

JUSTICE AND PEACE

- Biblical Social Ethics -

Jan H. Boer

**Translated by
Gail Ruston**

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INTRODUCTION

This book is a guide to lead you from where you are to a new place. It will help you to leave the wisdom of the world and follow the wisdom of God. In this guide we shall study the Bible in relationship to man's lifestyle before God. We shall discuss the way of salvation and also how to live at peace with our neighbour.

How will you be able to do this?

The world has her own advice about this but in this book you will see that the wisdom of God is very different to that of the world. Today it appears that many Christians prefer the wisdom of the world but according to God's Word, the wisdom of the world is not true wisdom at all. The Bible calls the world's wisdom foolishness. Indeed, the wisdom of the world is foolishness. Only God knows what will bring peace to our world. Man does not want the way of peace. He says that it is not possible to have peace today.

Well friend, the time has come to follow God's wisdom, since we have already tried the wisdom of the world. Following the world's wisdom has taken us now here and only brings trouble. Let us follow God's wisdom and see the results for ourselves. - This book is called **JUSTICE AND PEACE - A BIBLICAL SOCIAL ETHICS**, because only this way will bring us peace. Following the way of the world brings only enmity and strife instead of peace. If we follow the Lord with the obedience explained in this book, our lives will be very different to the way many Christians live and we will experience peace and rest in our hearts.

This book will benefit you by not only allowing you to obtain a certificate but by letting you prove for yourself the way of peace.

In certain places in this book the word "DISCUSSION" is written. Try to do what is written in each of these sections and you will benefit from the course. If you follow the suggestions under the discussion headings, you will further your understanding of what is being taught about the way of

peace. Ask the Lord to lead you in understanding the way he wants men to live.

I, the writer of this guide am ready to discuss any of the things you have learnt in this book. If you require any help, you may write to me or visit me in my office. If you would like me to visit your group meeting to discuss the things written in this book, then that may be possible.

May God bless you as you study this book. Amen.

Jan H. Boer

Jos, 1984

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

1. Pay attention to the way the book has been divided into ten weeks. Study for five days each week, doing a little each day as set out in the book. Do not stop until the end of each week. Then read through the whole week's work in one go. This is the best way to learn.
2. If this book tells you Read and Study Matthew 5:48, then take your bible, read the verses that you should read carefully and ask yourself "What does the verse say?" before you continue with studying this book. The same advice applies for the bible references that are printed in the book.
3. When you have completed a day's work, go back and read the questions and your answers again. This will help you to remember what you have learnt.
4. The book contains all the answers to the questions. They are at the end of every day. They have been added, so that you can check and if necessary correct your own answers. But don't read these answers before you have written your own. If one of your answers is incorrect, then cross it out and write the correct answer above it.
5. At the end of most days there are discussion questions. Give some thought to these and then you will be ready to contribute your opinion to the group meeting.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION

Sometimes a person goes to school or college only to get a certificate or in order to get promotion where he works. But this book which we are going to begin studying is to enlarge your understanding of the way of the Lord. As a result we have written out some questions for you to answer 'Yes' or 'No'. Answer them according to your own opinions. Your class leader will not count any of the answers as wrong because they are only your opinions. At the end of this book we will repeat these same questions again so that you can see if you have a better understanding of the subject. Now answer the questions below.

If you agree with what is written write a 'Yes', if you do not agree write a 'No'.

1. There are some things in life which do not concern religion _____
2. The work of spreading the Gospel is more important than the work of improving daily life in the world. _____
3. In God's eyes, the 'spirit' is more important than the 'body' _____
4. The Bible is used in religious matters, but in worldly matters we need men's ideas rather than the Bible _____
5. The Bible's teaching about love, taking up one's cross and fellowship apply only to the work of the church, not work in the world _____
6. A Christian's activities can be divided into two parts; what one does for the Lord and the rest of one's activities _____
7. The Christian religion has nothing to do with trading or any other job _____
8. Religion has nothing to do with politics _____
9. A pastor's work is more useful than that of a politician _____
10. The wisdom of God concerns spiritual matters, not the affairs of the world _____

Now start your study at Week 1. May the Holy Spirit enlighten you. Amen

WEEK 1: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 1: INTRODUCTION

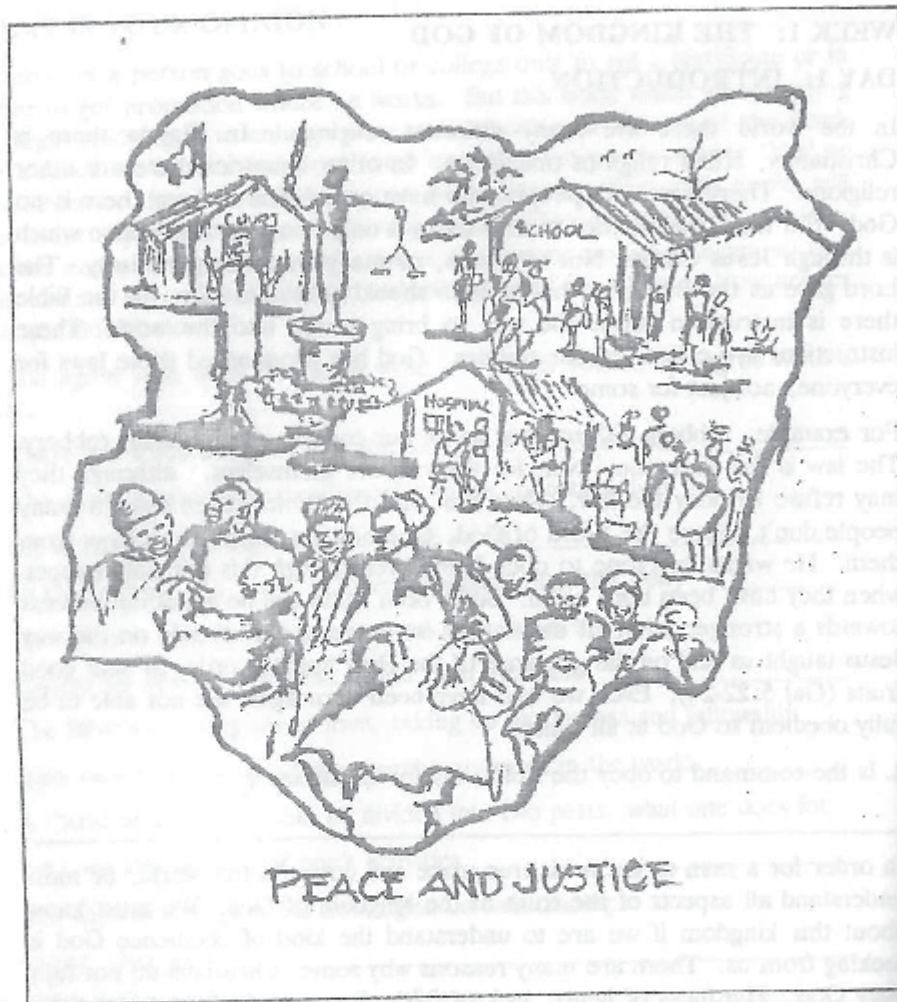
In the world there are many different religions. In Nigeria there is Christianity, tribal religions and Islam. In other countries there are other religions. There are even people who have no religion and say there is no God! But the Bible teaches us that there is only one way to salvation which is through Jesus Christ. Not two ways, or many ways, only one way. The Lord gave us the Bible, so that all men should believe in Him. In the Bible there is instruction about the way to bring peace into the world. These instructions are called laws or statutes. God has pronounced these laws for everyone, not just for some.

For example, robbers. There is a law in our country which forbids robbery. The law is for everyone, even for the robbers themselves, although they may refuse to obey the law. Thus it is with the Bible. Even though many people don't believe the Word of God, God has not removed his laws from them. He wants everyone to obey Him, even though this can only happen when they have been born again. Being born again can be a gradual process towards a stronger faith. It means that we more and more rely on the way Jesus taught us and on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to bear good fruits (Gal 5:22-24). Even we who have been born again are not able to be fully obedient to God at all times.

1. Is the command to obey the Lord only for Christians ?

In order for a man to know his true place and duties in this world, he must understand all aspects of the truth of the kingdom of God. We must know about this kingdom if we are to understand the kind of obedience God is seeking from us. There are many reasons why some Christians do not fully obey God. Hardness of heart, lack of faith, fear and doubt are just some of the reasons. But here is another. We can reduce the extent of the kingdom of God by saying that His kingdom only applies to spiritual things and not to the other things in the world. Some say God prefers spiritual matters to those of the world. Because of this, many Christians try hard to serve God in spiritual things but in other matters they follow worldly wisdom.

In this book we will study the full obedience that we ordinary men and women should give to our Creator in every day affairs.



2. Write down three reasons for which man fails to give the Lord full obedience.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

3. Why do Christians serve the Lord more in spiritual matters than in other things?

This week we shall be studying the kingdom of God from the Bible. We will look at its foundation and nature, and its extent and value. We know that the Bible talks about the kingdom of God in both, the Old and New Testament. In the New Testament Jesus Christ has brought God's kingdom in a different way. He has increased its depth and strength and on the last day he will establish this kingdom. Nevertheless, the kingdom has existed since the beginning of time.

The Founding of God's Kingdom and it's Nature

Read and study Genesis 1. - All of this chapter deals with the creation of the world. We don't find God's kingdom mentioned in this chapter but we should realise that when God created the world he also founded His kingdom. This kingdom contained everything that is in heaven and earth; space and oceans, animals and plants and even man himself. The spiritual and the earthly were altogether in the kingdom. All that had been created was in God's kingdom.

4. Write down anything you think was not in God's kingdom.

5. Many Christians think God is more interested in spiritual thoughts than in earthly things. List the things mentioned in Genesis 1 which God pronounced good.

6. How many of the things you wrote down relate to earthly things?

7. How many relate to spiritual things?

Notice how most of the things mentioned in Genesis 1 relate to earthly things. These are the things which God pronounced good. We are not saying that God preferred the earthly things to spiritual things but that God loves both. Both are very good (Genesis 1:31). One is not more important than the other to the Creator.

8. What does God prefer: spiritual or earthly things? Explain the reason for your answer.

ANSWERS

1. No, it is not just for Christians, but for everyone.
2. Three from the following: (a) Hardness of heart, (b) Lack of faith, (c) Fear, (d) Doubt, (e) By reducing the extent of the kingdom of God.
3. Because they think spiritual matters are of more value to the Lord than other matters.
4. There is nothing that is not in God's kingdom.
5. Light (verse 4), land and seas (verse 10), vegetation and trees (verse 12), two great lights and the stars (verse 18), fish and birds (verse 21), animals (verse 25), all creation (verse 31).
6. All of them.
7. Nothing here is called spiritual in this chapter.
8. He loves them both. He created them all and said they were all good.

DISCUSSION

Read your answer to question 3. If someone says religion doesn't concern our daily living in this world, what answer will you give to him?

WEEK 1: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 2: THE PERFECT AND THE IMPERFECT WORLD

Yesterday we learnt that God loves both, spiritual and earthly things, because he created them. They are both equally valuable to Him. But here are some verses which appear to deny the world's goodness. Today we will look at them in order to understand their meaning.

John 18:36 - Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world my kingdom is from another place"

1. What do you think? Does this verse contradict yesterday's lesson?

In this passage Jesus shows that he received his kingship from his Father, not from earthly rulers. He is not rejecting his earthly kingdom; the world did not make him king.

James 4:4 -..... don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

1 John 2:15 - Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

2. According to these verses, how is friendship with the world against God?

(a) _____

Do these verses contradict each other?

(b) _____

John 17:15 - My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

1 John 2:16 - For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world.

3. What does the word "world" mean in these verses?

John 3:16-17 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

4. According to these verses does God hate the world or not?

All the above verses show that the word "world" has two meanings in the Bible. Sometimes the Bible is referring to the world God made. That is the perfect world. It is the world which God loves. We should love this world,

too. At other times the Bible is referring to the evil world, where man doesn't think about God. This is the world which the Bible tells us to reject. We should not adopt its ways. It becomes a god or idol to those who do not know Jesus Christ.

Now answer these questions based on what you have just learnt.

5. The Bible talks about the world in two ways. Explain this briefly.

6. Which world are we to love and which world should we turn away from?

But are there really two worlds? No. The world is one. God loves the world because He created it, even though now it is filled with evil. Whenever you read about the world in the Bible, you must ask yourself whether it refers to the world God created or to the evil world.

Read and study Matthew 7:21-23.

7. How will you decide between these people?

8. How will God decide between them?

9. If God's kingdom contains everything in creation, how is it that these people are not in the kingdom?

10. What is the difference between those who are in the kingdom of God and those who are not?

Romans 14:17-18 - *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God*

11. What is the difference between the children of God's kingdom and other people according to this passage?

Man often makes mistakes. That is why he is sometimes unable to tell the difference between the children of the kingdom and other people. However, there are signs which reveal the kingdom of God to us clearly.

Matthew 4:23 - *Jesus went preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people.*

Matthew 10:7-8 - *.... preach this message: "the kingdom of heaven is near." Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.*

Luke 9:1-2 - *When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God.*

Luke 11:20 - *But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.*

1 Corinthians 4:20 - *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.*

If you have time, also read and study Matthew 4:24, Mark 1:21-26, 32-34 and Luke 4:40-43.

12. According to these verses what is the great sign of the kingdom of God?

13. What is the sign of God's kingdom today?

Even today we see the power of healing in hospitals and also in supernatural ways. Even today some people have the power to cast out evil spirits. But Satan and his helpers are everywhere. Christians must be ready to cast out evil spirits wherever they find them.

ANSWERS

1. You answer here.
2. (a) The one who loves the world becomes an enemy of God and the love of the Father is not in him. (b) There is no contradiction.
3. According to these verses the world is a place characterised by evil. It is

a world which we are to turn away from and it is not the world which God created.

4. No, God loves the world and wants to redeem it.
5. The world that God created and the evil world.
6. We should love the world which God created and turn away from the evil world.
7. We can not decide between who is honest and true and who is not.
8. He knows the thoughts of a man's heart.
9. Yes, they are part of creation, but they are not part of the kingdom because they have not been born again and they do not follow the laws of the kingdom.
10. Those who are in the kingdom are seeking to do God's will, the others are doing what they want to do.
11. The difference is that those in the kingdom set their hearts to seek righteousness and peace and the others set their hearts mainly on eating and drinking.
12. Healing diseases, driving out demons and power.
13. Write your opinion here.

DISCUSSION

1. Why is it that Christians today do not perform supernatural acts as they did in the past?
2. How could healing be administered in the church?

WEEK 1: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 3: THE EXTENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Yesterday we saw how God loves the world. We saw also how we need to love the world and hate the evil in it. Today we will continue our study of the kingdom of God and look at its extent. We must be careful not to reduce the extent of the kingdom of God by saying that it does not include certain parts of our lives. This may happen if we are not fully obeying the Lord.

Psalm 24:1 - The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it

Psalm 50:1,10-11 - The Mighty One, God, the Lord, speaks and summons the earth for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine.

Psalm 103:19 - The Lord has established his throne in heaven and his kingdom rules over all.

Also read and study these passages: 1 Chronicles 29:11-12, Psalm 33:6-9, Psalm 89:9-12, 14, Psalm 22:28 and Psalm 47:7-8.

1. What kind of people do not belong to the Lord ?

-
2. From these verses write down the things which belong to the Lord.

-
3. Write down those things which do not belong to the Lord.

Matthew 8:26 - Then he(Jesus) got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

Matthew 8:31,32 - The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." He said to them, "Go !" So they came out and went into the pigs

Read and study also Matthew 9:32,33, Matthew 21:19 and Luke 7:14-15.

4. From these verses write down who obeyed Christ?

From this we see that there is nothing in creation which is outside the power of the Saviour. There is nothing outside his kingdom.

Matthew 28:18 - Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Read and study Colossians 1:16-20, Hebrews 2:7-8,10.

5. What links these verses with the verses from the Old Testament at the beginning of the lesson?

6. Does the salvation which Jesus brings concern only spiritual matters?

7. Underline every use of the words "all" and "everything" in the above verses. Now count them. How many are there?

Both, the Old and New Testament repeatedly show that there is nothing outside the scope of God's and Jesus' control. Everything obeys him.

8. Who does not fully obey God?

This is very sad. All the animals and everything living obeys God except for man. The Bible contains many laws for man. Animals and plants obey God, so they do not need laws from the Bible. But man is very disobedient. He is constantly disregarding God's kingdom and going his own way.

9. Why does man behave in this way?

Read and study Exodus 20:1-23 and then answer question 10.

10. List the things, about which God gave laws through Moses.

11. What is the benefit to man of God's Laws?

In other parts of the Bible, there are laws relating to riches, regulations, religious observances, healthcare and to spiritual matters: They are all mixed together. Many Christians want to separate the spiritual from the physical, that is, the worldly things from religious things, but the Bible does not make this separation. All are in God's kingdom. It is right that we learn how to serve the Lord in all our activities.

ANSWERS

1. According to Psalm 24:1 everyone belongs to the Lord, whether they know his way or not.
2. For example; animals, cattle. Every living creature, all power, greatness, glory, majesty, splendour, wealth and honour.
3. There is nothing which does not belong to the Lord. All these verses repeat the fact that the Lord God rules over everyone and everything.
4. For example; the demons, the pigs, the fig tree and the dead man. No created thing is outside the power of our Saviour.
5. The Old Testament states that God the Father has authority over everything. The New Testament states the same about our Saviour Jesus Christ.
6. No, it affects everything in the world.
7. Eleven.
8. Mankind.
9. Because he is sinful. He does not know what he ought to do because his mind has been darkened.
10. There are many laws. Just write down some of them.
11. So that we may know the way to find peace in the world. If God does not show us, then there is no way that we will understand the way to peace.

DISCUSSION

1. What is the benefit of God's laws to men? Discuss Question 11 together.
2. In what ways does the work of Christ concern all creation?

WEEK 1: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 4: THE FALL OF MAN

Yesterday we studied the extent of the kingdom of God and looked at God's laws. Why is it that man needs God's laws written down whilst animals do not? That is what we shall discuss today.

Everyone who studies this book knows the story of the fall of our first parents in Genesis chapter 3. It does not have to be repeated here. However, we shall discuss the results of the fall.

Read and study Genesis 3:7-24 carefully.

1. What happened between God and man in the verses indicated below.

(a) verse 8 _____

(b) verse 12 _____

(c) verses 23-24 _____

Genesis 4:23-24 - *Lamech said to his wives, "..... listen to me; I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times."*

2. Lamech was boasting. Explain why he was boasting.

These verses show the depth of man's evil. He thought he was more important than God his Creator. Imagine that!

3. Go back to Genesis chapter 3. List the things which went wrong with Adam and Eve in the verses indicated below.

(a) verse 7 _____

(b) verse 12 _____

(c) verse 15 _____

(d) verse 16 _____

Genesis 4:8 - *..... Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.*

4. What happened to the relationship between these two brothers?

Sin is not like a stone. If you find a stone today in your field and you do not remove it, it will still be there tomorrow and the next day and the next year. It will not change. It will not get any bigger. But sin is not like that. Sin is like a tree which grows bigger each year. Finally sin and evil increased to such an extent that God became angry with men.

Read and study Genesis 6:5-6 and Genesis 6:11-12. Also read and study Romans 3:10-18.

