

# Search The Scriptures

VOLUME 58

*"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).*



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# BEGINNING OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

## 742 Lesson

### DAVID DEFEATS GOLIATH

**MEMORY VERSE:** “So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David” (1 Samuel 17:50).

**TEXT: 1 Samuel 17:1-58**

**W**e recall that David, the son of Jesse, was secretly anointed by Samuel as king in Israel in the previous chapter because Saul had been rejected due to his disobedience to God’s command. By providence, David was chosen to play the harp to relieve Saul of his affliction and torment by an evil spirit. David’s anointing marked the confirmation of God’s hand upon him for greater exploits, and “**...the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward...**” (1 Samuel 16:13).

This study focuses on the war between Israel and the Philistines, a recurrent problem between the two nations. The Philistines had gathered at Shochoh, a territory of Judah, to fight against the people of God. For forty days, their champion, who goes by the name Goliath, taunted the army of Israel with crass vituperation, outright disdain and hate, and there was none to challenge him or call his bluff. By providence, however, David appeared on the scene of battle and through sheer courage and faith in God, took up the gauntlet to confront him. God gave him the victory and he defeated Goliath and brought resounding victory to Israel.

The defeat of Goliath underscores the importance of faith and dependence on God: that believers should not trust in the arm of flesh for victory in the battles of life but in the living God. “**Thus, saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD**” (Jeremiah 17:5).

**Question 1: What can believers learn from the defeat of Goliath?**

**GOLIATH'S CHALLENGE AND DISDAIN FOR ISRAEL'S ARMY** (1 Samuel 17:1-11; 14:1-22; 2 Kings 18:17-35; Exodus 23:20-23; Deuteronomy 20:1-4; Isaiah 41:10-16; 49:24-26; Exodus 14:13,14)

The Philistines who fled before Israel not long ago, gathered again at Shochoh to fight against them. **“And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines”** (1 Samuel 17:2). The boldness of the Philistines might have been prompted by their possible awareness that Saul had fallen out of favor with God, thus losing divine support. They supposed that Israel would be an easy prey since their leader no longer enjoyed God's protection. This probably emboldened them to confront the Israelites. This should serve as warning to believers to maintain constant relationship with God because their adversaries are constantly watching to see that they fall out of the favor and protection of God (1 Peter 5:8). Obedience to and steadfast walk with God will ensure divine protection and security; otherwise, disobedience to His commands will bring loss of divine presence, favor, peace and answer to prayers. It will expose the believer to satanic attacks and divine judgment.

**Question 2: What were the consequences of Saul's loss of fellowship with God?**

Goliath subjected the Israelites' army to great bashing, ridicule and disdain. As a strategy, he employed derisive propaganda with boasting to weaken their army. **“And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us”** (1 Samuel 17:8,9). Then he capped his vituperation and said, **“I defy the armies**

**of Israel this day**". Goliath's strategy worked because, **"When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid"**.

Besides, Goliath seemed to be very confident of his kitting – the physical armor – the helmet of brass, coat of mail, greaves of brass, staff of spear, shield, etc. He was very sure that the Israelites would not find a man to match his military status. Meanwhile, Saul's loss of fellowship with the Lord led to his loss of faith in the promises of God. Consequently, great fear gripped him and the entire nation. Their fear showed that Israel's search for security in a human king instead of absolute trust in God had failed.

On the basis of God's covenant, the Israelites were never to fear their enemies but trust in the Lord who promised to defend them whenever they were confronted by their enemies. He said, **"When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt"** (Deuteronomy 20:1). In the same vein, believers are not to fear Satan and his agents but trust in the living God wholeheartedly. **"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"** (1 John 4:4).

**DAVID'S PEDIGREE AND GRACIOUS CHARACTER:**  
(1 Samuel 17:12-31; 16:12,18; Psalm 37:23; 115:2-11)

While Goliath was still parading himself as the champion of the Philistines and boasting of his ability to defeat anyone, David appeared on the battlefield.

**"Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul"** (1 Samuel 17:12). He hailed from a family of eight sons and was the youngest. Jesse had sent him to check on the welfare of his three elder brothers – Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah – who

were in the army. But his appearance at the war scene could not be said to be a coincidence but divinely arranged (Psalm 37:23).

David was described as having a lovely personality, a man of valor and courage. **“Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him”** (1 Samuel 16:18). While the army of Israel was down with fear, David volunteered to confront the champion of the Philistines. On noticing his courage to fight Goliath, Eliab, his eldest brother, became angry and accused him of pride and naughtiness. But he bore the provocation with admirable temper; he only asked: **“...What have I now done? Is there not a cause?”** He humbly discountenanced his brother’s provocation, discouragement and accusation and turned to others that he might understand the problem. He was determined to fight the Philistine. The ill-will of his brothers would not deter him because the glory of God and of his nation was at stake. He must have thought within himself, **“Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?”** (Psalm 115:2). Christians also should be determined to accomplish their God-given tasks despite oppositions or provocations. In addition, we should handle provocations with grace and calmness. **“And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them”** (1 Samuel 17:23). Unlike other Israelites, what David heard stirred up faith in him instead of fear; it led to decision and determination in place of discouragement and despair. He rose to the challenge for the glory of God and the territorial integrity of his nation. Believers should not allow negative statements to remove their confidence in God and His promises.

**COURAGE AND THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH** (1 Samuel 17:32-58; Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Romans 10:10; 2 Timothy 4:1-5)

In spite of Goliath's intimidating features, stature and military prowess, David displayed boldness, courage and extraordinary faith in the God of Israel. He acted selflessly to defend the glory of God and reversed the national reproach. **"And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine"** (1 Samuel 17:32).

**Question 3: Why was David bold and courageous to confront Goliath?**

Drawing from his past experience, David testified to God's strength and faithfulness when he was confronted with danger. He recalled that, as a shepherd boy, he killed a lion which took a lamb out of his father's flock. He did the same thing to a bear. He was confident that God who enabled him to kill a lion and a bear would do the same to the uncircumcised Philistine who had defied the armies of the living God. **"David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine..."** (1 Samuel 17:37).

With faith and assurance in his heart, David confessed what the Lord would do. **"Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands"** (1 Samuel 17:45-47). There is always a link between what we believe and what we confess; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth always speaks. **"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"** (Romans 10:10).



Apparently, David's confession and audacity infuriated Goliath and he rose to attack him. But David ran quickly, reached for a stone in his shepherd's bag and launched an offensive from his sling against the champion of the Philistines. The stone hit and sunk into his forehead, **"and he fell upon his face to the earth"**. Thus, David killed Goliath; the champion of the Philistines was brought down without much fight.

The story and defeat of Goliath is legendary. It was an event that left in its trail a lot of lessons for humanity. First, it cautions us against pride and boasting. Surely, pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 16:18). Goliath had boasted of his ability even before the battle began, but his proud heart destroyed him. Second, God can use seemingly insignificant vessels to wrought victory for His people: David was an insignificant figure in comparison to Goliath's person, power and position. Moreover, a stone launched with a sling would do less damage to a man armed like Goliath. But these seemingly insignificant vessels – youthful David and a small stone – brought down a giant. Still, we recall that God is a Specialist in the use of little things to accomplish big purposes. Consider that a rod in Moses' hand, the jaw-bone of an ass, a mustard seed, five barley loaves and two small fishes, etc. were all used to accomplish great purposes. Third, Goliath's defeat shows the futility of carnal weapons in the battle of life. Fourth, we must never disparage or look down on individuals. God can use anyone to fulfill His program. Saul and David's elder brothers discouraged him from confronting Goliath because they felt he was not qualified by all standards to do so, but they were wrong.

On the other hand, there is a lot to learn from David. First, he never forgot God's past mercies and gracious dealings with him: that the same God who delivered the lion and the bear into his hand could do the same against an uncircumcised Philistine. It was this knowledge that inspired faith in him to confront the present challenge. Second, he was humble. He knew without God, he could not do anything; therefore, he relied on his God-given

ability. Third, he was concerned for the glory of God and would not mind putting his life on the line to defend it. Fourth, he had no personal ambition to be popular or prominent.

**Question 4: What can believers learn from David's victory over Goliath?**

As David triumphed over Goliath, so did Christ over Satan and the hosts of hell when He went to the Cross (Colossians 2:14,15), and has transferred this victory to His followers. Believers can exercise power over Satan and all adversaries with courage and confidence in God. We should not be afraid to confront any opposition as we preach the gospel because God has said, **"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness"** (Isaiah 41:10).

In conclusion, we should note the following: one, God resists the proud and pours contempt on those who defy Him. Two, like Goliath, no one ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. Three, we should enlist in the battle against Satan and his agents to defend God's honour and Word. Like David, believers should confront every battle of life by putting on the whole armor of God, believing that no power of darkness will prevail against them. Finally, believers should note that **"... God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; That no flesh should glory in his presence"** (1 Corinthians 1:27,29).

## DAILY BIBLE READING

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Luke	7	Proverbs	1-2
TUE	"	8	"	3-4
WED	"	9	"	5-6
THUR	"	10	"	7-8
FRI	"	11	"	9-10
SAT	"	12	"	11-12
SUN	"	13-14	"	13-14

# 743 Lesson

## SAUL ENVIES DAVID

**TEXT: 1 Samuel 18:1-30**

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And Saul was very wrath, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward” (1 Samuel 18:8,9).

The victory of Israel’s army over the Philistines in the previous chapter was memorable. David, the lad-warrior brought down Goliath, the head of the army of the Philistines, and won the much-needed victory for a shivering king and army of Israel. It was this victory that brought David to limelight in Israel and endeared him to King Saul, his son and servants, and the generality of the people. Jonathan, the king’s son loved David so much that he gave him his royal robe, garments, sword, bow and girdle as the duo entered a lifelong friendship. But the growing popularity of David among the people which was amplified by the customary victory songs of the women, bruised the king’s ego and drew his ire. He began to nurse hatred and envy against David and made attempts to eliminate him. When that did not succeed, he threw up some ensnaring devices to destroy him and his growing popularity, albeit to no avail.

**DAVID’S FRIENDSHIP WITH JONATHAN AND APPOINTMENT BY THE KING** (1 Samuel 18:1-5; Proverbs 18:24; 17:17; John 15:13-15; 1 John 3:16; Romans 5:7,8; Luke 22:20; Ephesians 4:7,8,11-13)

The victory of David over Goliath brought with it higher responsibility, national esteem and general affection of the people. Following the slaughter of Goliath, Abner brought David to Saul “...**with the head of the Philistine in his hand**” (1 Samuel 17:57,58). It was during the interaction of Saul with David that Jonathan’s heart was

drawn towards him and the most intimate friendship commenced between them. The two swore to be friends and there was no love lost between them thereafter.

This friendship was providential as nothing could break it. Even when Jonathan came under the threat of being killed by his own father for helping David to escape, he staked his life for his friend. The prudence, modesty, piety, bravery and faith of David might have been the points of affection that endeared him to Jonathan. These virtues might have rubbed off on him as he also did set upon the Philistine army with faith and bravery with which David conquered the Philistine giant. They were so united in their spirits that they seemed but one soul in two bodies.

Ordinarily, the likes of Jonathan who lived in the royal court would not descend to befriend a David who just came to town from following sheep. Though their social classes were wide apart - a common shepherd boy and a crowned prince - their soul tie could not be broken or separated. Jonathan demonstrated his love for David with generous presents of his royal robe, garments, sword, bow and girdle. If there was a friend who stuck closer to David than his own brother, it was Jonathan (Proverbs 18:24). The bond was so strong that after the death of Jonathan, David lamented bitterly that: **“I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women”** (2 Samuel 1:26).

<p><b>Question 1: What are the similarities between Jonathan’s friendship with David and that of Jesus with believers?</b></p>
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Full of love, Jesus Christ the Prince of peace also descended from the courts of heaven to initiate and seal an everlasting friendship with humanity. He stripped Himself of heavenly glory, incarnated through the virgin birth, demonstrated supreme love through His death and resurrection to provide robes of righteousness for everyone. More than Jonathan, He became poor so that we can be enriched with divine blessings. Jonathan did not die for David, but Christ died for us. **“Greater love**

**hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”** (John 15:13). Jonathan made a verbal covenant with David, but Christ made an everlasting covenant with His blood for as many as would respond to His love by turning away from sin. Jonathan gave to David his sword, bow and girdle but the Lord has given believers a comprehensive package of the whole armor of God, the sword of the Spirit and the girdle of truth.

**Question 2: Why was David accepted by all Israel?**

David had been anointed to replace Saul as the next king of Israel. By divine arrangement, it was his victory that connected him to the royal family. Saul accepted David and employed him in the affairs of government as a head over the men of war. Thus, he became a resident of the royal court. David's presence at the royal court was to prepare him ahead of the higher calling of the Lord. David showed himself a dutiful servant as he “... **went out whithersoever Saul sent him...**” (1 Samuel 18:5). He was obedient and courageous, the qualities which earned him acceptance “**in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants**”.

**RELENTLESS PLOT AGAINST AN ACCEPTED COMMANDER** (1 Samuel 18:6-11; 2 Corinthians 10:12; Proverbs 6:16,19; 1 Peter 5:8; Titus 3:3; Acts 7:9; Matthew 27:18; Acts 13:45; 17:5; Job 1:9,10; Ecclesiastes 10:8; 1 John 5:18)

The defeat of Goliath and the Philistines did not only bring joy but also pain to David. Saul felt threatened by the growing popularity of David as expressed in the slanted victory and congratulatory songs of the women. The content of the song ascribed “**ten thousands**” casualties to David and only “**thousands**” to Saul. He could not bear to hear the women magnifying his servant above him. He was angry and greatly displeased that the women could express the truth of the victory over the Philistines in songs that reproached him. Saul's skewed suspicion flashed on an assumed plan to take the kingdom from him and terminate his dynasty as previously declared by Samuel. “**And Saul was very wroth... and he said, They have ascribed unto David**

**ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward**" (verses 8,9). Seeing David as his possible successor to the throne, he labored to eliminate him. Thus, the triumph and jubilation soon turned to trouble as Saul determined to get rid of David.

However, believers must avoid comparing one with another and sowing seeds of discord through testimonies they share among the people of God. Note also that it is futile to try to reverse God's judgment on the disobedient by any other means than heartfelt repentance. Saul's hatred, envy and plot to eliminate David showed that he loved the praise of men and his kingship more than the word and glory of God.

The Scripture affirms that envy and hatred are marks of the unregenerate. Prior to his conversion, Paul the apostle recalled that "**we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another**" (Titus 3:3). It was for envy Joseph was sold into slavery, Christ was delivered to be crucified and the Jews persecuted Paul the apostle (Acts 7:9; Matthew 27:18; Acts 13:45; 17:5). So, envy is not a virtue but a vice which believers must guard against.

