

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST



2020 BIBLE STUDY AND HOME CELL GUIDE

*Compiled by
National Discipleship & Leadership Development Committee*

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FOREWORD

The overarching theme for the Five-Year Vision of The Church of Pentecost (2018-2023) is, 'Possessing the Nations: Equipping the Church to Transform Every Sphere of Society with Kingdom Values and Principles.' Further to this, it has pleased the Lord and us to carve for this year, 2020, the sub-theme, '*A Glorious Church to possess the Nations*' (Eph. 3:21; 5:27).

The church is likened to the bride of Christ. Christ so loved the church that he gave his life for the church. Through the power of the Word, Christ washes the church of every spot, wrinkle or any other blemish. His goal is to present to himself a glorious church which is flawless, holy and perfect. Thus, a glorious church is one in which people from all walks of life, cultures, colours, and nations have accepted Jesus as Saviour and in loving obedience submitted to His Lordship.

These people have their lives transformed to reflect that of Christ. These transformed persons become vessels of Christ to transform every sphere of society. In 2020, our goal as a church is to claim our victory in Christ such that each member will through a holy and blameless life radiate the glory of Christ in every sphere of life. It is this church that can possess the nations, shining forth as light in every dark arena of life. Through the avenues of teaching, preaching and Bible Study in all our churches, we will be able to engage the Word of God to know who we are and have become in Christ Jesus.

The National Discipleship and Leadership Development Committee (NDLDC), over the years has been instrumental in creating the platform for the entire Church to engage with the Word of God. In line with practice, the NDLDC has come up with a material that blends the Word of God, the theme for the year and selected contemporary issues that require our attention and action. In this study guide, you will find selected studies on the thematic area of the Five-Year Vision and the theme for this year. These have been simplified in a systematic yet comprehensive way to solicit practical responses from all Christians. The Bible Study or Home Cell groups will continue to serve as the focal points for effective engagement.

The inductive approach to the discussions, as usual, is intended to engage members for reflection and create an atmosphere of lively discussions and mutual exchange of ideas. Such healthy exchange of ideas culminates into a significant mass to release a glorious church to possess the nations. It is essential that no one sits on the pane. Get involved and get counted; share your thoughts guided by Scripture. The story you share during discussions will give hope to someone in the group. In the same vein, your thoughtful questions could also be the key to open doors of strongholds in the minds of fellow believers, and others who may visit the Bible Study or Home Cell groups.

This manual, in sincerity, provides an important avenue to be intentional in equipping the members and leaders of the Church for a glorious presence in national transformation with Kingdom values and principles. The NDLDC is once again, highly commended for the painstaking and meticulous efforts expended in producing this study manual.

I pray that the glory of Christ will reflect on us to be His glorious Church, equipped to transform lives as we yearn to possess the nations with Kingdom values and principles.

God bless you,

Eric Kwabena Nyamekye (Apostle)
Chairman, The Church of Pentecost

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A Glorious Church to Possess the Nations (Eph. 3:21; 5:27) is the theme chosen by the Chairman and the Executive Council for the year, 2020. This theme ushers The Church of Pentecost into the next phase of its Five-Year Vision which is, 'Possessing the Nations: Equipping the Church to Transform Every Sphere of Society with Kingdom Values and Principles'.

As the annual practice is, the National Discipleship and Leadership Development Committee (NDLDC) has come out with a systematic study on the theme for discussion in small relational groups. To this end the Bible Study and Home Cell Ministry which is the Church's structure for discipleship and pastoral care (under the NDLDC), will facilitate the discussion. In line with the vision and church practice, some thematic scripts have been developed in this year's study outlines to handle some key aspects of our doctrine and practices as a Church. These thematic scripts are explained below:

The theme for this year gives the Church a clarion call to portray a glorious outlook as we stand out to make a difference. As a result, we will be transforming every sphere of society with Kingdom Values. This calls for the crucial task of revisiting, revising, reaffirming and reinforcing *what we believe, why we believe what we believe* and how to *demonstrate what we believe*.

This has become imperative due to the contemporary pluralistic world where anything is accepted and the gap between the Kingdom of God and darkness is gradually being bridged. In response, aspects of practical Christian life, beginning from the home, through the streets to the marketplace have been highlighted in our studies for this year. The intent is to engage our attention, reflection and action.

The topics include: *Uphold Truth in the Streets, Holy Vessels for Honourable Use, Mentoring the Youth, Family Commitment to Biblical Values, Unity in the Body of Christ, Bad Company Corrupts Good Character, Don't Compromise your Christian Values, Truly Acknowledging Christ's Lordship*, among others. It is expected that sincere attention will be given to this practical Christian lifestyle issues to reflect the glorious nature of the Church in society as stated in Ephesians 5:27: He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault (NLT).

As with previous years, a contemporary issue will be discussed. We shall continue with the issue of caring for the environment in recognition that it is the handiwork of God, our Father. This year, the focus is to bring stakeholders on board to own the campaign in our various communities. This focus is to translate into all other social initiatives and campaigns of subsequent years. Topics like *Involvement in Community Initiatives, Environmental Care Our Responsibility and Getting Stakeholders on Board* will be treated.

In keeping with the vision to make a difference in every sphere of society, the Church has launched the Pentecost Professionals Guilds which aim to bring all professionals and marketplace people in the Church together to use their collective influence to transform the marketplace. Lessons have been developed to aid this process. Some of these are *Don't Abuse the Privilege*, *Don't Withhold Your Workers' Pay*, *Integrity in the Market Place*. This is to induce in us a character of integrity in our workplaces as the key to exerting the appropriate influence.

The tenets of the Church remain significant. In this particular year, our concern will be The Lord's Supper with topical studies on *Institution of the Lord's Supper*, *The Emblems of the Lord's Supper*, *The Significance of the Lord's Supper*, and *Examine Yourself*. We will also look at Tithes and Offering with studies like *Tithing - Nature and Origin*, *Tithing - Recommended by Jesus*, *Blessings of Tithing Faithfully* and *Tithing - Consequences of Unfaithfulness*. This is to help us have a defense for what we believe and practise in this perverse world.

Lessons have also been developed to arouse our greater interest in helping our societies. These include; *The Local Church and her Social Responsibility* and *Fulfilling the Social Responsibility of the Church*.

The need to evangelize the world and bring all to the saving knowledge of Christ has been given another boost in our study this year with topics on evangelism and missions. These include; *Personal Evangelism* and

Supporting Missions Work.

The special days on the Church's calendar have been featured with the necessary topics for our attention. These are Caring Out of Love, Honouring Officers of the Church, Raising Godly Christian Workforce, Jesus, Friend of Children and others. These lessons both highlight the theme for the year and also serve as boosters to the entire Church in keeping abreast of the various activities slated for the year.

The Agenda to transform Bible Study groups into Discipleship Groups is on course. It is expected that each Bible Study Group will have an officer in charge as the discipler of the group (they must not necessarily be the Bible Study facilitators). It is important to reiterate that the Bible Study on Sunday morning is to be done in small permanent groups and at permanent places in the church with permanent leaders (disciplers and facilitators). The groups will meet every Sunday (after worship) except on Lord's Supper Sundays. The Review Questions for each week have been outlined to assess members on what was learnt the previous week and how these lessons were practically applied in their lives during the week.

In the light of the vision direction of the Church, we continue with the mandatory Home Cell Group meetings once in a month named the Home Cell Day. The Sunday before Communion Week is the day for Home Cell meetings.

However, Home Cell Groups are at liberty to meet more than once in a month if the members so wish. The Home Cells are directed to focus on impacting their communities through intercession and practical social services. Apart from the monthly mandatory meetings, the Cell Leader could mobilize the members to serve their communities. On days when the Cell is not meeting for studies and social service, families are expected to meet in their various homes for fellowship, exhortation and prayer.

District Ministers are entreated to make time, spearhead and organise preparatory meetings regularly for the study leaders. This should be organised at least every two weeks. Preparatory meetings enhance understanding of the material as the leaders share different perspectives on the text. The meetings also provide the opportunity for the minister to assess the effectiveness of the cell and study groups. The emphasis of the study should be on how to apply the lessons gleaned from the text to daily life. It is thus highly recommended that, the Cell Leader should study the outline prayerfully and diligently ahead of class. We trust the Lord will nourish us by the study of His Word as we endeavour to portray the glorious Christ-like life to possess the nations.

As a Committee, we are deeply grateful to the Chairman of The Church of Pentecost, Apostle Eric Kwabena Nyamekye for his interest, direction and support to our work.

The General Secretary, Apostle A. N. Y. Kumi-Larbi, the International Missions Director, Apostle Emmanuel Gyasi-Addo and the entire Executive Council Members are commended for their various supports.

The work of the Script Writers is acknowledged for their diligence and commitment to writing this year's study outlines. They are Vincent Anane Denteh, Christian Tsekpoe, Seth Fianko-Larbi, and Joseph Owusu Boateng. The rest are Samuel Ayisi Mensah, Emmanuel Foster Asamoah, George Osei-Asiedu, Samuel Acheampong and David Kwafo.

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The members of the National Discipleship and Leadership Development Committee are also highly appreciated for providing direction, inputs and painstakingly editing the final version of the scripts and ensuring their production. They are:

Pastor Henry Sowah Ako-Nai	Secretary
Apostle Vincent Anane-Denteh	Member
Apostle William Boakye Agyarko	Member
Pastor Eric Ansah	LLTS Organiser
Pastor Joseph Owusu Boateng	Member

It is our earnest prayer that these little loaves of bread and fishes will be multiplied by the Lord to enhance the rapid transformation of members to bring the glorious nature of the Church to bear on our communities. This goal will be accelerated as we release our spiritual and physical energies to make significant impact in every sphere of society aimed at possessing the nations for Christ.

Samuel Kojo Gakpetor (Apostle)
Coordinator, NDLDC

2020 WEEK BY WEEK TABULAR BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

WEEK	DATE	ACTIVITY	BIBLE STUDY	
JANUARY				
1	5 TH	Lord's Supper		17
2	12 TH		The Value of a Strategic Plan	18
3	19 TH	WE CARE WEEK	Caring Out of Love	20
4	26 TH		The Church as a Glorious Institution	22
FEBRUARY				
5	2 ND	Lord's Supper		24
6	9 TH	BIBLE WEEK	Tithing – Nature and Origin	25
7	16 TH		Tithing – Recommended by Jesus	27
8	23 RD		Blessings of Tithing Faithfully	30
MARCH				
9	1 ST	Lord's Supper		32
10	8 TH	MCKEOWN MISSIONS WEEK	Supporting Missions Work	33
11	15 TH		Christ in You, The Hope of Glory	35
12	22 ND		Manifesting His Glory	37
13	29 TH	OFFICERS' APPRECIATION DAY	Honouring Officers of the Church	39
APRIL				
14	5 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		42
15	12 TH	EASTER SUNDAY		43
16	19 TH		Communion – The Institution of the Lord's Supper	44
17	26 TH		Communion – Emblems of the Lord's Supper	46
MAY				
18	3 RD	Lord's Supper		49
19	10 TH		Fellowship in the Local Church	50
20	17 TH	EVANGELISM WEEK	Personal Evangelism – Witnessing About Christ to Others	52
21	24 TH		Involvement in Community Initiatives	54
22	31 ST		Environmental Care, Our Responsibility	57
JUNE				
23	7 TH	Lord's Supper		60
24	14 TH		Investing Wisely	61
25	21 ST	YOUTH WEEK	Mentoring the Youth	63
26	28 TH		Examine Yourself	66

WEEK	DATE	ACTIVITY	BIBLE STUDY	
JULY				
27	5 TH	Lord's Supper		68
28	12 TH	PUC DAY	Raising Godly Christian Workforce	69
29	19 TH		Avoid Double Standards	71
30	26 TH		Personal Evangelism – The Reward of Personal Evangelism	73
AUGUST				
31	2 ND	Lord's Supper		75
32	9 TH		Uphold Truth and Justice in the Streets	76
33	16 TH	PENTSOS	Fulfilling the Social Responsibility of the Church	78
34	23 RD		The Cost of Laziness	81
35	30 TH		Don't Withhold your Workers' Pay	83
SEPTEMBER				
36	6 TH	Lord's Supper		85
37	13 TH	CHILDREN'S WEEK	Jesus, Friend of Children	86
38	20 TH		Holy Vessel for Honourable Use	88
39	27 TH		Personal Evangelism – How to Engage in Personal Evangelism	90
OCTOBER				
40	4 TH	Lord's Supper		92
41	11 TH	GPCC WEEK/ OUTREACH DAY	Unity in the Body of Christ	93
42	18 TH	PENSIONS DAY	Remember the Lord's Servants	96
43	25 TH		Personal Evangelism – The Role of the Holy Spirit in Witnessing	98
NOVEMBER				
44	1 ST	Lord's Supper		100
45	8 TH		The Church is Holy and without Blemish	101
46	15 TH		Church Discipline for Corporate Holiness	103
47	22 ND		Restoring Disciplined Members to Fellowship	106
48	29 TH		Truly Acknowledging Christ's Lordship	109
DECEMBER				
49	6 TH	Lord's Supper		112
50	13 TH		In All Things, Give Thanks and Praise	113
51	20 TH		The Lord Jesus Deserves Worship	115
52	27 TH		CHRISTMAS CONVENTION	118

BIBLE STUDY

WEEK 2

THE VALUE OF A STRATEGIC PLAN

Review of Previous Year's Lessons (5 Minutes)

- a) What was your favourite topic last year?
- b) Share the impact BSHC made on your Christian life last year.

Main Text: Luke 14:28-32.

Memory Verse: *Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?* – Luke 14:28.

Introduction

Planning can be defined as a set of intended actions for accomplishing important objectives. It sets the stage for the other management functions like organising, leading and controlling. Entering into a New Year comes with the common cliché of 'new year resolutions'. Many people including Christians, however, forget about these resolutions after a short period into the New Year. Without a well thought out plan for our lives, we may leave our lives to chance. Also, we may not be ready when opportunities come our way because we have not prepared for those opportunities. Jesus Christ teaches us today to consider carefully our intended actions before taking steps to implement them. This study will focus on how we can turn our objectives for the year into very good plans.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why should planning be an essential part of our lives? Verses 28-29.
2. What are some of the factors you will consider in planning? Verses 31-32.
3. What are some of the factors that hinder us from planning?
4. What happens if we fail to plan?
5. How would you ensure that you achieve your resolutions?

Conclusion

Our study today reveals the need to have plans for our lives. In the parable, Jesus intimated that, without planning, we may be ridiculed or become unfruitful. Planning should not be done in isolation. As we learnt from our main text, series of consultations are needed for a successful plan. First, we need to consult God and then knowledgeable people in what we want to do. Others are mature Christians, family (e.g. spouses, parents, and children) and relevant literature. A good plan has a clear vision, objectives, actions or steps to be taken and time lines. In addition, we must have people who will hold us accountable to the objectives of our life plans. We need to take bold steps to plan for the year ahead, for it is said, 'if you fail to plan, you plan to fail'. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WEEK 3
CARING OUT OF LOVE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What are some of the challenges you faced in meeting your resolutions last year?
- b. Share in brief one thing you want to achieve in the year.

Main Text: Galatians 6: 9-10.

Memory Verse: *Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone, especially to our Christian brothers and sisters.* – Galatians 6:10 (NLT).

Introduction

Caring for one another is very important because the world is filled with different kinds of people. Some are privileged to be able to afford the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter daily. Others simply struggle with starvation and lack of basic needs. Unfortunately, people who interact daily with the needy sometimes grow weary of supporting them and become insensitive to their situation. This is due to many factors. However, the main text for today's study provides an encouragement to continue supporting the needy amongst us in spite of the challenges involved.

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the factors that makes people weary in doing good.