5. Write briefly in your own words what these verses have to say about the character of man.

6. According to the above verses, where is sin not found in man's life?

7. Read and study Romans 3:17 again. What didn't man know?

Truly, man did not know what would bring him peace in the world. The history of man is one of wars and oppression, not peace and righteousness.

8. In your opinion why did God impose laws for living in this world?

Even though all of us are sinners, the Lord loves his world. He does not want it to be spoiled and that is why he sent his Son Jesus Christ to save us. Jesus taught us the way to find peace in this world. This is the way of righteousness and harmony.

The Bible is full of this message.

But man as a sinner has no power to obey the Lord. Read and study Ephesians 2:1, 4-6.

The Saviour himself talked about this new life when he met Nicodemus.

John 3:3,5 - *..... Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again I tell you the truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."*

9. What must happen to a man before he can enter the kingdom of God?

God wants all men to do his will, but as sinners they are not able to until they have been born again and redeemed from their sin. God is not preventing man from entering the kingdom, but rather man is preventing himself from entering because of his sinful nature.

10. Who prevents man from doing God's will?

11. Why is this?

ANSWERS

1. (a) They did not want to meet the Lord. (b) Adam blamed God. (c) The Lord drove them out from the garden of Eden and from God's presence.
2. He said that he had more power than God. God had avenged Cain seven times, but Lamech would be avenged seventy seven times.
3. (a) They were ashamed of each other's nakedness. Their close relationship was gone. (b) Adam blamed Eve. He refused to admit his fault and blamed his wife. (c) Enmity between mankind and the snake. (d) The beginning of male domination over woman arose from sin, not from creation.
4. It went from bad to worse and even to murder.
5. Man had become very wicked and violent.
6. There is not anywhere; for sin has entered every part of man's life.
7. The way of peace.
8. Since we do not know the way to peace, the Lord wanted to show us how we can live in peace.
9. He must be born again.
10. Man prevents himself.
11. Because of his sinful nature.

DISCUSSION

Explain the position of man before the fall, after the fall and after he has been born again. What kind of man will be able to understand God's laws? Will he be able to keep them?

WEEK 1: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 5: SEEING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

First, recall yesterday's topic about the fall of man into sin and his need for laws and a new birth.

1. To help you remember yesterday's lesson, answer these questions?
(a) What is the depth of man's evil?

- (b) Why does mankind require God's laws?

- (c) What must a man do to enter the kingdom of God?

No man gives birth to himself, he is born of a woman. So it is with the new birth. We are not born again by the power of man. We are born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, there is something a man must do before he can see God's kingdom.

Matthew 3:2 - "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."

Matthew 4:17 - "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."

Also read and study **Mark 1:15**.

2. According to the above verses, what are we to do?

God alone has the power to give us the new birth but we must be ready to repent. However, even our repentance requires God's power. If we don't repent we will not see the kingdom of God.

3. What is repentance?

But even if a man repents and is born again, seeing the kingdom of God is not easy, because of our sinful nature.

4. In your opinion, why is it hard for a man to see the kingdom of God?

The kingdom is here before us but the evil in man drives it away. There is much evil, and it is as if the world is full of sin and darkness. The increase in sin hides the kingdom. And this sin and evil not only affects man.

Read and study **Romans 8:19-22**.

5. What do the preceding verses tell us about creation?

The creation itself is suffering because of sin.

Read and study **Isalah 65:17-25**.

6. What is this passage about?

7. What will God's people do in that day?

(a) _____

Why will they do this?

(b) _____

Sorrow will pass away when this new age comes.

8. From the verses in Isaiah 65, write down the things which will pass away and change.

(a) verse 19 _____

(b) verses 21-22 _____

(c) verse 23 _____

(d) verse 24 _____

(e) verse 25 _____

In this passage we see the kind of salvation which the Lord will give. It is full of salvation. It is not just the salvation of mankind, but of all creation in heaven and on earth. This salvation affects man and all creation. Everything will be made perfect. There will be no more illness or oppression. Dishonesty, deceit and all kinds of evil will no longer exist.

9. What will make its home in the new creation? Explain the meaning of this.

10. Explain what the relationship will be between God and his people when there is a new heaven and a new earth?

11. What will pass away?

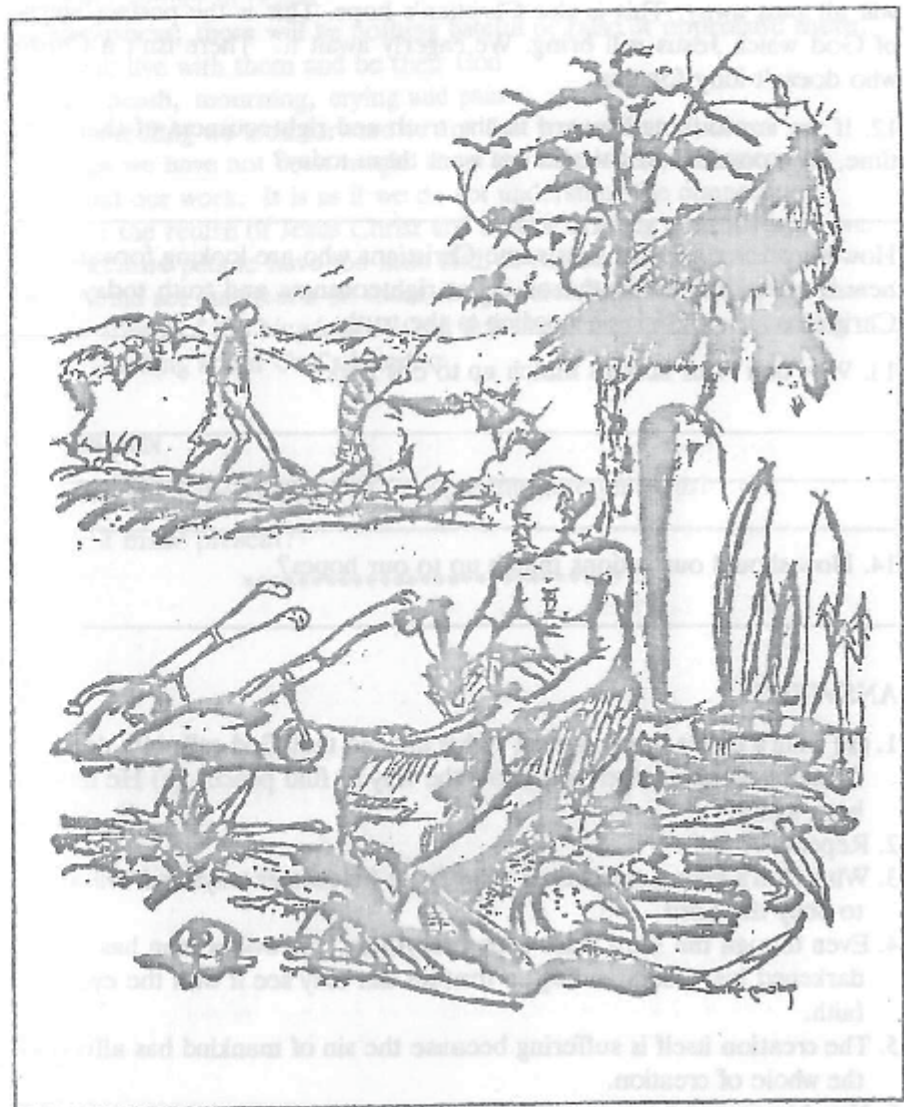


Figure 2: A new heaven and new earth: Swords to ploughshares

2 Peter 3:13 - *But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

The things that trouble us now, aggression, falsehood, illness and sorrow will all pass away. This is the Christian's hope. This is the perfect kingdom of God which Jesus will bring. We eagerly await it. There isn't a Christian who doesn't long for this.

12. If we are looking forward to the truth and righteousness of that coming time, is it possible that we do not want them today?

How surprising and sad that some Christians who are looking forward to the new creation are not bothered about righteousness and truth today. These Christians are not living according to the truth.

13. Why don't our actions match up to our hope?

14. How should our actions match up to our hopes?

ANSWERS

1. (a) Man's evil is in every part of his life, so that God calls him dead. (b) Because mankind does not know the way to find peace. (c) He must be born again.
2. Repent.
3. With God's help a man turns away from his former ways and evil works to obey the Lord.
4. Even though the Lord rules over everything, the evil of man has darkened his understanding so that he can only see it with the eye of faith.
5. The creation itself is suffering because the sin of mankind has affected the whole of creation.
6. New heavens and a new earth.
7. (a) They will be glad and rejoice. (b) Because of the new relationship of all God's creations.
8. (a) The sound of weeping and crying. (b) Oppression will pass away, everyone will eat what he has harvested. (c) Work will be successful and children will be healthy. (d) God will answer their prayers. (e) Animals

will live together in peace.

9. Righteousness; there will be nothing hateful or false or oppressive there.
10. God will live with them and be their God
11. Tears, death, mourning, crying and pain.
12. It is something we look forward to and that we need at all times.
13. Perhaps we have not been taught about the relationship between our hope and our work. It is as if we do not understand the connection between the return of Jesus Christ and that of working honestly were we are. Because people have too little faith to realise their hopes.
14. We should set our hearts on those things which Jesus will bring us; that is, the affairs of the kingdom of God that our actions will be according to the teaching about God's kingdom.

DISCUSSION

1. In what ways is the kingdom of God present here on earth?
2. How is it made present?

WEEK 2: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 1: THE VALUE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Last week we studied the founding of God's kingdom, its extent and the relationship of man as a sinner to the kingdom. This week we shall discuss the principles of the kingdom.

Today we will look at its value.

If you have a concordance in your Bible look up the word "kingdom". It is used many times in the Bible. Christians talk a lot about man finding salvation but the Bible talks more about God's kingdom. That is, God's creation, heaven and earth, body and spirit, man and the rest of creation.

A. The kingdom of God is our basis for preaching the Gospel

Matthew 4:17,23 - *From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom*

Read and study also Acts 1:3, Matthew 10:7, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:43 and Luke 8:1.

1. What is the main message of the preaching of Jesus?

Matthew 3:1-2 - *In those days John the Baptist came, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."*

Luke 9:1-2 - *When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God*

Also read and study Luke 9:60.

2. John the Baptist and the disciples of Jesus preached in different ways; but what was the main message of their preaching?

So it was with the apostles. Read and study these verses; Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23; 28:31. We can see that the meaning of the Gospel is actually contained in the preaching of the kingdom of God. In fact, we can say that all preaching is about the kingdom of God.

B. Only the kingdom of God is Internal.

There are many things in the world which attempt to get our attention and cause us to forget about the kingdom of God. Read and study what the Bible has to say about this.

Proverbs 23:4-5 - *Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.*

Read and study Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 12:33-34, John 6:27, 41-59 and James 1:11, 5:1-3.

3. (a) Is the value of riches the same as the value of God's kingdom?

(b) Write here the reason for your answer.

Hebrews 13:14 - *For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*

4. What sort of city is first mentioned in this verse?

5. What kind of city should we be looking for? Explain your answer.

Read and study 1 John 2:16-17.

6. What will happen to this world?

7. Which world will pass away?

8. Which world will not pass away?

C. Nothing in creation can separate us from the kingdom of God

Man, the sinner, has no sense of right. Every time he prefers that which contradicts God's kingdom. The Bible shows us that nothing in creation should separate us from the kingdom. If what you are seeking separates you from God, then you must get rid of it.

Matthew 19:21 - Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me"

Also read and study **Matthew 13:44-46, Luke 12:32-34.**

Riches are not a sin. Nevertheless the Lord told these people to sell all their possessions.

9. Why did Jesus tell these people to sell all their possessions?

Read and study **Romans 14:17, 20-21 and Matthew 4:4.**

The Lord does not forbid us to eat meat or drink wine. However, a follower of Jesus should pay attention to what he eats or drinks.

10. Why is it good to pay attention to the kind of food we eat or drink?

Acts 19:18-19 - Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practised sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly.

Read and study also **Matthew 10:37, Matthew 18:8-9, Matthew 10:39, Matthew 16:26.**

11. In these verses many good things are mentioned, but if they come between you and God's kingdom then you must get rid of them. Write down five of these things and their reference.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

(e) _____

To summarise, Jesus said:

Matthew 6:33 - But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

This verse shows us the way of peace - Memorize this verse.

ANSWERS

1. The good news of the kingdom of God, that is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Repent, for the kingdom of God, that is the kingdom of heaven, is near!
3. (a) No. (b) You have your answer.
4. A city that does not endure.
5. An enduring city that is to come.
6. It will pass away.
7. The sinful, wicked world.
8. The new world which Christ restores and where Christians are seeking to do God's will.
9. Because their possessions were a stumbling block to them and would prevent them from following the way of the Lord and from finding God's kingdom.
10. Because some times what you eat and drink may cause another to fall.
11. (a) Items used in sorcery or spirit worship - Acts 19:18-19. (b) Parents and children - Matthew 10:37. (c) Parts of the body - Matthew 18:8-9. (d) Your own life - Matthew 10:39. (e) The whole world - Matthew 16:26

DISCUSSION

1. What will be given to us if we seek first his kingdom?
2. Practice the memory verse together.

WEEK 2: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 2: THE FIRST PRINCIPLE: THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

From the start of this book we have been studying important things about the kingdom of God. We understand that God's kingdom is everywhere. The kingdom contains all creation, both physical and spiritual. The Lord wants mankind to obey him in all his ways, both earthly and spiritual. But man is a sinner and sin affects him in every way. The Bible says that no one can act truthfully. We are all dead in our evil deeds. We are blind to what we ought to do because our sin has darkened our hearts and minds. We are indeed lost.

But, praise the Lord, he hasn't left us in darkness. He sent us prophets and apostles and his Son Jesus Christ. The source of their message is written in the Bible. In the Bible we will be enlightened about everything. About the way we should serve the Lord and how we should live with our neighbours. We have been given laws which we must obey.

1. Explain the extent of God's kingdom, according to what you have learnt.

2. Explain the extent of sin in the world.

3. What has God given us in the Bible which we should live by?

There are two kinds of laws. One kind teaches us what to do. For example, there is a law which forbids us using two different measures and there is a law which forbids a man from collecting to himself houses and farms just for his pleasure. These kinds of laws are more frequent in the Old than in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the Lord gave the Children of Israel these laws because of their lack of understanding. They were like young children needing to be taught not to play with a knife or matches because they do not understand the dangers of them. But mature adults do not need to be prevented from using them because they understand the dangers involved.

The other kind of laws affects all of man's activities. Here is the greatest commandment:

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40)

4. How should we love God?

5. How should we love our neighbour?

6. (a) If this love is in your heart, do you need to be told not to kill or cheat your brother?

(b) Explain why such a law would be inappropriate to one who loves God.

This commandment is called the "greatest commandment" because it is the first principle of God's kingdom and the basis of all other laws. If you do not have love in your heart then you will not be able to keep the other laws. But if there is love in your heart then you will keep all the laws written in the Bible.

Love is sufficient to enable us to keep the way of the Lord.

Read and study Romans 13:9-10 and Galatians 5:14.

7. Why is the greatest commandment so called?

Read and study 2 John 5-6. Also read Leviticus 19:18 and 34 and Deuteronomy 6:5; 30:6.

8. Is the greatest commandment a new one?

It is certainly not a new commandment. But what is new is that the Holy Spirit has come to live in the hearts of believers. In times past, the Holy Spirit did not fill the hearts of believers as he did at Pentecost. That is the reason why in Old Testament times the people required many laws.

Read and study John 14:15-23.

9. What is the difference between the people of the Old and New Testaments regarding laws?

1 John 5:2-3 - *This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. Read also John 14:15-23.*

10. What is the relationship between the commands of God and love?

Read and study Ephesians 3:17-19 and Philipians 1:9.

11. If a man doesn't have love in his heart he will not be able to keep God's laws. What else won't he be able to do?

John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Romans 5:8 - *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

12. Explain the kind of love God showed us.

John 13:34 - *Love one another. As I have loved you*

John 15:13 - *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*

Read and study also Ephesians 5:2 and 1 John 3:16.

13. Explain from these verses what kind of love Christians should show to their neighbours.

Instead of cheating each other or humiliating one another, we should give ourselves for each other, even to death as Christ did for us. The greatest commandment is that we love everybody.

Luke 6:27 - *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you*

1 Thessalonians 3:12 - *May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.*

14. Are we to love only our brethren?

Read and study Luke 6:32-36.

15. (a) There is a saying, "Love those who love you". Is this right?

(b) Explain the reason for your answer.

16. A close friend will be careful about what he does. From these verses write down what a close friend would or would not do to his neighbour.

(a) Romans 13:10 - *Love does no harm to its neighbour.*

(b) Galatians 5:13 - *You my brothers, serve one another in love.*

(c) Ephesians 4:5 - *Instead, speaking the truth in love*

(d) Philipians 2:4 - *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

(e) Hebrews 10:24-25 - *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. let us encourage one another*

If you compare these verses you will see that we are not only forbidden to hurt one another, but we are told to encourage, build-up and put others first. If you compare the kind of love which the Bible teaches, you will see that the way of Christ is very different to that of the world in every way. Love is an amazing thing. The world does not understand it.

ANSWERS

1. It includes all of creation, all things, both spiritual and physical.
2. It is everywhere. It affects every part of our lives.
3. God has given us laws.
4. With all our heart, all our soul and all our mind.
5. As ourselves.
6. (a) No. (b) He will not even want to kill or cheat another, but to help them because he lives with love in his heart.
7. Because it is the basis for all laws.
8. No, it has been here since the beginning.
9. The people of the New Testament have more understanding than those of the Old Testament because of the coming of the Holy Spirit.
10. It is impossible to keep the commands unless one has love in his heart. The person who does not have love can not obey them.
11. He would not understand and will lack insight.
12. He gave His Son to redeem us whilst we were sinners.
13. Jesus gave his life for us. Therefore, we too should give our lives for each other.
14. No, we should love all people, even our enemies.
15. (a) It is not right. (b) We should love all people, not just those who love us.
16. (a) A close friend does not harm you. (b) A close friend serves another. (c) A close friend speaks the truth in love. (d) A close friend cares about the interests of others. (e) A close friend encourages another in good deeds.

DISCUSSION

Read your answers to question 16. Do we love everyone or do we love some and reject others? Why is it that we reject some people?

What should we do about this problem?

WEEK 2: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 3: THE SECOND PRINCIPLE:

MAN IS MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Yesterday we studied the greatest commandment, love. Love is the basis of all our duties. If you are filled with love you have already rejected evil. However, there are some Bible teachings which help us test every action according to God's will. We call these the principles relating to man and his neighbour. If you use these to test your actions you will not make a mistake. The principle which we are going to study today is about the value of man.

In order to understand how we should behave towards each other in this world, we have to understand man's place and value.

Genesis 1:26 - Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

1. According to this verse how was man created?

2. What is linked to being made in the image of God?

The Bible does not explain the meaning of the words 'image of God' but we can be sure that it has something to do with the kingdom of God. Since the very beginning, God has given man the very responsible job of ruling over his creation.

3. Write down two things which make man particularly valuable.

(a) _____

(b) _____

Genesis 1:27 - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

4. According to this verse, who was created in the image of God?

5. How do you see the value of man and of woman in this verse?

Genesis 9:6 - "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man."