To execute his murderous intention and take David unaware, the opportunity Saul sought for came when David played his harp to refresh him from the torment of an evil spirit. He wasted no time as he cast a javelin to pin him to the wall. By divine help, David escaped two attempts on his life by Saul.

**Question 3: What do we learn from Saul's move to kill David?**

In Saul, we see the mission of the adversary who "**...as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour**". The exhortation for the heaven-bound believer is to be sober and vigilant, with a readiness to resist the adversary.

The phrase: **“the evil spirit from God”** in the text means “the evil spirit permitted by God”.

**Question 4: Why was Saul afflicted by an evil spirit?**

It is obvious God builds a hedge around every true child of His but **“whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him”** (Job 1:9,10; Ecclesiastes 10:8). So, when Saul was in fellowship with God, there was a hedge around him. But when he sinned and did not truly repent, the hedge was broken, and the evil spirit was allowed to afflict him. There is, therefore, no eternal and permanent security for any believer who is saved but does not abide in Christ. God’s promise clearly states that: **“he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not”** (1 John 5:18). It is as believers keep themselves in the love of God and abide in fellowship of the saints, prayer and regular intake of the Word that they are kept by the power of God. The abiding believer has a measure of the Holy Spirit in him that shields him from being possessed by an evil spirit (John 14:17).

**Question 5: What should be the believer’s attitude towards persecutors?**

Believers today should learn from David to put their entire faith in God to fight their battles and defeat the purposes of their enemies. Instead of confronting the enemy physically, they are expected to prayerfully handover the battle to God. Besides, David was calm and collected. He did not fight back but remained focused and available even for higher assignments. Though he had both strength and courage enough to retaliate, he did no more than secure himself by getting out of it. This was anchored on his absolute faith and confidence in God. The believer in Christ must never give in to revenge (Romans 12:19). When we live in holiness and fear of God, our persecutors will be afraid of us: **“For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him...”** (Mark 6:20).

**REPEATED FEAR OF THE APOSTATE AND CRUEL KING** (1 Samuel 18:12-30; Proverbs 29:25; 1 John 4:18; Mark 6:20; Romans 12:19,20; Isaiah 41:10,13,14; 54:17)



Saul was a proud and self-willed leader who would rather seek the honour of men than the approval of God. These traits led him to a point of backsliding and apostasy. His lust for honour and recognition of men brought him to the state of perpetual fear. For fear of men, he failed in the divine appointment with Samuel, transgressed the commandment of the Lord and was finally rejected.

Saul's fear in the text was based on his discovery that the divine presence which he lost was with David. **“And Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him and was departed from Saul”** (1 Samuel 18:12). He knew that David could not have escaped the points of javelin without the help of God. Besides, it was baffling that he tried unsuccessfully to convince Jonathan to work against David. Added to this was David's prudent behavior.

**Question 6: What are the similarities between the devices Saul used to eliminate David and ones the devil uses against believers?**

When Saul brought David close to him, his motive at first was not known, given that he had a broken relationship with God. Later, it became clear that: one, it was to ensure that attention was not shifted to David after his defeat of Goliath; two, to monitor and keep his movements in check; three, he was scared of losing his throne; and four, he needed to entrap him through deceptive favor of luring David to marry his daughter. Saul's motive for requesting for one hundred foreskins of the Philistines as bride price was an envious plot to destroy David in the process.

The strategies that Satan uses today are similar. He can use promotion and favor as baits to lure believers into compromise. He and his agents show feigned love to people in order to pollute or initiate them. The devil also uses marriages to entangle careless believers. But God is always faithful in preserving his children at all times, especially those who put their trust in Him. The wisdom He gave David to prevail over Saul's cunning and crafty devices is still available to us.

God preserved David from all the attempts Saul made against him. Also, David was very cautious and circumspect in everything he said and did: he “... **behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by**” (verse 30). Therefore, a believer who walks in the wisdom of God as David is assured that, “**no weapon that is formed against [him] shall prosper**” (Isaiah 54:17).

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Luke	15-16	Proverbs	15-16
TUE	“	17-18	“	17-18
WED	“	19	“	19-20
THUR	“	20	“	21-22
FRI	“	21	“	23-24
SAT	“	22	“	25-26
SUN	“	23	“	27-28

# 744 Lesson

## SAUL PLOTS TO KILL DAVID

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But Jonathan Saul’s son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself” (1 Samuel 19:2).

**TEXT: 1 Samuel 19:1-24**

**T**he preceding chapter details Saul’s unsuccessful attempts to eliminate David after his victory over Goliath. The relationship between the two further deteriorated in this lesson. In fact, Saul’s hatred, envy and fear of David became full-blown to the extent that he openly campaigned and enlisted his household in the manhunt for him. His frustration worsened as Jonathan, his son and Michal, his daughter declined from collaborating with him to eliminate David. The basic lesson here is that the wicked may hunt believers and Christian servants but the Lord “**preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked**” (Psalm 97:10).

**UNGODLY DIRECTIVE TO KILL DAVID** (1 Samuel 19:1; Exodus 20:13; Psalm 37:12,13; Proverbs 6:14; Psalms 86:14; 94:21,22; Isaiah 10:1)

**“And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David”** (1 Samuel 19:1). It was awful for Saul to enlist his household in the murderous plot against David. His instruction has far-reaching domestic and national implications. One, by attempting to drag Jonathan and his servants into the murderous plot, Saul tried to infect his household with malice for David. It is ungodly for church leaders to nurse hatred against any worker or member, let alone influence their household to hate, antagonize or even hurt their target. As Christians, we should guard against the tendency to sow seeds of discord and hatred

in our children, family members or colleagues in our workplaces. The Bible commands us to **“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”** (Hebrews 12:14).

Two, the instruction to kill David had the capacity to generate inter-generational enmity and war between the two families and tribes. Three, the instruction to eliminate the innocent young man was a flagrant disregard for God’s word not to kill (Exodus 20:13; Matthew 19:18). Today, believers are warned to desist from getting involved in any form of murder, including abortion (Romans 13:9; 1 Peter 4:15; 1 John 3:15). Four, Saul’s directive revealed his questionable character. He failed to lead an exemplary godly life for his household and subjects. Believers are enjoined to emulate the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ and godly Christian leaders (1 Peter 2:21; 1 Corinthians 4:16).

<p><b>Question 1: What are the implications of Saul’s instruction to Jonathan and his servants to kill David?</b></p>
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**SELFLESS DEMONSTRATION OF KINDNESS TO DAVID** (1 Samuel 19:2-7; Romans 12:9,10; 13:10; 1Corinthians 13:4,5)

**“But Jonathan Saul’s son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself”** (1 Samuel 19:2). Here, Jonathan demonstrated unusual love and kindness to David. Indeed, his love for him was a kind providence as God used him to shield David from harm. Jonathan’s love for David was pure as he refused to imbibe his father’s hatred and murderous intention towards him. The Scripture admonishes that believers should **“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil...”** (Romans 12:9,10). Love amongst brethren should be characterized by sincerity, kindness, purity, patience and gentleness (1 Corinthians 13:4,5). It is important to underscore here that godly children should refrain from running sinful errands for their parents.

**Question 2: Describe the nature of love that should exist among brethren in the church.**

**“And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good”** (1 Samuel 19:4). Jonathan played the role of an advocate and intercessor. His intercession for David was very prudent. It was managed with a great deal of meekness and wisdom; and he showed himself faithful to his friend by speaking good of him, even when faced with the danger of incurring his father’s displeasure. He pleaded convincingly and made his father see why David should not be killed (1 Samuel 19:4,5). Saul’s hands were weakened at Jonathan’s words because he had no justifiable reason for his action. As God’s children, we have nothing to fear because we have an Advocate and Intercessor before our heavenly Father (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). Besides, our righteous life will speak for us in times of adversity, persecution and unjustifiable attacks from the enemy (Proverbs 11:6; 1 Peter 3:13). In view of this, we should use our tongues positively at all times to build up and not to destroy (Proverbs 25:11; Ecclesiastes 10:12; 12:11). Christ teaches that believers should be peacemakers who cement relationships in line with the Scriptures (Matthew 5:9).

**Question 3: What can believers learn from Jonathan’s mediation?**

Having succeeded in his peace initiative, Jonathan brought David to Saul and he resumed his duties in the palace (1 Samuel 19:7). Nothing suggests that David was fearful, vengeful or half-hearted in his service to the king on resumption of duty. He still loved Saul irrespective of the persecution and plots to eliminate him. The Bible declares that **“there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear...”** (1 John 4:18). The life of David as an obedient and faithful servant is a lesson to contemporary believers. We are therefore admonished to **“be subject to [our] masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward”** (1 Peter 2:18).

**Question 4: What can we learn from David's attitude after resumption of duty in Saul's palace?**

**SUSTAINED DESPERATION TO KILL DAVID** (1 Samuel 19:8-24; Jeremiah 17:9; John 15:18; Galatians 4:29; 2 Timothy 3:13)

On re-assumption of duty, David took on the Philistines in battle and **“slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him”** (1 Samuel 19:8). David's winning streak in different battles over the Philistines unsettled Saul. How David remained unconquerable and unscathed from different attempts at getting rid of him remained a hard nut for him to crack. Rather than getting killed by the Philistines which Saul so much desired, David defeated them over and over. This latest victory increased Saul's frustration and renewed his desperation to kill him. Harboring such a murderous intention would not allow him to commend or reward David for his patriotic zeal and feat. Saul's action confirms the fact that hatred and malice blind the eyes of the unregenerate and backsliders from seeing good things in others. The Jews never saw anything good in our Lord Jesus Christ because of their religious blindness occasioned by hatred for the truth (John 9:39-41). Meanwhile, David's doggedness teaches us that persecution and challenges of life should not restrain us from putting in our best into God's service. As a combination of hatred and plot to kill brewed in Saul, the evil spirit that had been previously exorcised returned to afflict him. As usual, David was more than ready to use his musical prowess to bring relief to the tormented king. But Saul saw this as another opportunity to get rid of him at once. **“And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night”** (verse 10). From this point on, Saul began the hot chase to hunt him down. He quickly dispatched his hatchet men to his house to eliminate him. This plot was aborted by Michal, Saul's daughter whom he married. She did not only provide David with the intelligence about the looming danger but personally smuggled him out of the house through

a window. In this age of security concerns, we must not ignore reports of intelligence in our communities and circulating same to the brethren. After David's escape, facilitated by Michal, she tested her father's resolve to kill David by saying that he was sick and could not report to the king as directed. But the king insisted that his messengers should bring his sick body from the bed that "**I may slay him**". This is the height of wickedness to seek to snuff life out of David, even if he was sick.

**“So, David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah... he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth”** (verse 18). By running to Samuel, David made God his refuge. As a prophet of God, Samuel was in the best position to counsel him on what to do at such a time.

David's flight did not assuage Saul's frustration. As far as he was concerned, he would stop at nothing but the termination of his life. Having obtained intelligence report that David went to Naioth with Samuel, he dispatched some messengers to capture and bring him. Lacking respect for God and His prophets headed by Samuel, the three batches of Saul's messengers entered the assembly to carry out their evil assignment but were all arrested and detained by the Spirit of God. Unwilling to accept any disgrace arising from a failed plot, "**he went thither to Naioth**" and was also overpowered by God's Spirit.

It is unfortunate that Saul who prophesied shortly before his coronation causing people to ask: "**Is Saul also among the prophets?**" has lost all grace and every vestige of godliness and is left to chase a servant in his kingdom. How quickly has his loss of the Spirit turned him into a monster without regard for human lives! Those who manifest gifts without grace, and charisma without character will be turned back at the pearly gate of heaven (Matthew 7:22,23).

<p><b>Question 5: What can believers learn from Saul's unsuccessful attempts to kill David?</b></p>
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Saul with his messengers failed to realize that God’s presence with David was the secret of his protection. Though the devil seeks to devour God’s people and servants, the Lord is always committed to their preservation (2 Timothy 4:18; Psalm 91). He preserved Joseph, the three Hebrew children, Daniel, David, the apostles and Christ from being killed prematurely (Genesis 50:15-21; Daniel 3:16,17,24,25; 6:18-23). And irrespective of what you are going through, **“The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore”** (Psalm 121:7,8).

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Luke 24	Proverbs	29-30
TUE	John 1	“	31
WED	“ 2-3	Ecclesiastes	1-2
THUR	“ 4	“	3-4
FRI	“ 5	“	5-6
SAT	“ 6	“	7-8
SUN	“ 7	“	9-10



# 745 Lesson

## JONATHAN DELIVERS DAVID FROM DEATH

**MEMORY VERSE:** “The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father” (1 Samuel 20:13).

**TEXT: 1 Samuel 20:1-24**

**D**avid’s travail with Saul began after he defeated Goliath of Gath and the women ascribed greater popularity to him than to the king. Saul became envious and jealous. **“And Saul was very wrath... and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?”** (1 Samuel 18:8). From that time, the king made several attempts to assassinate the young warrior of Israel, but God delivered him from all the evil plots.

Our present lesson is a continuation of David’s nightmare and flight from danger to consult with Jonathan, the son of Saul, who had pledged loyalty to and friendship with him. Their covenant of friendship was renewed, and Jonathan faithfully promised to provide David with intelligence report for his safety. From this study, we learn among others, that unlike Saul, leaders should be free from narrow-mindedness, suspicion and envy of their subordinates who may be more favored, gifted and successful (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). Again, like David, if we cannot vindicate our reputation before men, we should commit it to God (Psalms 37:5,6; 139:1-4). Also, like Jonathan, we should strive to show genuine sympathy to those whose godly characters are being defamed (Psalm 119:63; Hebrews 13:3). Above all, we should strive to live righteously at all times so as to find acceptance with the holy, all- seeing God.

**Question 1: Mention some lessons from the lives of the major characters in our text.**

**DAVID CONSULTS WITH JONATHAN** (1 Samuel 20:1-8; Proverbs 11:14; 17:17; 15:22; 18:24; 20:18; Matthew 2:13; 4:12; 12:14,15; 10:23; 2 Peter 2:9; 2 Timothy 4:18)

**“And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?”** (1 Samuel 20:1).

On several occasions, David fled for his life as a result of threats by King Saul. In particular, twelve attempts were made on his life: thrice, a javelin was thrown at him; twice, he was set up through marriage arrangement so that he would fall into the hands of the Philistines; six times, soldiers were sent after him, and once, Saul went after him in Ramah (1 Samuel 18:11; 18:17-30; 19:1,10,11-24; 23:15; 26:2). This was why David exclaimed, **“...there is but a step between me and death”**. He therefore appealed to Jonathan concerning his innocence; obviously, with a readiness to humble himself and seek pardon if indeed he had done any wrong against Saul.