2. Why should we persist in doing good in spite of the challenges? Verse 9
3. Why did Paul emphasise doing good to the family of believers? Verse 10, James 2: 16-17.
4. What should be the attitude of those who receive material support from the church and benevolent individuals within the church?
5. How would you personally respond to the needy around you?

Conclusion

Goodness is the quality of being gracious, virtuous and sensitive to the needs of others. Caring for others is not limited to providing material things or financial resources. It includes extending a helping hand, assisting in job acquisition, offering free consultancy, consoling people in trying moments (bereavement, loss of job) and celebrating their successes (graduation, weddings). Sometimes, unpleasant experiences such as ungratefulness and disloyalty cause many to lose interest in showing kindness to people in the church. However, while admitting that these experiences are painful, we must be encouraged by the scriptures that we will be rewarded if we continue to do good without growing weary. Those who are privileged to receive help from members in the church should always remember to be grateful.

WEEK 4
**THE CHURCH AS A
GLORIOUS INSTITUTION**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What impact did the previous lesson make on your life?
- b. In what ways can you be of help to the needy?

Main Text: Ephesians 5:18-20, 25-27.

Memory Verse: *And to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.* – Ephesians 5:27.

Introduction

We have established in last year's Bible studies that the church is not the physical building in which believers gather to worship. Rather, the church is made up of men and women (adults) and children of all tribes, languages, nations and generations who have responded to the call of God by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. In today's passage, Paul the Apostle presents us with the illustration of the church as the bride of Christ, which has been made glorious by the Lord Jesus himself. Using this illustration, we shall discuss how Paul's illustration helps us to understand the church as a glorious institution and a radiant body for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions for Discussion

1. What makes a church glorious? Verse 18-19.
2. How did Jesus make the church glorious? Verse 25-27.
3. Why do you think Jesus had to cleanse the church? Verse 26.
4. How can we maintain the church as a glorious institution?

Conclusion

For a church to be glorious, the individual members of the church need to keep themselves from all forms of impurity, including drunkenness, which leads to many other vices. Instead, the members of the church must be filled with the Holy Spirit, expressing the glory of the Lord through their lifestyle. Their spirituality must also manifest from the songs they sing and how they pray, giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:18-20).

Paul specifically explains that out of love for the church, Christ gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word (Eph. 5:25-26). Jesus had to cleanse the church because, sin takes away the church's glory and renders it dirty and unacceptable before God. In order to present her as a glorious church therefore, there was the need to purge it from all sins and uncleanness. It is our corporate and individual responsibility to live in holiness in order to maintain the church as a glorious institution just as the Lord made her to be.

WEEK 6

TITHING – NATURE AND ORIGIN

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in the previous lesson?
- b. How did the lesson impact your life?

Main Text: Numbers 18:20-28.

Memory Verse: *And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.* – Genesis 28:22 (NKJV).

Introduction

Tithe is defined as the tenth of one's income or profit. Its practice by Christians is rooted in the Old Testament. Historians, however, believe that the practice of paying tithes as tribute to rulers existed in Babylon in ancient times as well as in Persia, Egypt and China, and that Abraham knew of the practice before God called him to leave Haran. Also, there are biblical accounts showing that tithing was indeed practiced long before the time of Moses and the institution of the Jewish Law. The two pre-mosaic accounts which show how Abraham and Jacob handled tithing occur in Genesis 14:17-20 and 28:20-22 respectively. During the time of Moses, tithing was structured for informed compliance. In this study, we shall look at tithing as instituted under the Law.

Questions for Discussion

1. What sort of inheritance did God provide for the children of Levi? Verse 20.
2. Why did God give the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel? Verse 21.
3. What did God direct the children of Israel to do to support the Levites? Verse 24.
4. How were the Levites to treat the tithes they receive? Verse 26.
5. Why do you think that tithing is still a relevant practice for Christians?

Conclusion

At the time the Law was given, the Israelites were on their way to the Promised Land. There they would be predominantly farmers, shepherds and herdsmen. These were the key occupations that they devoted their energies to and by which they paid their tithes. Then, they interpreted the law on tithing within the framework of their professions. Now, we will do well to do the same having regard to the multiplicity of avenues by which we earn incomes and receive additional inflows (both financial and material). Oh that we will espouse all diligence and faithfulness in tithing that each one of us can at all times say to the LORD with all boldness, I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow (Deut. 26:13).

WEEK 7
**TITHING – RECOMMENDED
BY JESUS CHRIST**

Review of Previous Lesson

- a. What was different from what you already knew about the previous lesson?
- b. Share briefly how the previous lesson impacted your life.

Main Text: Matthew 23:23.

Memory Verse: *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.* – Galatians 6:6 (NKJV).

Introduction

In recent times tithing, as a practice for the church, has come under numerous attacks, surprisingly from supposed Christian churches, groups and individuals. Among reasons given for their attitude are that the Old Testament priesthood is no more, and that the New Testament is silent on the practice. Their conclusion is that since Jesus did not plainly endorse it, tithing is not to be practiced in the name of Christianity. They, therefore, accuse churches that practice tithing of using unbiblical means to amass wealth. In this study, we shall look at how Jesus Christ in plain language endorsed tithing.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did Jesus denounce the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and their colleagues? Verse 23a.
2. What do you think Jesus expected the Pharisees and the colleagues to do?
3. Explain the following phrases in Jesus' statement,
 - a. These you ought to have done,
 - b. Without leaving the others undone.
4. How should Christians treat a practice that Jesus so clearly endorses?

Conclusion

Jesus' comment on tithing makes the practice very significant; and that He recommended its continued practice gives credence to its relevance to the Church today. His statement in the main text does two things. First it denounces hypocrisy in tithing. Then it recommends tithing within the framework of justice, mercy and faithfulness. Though He endorsed a practice instituted under the Law, was never an endorsement of righteousness by works. For, tithing is not and can never be a substitute to expressing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The principle of the ancient tithes, namely, that ministers of the gospel and objects of benevolence should be provided for by the whole people of God, according to their means, is fully recognised in Scripture

as applicable to the followers of Christ. For example, He sent His servants forth, two and two, without provisions or purses, to receive their support from the people, since 'the labourer is worthy of his hire,' (Matt. 10:9-14). The Church of Pentecost upholds Jesus' position on tithing and has continued to teach its members to practice tithing as an important church growth factor that brings in tremendous blessings to those who practice it faithfully.

WEEK 8

BLESSINGS OF TITHING FAITHFULLY

Review of Previous Lesson

- a. Share how the previous lesson impacted your life.
- b. What efforts did you make to share your experience with your friends?

Main Text: Malachi 3: 10-12.

Memory Verse: *'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,' Says the LORD of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.'* – Malachi 3:10 (NKJV).

Introduction

God's invitation to Israel to return to Him in faithfulness was for their own benefit. A sign of genuine repentance was their compliance with paying tithes and offerings as prescribed by God. Israel was to ensure that there was food in God's storehouse. The abundance of food in the storehouse was a sign that the priests would be supported from the tithes as they ministered in the Temple; they would no longer have to look for other means of livelihood. Yet it required faith on the part of Israel to trust God with a tenth of the resources He had given them. In this study, we shall look at the various ways God promised to bless His people if they turned to Him and paid their tithes in faith and faithfully.

Questions for Discussion

1. What were the Israelites to do to provide enough food in God's storehouse? Verse 10a.
2. How would you explain the statement, 'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse'? Verse 10a.
3. Identify various ways in which God promised to bless His people for their faithfulness. Verses 10-12.
4. Share in brief your personal experience of how God rewards those who tithe faithfully.

Conclusion

To 'bless' meant to fill with benefits, either as an end in itself or to make the object blessed a source of further blessing for others. In response to faithfulness on the part of Israel, God will provide rain in season and cause the land to yield its fruits in full strength. This is what God promised to do for Israel if they turned to Him. He would restore the fortunes of repentant Israel; He would drive away the devourers (caterpillars and locusts) that devastated their farms. Thus, Israel shall enjoy abundance instead of suffering scarcity of food. The prosperity of the land will be a signal to the nations that God was blessing His people because of their obedience to His will. God still promises His children that today.

WEEK 10

SUPPORTING MISSIONS WORK

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What was the main text of the previous lesson?
- b. Summarise the passage of the previous main text.

Main Text: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15.

Memory Verse: *But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving.* — 2 Corinthians 8:7.

Introduction

Missions define various activities that the church undertakes to reach out to various cultures with the gospel of Christ as expressed in the Great Commission. The CoP has branches in over 100 countries worldwide. The Church, through the Missions Board, supports both the internal and external branches with funds for acquisition of evangelism equipment and construction of church buildings. These funds are realised from the monthly Missions Offerings and annual McKeown's Missions Week. In the passage read, we observe the eagerness of the Macedonian churches to support churches outside their region in spite of their difficulties. These lessons will guide us as we endeavour to support the work of missions.

Questions for Discussion

1. What did the churches in Macedonia do to support the work of missions in spite of their hardship? Verses 2, 3.
2. What advice did Apostle Paul give to the Corinthian church concerning supporting missions work? Verse 10-14.
3. What would be the consequences if we fail to support the work of missions?
4. From the example of the Macedonian churches, how should we give towards missions?
5. Apart from giving, discuss other ways by which we can support missions?

Conclusion

The Macedonians, though poor and tested by many troubles, rejoiced exceedingly for the opportunity they had to support churches outside their region. They gave freely beyond their ability to the extent of pleading with much urgency that their gifts must be received. Apostle Paul entreated the Corinthian church to emulate the good work of helping those in need with their substance, and not relent. We could also make others (including sinners and those in need) know Christ if we open our hands to support the work of missions without considering our present challenges. Aside giving in support of missions, we should pray continually for the work of missions, and encourage missionaries by communicating frequently with them.

WEEK 11

CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in the previous lesson?
- b. How has it impacted your giving towards missions work?

Main Text: Colossians 1:24-29.

Memory Verse: *To them God has chosen to make know among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.* – Colossians 1:27.

Introduction

Our Lord Jesus Christ, out of love, offered himself as a sacrifice to make the church a glorious institution. In today's study, Paul tells us about a mystery which has been hidden for ages and generations, but now disclosed to the Lord's people. This mystery according to Paul, is the glory of God which has been imparted to us as a result of our believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall therefore discuss what makes the glory in us a mystery, what it means to have the hope of glory and how we can manifest that glory individually as members of the body of Christ.

Questions for Discussion

1. What mystery did Paul say God has disclosed to the Lord's people? Verse 26-27.

2. For how long was the mystery hidden? Verse 26.
3. What makes God's glory in us a mystery? Exodus 34:29-30.
4. How do you understand the statement 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'? Verse 27.
5. How can you as an individual demonstrate God's glory, which has been deposited in you?

Conclusion

Paul describes this as a mystery because, in the Old Testament, the people were unable to behold the radiance of this glory on Moses' face (Exo. 34:29-30). In the New Testament, however, this glory is not only in our faces, but in us. The implication of Paul's statement that 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' is that, there is no other hope to enjoy God's eternal glory than the assurance of Christ's abiding presence with us and in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. This means that without Christ, humans could not obtain glory from any other source. Jesus personally confirms this in His prayers when He states that 'I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one' (John 17:22).

As individuals, it is our responsibility to maintain high level of integrity and maintain these riches in God's glory as deposited in us.

WEEK 12

MANIFESTING THE GLORY OF GOD

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What kind of assurance did the previous lesson give you?
- b. How has it impacted your lifestyle as a Christian?

Main Text: 2 Corinthians 3:16-18, Exodus 34:33-35.

Memory Verse: *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* – Ephesians 5:27.

Introduction

In our previous lesson, we identified that the mystery of the glory of God was hidden for many ages and generations but has been revealed to us as 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'. In today's lesson, Paul draws from the Old Testament experience where Moses had to veil his face before he could communicate with the people of Israel because, they were afraid of the radiance in his face. In today's lesson, we shall discuss what happens when one turns to the Lord and focuses on His glory. We shall also discuss how we as individuals and as a Church can manifest the glory of God.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think Moses had to put a veil over his face before speaking with the people of Israel? Exodus 34:33, 35.
2. What happens to the veil in the New Testament? 2 Corinthians 3:16.
3. What happens to us when we focus on the Lord's glory with unveiled faces? 2 Corinthians 3:18.
4. How can we manifest God's glory as a Church?

Conclusion

Paul explains to us that when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed so that with unveiled faces we can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. As we continue to contemplate on His glory, we become more and more like Him as we are transformed into His glorious image (2 Cor. 3:18). When we have the glory, we must manifest it through our character. It is contradictory to have the glory of the Lord and still be comfortable with the deeds of darkness because the glory must be radiated as light in every dark space.

Additionally, we must radiate the glory through preaching the gospel, praying for the sick and demonstrating the power of God which reveals the glory of God deposited in us.

WEEK 13

HONOURING OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in our previous lesson?
- b. How are you manifesting the lessons learnt?

Main Text: Philippians 2:24-30.

Memory Verse: *Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. – 1 Thessalonians 5:12.*

Introduction

To honour is to obey, revere, speak kindly to, and think well of another. Officers of The Church of Pentecost deserve honour for their dedicated service which enables the church to reach more souls and disciple them. They include Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses who offer voluntary service in various roles in the Church. In view of this, the Church has instituted the Officers' Appreciation Day to celebrate their invaluable contribution towards the growth and sustenance of the Church. This is to recognise their efforts and also, provide the opportunity for members to honour them. In our study, we shall examine Paul's encouragement to the church to honour Ephaproditus who risked his life for the flock Philippi.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who was Epaphroditus and what was his role in the church in Philippi? Verse 25-27.
2. From Verse 30, what happened to Epaphraditus while labouring for the Lord? How would you relate this to the experiences of officers in the local church?
3. Discuss the statement, 'welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honour people like him'. Verse 29.
4. Share a testimony of how an officer of the Church impacted your life?
5. How would you honour an officer in your local church?

Conclusion

Paul described Epaphroditus as a brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, and a messenger of the church in Philippi. He risked his life for the work of Christ while Paul was under arrest in Rome. Many officers make significant sacrifices for the progress of the Church. Being custodians of the local church, they complement the efforts of ministers in administration, discipleship, pastoral care, etc. As Paul instructed the Philippians, people who render such selfless services are worthy of appreciation and honour which can be expressed through visitation, giving of gifts, and respect for authority.

Also, we must learn to say 'thank you' when an officer extends a hand of help, and pardon them when they offend us. Honour is not only in the giving of gifts but obedience, reverence, goodwill and submission. On behalf of the Church, we say Ayekoo to all Officers of the Church of Pentecost for their selfless service.

WEEK 16

THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in the previous lesson?
- b. Share your experiences on how you applied the lessons learnt.

Main Text: Matthew 26:17-20, 26-30.

Memory Verse: *'While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body'. – Matthew 26:26.*

Introduction

The Lord's Supper is a living memorial observed in remembrance of Christ's death for our redemption from sin and condemnation. It is the seventh (7th) tenet of our Church, affirming the strong belief we have in its sacredness and significance. All members with full membership and in good standing (that is, those who have been baptised in water by immersion and are living in accordance to the Word of God) are expected to partake in it always. This sacred ordinance is sometimes referred to as the Breaking of Bread, Holy Communion and the Lord's Table. In our study today, we will study about the institution of the Lord's Supper.

Questions for Discussion

1. What did Jesus do when He took the bread and cup? Verses 26, 27.

2. Why did Jesus have to shed His blood? Verse 28.
3. Discuss the statement, 'for this is My blood of the new covenant'. Verse 28.
4. How is the Lord's Supper similar or different from the Passover Feast?
5. Why do we celebrate the Lord's Supper? Luke 22:19.