6. Why is murder forbidden in this verse?

Man is of supreme value. Being made in the "image of God" gives man authority over all creation. It is also the reason why murder is forbidden. Would one kill someone who bore the image of Almighty God? Never!

Read and study Psalm 8:4-6.

7. List the things which have more worth than man.

8. What is the relationship between man and the rest of the world?

Man is indeed of great value. We should not despise him. We should not treat anything as being of more value than man, except God himself.

9. Does a man who is not a Christian still bear the image of God?

A man who does not know God through Jesus Christ still bears the image of God. His value now may not be as God intended but he is still over all creation.

2 Corinthians 4:4 - *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Colossians 1:15-16 - *He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created.*

10. What is said in these verses about "the image of God"?

11. Why did they say this about him?

Romans 8:29 - *For those (believers) God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

12. To whom are we to be conformed?

Colossians 3:9-10 - *Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

13. What is the new self forbidden to do?

14. Why are we forbidden to do these things?

1 John 3:1 - *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!*

15. According to this verse, what did God call us which proves how valuable we are to him?

God has indeed created us with great value and in his own likeness. Man's value has diminished because of sin, but it has not been lost completely. But in Jesus Christ, our position has been restored. In believers the image of God has been put right, such that we have been made children of God. This position is truly wonderful. We should acknowledge the value of every individual because they bear the image of God.

ANSWERS

1. In God's image, that is in his likeness.
2. Ruling over the earth.
3. (a) Being made in the image of almighty God. (b) The task of ruling over the earth.
4. Man.
5. They are of equal value.
6. Because of the value of man, who was created in God's image.
7. Only God surpasses man in worth.
8. Man rules over everything.
9. Yes, even though his value is not seen so clearly as at the beginning. Nevertheless he is made in the image of God and still has the job of

- ruling the world.
- 10. Jesus Christ is the image of God.
- 11. Because he created all things, he was the first ruler.
- 12. To the likeness of Jesus Christ.
- 13. To lie and to live in the way of the 'old self'.
- 14. Because we have put on the 'new self' which lives in the image of the true God.
- 15. Children of God.

DISCUSSION

- 1. If everyone bears the image of God, why is it that so many ordinary people suffer oppression?
- 2. How can oppression be overcome?

WEEK 2: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 4: THE THIRD PRINCIPLE: HUMBLE YOURSELF

Yesterday we studied the value of man from the Bible. We saw that man is of great value before the Lord. We should therefore never despise or abuse a fellow man. We must honour one another in every way. But, do not think that you are so important that everyone else should honour you. It is possible that to someone who does not understand the Bible or the value of man, you would appear as arrogant.

- 1. Why is it easy to misunderstand the meaning of "the image of God"?

Read and study Matthew 18:1-4.

- 2. Write down briefly the disciple's question.

- 3. Write down the reply which Jesus gave.

- 4. (a) Does the reply Jesus gave contradict yesterday's lesson?

- (b) Explain the reason for your answer.

Yesterday we learnt that all men are valuable but this does not mean that we should become arrogant. We should honour one another but not ourselves. It is right that we humble ourselves.

One day the mother of James and John came to Jesus with this request:

Read and study Matthew 20:21 and 24-28.

- 5. What mistake did this woman make?

- 6. According to Jesus, how do the children of the world rule?

- 7. In the Christian way, if a man seeks to be a leader, what must he be first?

Romans 12:10 - *Honor one another above yourselves.*

- 8. According to this verse who should we honour?

The Lord does not want us to honour ourselves but one another.

Luke 16:15 - *He (Jesus) said to them (the Pharisees), "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."*

- 9. What mistake did the Pharisees make?

- 10. Explain the meaning of the word detestable in the above verse.

James 4:6 - "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

11. Whom does God oppose?

12. What do the humble receive?

1 Peter 5:6 - *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

13. What reward is given to those who humble themselves?

Listen to Mary's song recounting the things which Jesus will do.

Read and study Luke 1:51-53.

14. What will Jesus do to the leaders who do not humble themselves?

15. What will Jesus do for the humble and the hungry?

ANSWERS

1. It's easy to think that we are more important than we are.
2. They wanted an important position in the kingdom of heaven.
3. They should humble themselves and become like children.
4. You have your answers.
5. She wanted her sons to have better places in Jesus' kingdom than the other disciples.
6. They rule by showing their authority.
7. He must make himself the servant of all.
8. One another above ourselves.
9. Before the people become boastful.
10. Man honors the powerful, the rich and the rulers. But if they do not humble themselves they are considered as unpleasant before God.
11. The proud; those who exaggerate.
12. Grace.
13. The Lord will lift them up.
14. He will scatter them and send them away empty handed.

15. He will lift up the humble and feed the hungry.

DISCUSSION

Discuss whether we humble ourselves as we should in the church. What about our leaders? What about our members? If your answer is 'no'; why don't Christians humble themselves? How can we be an example of living humbly?

WEEK 2: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 5: THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE: CARRYING THE CROSS

Yesterday we talked about humbling ourselves.

Every Christian needs to honour his brother, but he must humble himself.

Today, we will consider another principle of the kingdom of God which comes after humility. This is suffering or bearing the cross. The godless in the world do not understand the meaning of life; they seek only to enjoy themselves. But for those of us who are Christians, the Bible clearly teaches that all who follow Jesus Christ, will suffer in this world.

Some people want to follow Christ hoping to escape from suffering. But even though God will meet their needs, if they follow him faithfully, they will not escape from suffering. But it will be a different kind of suffering.

Read and study Matthew 10:17-18, 22 and 24-25.

In this passage Jesus is talking to his disciples about what is ahead of them.

1. What kind of trouble awaits them?

2. Why was this going to happen to them?

3. Who is the student to be like?

John 15:18-19 - *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not*

belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."

4. Why will Christians be persecuted?

Matthew 16:24-25 - Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."

Also read and study Matthew 18:32-35. This is a hard passage to understand. Many times a Christian is called to obey the Lord even when it leads to personal loss. He must be prepared to hate himself.

5. Give two examples of how following Jesus could cause you to experience personal loss.

(a) _____

(b) _____

6. Give an example of how you could lose your life for Jesus' sake.

If you prefer taking bribes or dishonest profits or even yourself to Jesus, then you are amongst those who want to save their lives. But you will not receive the life which Jesus gives.

Matthew 5:10-12 - "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Read and study 1 Peter 4:14.

7. Who are blessed?

8. (a) How are they to behave when persecuted?

(b) Why should we also behave in this way?

Acts 5:41 - The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name (of Jesus).

James 1:2 - Consider it pure joy my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds

1 Peter 4:12-13 - Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

9. According to these verses, how should a Christian feel in his heart when suffering?

10. (a) Is persecution a strange thing to us?

(b) Why not?

Read and study Matthew 10:28.

11. Who shouldn't we fear?

12. (a) Whom should we fear?

(b) Why should we fear him?

But, praise the Lord, we do not suffer without reason. The verses above have shown us the benefits of suffering. Now read and study Philippians 2:5-11.

13. What attitude did Jesus have?

14. What reward was Jesus given in this passage?

15. How did Jesus become an example to us in Matthew 16:24-25?

ANSWERS

1. Suffering.
2. They would reject the Lord Jesus Christ and his followers.
3. His master.
4. Because they do not belong to the world, the world hates them.
5. For example: (a) You may experience loss if you as a business man refuse to give bribe. You may seek a business contract but are told you must first give a bribe. (b) You may not gain much if you only seek honest gains in the market.
6. For example; we could suffer persecution like some do in other countries.
7. Those who are persecuted.
8. (a) Rejoice and be glad. (b) In order to follow in the steps of the prophets and be blessed.
9. He should rejoice.
10. (a) No. (b) Because we share with Jesus in his suffering.
11. Those who kill the body.
12. (a) God. (b) Because he has the power to destroy both the body and the soul.
13. He made himself nothing and took the nature of a servant.
14. God exalted him to the highest place; every knee shall bow to him.
15. He gave his life for us.

DISCUSSION

Give examples of how this lesson can be used 1) in the church, 2) in the market, and 3) in local government.

WEEK 3: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 1: THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE: UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP

Last week we studied the subject of humility and before that the subject of man's value. Both of these are principles of Christian living in God's kingdom. We finished last week by seeing how we must be prepared to give up our lives. Today we shall discuss the subject of unity and fellowship in the church and in the world.

A. Unity and fellowship in the Lord's Supper

Jesus Christ left the church with a special sacrament called 'the Lord's Supper'. We will not look into everything the Bible teaches about the Lord's Supper but only those parts which concern our subject. The basic meaning of the Lord's Supper is a sharing with Christ in his body and blood. When we eat the bread and drink from the cup it is as if the body and blood of Jesus becomes our own.

1. What is the basic meaning of the Lord's Supper?

2. When we eat the Lord's Supper we are participating with Christ. With who else do we participate? Explain.

When we share the Lord's Supper we are also participating with each other.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 - Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Confirm your answer to question 2 by answering the following.

3. With whom are we participating when we eat the Lord's Supper?

But what is this body?

1 Corinthians 12:27 - Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it.

4. Who are the body?

5. Read and study 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 again. What do we become when we eat the loaf?

These verses clearly show our unity with Christ himself and with each other. This unity is for Christians only, because we have a special unity and fellowship in Christ with each other.

6. Do you think the unity of Christians only affects things concerning the church?

7. If you think it affects other things as well as the church, what are these things?

Our unity and fellowship in Christ should affect everything we deal with. It is amazing to see how some Christians cheat each other. They have fellowship together in the church but in the market or the local government there is no sign of unity and fellowship. They will even cheat each other.

8. What do you think causes this?

Remember the lesson we had earlier about how man divides spiritual matters from worldly ones. If you divide spiritual or church matters from other matters, then you are making a separation which God does not want. The command of the Lord is one, not two. Christian fellowship is one, not two. In Christian fellowship we need to be united in all our activities.

9. Think about, then write down, an example of how Christians can be united in the world.

B. Gifts

Another area where Christians need to be united concerns the gifts given to us by the Lord. There is nobody, Christian or not, who does not have at least one gift. Everyone can do something with the gift God has given him. As Christians we must make special use of our gifts.

Read and study Matthew 25:14-30.

Most people use their gifts without realising they have been given them. But do they use them as they should? We shall discuss this today.

Read and study 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

10. List five gifts mentioned in this passage.

Here you see the difference between Christians and the rest of the world.

11. In your opinion, if somebody is very good at something and becomes an expert, how will he make use of his expertise?

12. (a) According to the above passage, should one boast about his gifts?

(b) What is the reason for your opinion?

13. Instead of boasting, what should he do with the gifts that God has given him?

Read and study 1 Corinthians 12:25.

14. What does this verse forbid?

Read and study onto verse 26.

15. What are we encouraged to do in this verse?

The Bible forbids us to use our gifts just to improve our own lives. The Lord has divided these gifts among us so that we may build up one another. In this way the behaviour of the Christian will be clearly seen.

Ephesians 4:11-12 - *It was he who gave some to be apostles to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up*

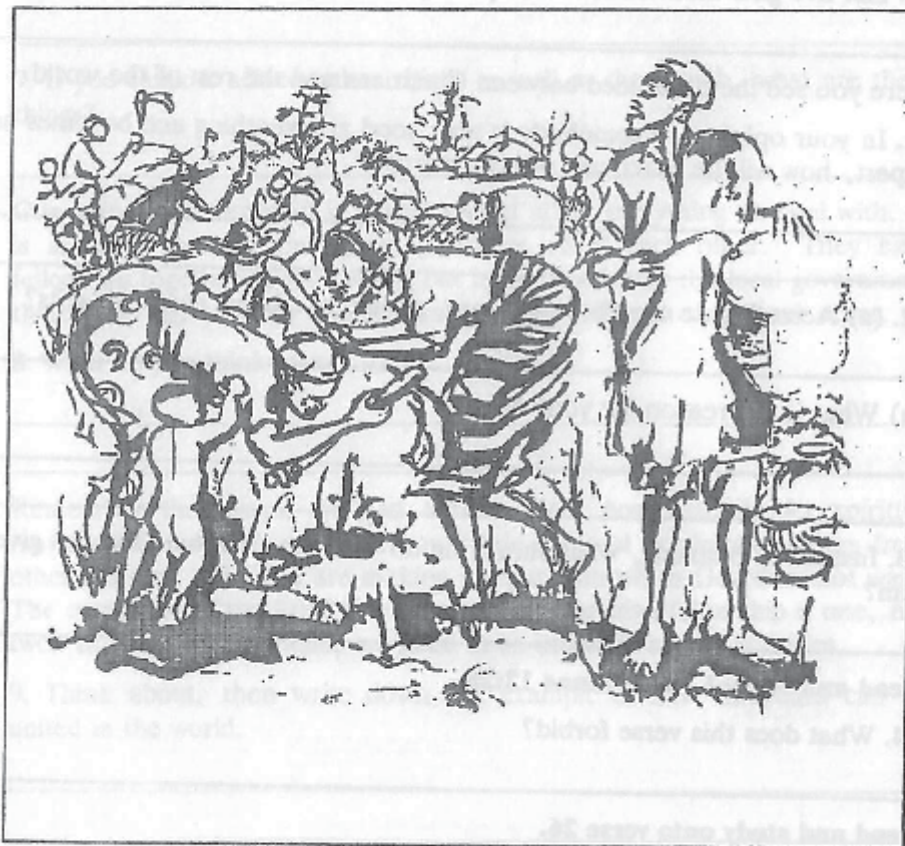


Figure 3: Working together

16. Why were we given these gifts?

1 Peter 4:10 - *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others*

17. According to this verse, what should we do with these gifts?

ANSWERS

1. Sharing with Christ.
2. Our fellow Christians.
3. The body of Christ, that is all Christians.
4. Christians.
5. One body.
6. No, it doesn't only affect things concerning the church.
7. It affects everything.
8. The most likely reason is that they divide things into two groups. That is they put what concerns the church apart from their daily life.
9. There are many examples. One could set up a company and trade together. For example an organisations to improve the lot of the ordinary man or the farmers, or they could try to fight corruption.
10. The message of wisdom, the message of knowledge (verse 8), faith, gifts of healing (verse 9), miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in different tongues and the interpretation of tongues (verse 10). See also verse 28.
11. Some will use it to get rich or to boast to others about how much better they are than others.
12. (a) No, because God is the one who gave the gifts. There is no reason for boasting. (b) You have your answer.
13. Use them to bring glory to the Lord.
14. Division. That is everyone should use his gift to benefit the others.
15. To support and help each other by means of the gifts which we have
16. In order to build up the body of Christ.
17. We should use them to serve others not just ourselves.

DISCUSSION

Do we use our gifts to help only ourselves or to help others? Let each one explain his point of view with an example.

WEEK 3: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 2: REVISION FROM WEEK 1, DAY 1, TO WEEK 3, DAY 1

1. (Week 1, Day 1) Is it only the duty of Christians to obey the Lord?

Explain the reason for your answer?

2. (Week 1, Day 1) What does God prefer, the spirit or the body? Explain the reason for your answer.

3. (Week 1, Day 2) What consequence has the friendship with the world?

4. (Week 1, Day 2) There are two meanings to the word "world" in the Bible. Explain this briefly.

5. (Week 1, Day 3) Does the salvation of Jesus affect only spiritual matters?

6. (Week 1, Day 3) The Bible says many times that everything obeys God. Who alone does not fully obey God?

7. (Week 1, Day 4) Write down where sin does not enter man's life.

8. (Week 1, Day 4) (a) What must happen to a man before he can see and enter the Kingdom of God?

(b) Explain what being born again means.

9. (Week 1, Day 5) The Kingdom of God is clearly here, but most people cannot see it. Why is this so?

10. (Week 2, Day 1) John the Baptist and the disciples of Jesus preached in many different ways, like Jesus did, but what was their main message about?

11. (Week 2, Day 1) Say the memory verse, Matthew 6:33 about God's kingdom.

12. (Week 2, Day 2) (a) What is the greatest commandment?

(b) Why is this called the greatest commandment?

13. (Week 2, Day 2) What kind of love should Christians show to their neighbours?

14. (Week 2, Day 2) (a) There is a saying "Love those who love you". Is this correct?

(b) Explain the reason for your answer.

15. (Week 2, Day 3) What is the second principle of the kingdom of God?

16. (Week 2, Day 3) Why is man valuable.

17. (Week 2 Day 4) (a) What is the third principle of the kingdom of God?

(b) What is the relationship between the second and third principle?

18. (Week 2, Day 4) What reward will those receive who humble themselves?

19. (Week 2, Day 5) What is the fourth principle of the kingdom of God?

20. (Week 2, Day 5) What does it mean to carry the cross?

21. (Week 2, Day 5) Explain the words of Jesus "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it".

22. (Week 3, Day 1) What is the fifth principle of God's kingdom?

23. (Week 3, Day 1) Which things are affected by the fellowship of Christians at the Lord's Supper?

24. (Week 3, Day 1) Instead of boasting, what should we do with the gifts God has given us?

ANSWERS

1. No, not only Christians, but every person.
2. He cares for both. He created both of them and said they were good.
3. Whoever loves the world is against God.
4. There is the created world and there is the world which is full of evil.
5. No, it affects everything.
6. Man.
7. There is nowhere; sin enters every part of man's life.
8. (a) He must be born again. (b) Being born again can be a gradual process towards a strong faith, to rely more and more on the way taught by Jesus, to be guided by the holy spirit to bear good fruits (Gal. 5:22-24).
9. Although the Lord rules over all, the evil of man has made it hard to see the kingdom except with the eye of faith.
10. Repent, because the kingdom of God (that is the kingdom of Heaven) is near.
11. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.
12. (a) The greatest commandment is to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves. (b) Because this is the basis of all the commandments.
13. Jesus gave himself for us. We must show the same sacrificing love for others.
14. (a) No, it's not correct. (b) We should love all men, not just our friends.
15. Man is made in the image of God.
16. Because he's made in the image of almighty God.
17. (a) To humble yourself. (b) We should honour one another because of our value, but not honour ourselves. Instead we should humble ourselves.
18. The Lord will lift them up.
19. Taking up the cross.
20. The one who follows Jesus will suffer in this world.
21. We must obey Jesus even though it may cause us loss.
22. Unity and fellowship.
23. Everything is affected.
24. Use them to bring glory to God and for the service for others.

WEEK 3: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 3: WORKING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD: THE FIRST COMMAND

Last week we studied the greatest commandment which is love. Now we shall look at the subject of work. What does work mean to a Christian?

1. Why do we work?

It is probable that, like the majority of people, your view is that one works in order to earn money to pay for ones needs. Yes, that is true. It is possible that you said that one works to obtain more possessions. If we want to understand the meaning of work from the Bible we have to go back to the first command God gave to mankind in Genesis 1:28.

2. Do you remember what this first command in the Bible says?

3. What kind of work shall we do for the Lord? Give four examples.

- (a) _____ (b) _____
(c) _____ (d) _____

It is possible you wrote down things like preaching the Gospel or leading Bible study. Those are not wrong, for they are indeed God's work. But there are more. Before we see what the Bible has to say about this, here are two more questions.

4. From the jobs indicated below, which in your opinion is more valuable to the Lord? Explain your answer.

(a) Trading or preaching?

(b) Local Government or leading Bible study?