The Lord will always provide means for His people to escape in times of danger (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9). Hence, in the course of obedience to the great commission, we should be wise to discern that when our lives are under threat, we should, if necessary, relocate to continue the work (Luke 4:29-31; John 7:1; 10:39-42). The Scripture says, **“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished”** (Proverbs 27:12). In handling threats to life, we should be prudent enough to learn from our Lord Jesus Christ, Apostles Paul and Peter, and others.

**Question 2: Outline some qualities of true friendship exhibited by Jonathan.**

It is comforting and reassuring that David could find a friend in Jonathan at a time he had such an enemy on the throne. Jonathan was no doubt, one of the noblest characters in the Scriptures. He was **“...a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”** (Proverbs 18:24) and one who **“...loveth at all times...”** (Proverbs 17:17). He loved David in times of triumph and distress (1

Samuel 18:1; 20:1,2). He was selfless and sacrificial. His knowledge of David's coming greatness did not make him feel threatened or jealous. Rather, he loved his friend as his own soul and was willing to see him crowned and exalted to the throne. Such quality of love is required of believers when someone else is advanced into a leadership position or becomes more gifted than themselves (Romans 12:10). Similar traits were exhibited by John the Baptist (John 3:26-33); Jehu's colleagues (2 Kings 9:5,11-13); the apostles (Galatians 2:9); and Peter (2 Peter 3:15,16).

Jonathan also exhibited loyalty, the greatest evidence of genuine friendship by being available to help in times of distress or personal struggles. Too many people are fair-weather friends who stick around only when the friendship profits them but leave as soon as the relationship requires commitment and sacrificial love. In Jonathan, we also see purity of life. He was very principled and there was no inclination to do evil (Exodus 23:2; Isaiah 5:20). He was readily available to give David counsel when he needed it most (Proverbs 11:14). It is worth mentioning here that believers should always seek counsel from mature leaders when in doubt or danger.

**DAVID AND JONATHAN RENEW THEIR COVENANT**  
(1 Samuel 20:9-17; 18:3; 2 Samuel 9:1-10; Genesis 21:27; 1 Kings 5:12)

**“And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: But also, thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever...”** (1 Samuel 20:14,15).

Motivated by pure love and regard for his friend David, Jonathan renewed their covenant of friendship (1 Samuel 18:3; 20:16,17). The reasons are obvious: he wanted to assure him of his unwavering love. He feared that David might have reasons to fear that his father's influence, and his own interest in the throne, should make his love grow cold. He then invited David to **“Come and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field”** (1 Samuel 20:11), not

to fight but talk the matter over and consolidate their friendship. Once they got to the field, Jonathan vowed and swore to remain faithful, even appealing to God as both witness and judge. **“The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father”** (1 Samuel 20:13).

The conditions of the covenant are in two parts, namely, David was to preserve the life of Jonathan on ascension to the throne, **“And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not”** (1 Samuel 20:14). Secondly, he was to show kindness continually to the house of Jonathan: **“But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever...”** (1 Samuel 20:15). It was in remembrance of this covenant that David showed kindness to Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan (2 Samuel 9:7; 21:7).

**Question 3: What was the content of the covenant between David and Jonathan?**

Faithfulness demands that we keep the terms of godly, righteous and legitimate covenants (2 Timothy 3:3; Ecclesiastes 5:4; Malachi 2:16). It is an act of ungodliness to violate our commitments in form of business contracts, marriage vows or land agreements.

All parties to such agreements are expected to keep their part of the deal. The Scripture enjoins us to fulfil our promises, covenants and vows (Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21). **“Covenant breakers”** are regarded as evil doers worthy of divine judgment (Romans 1:31,32).

**Question 4: What can believers learn from Jonathan and David regarding faithfulness and trust in fellowship?**

Jonathan’s prayer in his oath **“...and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father”** (1 Samuel 20:13) was prophetic. It showed that he had already concluded that David would definitely become king in his father’s stead and would not be killed by his father,

Saul. We observe that Jonathan was faithful in keeping to the terms of his covenant with David just as David also trusted him.

**JONATHAN'S TOKEN TO DAVID** (1 Samuel 20:18-24; Joshua 8:12-19).

In response to Jonathan's readiness to assist, David proposed a simple strategy to ascertain Saul's disposition towards him. In two days, Saul was to hold a feast during the new moon when sacrifices would be offered (Numbers 10:10; 28:11-15). At this solemn feast, Saul probably would have all his children and officers to sit with him, with David as one of them. David therefore knew that Saul would expect him at the feast. Meanwhile, he had resolved to be absent from the feast as a safety strategy. Should Saul overlook or excuse his absence, he would conclude that Saul had reneged on his plot to kill him. But if the king regarded his absence with strong displeasure and discontent, it would be easy to conclude that mischief was determined by the king against him. For, he reasoned that since it was certain that the king did not love him as to desire his presence for any other end than he might have an opportunity to kill him. Here, they both settled on the signs and tokens to adopt to know Saul's mood towards David.

**“And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark. And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt; as the LORD liveth”** (1 Samuel 20:20,21). The sign was that Jonathan would shoot three arrows on the side of the rock, Ezel. If he told a lad, the arrows were on this side of the rock it would mean that David could come home as no harm was intended; **“but if he says the arrows are beyond thee...”** then David was to go his way for Saul intended to kill him.

**Question 5: What are the duties of believers to those in danger of hell?**

Based on the agreed arrangement, Jonathan saved the life of David, Israel’s future king, from being cut short prematurely. In like manner, believers should labour to rescue sinners and backsliders who are in danger of going to hell. **“If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?”** (Proverbs 24:11,12). We should devise scriptural evangelistic strategies to reach all categories of sinners and backsliders before it is too late.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	John	8	Ecclesiastes	11-12
TUE	“	9	Song of Sol.	1-3
WED	“	10	“	4-5
THUR	“	11	“	6-8
FRI	“	12	Isaiah	1-2
SAT	“	13-14	“	3-5
SUN	“	15-16	“	6-7

# 746 Lesson

## DAVID FLEES TO GATH

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath” (1 Samuel 21:10).

**TEXT: 1 Samuel 21:1-15**

**D**avid had fallen out of favor with Saul and he wanted him dead by all means. His life was under constant threat causing him to move from one place to another for safety. He reminisced his travail during this period in one of the psalms. **“They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love”** (Psalm 109:3-5). David, being chased by a furious and determined enemy, decided to relocate across the border for his safety. The need for him to seek asylum in a strange land was because Saul had recorded several humiliating misses and was not going to give up until he was assassinated. Also, Jonathan his friend had confirmed that Saul meant to get rid of him and Michal had recently aided his escape. Believers need not forget that the devil is always trailing and seeking to devour the careless ones. Even Christ was not spared. Satan is always seeking to abort the plan of God for His people. Christians must be prayerful and watchful when they are victorious, successful or exalted because every open door attracts many adversaries (1 Corinthians 16:9,13).

**Question 1: What can believers learn from Saul’s different attempts to get rid of David?**

**DAVID FLEES TO NOB** (1 Samuel 21:1-6; Psalms 46:1; 9:9; 37:39; Matthew 12:3,4; Mark 2:25-27)

The text focuses on David’s wanderings after parting

ways with Jonathan, his bosom friend. It began with his flight to Nob where he had an encounter with Ahimelech, the priest. Nob, a city probably of the tribe of Benjamin was where the tabernacle of the Lord was pitched at that time after the desertion or abandonment of Shiloh.

David had to run away from Saul's fury for his dear life because neither Samuel the prophet nor Jonathan the king's son could protect him. Little wonder that the Scripture concludes: **"Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man"** (Psalm 60:11). Since our help comes from the Lord, we are to look up to Him at all times and under all circumstances.

**Question 2: What do believers learn from David's meeting with Ahimelech in the sanctuary?**

David's decision to visit the house of God before going to Gath is instructive to believers. As his custom, David fled first to God's prophet and priest before his flight to Gath (1 Samuel 21:1-9; 19:18-24; 22:9,10). Here, we learn that we should always resort to spiritual resources such as the house or presence of God, the word of God and men of God (counsellors) before undertaking important tasks or while suffering persecution. The assurance that God is always ready and available to intervene on our behalf takes away fear, unbelief and discouragement.

Ahimelech was a priest in God's house. On sighting David, he enquired why he was alone, probably before he saw the young men who accompanied him. David's reply that: **"The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know anything of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place"** (1 Samuel 21:2) was not true. The king who sought to kill him could not have sent him on an errand. Here, he just wanted to obtain his requests under pretense. David got bread for himself and his men. Ahimelech consented to his request for the hallowed bread judging by status and past reputation of David. Since Ahimelech was a



true priest of God, he could still have granted David's request if he heard the truth about his plight and flight from danger. So, there was no reason for him to tell lies. Believers cannot point to David's example as reason to lie; Christ is our perfect Example in everything.

One basic condition the priest gave for acceding to the request was that the young men must have separated themselves from women before partaking of the hallowed bread. This bread was not the common one; it was the shewbread. Its handling bears some semblance with the unleavened bread which the Scripture enjoins New Testament believers to use in observing the Lord's Supper. Ahimelech gave David the shewbread which was not lawful for him to eat. Our Lord Jesus referred to this event without condemning the action of the priest to teach us that the value of saving life was above ceremonial laws.

In response to the Pharisees' allegation that Christ's disciples who were hungry plucked and ate ears of corn on the Sabbath day, **“he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?”** (Matthew 12:3,4; Mark 2:25-27; Luke 6:4). Also, Christ's reference to this incident in the Old Testament attests to the veracity of Scripture as the word of God.

**DOEG: A SERVING STRANGER IN ISRAEL** (1 Samuel 21:7-9; 22:9,10; Proverbs 22:3; Matthew 10:23; 23:34)

**“Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdsmen that belonged to Saul”** (1 Samuel 21:7-9).

While David and Ahimelech exchanged pleasantries, Doeg, a proselyte to the Jewish religion watched. As the chief of Saul's herdsmen, he appeared responsible and harmless but deadly. Though he came to the house of

God to either pay some vows or avail himself of some rites of purification, he found an opportunity to report proceedings to Saul whom he knew had been hunting David (1 Samuel 22:9,10). His report that stoked the fire of Saul's hatred of David was not surprising judging by his pedigree as an Edomite. Edom (Esau) was an avowed enemy of the united nation of Israel. Now in the employ of a senior citizen in Israel, he found an occasion to fuel the enmity between two key leaders in Israel because of the perpetual hatred of the Edomites for the Israelites (Ezekiel 35:3-5).

**Question 3: Why should believers be careful in engaging sinners in their household duties?**

Believers should be careful on who they engage in their secular endeavor or domestic affairs. There is need to always seek the counsel of the Holy Spirit in all decisions, including employment of staff for household and sensitive duties. Besides, there is need for proper and effective information management by all Christians at the home front and in workplaces to avoid suffering incalculable damage. We must be wise to relate with people around us based on proper understanding of their personality, antecedents and loyalty. Doeg's report made Saul to destroy the city of Nob and kill eighty-five priests. In this age of security concerns, believers must be prayerful and watchful to detect and appropriately handle every friendly foe and pretentious Doegs. Also, it is unwise to dish out sensitive personal information and movement on social media platforms as these are now being used by rapists and kidnappers.

Aside eating bread for sustenance, David realized that he needed a spear or sword especially as he would be crossing the border of Israel in order to escape from Saul. **“And David said unto Ahimelech and is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.”** Armed with bread and sword, David fled to Gath. Believers need to put on the whole armor of God to be successful in their service and pilgrimage to heaven.

David's flight from perceived danger was in order. The Scripture states that, "**A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished**" (Proverbs 22:3). Jesus also teaches that believers should endure persecution. But in life-threatening situations, He said, "**when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come**" (Matthew 10:23; 23:34).

**DAVID'S FLIGHT TO GATH** (1 Samuel 21:10-15; 1 Kings 8:56; 1 Peter 2:21-23; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Deuteronomy 8:3; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Romans 8:28)

While in the court of Achish, David who was already traumatized by fear deduced from the unfolding events that his life was not safe there. Without thinking of the divine presence, he resorted to self-management and feigned madness in order to escape death. This deception worked for him as he was thereafter taken for a mad man, ignored and rejected. There is no need for self-management and the use of sinful shortcuts for self-preservation or the execution of our divinely ordained programs and projects because God knows how to secure our lives.

**Question 4: From the text, mention some blunders David made that believers must avoid.**

David made many blunders while suffering. He told a lie and dramatized deceit out of fear to have his way (1 Samuel 21:2,8,12,13). This is quite unlike Christ who was without any fault or blemish during His trials (Hebrews 5:8,9). The failure, backsliding and blemishes of any Bible character must never be copied by any heaven-minded believer. Christ our Lord, the Author and Finisher of our faith, is our Model. "**For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously**"

(1 Peter 2:21-23). From the way and manner David conducted himself, we observe that no matter how spiritual a believer may be, he can fall from the grace of God if he is not prayerful and watchful.

**Question 5: How does one retain his integrity in times of distress?**

It is possible to retain one's integrity even in extremely difficult situations. The reason is, **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"** (1 Corinthians 10:13). To always overcome, every heaven-bound believer needs determination, courage, watchfulness, regular self-examination, prayer, patience and personal faith in God in times of tribulations.

In David's trying times, we see the king-elect now on exile; heir who will be possessor of vast treasures begging for bread; and a valiant warrior in need of a sword. In His sovereignty, God sometimes permits contrary circumstances to come the believer's way for the purpose of testing his faith and faithfulness as well as to bring glory to His name. It is certain that obstacles and difficulties cannot hinder the word and purpose of God. He allows them to prove and train His servants for higher responsibilities and grow their faith to depend on Him and obey His commandments (Deuteronomy 8:3). Joseph, Daniel, the three Hebrew children and the apostles suffered for righteousness' sake and came out stronger. David would learn from his trials that his one-time victory over the Philistines was an insufficient credential that would make him ascend the throne of Israel. He would have to depend absolutely on God to occupy the throne. In spite of our present challenges as believers, **"we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"** (Romans 8:28). God is our overall Moderator and He will balance up everything for us as we closely walk with and faithfully serve Him.

## DAILY BIBLE READING

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	John	17-18	Isaiah	8-9
TUE	“	19	“	10-11
WED	“	20-21	“	12-14
THUR	Acts	1-2	“	15-16
FRI	“	3-4	“	17-18
SAT	“	5-6	“	19-20
SUN	“	7	“	21-22

**END OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES**

# BEGINNING OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

## 747 Lesson

### EXHORTATION TO STEADFAST CHRISTIAN LIVING

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).

#### **TEXT: Philippians 1:1-30**

**T**his study focuses on one of the prison epistles of Paul when he was in confinement in Rome. Aside from Philippians, others are the epistle to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Philippi was a chief city in the western part of Macedonia. Paul’s Macedonian call in Troas during his second missionary journey led to the founding of the church in Philippi with the conversion of Lydia, the Philippian jailor and others (Acts 16:1-40).