Conclusion

The Lord Supper was established by Jesus when He was eating the Passover meal with His disciples (Matt. 26:17-20). The Jews celebrated the Passover feast in memory of their historic redemption from slavery in Egypt (Exo. 12). Thus, just as the Passover is celebrated to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, the Lord's Supper is celebrated to commemorate the sacrificial death of Jesus, the Lamb of God, who inaugurates the new exodus. The Lord Jesus commands His disciples to celebrate the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him (Luke 22:19). The main reason why the Church celebrates the ordinance of Lord's Supper is because of the command of the Lord Jesus. Thus, whenever we come to the table to eat of the bread and drink of the cup, we must remember the priceless sacrifice of Christ on the cross which has brought us redemption, and be willing to also stand for Him, even if it would mean death. It is an occasion of thanksgiving for the salvation and blessings that God has made available for humankind in Christ.

WEEK 17

EMBLEMS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in the previous lesson?
- b. How has that influenced your Christian life?

Main Text: Mark 14:22-24.

Memory Verse: *'Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day'*
– John 6:54.

Introduction

Christ's death on the cross established a new covenant between God and all who receive Him as Lord and Saviour. When we repent of our sinful ways and turn to God through faith in Christ, we are forgiven of our iniquities, redeemed from the power of sin and Satan, and given a new spiritual life (Col. 1:13, 2 Cor. 5:17). We become the children of God (John 1:12) and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. As part of our obedience to His lordship, we celebrate the Lord's Supper as He commanded (Luke 22:19). As we partake of the bread and drink of the cup at the Lord's Table, our hearts should be set on the benefits that His death and resurrection brought us, and encourage us to also offer our lives to Him as a living sacrifice that is holy and acceptable unto God (Rom. 1:12). In today's study, we shall consider the emblems of the Lord's Supper and what they mean.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the emblems Jesus used in the celebration of the Communion?
2. How do you understand the following statements of Jesus;
 - a. '...this is My body', in reference to the bread. Verse 24.
 - b. 'This is my blood...' in reference to the cup. Verse 23, 24.
3. In your view, what is the significance of the body and blood of Christ?
4. From the passage, the body was broken and the blood was shed.
 - a. What does it mean?
 - b. How should this affect our celebration of the Lord's Supper?

Conclusion

The emblems of the Lord's Supper refer to the bread and wine used at the Lord's Table. When Christ said of the bread, 'this is my body', He did not mean His real body as some believe. He rather meant it represents His body which is broken or sacrificed for all. The bread also symbolises the Church, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16; 11:29). Similarly, when He said of the cup, 'this is my blood', He did not mean His real blood, but a symbol of it. These can be inferred from the celebration of the

Passover when the lamb used is not the actual lamb killed during the exodus. Therefore, feeding on the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus is a metaphorical statement which simply means believing in His death so as to have eternal life. Jesus shed His blood on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, to provide the opportunity for forgiveness and make salvation available to us. This is why the Lord's Supper is an occasion of thanksgiving where we express our heartfelt gratitude to Him for the sacrifice made on our behalf.

WEEK 19

FELLOWSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in the previous lesson?
- b. How relevant is this knowledge to our participation in the Lord's Supper ??

Main Text: Acts 2:42-47.

Memory Verse: *By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.* – John 13:35.

Introduction

Humans are social beings. Thus, everyone desires to belong to a group where the sense of oneness and bonding is strong. When people become Christians, they leave the 'fellowship' of sinners to become 'fellows' in the 'ship' of Christians. Thus, fellowship is not just for challenging times but needful for the survival of the Christian. In view of this, the Church is expected to intentionally promote fellowship with one another. The early Church was committed to expressing the love of God as they worshipped together and cared for one another.

Questions for Discussion

1. In what ways did the early Church spend their lives together? Verse 42
2. How were the needy among the believers supported? Verses 44, 45

3. How does fellowship affect church growth? Verse 47
4. What challenges militate against fellowship in the local church?
5. How can the local church bring about strong fellowship among members?

Conclusion

Fellowship as used in Acts 2:42 expresses the idea of being together for mutual interest. The early Church demonstrated this quality. With one accord, they received, retained and acted on the teachings of the Apostles. More so, with great sensitivity, they provided support for the needy among them through sacrificial giving. Strong fellowship in the local church brings unity, retains converts in the church and influences outsiders towards faith in Christ Jesus. We can build strong fellowship by strengthening the small groups in the church such as the cells, Bible study groups and ministries. This is because, it is difficult to foster strong fellowship in a crowd or large group. In addition, we can create opportunities for fellowship outside the church. This may take the form of profitable discussions on social media platforms, phone calls and visitation to homes of members. More importantly, church leaders must teach on the subject of fellowship – purpose, method, practice and importance of biblical fellowship.

WEEK 20

WITNESSING ABOUT CHRIST TO OTHERS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What was the focus of the previous lesson?
- b. How would it affect the local church?

Main Text: John 1:35-42.

Memory Verse: *He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation'.* – Mark 16:15.

Introduction

The greatest desire of God has always been for the salvation of humankind. He wants everyone to come to repentance and be reconciled to himself through faith in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:3-5). But how can the lost believe in Christ and be saved when they have not heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them? (Rom. 10:14, 17). That is why in Mark 16:15, Jesus commands us to 'preach the good news to all creation'. We learn from the main text that when Andrew heard the testimony of John about Christ and followed Him, the first thing he did was to find his brother Simon and tell him about his newly found Lord.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did John testify of Christ as, 'the Lamb of God'? Verse 36.

2. How did the two disciples with John respond to this testimony about Christ? Verse 37.
3. What was the first thing Andrew did after he had chosen to follow Christ? Verse 40-41.
4. What can we learn as Christians from what Andrew did?
5. Discuss some of the things that often prevent Christians from sharing their faith.

Conclusion

Everyone who has received Christ should have the deep desire to share Him with others. Like Andrew, we must carry the gospel message to our unbelieving friends, relatives, co-workers and others. God is counting on us to move out of our comfort zones to find the unsaved (in our homes, neighbourhoods, workplaces, schools, on the streets, etc.) and bring them to Jesus. Doing this would bring more joy in Heaven (Luke 15:7, 10).

WEEK 21

**INVOLVEMENT IN
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you do in the week with regards to sharing the good news?
- b. How many souls did you witness to in the previous week?

Main Text: Nehemiah 3:1-5.

Memory Verse: *The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors. – Nehemiah 3:5b.*

Introduction

The vision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem brought various families and categories of people to work together. However, the Nobles of Tekoa were identified as persons who refused to work. Like the nobles of Tekoa, some people are indifferent to community transformation initiatives by the Church. Such persons withhold their skills, goodwill, resources and efforts from initiatives intended for the common good of people. What factors account for this behaviour? How can such persons be made to come on board? Our discussion today will help find solutions to this setback in the community transformation agenda of the Church.

Questions for Discussion

1. Identify the category of people who got involved in the rebuilding of the wall? Verse 1-5.
2. What motivated them to get involved in the rebuilding project?
3. In your view, why did the Men of Tekoa work while their nobles refused to work?
4. How can the behaviour of the nobles of Tekoa be avoided in the ECC and other community transformation initiatives by the Church?
5. What is the best way to bring such 'nobles' on board?

Conclusion

The passage provides a picture of the division of labour that led to the rebuilding of the walls in fifty-two days. The priests, children and various families were involved in rebuilding the wall. Though the people of Tekoa participated in the work, their nobles did not submit to the supervisors. These nobles thus lost a great chance to be part of the history of this enviable feat. Perhaps, they thought that this task was below their honour and therefore did not submit to the supervisors. Some people are not enthused about the community transformation initiatives of the Church because, they consider them to be the responsibility of government and district assemblies. No one should stand aloof. Everyone should get involved and contribute their

quota. However, we should not cast insinuations on people who refuse to join but court their interest patiently to contribute to the church's community transformation initiatives.

WEEK 22

**ENVIRONMENTAL CARE,
OUR RESPONSIBILITY**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in the previous lesson?
- b. How are you applying what you learnt in your life?

Main Text: Deuteronomy 23:9-14.

Memory Verse: *For the LORD your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you.* – Deuteronomy 23:14.

Introduction

The creation narratives indicate that GOD (Elohim) created the Heavens and the earth. At the apex of His creation, God made humankind and put all that He had created into their care. Thus, as stewards of God's creation, we are responsible for how we care for God's property. For us as Christians who acknowledge God as our heavenly Father, the responsibility is even greater; that is, we must take better care of the earth and do more robust advocacy for environmental care, because it is our Father's property. In this study, we discuss environmental cleanliness within our communities as the responsibility of the Christian in the local church.

Discussion Questions

1. How does God want us to keep the environment? Verse 9-11.
2. Why were the Israelites instructed to ensure environmental cleanliness? Verse 14.
3. How can we contribute towards environmental cleanliness in our communities?
4. Discuss practical ways by which the local church can advocate for better care of the environment in their communities.
5. What are the setbacks in the Environmental Care Campaign? How can we deal with these setbacks?

Conclusion

God intends humankind to live in harmony with all creation, and to use its resources in a responsible and sustainable way. However, humans continue to abuse and exploit the earth's resources leading to global warming, pollution of water bodies, land degradation, etc. These things must be our concern as people entrusted with the stewardship of the earth's resources.

In the passage, the Israelites were to take practical steps to maintain cleanliness in their environment. Likewise, keeping the environment clean is the responsibility of every believer and thus, require stringent measures that will ensure environmental cleanliness at all times.

The Environmental Care Campaign (ECC) of CoP's Vision 2023 is to create the awareness of this great responsibility entrusted to us as Christians. We must be committed to sustaining the gains made so far while finding practical means to dealing with the challenges hindering the successful implementation of the ECC in our local churches.

WEEK 24
INVESTING WISELY

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- c. What did you learn in the previous lesson?
- d. How are you taking up this responsibility in your community?

Main Text: Proverbs 28:19-20.

Memory Verse: *He who works his land will have abundant food but the one chases fantasies will have their fill of poverty.*
– Proverbs 28:19.

Introduction

The past years have witnessed the unfortunate collapse of some financial institutions in Ghana. Among these institutions are a few who promised very high interest rates which attracted people to invest. Unfortunately, many have neither received the interest promised nor the capital invested, thereby bringing upon themselves and their dependants untold hardships. In this study, we shall discuss the precautions to take in order to avoid loss of lifetime investments.

Questions for Discussion

1. Identify the two the types of investors cited in the text. Verse 19-20.
2. Which of the two types of investment would you consider as wise investment? Provide reasons for your answer.

3. What are the dangers of being eager to be rich?
4. How can we avoid the dangers of being eager to be rich?
5. What basic information should one have before putting money in any financial institution?

Conclusion

In the passage read, we understand that honest labour brings wealth while chasing fantasies leads to losses. In the context of this discussion, such fantasies include expected riches from lottery, betting, and investing in businesses and financial institutions that promise unrealistic profit margins. Fundamentally, the pitfalls in investment are sometimes caused by a person's eagerness to become rich in the shortest possible time. This can lead a person to part with lifetime investments and properties in response to swindlers who promise unrealistic returns. To make wise investment, interested persons need to seek information from the appropriate authority. Thus, people should not invest in a business just because the returns are high. They need to check the legality of the business because it could be illegal in spite of the huge profit margins promised.

MENTORING THE YOUTH

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

1. What did you learn in the previous study?
2. How did you apply it to your life?

Main Text: Exodus 24:12-13, Exodus 17:8-13.

Memory Verse: *So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.* – Exodus 17:10.

Introduction

Mentoring can be defined as a relational learning and developmental partnership between people with different levels of experience and knowledge in a particular area. This can be seen in the relationships that existed between Jesus and His disciples (Mark 3: 14-15), and other prominent biblical characters such as Jethro and Moses, Moses and Joshua, Paul and Timothy, among others. In the passage read, Moses brought Joshua close and provided him the opportunity to mature in various aspects of leadership. Mentoring the youth is needful for the transfer of right doctrines and values from one generation to the other. Our discussion of the main text would help us draw useful lessons as we endeavour to become intentional about mentoring the youth.

Questions for Discussion

1. From the scriptures, how did Moses mentor Joshua?
Exodus 24:12-13, Exodus 17:8-13.
2. How valuable were these experiences in preparing Joshua for leadership?
3. How can the youth be mentored to take up roles in the Church and society?
4. What are the challenges to mentoring young people in the Church?
5. Discuss practical solutions to the challenges identified in Question 4.

Conclusion

When God instructed Moses to meet Him on the mountain for the tablets of stone, law and commandment, he was accompanied by Joshua (Exo. 24:12). Also, Joshua was part of the men chosen to spy the land of Canaan (Numb. 13:16). In addition, Moses instructed Joshua to choose men and fight the Amalekites while he stood on the mountain (Exo. 17: 8-13). All these experiences contributed to building Joshua into a strong leader who led the Israelites to the Promised Land. Mentoring is intentional, that is, it starts when mature members of the Church identify or accept to establish a relationship that provides the avenue for training, accountability, and modelling of the Christian faith to

a young person (1 Thess. 2:8). The lesson here is that adults should consciously identify young people with potentials and entrust responsibilities to them. With patience, the youth should be guided to accomplish their mandates. The role of the youth in this mentoring relationship is to possess a teachable spirit and be determined to be groomed for future roles.

WEEK 26

EXAMINE YOURSELF

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Recite the previous memory verse
- b. How did the memory verse influence your activities in the week?

Main Text: 1 Corinthians 11:27-34.

Memory Verse: *A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.* – 1 Corinthians 11:28.

Introduction

One of the key objectives of Paul in writing First Corinthians was to correct and instruct the church in Corinth on issues that were affecting their growth, one of which was the manner in which they were taking the Communion. In the 'love feasts' which they held along the Communion, some were overfilling themselves while others were left hungry. While the rich were separated to eat their meal, the poor who could not contribute much were ignored Verse 21-22. Paul condemned the behaviour because it was encouraging division within the congregation and defeating the purpose of the Communion. He then charged them to examine themselves before partaking in the Lord's Supper so they do not bring judgement on themselves.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is your understanding of 'eat and drink in an unworthy manner'? Verse 27a.

2. Discuss what it means to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Verse 27b.
3. How can we examine ourselves before partaking in the Holy Communion? Verse 28.
4. When does a person eat and drink judgement upon themselves? Verse 29.
5. Which factors can prevent a person from partaking in the Lord's Supper?

Conclusion

In The Church of Pentecost, several behaviours can hinder a member from coming to the Lord's Table, aside not being baptised in water by immersion. These include being involved in marital relations without the required customary rites, having more than one spouse, among other public lifestyles that do not glorify God. Members serving under suspension for certain misconducts may also not be allowed to partake in the Communion. The most important thing however, is doing a personal 'heart-check' or self-examination to determine whether or not it is appropriate to dine with the Lord. This does not imply being perfect, but rather being sure there are no unconfessed sins or areas in your life which have not been surrendered to the authority of Christ. Like the psalmist, we should genuinely ask God to forgive our hidden faults and be ready to turn away from it.

WEEK 28

RAISING GODLY CHRISTIAN WORKFORCE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Summarise the previous lesson on Lord's Supper.
- b. What does 'self-examination' mean?

Main Text: Jeremiah 35:1-14.

Memory Verse: *But they replied, 'We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jonadab son of Recab gave us this command: "Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine"'. – Jeremiah 35:6 (NIV).*

Introduction

The development of human resource of a nation is very important to national development. However, for sustainable and meaningful development, the teaching and learning of technical skills must be linked to godly values. Failing this, the nation risks raising a highly skilled workforce who are indifferent to righteousness. With such tall trees with rotten roots at the helm of affairs, the nation risks setbacks of spiritual blindness, moral decay and economic hardship. In today's study we shall see the sterling example of the Rechabites who refused to compromise godly values passed on to them by their forebears.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did Jeremiah invite the Rechabites to drink wine? Verses 1, 2

2. What answer did the Rechabites give to the invitation, 'Drink Wine'? Verse 6a
3. Why did the Rechabites refuse to drink the wine offered them? Verse 6b
4. How did the Rechabites show the value of their godly upbringing? Verse 8
5. In what ways should Verses 13 and 14 inspire us to support PUC to raise godly professionals?