Many Christians will say preaching and leading Bible study are more valuable to the Lord than the other jobs. Now let us see what the Bible teaches. Let us read the first command which God gave.

Genesis 1:28 - God said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

5. What job did God give our first parents?

It is possible that you are surprised by this commandment. Many Christians do not think that ruling the world and looking after the creatures in it is the work the Lord wants them to do.

6. In your opinion, why do most Christians think these jobs are not part of the work of the Lord?

Remember the lesson in Week 1, Day 1. Dividing work into separate categories is what causes the misunderstanding. Remember God does not despise the body or the world. He loves all his creation, the earthly and the spiritual. So physical work is also the Lord's if it is done according to his will.

The first command shows how God desires man to care for the creation. This has been our work since the beginning.

Genesis 2:15 - The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

In this verse, God showed Adam and Eve the way to keep the first command.

7. What did the Lord tell them to do?

But farming is not the only way to fulfil God's first command. Gradually, different jobs evolved as we see in Genesis 4:17-22. Read and study these verses.

In our time, jobs have become numerous. For example there is trading, building, office work and many other jobs. All of these are ways of ruling God's world. Through these jobs, man serves the Lord and fulfils his will. These are the works of the Lord, these are the works of religion, for these are the duties God entrusted to man from the beginning.

8. How can one call trading and building the work of the Lord?

Look at question four again. If your opinion has changed, rewrite the answer.

9. In your opinion, which job is of more value in God's sight.

(a) Trading or preaching

(b) Local Government or leading Bible study

(c) Farming or sweeping the church

It is possible that you now said: God prefers trading, work in local government and farming to preaching, leading Bible study and sweeping the church. But this is not the meaning of this lesson. God values all work. All of them are the work of the Lord; all of those are religious work and they are all of equal value in God's sight.

10. Write down four jobs which are not done in the church but are still of value to the Lord.

(a) _____ (b) _____

(c) _____ (d) _____

The meaning of today's lesson is not that we despise the work of the church, but rather that we understand the value of the work we do in the world.

All are valuable and must be done. If we want to improve things in the world we must understand the value of work. We should understand the relationship between the work of evangelism and our everyday work in the world. We will continue this study on Day 5.

ANSWERS

1. Write your own opinion.
2. If you can't remember, read Genesis 1:28.
3. Write your own answer.
4. Write your own answer.
5. To rule the world according to God's will.
6. The main reason is that they divide life into two parts, that of the Lord and that of the world.
7. To work and take care of the garden.
8. These are ways by which man rules the earth to fulfil the first command. They are gifts to be used for the service of others and to glorify God.
9. (a), (b), (c), All these jobs are valuable in God's sight. One is not more important than another.
10. For example (a) Nursing. (b) Driving. (c) Office work. (d) Carpentry.

DISCUSSION

1. How can we make people realise that they are doing God's work when they are farming, trading, working in offices etc?
2. If all work comes from the Lord, how should we view those whose work is stealing or prostitution? How do we advise them?

WEEK 3: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 4: WORKING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD: RULING THE WORLD AFTER THE FALL

Yesterday we studied the subject of work in the kingdom of God.

1. What is the meaning of working?

God created man to rule the world in his name. Man was to investigate its secrets and use his knowledge to improve living in the world. Some people say that work was a punishment for sin. If man had not fallen into sin he would not have to work.

2. Is this true? Explain your answer.

3. Yesterday, we saw how God gave us the command to work. What is the Bible reference for this command?

4. When God gave this command, had Adam already fallen into sin?

5. In which chapter do we read about the fall of Adam into sin?

This shows clearly that the command to work was not a punishment for sin. Since the beginning, God has wanted man to rule the world. This has been our duty since the creation of man. Nevertheless, the fall of man into sin has brought about a change to man's work.

6. If you know the change that sin brought to man's work, write it here.

Read and study Genesis 3:16-19.

7. Was there birth before the fall? How do you know?

8. What changed concerning childbirth?

9. What happened to work?

Painful childbirth and hard work were the punishment for sin. Sin brought many difficulties to work. Sin weakens our bodies and causes them to become tired. Sin caused new things to spring up from the earth which were not there originally.

10. Write down examples of things which grew after the fall into sin.

There is also another reason why man does not enjoy his work. God created him to work for him in the world; to honour the Lord and to help his neighbour in every way. But man changed this and made work something different. Man did not stop working, but he changed the meaning of work.

Genesis 4:17 - *Cain was then building a city*

Genesis 4:20 - *Jabal was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock.*

Genesis 4:21 - *Jubal was the father of all who play the harp and flute.*

Genesis 4:22 - *Tubal-Cain forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron.*

11. What do you think about these jobs in relation to the first commandment? Were they keeping it?

People did not stop working; they continued ruling the world but they also started to do new jobs which had not existed before. They studied the world and discovered things which Adam and Eve did not know about. However, there was another change.

Read and study Genesis 4:23-24.

In verse 15 of the same chapter the Lord said that if anyone killed Cain he would avenge him seven times. But Lamech thought he was greater than God, he would exceed God in vengeance. Instead of man serving God through his work, he started boasting that he exceeded God and became proud. From now on he did not work to serve God but rather to honour himself.

12. What do we learn from Genesis 4:17-24?

From this time on, man increased in doing evil so that the Lord became angry with him. Read and study Genesis 6:6. God judged man by the Flood. Even after this man's behaviour did not improve.

Genesis 11:4 - *Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves"*

13. According to this verse, who were the people honouring?

This is one of the reasons why man only enjoys work if it brings him power and riches. If a man is seeking only riches and power from his work and fails to achieve these, he will not enjoy his work. If he is seeking happiness and honour from the work and he does not achieve them, then he leaves the job.

Only if a man honors the Lord through his work, he will be prepared to accept whatever kind of work he has to do.

ANSWERS

1. To rule the world in God's name.
2. It's not true, because God gave the first command before they committed sin.
3. Genesis 1:28.
4. No, see Genesis 2:15.
5. Genesis 3.
6. Work was not a punishment for sin, but sin reduced our strength so that we now get tired. The creation also produced thorns and thistles and other problems.
7. Yes there was (Read Genesis 1:28).
8. The punishment was the increase of pain in childbearing.
9. The Lord cursed the ground and because of this, work became hard and exhausting.
10. Thorns and thistles.
11. Yes, they were continuing to rule the world and started doing new jobs.
12. Man continued to rule the world, but not according to God's will, rather according to his selfish ambitions.
13. They were honouring themselves.

DISCUSSION

Why is it that many people today do not want to work, unless they receive a big wage and can become very rich? Do Christians behave like this?

WEEK 3: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 5: WORKING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD: THE GREAT COMMISSION

This week we are studying the subject of work. In Week 3, Day 3, we discussed the first command together with the meaning of working in the kingdom of God. The meaning of working is to rule the world in the Lord's name. This has been the Lord's work since the beginning.

1. What has been the work of the Lord since the beginning?

Yesterday we saw how sin has spoiled the real meaning of work.

2. Write down three ways in which the real meaning of work has been spoiled.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

Although man has a fallen nature, can his life in this world be restored? God, in his grace, has sent us Jesus Christ, to reconcile us to himself and to each other. 'Us' here refers to those who have believed in him. But the news of the way of reconciliation needs to be spread to everyone.

God has given us another commandment; the great commission.

Read and study Matthew 28:18-20.

3. Write briefly what the great commission is about.

Jesus wants his followers to spread the Gospel everywhere. Before Jesus gave them this command he talked about the extent of his authority. Look back at Week 1, Day 2.

4. What did Jesus say about his authority?

If we are to spread the Gospel, we must declare all his authority. That is, we must show that his power concerns every part of our lives, both the earthly and the spiritual.

5. What kind of Gospel does Jesus want us to preach?

Read and study Matthew 28:20.

6. Write briefly what this verse says.

The Gospel which we spread must include the knowledge of the authority of Jesus and all that he taught us about both, earthly and spiritual matters.

Now think about this question.

7. Why does God want to redeem us?

Perhaps you said, in order for us to be saved eternally, or to enter heaven, or to have our sins forgiven. These are all true. But salvation is more than that. Full salvation is when a man is reconciled to the Lord. He receives power from the Lord and is able to fulfil the Creator's will in every way. He will do everything the Bible teaches. Earlier in this book we saw how a man must repent and be born again before he can understand the will of God and the meaning of his own life in the world.

Ephesians 2:1 - *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins*

8. What does this verse say about our past life?

Before we believed in Jesus we were dead and did not understand any thing. But look at what God has done for us.

Ephesians 2:4-5 - *..... God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions*

9. What happened to us when we were dead?

Now we have knowledge and wisdom which we did not have formerly. This wisdom is very different from that of the world. If you have a Bible Concordance look up the word 'wisdom'.

Read and study James 3:13-17.

10. How is God's wisdom like?

Ephesians 3:17 - *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*

11. How is the wisdom of the world like?

If we have God's wisdom with us we will be working in the world according to God's principles. But if we have worldly or satanic wisdom, then we will do the things you wrote in question 11. The Lord redeemed us, so that we might know how to serve him in his Kingdom in this world and the one to come. He came in order that we might know how to do his work and rule this world.

12. Why did Jesus redeem us?

The spreading of the Gospel is meant to improve our life in this world. Some Christians do not understand this. To them spreading the Gospel is the most important task of all. Every other job we do relates to this important task. For example, some Christians build a hospital, in order to spread the Gospel through the nursing care given. To them, the spread of the Gospel is more important than the work of nursing.

We have seen that work has been with us since the beginning of time. But man does not know how to rule the world, because he lacks true wisdom. Jesus has commanded us to preach the Gospel, so that men may repent, find God's wisdom, serve him and learn how to rule the world, according to his original purpose. Preaching the Gospel should help us in working in this world - not the other way round. Ruling the world is the basis of our work. The Gospel came later as a result of sin.

ANSWERS

1. Ruling the world.
2. (a) Man's strength decreased. (b) The earth produced thorns and thistles. (c) Sinful man was working for himself and not to glorify God or to help his neighbour.
3. To make disciples of all nations.

4. God the Father had given him authority over everything.
5. The Gospel which concerns every part of our lives, both the earthly and spiritual, that we may experience the full power of our Saviour.
6. Jesus said, "..... Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you"
7. So that we are reconciled with him and may serve him.
8. Formerly we were dead and didn't know anything.
9. God made us alive with Christ, we were raised from death.
10. Pure, peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.
11. Full of envy, selfish ambition, disorder and evil practice.
12. So that we might know how to rule the world in his name and share in those characteristics mentioned in question 10 not those in 11.

DISCUSSION

1. Briefly write down the main points from the above paragraphs. What is the relationship between the carpenter and the evangelist?

What is the relationship between the work of a pastor and the work of a builder, a policeman, a government worker, a trader, a teacher and others?

2. Is there one job which is more important than the rest or do all our jobs fulfil God's will concerning ruling the world? Explain the reasons for your views.

WEEK 4: WORKING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD: MAN AND HIS WEALTH

DAY 1: THE CALL OF GOD TO DIFFERENT WORK

We have been studying the importance of work. What is the place of work in God's kingdom? What happened to work after the fall of man into sin? Now we shall discuss the way a man can know which work the Lord wants him to do. Thus how one is being called.

1. Here is a trader and a pastor. Which one of these needs the call of the Lord to do his job? Give the reason for your answer.

Many Christians think that it is only if you want to do the work of a pastor or evangelist that you have to be called by the Lord. In their view, traders and other workers do not need to be called by the Lord.

2. Do you agree with this? Explain your reason.

Many Christians divide work into two sections. There is, they say, the Lord's work and a secular work and if you wish to do the Lord's work, you must be called by the Lord. However, you do not need to be called to do secular work.

3. (a) Is it possible to divide work into two sections? (Look back at Week 1, Day 3).

-
- (b) Write down the reason for your answer.

It is not possible to divide work into two compartments. The work of God cannot be separated from secular work. All work done in the world is the Lord's. Whatever job we are doing should be a means of serving the Lord. God is calling all Christians to serve him in their work, whether in the church or in the world outside. Every Christian has been called. Traders, builders, doctors or teachers, all need to hear the call of the Lord in their work.

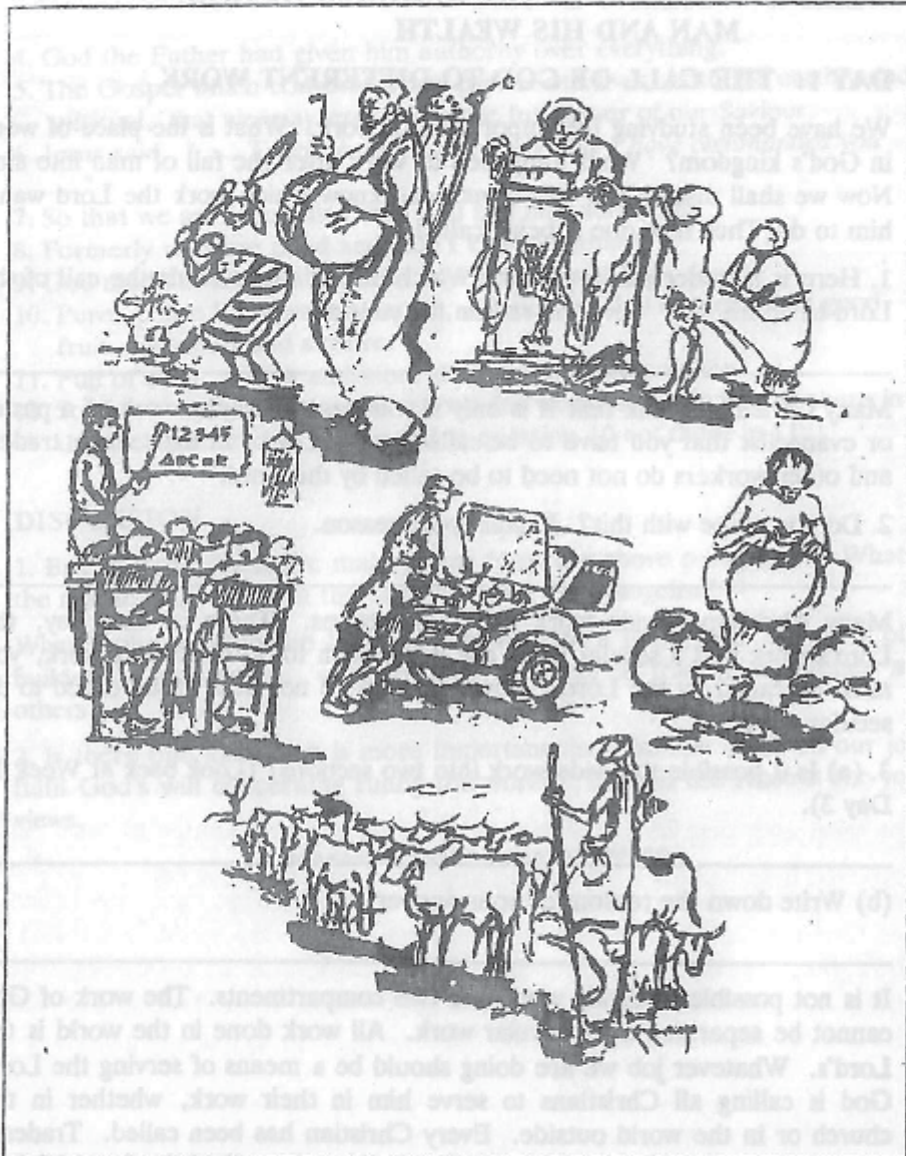


Figure 4: Different talents working for the kingdom of God

Let us now consider how we may know the way the Lord calls us and to listen for his call. Some think that man is free to take whatever job he wants to.

4. What do you think? Is a man free to take any job?

5. In your opinion, why do many Christians think they have not heard the call of the Lord?

The biggest reason for not hearing the call of the Lord is because we are not expecting to be called to do the job we are currently doing. It is as if we have covered our ears and have not listened for the call of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 - *Do not put out the Spirit's fire*

6. According to this verse, what is possible to do with the Spirit's fire?

7. How, in your opinion, can one 'put out the Spirit's fire'?

E.g. if we decide that the Holy Spirit only calls us to work in the church, then we are not listening to him. This is how we put out the Spirit's fire.

8. In your opinion, how can a man be sure it is the Lord calling him?

The Lord has many ways of calling us. He is able to speak to man in his heart or even in a dream. He can speak whilst we are reading the Bible, listening to a sermon or talking with other Christians. Sometimes it is through the advice of other Christians that the Lord calls us.

9. List some of the ways that the Lord can call a man to do a job:

Apart from the ways we have already listed, there are other things which can help us realise that the Lord is calling us. Firstly, look at yourself and

consider what gift God has given you. Has God given you the gift to become a carpenter or a doctor?

If you realise that this is the gift which God has given you, then you will be keen to the job which uses this gift. But be sure you are keen to do the job, because it uses your gift, and not because of the fat salary you may receive.

10. Explain briefly, from the above, how you will be able to understand the call of God to you.

Here is another way. Perhaps there is a great need in the country or amongst your own people. It could be a shortage of reliable school teachers or forward thinking farmers or even good, honest traders. If you see there is a need and God has given you the necessary gift, then it is possible that God is calling you to this work.

11. Explain briefly another way, the Lord may call people, from what you have just learnt.

It is good to link the understanding of your gift with the needs of the community. Seek advice from other Christians, pray and read the Bible. It is possible that God is calling you by these means.

If God calls you to do a certain job, you can be sure that he will open up the way for you to do it. In fact, if the Lord does not open up the way then he is not calling you to that job. However, if you think that you have heard his call and the way is not opening quickly, do not immediately say that this is not the Lord's calling. Perhaps he is testing you to make you stronger. If after much waiting the way does not open up, then let us seek again the Lord's will.

12. Write down the ways in which you can be certain that the Lord is calling you.

But do not deceive yourself. It is possible that you see a well paid job you are keen to do it. Perhaps you start the job, as if the Lord has called you to it. But in reality, it is what you are hoping to receive, and not the calling of the Lord.

13. Explain how it is possible to be deceived.

14. Ask Christians in different jobs, whether they started their job as a result of being called by the Lord. Ask some young people who have not yet started work, if they are waiting for the Lord to call them to a special job.

15. Prepare a sermon about how the Lord's call is to all types of jobs.

ANSWERS

1. You have your answer.
2. You have your answer.
3. (a) No, it's not possible. (b) Write your opinion down. All work done in the world is the Lord's.
4. No, we don't have this kind of freedom. The Lord wants us to hear his call and obey it.
5. Because they don't think that the Lord calls people to ordinary jobs, they haven't listened. They have become as if they are deaf.
6. To put it out.
7. By closing our ears, that is not listening.
8. You have your answer.
9. (a) By speaking to him in his heart; (b) through dreams; (c) through the Bible; (d) through a sermon; (e) through conversation with others; (f) through advice from others. Perhaps you know some more ways.
10. If you have a gift and you are keen to do a job which uses this gift.
11. By learning of a great need which his country or fellow men have.
12. If the way opens up, then he is calling you.
13. If you see a well paid job, it's possible you may want to think God has called you to it but he probably hasn't.
14. Tasks for you to do.
15. Tasks for you to do.

DISCUSSION

1. When you went and talked to different Christians, what did they say to you? Are they doing their jobs because the Lord called them, or simply because they like that job?

What about the young people? Are they seeking the call of the Lord before they start a job?