Paul’s particular fatherly affection, kindness and tender care for the Philippian church which he was instrumental in planting was quite remarkable and understandable. Aside the extraordinary way he was directed by the Lord to preach the gospel there (Acts 16:9), it was at Philippi that he was scourged and imprisoned (Acts 16:23,24; 1 Thessalonians 2:2). Also, the brethren there were so loving and kind that they regularly sent presents to him even when other churches did not show much care (Philippians 4:15-18; 1:7). Paul was particularly impressed by the rapid growth of this church from its small beginning to a flourishing church of godly, loving, dynamic, steadfast and eminent saints with bishops and deacons among them.

**Question 1: What is the central theme of Paul’s epistle to the Philippians?**

The central theme of Paul’s epistle to the Philippians is joy. It teaches us that Christians can be joyful even in

the midst of hardship and suffering because of their faith in Christ. He wrote the epistle to reveal the fact that his imprisonment had not impeded but hastened the spread of the gospel. As Christians, we should understand that our suffering and persecution on account of our faith is a testimony of our steadfastness and identification with Christ (Acts 5:41,42; 1 Peter 2:21- 23). In this epistle, he mentioned steadfastness, humility, submission, love, unity, etc. as some of the essential virtues concerning the Christian life.

**CHRIST-LIKE JOY AND AFFECTION FOR SAINTS:**  
(Philippians 1:1-8; Colossians 1:3,4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10; 3:6-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:3,4; 2 John 4; 3 John 3-6)

Though Paul alone was divinely inspired to write the epistle, he joined Timothy as co-author. This expresses his humility and regard for others. We also observe that in spite of the high office he occupied as an apostle, he simply identified himself and his associate as **“the servants of Jesus Christ”**.

**Question 2: Why did Paul address himself as a servant of Christ?**

A minister is essentially a servant who labors in prayer, preaching, counselling and exhortation to perfect the saints and edify the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). As a servant of Christ, Paul appreciated the dignity of service. He counted it a great privilege to be involved in the royal service of the supreme Master. His humble description of himself as a servant and bondman of Christ is a challenge to those who see it as a mean thing to serve Christ. By his humble acceptance of the position of a servant, he indicts those who feel too great, exalted and reputable to offer divine service. Without any doubt, Paul was one of the greatest of men, but he still answered the call of Christ and worked as a servant. Every minister who is called and commissioned by Christ must have the qualities of a servant. First, a servant of God must be faithful – he neither adds to nor subtracts from the message of his Master (Numbers 12:7). Of Timothy, Paul wrote: **“...Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord...”** (1

Corinthians 4:17). Second, those who serve the Lord must be **“fervent in Spirit”** (Romans 12:11). Third, a servant must be fearless (Acts 4:20).

It is significant also to note that the Christians here were addressed as saints while they were still alive, not after they had died. Saints are those whose sins have been forgiven and their lives transformed, washed and cleansed by the blood of the Lamb and made pure to live a life of practical holiness. Nobody becomes a saint outside Christ or after death.

Paul the apostle proceeded to give thanks to God for the saints at Philippi. Though they were out of sight and despite the scourging, imprisonment and other forms of maltreatment he suffered to preach the gospel to them; he remembered Philippi with joy. Also, he remembered them in prayer: **“Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy”** (Philippians 1:4). Paul was always concerned for the converts whom he continuously prayed for. He further exhorted them to remain steadfast in all situations, whether in his presence or absence until Christ comes. Thanksgiving is an important aspect of believers’ prayer. Therefore, in whatever situation we find ourselves, we should learn to give thanks to God.

**Question 3: Why did Paul give thanks to God for the Philippian believers?**

Paul thanked God for their consistent fellowship in the gospel (Philippians 1:5). It is comforting to ministers when those who sincerely receive and embrace the gospel abide in the faith. He also thanked God for the confidence he had concerning the genuineness and enduring quality of their spiritual experiences (Philippians 1:6). His thanksgiving was equally for their companionship and communion with him in the suffering, defence and communication of the gospel. They were partakers of his affliction by sympathy, concern and readiness to assist him (Philippians 1:7). Church members ought to be a constant source of joy and thanksgiving to their leaders so that they will be able to discharge their onerous duties effectively and profitably (Hebrews 13:17).



**INTERCESSION FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF BELIEVERS** (Philippians 1:9-11; Ephesians 1:16-19; 3:14-19; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Corinthians 5:8; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:17; Galatians 5:22,23)

Full of joy that the Philippian Christians were abiding in the faith, Paul the apostle prayed that “[their] **love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That [they] may approve things that are excellent; that [they] may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God** (Philippians 1:9-11).

**Question 4: What definite requests did Paul make for the Philippians and what can we learn from him?**

First, he prayed that their love should grow “**more and more**”. The greatest and new commandment of Christ to all believers is to love God, fellow believers and all men. God is love and any professing believer who does not have this virtue does not know or have Him. And since the grace of God is boundless, believers should understand that divine love can be so shed abroad to overflowing in their hearts than what they presently have.

Second, he prayed that they may approve the things which are excellent (verse 10). It is childish to just love and approve all things indiscriminately as right and scriptural. Such simplicity would make them to be gullible and easy prey for enemies of the gospel.

Three, he prayed that they might be honest, sincere and upright-hearted people. Deceit, hypocrisy and double-dealing are not attributes of a true Christian. Openness, transparency and “**the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth**” mark the life of a true Christian.

Four, he prayed that they might be inoffensive people. We are to live in all good conscience before God and exercise ourselves to always have a conscience void of offence towards God and men (Acts 23:1; 24:16). Five,

that they will remain blameless till the end (Ephesians 5:27; Jude 24). The reason is that no one will be able to see the Lord who is not living a consistent holy life (Hebrews 12:14). Six, that they might bring forth the fruit of righteousness in abundance (Philippians 1:11). It is instructive that Paul's prayer for his converts, both in Philippi and other places, centered on spiritual things rather than mundane matters.

**CHRISTIANS' TRIUMPH IN SUFFERING FOR THE GOSPEL** (Philippians 1:12-19; Matthew 26:36; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 2 Corinthians 4:8; 6:3; 11:23)

Paul's suffering emanated from two sources. First, he suffered imprisonment from the avowed enemies of the faith who intended to destroy him and prevent the spread of the gospel. Second, he suffered from false friends who preached Christ out of contention and envy. The preaching of the gospel usually encounters oppositions because Satan and his cohorts want to hinder the salvation of men, discourage preachers of the gospel, encourage the spread of falsehood and prevent the accomplishment of God's will on earth. When God's people obey the Great Commission, Satan and his cohorts always instigate opposition against them. Believers should, therefore, not be surprised at Satan-inspired anti-gospel rules and regulations, mockery, persecution, etc. from religious groups, heretics, backsliders, pseudo-Christian groups, and merchant men and women whose unwholesome means of livelihood are threatened by the mass conversion of their patrons, supporters and followers (Acts 16:19).

Paul affirms that his suffering had a paradoxical outcome: **"...the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel"** (verse 12). It afforded him the opportunity of preaching the gospel to kings and judges in palaces where he stood trial and to inmates in prison. This has also challenged many brethren to be bold and fearless in preaching Christ. While some were sincere in preaching the gospel, others were doing so out of pretense. He rejoices that whichever way, **"Christ is preached"** (verses 12-19).

Like Paul the apostle, suffering believers and ministers should know that since God will never change, all things will work together for their good and for the realization of God's purpose and glory. So, a true child of God should not resort to self-pity, regret, despair, murmuring, grumbling and despondency during opposition and persecution. Rather, he should turn opposition to opportunity in order to demonstrate godly disposition (Genesis 41:14; Daniel 3:27; 6:22; Jeremiah 38:10; Acts 12:7; 16:26).

**Question 5: What should a believer's disposition be in the face of opposition?**

**CHRISTIANS' CONSECRATION AND STEADFASTNESS**  
(Philippians 1:20-30; 2:14-16; Galatians 5:1; Job 11:14, 15; 27:5,6; 17:9; 1 Corinthians 15:58)

The "**earnest expectation**" and "**hope**" of Paul the apostle was not to be ashamed in anything. He constantly desires that Christ would be magnified in and through him both in life and death. His consecration is, "**For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain**" (verse 21). While he passionately desires to continue to minister to the Philippians, he had a greater passion and pull to "**depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better**". The blessedness of living with Christ in an unending union, joy and rest is always far better for genuine Christians. This is the reason Apostle Peter did not want to return from the mount of transfiguration. And Paul, having been to the third heavens and seen its resplendent beauty, cannot but conclude that the final home-going for the righteous and holy is always "**far better**".

While he lives on earth, he would do Christ's bidding to continue to feed His flock. "**...I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ...**". It is expected that every born-again Christian be as consecrated and heaven-conscious as Paul by laying all on the altar and becoming committed to God, the church and to the progress of the gospel (2 Chronicles 29:5; Psalm 118:27).

The Apostle concludes the chapter with exhortation on Christian conduct that befits Christ’s gospel. They are exhorted to **“stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel”** (verse 27). Attributes of steadfastness, unity and courage are required of Christians so as not to cringe, be cowered or terrified by the adversary. One basic truth for every Christian either in the Philippian or present-day church is: **“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake”** (verse 29). The Apostle affirms that he had past and current experience of suffering for Christ which the Philippian believers knew. And if he was not terrified and discouraged, every believer should maintain firm conviction of godly principles amidst trials, oppositions and sufferings till the end.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Acts	8	Isaiah	23-24
TUE	“	9	“	25-26
WED	“	10	“	27-28
THUR	“	11-12	“	29-30
FRI	“	13	“	31-32
SAT	“	14-15	“	33-35
SUN	“	16	“	36-37

# 748 Lesson

## CHRIST-LIKE LOVE, UNITY AND HUMILITY

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Philippians 2:2,3).

### **TEXT: Philippians 2:1-30**

In continuation of his exhortation to the Philippians, Paul the apostle expatiates on the characteristics of Christ-like love and unity among the brethren, and humility as exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ. Having experienced and exhibited this true love himself, he admonishes others on the practical demonstration of it. He describes Christ-like love as unifying and self-sacrificing. Where this love exists, believers identify with one another both in moments of joy or pain. Genuine love also stimulates caring and sharing, unity of purpose and lowliness of mind.

The apostle goes further to set forth the unparalleled humility demonstrated by Christ in subjecting Himself to death on the Cross at Calvary in order to atone for the sins of mankind and liberate us from captivity of sin and its consequences. Paul and his faithful companions displayed their commitment in following the footsteps of the Lord by their willingness not only to endure pain but to lay down their lives in ministering to the saints.

**Question 1: How can ministers of the gospel demonstrate commitment to following the footsteps of Christ?**

**CHRIST-LIKE EXAMPLE OF LOVE AND HUMILITY:** (Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 11:29; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21; John 13:34,35)

In setting a standard for Christian virtues, Apostle Paul had no other measure than that of Christ. He typifies all that is desirable in godliness and exemplifies the

perfect state of the fruits of the Spirit. In Him, we have the highest level of love – *agape* – manifested and He is our perfect Example and pattern to follow. He went to the Cross and gave His life for humanity so that we can be saved; died so that we can live; became poor to enrich us; His life was cut short so that we can inherit everlasting life (2 Corinthians 8:9).

There can be no greater love than that a man should give his life for his friends (John 15:13). We are therefore called on to **“be likeminded, having the same love...”** (Philippians 2:2). True children of God must reflect the life of Christ through genuine love to others – within and outside the church. Our daily lifestyle should be spent in service for Christ and humanity. One of the best ways to do this is to show others the way of salvation and escape from eternal damnation. When we preach the gospel to others, we are showing love. **“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but indeed, and in truth”** (1 John 3:18).

We are also to emulate Christ who was eminently humble. One, He left His heavenly throne and the magnificence of His glory to walk the dusty roads of Jerusalem in search of lost souls (John 17:5). Two, He made Himself of no reputation. He did, for a while, hide His heavenly fame in an earthly frame, even though he retained every single attribute of deity. While on earth, He surrendered the independent exercise of those divine characteristics to the Holy Spirit (John 5:30). Three, He took on humanity and was made in the likeness of men so as to identify with us (John 1:14, Hebrews 2:14). Four, He took upon Himself the form of a servant. **“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”** (Matthew 20:28). Five, He humbled Himself; that is, He submitted to authority (1 Peter 2:21-24). Six, He became obedient unto death (Matthew 26:39; John 10:18, Hebrews 5:8). Seven, His suffering was unparalleled. He suffered the worst kind of death on the Cross (Galatians 3:13, Psalm 22:1-20).

**“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name”** (Philippians

2:9). As a result of His love, humility, obedience and sacrifice, He has been highly exalted by God and given a name, position and place of authority above all other names. He will be universally acknowledged as Lord of all.

**Question 2: Mention some characteristics of Christ-like love.**

**CHRISTIANS AS LIGHTS IN A PERVERSE WORLD**  
(Philippians 2:12-18; 1 Peter 2:9; Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 2:19,20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:8,9)

The Apostle continues his exhortation to love, oneness and humility with a call on believers to ensure they secure their salvation experience with all diligence and determination. They must not be careless or frivolous and allow their adversary take advantage of them. He says, **“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”** (verse 12). This is to say that believers must be careful and conscious of the possibility of losing salvation; hence, they need to work at ensuring that it is intact. This godly kind of fear is said to be a great guard and preservative from evil. Believers must conduct their Christian profession with great care and circumspection (Hebrews 4:1).

Next is the appeal to exhibit proper behavior and temperament. The Apostle enjoined them to be cheerful in obedience and not to do things with **“murmurings and disputings”** which negate their profession of faith in Christ. His appeal was based on the confidence he had in the Philippian brethren that they would comply.

**“As you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence...”** (Philippians 2:12). This is a testimonial to the Philippian believers and a challenge to present-day Christians to shun eye-service. There must be a willingness to comply with every discovery of the will of God in private as well as in the open.

Though God’s grace and faithfulness abound, a believer nevertheless has a responsibility to keep himself

unspotted in this polluted world, and build up himself through constant prayer, study and meditation on God's word. Christians are to adorn themselves with gracious character through cheerful obedience to God's commandment, doing all things without murmurings and by a peaceable, blameless conversation towards all men.

**Question 3: How should believers live as lights in the world?**

Believers with sound and current salvation experience are lights in the world and must remain so at all times. **“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world”** (Philippians 2:15). The world has been darkened by acts of evil, wickedness and sin. Its whole substance and essence lack any form of uprightness and truth. Thus, the inhabitants grope in darkness and do not know the way of life. But believers in Christ have been enlightened by the knowledge of the truth and made to be lights that will illuminate the world. **“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid”** (Matthew 5:14). As light, we brighten the corners of the world where we are placed so that people sitting in the shadows and regions of darkness can see the salvation of God.