Conclusion

The Rechabites traced their lineage to Jehonadab (Jer. 35:8) who had ordered them to abstain from alcohol, among other things. They upheld this command with the needed strictness such that not even Jeremiah could convince them in the name of the Lord to do otherwise. This is the sort of attitude expected of products of Christian universities. As a Christian university, the Pentecost University College (PUC) intentionally integrates the values and principles of the Kingdom of God into its academic programmes. This is to shape the character of professionals it produces to transform every sphere of society with these values and principles. Raising godly professionals requires inflows of commitment, steadfastness, and adequate funding. This is why we must pray for, promote, and financially support the PUC to achieve its goal of raising godly professionals for national transformation.

WEEK 29

AVOID DOUBLE STANDARDS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. How has the previous lesson influenced your life?
- b. What text was used as memory verse?

Main Text: 2 Samuel 12:1-9.

Memory Verse: *A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight.* – Proverbs 11:1 (ESV).

Introduction

Double standards is to indulge in wrong doing whiles condemning others in the same act. Our integrity is tested in our secrets; when no one is watching. We must however know that our God is always watching. Integrity is who you truly are; it is the image in the mirror. In this study we shall discuss how David exhibited double standards when he killed Uriah.

Questions for Discussion

1. How was integrity played out in the life of Uriah? 2 Samuel 11:10, 11 and 14.
2. In what ways did David violate his integrity? Verse 7-9.
3. How will you describe the reaction of David after his hypocrisy was revealed to him? Verse 13.

4. State some ways in which double standards play out in our daily lives and how they can be avoided.
5. Why is integrity key to our Christian lives?

Conclusion

In our main text, we see David living in double standards. When he had compelled Uriah, his loyal soldier to be drunk, committed adultery with his wife, and murdered him, David was quick to pass judgement on a 'citizen' he believed to have stolen a sheep. When we live by God's standards, what is wrong becomes wrong in all situations. Like Uriah, we need to stand our grounds and avoid compromising in situations that only suit us. It is important to also indicate that although David exhibited gross hypocrisy, he did not live in his sin and did not try to defend his evil act but repented to redeem his damaged image. As we try to live as people of integrity, we must be ready to admit our wrongs and make amends.

WEEK 30

THE REWARD OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What was the topic of our last study?
- b. Explain briefly what you remember in that lesson.

Main Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20.

Memory Verse: *Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.* – Daniel 12:3.

Introduction

A reward is a thing that is given to someone in recognition of their service, effort or achievement. It could be a prize or an honour. In the New Testament, many rewards are spoken of. For example, there is the crown of life for those who patiently endure trials and tests (Jam. 1:12) and the crown of glory for those who faithfully care for the flock (1 Pet. 5:2-4). In today's passage, the Apostle Paul adds that there is also the crown of rejoicing for those committed to leading others to Christ. He indicates that the conversion of the Thessalonian believers, which was through his ministry, is a good ground for his hope, glory and joy before the Lord Jesus (1 Thess. 2:19-20).

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was Paul so eager to see the believers in Thessalonica? Verse 17.

2. What hindered his desire to see them face to face? Verse 18.
3. How did Paul see the conversion of the Thessalonians through his ministry? Verse 19.
4. Share your understanding of the statement, 'Indeed, you are our glory and joy' Verse 20.
5. How has today's studies encouraged you to win more souls for Christ?

Conclusion

There is deep satisfaction found in witnessing about Christ to others. The mere sense of obeying the command to preach the gospel, and the gratitude of those we lead to Christ gives us peace and joy. It is dreadful rather to withhold the message of salvation from the unsaved, because we can be held responsible for their loss (Ezek. 33:6-9). As the return of Christ and the end of time draws closer, we must hurriedly reach out to the lost with the message of life, bearing in mind that a reward awaits faithful soul-winners in Heaven.

WEEK 32

UPHOLDING TRUTH AND JUSTICE IN THE MARKET PLACE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What do you remember from last week's discussion?
- b. How are you applying the lessons?

Main Text: Isaiah 59:12-15.

Memory Verse: *Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices.* – Colossians 3:9.

Introduction

In the marketplace, the moral distortion of truth and deceit in doing business is often overlooked. Though subtle, the impression is that lying is unavoidable if one is to be successful in business. Unfortunately, deceptive characters have wrongfully assumed the title of being smart. In the passage, the Prophet Isaiah laments the perversion of justice in the daily affairs of the people. He concludes that truth has fallen in the streets. Our discussion today will highlight the reason for this situation and our responsibility towards restoring truth to its rightful position in the marketplace.

Questions for Discussion

1. Identify the three issues being addressed in the passage. Verses 14, 15.

2. Discuss the statement truth has fallen in the streets. Verse 14b.
3. What challenges do honest people face in the marketplace? Verse 15a.
4. How should Christians respond to these challenges?
5. How would you personally uphold truth, justice and fairness in the marketplace?

Conclusion

The statement 'truth is fallen in the streets' describes the total disregard for truth, honesty, and fairness in the public place; market, political arena, courts, hospitals, etc. The Prophet goes further to say in verse 15 that, those who stand for the truth are oppressed by the vanguards of falsehood. When lies and falsehood control the affairs of the marketplace, honest people are persecuted. Nevertheless, we have been mandated by God to restore order to the marketplace. In pursuing this agenda, Christians need to avoid half-truths, trickery and manipulation at the workplace. It is a call to be straightforward, firm, transparent and sincere. Truth can fall where proverbially, there is no pillar to support it. As agents of transformation, we must uphold truth, honesty and fairness in the market place.

WEEK 33

FULFILLING THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What was your understanding of the term 'marketplace' as used in the previous lesson?
- b. What have you been doing differently to uphold truth after the lesson?

Main Text: Matthew 25:31-40.

Memory Verse: *I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.* – Matthew 25:36 (ESV).

Introduction

The Church is the salt of the earth and light of the world. Thus, the Church has the responsibility to reflect the love of Christ to the world in which she operates. In view of this, the Pentecost Social Services (PENTSOS) was established in the year 1983. Among other functions, PENTSOS is charged with the mandate to formulate policies and provide direction that would enable the Church meet her social responsibilities. In the passage read, Jesus reckons the various actions taken to meet the needs of people as help extended to Him. Our study today seeks to highlight the Church's contributions in meeting some needs of humankind, as stated in the passage.

Questions for Discussion

1. Identify some of the needs of humankind stated in verse 34-37.
2. Why do some christians and churches overlook or neglect people with such needs? Verse 37-39.
3. Discuss the statement, 'Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me'. Verse 40.
4. Which of the social intervention programmes of The Church of Pentecost do you know?
5. How can we resource PENTSOS to fulfil their mandate?

Conclusion

The Church through PENTOS is committed to meeting her social responsibilities. The vision 2023 envisaged to construct twenty-five (25) boreholes for deprived communities, one CHPS compound, and two correctional facilities at Nsawam and Ejura Prisons. Currently, there are eighty-six basic schools, two Senior High Schools, two Vocational Schools, one Skills Learning Centre and eight health facilities under PENTSOS. Also, the Pentecost Educational Scholarship Scheme (PESS) and another Scholarship for students who qualify to study at the Pentecost University College have been instituted among other measures to assist needy students in the Areas and Districts of the Church. From the above, it is evident

that the Church is contributing to feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving water to the thirsty, and visiting prisoners. We need to appreciate these efforts being made by the Church and support PENTSOS to fulfil the social responsibilities of the Church.

WEEK 34

THE COST OF LAZINESS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. From the previous lesson, what did you learn concerning social responsibility?
- b. What social needs did you identify in your community?

Main Text: Proverbs 24:30-34.

Memory Verse: *The sluggard says, 'there is a lion outside! I will be killed in the public square'.* – Proverbs 22:13.

Introduction

Many people have the tendency to use excuses to neglect their responsibilities. What is common to lazy people is the attitude of shifting blame and finding reason for their inability to perform a task. Often, the habitual excuse-maker is seen as the weak-link at the workplace. This is a reputation every Christian should avoid. In this light, we shall discuss the underlying causes and solutions to dealing with this attitude.

Questions for Discussion

1. From the passage, what are the marks of a lazy person? Verses 31-34, Prov. 22:13
2. In what ways is the attitude of laziness expressed in contemporary times?

3. How does the attitude of laziness lead to poverty?
Verse 33-34
4. How can the attitude of laziness of be dealt with?

Conclusion

The field of the sluggard as described in Proverbs 24:31-34 is overgrown with thorns, covered with weeds and has its fence wall broken. This is because daily, the sluggard finds an excuse to procrastinate, idle about and avoid work. Little by little, work undone accumulates and the sluggard is overwhelmed by the backlog. Laziness brings failure, poverty and lack of progress. Possibly, it is for this reason that some people live in unclean environments while others suffer unemployment and avoidable poverty. No one takes a habitual excuse maker serious at the workplace. They are often bypassed during promotion to which they complain bitterly. Such a person is a bad example and their testimony as Christians may not be taken seriously. To avoid being lazy, inculcate the habit of self-discipline, avoid procrastination, and plan your day by apportioning time for every task.

WEEK 35

DON'T WITHHOLD YOUR WORKERS' PAY

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What was the main issue discussed last week?
- b. How has the lesson impacted your life?

Main Text: Deuteronomy 24:14-15.

Memory Verse: *Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labour.* – Jeremiah 22:13.

Introduction

Hired servants in biblical times were to receive their wages by the end of the period agreed upon. Thus, people who hired them were bound by Law not to withhold their wages even for a night. This is because that was their only hope for subsistence. Treating the needy, subordinates and the vulnerable justly is a major theme of the Bible. Today, we shall examine the reason for the deliberate delay of wages by some employers and the biblical response to such practices.

Questions for Discussion

1. How should 'hired persons' be paid? Verses 14, 15.
2. Why should we pay people we hire for work promptly? Verse 15.

3. Discuss why some employers withhold workers' wages deliberately?
4. How do you think God sees such practices?
5. Personally, how would you pay people who render services for you promptly?

Conclusion

In Deuteronomy 24:15, we understand that withholding what is due people who render services for wages is an offense against God. From the passage, we can infer that the command is to pay people we engage for work promptly because it is their only hope for survival. Delaying payments without just cause makes them cry unto God for justice. This is what every employer should avoid because according to the Scriptures, the cry of the worker becomes sin for the employer who has withheld their wages. Some employers delay payments because they reinvest it in other businesses. Others do it out of sheer exploitation of the poor because of their helpless situation. As light to the world, Christian employers are encouraged to avoid such behaviour and pay workers promptly. According to Jeremiah 22:13 and James 5:4, people who accumulate wealth using the toil of others unjustly will be punished by God. Where the employer is unable to pay promptly for any plausible reason, they should dialogue amicably with workers.

WEEK 37

CHILDREN'S DAY – JESUS, FRIEND OF CHILDREN

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. From the previous discussion, what does the scriptures say about withholding workers' pay without just cause?
- b. In what way was the previous study beneficial?

Main Text: Mark 10:13-16.

Memory Verse: *But Jesus called the children to him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these'. – Luke 18:16.*

Introduction

In the CoP, children are considered as gifts to the family and Church. The Church has a strong Children's Ministry which provides training along biblical principles of spiritual growth. These include lessons on salvation, worship, manners and respect for authority. The Church observes Children's Week annually to celebrate children and reinforce the need to be intentional about their holistic growth. Today's study focuses on how Jesus sees children with the view to shaping our perception of children with the word of God.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think the disciples stopped the people and how is this behaviour expressed in our churches?
2. What was Jesus' reaction when His disciples rebuked them? Verses 14, 15.
3. What was Jesus' command to His disciples and by extension all Christians? Verse 14
4. Explain Jesus' statement, '...whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it'.
5. How should parents and guardians complement the work of the Children's Ministry?

Conclusion

We can infer from the behaviour of the disciples that they did not place value on the children's meeting with Jesus. Leaders and members of the church must give priority to children. We must avoid the tendency to belittle the need for them to be involved in various aspects of the church service. Parents and guardians should involve children in devotions, Bible study and other church activities all in the effort to guide their growth and love for Jesus. In the CoP, children are considered as members of the church and thus, should be accorded all the courtesies that will enable them grow in Christ.

WEEK 38

HOLY VESSEL FOR HONOURABLE USE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you do differently to disciple your children?
- b. How are you overcoming some of the challenges in discipling your children?

Main Text: 2 Timothy 2:19-22

Memory Verse: *If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honourable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.* – 2 Timothy 2:21 (NLT).

Introduction

The church is made up of many people because the door of salvation is open to all irrespective of race, colour, behaviour and worldview. However, we must make a conscious decision to consecrate ourselves to holy living immediately we accept Jesus as Lord and saviour. The word ‘honour’ means high regard, respect or esteem. To be honourable therefore requires one to be holy (set apart from filthiness) as a model of good things. In our main text, Paul uses the metaphor of various kinds of utensils in the home to demonstrate God’s choice of holy people as vessels of honour. In our discussion today, we shall discuss how to become vessels of honour.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the categories of articles in a large house according to verse 20?
2. What is a vessel of honour?
3. How is a vessel of honour different from a vessel of dishonour? Verse 21.
4. Identify the personal responsibility involved in becoming a vessel of honour.
5. What are the benefits of becoming a vessel of honour?

Conclusion

In our discussion, we realised that God uses vessels of honour that is Christians who have consciously separated themselves from 'dead works' through the help of the Holy spirit. Thus, each person has the responsibility to set himself apart to pursue holy living by denouncing sin daily. Vessels of honour are therefore vessels sanctified and useful to the Master for every good work. Practically, abstaining from sin through yielding to the Holy Spirit imparts holiness which makes one a vessel of honour.

WEEK 39

HOW TO ENGAGE IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What do you remember about the topic 'Vessel of Honour'?
- b. How would you devote yourself to holy living everyday?

Main Text: John 4:5-15.

Memory Verse: *To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.* – 1 Corinthians 9:20.

Introduction

Personal evangelism is one of the most effective ways to witness about Christ. However, many Christians fail in their attempts to engage in it. This happens usually because they do not know how to go about it. Knowing how to share our faith is what often makes the difference between effective and ineffective witnessing. In today's main text, Jesus provides an example in effective witnessing. He demonstrates how we can go about sharing our faith with others so clearly and convincingly that they can make the decision to accept Him as Lord and Saviour.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did Jesus return to Galilee from Judea? Verse 1-3.
2. In what state did Jesus find himself when He came to Sychar? Verse 5-6.
3. What did Jesus request from the woman, and what was her response? Verses 7, 9.
4. Discuss the approach and style Jesus used in witnessing to the woman.
5. Briefly demonstrate how to witness to others from Jesus' example.

Conclusion

We have observed how Jesus witnessed to the woman of Samaria. He was well prepared, calm and patient with her. He also engaged her in a very conversational way. He began on the natural side and gradually focused the conversation on spiritual things. To be able to witness effectively to others, we must be well prepared in the Word and prayer, and have a pleasing lifestyle. We must be calm and patient with those we want to lead to Christ. We must be conversational in our approach by asking and allowing relevant questions. More importantly, our focus should be to help the other person to understand who Jesus Christ is, what He has done for them and how they can receive Him into their lives.

WEEK 41

UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Briefly explain why personal evangelism is very effective.
- b. Share what you did in the week to witness about Christ.

Main Text: Ephesians 4:1-6.

Memory Verse: *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.* –Ephesians 4:3.

Introduction

The Church at Ephesus was composed of Jewish and Gentile converts. Due to their different backgrounds, there was the tendency for frequent disagreements. One possible area for dissent was how the Gentiles had been admitted to the faith without bearing the yoke of circumcision in the Mosaic Law. Paul in this passage provides direction for the unity of people from various backgrounds in the church. It is in view of this, that presently, Pentecostal and Charismatics churches have come together under the umbrella of the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC). Currently, there are over two hundred (200) churches under the council. Today, we shall examine the basis for unity in the body of Christ.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the basis for Christian Unity? Verse 4.
2. Why do some Christians look down on people in other denominations?
3. How should we relate with Christians in other denominations?
4. In what ways does unity in the body of Christ enhance the Great Commission?