2. Let some students read out the main headings from the sermon they have prepared.

WEEK 4: WORKING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD: MAN AND HIS WEALTH

DAY 2: THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TO WORK

We are still studying the importance of work in God's kingdom. We saw what the real meaning of working was at the beginning of time and how sin has spoiled that meaning. Then we learnt how the Lord's call affects all the work man does. Today we shall look at some of God's laws which affect our work.

First, let us recall the real meaning of working.

1. If you remember, write down the real meaning of working.

In order to do this work, remember the principles we studied from Week 2, Day 2, through to Week 3, day 1, about our relationship with other people in God's Kingdom.

2. Write down the first principle and how it affects our work.

3. Write down the second principle and how it affects our work.

4. Write down the third principle and how it affects our work.

5. Write down the fourth principle and how it affects our work.

6. Write down the fifth principle and how it affects our work.

But sadly, many Christians have just the same attitude to work as non-Christians.

7. In your opinion, why do many Christians have the same attitude to work as non-Christians. Try to write two or three answers.

(a)

(b)

(c)

There is indeed more than one reason. Consider lack of faith. Sometimes we trust more in worldly wisdom than in God. Then there is the division we make between the spiritual and the physical: For physical things we follow the way of the world. But there is still another reason. We are waiting for the return of Jesus Christ to complete his work of salvation and set up his perfect kingdom. Sin has not left us yet. It is as if the Holy Spirit and Satan are both in our hearts. Our mind is divided into two. It is as if there is a war in the heart of every Christian.

8. Write briefly the reasons given above.

Read and study Romans 7:15-25 very carefully. This passage explains what we have just discussed.

9. Briefly write down what the passage says.

It is true that Christians who have been born again and received Jesus Christ, still experience this war in their hearts between the power of God and that of Satan. We can only hope to win this war with the help of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

What shall we do? Is it impossible to follow the Lord's will? No, the Lord has shown us the way to increase our obedience to him, and to continue in his ways as we should.

10. In your opinion, how can we grow stronger in the Lord's way, in our daily work?

We must keep close to the Lord and pray without ceasing. Jesus Christ made us this promise.

John 16:13 - *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth*

11. In this verse, what did Jesus promise us?

But the Holy Spirit will not just turn up; we have to ask for him in prayer. The Holy Spirit will not tell us anything new, but only what the Bible says.

12. How can we then understand the Holy Spirit's word in our hearts?

There is still another way which we can follow in order to obey the Lord in our daily work.

13. In your opinion which way can we follow?

We need to meet up with fellow Christians in Christ to talk together and strengthen one another. Together with our spiritual brethren, we should seek the will of the Lord, in relation to our work. Certainly, we know how to live in the world, but we will not be successful, except we are in complete fellowship with God and with one another.

14. Briefly write down the ways in which we should seek the Lord's will in our daily work.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

ANSWERS

1. To rule the world according to God's will in order to glorify him and to serve one another.
2. To love God and our neighbour. We won't work just for ourselves but for the benefit of all.
3. Man is made in the image of God. In our work we must recognise the value of every person, whatever their position.
4. To humble ourselves. In our work we won't seek a position to exalt ourselves.
5. To carry our cross. We won't follow the world's wisdom in order to be happy. But we'll take up our cross and work honestly.
6. Unity and fellowship. In our work we won't adopt the slogan which says, 'The fall of one is the rise of another'; but we will use our gifts to strengthen our fellowship and improve things for our neighbours.
7. Give your opinion. then read the explanation which follows the question.
8. (a) We trust more in worldly wisdom than in God's wisdom. (b) The division we make between the spiritual and the physical. (c) In the future our salvation will be complete. Until then Satan continues to tempt us.
9. Sin still troubles us. In our heart we believe in Jesus Christ, but Satan's power has not left us yet.
10. Write your opinion. In my opinion, prayer is the greatest way.
11. That the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth.
12. By reading the Bible.
13. Have fellowship with other Christians.
14. (a) By prayer. (b) Reading the Bible. (c) Having fellowship with other Christians; that is listening to their advice.

DISCUSSION

If you want to know how committed a man is to his religion, do you pay attention to his style of worship or to his daily work?

WEEK 4: WORKING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD: MAN AND HIS WEALTH

DAY 3: WEALTH IS NOT A SIN

Today, we will discuss what the Bible teaches us on the subject of wealth. There are many temptations in this world, but without doubt, wealth is one of the greatest temptations which affects man. It even affects those in the church. If a man does not keep close to the Lord, it is very difficult not to fall into this trap. Money becomes an idol to him, even though he may continue to follow the Lord. If a man commits adultery, he knows it is wrong. But it is possible for a man to admire wealth more than he should, without realising it; the love of money takes hold gradually. In week 3, day 5, we talked about how different God's wisdom is to that of the world.

1. What causes some Christians to make wealth their idol without realising it?

God created the world and it was good in his sight. There was no sin in the world. The only sin was in the heart of man. So it is with wealth. Wealth itself is not sinful. Since the beginning, God has never rejected the wealthy person. Let us read about some special people in the Old Testament.

Genesis 13:2,6 - Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.

Read and study Genesis 26:12-14, 16, Genesis 30:43, and 1 Kings 3:13.

All of these people, Abram, Isaac, Jacob and Solomon are among God's important people in the Old Testament. Apart from this, there is something else which links them all.

2. What have they in common?

3. Who gave Isaac and Solomon their wealth?

4. What does the story of these leaders show us?

It is indeed true that God does not reject the rich because of their wealth. If he rejects them, it is because of their character. We will study this subject later.

5. If God rejects a wealthy person, why do you think he does?

God ordained that by hard work, a man should acquire wealth.

Proverbs 10:4 - Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

Proverbs 12:11,24 - He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgement. Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor.

6. What two things do these verses show us about wealth?

(a)

(b)

Read and study Proverbs 31:10-31 and then answer this question.

7. Why is this woman so valuable?

2 Thessalonians 3:10 - ".... If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

8. What is prevented according to this verse?

Much work brings blessing and wealth, but laziness brings loss, says the Lord. But the Lord does not want man to boast about his efforts.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 - You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth

Read and study also Ecclesiastic 5:19 and Ecclesiastic 6:2.

9. What is forbidden in the first passage above?

10. Why have these people acquired wealth?

11. If you become rich because of your hard work, who gave you the strength to work?

Here is something else to think about. Even though the Bible links wealth and hard work, it also says that wealth is a gift from God. Let us look at this. Some people think that if a man is serving the Lord aright, he will become rich. If that man does not become rich, it is a sign that he is not being completely true to the Lord. It is as if his lack of riches indicates his lack of righteousness. Beware of this idea! It is possible for a man to lack riches because the Lord is disciplining him.

Judges 2:11,14-15 - Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. They were in great distress.

Read and study also 1 Kings 16:29-30, 17:1.

12. What was the cause of the Israelites suffering?

They suffered because they did not obey the Lord.

Read and study Job 1:6 - 2:10.

13. What happened to Job?

14. Why did Job suffer? Had he sinned?

The story of Job teaches us to be careful in the matter of riches. He did not sin yet he lost everything including his health. Let us look again at the fourth Principle in our course.

15. Write down the fourth principle of the kingdom of God.

ANSWERS

1. Because the desire for money takes hold of a person little by little without completely separating him from the Lord.
2. All of them were wealthy.
3. God.
4. It shows that God does not reject a person because of his wealth.
5. It's possible that his wealth has become like a god to him or that he uses it to suppress others. God rejects the rich person because of his unrighteousness not because of his wealth.
6. (a) Lazy hands make a man poor. (b) Diligent hands bring wealth.
7. Because she is hard-working.
8. A lazy man shall not eat unless he works.
9. Pride and boasting that a person has acquired all his wealth by his own efforts.
10. Because of their own struggle, but really God gives them that wealth.
11. God gave it to you.
12. They did evil in the sight of the Lord.
13. Satan took away his wealth, his children and his health.
14. No, he had not sinned.
15. Carrying the cross. The one who follows Jesus will suffer.

DISCUSSION

1. How can the economic situation of the poor be improved to be self-reliant?
2. Look at the way the wealthy among you live. In your opinion how did they become rich? How about the poor, how did they become poor? Are all wealthy people righteous? Are all poor people unrighteous?

**WEEK 4: WORKING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD:
MAN AND HIS WEALTH**

DAY 4: LIFE IS MORE THAN WEALTH

Yesterday, we said that wealth is not a sin. The Bible teaches many times that it is God who makes a person rich. Nevertheless, the Bible is full of warnings about the limits and the dangers of wealth. The Bible teaches us about those things which are more beneficial than wealth in this world.

Proverbs 3:13-15 - Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her.

1. What kind of man is called blessed?

2. What are these things more precious than?

Read and study Proverbs 15:16-17.

3. What is wealth linked to in this verse?

4. What is better than wealth?

Proverbs 16:8 - Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice.

5. What is wealth linked to in this verse?

6. What is better than wealth in this verse?

Proverbs 16:16 - How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver!

7. What is better than silver and gold?

Proverbs 16:19 - Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.

8. What kind of picture is drawn here of the wealthy?

9. According to this verse, what is it better to be?

Proverbs 20:15 - Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel.

10. What exceeds gold and rubies?

Proverbs 28:6 - Better a poor man whose work is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse.

11. What is a rich man's ways likened to?

12. In this verse, what is it better to be?

Please note that we are not saying that all rich people are of bad character. It is only those who fail to behave as they should. However, we are not saying that to be poor is good.

13. Write down the characteristics of the rich in the verses indicated.

(a) Proverbs 15:17 _____

(b) Proverbs 16:8 _____

(c) Proverbs 16:19 _____

(d) Proverbs 28:6 _____

14. What are we saying in these verses?

It is not that God wants us to be poor, but he does not want to see the behaviour which characterises the rich. If you cannot separate your riches from these characteristics then it is better not to have the riches.

Now read Ecclesiastes 5:10-17.

15. Read the above passage two or three times, then write down briefly what it is saying.

If a man has set his heart on becoming rich, he will not be happy or have peace of mind because he is serving that which is not worthy of being served.

ANSWERS

1. The one who finds wisdom and gains understanding.
2. Silver and gold and rubies. That is anything very costly, which you may desire.
3. Turmoil and hatred.
4. The fear of the Lord and a meal of vegetables where there is love.
5. Injustice.
6. Righteousness.
7. Wisdom and understanding.
8. They are proud and steal from the poor.
9. Oppressed and lowly in spirit.
10. Lips that speak knowledge, that is meaningful, so that people listen to you.
 11. Perverse or deliberately harmful.
 12. A poor man whose work is blameless.
 13. (a) Hatred. (b) Injustice. (c) Proud and plundering the poor to get rich. (d) Perverse.
 14. We are not saying that you should be poor, but if you must choose, then it's better to be poor and living in love and faithfulness than to be rich and full of hate and pride. But the man who gains wealth honestly and is then able to help others with it, is blessed.
5. The main theme of the passage is that wealth can't satisfy the needs of a man's heart.

DISCUSSION

Read and study Ecclesiastes 2:11. Discuss why some Christians are unhappy.

WEEK 4: WORKING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD: MAN AND HIS WEALTH

DAY 5: THE DANGER OF WEALTH (Part 1)

Today, we will continue the subject of wealth. Yesterday we saw some circumstances which were better than wealth. We also saw the kind of behaviour which some wealthy people adopt. Today we will continue discussing the danger that wealth brings to Christians.

Today, many think that riches are everything, but the Bible clearly contradicts this view. There are many things which are far more beneficial than riches.

Proverbs 11:28 - Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

1. What happens to the one who trusts in riches?

Ezekiel 7:19 - Their silver and gold will not be able to save them in the day of the Lord's wrath. They will not satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs with it, for it has made them stumble into sin.

2. According to this verse, what were riches unable to do?

3. Why were riches unable to satisfy them?

In order to understand the temptation which wealth brings, read the following passage.

Read and study 1 Timothy 6:9-10.

4. Write down some of the temptations which wealth brings.

5. According to this verse, what is the root of all kinds of evil?

God does not reject money, he rejects the love of money. That is, putting the love for money before your love for God and your neighbour.

6. What kind of love of money does God reject?

7. Why does God reject this kind of love of money?

The love of money causes a man to do all kinds of evil. Here are some examples.

Jeremiah 22:13 - 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 labor.

8. What did this man put first?

9. What crime did he commit against his countrymen?

10. What made him commit this crime?

Jeremiah 22:17 - But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion.

11. What did this man put first?

12. What crime does he commit against his neighbour?

In the New Testament there are stories about people who made use of others, because of the love of money. Read and study Acts 16: 16-24. Here is the story of a slave girl who told fortunes and made a lot of money

for her owners. Paul cast out the fortune telling spirit, so that she could no longer do it. Read and study verses 19-24.

13. Were the owners of the slave girl pleased when she was healed?

14. Why not?

These people put their profit before the health of the slave girl. Paul was not a local man - he was a visitor. However, he did not use that as an excuse to do nothing and leave the slave girl possessed and her owners using her to make a profit. Why then, are visitors to Nigeria not supposed to speak out against the problem of extortion?

Is it true that visitors can not understand the situation and should do nothing about it? Will Nigerians sort out this problem on their own?

15. Why did Paul, a visitor, sort out the problem of exploiting the slave girl in a foreign country?

16. What happened to Paul, the Apostle, after he had healed the slave girl?

We see many different problems in our country, but it will be with great difficulty that the problem of extortion is solved.

Certainly, the behaviour of Christians today is very different to that of Paul's day. Firstly, we divide the world into two; the spiritual and the earthly. Paul never made this distinction; to him the world was a whole. When he saw extortion he had to speak up. Secondly, we are afraid to speak out whereas Paul the Apostle was not. He was obeying the Lord even though it led him to being put in prison.

17. Write down the two differences between us and the Apostle Paul.

- (a) _____
(b) _____

ANSWERS

1. He will fall.
2. They were unable to save them.
3. Because it had made them stumble into sin.
4. For example: Longing for it, cheating, turning away from the truth, false deals.
5. The love of money.
6. Loving it more than God or your neighbour.
7. Because if there is a choice to be made between the things of God and money matters, the one who loves money will choose money matters and forget about the things of God.
8. The building of his palace.
9. He didn't pay them for their labour.
10. He put the building of his palace before the welfare of his countrymen.
11. Dishonest gain.
12. The shedding of innocent blood, oppression and extortion.
13. No, they were not pleased.
14. Because they wanted the money rather than the girl's healing.
15. Because of the trouble the girl was suffering, he obeyed God.
16. He was put in prison.
17. (a) Paul didn't separate the work of the Gospel from that of social action. (b) Paul obeyed God even though it meant going to prison.

DISCUSSION

Is there oppression in your church, home and your area? Who is the oppressor and who is the oppressed? Why does oppression happen? How can it be solved?

If you answer 'No', what has prevented you from finding a solution?

In the New Testament there are stories about people who made use of officers, because of the love of money. Read and study Acts 16: 14-26. Here is the story of a slave girl who sold instances and made a lot of money.

WEEK 5: MAN AND HIS WEALTH: ACCEPTING BRIBES AND GIVING LOANS

DAY 1: THE DANGER OF WEALTH (Part 2)

Today we shall continue studying the subject which we started at the end of last week. That is the danger of wealth. We saw how the love of money can cause a man to forget about the value of his brother and may even stop loving him.

Read and study Mark 5:1-17.

This story tells us how Jesus healed a demon-possessed man. The demons left the man and entered into a herd of about two thousand pigs, which rushed down the hillside and were lost in the lake. But the possessed man was completely healed. Wasn't this something to be happy about? Well, see what happened.

Mark 5:17 - *Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.*

1. What did the people want Jesus to do?

2. Why did they want Jesus to leave their region? Why weren't they grateful?

No, they were not grateful. In their view they had suffered a great misfortune in the loss of the pigs. They had forgotten how their brother had been healed.

3. What was their mistake?

Ask yourself this question. If this happened in your area, what would you do? You may well say that you would be grateful for the healing which had taken place. But what about the two thousand pigs which were lost - this was not a small thing!

4. What would you do?

This story shows us the problem of wealth. In this story the people had to choose between one man and two thousand pigs. It is not easy to make the

right choice, even for us! If a man has this kind of wealth, it is very easy for the wealth to take him over and rule him. That is the danger of wealth. Even in religious matters, wealth is able to bring problems and hide the truth.

Read and study Acts 19:23-40.

This is the story of the silversmiths who made shrines of a goddess, called Artemis. The silversmiths wanted the work of the Apostle Paul to be despised, so that the spread of the Gospel would be hindered. There were many reasons for this, but the main reason is here.

Read and study Acts 19:24-25.

5. According to these verses, what concerned Demetrius the most?

Demetrius did not accept the Gospel, because he put wealth before every thing else. He did not listen to the truth. He was more afraid of the loss he was going to make.

6. What mistake did Demetrius make?

Even today, some people think that through money they will obtain the Lord's favour.

Read and study Acts 8:9-24.

This story is about Simon the Sorcerer who practiced magic. When the people saw the power of the apostles in signs and miracles, they forgot about Simon. He became very worried as he saw his income drying up. So he sought the power which the apostles had. But instead of doing what was right, by repenting and believing in Jesus Christ, he sought the gifts of God by another means.

Acts 8:18-19 - he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

7. By what means was Simon seeking this ability?

8. What was his mistake?

Seeking wealth brings contempt. Read and study James 2:1-9. This passage has something to say to us today. It is the subject of discrimination. In brief, the passage is talking about the discrimination between the rich and the poor. If a rich person attends a meeting he is often given the best place.

James 2:3 -..... "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet"

9. What does this verse show us?

James 2:6-7 - *Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?*

10. Write down three things said about the rich.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

11. But if these rich people come to worship or attend a Christian meeting, where do they sit? Amongst everyone else or in a special seat at the front?

It is impossible to discuss every verse in the Bible which relates to the subject of seeking wealth.

ANSWERS

1. They wanted Jesus to leave their country.
2. They were not grateful because they viewed what had happened as a big financial loss.
3. They thought the pigs they owned were more important than the health of the man.
4. You have your answers here.
5. The good income from the business.

6. He put wealth before the truth.
7. He was offering money in order to receive the power of the Holy Spirit.
8. He thought he could obtain the gifts of God with money rather than by the way of obedience.
9. It shows discrimination and contempt.
10. (a) They exploit people. (b) They drag people into court. (c) They slander the name of the Lord.
11. On most occasions, we as Christians seat them in a special place at the front.

DISCUSSION

Read and study Matthew 19:23-24. Why is it hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God? If this is so, why are Christians blindly seeking wealth? What should the church do in regard to this problem?

WEEK 5: MAN AND HIS WEALTH: ACCEPTING BRIBES AND GIVING LOANS

DAY 2: ACCEPTING BRIBES IN NIGERIA

For four days, we have been studying the Bible teaching about wealth. We have seen that God does not forbid us to have wealth, but we are not encouraged to seek it.

1. Why doesn't the Bible encourage a man to seek riches beyond his needs?

Read and study Proverbs 30:8-9.

2. What does this verse teach?

Matthew 6:11 - Give us today our daily bread.

Philippians 4:11 - I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

1. Timothy 6:6 - But godliness with contentment is great gain.

Hebrews 13:5 - Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

3. List two important things which these verses teach us.

(a) _____

(b) _____

We Christians need to live in contentment. We should accept all that God gives us with thanks and without any jealousy in our heart. Let us believe that the Lord knows our needs and will meet them. The lack of contentment and faith causes many problems in this world.