Believers are to hold fast and hold forth the word of life for their own benefit and of others. Strict obedience to this will bring joy to the heart of the Chief Shepherd and also to the under-shepherds. **“That I may rejoice in the day of Christ...”** (Philippians 2:16). Our steadfastness and usefulness in God's kingdom is what fulfils and gladdens Christian leaders who labour tirelessly to build up believers.

**COMMENDATION AND COMMITMENT OF FELLOW LABOURERS** (Philippians 2:19-30; Acts 16:3; 17:14,15; 19:22; Matthew 24:45-47)

Paul takes particular notice of two committed ministers – Timothy and Epaphroditus. Though he himself was a



great apostle who labored more abundantly than they all, he still spared time to speak with respect of those who were less endowed than he.

**Question 4: What motivations can Christian workers receive from the commendable lives of Timothy and Epaphroditus?**

Timothy had a long contact with the church in Philippi. Concerning the Philippian church, he was a shepherd “...**who will naturally care for your state**” (Philippians 2:20). In relation to the Apostle Paul, he was a son, but concerning the gospel, he was a servant, willing and committed to laboring and ministering to others (verse 22). The Apostle promised to send him as a faithful representative to know their spiritual state and be comforted.

Apostle Paul referred to Epaphroditus as his brother, companion in labour and fellow soldier to whom he bore a tender affection. Epaphroditus, which means “charming”, was a Gentile believer from Philippi who had been sent by the Philippian church to minister to Paul and bring him their offering. The Apostle commented on his service, sickness and the sorrow his ill-health would have caused (verses 25-27). He had decided to send him back to the brethren at Philippi. A Bible scholar aptly summarizes his life as being balanced and burdened (Philippians 2:25-30).

**Question 5: What can Christian leaders learn from Paul’s commendation of Timothy and Epaphroditus?**

The lives of these men furnish present-day Christians with lessons in service and ministry. Leadership is about service, sacrifice and self-denial. As Christ came to minister and not to be ministered unto, so must His servants do. It is unfortunate that some Christian leaders serve without sacrifice; they seek recognition from men, make their belly their God, fleece the sheep and live in opulence. Such cannot be said to be true servants of Christ. As leaders, if we are going to receive commendations from Christ and be rewarded on the last day, we must obey His teaching on leadership with faithfulness in service. **“Blessed is that servant, whom**

**his lord when he cometh shall find so doing...”**  
(Matthew 24:46-47).

Genuine believers should however hold in reputation faithful Christ-like ministers of the gospel who make great sacrifices for the flock of Christ. Such ministers who preach Jesus as the only Saviour, repentance and faith in the atoning blood of Christ as the only means of reconciliation with God, holiness before God and men as requirement for entry into heaven; ministers who endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, deny self and lift up Christ constantly to “**...present every man perfect in Christ Jesus**” (Colossians 1:28) should be “**...counted worthy of double honour**” (1 Timothy 5:17). May the Lord find us faithful till the end.

### DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Acts	17-18	Isaiah	38-39
TUE	“	19	“	40
WED	“	20	“	41-42
THUR	“	21	“	43-44
FRI	“	22-23	“	45-46
SAT	“	24-25	“	47-48
SUN	“	26	“	49

# 749 Lesson

## THE PURSUIT OF TRUE BELIEVERS

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13,14).

**TEXT: Philippians 3:1-21**

**M**oving from the subjects of Christ-like love, unity and humility that are the hallmarks of Christians in the previous chapter, Paul the apostle here exhorts believers to holy living and pursuit of higher spiritual attainments. Attaining holier aspirations requires that believers renounce the flesh and carnality. This is the reason the Apostle reiterates his earlier warning against imbibing the false teachings of Judaizers who trust in the flesh. He clarifies that all the privileges of physical birth and observance of rites of circumcision the Judaizers pride themselves in cannot afford the salvation of God. He therefore exhorts believers to “**rejoice in the Lord**” who alone is the Author of salvation, righteousness and the hope of eternal life. Apart from obtaining present salvation by grace alone through faith, every believer should make eternal salvation and hope of eternal prize their pursuit.

**Question 1: Why should believers rejoice in the Lord?**

**PAUL’S PEDIGREE AND WARNING AGAINST JUDAIZERS** (Philippians 3:1-6; Acts 21:37-39; 22:1-5; Galatians 1:13-18; 3:1-11; 1 Timothy 1:12-16)

The text begins with Paul the apostle’s admonition to “**brethren**” to “**rejoice in the Lord**”. As believers, we should rejoice that the Lord has rescued us from eternal damnation. Without the Lord’s intervention, we would still remain in bondage to sin, Satan, the flesh, self and the world. We would pine in life and burn in hell forever

had He not incarnated and offered His life to make atonement for our sins. The privilege of being born into a rich, religious or godly family will not be cause for real joy without His mediation that reconciles and brings us into fellowship with God. Paul's repeated emphases on this truth of salvation by faith was necessary to counter the false teaching of Judaizers who claimed that circumcision was required to be saved.

Having partaken of the salvation of God by faith, the Apostle warns the Philippian Christians to "**Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision**". He calls the Judaizers by different names to describe the potential dangers they pose to the Christian faith. As "**dogs**", they are shameless, corrupt and contentious. As "**evil workers**", they are mischievous and seek to destroy the faith of the Philippian believers. Calling them the "**concision**", for instance, refers to mutilation or cutting of the flesh or those who believe in the act of circumcision. Their insistence on the literal act of circumcision by believers showed they were ignorant of the fact that the practice only foreshadowed a New Testament spiritual experience of sanctification of the heart (1 Thessalonians 4:3,7,8; 5:22-24). Even in the experience of heart circumcision, faith is required from consecrated, praying and thirsty believers to obtain it.

Understandably, Paul declares: "**For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh**". Here, he describes true believers who were Jews by birth and observed the rite of circumcision but obtained salvation by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 2:11). Thus saved, they worship God in spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus who alone is their Saviour and hope of eternal reward (John 4:23,24).

<p><b>Question 2: State the erroneous teaching of the Judaizers and how Paul proved them to be false.</b></p>
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Paul the apostle highlights that if salvation were to be obtained by privilege of birth, education, religious zeal and conformity to the law, he was more qualified than

any other Jew by all standards. One, he was “**circumcised the eight day**” in accordance with the letter of the law (Genesis 17:12) unlike the proselyte who was circumcised in adulthood. Two, he was “**of the stock of Israel**”, the covenant name of God’s people. Three, he hailed from “**the tribe of Benjamin**”, one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Four, he was “**an Hebrew of the Hebrews**” and a *bona fide* Jew with both parents possibly Jews, tainted with no Gentile admixture. Five, “**as touching the law a Pharisee**”, he belonged to the sect that was the most orthodox defender, observer and expounder of the Old Testament and was a student of the learned and great teacher, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Six, he was, “**concerning zeal, persecuting the church**” and was vehement in his efforts to stamp out Christianity. Seven, “**touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless**”, though not sinless.

It is obvious from the foregoing that earthly achievements, cultural background, Christian parentage, human accomplishment, reputation, works, religious affiliation, rites and zeal, no matter how impressive, cannot earn a person eternal life with God. Salvation comes through genuine repentance and absolute faith in Christ’s atoning sacrifice. Believers must not remain indifferent while present-day religious zealots continue to spread their untruth (Ecclesiastics 9:10; Romans 12:11; John 2:17).

**PASSIONATE PURSUIT OF SINGLE- MINDED BELIEVERS** (Philippians 3:7-14; Matthew 5:29,30; Galatians 2:18; Luke 9:62; Psalm 57:7; Matthew 13:44-46)

Paul’s single-minded and steadfast pursuit of spiritual goal began with his salvation and renunciation of all personal achievements. He decided to get rid of all things, including legitimate ones, which would hinder its attainment. He overwrote the aforementioned things that had been gain to him with a single word: Christ. He discovered his entire earthly achievements would amount to nothing when compared with the treasures he had found in Christ. Counting all privileges his

natural birth and education afforded him as “**dung**”, he consecrated and committed himself to a lifelong walk with the Lord. “**Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.**” Paul speaks of a voluntary action and attitude of foregoing legitimate rights and privileges, preferring to suffer the consequences of losing them.

Moses also damned the consequences of losing earthly royal privileges for greater spiritual riches and reward (Hebrews 11:24-27). No true believer ever holds to the mundane and ephemeral at the expense of the spiritual and eternal.

Believers today must emulate Paul’s example by identifying whatever human achievements, privileges, possessions, power, positions, partnerships or profits that pose a hindrance to their consecration, spiritual growth, pilgrimage to heaven and hope of eternal reward, and deal with them appropriately (Matthew 5:29,30). “**For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?** (Mark 8:35,36).

Christ illustrated believers’ expected consecration to Him and the gospel in two parables (Matthew 13:44-46). In the parable of the hid treasure in the field that a man found, and that of the merchant man who discovered a priceless pearl, both men had to make great sacrifices to the point of disposing some of their valued possessions to obtain the invaluable treasure they have found. Applicably, the earnestness, diligence, promptness, perseverance, watchfulness and care with which believers seek Christ should be higher than those of unbelievers in search of silver and gold (Proverbs 2:4,5).

Paul’s statement in the present tense, “**that I may win Christ**”, does not mean he needed salvation experience as he had been saved and written the epistle as an apostle

and servant of Jesus Christ (1:1). But he expresses the great desire of his heart which is that Christ may be his gain, not gold, or silver or religious reputation. He had his eyes fixed at the end and climax of his Christian race; hence the need to remain steadfast and watchful so as not to be cast away after preaching and writing great epistles to other people.

Appearing at the marriage supper of the Lamb without a wedding gown or robe of righteousness obtained and preserved by faith alone would be risking eternal damnation. Self-righteousness which is like a filthy rag in the sight of God was all that the Judaizers had (Romans 10:1-3). Paul knew and greatly desired to **“be found in him, not having mine own righteousness... but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith”**. Faith is vital to obtaining and maintaining the righteousness of God. With this spiritual summit and eternal goal in mind, the Apostle sought to know Christ more intimately and experience Him in a most sublime way. **“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead”** (verse 10,11). He sought to know more about the Person of Christ. This is possible through unbroken communion with Him in prayer, reading, studying, meditating on His word and obeying His commands. He sought to know the power of His resurrection: the power that raised the Lord from the dead (Ephesians 1:19,20). Since Christ first died before He was raised to life, the believer must be crucified and dead to self to experience this quickening power (John 12:24; Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:11).

**Question 3: From Paul's example, state some specific spiritual blessings believers should passionately seek to obtain in life and in eternity.**

Paul also desired to know **“the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”**. It was part of his commission which he had also taught: that every believer must suffer for Christ (Acts

9:16; 26:15-17; Philippians 1:29). Fellowship means communion, companionship, partnership and sharing. Though Christ calls us to share in His suffering, He does not abandon His people in suffering. He appeared in the furnace of fire with the three Hebrew children and sent His angels to deliver Peter and Paul with Silas from prison. He granted John the beloved timeless revelations while on the island of Patmos where he was banished for his faith. Conformity to Christ must be in life as well as in death. He lived and died in righteousness, so must every believer who seeks to reign with Him.

Believers who die in Christ will be resurrected to life at rapture to live with Him forever. Death loses its sting, pain and power over everyone who is saved by grace and lives a holy life. This is why the doctrine of resurrection of the dead is pivotal to our faith and eternal joy.

Paul did not count himself to have arrived as some people profess today. The secret of his unrelenting and passionate pursuit is singular: **“But this one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before”** (verse 13). Relishing past successes or bemoaning past failures will incapacitate and rob us of any initiative for spiritual progress. Like Paul, we must always bear in mind that there are greater challenges, battles and tasks ahead.

<p><b>Question 4: What is the secret of Paul’s untiring spiritual pursuit which believers need to imbibe?</b></p>
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Like an athlete, Paul the apostle says, **“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”**. He had a clear vision and knowledge of the prize he was striving to win. It was the **“...crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”** (2 Timothy 4:8). This hope of eternal reward should be the anchor of the believer’s spiritual pursuit.



**PRIORITY OF EXEMPLARY LIFE WHILE WAITING FOR THE RAPTURE:** Philippians 3:15-21; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Hebrews 13:7,17; Malachi 3:16-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Having proposed himself as an example worthy of emulation, he urges the Philippian believers who can also discern spiritual things to follow suit. **“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.”** Paul realizes that not all will agree with him in adopting such a hardline conviction. But he expresses the confidence that if any person is really willing and sincere to know the truth, God would give him understanding. Irrespective of different levels of spiritual attainment, he admonishes that believers should **“... walk by the same rule”, “mind the same thing”** (verse 16) and emulate those who live like Christ. Paul once admonished Timothy to be a Christ-like example among believers while Peter the apostle also exhorted Christian wives to win their husbands by exemplary lifestyle (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 3:1).

**Question 5: How should believers live with eternity in view?**

When a professing believer lives contrary to Christ and His word, he becomes a bad example that leads others astray and thus become an enemy of the cross of Christ. Incidentally, Paul tearfully affirms that in the Philippian church, there were many of such hypocrites who pretended to be spiritual but **“mind earthly things”**. They were bereft of the fruits of righteousness that qualify for admission into heaven.

The Apostle was always heaven-conscious. **“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body...”**. True believers live and serve in expectation of the imminent return of the Lord to take His redeemed people to heaven. Now that we live on the fringe of time, soon to be translated from earth to heaven, everyone must forsake religion without

righteousness, obtain salvation by faith, avoid imbibing and peddling erroneous teachings, maintain a holy, exemplary life and conviction, and remain fervent in spiritual service and pursuit of heavenly rewards.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Acts	27	Isaiah	50-51
TUE	“	28	“	52-54
WED	Rom.	1-2	“	55-57
THUR	“	3-4	“	58-59
FRI	“	5-6	“	60-61
SAT	“	7-8	“	62-63
SUN	“	9-10	“	64-65

# 750 Lesson

## BELIEVERS' JOY AND CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again, I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

### **TEXT: Philippians 4:1-23**

The last chapter ended with a passionate exhortation of Apostle Paul to the Philippian brethren to beware of the invading shameless and carnal ministers whose mission was to destroy the message of the cross of Christ. He counselled them to follow his pattern of godliness and live in earnest expectation of the glorious translation that awaits them at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In continuation of his call to steadfastness, the Apostle gave a detailed exposition of what he had described as fruits of righteousness expected of them as believers. He also admonished the brethren on the need for singleness of purpose required for a successful ministry as exemplified by his life. He concluded the epistle to the Philippians with an affectionate salutation and benediction.