Conclusion

Unity in the body of Christ is very important. This is because we belong to various ethnic groups, educational backgrounds and political persuasions. However, we are united by one Body, one Spirit and one Hope. One Body implies there is one Universal Church with people belonging to different denominations, race, and ethnicity but united by their faith and continuous confession of the lordship of Christ. One Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit indwelling the hearts of all true believers causing them to do the will of the Father. The meaning connoted by One Hope is that, all Christians are looking forward to everlasting life (1 Pet. 1:3-4). Thus, all true believers in the Universal Church are joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Christians are united by the same body, same spirit and one hope though we may belong to different denominations.

Sometimes, people look down on other denominations because of ignorance of unity of the body of Christ, perceived departure from the right Christian doctrine, quest for dominance and superiority, historical rifts, etc. However, the Great Commission is bigger than one denomination. Thus, we must pray that all churches will pursue the right doctrine such that our coming together will speed up the progress of the kingdom of business.

WEEK 42

REMEMBER THE LORD'S SERVANTS

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What is your view on unity in the body of Christ as discussed in the previous lesson?
- b. How can you contribute to this unity as an individual?

Main Text: 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

Memory Verse: *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* – Hebrews 13:7 (KJV).

Introduction

Every organisation has a retirement structure and package for its workers. The Church of Pentecost has instituted the Pensions Fund as part of her retirement package for retired ministers. These men and women who have served the Lord, humankind and the Church did so passionately and, for some, and in some circumstances at the peril of their lives. In view of this, the Church should see it as a blessing to have these retired ministers and widows around and contribute generously to the Pension's Fund.

Questions for Discussion

1. How do you understand the phrase being poured out as a drink offering? Verse 6.

2. What are the three key things Paul said he had done as he neared the end of his ministry? Verse 7.
3. Identify any factor that motivated Paul to work as hard as he did?
4. In what ways can we demonstrate our love for our retired ministers?
5. How should the life of our retired ministers spur us unto good works? Hebrews 13:7

Conclusion

Paul in his service to the Lord compared his life to a drink offering. In the Old Testament, drink offering was part of the basic offerings presented to the Lord. It signified a person's devotion, and once offered, recovery was not possible. Paul's motivation for the ministry was not the material gains the churches of God could or would bring to him. He had eternity in view and so looked at life with joy. His example shows that while time and age do require adjustments, there is never an appropriate time to cease in the work of the Lord. Inasmuch as he was content with life, he also longed for human companionship and so requested for Mark's visit and bemoaned how some had neglected him (2 Tim. 4:10-11). This is why CoP has a well-structured retirement plan for ministers and contributes to the PENSION'S FUND. Today, we are encouraged to look around and visit retirees, encourage and pray with them. We must learn from the exemplary service of our retired ministers and offer ministry in the Lord's vineyard while we have strength.

WEEK 43

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN WITNESSING

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in the previous study?
- b. What did you do to appreciate the Lord's servants?

Main Text: Acts 1:4-8.

Memory Verse: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* – Acts 1:8.

Introduction

Before Jesus ascended to Heaven after His death and resurrection, He commanded His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they had received the Father's promise, which was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The purpose for the baptism was to empower them to be witnesses of Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the world. After the outpouring on the Day of Pentecost, we observe how with power and boldness the disciples preached about Christ in the temples, neighbourhoods and on the streets. Christians today can likewise engage in effective witnessing only through the power and leading of the Holy Spirit.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did Jesus command His disciples to wait in Jerusalem? Verse 4-5.
2. What did the disciples ask of Jesus, and what was His response? Verse 6-7.
3. Discuss the purpose of the power the disciples were to receive. Verse 8.
4. Where were the disciples expected to witness about Christ? Verse 8b.
5. In which other ways does the Holy Spirit help believers to share their faith?

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit helps us in many ways to engage in effective witnessing. He gives us the boldness to preach the good news (Acts 4:31) and bears in us the character of Christ so we can live a pleasing lifestyle. He also gives us understanding in the Word of God, reminds us of what we learn from it (John 14:26) and teaches us what to say at any point (Luke 12:11-12). As we witness to others, the Holy Spirit convicts them of sin and draws their heart to Christ (John 14:8). Clearly, we cannot do effective witnessing without the help of the Spirit. We must therefore learn to always wait on Him in prayer and allow Him to lead us.

WEEK 44
LORD'S SUPPER

WEEK 45

THE CHURCH IS HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn in the previous study?
- b. How has the Holy Spirit led you in witnessing?

Main Text: Philippians 2:14-16.

Memory Verse: *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.* – Ephesians 5:27 (KJV).

Introduction

The word ‘blemish’ could mean a stain, mark or imperfection that disfigures the appearance of something or destroys a person’s reputation. The Church is a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9) that is made up of faithful Christians who exemplify the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the Perfect One. God expects the Church to be sanctified, holy and separated from sin. It is to be blameless and serve as a model of integrity. The Church without blemish is, therefore, an embodiment of Jesus’ ministry and righteous living.

Even in the Old Testament, sacrifices offered to God were to be without spot or wrinkle (Exo. 12:5; Deut. 17:1) and that presupposes the kind of Church that God established through the work of Christ on Calvary.

In the same way, the Church must be an epitome of righteousness and godliness in this depraved world.

Questions for Discussion

1. Explain in your own words why the Church should be without blemish. Ephesians 5:27.
2. How do you explain the biblical command that Christians should be blameless in this 'crooked and depraved generation'? Verse 15.
3. In which way can we live a 'blameless and pure' lifestyle? Verse 15.
4. What benefit would the Church get if it remains blameless? Philippians 2:16a.
5. Examine today's Church in the light of the call for the Church to be blameless.

Conclusion

Instead of being blameless, today's Church seems to be bedevilled with spots and wrinkles such as false teachings, corruption as well as carnality and materialism. These vices are contrary to the call for the believer to be blameless and live above reproach (Col 1:22). Building a Church without blemish must be the responsibility of every Christian. We are the light of the world and under no circumstance should we allow darkness to surround and overwhelm us. Every Christian must be a role model for society.

WEEK 46

**CHURCH DISCIPLINE FOR
CORPORATE HOLINESS**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn about the church in the previous lesson?
- b. How would you ensure that your local church becomes a blameless church?

Main Text: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13.

Memory Verse: *Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.* – Hebrews 12:10.

Introduction

The Church of Pentecost has a divine destiny, being marked out distinctively by her unique covenant and relationship with God dating back as far as 1931. The covenant has two parts – God’s part and the Church’s part. One of God’s part is His promise to, from time to time, prune and purge His Church of all parasites, pests, personality cults, false doctrines, social and religious evil in order to make the Church holy and radiant to avoid spiritual decline and apostasy. In the main passage, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth not to condone sexual immorality but discipline people who indulge in such practices.

Today, we shall we look at church discipline as God's tool for ensuring the corporate holiness of the church.

Discussion Questions

1. What was the nature of the immorality in the Corinthian church and how did Paul react to it? Verse 1 - 3.
2. How is the local church to treat brethren who fall into open sin? Verse 4-11.
3. How do you understand the phrase 'Hand him over to Satan'? Verse 5
4. For what reasons do we sometimes fail to report issues of misconduct of members/officers when these come to our personal attention? What is the effect on the church?
5. How is the local church affected by the sinful life of a church member?

Conclusion

A brother in the Corinthian church was sleeping with his father's wife and the church leadership had failed to discipline him. The Apostle Paul was enraged at this state of affairs and rebuked them for seeing nothing wrong with what was going on. Immorality is like yeast; if it is allowed to continue, many people in the church will imitate it thinking there is nothing wrong with it. Human beings learn by association that is why bad

company corrupts godly character (1 Cor. 15:33). The church leadership is expected to, in the spirit of love, confront members who live in immorality and apply appropriate disciplinary actions. Disciplinary sanctions in the church of Pentecost include warning, open or public rebuke, suspension from full membership for members, revocation of office, demotion, downgrading and excommunication.

WEEK 47

RESTORING DISCIPLINED MEMBERS TO FELLOWSHIP

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What should the church do to members who fall into open sin?
- b. Why do you agree that such members should be disciplined?

Main Text: 2 Corinthians 2: 5-10

Memory Verse: *This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.*
– 2 Corinthians. 2:6-7.

Introduction

Restoration in church discipline is when a person disciplined by the church for an offense is reinstated to fellowship and privileges of the church. This is done on the evidence of true repentance of the person serving disciplinary sanctions of the church. In the passage read, Paul pleaded with the church to forgive and restore the immoral brother who had earlier been disciplined by the church. Our discussion today will help us understand the biblical basis for this practice and also, appreciate how it is applied in The Church of Pentecost.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was Paul calling for the restoration of the brother who had earlier been disciplined by the church? 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 2 Corinthians 2:6-7.
2. How should church members treat suspended members who show genuine repentance? Verse 7.
3. How do you understand the statement, I urge you to reaffirm your love for him in verse 8?
4. Identify and discuss some challenges suspended members who have repented go through in the local church?
5. How can we demonstrate love and compassion for such people who have shown genuine repentance?

Conclusion

In 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth to discipline the immoral brother. After a period of time, Paul instructed the same church to restore this brother to fellowship (2 Cor. 2: 1-7) because the disciplinary action had served the purpose of preserving the image of the church as well as bringing the offender to repentance. In The Church of Pentecost, disciplined members who show genuine repentance are restored to fellowship. Thus, the local church should forgive, affirm their love and welcome disciplined members who show genuine repentance. The decision to restore a disciplined member in the local church to fellowship is taken by the District Pastor in consultation

with the local presbytery. Depending on the gravity of the offense and disciplinary action applied, a person may cease to hold leadership positions even after being restored. We must balance compassion with caution in order not to hastily restore unrepented offenders to fellowship of the local church.

WEEK 48

TRULY ACKNOWLEDGING CHRIST'S LORDSHIP

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. How has the previous lesson changed your perception on restoring disciplined people in the church?
- b. Share your experiences on the positives of relating with such people in the church?

Main Text: Matthew 7:21-23.

Memory Verse: *Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not what I say?* – Luke 6:46.

Introduction

During Jesus' stay on earth, many people followed Him for several reasons. Some identified themselves to be disciples and acknowledged Him to be their teacher and master. Yet, their actions proved otherwise. Their persistent reference to Jesus as Lord did not match their obedience to His teachings. To call someone Lord and disobey the person is contradictory because lordship implies total control and ownership. In this lesson, we will come to know the difference between genuinely acknowledging Jesus as Lord and paying lip service to His lordship over a person's life.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean to say Jesus is your Lord?
2. Why would Jesus deny the categories of people mentioned in verse 22-23?
3. What accounts for the gap between people's confession of Jesus as Lord and their obedience to His teachings?
4. How does the mere profession of Jesus as Lord affect our testimony as Christians?
5. How can we practically demonstrate that Jesus is truly the Lord of our lives?

Conclusion

To call Jesus Lord is to acknowledge His rulership over one's life. This implies that a person's decisions and actions are subject to the dictates of the Lord Jesus Christ which is revealed in His word, and leading of the Holy Spirit that indwells a believer. Sometimes, there is a huge gap between the profession of Christ as Lord and obedience to His teachings due to ignorance of some believers of what the confession of Christ as Lord entails. To be a Christian is to truly be under Christ's lordship; that He has full control over every area of our lives. This means, taking orders from Him through the Holy Spirit He has given to us and choosing to follow His way against the desires of our flesh.

Truly acknowledging Christ as Lord demands total surrender of our will, interests, desires and aspirations to His authority and direction for our lives. We can do this by yielding daily to our Lord Jesus Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit.

WEEK 50

IN ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS AND PRAISE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. Share how you demonstrated Christ's Lordship over your life in the past week.

Main Text: Psalm 103:1-5, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Memory Verse: *In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* – 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (KJV).

Introduction

By the grace of God, we are inching gradually to the end of the year. While some can celebrate successes chalked, others have mixed feelings about the year. For those whose expectations and aspirations may not have been realised, the scriptures encourage us to give thanks and praise in all situations. Giving thanks in all situations should be the lifestyle of a Christian. The passage read tells us not to forget all of God's benefits which include his providence, mercies and deliverance from destruction. Today, we shall discuss how we can praise and thank God irrespective of what happened during the year.

Questions for Discussion

1. As we draw to the end of the year, what can we praise and thank God for.
2. What will make it difficult to give praise and thanks during this period?
3. Discuss the meaning of the statement, 'give thanks in all things' Verse 18.
4. Why is it important to give thanks in all things? Verse 18, Romans 8:28.
5. How would you show your appreciation to God for all that happened this year?

Conclusion

Sometimes, unpleasant situations experienced during the year can lead to disappointment and bitterness which could make one unthankful. Nevertheless, the Scriptures command us to give thanks and praise in all things; in both good and bad situations. This is because an ungrateful and bitter person gradually becomes cold and indifferent towards God's providence. In the passage read, we are to give thanks for God's mercies and providence in healing our diseases, delivering us from destruction, and renewing our strengths. Thanking and praising God for all things release us from the bondage of regrets, discontentment, unhealthy comparisons, and bitterness. A grateful spirit acknowledges the hand of God in every situation of life. It makes one rest in the Lord knowing that He has all issues under control.

WEEK 51

THE LORD JESUS DESERVES WORSHIP

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Give a brief overview of the previous lesson
- b. In what ways have you been thankful to the Lord over the week?

Main Text: Philippians 2:5-11.

Memory Verse: *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name. – Philippians 2:9.*

Introduction

Some religious sects do not understand why we ascribe worship to Jesus. They adduce several reasons to reject the deity and lordship of Christ. However, the New Testament bears witness to Jesus as God's incarnate and a revelation of His nature and character. This special revelation of God through Christ enables us to acknowledge Jesus' deity and lordship. Also, through Jesus' redemptive work, God the Father has exalted Him above all else giving Him a name that is above every other name (Phil. 2:6-11). Thus, the Lord Jesus deserves to be worshiped. Our discussion today seeks to highlight why we ascribe worship to the Lord Jesus.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does the passage teach about the deity of Christ? Verse 6, John 1:1-2, Hebrews 1:3

2. What did Jesus do according to verse 7?
3. How do you understand the statement, 'God has exalted Him' in verse 9?
4. Discuss why Jesus deserves to be worshipped? John 17:1-2, Ephesians 1:20-2, Philippians 2:10-11.
5. What separates Jesus from other religious leaders such as Muhammed, Buddha, etc?

Conclusion

The deity of Christ is not questionable. This is because Bible ascribes characteristics of deity to Jesus. He is described as eternal (Rev. 1:8), immutable (Heb. 1:10-12), omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. Also, the Prophets and angels who spoke about His birth called Him Mighty God, Everlasting Father (Isa. 9:6) and Immanuel (God with us). Also, the works of Jesus proved His deity; He is the upholder of all things (Col. 1:15-16), He forgives sin (Col. 3:13), He will raise the dead and execute judgement (John 5:21-25). The passage read indicates that, Christ being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God (Phil. 2:6-7).

What this means is that, from the beginning, Jesus had the same infinite glory with the Father as God. Also, being exalted by God (Phil. 2:9) implies that Christ has glory, honour and power which no being, either in Heaven or earth has. Thus, no other name can be compared to Jesus' name.

His rank, dignity and titles are above all others. Jesus is equal with the Father and is worshipped as God. Jesus was not a mere prophet and messenger sent by God to accomplish a task. Jesus' existence before creation, incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection and role in future judgement of the righteous and wicked prove His divinity and lordship. The Lord Jesus indeed deserves to be worshipped.