4. Explain the kind of problem we are studying.

5. Give two reasons why a man seeks a bribe.

(a) _____

(b) _____

But what is a bribe? Let us ask ourselves this question.

6. What is the difference between accepting a bribe and accepting a genuine present?

If you are not sure of the answer to number six, answer these questions.

7. What is the intention of the giver when giving a genuine present?

8. Is the giver of a genuine present seeking any benefit?

9. (a) What does the seeker of a bribe look for?

(b) Is there love in his heart?

10. What is the intention of the seeker of a bribe? Does he want to give help or show love?

11. In your opinion, why is accepting a bribe a sin?

There are many different reasons. Some who accept bribes receive a wage for their work, but they will not complete their work unless they receive extra income through bribes. They are not satisfied. Their behaviour is that of stealing. Some say their wage does not meet their needs, so they seek extra money by means of cheating or accepting bribes. It is possible that they do this because of their lack of faith. They do not believe that the Lord has the power to meet their needs. Others seek bribes for no other reason than the love of riches.

12. Write down three reasons which cause people to accept bribes.

- (a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____

But what about those who give bribes? What are their reasons?

These also vary. Some are seeking contracts, or work, or entry into a school, but those in charge will not meet their needs until a bribe has been given. Because of their lack of faith in the Lord they give a bribe. In fact, some who seek a contract or work are not capable of doing it. Nevertheless, by means of a bribe, they obtain it. These kind of people build large houses which later collapse and kill those inside. Others obtain work which is beyond their abilities and the work gets worse.

13. Write down three reasons which cause people to give bribes.

- (a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____

14. In your opinion, why does the Bible forbid us to accept bribes?

15. Some say that accepting bribes is not a sin, it is our custom. What do you think?

It is possible that what is called a bribe came from a past custom, but this custom became corrupt. Our good customs were set up to help the community, not to cause problems. However, it is not only in recent times that the accepting of bribes has occurred. Even in the Old Testament times bribes were accepted. We will continue this study tomorrow.

ANSWERS

1. Because riches are a temptation which exceed most Christian's strength and so take them away from the Lord.
2. The Lord will give us what we need, since both poverty and riches bring problems.
3. (a) Contentment. (b) Trust in God.
4. Accepting bribes.
5. (a) Lack of contentment. (b) Lack of faith.
6. You have your answer.
7. To show love or to give help.
8. No, he is helping.
9. (a) He is looking for some benefit, (b) there is no love in his heart.
10. He is looking for something which he will only obtain if he receives a bribe. He puts his own profit before help and love.
11. It is a sin because it is love of riches, is stealing and prevents true justice.
12. (a) Lack of contentment. (b) Lack of faith. (c) The love of money. There are others too.
13. For example: (a) Lack of faith. (b) Looking for something which you're not able to obtain. (c) Give your own reason here.
14. Write your opinion. Tomorrow, God willing, we will discuss it.
15. Write your opinion. It's possible there was a custom regarding the giving of presents, but it has disappeared. The Bible doesn't agree with this kind of custom regarding accepting bribes.

DISCUSSION

In your opinion, what should the church do about those who accept bribes and those who give bribes?

WEEK 5: MAN AND HIS WEALTH: ACCEPTING BRIBES AND GIVING LOANS

DAY 3: BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT ACCEPTING BRIBES (Part 1)

Yesterday we discussed the subject of accepting bribes as it relates to us here today. We will now discuss what the Bible teaches us about this thing which causes us so much trouble.

Exodus 23:8 - Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous.

1. What two reasons are given in this verse against accepting bribes?

(a) _____

(b) _____

2. What do you think is the meaning of the first reason "*a bribe blinds those who see*"?

Rulers know the evil which is going on, but when they accept a bribe, they act as if they do not know. For example, the man in charge of the building notices that insufficient cement is being used, but because he has received a bribe he has to accept the building. Perhaps afterwards the building collapses and people inside are killed.

3. What do you think is the meaning of the second reason "*a bribe twists the words of the righteous*"?

There has been a group in C.A.N. (Plateau State Branch), called "the League for Action Against Bribery". They have chosen Exodus 23:8 as their motto.

4. Give an example of how a bribe blind those who see.

5. Give an example of how a bribe twists the words of the righteous.

Deuteronomy 10:17-18 - For the Lord your God shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and loves the alien

These verses teach us that the Lord shows no partiality, that is, he does not prefer one to another, but loves us all. He does not accept bribes. It also tells us what the Lord does. His work is against accepting bribes.

6. Write down God's work as described in Deuteronomy 10:17-18.

Instead of accepting bribes, the Lord sees that justice is done for the poor. There is no agreement between these two characteristics. You cannot find them both in one man. The one who accepts bribes will not behave righteously because he will inevitably tread on the poor, exploit and humiliate them. But the one who is humble will not accept a bribe, because these two things do not go together.

7. According to Deuteronomy 10:17-18, which actions contradict each other?

1 Samuel 8:3 - They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

This verse is talking about the sons of Samuel. They became important through their work of offering sacrifices. But they did not behave or do their work as they should have.

8. What did they do?

Here we see things which go together; dishonest gain, accepting bribes and perverting justice. You will always find these things together, because they

all follow the same path. If you meet a man who accepts bribes, you will find in him these other characteristics, too.

One day, when Samuel was old and tired, he called the people of Israel together in order to say goodbye to them. Here is what he said to them:

Read and study 1 Samuel 12:3.

9. Briefly write down the meaning of the questions Samuel asked.

10. Had he done any of the things he asked about?

11. What sort of things were they? Write down four of them.

Read and study Job 15:34-35.

In this passage Eliphaz, a friend of Job, is speaking. His words are not like the words of God, there are mistakes in what he says. Nevertheless, he links three characteristics of the people he is speaking about.

12. Write down these three characteristics.

Many people think that it is possible to link godliness with accepting bribes, but in this passage accepting bribes is linked to godlessness. The one who accepts a bribe does not have the fear of the Lord in his heart, how hard he may try to be righteous. Those who accept bribes are linked with those who do evil and deceive.

Deuteronomy 16:19-20 - Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you.

The meaning of this passage is close to that of Exodus 23:8 which we mentioned earlier. Accepting bribes is forbidden.

13. What should one do instead of accepting bribes?

14. According to these verses, why should one follow justice?

The world deceives us by saying that the only way to get on is to give bribes. You will fall back and others will pass you unless you give bribes. In other words, you will not live and you will not possess the land, unless you give bribes. But the Bible rejects this worldly advice. In fact, the reason Nigeria is not progressing, is because of the extent of the bribery. It prevents us from improving our country. We should open our eyes and see how the history of Nigeria actually supports what the Bible tells us.

15. How does the history of Nigeria support the truth of the Bible teaching about bribery?

Proverbs 15:27 - A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live.

Some seek dishonest gain in order to help their families to benefit.

16. But, according to this verse, what will this practice bring to his family?

17. Try to write down an example from your own town of how a man, seeking dishonest gain, has brought trouble to his family.

This verse links the person seeking dishonest gain with the taking of bribes.

18. What does this verse say about bribes?

Read and study again the explanation of Deuteronomy 16:19-20, so that you do not forget how the teaching of the Bible contradicts the teaching of the world.

19. From what you have learnt, how does the wisdom of the world contradict the teaching of the Bible?

ANSWERS

1. (a) A bribe blinds the eyes of a person. (b) It twists the words of the righteous.
2. It means that a person is aware of the evil that is going on, but because he has been given a bribe he will ignore it and keep quiet. Nothing will be put right.
3. An honest person falls into temptation because of accepting a bribe. He no longer speaks the truth.
4. You have your answer.
5. You have your answer.
6. He judges the cause of the people in righteousness.
7. Accepting bribes and acting justly.
8. They sought dishonest gain, accepted bribes and perverted justice.
9. He asked if he had taken anything from anyone falsely.
10. No.
11. Taking someone else's animal, cheating, oppression and accepting bribes.
12. They are godless, they love bribes, they conceive trouble and give birth to evil.
13. We should act justly and live in contentment.
14. So that we may live and possess the land.
15. The amount of bribery in our country prevents us from living well, improving and possessing the land.
16. Trouble.
17. You have your answer.
18. If you want to live, then don't accept bribes.
19. In the opinion of the world, you must accept bribes if you want to be happy in life. But the Bible says that if you accept bribes you will not be at peace.

DISCUSSION

What kind of trouble does accepting bribes cause us in Nigeria? What kind of trouble does accepting bribes cause us in the church?

WEEK 5: MAN AND HIS WEALTH: ACCEPTING BRIBES AND GIVING LOANS

DAY 4: BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT ACCEPTING BRIBES (Part 2)

We will continue today with the subject of accepting bribes.

Proverbs 29:4 - By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.

1. The Bible teaches us that we must obey our rulers. But what about those rulers who accept bribes?

(a) Should we obey them?

(b) Write down the reason for your answer.

2. According to this verse, what will a king who accepts bribes do to his country?

3. If you know of a king or ruler who accepted bribes, explain what kind of damage he did in his work.

4. What did the community do about this matter? Did they ignore him or not?

Isaiah 1:23 - Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts.

5. What is said about the rulers in this verse?

6. Why did they say this about them?

All of them loved bribes. We see from this verse that accepting bribes is not a new thing in the world. Nevertheless, the Lord still views it as very unpleasant because of the damage it causes.

7. Have you ever heard church leaders openly calling rulers who accept bribes "rebels" or "companions of thieves"?

8. If Christians were to call rulers by this name, what would they say about him?

Truly, only with great difficulty could Christians say of their rulers "rebels" or "companions of thieves". But in this verse the prophet Isaiah, inspired by the Holy Spirit, called them by the name they deserved.

9. Why don't Christians today follow Isaiah's example?

Ezekiel 22:12 - In you, men accept bribes to shed blood; you take usury and excessive interest and make unjust gain from your neighbors by extortion. And you have forgotten me, declares the Sovereign Lord.

10. In this verse, what else is linked to accepting bribes?

11. What does this verse tell us about the relationship between those who accept bribes and the Lord?

Yes, they had forgotten the Lord. They had not forgotten that he existed, rather they had forgotten his truth and his power to meet the needs of his people. They forgot about his anger on those who accept bribes. They forgot his power and his laws.

12. What kind of things did those who accepted bribes forget about God?

Amos 5:12 - For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts.

13. Write down the three sins mentioned in this verse.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

Note carefully, how the Lord calls these actions "great sins". But we do not regard them as evil, instead we link them with religious activity and say that it does not matter.

Read and study Amos 5:21-25.

14. Write down briefly what this passage is saying.

The prophet Amos said that all our religious affairs are very unpleasant to the Lord unless they are linked to acts of justice and righteousness. Nevertheless, Christians are in the habit of inviting those who accept bribes and similar people to their fund raising occasions and we even offer them the best seats. But beware, the Lord despises this kind of money. Some churches will not accept money given by those with two wives or from those who have committed adultery. But they are pleased to accept money from those who take bribes! How is this? As well as giving us prohibitions, the Lord also taught us about the kind of behaviour that should be found in Christians.

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

15. List the kind of characteristics which are more suitable than accepting bribes.

The one who puts these good characteristics into practice will not accept bribes. Instead he will rely on what God does for him.

ANSWERS

1. Write your opinion. God willing, in a few days, we shall discuss this further.
2. He will tear it down.
3. You have your answer.
4. You have your answer.
5. They are called, 'rebels' and 'companions of thieves'.
6. Because they loved bribes.
7. I hope you have, but it's very unlikely.
8. They would say he is a troublemaker.
9. Because we are afraid. If you know any other reason, write it down.
10. Shedding blood, excessive interest on loans and extortion of neighbours.
11. They have forgotten him.
12. They forgot his anger and his laws.
13. (a) Oppress the righteous. (b) Take bribes. (c) Deprive the poor of justice.
14. The Lord will not accept our religious acts unless we seek justice and righteousness.
15. You will not find these characteristics among those who accept bribes: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

DISCUSSION

Mention three things that you yourselves ought to do about the problem of accepting bribes. Give your advice on what the church ought to do about this problem.

WEEK 5: MAN AND HIS WEALTH: ACCEPTING BRIBES AND GIVING LOANS

DAY 5: LOANS - HELPING THE POOR (Part 1)

In weeks 3 and 4 we discussed the importance of work according to the Bible. We learnt that we are not working in the world simply to enjoy ourselves or to glorify ourselves, but in order to glorify the Lord and rule in

the world. After that, we studied wealth and its dangers. We saw how easily wealth can trap a man so that he forgets about God and the welfare of his neighbour completely. Next we saw the arrogance of the man who accepts bribes. We saw the reason why the Lord forbids us from taking bribes.

1. Why does the Bible forbid the taking of bribes?

Now we shall discuss what the Bible teaches about giving loans. Such is man's character that if a person accumulates riches, he will use these riches to make even more wealth. Man is never satisfied with what he has. Wealth is like beer, if you taste a little, you will want more. Because of this, if a poor person seeks a loan from a wealthy person, the rich man will be happy to give him the loan but with interest added on. The poor person's need becomes gain to the rich man. The fall of one is the rise of another. Truly, this is not what the Bible teaches.

Haggai 2:8 - *"The silver is mine and the gold is mine", declares the Lord Almighty.*

Deuteronomy 8:18 - *But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.....*

2. Why does the Lord have power over our wealth?

The Lord has power over how we use our wealth. He gave us wealth that we might serve him with it, not just enjoy ourselves.

3. Why did the Lord give some people wealth?

Psalms 112:5 - *Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely.*

Some rich people do not want to part with their riches.

4. According to this verse, what will come to the man who lends freely?

Psalms 37:25-26 - *..... I have never seen the righteous forsaken They are always generous and lend freely.*

5. According to this verse, what is the righteous man always doing?

Read and study Luke 6:34-36.

6. According to this passage, what is the difference between followers of Christ and the rest of the world, regarding the giving of loans?

Psalm 15:1,5 - *Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? who lends his money without usury (interest).*

We see in this Psalm the characteristics of those who would stand before the Lord.

7. What kind of loan does this kind of man give?

Read and study Exodus 22:25-27.

8. In these verses who are receiving loans?

9. These verses forbid two things. What are they?

(a) _____

(b) _____

10. Why did the Lord forbid these things?

Deuteronomy 24:6, 12, 17 - *Do not take a pair of millstones as security for a debt, because that would be taking a man's livelihood as security. If the man is poor, do not go to sleep with his pledge in your possession. Do not take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.*

11. What is forbidden in these verses?

12. What pledge are these verses talking about?

In Leviticus 25, two festivals were established for the Israelites. One was called the "Sabbath Year" and the other was called the "Year of Jubilee".

Read and study about these festivals in Leviticus 25:1-13.

Deuteronomy 15:1-2 - *At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts. This is how it is to be done: Every creditor shall cancel the loan he has made to his fellow Israelite. He shall not require payment from his fellow Israelite or brother, because the Lord's time for canceling debts has been proclaimed.*

13. What was to be done with the debts in the seventh year?

It is possible that a poor man would come, seeking a loan from someone, but because the seventh year was close, the person would not agree to the loan. What should be done? Did the Lord's plan bring problems for the poor? The Lord knows the heart of man and his evil ways. Because of this, he gave another law.

Read and study Deuteronomy 15:9-10.

14. What sort of problem would arise, when the seventh year was close?

15. Why would some people refuse to give a loan?

16. What did the Lord say about this matter?

The Lord certainly gave us a strong law. For example, there is only one year left before the seventh year. Your neighbour wants a loan from you. If you give him the loan you will have to cancel it in a year's time.

17. Why do you think God gave this law?

But it is possible that one might say, "Wasn't the loan my money? Didn't I suffer in order to get it. What has this law to do with the Lord? It is as if the Lord gave the poor permission to steal!"

18. What do you think about this point of view?

1. Because bribery is a form of oppression and prevents true justice.
2. Because all wealth is his and he gave it to us.
3. In order that they might serve God and people in need with it, not just enjoy themselves.
4. Good things will come.
5. He lends freely.
6. The people of the world give loans to those whom they expect will repay them. But Christians should lend even though they know they may not get it back.
7. He lends money without interest added on.
8. The poor and needy.
9. (a) Lending money with interest added on. (b) Keeping your neighbour's cloak, which is his pledge or deposit, with you overnight.
10. Because he is full of compassion.
11. Keeping a person's pledge or deposit overnight if it affects their livelihood or welfare.
12. Those of the poor.
13. They were to be cancelled.
14. Some didn't want to give loans.
15. Because they might not get it back.
16. He commanded them, nevertheless, to give a loan. If they didn't it was counted as a sin.
17. Without this kind of law, debts would pile up on the poor to such an extent that they would be trapped. So it was to prevent the burden getting too much for the poor. It meant that however deep in debt a person had become, there was a way out in the seventh year.
18. Write your opinion. From the start, all our wealth belongs to the Lord. He is the one who has authority over wealth more than us.

DISCUSSION

1. What is the difference between the way we give loans today and the way of the Old Testament?
2. Read your answer to question 18. Count up the reasons why Christians should not think like that.

WEEK 6: (1) GIVING LOANS, (2) THE PURPOSE OF TRADING

DAY 1 LOANS: HELPING THE POOR (Part 2)

Today we shall continue with the subject of giving loans. Yesterday we discussed some important points, relating to loans.

1. Write down three of these points.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

Certainly, the laws of the Lord in the Bible regarding giving loans are hard ones.

Read and study Ezekiel 18:5-8.

In this passage, pledge and usury are linked to certain sins.

2. List four sins which are linked to pledges and usury (interest).

3. According to this passage, which of these sins is the more serious in the Lord's sight?

Read and study Ezekiel 18:10-18.

In this passage the subject of pledges and usury(interest) is also linked to various sins. There is no difference between these sins, they are all equally serious in God's sight and very unpleasant to him.

Read and study Nehemiah 5:1-12.

At this time the people of Jerusalem were very hungry and they did not have any money to pay their taxes.

Read and study Nehemiah 5:3-5.

4. In order to meet their needs, these people had to do four things. What were they?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

They came to Nehemiah with their complaint.

5. Why were they not able to do anything themselves about their problem?

These people were suffering greatly. They were unable to put things right, because they had lost their possessions. A man without a house and farm of his own has no security and so is powerless. These people were taken over by the rich, as a result of having to borrow money and give pledges and become slaves. The fall of ordinary people is the rise of the great! The great do not want to help the ordinary people by giving them loans, but only to make a profit for themselves.

6. What sin do the great commit?

Read and study Nehemiah 5:7-11.

7. What did Nehemiah say should be done?

Read and study Nehemiah 5:12.

8. What did the nobles and officials promise to do?

We have seen that giving loans with interest was forbidden.

Read and study Luke 19:16-19.

9. In this passage, why are the servants praised?

As for the man who didn't make a profit, listen to what his master said:

Luke 19:23 - "Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?"

10. What did the servant do wrong?

If Jesus had found the matter of interest very unpleasant, he would not have used this example. Jesus Christ would never use sinful actions to teach us the way to God's kingdom.

11. What is the difference between the kind of "interest" used in these verses and that of the Old Testament passages we studied?