**Question 1: In what ways is the joy and confidence of Apostle Paul expressed in our text?**

The joy of the Apostle is palpable. He expressed it in the salvation of the brethren and in their gracious care for his needs. He exhorted them to "**Rejoice in the Lord alway...**" (verse 4). Paul's confidence in our text was firmly based on: one, his hope of eternal reward (verse 1); two, the visible evidence of genuine spiritual experiences of his fellow labourers (verse 3); three, the ability of God to supply all the needs of His praying and faithful saints and to give them incomprehensible peace in a precarious and failing economy (verse 6); four, the acceptability of the sacrifice of his life and ministry to God, which he recommended to the brethren as a

pattern (verse 9); five, inner spiritual strength from Christ to serve God in all circumstances and overcome the temptations concomitant with poverty or prosperity (verses 11-13).

**GRACIOUS ATTRIBUTES OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST:**  
(Philippians 4:1-9; 1:9-11; Galatians 5:22,23; 2 Peter 1:5-10)

As an effective minister, Paul understood the importance of unity or working together to achieve a common purpose. Therefore, he enjoined the Philippian believers to “...**be of the same mind in the Lord...**” and “...**help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life**”. He exhorted them to make the Lord the great object of their affections, bury all their petty differences and show consideration for his fellow labourers. As believers, we should support those who labour sacrificially among us and are faithful to the gospel.

**Question 2: What are the essential gracious attributes of believers in Christ?**

**“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”** (verses 5,6). Again, the Apostle emphasized the indispensability of a watchful, moderate, worry-free, peaceful, prayerful, thankful and godly life in everything. According to a Bible commentator, the word ‘moderation’ refers to restraint of passions, sober living and freedom from all excesses. Used as synonyms of propriety, gentleness, mildness, it means that which is fit or suitable. The Apostle admonished them not to indulge in excess of passion, dressing, eating or drinking. They were to govern their appetites and restrain their tempers so to be examples of what was proper for men in view of the expectation that the Lord would soon appear. The imminent return of Christ calls for moderation in the way believers live.

People worry and are anxious over small as well as big issues of life. Food, clothing, shelter and safety are some of the basic concerns people worry about. Worriers think and see problems, Satan, impossibilities, impending doom, death, etc. But Paul the apostle says it is unreasonable for a child of God to get so preoccupied with challenges of life which will always be there. If anyone had any cause to worry, Paul should as he wrote the epistle from his prison ward. In spite of problems and challenges, the proper conduct of anyone who believes in God is to **“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”** (verse 6).

Before and after prayer and thanksgiving, believers need to **“gird up the loins of [their] mind...”** (1 Peter 1:13) to filter out worry-induced thoughts and darts of the wicked aimed at weakening or discouraging them. The Apostle enjoined the Philippian believers to program their minds with thoughts that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good, virtuous and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8). This means that believers are required to have the mind of Christ and walk as He also walked. To have the mind of Christ and think wholesome thoughts that translate into Christ-like conduct, **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”** (Colossians 3:16). This way, we will be able to live impactful lives to the glory of God.

**GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF A SINGLE-MINDED MINISTER** (Philippians 4:10-19; 2 Corinthians 11:9; 2 Samuel 9:3,7; 2 Kings 4:8-17)

Paul was a single-minded minister who did the will of God at great costs. He was a model in Christian service and did not abuse the privilege of his apostleship. He labored more abundantly and suffered most for the gospel of Christ than all the other apostles (1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 11:25-27). He toiled relentlessly to win souls and mature them in the Lord for no pecuniary

benefits. When opportunity allowed, he labored with his hands to provide his own physical needs (Acts 20:34).

Although he had taught the truth that “**...they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel**” (1 Corinthians 9:14), he bore no grudges for failure of some of the churches to meet his physical needs. The reason is, “**I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me**” (verses 11- 13). Though he is unmoved by lack or plenty, the generosity of the Philippian church was an encouragement to him. He said, “**...I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity**”.

<p><b>Question 3: What can believers learn from the charity of the Philippian church and Paul’s response?</b></p>
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Paul’s appreciation of the kind gesture of the Philippian church teaches us some vital lessons. One, Christian ministers should appreciate and commend the kind deeds of their members. Two, the best of God’s children will experience the vicissitudes of life. He should therefore, display godliness and contentment in whatever state he finds himself. Three, the Philippian church was committed and generous in giving. Even when the Apostle was not in their midst, they remembered to support his ministry. Four, giving is an investment into the kingdom of God. It is laying up for ourselves, “**...treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal**” (Matthew 6:20). The believer who gives cheerfully, faithfully, consistently and bountifully is making a sure investment in the Kingdom. It is, however, pertinent to note that those who give to God as sinners or backsliders will reap no eternal profit. Five, giving of our precious substance, money and time to cater to the needs of fellow believers is a spiritual service to God

(Matthew 10:40-42; 25:37-40). Apostle Paul described it as “...**an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God**”. Six, leaders should earnestly pray for members of the church who graciously give their substance, time, money and entire lives for the propagation of the gospel. In response to their generosity, the Apostle prayed that “**my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus**” (verse 19).

**APOSTOLIC FAREWELL AND BENEDICTION:**  
(Philippians 4:20-23; Leviticus 9:22; Numbers 6:23-27; Acts 20:32; Jude 24,25; Colossians 4:12)

**“Salute every saint in Christ Jesus...The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”** Paul concluded this epistle by acknowledging the supporting role of his companions and conveying their greetings to the brethren. He also showered apostolic blessings and good wishes upon them. Salutation or greetings is a sign of courtesy or respect. Believers should learn to appreciate and commend ministerial companions. “...**The brethren which are with me greet you.**” This reveals another sterling quality of leadership of the Apostle: he was a master team builder.

**Question 4: What challenge does Paul’s style of leadership pose to contemporary Christian leaders?**

Apart from the brethren which were with him, Apostle Paul also sent the greetings of “**All the saints...**”. However, in sending the saints’ greetings, he made particular mention of “...**they that are of Caesar’s household**”. History tells us that the Apostle was at this time under imprisonment in Rome when Nero was the Emperor. It was said that he became acquainted with the emperor’s family and turned his house to a church. This confirms Paul’s testimony that, although he was bound by men, the word of God could not be bound (2 Timothy 2:9). This is indeed a great marvel of the grace of our loving Lord and a challenge to those of us who are free and have, at our disposal, the benefits of modern technology to fully reach out to sinners everywhere with the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19).

**Question 5: Why is the grace of God vital in the believer's walk with the Lord?**

Having declared that the grace of God was the secret of his unquenchable passion, uncompromising stand and great ministerial success (1 Corinthians 15:10), the Apostle ended this epistle with an apostolic benediction: **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen”** (verse 23). The importance of the believer's prayer for a daily dose of divine grace cannot be overemphasized. This is because he is saved, sanctified, Spirit-filled and sustained by the grace of God. He can only serve the Lord acceptably and secure his eternal inheritance by His grace (Hebrews 12:28).

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Romans	11-12	Isaiah	66
TUE	“	13-14	Jeremiah	1-2
WED	“	15-16	“	3-4
THUR	1 Cor.	1-2	“	5-6
FRI	“	3-4	“	7-8
SAT	“	5-6	“	9-10
SUN	“	7	“	11-12



# 751 Lesson

## THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GOSPEL

**MEMORY VERSE:** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

### **TEXT: Colossians 1:1-11**

The epistle of Paul to the Colossians was written during his confinement in a Roman prison. Colosse was a city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, having Laodicea and Hierapolis as its immediate neighbors. The city, located on the east of Ephesus, was noted for its idolatrous worship. The church in Colosse was established most probably through the evangelistic ministry of Epaphras with his fellow natives of Colosse such as Philemon, Archippus and Apphia who became converted during Paul’s gospel outreach at Ephesus. Paul’s missionary work there had such a profound and far-reaching impact that **“all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks”** (Acts 19:10,26). These converts, properly followed-up by Paul (Acts 18:23), headed for their native land to preach the gospel and plant the church there. It is clear from this epistle that the Apostle had not been there (Colossians 2:1).

Soon after the Colossian church was established with remarkable evidence of transformation through the gospel, false teachers infiltrated the church to teach that commitment to Jesus Christ and adherence to the apostolic gospel was inadequate for full redemption. They opined erroneously that a mix of human philosophy, tradition, asceticism, worship of angels as intermediaries between God and man, observances of certain Jewish rites with the gospel was the acceptable religion (Colossians 2:8,16,18,21-23). This hybrid religion they peddled contradicted the basic Bible truths and was calculated to undermine the pre-eminence of Christ as the Saviour of mankind and the completeness of believers in Him.

**Question 1: What was Paul's motive in writing the epistle to the Colossians?**

So, Paul wrote to refute these erroneous teachings as well as establish the truth of the gospel that Christ is the only Saviour of the world, the Head of the Church and the Lord of the universe/creation. He further stated that redemption in Christ alone is complete and believers who are thus redeemed are **“complete in him”** (Colossians 2:10). Intermediaries are, therefore, unnecessary and unscriptural. The text focuses on the Apostle's salutation and thanksgiving to God on behalf of the Colossian Christians for the grace of God received through the gospel, acknowledgement of the impact of the gospel in their lives and his heart-felt prayer for their spiritual growth and fruitfulness in the gospel.

**PAUL'S ADDRESS AND SALUTATION TO THE CHURCH** (Colossians 1:1,2; Romans 1:7; Galatians 1:3-5; Ephesians 1:1-3; Philippians 1:1,2; 1 Timothy 1:1,2; 2 Timothy 1:1,2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 1-3)

Paul begins this epistle by introducing himself as **“an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God”**. Here, he attributes his apostleship to divine will and grace, not to his own merit, strength or will. He was saved by the grace of God through faith. No one can be addressed as an apostle or a servant of Christ who had not received the grace of God that brings salvation to all men; the grace that teaches us that, **“denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”** (Titus 2:12). As grace was a gift, so was his apostleship to preach the gospel. Every true minister of Christ derives his commission or office not by his own strength or schemes, nor by men's nomination but by divine appointment (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28). It was, therefore, expedient for him to explain his call, commission and apostleship in relation to the gospel so as to give this epistle authenticity, authority and acceptance among the Colossian believers. Besides, he revealed that God is the Source of the gospel; that it had been promised and prophesied in Scriptures by the

prophets and that the central subject is Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 1:4).

**Question 2: Why were believers called saints in the early church?**

**“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ.”** In the New Testament dispensation, the word **“saint”** is used for all genuine Christians whose lives have been transformed by the power in the blood of Jesus. The call to salvation is also a call to be saints. This phrase marks them as holy people, chosen and set apart for God. They are made saints by their divine calling and character (Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:15,16 ); through the blood of atonement (Titus 2:14; Hebrews 9:14; 10:12); by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:13); by the sanctifying power of the word of truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13; John 17:17) and by their separated, blameless, spotless moral life and inward purity (Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:23). The saints of God live above reproach and for the glory of God. All saints are brethren who love and fellowship one with another. As brethren, all rancor, bitterness, fighting, malice, unforgiving spirit and all vices that would erect a wall of partition are removed. Unfaithfulness is a mark of the unregenerate; all true saints and brethren will be faithful to God, to their calling and to the gospel.

Paul’s characteristic introductory greeting which is found in most of his epistles is also conveyed to the Colossian church. **“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”** (Colossians 1:2). Grace is the unmerited favor God freely bestows on the morally weak but repentant sinner by saving him from sin. **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”** (Ephesians 2:8). Peace is the effect of grace obtained from God within the soul (Colossians 1:14; Romans 5:1). Grace is the outpouring of the Father’s love toward the repentant sinner or backslider and peace is the divine rest and tranquility in the heart that attests to the reality of cancelled sin and entry into God’s family (Ephesians 2:18,19).

**PAUL'S THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR THE COLOSSIAN CHRISTIANS** (Colossians 1:3-8; Romans 1:8; Ephesians 1:15,16; Philippians 1:3-7; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Psalm 118:1-4)

Paul's expression of thanksgiving to God on behalf of the Colossian church was in recognition and appreciation of the influence and transforming power of the gospel on the believers. This was in keeping with his manner and practice in his epistles to other churches in which he gave thanks to God for their reception of the gospel and its tangible fruits on them. Faith in Christ and love toward all the saints were sufficient proofs of their conversion for which he gave thanks to God. These godly attributes they manifested were anchored on the hope of rewards in heaven that was preached to them. The inference here is that everyone who has heard the gospel, believed and have the hope of reward in heaven will strive to live the Christ-like lifestyle here on earth. The gospel is universal and able to produce the same kind of fruits in the lives of recipients irrespective of their locale. Paul affirms that **"Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth** (Colossians 1:4-6). The fruit Paul mentioned here are that of the Christian character.

Every sinner is expected to repent of sin and bear fruits of repentance. After salvation, the professing believer will not continue to live in sin. The fruit of the Christian character that show genuine conversion are **"...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"** (Galatians 5:22,23).

**Question 3: What can Christians learn from Epaphras' ministry in Colosse despite threats by false teachers?**

The truth of the transforming power of the gospel and hope of its recipients was preached to them by Epaphras whom Paul referred to as “**our dear fellow servant**” and “**faithful minister of Christ**”. The Apostle here reveals the bond of affection between them and his testimony of Epaphras. He was happy that Epaphras was faithful in preaching the true gospel to them which, as a corollary, bore spiritual fruit; that if he was not preaching, he was teaching them the Word to help them grow in faith or laboring in prayers for them to be steadfast, mature and perfect in God’s will (Colossians 4:12,13). He loved the brethren and wanted to protect them from false doctrines that would destroy their fellowship and hinder their spiritual development. This attitude is worthy of emulation by all Christian leaders. Where the gospel is faithfully preached and taught with unceasing intercession, there would be testimony of transformation such as Epaphras shared with Paul. He testified of their “**love in the Spirit**”. He balanced this testimony with the report of the threat and challenge from peddlers of false teachings which informed the writing of this epistle by the Apostle.

**Question 4: What should believers thank God for?**

Like Paul, believers should show gratitude for what God is doing in the lives of others, since we are all members of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12- 14). Believers are to give thanks to God for His mercies, kindness, goodness, love, grace, provision and protection. Like Epaphras and Paul, praise to God and testimony should precede prayer while commendation should precede correction. At this time, Paul was in a Roman prison and Epaphras was facing the greatest challenge in ministry, but they were not downcast. So, whatever challenges, persecution and pressures we face in life and ministry, we must not give room for worry, anxiety or fear; we must pray with faith and thanksgiving, knowing that God is faithful to perform all that He has promised (Colossians 4:2; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 10:23).

**PAUL’S PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF THE CHURCH** (Colossians 1:9-11; Romans 1:9-11; Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-19; Philippians 1:9-11; Philemon 4,5; John 17:20-24)

**“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”** (Colossians 1:9). Paul’s prayer for the Colossian church bears striking semblance with his prayer in other prison letters (Ephesians 3:14-19; Philippians 1:9-11). From his prayers, we learn a great deal on how to pray scripturally, fervently and effectively to God for the church.