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HOME CELL

WEEK 3
PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 4

**HOW TO USE THE BIBLE
IN YOUR DEVOTIONS**

Review of the Year (5 Minutes)

- a. How did the Home Cell contribute to your spiritual life in the previous year?

Main Text: Acts 17:10-14.

Memory Verse: *Like new born babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.* – 1 Peter 2:2.

Introduction

The Bible plays a critical role in our spiritual growth. Reading the bible could follow a character study, topical study, book study or a devotional guide. In our passage today, the Bereans set an example of examining the scriptures daily. In studying the Bible during devotions, three main questions could be asked; what does the passage say (Observation), what does the passage mean (Interpretation) and how does the passage apply to my life (Application). These are reflective questions that must engage our minds as we read the Bible during our daily devotions.

Questions for Discussion

1. How were the Bereans different from the Thessalonians? Verses 10, 11.

2. Explain the phrase, 'examining the scriptures' Verse 11.
3. How is 'examining the scriptures' different from 'reading the scriptures'?
4. What is the procedure for Bible study during devotions?
5. How does effective Bible study during devotions enhance spiritual growth?

Conclusion

The Greek word for 'examining' as rendered in the passage is *anakrino*. This word implies the repetitive act of studying a document. Examining the scriptures daily as the Bereans did is crucial. A time of devotions should ideally start with prayer. Thereafter, read a passage from the Bible and reflect on it to get the meanings of words and phrases in the passage. Your understanding of a passage read should be consistent with the entire doctrine of the Bible. The next stage is to connect the lessons in the passage to your personal life and relationship with God. This should be followed with a response: thanksgiving, repentance, prayer, faith and how to obey what the scripture says. It is good to keep a journal of lessons, discoveries, prayers and favourite Bible verses encountered during the devotions. A notepad and pen will help keep a good journal.

WEEK 8

TITHING: CONSEQUENCES OF UNFAITHFULNESS

Review of Previous Lesson

- a. What impact did the previous lesson have on you?
- b. Share your experience with the group.

Main Text: Malachi 3:7-12.

Memory Verse: *You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation.* – Malachi 3:9 (NKJV).

Introduction

The tithing system began during the time of Moses (Lev. 27:30-34, Deut. 14:22). The Levites received some of the tithes because they could not possess land of their own (Num. 18:20, 21). During the time of Malachi, however, default in giving tithes and offerings was a national issue as all (the priesthood inclusive) were culpable. The misconduct attracted stiff punishment from God. Specifically, failing to obey the commands of the Torah brings a curse on the people. In this study we shall look at the consequences that Israel suffered for non-payment of tithes.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did God describe Israel's failure to observe His ordinances? Verse 7.

2. Why did God charge the children of Israel with the criminal offence of robbery? Verse 8.
3. Of what commodity was Israel robbing God? Verse 8.
4. What punishment did God prescribe for Israel for robbing Him? verse 9.
5. How does the main text speak to you as a Christian?

Conclusion

During Malachi's day, the people were not giving tithes, so the Levites went to work to earn a living, thereby neglecting their God-given responsibilities to care for the Temple and for the service of worship. Thus, the Israelites were reduced to a community of poverty-stricken residents. They were suffering while the nations prospered. For this reason, they complained that God had blessed the nations, but had ignored them. However, God charged Israel with the criminal offence of robbery. They were robbing God in tithes and offerings through non-compliance with provisions in the Covenant. God placed them under a curse for which they missed all the benevolences that God dispenses to His people and were exposed to extreme levels of suffering inflicted by God using 'agents' like droughts, locusts, plant or human diseases, or military defeats. Their only way out of this misery was for them to tithe. Today, we are called to same obedience to God through tithing.

WEEK 9
LORD'S SUPPER

WEEK 10
CELL SOCIAL IMPACT

WEEK 13

RESPECT FOR SUBORDINATES

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What did you learn from the previous lesson?
- b. Share how faithfulness in tithing has averted some negative consequences in your life.

Main Text: Ephesians 6:5-9.

Memory Verse: *For God does not show favouritism.* – Romans 2:11.

Introduction

The Scriptures abound with many entreaties to treat strangers, slaves (subordinates), the poor and needy with respect. In Exodus 22:21, God told the Israelites not to oppress foreigners by remembering that they were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. Sometimes, we forget the miseries we suffered under our superiors and mete out the same treatments we dreaded to people who work under us such as house helps, employees, and those lower in rank at the workplaces. These issues will engage our attention as we discuss the position of the scriptures on these matters.

Questions for Discussion

1. How were masters to treat their slaves? Verse 9
2. Why were masters asked to treat their slaves well? Verse 9b.

3. What constitutes maltreatment of a subordinate at home or the workplace?
4. Why do masters sometimes mistreat their subordinates?
5. How can we avoid the tendency to disrespect subordinates?

Conclusion

Having exhorted subordinates to be of good conduct in Ephesians 6:5-8, masters were asked to treat their subordinates with much respect. The reason for this command is that, God is no respecter of persons, that is, He treats all men with love. In biblical times, slaves (subordinates) were the properties of masters and they could do as they pleased with them. However, masters who were in the faith were not to follow this practice. Likewise, anything one does to spite, disrespect and infringe on the fundamental human rights of a subordinate constitutes maltreatment. Christians should not take advantage of leadership positions to oppress and punish subordinates unreasonably. To avoid such tendencies, we must treat subordinates with love, kindness and mercy. We must humbly accept that our subordinates are not less human; they just happen to work under our supervision. They deserve our respect and kind treatment because we could easily be where they are.

WEEK 14
LORD'S SUPPER

WEEK 15
CELL SOCIAL IMPACT

WEEK 17

COMMUNION - THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Where can the text 'For God does not show favouritism' be found in the bible?
- b. How did you apply the previous lesson in your life?

Main Text: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Memory Verse: *And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me'. – 1 Corinthians 11:24.*

Introduction

The Lord's Supper signifies the unique fellowship we have with Christ because of the sense of dining with Him. It is a time to experience companionship with our Lord and commune with other believers in the Church (1 Cor. 10:16-17). The occasion is also an open declaration of the New Covenant we have with God through the sinless life, atoning death and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11:25b). Through this commemorative ceremony, we accept the lordship of Christ over our lives and affirm our commitment to remain faithful to Him.

Questions for Discussion

1. From whom did Paul receive his account on the Lord's Supper? Verse 23.

2. In your view, how often should one partake of the Lord's Supper?
3. According to verse 26, how significant is the Lord's Supper to believers?
4. Personal evangelism is connected to one's participation in the Lord's Supper. Discuss. Verse 26.
5. How would you remember Christ when you participate in the Lord's Supper?

Conclusion

In today's study, we have considered the present significance of the Lord's Supper. In 1 Corinthians 11:26, Paul indicates that the practice of it can be as often as possible. Hence, while some denominations practice it weekly, others do it annually. In The Church of Pentecost, it is observed on the first Sunday of every month, and is officiated by either a minister or an elder. The unique significance of the Lord's Supper is that, participants proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Cor 11:26). This should motivate us to always get ourselves well prepared before partaking in it.

The full significance of this sacred ordinance can only be realised when we come to the occasion with a pure heart, genuine commitment to God's Word and in earnest prayers. That is why in The Church of Pentecost, the week preceding the Lord's Supper day is set aside for preparatory prayers and teachings. We should make all efforts to actively take part in such church meetings.

WEEK 22

GETTING STAKEHOLDERS ON BOARD

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What new thing have you learnt about the Lord's Supper?
- b. What will you do to ensure continuous participation in the Lord's Supper?

Main Text: Nehemiah 4:13-23.

Memory Verse: *In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.* – Nehemiah 4:20 (KJV).

Introduction

The background to this passage was the conspiracy by Sanballat, Tobia, the Arabians, Ammonites and Ashdodites to frustrate the rebuilding project. In response, Nehemiah mobilised all categories of stakeholders to resist these detractors. Working with stakeholders is one strategic means to accomplishing great tasks with ease. A stakeholder is basically anyone who has something to gain or lose from a project or development initiative. They can be categorised under key stakeholders, primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders. As a church, it is important that we also engage stakeholders in all our social initiatives such as the Environmental Care Campaign.

In this lesson, we shall discuss how Nehemiah interacted and worked with all categories of stakeholders to rebuild the broken walls in fifty-two days.

Questions for Discussion

1. Identify the three groups of people Nehemiah addressed after pondering over the threat. Verse 14.
2. In your view, how did these groups going to influence the success or failure of the rebuilding project?
3. Who are the stakeholders in the Environmental Care Campaign?
4. How do we ensure that all categories of stakeholders are involved in the Environmental Care Campaign?

Conclusion

Nehemiah's address to the nobles, rulers and common people is very instructive for community participation in the Environmental Care Campaign (ECC). He conferred with the various categories of stakeholders: nobles, rulers and the rest of the people. These groups can be likened to chiefs, government agencies and people in our communities respectively. Key stakeholders are people, groups and institutions who can influence the success of a project significantly. Government agencies, chiefs, opinion leaders, market queens, GPRTU, waste management companies, etc. are key stakeholders in the ECC. Primary stakeholders include those who are directly affected by a project.

They are usually referred to as beneficiaries of a project. Last but not least, secondary stakeholders are all other groups who are indirectly impacted by the project. These include corporate organisations, NGOs, the media, government, etc. The coming together of all these categories of stakeholders helps the community to own the project and also, assist with logistics for the successful implementation of the campaign.

WEEK 25

PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 26

THE LOCAL CHURCH AND HER SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What was the topic of our last study?
- b. Explain briefly what you remember in that lesson.

Main Text: Jeremiah 29:7, Deuteronomy 15: 11

Memory Verse: *Therefore I command you to be open handed towards your brother, to the needy and the poor in your land.*
– Deuteronomy 15:11b (NLT).

Introduction

Social responsibility can be defined as the moral concern and commitment to improving social conditions in communities. While some people applaud such initiatives by the Church, others are of the opinion that resources of the Church are meant solely for the propagation of the gospel and thus, should not be used to meet the social needs of communities, cities and nations. In the passage read, the captives were mandated to seek the interest of the land they inhabited. Our discussion today would help us appreciate the need to engage in social intervention programmes as a local church and home cell.

Questions for Discussion

1. How do you understand the command in the light of the social responsibility of the local church? Jeremiah 29:7, Deuteronomy 15:11.
2. Discuss the reason for the involvement of the local church and home cell in community transformation? Luke 3:11, 1 John 3:17.
3. How can the local church and home cells collaborate with other stakeholders (government, chiefs, NGOs, etc.) to improve social conditions in their communities?
4. How would you respond to the notion that church resources should not be used to improve social conditions in our communities?

Conclusion

The Christian's responsibility towards meeting social needs is evident in the scriptures. God sought to remind the chosen nation, Israel, of their moral obligation to see to social justice and fairness in the distribution of wealth, judgement, access opportunity and protection of the vulnerable. More so, they were to seek the prosperity of the land where lived. The lesson here is that we all live in communities and thus, promoting the wellbeing of the community will ultimately inure to our benefits. In view of this, the local church is God's chosen instrument of change, cannot dissociate herself from

issues that relate to the wellbeing of our communities and societies. The local church and home cells should be able to partner other stakeholders to bring desirable change to their communities.

WEEK 29

PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 30

**FAMILY COMMITMENT
TO BIBLICAL VALUES**

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. From the previous lesson, what did you learn concerning social responsibility?
- b. What social needs can you identify in your community?

Main Texts: Acts 5:1-11.

Memory Verse: *'Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the Lord. – Jeremiah 23:24.*

Introduction

Building a strong family requires that we agree to live by Biblical values. This notwithstanding, there are situations where certain values contradict our Christian values. In such instances, we must remain steadfast as Christians. Unfortunately, in our text today, Ananias and his wife who were part of the church failed to live by Christian values leading to their eventual death. In view of this, we shall discuss how family members can hold one another accountable in ensuring that they uphold Christian values at all times.

Questions for Discussion

1. What could be the motivation behind the couple's decision to sell the land?

2. What was wrong with the action of the couple?
Verse 4, 8
3. How did the attitude of the couple contradict Biblical values?
4. Discuss how Ananias and Sapphira could have prevented what happened to them.
5. In which ways can we uphold Christian values in our family lives?

Conclusion

Ananias and Sapphira were most likely motivated by the good examples of members who had previously sold their possessions and brought the proceeds to the Apostles to meet the needs of the saints. However, their action lacked integrity as compared to the good example set earlier by some of the believers. Couples should be accountable to each other in upholding biblical values. Though they knew their action was wrong, none advised the other against this evil act of deceit. Possibly, they sought to have the Church applaud them but instead God plucked them out of the midst of the believers. Sadly, this attitude of the couple prevails in some homes, churches and workplaces. It is always important to help one another to stand by biblical values in our homes. Remember God is watching every deed (Jer. 23:23-24).

WEEK 31
LORD'S SUPPER

WEEK 33

PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 34

PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 35

INTEGRITY IN THE MARKETPLACE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Narrate briefly what you can recall from the previous month's lesson.
- b. Briefly explain the effect the lesson had on your life.

Main Text: Daniel 6:1-6.

Memory Verse: *The integrity of the upright guides them but the unfaithful are destroyed in their duplicity.* – Proverbs 11:3.

Introduction

Integrity basically reflects how people demonstrate moral values they profess to believe in. However, some Christians do not exhibit Christ-like character at the workplace. In view of this, we shall discuss the need for Christians to integrate faith-based virtues in all aspects of their conduct at the workplace. In the passage, Daniel was found to be without any corruption in the discharge of his duties as one of the governors in Babylon. We shall draw practical lessons from this passage in our bid to influence the market place with kingdom values and principles.

Questions for Discussion

1. In your view, what areas did Daniel's friends seek to find something against him?

2. How do you understand the statement 'they could find no corruption in him' in verse 4?
3. Discuss what constitutes integrity in the area politics, civil service, and entrepreneurship.
4. In what other areas do we need to demonstrate integrity as Christians?
5. How does lack of integrity affect our work as Christians?

Conclusion

Daniel was found to be without corruption at the workplace and could only be accused on account of issues that contradicted the principles of his faith. Integrity in business involves the quality of being trustworthy, honest, fair, reliable and transparent. When trust and reputation are built overtime in business, they become a brand for the person. Often, people are secure when dealing with a person of integrity. Demonstrating integrity in the marketplace manifests the Kingdom values in a more concrete and authentic way. To do this, one must be free from deceit, trickery and manipulation. Also, we must decide never to cheat uninformed and ill-informed customers or business partners. In addition, deceiving customers on promised time of delivery of services should be avoided. Finally, loans and credit purchases should be paid on time to gain the trust of financial institutions and creditors.

WEEK 39

DON'T ABUSE THE PRIVILEGE

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What challenge(s) did you face in your business in an attempt to apply the lesson on integrity?
- b. Share the success stories in upholding your integrity in the marketplace.

Main Text: Genesis 39:1-9.

Memory Verse: *And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?* – Luke 16:12.

Introduction

The duty of mutual trust and confidence for an employee is the agreement to serve an employer in good faith and not to act against the employer's interest. In the passage read, Joseph remained faithful and loyal when he was given the rare privilege to manage the entire household of his master, Potiphar. Though this is often unwritten, it is a quality every employer looks out for in an employee. It is the glue that binds the employer and employee together. Our discussion today will help us come out with practical steps to guard against abusing the privilege of being favoured and trusted by our employees because we are Christians.

Questions for Discussion

1. What influenced Potiphar to entrust the management of his household to Joseph? Verses 3, 4.
2. Why did Potiphar choose not to concern himself with anything except the food he ate? Verse 6.
3. Share experiences of how people mismanaged businesses when they were trusted by their superiors.
4. With lessons from Joseph, how should Christians handle the privilege of being favoured and trusted by their superiors at the workplace?