The Lord does not object to the general idea of interest where it relates to raising business capital and trading. He objects to the rich making money out of the sufferings of others. The needy should be helped without being exploited. This idea is also taught in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 15:11 - ... be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.

Deuteronomy 23:20 - You may charge a foreigner interest

12. What was the difference between the way you treated your brother and a foreigner?

Why was this? Does the Bible always distinguish like this? We are not going to discuss the Bible teaching on ethnic origins here, that will come later in week 9. But let us explain what these verses mean: In Deuteronomy 15:11 we are told to help the needy whoever they may be. The foreigner mentioned in chapter 23 was a rich trader who came from outside seeking money. He was not a hungry person or an ordinary man. The Bible does not forbid us to give a loan with interest to a well off trader. It tells us not to use the ordinary man to make ourselves rich, but to help him.

13. Explain the kind of loan which the Lord allows and the kind which he forbids.

Yesterday and today we have been studying the subject of loans and interest. We saw that expecting interest from a needy man was very unpleasant to the Lord, like any other sin. He said that those who give such loans will not live. But what about church members today? Without doubt we help each other in love. Nevertheless, we do not hear many

sermons on this subject, even less we hear of someone acting in this way, being disciplined. Instead, it is those who have more than one wife or those who commit adultery, who are disciplined.

14. Have you heard of a church disciplining a person for committing adultery?

15. Have you heard of a church disciplining a person for giving a loan with interest to a needy person?

Most churches do not do this.

16. In your opinion why don't they do this? Before you answer, remember how some Christians divide earthly and spiritual things. Is this one of the reasons why they don't discipline these people?

1 Corinthians 12:26 - If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

17. How does this verse concern today's lesson?

If Christians think about this verse, they will not easily make money out of each other.

ANSWERS

1. Three of the following: (a) Our wealth belongs to the Lord. He has authority over it. (b) It is forbidden to give a loan with interest to the poor. (c) In the seventh year debts will be cancelled. (d) You are not to keep a poor person's pledge of a cloak, with you overnight.
2. For example: Eat food in pagan shrines. Worship idols. Sleep with another man's wife. Oppress another person. Refuse to return a pledge when the loan has been repaid.
3. They are equally serious in his sight.
4. (a) Mortgage their fields and homes. (b) Borrow money. (c) Give their sons and daughters to become slaves. (d) Lose their rights and become

powerless.

5. They had no power, because their fields now belonged to others.
6. They exploit the needs of the poor to become rich. In other words, the fall of one is the rise of another.
7. They should give back to the poor their fields and their houses.
8. They would give them back without asking for anything more.
9. Because they made a profit on the loan they were given.
10. He didn't deposit his money in the bank where it would have gained interest.
11. In this parable Jesus is talking about a loan made to raise business capital. The verses in the Old Testament, on the other hand, are talking about the exploitation of the needy when they seek a loan.
12. They were allowed to charge a foreigner interest on a loan.
13. The Lord forbids the giving of a loan with interest to a needy person, but he allows the charging of interest when the loan is for business purposes and the person is not in need.
14. Write your opinion. Probably everybody has heard of this kind of discipline.
15. Write your opinion. I certainly haven't heard of this.
16. It's possible that the main reason is the division people make between earthly and spiritual things. So they don't follow the Bible's teaching on money matters.
17. Instead of saying, the fall of one is the rise of another, we are to share the suffering of the fallen and to help them.

DISCUSSION

1. If you are a pastor or leader, knowing of someone who gives loans with interest to those in need, what should you do? If you are not a leader, what will you do?
2. It is good to preach sermons on this subject, so that your people realise that the Gospel concerns every part of our lives. Write an outline for such a sermon.

WEEK 6: (1) GIVING LOANS, (2) THE PURPOSE OF TRADING

DAY 2: THE PURPOSE OF TRADING

On the road south of Jos there is a village where they sell potatoes. In these difficult times people try all kinds of tricks. There are those who fill the bottom of the dish with stones so that it does not hold so many potatoes. Then there are others who put the biggest potatoes on the top. There are many Christians among these traders. One day, a woman came to buy potatoes from them. When she saw how they tricked her, she asked, "Are you Christians?" Some said they were. Then she asked them another question, "Did Jesus teach you to do this?" Someone answered, "Selling potatoes has nothing to do with Jesus."

The traders selling those potatoes are examples of those Christians who separate their religion from their job. They are saying that selling potatoes, yams or maize has nothing to do with Jesus. They also say that he has nothing to do with building work, office work, trading or driving taxis. They think that a man does not need the teaching of the Bible to do his job, because he is doing it simply to earn his living. What is really needed to do one's job is to be smart.

1. Are these people right? Explain your answer.

2. Think about the principles relating to man and his neighbour in week 2. In what ways did the potatoe sellers fail to follow

(a) - the greatest commandment?

(b) - the value of man?

(c) - unity and fellowship?

3. To the man of the world, what is the purpose of trading?

4. What is your understanding of the purpose of trading?

Your answer to question 4 will show whether you support the world's view or not.

If we want to know the purpose of trading from the Bible, let us remember the meaning of all work.

5. What is the meaning of all work? If you have forgotten, look up Week 4, Day 2.

Trading is work. As a result of this, everything the Bible teaches us about work also concerns trading. To a Christian, trading can be a way to serve the Lord and one's neighbours. If you have ever lived where there is no market or shop you know the value of a market. Everything you need can only be obtained by going a long way to get it. Where there is a market all the other craftsmen can get on with their work without difficulty. Builders can find cement, bicycle repairers can find spare parts, travellers can buy food, farmers can buy hoes. Where there are no traders everyone will suffer. Traders set other workers free to get on with their jobs.

6. Briefly describe the benefits of the market to the community.

7. Is everyone free to become a trader? Think about the subject of gifts which we studied in week 3, day 1.

If God has given you the gift to trade, then do it; but if not, then it is not his will for you to be a trader. Therefore, you should not be seeking to be a trader.

8. Have you heard of a Christian who said he was called by the Lord to be a trader?



Figure 5: Fair Trade

9. If so, explain how this man heard the call.

I, the writer of this book have never heard anyone say he was called by the Lord to trade. It is not easy to hear such a story.

10. Why don't we hear of this kind of call?

It is likely that most Christians view trading simply as a job to make money. They do not think that God calls a man to this kind of job. Because of this we close our ears, so that we do not hear the call.

11. How will we know that the Lord has called a person to trading?

We have learnt in this course that to the Christian the meaning of work is not simply to make money. This is true of trading as well. The person who trades simply to make money will not behave like a Christian should.

12. In your opinion, should a Christian make profit? Explain.

Read and study Proverb 31:10-31.

The story of the good wife. This woman is praised because of her work.

Proverbs 31:16 - *She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.*

Proverbs 31:18 - *She sees that her trading is profitable*

Proverbs 31:24 - *She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.*

Proverbs 31:31 - *Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.*

13. Why is this woman praised?

14. Does she make a profit?

Even in the Bible a trader who makes an honest profit is praised. In every work we do, we must gain some profit from it, but the profit is not the most important reason for the Christian trader. The reason for trading or any other job is to serve the Lord, although we shall profit from it as well.

Read and study 1 Corinthians 9:7-10.

15. Are we forbidden to profit from our work?

No one becomes an evangelist or pastor to become rich. The wages of these servants of God are not much. But their needs should be met through their work.

Read and study 1 Corinthians 9:13-14.

16. What does this verse say about the wages of a church worker?

17. Why is it that traders find it so easy to cheat people?

If you put profit before God and your neighbour, then you will begin to cheat your community.

The work of trading has much value in the Kingdom of God, but one must keep close to the Lord in order to win the victory over temptation.

ANSWERS

1. You have your answer.
2. (a) They did not show the spirit of love. (b) They took advantage of their fellows and didn't recognise their value. (c) They forgot about the meaning of unity and fellowship.
3. To get money.
4. You have your answer.
5. To rule the world according to God's will to glorify him and to serve one another.
6. The market enables everyone to find locally what they require for their jobs.
7. No, not everyone, only those God has called and he has given the gift and ability.
8. You have your answer.
9. You have your answer.
10. It's possible that we, as Christians, close our hearts and therefore don't hear the call. Many may think that only for church works a call is necessary.
11. If you see a need and have the ability to meet that need, then it's possible that God is calling you.
12. You have your answer.
13. Because she is hard-working.
14. Yes.

15. No, Profit is part of it.

16. They should be paid by the church.

17. Because they put profit above relationships with others and the concern for God's laws.

DISCUSSION

From today's lesson discuss how traders can be helped to understand their job from a Christian perspective.

WEEK 6: (1) GIVING LOANS, (2) THE PURPOSE OF TRADING DAY 3: OTHER TRADING PRACTICES

Yesterday we studied the meaning of trading. We saw that there were three meanings.

1. Write down the three meanings.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

2. Yesterday we heard about the evil meaning which the world puts before everything. What is that?

Now that we understand the purpose of trading, let us discuss some business practices and test them.

First let us look at the subject of FRAUD (to gain money by trickery) in trading.

3. In your opinion, why is there so much fraud in trading?

The temptation of fraud is great because people have put profit first.

4. Write down two ways small traders commit fraud.

- (a) _____
(b) _____

5. Write down two ways big traders (for example those who sell cars) commit fraud.

- (a) _____
(b) _____

Yesterday we heard the story of some small traders. We tested their actions against the laws which affect all of man's work, that is, the principles of the kingdom of God. The Bible speaks about the subject of fraud.

Leviticus 19:35-36 - "Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight, or quantity. Use honest scales and honest weights"

6. How does this verse concern the potato sellers we mentioned yesterday?

Read and study Deuteronomy 25:13-16.

7. What does God forbid in these verses?

8. It was not just that God forbade the use of two different measures, what didn't God want?

9. Why weren't they to keep two different measures?

10. According to the world's wisdom, you will not make a profit unless you use a dishonest measure. But what do these verses say?

Hosea 12:7 - The merchant uses dishonest scales; he loves to defraud.

11. What does the one who uses dishonest scales love?

Proverbs 11:1 - The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.

Proverbs 20:10, 23 - Differing weights and differing measures - the Lord detests them both. The Lord detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please him.

In the church there are those who have become important through the use of dishonest scales. Sometimes church members honour this kind of people, especially at gatherings to raise money for the church. They will be given the best seats in front of everyone.

12. But what will God do to these people?

Micah 6:10-16.

The Lord shows how he will punish those who use dishonest scales.

13. Write down four kinds of punishment mentioned in these verses.

- (a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
(d) _____

Certainly these verses show us clearly that cheating by using dishonest scales is very detestable to the Lord. Therefore, we Christians must not treat this lightly.

14. What should a Christian do about someone who is cheating people in this way?

15. Have you heard of a church which has disciplined someone for cheating, if so, write about it here.

16. If you think the church ignores such people, why do you think they do?

There are many ways of cheating and we will not be able to list them all here. But we will consider one way which is happening a lot at the moment; the hoarding of food. For example, some big traders, if they foresee that grain is going to become expensive, go and buy up large

quantities when it is cheap and store it. Later, when the grain has become scarce they bring out the grain they have stored and sell it at a high price.

17. In your opinion, is this right? Explain the reason for your answer.

They claim there is no verse or law in the Bible which forbids this.

18. As there is no special law against this, is it alright for a Christian to do this? Explain your answer.

19. What should the church do about this kind of people?

ANSWERS

1. (a) To honour the Lord. (b) To rule the world according to God's will. (c) To make available the goods which will help people.
2. To make a big profit.
3. Because making a profit is put above everything else.
4. You have your answer.
5. You have your answer.
6. Dishonest scales are forbidden.
7. The keeping of two kinds of measures, that is one honest and the other false.
8. He didn't want them to keep two different kinds of measures in their houses.
9. Because if they had them at home, one day they would use the false measure.
10. If you obey the Lord's command, you will live long in the land.
11. To defraud.
12. He will detest them.
13. Four out of these: (a) He will begin to destroy them. (b) He will ruin them. (c) They will eat and still be hungry. (d) There will be war. (e) They will not harvest.
14. Teach him the right way and give him a goal, an example. If he still refuses to change, then he should be disciplined.
15. You have your answer.

16. Many times the church bends to the rich and is afraid of them.
17. It's not right, because food is being kept from people and their needs are exploited.
18. No, it's not, because we must follow the teaching of the principles of the kingdom of God.
19. It should teach them the right way and if they refuse to change, then it should discipline them.

DISCUSSION

List a number of ways traders cheat people. Do Christians do this too? Why do they? Think about the story of the potato sellers. What should the church do about them?

WEEK 6: (1) GIVING LOANS, (2) THE PURPOSE OF TRADING DAY 4: OTHER TRADING PRACTICES (Part 2)

Today we shall continue with the subject of trading. Yesterday we looked at the matter of cheating. Today we shall think about the relationship which exists between the shop-keeper and the customer. Everything we said about the principles of the kingdom of God applies to this relationship.

1. If you enter a shop, what do you think the owner will be thinking?

2. In your opinion, will he be pleased to see you, or will he be pleased for another reason?

If a person looks at his brother's coming only as a means to make money, he will not care about his brother in the way the principles of the kingdom of God taught us.

3. In your opinion, write down how the shop-keeper fails to keep the principles of the kingdom of God.
(a) Love: _____

- (b) The image of God: _____
- (c) Fellowship: _____
- (d) Gifts: _____

It is very likely that the customer and the shop-keeper will eat the Lord's Supper together.

4. In what way does the Lord's Supper affect the relationship between the shop-keeper and the customer?

But not all the customers are Christians, so the shop-keeper does not eat the Lord's Supper with everyone.

5. If oneness in Jesus doesn't link him to them, what kind of obligation does?

Let us look further at this. There is the great commission which the Lord gave us.

6. According to week 3, day 5, what is the great commission which the Lord gave us?

We are witnesses to Jesus Christ all the time, even when we are trading. We want all men to be saved. That includes all those who enter your shop. It is not only his money which you need. The most important thing is that you preach the gospel through your work, in order that people might be saved.

7. How would the joy of seeing a customer saved affect your relationship with him. Give two answers.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____

It is impossible, if you are looking forward to seeing a customer saved, to suddenly forget about this when he enters your shop and think only of the

money you want. Preaching the gospel has no limits. You must preach the gospel through your work, not only in the church.

Read and study Romans 14:19-21.

For example, someone who does not know Jesus comes to your shop. You sell him an immoral book at a high price and then the next day the book falls to pieces, because it has not been bound properly.

8. If you acted like this, how did you disobey the teaching of the above passage?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

1 Corinthians 10:33 - *..... even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.*

9. If you acted in the way mentioned above, how did you disobey this verse (give two answers)?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____

1 Corinthians 10:24 - *Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.*

10. How can you improve the condition of others through trading?

John 15:12-13 - *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*

11. How through trading can you show this kind of love?

12. Now that we have thought about the Bible's teaching concerning the relationship between the customer and the trader, write down three examples of the kind of things that one should not be selling.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

13. Now write down three examples of the kind of things which improve life in the community.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

Today we have discussed some serious matters relating to trading. We have seen how the wisdom of the world and God's wisdom are very different. It is not possible to make trading simply a way to make money. Our responsibility to our fellow man is always there, even when we are in the market.

ANSWERS

1. He's thinking about the profit he will get from you when you buy.
2. He will be pleased, not to see you, but the profit he hopes to make from you.
3. (a) He loves money more than you. (b) You appear to him as 'money' rather than as a person made in the image of God. (c) He's not interested in your fellowship just your money. (d) He uses his gift to benefit himself, not others.
4. Our fellowship at the Lord's Supper should not stop in church but should affect our relationship in the shop. We should remember that we both shared in the cup of the Lord, thus becoming one. So for this reason we shouldn't exploit one another.
5. He still has the obligations we learnt about in the principles of the kingdom of God.
6. To spread the gospel.
7. For example: (a) You won't be just thinking about his money, but about his well-being. (b) You will welcome him, (c) You will try to meet his need.
8. (a) You didn't help him to find peace, rather you added to his problem. (b) You have become the reason for his fall. (c) You have destroyed God's work in your desire for money.
9. (a) You didn't seek the good of the person when you sold him that book. (b) You are not seeking to save him, but your own good.
10. Write your opinion. You can help others by selling them the things which benefit them. Don't keep items which are hurtful or useless to others. Don't seek dishonest gain.

11. The answer is the same as the one above i.e. question 10.
12. For example: (a) Bad quality goods. (b) Pornographic books which tempt people in the wrong way. (c) Goods which are bad for our health, like cigarettes and drugs. (d) Weapons to kill people. (e) Poison.
13. For example: (a) Food or items which become hard to obtain e.g. shortages of rice and soap. (b) If you obtain them, you sell them at a fair price. (c) Things which bring peace and joy, like Bibles and good books.

DISCUSSION

Go to a Christian trader and discuss the above verses with him. Find out his opinion and look for ways of encouraging him.

WEEK 6: (1) GIVING LOANS, (2) TRADING PRACTICES

DAY 5: THE WORK OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE

Since the beginning of this week we have been studying the subject of trading. But it is important to realise that trading has only been used as an example of all the jobs which a man does. All that has been said about trading applies to other jobs as well. Everything we said about the purpose of work covers all jobs.

1. In your opinion, why is today's course called "The work of the Lord's people"? How does our work become the Lord's?

2. What is the purpose of doing any kind of work?

3. What is the purpose of trading?

There are many kinds of jobs in this world; teachers, taxi drivers, farmers, pastors, contractors, policemen, car mechanics, etc. We are not going to look at any new teaching today. Instead, we shall ask some questions for you to think about on the subject of work.

4. Explain the purpose of doing these jobs.

(a) Taxi driver _____

(b) Doctor _____

(c) Contractor _____

The main purpose is not just making profit. Instead, it is the benefits of these jobs. Nevertheless, those who do these jobs will be paid for their work. But the man who does his job solely to make a profit instead of helping the community will see his work deteriorate. He will not be able to help the community as he should. He will simply become one who cheats.

5. What will happen to these jobs if those doing them only do them for the money?

(a) School teacher _____

(b) Mechanic _____

(c) Pastor _____

One of the principles of the kingdom of God which we learnt was about the value of man in the image of God.

6. If we remember how God created man in his own image, how can the jobs of these people be improved?

(a) Policeman _____

(b) Doctor _____

(c) Taxi driver _____

A short while ago, two very tall buildings collapsed, because they had not been built properly. Some people inside were killed.

7. Which principle of God's kingdom did the builders forget?

8. What did they put first before everything else?

Today's teaching has not been as long as some days. The purpose of it is to understand that if a person puts the love of money first, what ever the work he does, he will never meet his needs. He will not be truly respected. He himself will not be at peace because he will be continually adding to his wealth but will never be satisfied. His conscience will trouble him. The love in his heart will dry up, only selfishness will remain.

ANSWERS

1. All work is of the Lord.
2. To rule the world according to God's will, to honour the Lord's name and to serve one another.
3. To make available the things which people need, enabling them to do their work in the world.
4. (a) To take people to the place they need to go to. (b) To heal the sick. (c) To build houses or places where people can live and work.
5. (a) He will not always be there, since he knows that his wages won't be reduced by his absence. (b) He'll repair your car with second-hand spares, but charge you for new ones. (c) He'll favour the rich instead of speaking out fearlessly.
6. (a) He won't seek a bribe or lock up a person without a valid reason. (b) He'll explain carefully to his patients what is wrong with them. He'll try to improve conditions in the hospital and show that he cares. (c) He'll drive with care, so that no one gets killed and he'll be considerate to other road users in cars and on foot.
7. All of them.
8. Getting money.