The essential ingredients of Paul’s prayer which should form our requests are that believers should be enabled as well as have spiritual fullness, knowledge of God’s will, wisdom, spiritual understanding, pleasing lifestyle of worthy walk with Him, fruitfulness in good works, growing spiritual knowledge, renewed spiritual strength, power, patience, longsuffering and knowledge. With these requests answered, he believed believers in Colosse would be able to live according to the truth they had been taught without being deceived into error. From these requests, believers should learn to prioritize on spiritual blessings, not material or physical matters, especially where erroneous teachings threaten to erode the truth. Though it is not wrong to pray about physical or material needs, priority should be given to spiritual needs.

**Question 5: Why does a believer need spiritual strength?**

Believers need spiritual knowledge, understanding, wisdom and strength to overcome temptations and the tempter; endure hardship, suffering, persecution, deprivations and trials of faith; remain steadfast, immovable and abound in grace and good works; live by faith and proclaim the truth constantly, resolutely and tirelessly; fight the good fight of faith, and serve God faithfully till the end.

If the benefits and blessings of the gospel are to be fully realized in our lives and church, we must constantly uphold its truth and be always ready to defend its purity against falsehood and false teachers. Our usefulness and fruitfulness would be enhanced as we pray for the church leaders and members to be filled with spiritual blessings, live holy lifestyle and continue to persevere in the faith in readiness for the Lord’s return and for the hope of reward in heaven.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	1 Cor.	8-9	Jeremiah	13-14
TUE	“	10-11	“	15-16
WED	“	12-13	“	17-18
THUR	“	14	“	19-20
FRI	“	15	“	21-22
SAT	“	16	“	23
SUN	2 Cor.	1-2	“	24-25

**END OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES**

## BEGINING OF SPECIAL STUDIES

# 752 Lesson

## THE SURRENDERED CONSECRATED LIFE

**MEMORY VERSE:** “All the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD” (Numbers 6:8).

**TEXT:** Romans 12:1,2; Colossians 3:5-10; Numbers 6:1-8

**T**he subject of consecration is central to the Christian life and walk. It determines to what extent a believer will go in his relationship and fellowship with God. Whether or not he would attain the status of a “friend of God” like Abraham or “a man after my own heart” like David is predicated on the level of his consecration and surrender to the Lord. Abraham did not earn this title only because God loves him but also because he demonstrated uncommon surrender, obedience and consecration (Genesis 22:1-18). Moses had the privilege of leading Israel out of a bondage of 400 years, not because he was the most educated, but perhaps because he chose “**rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt...**” (Hebrews 11:25,26). Paul got revelations and visions, reached the third heavens because of his relationship and devotion to God (Philippians 3:7-15).

Many believers manage to tread the periphery of the ocean of God’s grace, power and revelation because they are unwilling to go the extra mile with Him. Yet, the purpose of our call is that we “**may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God**” (Ephesians 3:18,19). Many believers scarcely know “**what the**



**riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power”** (Ephesians 1:18,19).

**Question 1: Why are some believers not effective in their ministries?**

Consecration lifts believers from the realm of the ordinary to the sublime. It releases us from the spoils of pleasure and sets us apart for God’s use and service. A believer who is set apart for God attains greater heights and deeper depths.

Consecration begins as an act of separating from a common to a sacred use, or of devoting and dedicating a person or thing to the service and worship of God. Consecration does not necessarily make a person or a thing holy, but makes him/it to be set apart, and devoted to God or to divine service like the consecration of the priests among the Israelites and of the vessels used in the temple (Exodus 29:9; Leviticus 8:12; Numbers 3:3; Joshua 6:19; Acts 6:6; 13:3).

**CALL TO CONSECRATION AND TOTAL SURRENDER**  
(Romans 12:1; Colossians 3:1-5; Exodus 32:29; Numbers 32:12; 2 Kings 23:3; 2 Chronicles 15:15)

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”** (Romans 12:1). Paul here calls the children of God to the supreme act of surrender, consecration and devotion to the Lord. This he does with the tenderness of a father and consciousness of a fellow heir. He admonishes, implores and pleads, rather than command believers, to yield wholly to the Lord. Paul’s plea is against the background of the foundational stones of teachings he had laid in the preceding chapters on the grace of God, propitiation for sin, justification by faith, possibility of reconciliation, the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the covenant of God with the children of Israel.

The thought of the Apostle here zeros in on two things: the fact that we are called brethren implies that before

dedication and consecration can be meaningful, the new birth must have occurred; and since we have received the mercies of God, the only logical consequence of our gratitude is that we will now give our bodies unto the Lord as a living sacrifice.

**Question 2: Who are those called to offer themselves as living sacrifices?**

The Apostle opines that there are those who are cleansed and had become children of God. It is this bracket of people who have come into a dynamic living relationship with Jesus that are called to offer themselves unto God as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him. And this is God's demand on everyone who professes the new birth. Those who are dead to sins and trespasses and the rudiments of this world are called to set their affections on heavenly things (Colossians 3:1-5).

When God called Abraham, He summoned him to a higher, more perfect walk (Genesis 17:1). To Solomon, He said, **“if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days”** (1 Kings 3:14). Again, He challenged Israel as a nation to separate from sin and idolatry. **“For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord... that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day”** (Exodus 32:29). God does not accept a half-hearted service, nor does He demand any relationship that falls short of entire consecration. Those who must know and receive of His best must be willing to lay themselves on the altar of sacrifice.

Further examples abound of individuals and groups of people who entirely served the Lord and reaped the reward of obedience. Caleb and Joshua were singled out for special blessing because they went beyond the run-of-the-mill devotion to carve a niche in God's heart. While thousands of their colleagues died in the wilderness, **“Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: [were spared] for they have wholly followed the LORD”** (Numbers 32:12). They

determined to go the extra mile with God when others settled for the easy walk. In like manner, Judah (at different times) under Josiah and Asa, covenanted to serve the Lord with their whole heart all their life (2 Kings 23:3; 2 Chronicles 15:15).

The highest example of consecration and absolute surrender is found in our Lord Jesus Christ who gave His all for the redemption of the world. Love drove Him from the bliss of heaven, the praises of angels and the fellowship of His Father, to trudge the poor Neighbourhoods of Jerusalem in search of the lost.

**REASONS FOR THE BELIEVER'S CONSECRATION**  
(Romans 12:1; Nehemiah 9:19-21; Psalm 103:1-5; Micah 7:18; Ephesians 2:4,5; Titus 3:5; Psalm 116:12; Philemon 8-10)

God's call to consecration is not without basis. He has been gracious to mankind. His love to us is without measure knowing that none of His creatures enjoys as much benevolence as man that is created in His own image. He causes His sun to rise on the just and unjust and sends His rain upon the grass to give us our meal. More importantly, the believer owes God a greater debt of gratitude, first, for His saving grace that delivered us from sin and power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His Dear Son (Colossians 1:13). Now we are called "**brethren**" – people washed in the blood of Jesus, justified and adopted into His Kingdom. We were brought from the depth of sin to sit with Christ in heavenly places and have been made heirs of the grace of God.

Second, we must be grateful to God for His manifold mercies. No one qualifies for the mercy of God based on his own merit; it is His free gift to us. His bowels yearns for the care and welfare of His creatures. Prophet Jeremiah captures it this way: "**It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not**" (Lamentations 3:22). A personal voluntary presentation of the believer to the Lord as a sacrifice follows the manifold grace and blessing he has

received from God. This is the response that articulates our gratitude for the showers of blessing God has poured upon us.

Israel on the other hand, did a lot to provoke the Lord to anger both in the wilderness and in Canaan. **“Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go”** (Nehemiah 9:19). The manifold mercies of God guarantee His presence in our lives. Reconciliation, the breaking down of the wall of partition between us and God, is by His mercies. The leading of the Spirit of God in the life and ministry of a believer is also a manifestation of the mercies of God (Romans 8:14). The psalmist also shows how God manifested His mercy towards him (Psalm 103:1-5). In response, he asked: **“What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?”** (Psalm 116:12). With the psalmist then and all the redeemed of the Lord today, it is **“the multitude of thy tender mercies”** that blot out our sins and gives us life more abundantly.

**Question 3: What can the believer render unto the Lord for all His benefits?**

Having enjoyed such mercies, Apostle Paul says affirmatively that the only reasonable service we can offer to the Lord is to present ourselves unto Him, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. This is the only acceptable sacrifice that could express our gratitude for the mercies the Lord made manifest in our life through salvation, sanctification, Holy Ghost baptism, healing, deliverance, provision, grace and the promise of heaven. Another reason for presenting **“our bodies a living sacrifice”** to God is hinged on the sacrifice of Jesus. Nothing equals the price He paid for us at Calvary. He suffered like no other to bear our grief and carry our sorrows.

Finally, the benefit of total consecration compels us to throw our lives unreservedly to the Lord. When we

do, we shall become vessels of honour reserved for the Master's use (2 Timothy 2:21) and He will reveal secrets and mysteries of the Kingdom to us (Genesis 18:17).

**THE REASONABLE SERVICE OF SURRENDERED BELIEVERS** (Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 8:3-5; Proverbs 23:26; Romans 6:12,13,19; 1 Corinthians 6:13,19,20; 1 Peter 3:10; Psalm 24:3, 4)

**“...That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”** (Romans 12:1). To “present” is to yield and surrender or give as offering. And what we are to present, surrender or give to God as offering here is our body. The heart is the most important of all the parts of our body. It is the first thing we give to God. God makes a special demand of it. **“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways”** (Proverbs 23:26). When our hearts are given to the Lord, we are cleansed and purged. Without this, consecration will be worthless and unprofitable.

Also, all members of the believer's body must be daily and continually presented to the Lord in a definite act of consecration. Members of our body include the eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, etc. We should not employ our eyes to gaze upon objects of temptation. Rather, we are to concentrate on things that sponsor and promote holiness in our thoughts and actions. **“I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?”** (Job 31:1). Here, Job consecrated his eyes for the glory of God and the promotion of holiness in his life. Also, we should not use our mouths or lips to crack indecent jokes or give our ears to hearing things that can inflame our thoughts. If we consecrate members of our body to the Lord, we will do things that please Him.

**OUR HOLY AND EXALTED PRIESTHOOD** (Numbers 6:1-8; 1 Peter 2:5,9; Philippians 2:17; Luke 9:23)

In the Old Testament, priests were commissioned to offer daily, continual sacrifices unto the Lord. Nobody

was a priest who did not offer sacrifice to the Lord. These people were commanded to sanctify themselves by virtue of their hallowed service. They were to distinguish themselves from others and separate from every form of defilements because they were persons that draw nigh to God in the performance of religious duties. And as long as they officiated in this capacity, they were required to be consecrated.

The Nazarites (Jews who professed extraordinary purity of life and devotion) of the Old Testament dispensation were expected to abstain from everything that defiles as long as the vow of separation was upon them (Numbers 6:1-8). Such were obliged to strict and close devotion to the Lord than others. They will rather be held in derision by others than break their vows to be separate to the Lord.

In the same vein, all true members of the body of Christ today, as priests, are to individually on a daily, continual basis **“offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”** (1 Peter 2:5). We are not to bring animal sacrifice to the Lord any more but to present our bodies a living sacrifice. A sacrifice is something you dedicate to the Lord. A Christian therefore, hands his life to God unconditionally, unreservedly and wholeheartedly. He presents himself to God to do His will only. **“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God”** (Hebrews 10:7).

**Question 4: How can the members of a believer’s body be offered as sacrifice to the Lord?**

Strictly, the sacrifice we offer to the Lord must include our time, talents, resources and endowments. For instance, Dorcas spent her time and resources making dresses and giving to the poor. It might even be our voice employed in singing and ministering. The feet might be presented to the Lord in going from one place to another witnessing for Christ.

Paul the apostle spoke of the sacrificial giving of the churches in Macedonia for the cause of the gospel. They

dug into the very sustenance of life and almost gave their very blood. But before they did that, they first gave themselves unto the Lord. Our souls must first experience God's love and receive His mercy before we can present ourselves to the Lord.

**Question 5: How can a Christian bear his cross daily?**

Again, as a sacrifice, the believer must daily bear his cross and deny self. The sacrifice of Christ led Him to bear the cross. When we patiently bear reproach, ridicule and persecution for Christ's sake, it is part of the sacrificial life. **“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”** (Luke 9:23).

**THE CHRISTIAN'S NON-CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD** (Romans 12:2; Galatians 1:4 6:14; James 1:27; 4:4; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 John 2:15).

Our service to God cannot be acceptable if we are still unequally yoked together with the world. The true believer is wholly given to God so that he will not be conformed to the spirit of this age. The spirit of the age manifests itself in pride, ego, sinful entertainment or sensual pleasure. Worldliness pervades the society through devilish music, movies, fashion, inordinate ambition and ungodly pursuits. The believer is delivered from the present evil world never to be friendly with or conformed to it. **“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”** (Galatians 6:14). We must of necessity keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

**Question 6: What is the Christian's position in relation to the world?**

## DAILY BIBLE READING

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	2 Cor.	3-5	Jeremiah	26-27
TUE	“	6-7	“	28-29
WED	“	8-9	“	30
THUR	“	10-11	“	31
FRI	“	12-13	“	32
SAT	Gal.	1-2	“	33-34
SUN	“	3-4	“	35-36



# 753 Lesson

## SERVING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Romans 12:10).

**TEXT: Romans 12:9-13; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8**

**P**aul’s discourse on the essential teaching of Christian living glides from vital Christian service and ministry within the body of Christ to daily practical Christian relationship that underscores Christian brotherhood. These teachings are put forth with an obligatory tone leaving no place for excuses or exemptions. This body of teaching zeros in on the life of love and its full- blossomed fruits. Unfeigned love produces selfless, unpretentious and excited service one to another in the Church. Love is more important than all the spiritual gifts being exercised in the present-day church. Great faith, acts of dedication or sacrifice, and miracle-working power produce very little without love. Love makes our actions and gifts useful. This is the hub of Christian life and relationship. If we have all things and lack love, we have nothing. All ministry activities we engage in will be unprofitable if the love of God is not at its foundation. Although people have different gifts, love is required of everyone.

**CHRISTIAN LOVE: THE BASIS OF SERVICE** (Romans 12:9,10; John 13:34,35; Philippians 1:9; Romans 13:10; Hebrews 13:1)

The Lord took extra pain to teach and show His disciples the new commandment – love. This is the only virtue that could help them to reach the uttermost parts of the earth. It is the propelling quality that could fire our zeal. The desire to serve one another is fulfilled when the heart is rich in love. We cannot give any excuse of being too busy or too occupied so much as not to be concerned about the physical and spiritual needs of our

brethren. God, who looks at our disposition, thoughts and hearts, who protects and keeps will know; **“and shall not he render to every man according to his works?”** (Proverbs 24:12).