Conclusion

Sometimes, we are privileged to be favoured and trusted by our superiors because they know we are Christians. Many a time, people have abused this privilege. In the passage, Potiphar concerned himself with nothing except what he would eat because he trusted Joseph. Joseph could have used this privilege to indulge in sin but he was faithful. He remained steadfast when he was tempted by Potiphar's wife. Unfortunately, some people abuse the privilege of being favoured by colluding with people to run down businesses, falsifying accounts, selling properties, and absconding with huge sums of money. The only reason Joseph passed this test was the fear of God. He considered any act against his master as wickedness

and sin against God (Gen. 39:9). We must come to the realisation that whatever we do against the progress of our superiors and businesses is sin against God. The privilege of being favoured is an opportunity to demonstrate to the world that there are still honest, loyal and faithful people because Christ lives in them.

WEEK 43

DON'T COMPROMISE YOUR CHRISTIAN VALUES

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. Recite the memory verse of the previous lesson.
- b. Explain briefly how you applied that text to your life.

Main Text: 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

Memory Verse: *Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness. – 2 Corinthians 7:1.*

Introduction

We live in communities with different kinds of people, some of whom do not believe in Christ and have no desire to be like Him. Moreover, we have been called to influence this people positively for Christ. In engaging them, we must be careful to always uphold our Christian values. As Christians, God indwells us and among us. Our prime response to Him is a life of holiness, which is, separating ourselves from uncleanness, filthiness and corruption so as to fully dedicate ourselves to Him. In this study, we shall look at how to live among and interact with non-Christians without compromising our faith in Christ.

Questions for Discussion

1. What advice does Paul give Christians? Verse 14.
2. What does 'Do not be equally yoked together with unbelievers' mean?
3. How do we become equally yoked with unbelievers'?
4. How does Paul describe the difference between the Christian and non-Christian? Verse 14-16.
5. In what practical ways can we engage unbelievers around us without compromising our faith in Christ?

Conclusion

Paul calls on Christians not to be equally yoked with unbelievers. He shows that Christians and non-Christians do not share the same values just as 'righteousness' and 'lawlessness', 'light' and 'darkness', cannot coexist. Thus, a true Christian cannot be one with unbelievers doing the things they enjoy doing which do not reflect the life of Christ. When Paul says, 'Do not be equally yoked', he is referring to a law, which forbade the yoking of an ox with a donkey (Deut. 22:10). Though, an ox and a donkey can graze together, they are not compatible enough to plough a field under the same yoke. Practically, we cannot engage in corrupt and immoral practices such as paying bribes, stealing from organisational coffers, etc. just like some non-Christians do. However, we are called to influence them positively as we uphold our Christian integrity.

WEEK 46
PASTORAL CARE / VISITATION

WEEK 48

BAD COMPANY CORRUPTS GOOD CHARACTER

Review of Previous Lesson (5 Minutes)

- a. What challenges did you identify in applying the previous lesson in your life?
- b. How did you relate with people who are not Christians in your community?

Main Text: Psalm 1:1-6.

Memory Verse: *Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character'.* – 1 Corinthians 15:33.

Introduction

The tendency to sing the tune of the masses in many cases is compelling. Thus, if all the people around us are going one direction, the temptation to follow that route is high. The psalmist admonishes believers to desist from associating with the wicked, sinners and mockers. The incidence of social vices such as armed robbery, suicide, drug abuse, gambling and premarital sex may be due to the influence of bad company. One sure way to maintain integrity is to watch the company we keep.

Questions for Discussion

1. How can a Christian's association with the wicked, sinners and mockers influence the person's integrity?

2. How does a Christian's meditation on the word of God keep them from the corrupting influence of the ungodly?
3. Identify the difference between the end of the wicked and that of the righteous? Verse 3-6
4. How do we develop good friendship within the body of Christ?

Conclusion

The passage begins with a benediction for those who fear the Lord. The best form of association he recommends are those who give godly counsel, the righteous and those who do not mock others. Our lives of integrity will be enhanced if we delight in what the word of God says day and night and live by them. There is no form of integrity beyond what the word of God prescribes. It is important that in our workplaces, schools, communities and even at church, we are careful of the people we associate with. Those who keep ungodly company are likened to chaff because they have no integrity. People of integrity have standards. They are described like trees planted by the waterside which are not affected by drought but yield their fruits in season. It is important we keep godly standards and desist from wrong associations in order to preserve our sanctity and influence others with our fruits.

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CHRISTMAS CONVENTION

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THE CHURCH AS A MODEL FOR SOCIETY

Main Text: 1 John 5:1-4.

Memory Verse: *For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.* — 1 John 5:4 (ESV).

Introduction

The New Testament reveals what God wants His Church to be in terms of modelling His principles in the world. No one sees God physically, but the Church as His bride and community is called to demonstrate the nature of God and portray His beauty to the world. When people see the Church, they should have a mental picture of God and His kingdom.

As a model for society whose power and image are derived from Christ, the Church remains an agent of transformation of society through its glorious ministry. For example, the victory in the sense of 1 John 5:4 implies that ungodly practices in the world, such as homosexuality, corruption, and other social vices must not have an expression in the Church, no matter the pressure mounted against it.

Questions for Discussion

1. What qualifies one to be a child of God? Verses 1,
2. How do you understand the statement 'those born of God have overcome the world'? Verse 4.
3. Faith in Christ is the victory of believers. Explain.

4. Explain who the Bible refers to as a person 'born of God' Verse 4.
5. Mention practical ways by which the Church, as a model for society, can fight moral decadence.

Conclusion

As an institution of victory, the Church has been divinely empowered to overcome all sorts of evil in society, both present and those to come in the future. We must all rise and build a Church that fulfils that mandate. The radiance of God's glory in it should be one that heals the moral decadence in the world (Matt. 5:13) and restores humanity to their original glory (Rom. 3:23).

The Church is a chosen and holy nation unto the Lord. It must stay awake and be the binding force that Jesus Christ empowers to transform the world. The implication is that, every believer should be a model by which others can emulate. Today, it has become obvious that the world is crumbling under the weight of corruption and other social vices, while many Christians are unfortunately compromising their faith to worldliness. Christ expects us as His ambassadors in the world, to impact positively our society with authentic godly principles such as integrity and holiness.

HANDLING POLYGAMOUS BELIEVERS IN THE CHURCH

Main Text: 1 Samuel 1:1-7

Memory verse: *But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.* – 1 Corinthians 7:2.

Introduction

The practice of polygamy dates as far back as the days of Lamech (Gen. 4:19) when human fell. The Bible also records several other instances of the practice (Gen. 36:2; 1 Sam. 1:2; 2 Sam. 2:2). Just like any other institution, marriage is guided by rules and regulations of which those who desire to enter into must comply with. The Scriptures clearly explain that monogamy is the divine ideal for marriage (Gen. 2:24). Today's lesson will seek to unravel the original plan God has for humankind concerning marriage and how The Church of Pentecost handles polygamous members.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did Elkanah treat his two wives? Verses 4, 5.
2. What conflict ensued between the two wives of Elkanah? Verse 6.
3. What was the aftermath of the conflict between Hannah and Peninah? Verse 7.
4. How do you understand the statement 'each man should have his own wife' (1 Cor. 7:2)?

5. How can we avoid polygamous marriages in the church?

Conclusion

The Bible is clear on regulations regarding marriage. Thus, it is our duty to comply with God's plan for marriage. In the beginning, He instituted marriage as a union between one man and one woman. This proves that monogamy was the original practice of marriage just as Christ emphasised (Matt. 19:4, 5). Polygamy is not an antidote for sexual immorality (1 Cor. 7:2). It rather poses numerous family conflicts (1 Sam. 1:4, 5; Gen. 29:30). In The Church of Pentecost, converts who are polygamists are baptised but not be received into full membership of the Church until they renounce polygamy. They are also excluded from being given the right hand of fellowship, giving testimonies or becoming officers of the church (Titus. 1:6, 1 Tim. 3:12). At their funerals, ministers may conduct the service but no tribute or testimonies are given on behalf of the Church at such funeral services. This is done to create room for God's original intent for marriage to be maintained.

THE PURPOSE OF THE ASCENSION GIFTS: EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

Main Text: Ephesians 4:11-16.

Memory Verse: *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers.* – Ephesians 4:11.

Introduction

One cannot talk about the Kingdom of God without discussing the ministerial gifts (ascension gifts) given to men to expand the Kingdom of God. Some call them ascension gifts because, it was made manifest after Jesus Christ ascended on high (Eph. 4:8). Ascension or ministerial gifts are gifts of people God gives to His church to enhance the ministry by equipping the believers of the faith. The five-fold ministries or offices that Jesus established after His ascension provide pastoral care for His church. Our lesson today will highlight these gifts, their relevance in equipping the saints and developing God's Kingdom.

Questions for Discussion

1. Name the five-fold ministerial gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11.
2. Why does God give ascension gifts to the church? Verse 12.
3. According to verses 13 and 14, what does God expect from the saints who have been given the ascension gifts?

4. How do you understand the statement 'no longer children tossed by the wind'? Verse 14.
5. Share your experiences on how you have been equipped by one of these gifts of men.

Conclusion

When Jesus ascended on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. These are the offices of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and the teacher. They are primarily responsible to 'equip the saints for the work of ministry; till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man'. God expects the fullness of Christ in the believer, hence, the giving of these gifts. In some respects, Christians are to be like children. They are to be docile, gentle, mild and free from ambition, pride and haughtiness (Matt. 18:2-3). But children have other characteristics besides simplicity and meekness; this is what Paul is referring to. It is certain that the child is ignorant, weak and unsteady, tossed about in the nurse's arms. We are not to be influenced easily by others and led astray; rather to be firm through the equipping power of the gifts of ministry. Let us continue to submit to the leadership of the church so that we will reach the perfection Christ desires of us.

THE BIBLICAL ROLES IN MARRIAGE

Main Text: Ephesians 5:22-33.

Memory Verse: *However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.* – Ephesians 5:33.

Introduction

In our world today, there are fellowships, movements and groups with different ideologies, beliefs and practices which influence society, including Christians. These beliefs and practices have led to significant social changes in today's world about roles in marriage. This calls for the need for Christians to appreciate what the Bible says about the responsibilities God has assigned to husbands and wives at home. It is important for us to know and follow God's design for married couples even when it is contrary to what we are familiar with. Our lesson focuses on the mutual roles of husbands and wives.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the roles of wives in marriage? Verse 22.
2. What are the roles of husbands in marriage? Verse 25.
3. Identify some cultural or traditional factors preventing husbands and wives from honouring their roles.

4. How can married couples handle challenges raised in question 3?
5. What happens when husbands and wives perform their roles in marriage effectively?

Conclusion

In today's lesson, we have looked at the roles of husbands and wives in marriage. Husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. In addition, husbands are to provide leadership and serve as breadwinners, protectors, mentors and companions to the family. On the other hand, wives are to submit to the authority of their husbands as to the Lord. They must support their husbands, take care of the household and must abstain from a life of laziness (Prov. 31:27). In situations where cultural and traditional practices conflict with biblical roles, husbands and wives must go for the latter. When couples perform their roles well, they experience joy and happiness in their marriages and become a positive influence for unbelieving couples. Husbands and wives should become vigilant to forestall falling into the traps of Satan that come through false doctrines and teachings that usurp the authority God has established in marriage.

THE BIBLICAL ROLES OF HUSBANDS

Main Text: Ephesians 5:25-30.

Memory Verse: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.* – Ephesians 5:25.

Introduction

Today's world has many fellowships, movements and groups with different ideologies, beliefs and practices which influence people including Christians. These beliefs and practices have led to both significant social changes in today's world about 'roles' in marriage. These have also brought the confusion and offensiveness of the subject on 'marital roles'. This calls for Christians to appreciate what the Bible says about their responsibilities at home. Today's study focuses *on the biblical role of husbands.*

Questions for Discussion

6. What does it mean for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church?
7. Come out with other roles of husbands in marriage?
8. How do husbands' roles impact their families?
9. What cultural factors that prevent husbands from exhibiting their roles in marriage?
10. In what possible ways should husbands handle these cultural challenges?

Conclusion

From today's discussions, we have known that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her. Thus, husbands are to lay down their lives for their wives in protection and support as Christ did for the Church. They must express their love as a duty, in respect and principle rather than attraction. This must be from a sincere, pure, passionate, and constant affection just as they love their bodies. Husbands are to love their wives even when they get displeased with some of their actions. In love, husbands must provide essential needs such as food, water and shelter for their families in love and respect. They must train their children in love to fear the Lord (Prov. 22:6), and serve as mentors and companions to them. Husbands must lead their families to Christ and ensure family unity to create joy and happiness. This will positively influence unbelieving singles and couples. Husbands should be vigilant to the manipulations of Satan from false doctrines, teachings, cultural or traditional beliefs and practices, which tend to water down the role of husbands in marriage. It is important for husbands to perform their roles even when it is contrary to what they are accustomed to.

THE BIBLICAL ROLES OF WIVES

Main Text: Ephesians 5:21-24.

Memory Verse: *Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.* – Ephesians 5:22

Introduction

There are misunderstandings in today's world concerning 'roles' of wives. These seem to mislead some Christians in their marriages. This comes from emerging liberation groups with philosophies, theories and practices that seek to oppose the biblical roles of husbands and wives. It is important for Christians to understand what the Bible says about their responsibilities. Today's lesson discusses the roles of wives in marriage.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean for wives to submit to their husbands in all things?
2. What are some other roles of wives in marriage?
3. How do wives' roles impact their families?
4. What cultural or traditional factors that prevent wives from exhibiting their roles in marriage?
5. What possible ways should wives handle these cultural or traditional challenges?

Conclusion

From our study, we have known that wives are to submit to their own husbands as to the Lord since the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the Church. Wives must act under the authority of their husbands, as the Church acts under the authority of Christ. This does not mean wives must submit to committing acts of dishonesty and wrong-doing. They are to submit themselves under the eye of Christ. Wives must not submit to other peoples' husbands and fight their own. Rather, they are to submit to their own husbands while relating kindly with others. In submission, wives must manage the home and the family. They must support their husbands to train their children in the fear of the Lord (Prov. 22:6). This creates family unity, joy and happiness which influence unbelieving singles and couples. Wives must avoid usurping the roles of husbands as this creates friction, disharmony and infighting. They must be watchful to the influences of Satan from false doctrines, teachings and cultural or traditional beliefs and practices which tend to weaken the role of wives in marriage. It is important for husbands to perform their role even when it is contrary to what they are familiar with.

UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE FROM THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Main Text: Genesis 24:1-4, 50-61.

Memory Verse: *Here is Rebekah before; take her and go, and let her become the wife your master's son as the Lord has directed.* – Genesis 24:51.

Introduction

For believers, marriage is not just a relationship between husband and wife, but also between spouses and God. Therefore, the procedure for contracting marriage is important. Traditional marriage forms the basis for all marriages. Some basic requirements and procedures are also followed in almost all cultures. Families of would-be couples are involved in the marriage contract. In the Christian context, much emphasis is placed on prayer and the leading of Holy Spirit. In today's study, we would look at the foundational procedure and requirements for marriage.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who were those involved in the process of contracting marriage for Rebekah?

Verses 50, 54, 58.

2. Why do you think Rebekah's family was so willing to give her in marriage? Verses 50, 51.

3. What practice in contemporary marriage contract is similar to the one in verse 52 to 54?
4. What are some measures families can put in place to make the marriage processes simple?
5. In which area do you think the church and families can work on to make traditional marriage as easy as possible?

Conclusion

Marriage is a covenant relationship but has some laws governing it. Abraham's servants, Laban, Bethuel, Rebekah's mother and Rebekah herself were involved in Rebekah's traditional marriage process. Rebekah's parents gave her in marriage because they realised God had a hand in it. The family did well to see her off responsibly by pronouncing blessings on her and gave her other physical needs. Abraham's servants also paid the price for Rebekah by giving precious things to her family. This is what we call 'dowry', and the practice is still common today. It is given to honour the parents of the bride and not the 'selling price' of their daughter. Dowries may differ from one traditional setting to another. One of the best things the Church can offer would-be couples is to provide a serene atmosphere for godly guidance and counselling.