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”** (John 13:34,35).

**Question 1: What is the place of love in Christian service?**

What articulates and loudly declares our relationship with the Lord is not our preaching, ushering or singing in the choir. It is our life of love that tells the world that we are disciples of Christ. The measure of our love should be the measure of the love of Jesus for us. The strange thing amongst believers is that Christian activities seem to drown the love of God in our hearts. The more activities we get engaged in, the less of love we have for the brethren. True fellowship always dies where love ceases to exist. This is the reason many fellowship centers are witnessing low turnout.

But here, Paul the apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, admonishes that our love must be pure and unfeigned. It is disheartening that most of us have learned how to pretend to love others – how to speak kindly, avoid hurting their feelings, and appear to take an interest in them. Some are even skilled in pretending to be moved with compassion when they hear of others’ needs, or to become indignant when they learn of injustice. But God calls us to real and sincere love that goes far beyond pretense and politeness. Sincere love requires concentration and effort. It means helping others become better people. It demands our time, money, and personal involvement. Because of the prevalence of feigned love among believers, Peter the apostle had this to say: **“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently”** (1 Peter 1:22).

## Question 2: How is love best expressed?

Our society today confuses love and lust. Unlike lust, God's kind of love is directed outward toward others, not inward toward ourselves. It is utterly unselfish. This kind of love goes against our natural inclinations. It is possible to practice this love only if God helps us set aside our own desires and instincts, so that we can show love while expecting nothing in return. Thus, the more we become like Christ, the more love we will show to others in the body of Christ. Our love must not be smiles covered with bitterness and hatred; it must be devoid of lust. It must not be one that loves the opposite gender and excludes his gender from his deeds of love. Covetousness must be stripped off our life of love. We should not love because of what we stand to gain or enjoy from the relationship.

Again, our love must be impartial – free and full; love for all without discrimination or ulterior motive. Our love must be one that is fervent, not passive or disinterested. Some say: 'I love people, but I don't know how to show it'. But they err. Love is expressed in actions of affection, kindness, consideration and empathy.

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you”** (Ephesians 4:32). Love overlooks the mistakes of others, forgives others very readily even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. When we do this, we are really following God (Ephesians 5:1). The Lord wants us to manifest love in our actions and relationships with one another. In fact, this is the very basis and foundation of our activity in the Church and ministry in the body of Christ.

Our love must not approve of sin. We must eschew or run away from any act or conduct that has the stain of sin. Gossips, backbiting, negative criticism must be abhorred. We must not be party to anything that would discourage or put down a brother or a sister. On the contrary, we should cleave to that which is good.

Remember the golden rule always and live by it. **“Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets”** (Matthew 7:12). If you want people to love you, you should love them first. If you want people to forgive you, appreciate you and speak well of you, do the same to them. If you want your mistakes and oversights to be overlooked, do the same to others too. If you do not want false stories about you to be peddled, do not do that to others too. This is the foundation of our service.

### **COMMITMENT AND ZEAL IN GOD’S SERVICE** (Romans 12:11,12; Acts 18:25; Psalm 69:9)

**“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer”** (Romans 12:11,12).

**Question 3: Mention six things that should characterize our Christian service.**

Six things are noted in these two verses as characteristics of our Christian service. First, not slothful in business; second, fervent in Spirit; third, serving the Lord; fourth, rejoicing in hope; five, patient in tribulation; and six, continuing instant in prayer. All these must be carefully considered and cultivated if we want our service to be acceptable to the Lord.

The charge to eschew slothfulness in business applies both to our daily private pursuits and our Christian service. **“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies”** (2 Thessalonians 3:10,11). We should be diligent in the daily execution of our secular work. A true believer must provide for the need of his family members. God places a high premium on dignity of labour.

Besides, women also should not be slothful in domestic business. The home of Christian women should not

be left untidy or their personal body unkempt with the excuse of a heavy load of Christian service to bear. Again, believers who are involved in different aspects of work in the church must not be slothful. The preacher in the church must create time to study and read the Bible thoroughly before ministering to God's people. If you will be a member of the choir in your church, you must be prepared to give the hours of arduous practice required to minister in songs to the people of God.

Fervency of Spirit involves some personal internal motivation and desire to carry on a given task. This is described as zeal. It strips our service of every form of passivity. **“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me”** (Psalm 69:9).

Serving the Lord in whatever capacity – literature distribution, hospital visitation, prison outreach, etc. – must be performed with cheerfulness and zeal. **“Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”** Our service must be **“as unto the Lord”** (Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 4:23,24).

**THE SACRIFICIAL LOVE AMONG THE BRETHREN**  
(Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:16; 1 John 3:16-18; Galatians 5:13)

**“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality”** (Romans 12:13).

<p><b>Question 4: How and what can we distribute to meet the needs of other believers?</b></p>
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Here, we have the commandment of the Lord concerning our service. It is a responsibility for all believers. Some feel they are so poor that they have nothing to distribute. But they miss it. While we may not have something tangible or material to share, we can speak kind words to comfort the sorrowful and encourage those who are discouraged (1 Thessalonians 1:2,3). Our love should not be partial, passive or theoretical. We must show

mercy to the needy and give to meet the needs of other saints. **“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him”** (1 John 3:16,17).

Supreme love for God and love for our fellow men attracts divine blessings. There will be divine favor and supplies to meet our needs. God will answer our prayers and fulfil His promises in our lives and endeavors when we pray. He will make our days like **“the days of heaven upon the earth”** (Deuteronomy 11:21).

So, we must happily lay down our resources for the good of the brethren if we say we love the brotherhood. This is the New Testament commandment. It is the summary of the law and the prophets put together. We must serve one another in love.

## DAILY BIBLE READING

<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Galatians	5-6	Jeremiah 37-38
TUE	Ephesians	1-2	“ 39-40
WED	“	3-4	“ 41-42
THUR	“	5-6	“ 43-44
FRI	Philippians	1-2	“ 45-46
SAT	“	3-4	“ 47-48
SUN	Colossians	1-2	“ 49

# 754 Lesson

## CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4).

**TEXT:** Revelation 20:1-6; Isaiah 11:6-10; 65:25; Zechariah 14:9-20

God's word teaches that Jesus Christ will come to reign literally on earth for a thousand years. This will happen when He returns to the earth with ten thousands of His saints. At this time, He will judge the nations that dwell upon the face of the earth (Jude 14,15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). At the commencement of this reign, Christ will bind the devil and cast him into the bottomless pit till the expiration of His rule (Revelation 20:2,3). Devoid of sin and Satan's influence, Christ's millennial reign will be characterized by peace and blessing (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25; Hosea 2:18; Zechariah 14:9-20; Isaiah 2:2-4).

**Question 1: What is the meaning of Christ's millennial reign?**

The word 'millennium' is a compound derivative from Latin which simply translates into a thousand years. Thus, Christ's millennial reign is a thousand years of the full manifestation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is sequel to the Great Tribulation period which is a period of intense suffering for everyone on earth.

**PLACE OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN ON GOD'S TIME-TABLE** (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 24:21,22; Jude 14; Revelation 19:15-21; 20:1-3; 11:15)

According to God's revealed time-table, the Church will suddenly be taken away by Christ in a mysterious event

known as the rapture. Then, a seven-year period of great suffering for sinners and careless Christians left behind will follow. This is called the Great Tribulation. At the end of the seven-year period, Jesus will come again with the Church to establish His government (Jude 14).

**Question 2: Highlight the events that will lead to Christ's millennial reign.**

The government of the Antichrist in the world at that time will resist His coming in an attempt to foil His predicted reign. But the Lord will overcome the armies of the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:15-21). In that conquest, He will bind Satan and imprison him for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). The kingdom of this world will, then, become the kingdom of our God and His Christ (Revelation 11:15).

**DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST THEOCRATIC RULE:** (Isaiah 9:6,7; Psalm 45:4; Isaiah 11:4; Psalm 72:4; Isaiah 2:3,4; 33:21,22; 42:4; Acts 3:22; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 11:10; Revelation 20:1-6; Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 5:25-27)

**Question 3: What is the form of government Christ will establish during His millennial reign?**

Christ's millennial reign will be a time when the purposes of God will be fully realized on earth. Theocracy which is government of the state under the firm control and direction of God will be established by Jesus. He, as the divine representative of God, will at that time speak and act for God. **"For ...unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this"** (Isaiah 9:6,7). He will be given a universal and glorious dominion with absolute power to govern (Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 45:4; Isaiah 11:4; Psalm 72:4). It will be the responsibility of Christ at that time to announce God's



will and law (Isaiah 2:3,4; 33:21,22; 42:4; Acts 3:22).

Christ's millennial reign will be a manifestation of the promise God gave David, that his throne shall have no end. Christ, as David's "son", will thus establish a glorious house and throne over an equally glorious kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 11:10). Divine mercy, goodness and truth will be displayed through Christ even as the glory associated with His deity, omniscience, omnipotence and righteousness will be fully made manifest. The Gentile world system (humanity without Christ) as it is at present, organized under the direct influence of Satan, will thus become an outmoded system. In its stead comes Christ's millennial reign, void of sin and all forms of unrighteousness. Satan, having been defeated and bound, will lack the power to induce people to sin (Revelation 20:1-6; Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 5:25-27).

### **BLESSEDNESS OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN**

(Isaiah 2:4; 9:3-7; Jeremiah 30:17,18,19; Ezekiel 43:7-12; Isaiah 24:23; 60:1-9; 12:1-2; 9:7; 42:1-4; 11:1-2,6-9; 41:19,20; 65:25; 33:24; Ezekiel 34:16; Joel 3:16,17; Amos 9:15; Isaiah 14:3-6; Zechariah 9:11,12)

The millennium will be the period of the full manifestation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. His reign will be very uniquely novel in different ways. One, it will be a period of unprecedented individual and national peace. There will be a complete cessation of the scourge of wars, as the kingdoms of the world will be fused together under the reign of Christ. The ensuing peace will herald an era of economic boom and prosperity. The beauty of this age is that hitherto antagonistic and irreconcilable foes will henceforth co-habit peacefully. Two, there will be joy unspeakable. The main reason for this is that Satan who had hitherto oppressed men will have been bound (Isaiah 9:3,4; Jeremiah 30:18,19).

**Question 4: Explain why everyone should strive to be part of Christ's millennial kingdom.**

Three, there will be holiness as the King is the Source of righteousness. Holiness will be manifested through the

King and His subjects (Ezekiel 43:7-12; Isaiah 1:26,27). Four, Christ's reign will be a glorious one. **"Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously"** (Isaiah 24:23; 60:1-9). Five, it will be a time of divine mercy and comfort for God's people. The King will personally minister to every need so that there will be fullness of comfort (Isaiah 12:1,2; Jeremiah 33:23-25). Six, Christ will dispense justice during His millennial reign (Isaiah 9:7; 11:5; 42:1-4). Seven, citizens of the millennial kingdom will have full knowledge of God that Christ will teach them (Isaiah 11:1-2,9; 41:19,20; 54:13; Habakkuk 2:14).

Eight, the original curse placed upon creation will be removed so that there will be abundant productivity of the earth (Genesis 3:17-19; Isaiah 11:6-9; 35:9; 65:25). Animals will also have their nature changed so as to lose their venom and ferocity. Nine, sickness will be removed and become a thing of the past (Isaiah 33:24; Jeremiah 30:17; Ezekiel 34:16). And healing will be naturally available to the deformed (Isaiah 29:17-19). Ten, there shall be preservation of life (Isaiah 41:8-14; 62:8,9; Jeremiah 32:27; Ezekiel 34:27; Joel 3:16,17; Amos 9:15; Zechariah 14:10,11) and complete freedom from all forms of oppression that at present ravage mankind (Isaiah 14:3-6; 42:6,7; 49:8,9; Zechariah 9:11,12).

**SUBJECTS OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL KINGDOM:**  
(Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 17:1-7; Matthew 5:3; Hebrews 9:28; Matthew 25:34)

**Question 5: How can a sinner and believer witness the millennial reign of Christ?**

Christ will reign as King over His subjects through one thousand years. The Scripture describes the subjects who will witness it. These include, one, the glorious Church composed of all redeemed and righteous souls from all over the world who shall have gone with Christ at rapture (Ephesians 5:25-27). They will be returning to earth with Him to reign. The apostate church that is

married to the world will be excluded (Revelation 17:1-7). Two, the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3) will be there. These are people who recognize and admit their state of spiritual poverty on earth without assurance of salvation and are willing to turn away from sin and surrender to Christ. And three, the watchful and prayerful will be accounted worthy of participating in the glorious kingdom of Christ (Hebrews 9:28; Matthew 25:34). So, to reign with Him, you must first be saved from sin, live a righteous life in spite of persecution and the reverses of life, abide in Christ and serve Him till the end.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Colossians	3-4	Jeremiah	50
TUE	1 Thess	1-2	“	51
WED	“	3-4	“	52
THUR	“	5	Lam.	1-2
FRI	2 Thess	1-3	“	4-5
SAT	1 Tim.	1-3	“	4-5
SUN	“	4-5	Ezekiel	1-2

**THE END OF THE STUDIES, BUT BE ADVISED  
THE WORD OF GOD IS TIMELESS (DOES NOT  
BECOME OBSOLETE AT ANY TIME). THEREFORE,  
ENDEAVOR TO KEEP THIS BOOK HANDY.**

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2. Brooklyn: 140 Saratoga Avenue (718) 919-1166
3. Queens: 188-21 Suffolk Drive, St. Albans, NY 11412 (347) 200-3301
4. New Jersey: 23-39 South 20 Street, Irvington (973) 202-3989
5. Staten Island: 144-146 Morningstar Road, Staten Island, NY 10303 (917) 238-2258
6. Spring Valley: 95 North Main street, Suite 1 (845) 709-6058

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### **DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH WEEKLY FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES**

#### **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE**

New Jersey	9:00 AM
Bronx/Brooklyn/Queens/Staten Island	9:00 AM
Rockland County	10:30 AM

#### **MONDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Rockland County	7:00 PM
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#### **TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Bronx/Queens/New Jersey/Co-op City and Staten Island	7:00 PM
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#### **WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Brooklyn	7:00 PM
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#### **THURSDAY (REVIVAL SERVICE) FAITH CLINIC**

Rockland County	7:00 PM
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#### **FRIDAY (REVIVAL SERVICE) FAITH CLINIC**

All the Church Locations except Rockland County	7:00 PM
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#### **ALL NIGHT PRAYER VIGILS**

Bronx – First Friday of Every Month	7:00 PM
Brooklyn – Last Friday of Every Month	11:00 PM
Queens – First Friday & Third Friday of Every Month	11:00 PM
New Jersey – Third Friday of Every Month	11:00 PM

**Pastor W.F. Kumuyi – General Superintendent**  
**Your Spiritual Welfare is our Concern**