SINGLEHOOD IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE

Main Text: Matthew 19:10-12, 1 Corinthians 7:7-10.

Memory Verse: *But I would have you to be free from cares. He that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord.* – 1 Corinthians 7:32 (ASV).

Introduction

Singlehood can be described as the state of being unmarried. This could be by choice, bereavement or circumstances beyond a person's control. The scriptures deal with the subject of singlehood comprehensively. In the discussion of these scripture passages, we shall find vital lessons that would empower singles to maximise this period of their lives to the glory of God. On the other hand, misconceptions on the subject of singlehood would be shaped by the word of God in order to avoid perceptions that drive the stigmatisation of singles in our homes, communities and churches.

Questions for Discussions

1. Identify the three types of eunuchs in the passage? Matthew 19:12.
2. How do these situations relate to singlehood in our contemporary times?
3. How do Jesus and Paul's statements address negative perceptions about singlehood? Matthew 19:12, 1 Corinthians 7:7-8.

4. What identity do all Christians, including the single and married, have in Christ? 1 Corinthians 12:13.
5. What is the right approach to encouraging singles in our homes, church and communities about marriage?

Conclusion

In His teachings on marriage, Jesus intimated that the single state of a person may be due to life's circumstances, nature and choice (Matt. 19:12). Though He condemned divorce, He did not speak against being single but rather explained the underlying causes. Also, Paul encouraged widows and the unmarried to remain single if that would not inconvenience them (1 Cor. 7:7-8). In both passages, the Lord Jesus and Paul did not condemn singlehood and marriage. This means that both situations are acceptable before God. John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, Anna the Prophetess and Apostle Paul were single persons who pursued their God-given mandate creditably. A Christian's identity is firmly rooted in their union with Christ; loved, forgiven, valued, sanctified, and prepared for every good work (Eph. 2:10, Col. 3:10-11). Other situations in life are temporal and should not become the yardstick for defining a Christian. Being single, married, unemployed, without biological children are all temporal situations in life as compared to our eternal identity of being joint heirs with Christ.

Christians who are single should not be stigmatised or made to feel they are incomplete. While we encourage singles to prepare for marriage, we must avoid disparaging remarks about their situation because such comments could make them take hasty decisions concerning marriage to their detriment.

BUILDING GODLY CHARACTER AS SINGLES

Main Text: Gen. 24: 12 -24; 50-53

Memory Verse: *The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.* - Gen. 24:16

Introduction

Every period of life presents unique opportunities and challenges. Thus, the period of being single is not freedom to indulge in all kinds of misbehaviour as some unbelievers do. Rather, one must use the time to build godly character through self-discipline, personal devotions and humility. In view of this, young singles who hope to get married must consciously abstain from sexual immorality, cohabitation and other vices associated with some singles. They should consciously inculcate good values and get themselves abreast with the right information concerning marriage. In the scripture read, we observed the good qualities of Rebecca when she met the eldest servant of Abraham. Our discussion today will help us identify some qualities singles need to learn and imbibe as they prepare for marriage in the future.

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the character traits of Rebecca. Verse 16-17
2. How can singles build such godly character in this age?

3. Where and how did the servant contract the marriage between Isaac and Rebecca?
4. Discuss the relevance of family consent in contracting marriage
5. How should singles who are Christians respond to their challenges in contemporary times?

Conclusion

Rebecca was beautiful single woman who remained a virgin until the appropriate rites were performed for her hand in marriage. With the help of the Holy Spirit and self-discipline, we can live holy lives as singles. Also, her interaction with the servant showed that she was respectful, humble, good nurtured, polite, kind and hospitable. The lesson here is that, singles must be conscious about building good character and inculcating strong moral values.

This could possible open the door to meeting future wives and husbands. We also realise that contracting the marriage took place with the consent of Rebecca's family even though the idea was conceived by the servant while they interacted at the well. Singles must be careful to avoid behaviours such as cohabitation and spending weekends with the opposite sex who has not performed all rites necessary for marriage because this is not acceptable as Christians. Families and the church should be informed immediately issues of contracting marriage between singles come up. This is necessary for direction and guidance for a successful marriage.

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

RULES OF CONDUCT FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

The Church is the household of God, redeemed and sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Church is therefore not a mere social institution, but a family of saints being trained and equipped until we all attain the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). The following guidelines are therefore intended to help you walk worthy of your calling as a child of God: -

1. Set aside a period daily for a personal quiet time in prayer and meditation on the Word (Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18-20).
2. Always endeavour to adequately prepare yourself through prayer and meditation before coming to the house of God (Heb. 4:15-16).
3. Be in your seat in good time before the commencement of service and participate fully in every aspect of the service.
4. Endeavour, by word and deed, to bring up your children in the fear of the LORD, and bring them with you to the house of God. Supervise and monitor the active participation of your children in Sunday School and Youth Ministry, as the case may be. Do not neglect the spiritual well-being of the other relatives and house-helpers under your care; they also need salvation (Gen. 18:19; Jos. 24:15; 2 Tim. 1:5, 6; Prov. 22:6; Deut. 6:4-7).

5. Make the Church your spiritual home. Love the brethren with brotherly affection and, if you are able, contribute to the needs of the saints (Phil. verse 7; Ac. 2:46).
6. During casual conversation at home or at work, do not speak disrespectfully or disparagingly about the Church and God's servants. Make your concerns and grievances known to the appropriate authority for explanation or redress (3 Jn. 9,10; Num. 12:12).
7. Endeavour to study the Bible diligently on your own and take it with you anytime you go to the house of God (2 Tim. 2:15; Ac. 17:11; Jos. 1:8).
8. Enter reverently; pray fervently; listen attentively; give praise from a grateful heart, and worship God in the beauty of holiness (Ps. 118:27-29; Eccl. 5:1; Rom. 7:12; Jas 1:19). "Enter into His gates with thanks-giving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him and bless His name" (Ps. 100:4).
9. Marital fidelity and chastity before and during marriage are the hallmarks of a true Christian and are, therefore, strongly urged upon every child of God. Pre-marital and extra-marital relationships have no place in the Church of God; members found in such relationships should be punished by suspension and/ or withdrawal from fellowship (1 Cor. 5; Heb. 13:4).

10. In your business, endeavour to make all your dealings and transactions Bible-based, honest and transparent (Prov. 16:8; 21:6; 22:13,16; Jer. 17:11; 22:13). A true child of God should not deal in items known to be detrimental to the spiritual, mental and physical health of others, e.g., alcohol, cigarettes and narcotic drugs.

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR GUIDE

With this Bible Reading guide, you can go through the Bible verse by verse and Book by Book in one year. You also may start this plan any time and progress at your pace too.

Week	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	Genesis 1-3	Genesis 4-7	Genesis 8-11	Genesis 12-16	Genesis 17-19	Genesis 20-23	Genesis 24-25
	Genesis 26-28	Genesis 29-30	Genesis 31-33	Genesis 34-36	Genesis 37-39	Genesis 40-42	Genesis 43-45
2	Genesis 46-47	Genesis 48-50	Exodus 1-4	Exodus 5-7	Exodus 8-10	Exodus 11-13	Exodus 14-16
	Exodus 17-20	Exodus 21-23	Exodus 24-27	Exodus 28-30	Exodus 31-34	Exodus 35-37	Exodus 38-40
3	Leviticus 1-4	Leviticus 5-7	Leviticus 8-11	Leviticus 12-14	Leviticus 15-17	Leviticus 18-20	Leviticus 21-23
4	Leviticus 24-25	Leviticus 26-27	Numbers 1-2	Numbers 3-4	Numbers 5-6	Numbers 7-8	Numbers 9-11
5	Numbers 12-14	Numbers 15-17	Numbers 18-20	Numbers 21-23	Numbers 24-26	Numbers 27-30	Numbers 31-33
6	Numbers 34-36	Deuteronomy 1-2	Deuteronomy 3-4	Deuteronomy 5-7	Deuteronomy 8-11	Deuteronomy 12-15	Deuteronomy 16-19
7	Deuteronomy 20-23	Deuteronomy 24-27	Deuteronomy 28-29	Deuteronomy 30-31	Deuteronomy 32-34	Joshua 1-4	Joshua 5-7
8	Joshua 8-10	Joshua 11-14	Joshua 15-18	Joshua 19-21	Joshua 22-24	Judges 1-3	Judges 4-5
9	Judges 6-8	Judges 9-11	Judges 12-15	Judges 16-18	Judges 19-21	Ruth 1-4	1 Samuel 1-3
10	1 Samuel 4-7	1 Samuel 8-10	1 Samuel 11-13	1 Samuel 14-15	1 Samuel 16-17	1 Samuel 18-20	1 Samuel 21-24
11	1 Samuel 25-27	1 Samuel 28-31	2 Samuel 1-3	2 Samuel 4-7	2 Samuel 8-11	2 Samuel 12-13	2 Samuel 14-15
12	2 Samuel 16-18	2 Samuel 19-20	2 Samuel 21-22	2 Samuel 23-24	1 Kings 1-2	1 Kings 3-5	1 Kings 6-7
13	1 Kings 8-9	1 Kings 10-12	1 Kings 13-15	1 Kings 16-18	1 Kings 19-20	1 Kings 21-22	2 Kings 1-3
14	2 Kings 4-5	2 Kings 6-8	2 Kings 9-11	2 Kings 12-14	2 Kings 15-17	2 Kings 18-20	2 Kings 21-23
15	2 Kings 24-25	1 Chronicles 1-2	1 Chronicles 3-5	1 Chronicles 6-7	1 Chronicles 8-10	1 Chronicles 11-13	1 Chronicles 14-16
16	1 Chronicles 17-20	1 Chronicles 21-23	1 Chronicles 24-26	1 Chronicles 27-29	2 Chronicles 1-4	2 Chronicles 5-7	2 Chronicles 8-11
17	2 Chronicles 12-16	2 Chronicles 17-19	2 Chronicles 20-22	2 Chronicles 23-25	2 Chronicles 26-29	2 Chronicles 30-32	2 Chronicles 33-34
18	2 Chronicles 35-36	Ezra 1-4	Ezra 5-7	Ezra 8-10	Nehemiah 1-4	Nehemiah 5-7	Nehemiah 8-10
19	Nehemiah 11-13	Esther 1-4	Esther 5-10	Job 1-4	Job 5-8	Job 9-12	Job 13-17

22	Job 18-21	Job 22-26	Job 27-30	Job 31-34	Job 35-38	Job 39-42	Psalms 1-7
23	Psalms 8-14	Psalms 15-18	Psalms 19-24	Psalms 25-30	Psalms 31-34	Psalms 35-37	Psalms 38-42
24	Psalms 43-48	Psalms 49-54	Psalms 55-60	Psalms 61-67	Psalms 68-71	Psalms 72-75	Psalms 76-78
25	Psalms 79-84	Psalms 85-89	Psalms 90-95	Psalms 96-102	Psalms 103-105	Psalms 106-108	Psalms 109-115
26	Psalms 116-118	Psalms 119	Psalms 120-131	Psalms 132-138	Psalms 139-144	Psalms 145-150	Proverbs 1-3
27	Proverbs 4-7	Proverbs 8-10	Proverbs 11-13	Proverbs 14-16	Proverbs 17-19	Proverbs 20-22	Proverbs 23-25
28	Proverbs 26-28	Proverbs 29-31	Ecclesiastes 1-4	Ecclesiastes 5-8	Ecclesiastes 9-12	Song of Solomon 1-4	Song of Solomon 5-8
29	Isaiah 1-3	Isaiah 4-6	Isaiah 7-9	Isaiah 10-13	Isaiah 14-16	Isaiah 17-21	Isaiah 22-25
30	Isaiah 26-28	Isaiah 29-31	Isaiah 32-34	Isaiah 35-37	Isaiah 38-40	Isaiah 41-42	Isaiah 43-44
31	Isaiah 45-47	Isaiah 48-50	Isaiah 51-53	Isaiah 54-57	Isaiah 58-60	Isaiah 61-64	Isaiah 65-66
32	Jeremiah 1-3	Jeremiah 4-5	Jeremiah 6-8	Jeremiah 9-11	Jeremiah 12-14	Jeremiah 15-17	Jeremiah 18-21
33	Jeremiah 22-23	Jeremiah 24-26	Jeremiah 27-29	Jeremiah 30-31	Jeremiah 32-34	Jeremiah 35-37	Jeremiah 38-41
34	Jeremiah 42-45	Jeremiah 46-48	Jeremiah 49	Jeremiah 50	Jeremiah 51-52	Lamentations 1-2	Lamentations 3-5
35	Ezekiel 1-4	Ezekiel 5-9	Ezekiel 10-13	Ezekiel 14-16	Ezekiel 17-19	Ezekiel 20-21	Ezekiel 22-23
36	Ezekiel 24-26	Ezekiel 27-28	Ezekiel 29-31	Ezekiel 32-33	Ezekiel 34-36	Ezekiel 37-39	Ezekiel 40-42
37	Ezekiel 43-45	Ezekiel 46-48	Daniel 1-2	Daniel 3-4	Daniel 5-6	Daniel 7-9	Daniel 10-12
38	Hosea 1-4	Hosea 5-9	Hosea 10-14	Joel 1-3	Amos 1-3	Amos 4-6	Amos 7-9
39	Obadiah & Jonah	Micah 1-4	Micah 5-7	Nahum 1-3	Habakkuk 1-3	Zephaniah 1-3	Haggai 1-2
40	Zechariah 1-6	Zechariah 7- 10	Zechariah 11- 14	Malachi 1-4	Matthew 1-4	Matthew 5-7	Matthew 8-9

41	Matthew 10-12	Matthew 13-14	Matthew 15-17	Matthew 18-20	Matthew 21-22	Matthew 23-24	Matthew 25-26
42	Matthew 27-28	Mark 1-3	Mark 4-6	Mark 7-9	Mark 10-13	Mark 14-16	Luke 1
43	Luke 2-3	Luke 4-5	Luke 6-7	Luke 8-9	Luke 10-11	Luke 12-13	Luke 14-16
44	Luke 17-18	Luke 19-20	Luke 21-22	Luke 23-24	John 1-3	John 4-5	John 6-7
45	John 8-9	John 10-11	John 12-13	John 14-15	John 16-17	John 18-19	John 20-21
46	Acts 1-2	Acts 3-4	Acts 5-6	Acts 7-8	Acts 9-12	Acts 13-16	Acts 17-19
47	Acts 20-23	Acts 24-28	Romans 1-3	Romans 4-7	Romans 8-10	Romans 11-13	Romans 14-16
48	1 Corinthians 1-4	1 Corinthians 5-9	1 Cor. 10-13	1 Cor. 14-16	2 Cor. 1-4	2 Cor. 5-7	2 Cor. 8-10
49	2 Cor. 11-13	Galatians 1-3	Galatians 4-6	Ephesians 1-3	Ephesians 4-6	Philippians 1-4	Colossians 1-4
50	1 Thess. 1-3	1 Thess. 4-5	2 Thess. 1-3	1 Timothy 1-6	2 Timothy 1-4	Titus & Philemon	Hebrews 1-4
51	Hebrews 5-7	Hebrews 8-10	Hebrews 11-13	James 1-5	1 Peter 1-5	2 Peter 1-3	1 John 1-5
52	2 John, 3 John & Jude	Revelation 1-3	Revelation 4-7	Revelation 8-12	Revelation 13-16	Revelation 17-19	Revelation 20-22

ANY QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS & ANY OTHER INFORMATION?

ALL GENERAL questions, suggestions or information to be forwarded to any of the following persons;
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