DISCUSSION

This book was written when the disease of Rinderpest was killing cattle. The Government ordered the Ministry of Animal Welfare to vaccinate the cattle free of charge. But sadly, in Plateau State, injections of water or other medicines were given. The injections were only given after the payment of a bribe. The Fulani were afraid to complain about these

workers in case another disease came and they would be refused help. In this case, which of the principles of the kingdom of God were ignored?

Explain your answer.

What should Christians do about this kind of problem?

WEEK 7: WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT: STEWARDSHIP AND POLITICS

DAY 1: REVISION FROM WEEK 3, DAY 3, TO WEEK 6, DAY 5

1. (Week 3, Day 3) Briefly write down the first command mentioned in the Bible.

2. (Week 3, Day 3) Explain how we can work for the Lord apart from what we do in the Church.

3. (Week 3, Day 4) Is work a punishment?

4. (Week 3, Day 4) What happened to the position of work when our first ancestors were punished for their sin?

5. (Week 3, Day 4) Some people rule in order to honour themselves. Whom should we honour in our work?

6. (Week 3, Day 5) Why has Jesus redeemed us?

7. (Week 4, Day 1) Which people need to hear God's call to the work they do?

8. (Week 4, Day 1) Why is it that most Christians do not hear the Lord's call to their job?

9. (Week 4, Day 1) Briefly explain the ways in which you can be sure that God is calling you to a certain job.

10. (Week 4, Day 2) According to the promise of Jesus, who will lead us into all truth?

11. (Week 4, Day 3) If the Lord rejects a rich person, is it because of his wealth or for some other reason?

12. (Week 4, Day 3) If you work hard and become rich, who gave you the strength to do it?

13. (Week 4, Day 4) Write down four things which are of greater value than wealth.

14. (Week 4, Day 5) What is the greatest sin in seeking wealth?

15. (Week 5, Day 1) According to Acts 19:24-25 what worried Demetrius most?

16. (Week 5, Day 2) Instead of longing for money, what should we be seeking?

17. (Week 5, Day 2 and 3) Why does the Bible forbid the accepting of bribes?

18. (Week 5, Day 3) Write down some of the evil practices which go hand in hand with accepting bribes.

19. (Week 5, Day 4) What does the Bible call the rulers who take bribes?

20. (Week 5, Day 4) What do those who take bribes forget about in relation to God?

21. (Week 5, Day 5 and Week 6, Day 1) The Bible talks about two kinds of loans. Write them down here.

(a)

(b)

22. (Week 5, Day 5 and Week 6, Day 1) Which kind of loan should be free from interest?

23. (Week 5, Day 5) Why did the Lord, in Old Testament times, say that loans to the poor were to be cancelled in the seventh year?

24. (Week 6, Day 1) Why, in the Old Testament, were the people allowed to charge a foreigner interest?

25. (Week 6, Day 2) According to 1 Corinthians 9:13-14, how should church workers be paid?

26. (Week 6, Day 3) Write down the three aims of trading.

(a)

(b)

(c)

27. (Week 6, Day 3) Why were the people not to keep two kinds of measures?

28. (Week 6, Day 5) Some time ago some buildings collapsed because the builders had not followed the correct building regulations. A number of people died as a result. Which principles of God's kingdom did the builders forget?

When you know all the answers to these questions, turn back to the Revision on page 37. Cover your written answers and try to answer all the questions again.

ANSWERS

1. Rule over the earth.
2. Whatever work we do, we should do it in order to rule over the world according to God's will, to serve him and one another.
3. No, it is not a punishment, because the Lord gave the first command before Adam and Eve sinned.
4. The Lord cursed the ground. Therefore man works with pain and the sweat of his brow.
5. We should be bringing honour to the Lord.
6. So that we will know how to rule over the world in his name.
7. All workers need it.
8. They do not think that the Lord calls people to do jobs like trading. So they don't listen for a call. Their ears are deaf to what the Lord wants to say.
9. Know your abilities and the needs of your community. Listen to the advice of other Christians. Pray and read the Bible.
10. The Holy Spirit.
11. He reject him because of his unrighteousness, not because of his riches.
12. God gave it to you.
13. Four of these: Wisdom. The fear of the Lord. Love. Truth. Knowledge. Humility. Faithfulness.
14. The love of money which causes people to forget the Lord and to put their trust in riches. It leads into other sins as well.
15. Paul had spoilt their opportunity for trade.
16. God's kingdom and his righteousness.
17. Accepting bribes is a corrupt practice because it perverts the course of justice.
18. For example: selfishness, plundering, suppressing the truth, oppression, ill treatment of others, no fear of God, strife, evil,

deception.

19. It says they are traitors and friends of thieves.
20. They have forgotten his anger and his commandments.
21. (a) Help for a needy person. (b) Help to increase capital; that is, a loan to be paid back with interest.
22. A loan which is to help a needy person.
23. Lest they should go on borrowing more and more until it was impossible for them ever to pay it back.
24. Because they were seeking to increase their capital. They had come looking for money. They were not poor people.
25. God has said that they must be paid what they need.
26. (a) To honour God. (b) To rule over the world according to God's will. (c) To bring for sale goods which will help people.
27. Because if you keep it in your house, one day you will use it.
28. All of them.

WEEK 7: WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT: STEWARDSHIP AND POLITICS

DAY 2: WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT

Our topic for today is "working for the government", but don't forget the main heading of Week 6, Day 5 "The Work of the Lord's People".

1. In your opinion, is working for the government one of the jobs a man can do for the Lord? Explain the reason for your answer.

Well, if working for the government is the same as the other work we do for the Lord, then it must be of equal value. All the Bible teaching relating to work and the relationship between man and his neighbour also applies to working for the government. Therefore, if you know what the Bible teaches about these things, then you already know how to meet the temptations of working for the government. However, we will discuss some of the matters affecting government employees in order to stress our responsibility to work and to help our brothers and sister who are government workers.

2. In your opinion, why don't most of the Christians who work for the government follow the Bible's teaching in their job?

There are probably many different reasons, but apart from a lack of Christian commitment, a misunderstanding has arisen in seeing work for the Lord and work for the government as two separate things.

3. People have said that if a Christian has started working for the government then he has stopped working for the church. Is this true? Explain your answer.

If we teach government workers that their work is not part of their service to the Lord, how can we expect them to be keen to serve the Lord in their work? We can't! Because a difference has been made between their work and that of the Lord. We need to be plain; working for the government is working for the Lord. He wants us to serve him in our government job just as much as in other jobs.

4. Often when you enter a government office the workers frown and look displeased at your arrival as if you are a nuisance to them. What does this kind of attitude show?

5. Sometimes, when you enter a government office you find that the person you wish to see is reading a newspaper or chatting to someone else and disregards you. Why does this happen?

If the worker understood your worth and had God's love in his heart, would he ignore you like that? Of course not.

Sometimes, when you visit a government office they will tell you that your file has been lost and you must come back tomorrow. Tomorrow you return only to be told to come back next day. Sometimes it is genuine, but many times it isn't.

6. When this happens, what do you think they want?

If this is happening then they are forgetting the principles of God's kingdom.

Sometimes when you enter a government office you will be ignored or encouraged to leave because no one there knows you. But if someone there knows you then your need will be met straight away.

7. What mistake are they making here?

Whether you know someone or not, the Bible teaches us to love him and to remember his worth. It is possible that as a result of your helpful actions he may even find salvation. We will study this again when we look at the subject of tribalism.

Many times you will find workers who do not turn up for work, whilst others will take very long breaks. People will waste much time waiting for them to return. Workers acting like this without a genuine reason are violating the principles which affect relations between people.

8. Which principles are being violated?

Sometimes government workers do not take good care of the equipment they use. They say that it is not theirs and it's as if it doesn't belong to anyone. But to misuse government property is like misusing your neighbours property. In fact it is stealing. The government has paid for the equipment but you have wasted the community's money which could have been used for other purposes such as repairing roads. It is also cheating because you have prevented the community from enjoying other improvements to their lives.

9. What is happening when someone misuses government property?

The problems we are talking about here are found everywhere. For example, in the hospitals a sick person may keep on coming to the hospital but is ignored unless one of the staff knows them. A short time ago a man came to a large hospital for a medical examination. At eight o'clock in the morning about 15 people were examined and the rest were sent away and

told to return the next day. Some had to keep on coming back for nearly two weeks.

10. What is the real reason for the behaviour of the hospital?

If they are working only for money they receive, then the work has become degraded.

It is possible that you are a government worker and you are trying hard to meet people's needs through the work you do. But it is easy to see that your work colleagues will try hard to make you adopt their practices. An engineer repaired some government equipment but instead of being grateful the other workers tried to stop him. They preferred to buy new equipment because in doing so they would receive a bribe.

11. What should you do if this kind of problem occurs?

If this sort of problem arises remember your God and his laws. Remember also his promise which says, if you stand firm and trust in him, he will not cause you to be ashamed. Perhaps you can find Christians to support you in prayer about this matter. If you fall into temptation here, you will certainly forget your God. Wrong behaviour at work does not correspond with that of obeying the Lord. Your heart will become cold towards him.

Today we have discussed some of the problems government workers face. But believe me, if we remember all the principles of God's kingdom and how everyone needs to be saved, we will not find it hard to do what is right. Indeed it is possible to doubt that the person who behaves badly is a believer at all, since the salvation which Jesus gives is seen in our actions. If you understand the principles of God's kingdom, these bad ways will be far from you. If we remember the meaning of work in God's kingdom, we will see all work, even government work, as for the Lord.

ANSWERS

1. Yes, it is one of them, because there is no work on trade which is not free from the Lord.
2. Write your opinion.
3. It is not true because we need people who fear God to work in the government.

4. It shows that they are irresponsible, only in that office to get money. They are not there to help you.
5. The worker doesn't know your value. He has forgotten that you have been made in the image of God. He has forgotten about the love of Jesus.
6. They may want a bribe, or just be feeling lazy.
7. They are forgetting the first and second principles.
8. They have forgotten the principle of love and of the worth of every human-being.
9. He is stealing, and cheating the whole community.
10. They are far from God. They are only thinking about getting money.
11. Write your opinion.

DISCUSSION

1. For government workers. Those of you who are Christians, look at ways of encouraging each other.

How can you encourage each other?

2. For all other workers. How can you help your brother and sister who are government workers to keep away from bad behaviour?

WEEK 7: WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT: STEWARDSHIP AND POLITICS

DAY 3: STEWARDSHIP OF HOUSES AND FARMS

The year of Jubilee

Human beings have many different needs but in order to live they have three basic needs. They are: Food, shelter and clothing. We have already seen that the Lord does not want man to lack clothing. That is the reason why the Lord did not allow someone to accept a poor man's cloak as a pledge. See Week 5, Day 5 and Week 6, Day 1.

Today we are going to look at the kind of provision the Lord made regarding our food. In other words, our farms and our homes which are

our inheritance. The time has come for Christians to understand how they ought to regard their houses and farms. Times are changing. All kinds of new projects are being started which require large areas of land. New headquarters have been built for local governments. For example, both large government projects and private company projects have caused the land of the poor people to be taken by force. They have promised the people compensation, but rarely do they pay it. Also, in some towns farms and houses are regarded as things to buy and sell. They are sold off as one pleases or they are hired out at very high rents. Without doubt, we need the Bible's teaching on these matters.

1. Write down two reasons why Christians need to know the Bible's teaching regarding our responsibility to our houses and farms.

- (a) _____
(b) _____

2. Do you know of any examples where poor people's farms and houses have been taken by the government so that they could build on the land?

(a) Write down an example which affects the whole of Nigeria. (b) Write down an example which affects your own town or state.

- (a) _____
(b) _____

3. In the examples which you wrote down, did the people receive compensation? If they did not, write down the reason why it was not paid to them.

As a result of this policy many people lost their house or farm because they have been driven out of their own inherited land. We need to listen to what the Bible teaches us about this matter.

The principles about the relationship between a man and his neighbour affect the subject of inheritance, but we will not discuss them today. Apart from these principles the Bible gives special teaching on this matter.

Firstly, we must not forget one important fact which the Bible teaches us.

Psalm 24:1 - The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

Psalm 89:11 - The heavens are yours, and yours also is the earth.

4. To whom do our houses and farms belong?

Look carefully at the main heading of our lesson for today and tomorrow. It is "Stewardship of our houses and farms".

5. What does this mean?

In these days we say our houses are our own either because we inherited them or bought them with our money. It is also possible to say that the whole country belongs to the government which has given us the stewardship of it (or allows us to use it). There is some truth in these words but whether we inherited it or bought it or had it given to us by the government, the one who rules over all of these things is our Creator, Almighty God. He has all authority over them.

Before the Children of Israel entered the land of Canaan, the Lord already knew how selfish man was. Because of this, he gave them laws relating to the inheriting of homes and farms. He made safeguards for them to live peacefully together. Read and study *Leviticus 25:10-18*, and *25:23-24* regarding the Year of Jubilee.

Leviticus 25:18 - "Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land."

6. Why did the Lord give them these laws?

The Lord provided the Year of Jubilee to enable the people to live happily and in peace together. He knows what brings peace in society so let us listen carefully to what he says.

Leviticus 25:10 - Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you

7. How many years passed between one Jubilee and the next?

(For example, if the Year of Jubilee came in 1900, the next would be in 1950 and then in the year 2000)

Leviticus 25:13 - *In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property.*



Figure 6: Year of jubilee - people returning to their former homes and farms.

8. What happened in the Year of Jubilee?

Notice that it says everyone is to return. Undoubtedly some people had moved. What had caused the people to move? It must have been trouble. They didn't want to move but difficulties forced them to. This is why some had sold their inheritance. Except for reason of poverty, the Lord did not approve of this sale since he had already divided the land between them as recorded in Joshua 13:8 to 19:51 and chapter 21. The Lord wanted everyone to stay in the land allocated to him. This meant everyone had somewhere to build on and to farm. Nevertheless the Lord allowed a man to sell his inheritance in time of great need. Here was the way it was to be done. The Lord didn't give them permission to sell it forever.

Read and study Leviticus 25:14-16.

Nowadays if a person sells a house or land he will try to get as much as possible for it, regardless of what is right. He hopes only to get a lot of money for it. But in this passage the Lord showed the people how to work out the price of the house or land. It was based on the number of years remaining before the next year of Jubilee.

9. Explain how to work out the price of a house or farm according to what you have learnt here.

But what would happen if later the person who sold the land (or one of his family) obtained enough money to buy it back. In today's world once it had been sold there would be no more to say. But the Lord showed a way to buy back (redeem) their inheritance. There are two ways of doing this.

10. Explain the first way of redeeming or buying back the inheritance according to what you have learnt.

When the next Year of Jubilee came round farms and houses were returned to their original owners. There was no mention of payment since the person had already had the use of it for the length of time for which he paid.

Here is the second way.

Read and study Leviticus 25:25-27.

11. Explain the way of redeeming property before the next Year of Jubilee arrived

12. How did they work out how much money to pay back?

For example, if someone sold a farm in 1960, 40 years before the next Year of Jubilee, then the buyer had to pay for these 40 years. But if in 1970 a relative or the man himself had enough money to redeem (buy back) what he had sold, what then? In the first place it was sold for 40 years. The buyer has used it for 10 years. If the original owner wants to redeem his farm he must refund the balance of the 30 years left to the buyer. There is no chance of bargaining. The Lord himself set out the way to work out what is to be paid.

13. In your opinion, why did the Lord make this law?

The Lord wanted to prevent the dishonest people from taking unfair advantage of the weak by robbing the poor of their homes and farms. He did not want them to become like slaves without shelter or land to farm. In parts of the world today the ordinary people have no place of their own. Life is hard and there is no food. This is what the Lord wanted to prevent.

ANSWERS

1. (a) People are being driven from their homes and farms because of big projects by government or business companies. (b) In these days, people treat houses and farms merely as things to buy and sell.
2. For example: (a) The work that has gone on to build the city of Abuja. (b) You have your answer.
3. According to the newspapers, the people of Abuja are complaining that they have not been paid compensation. I hope you found out about what happened in the case of your own area before you wrote your answer down.
4. To the Lord.
5. Our houses and farms are not our own. The Lord has given us the stewardship of them.
6. So that they would live in peace and happiness.
7. After every fifty years.

8. Everyone would return to his own property.

9. They had to estimate the price of the house or farm according to how many years remained until the next jubilee. If many years remain the price will be high. If only a few years remain, the price will be low.

10. When the next jubilee year arrived the house or farm would go back to the one who sold it.

11. If the original owner or one of his family had enough money to redeem the inheritance which he had sold, all he needed to do was to bring the money. The one who had bought the property must let him have his inheritance back.

12. The owner would pay according to the number of years that remained before the next Jubilee year.

13. By doing so he was preventing cunning and dishonest people from acquiring lots of farms and houses for themselves, and thereby making themselves extremely rich while the ordinary people lacked shelter and farmland.

DISCUSSION

Do the local people in your area suffer because of their lack of houses or farms?

If you answer "Yes", what has caused this problem?

How can we solve this problem?

WEEK 7: WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT - STEWARDSHIP AND POLITICS

DAY 4: STEWARDSHIP OF HOUSES AND FARMS

Yesterday we studied the subject of the Year of Jubilee and how it protected the stewardship of inherited homes and farms.

1. What was the purpose of this arrangement?

Yesterday we saw that the Lord sometimes allowed the people to sell their houses or farms. But it was only when they were hard pressed and forced

to sell. They were not allowed to sell then if everything was all right. That is the reason for the next two verses.

Deuteronomy 19:14 - *Do not move your neighbor's boundary stone set up by your predecessors in the inheritance you receive in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess.*

Proverbs 22:28 - *Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.*

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible calls the boundary stone a "landmark". When the land was divided amongst the people of Israel boundary stones were placed to show where each farm began and ended.

2. What do the verses above forbid?

3. Why are they forbidden?

4. Why, if someone sold his inherited land, was he not to remove a boundary stone?

But the people of Israel were not faithful to their stewardship.

Read and study Micah 2:1-2.

These verses describe some people who made evil plans at night.

5. What did they plan to do?

6. How did they plan to defraud a man of his inheritance?

These were important people! They were able to do this because they held the power. It was the leaders of the people who were ruling deceitfully. The Lord had forbidden this kind of evil action, so that the ordinary people would not lose their inheritance.

Read and study Isaiah 5:8,9.

7. What offence did the people commit in the above verses?

8. What danger lay ahead for the poor?

In Nigeria, according to the constitution, the government owns all the land. Because of this, the government sometimes uses force to drive people away, even resulting in deaths. At Bakalori in Sokoto State, some important people there joined forces with certain business men to set up a big modern farm. They wanted to drive the local people away, promising to pay them compensation, but nothing was paid. Therefore the local people stayed. It is important to note that these local people supported a different political party to the one which ruled their state. One night the police were sent and 386 people were killed in their beds. You can read the full report of what happened in a book called "Political Repression in Nigeria". Newspapers also report this kind of situation. What the Bible talks about is happening even in our own country today! The government showed its power, but the Lord did not give them this kind of power. Even rulers must obey the Lord because the land is not theirs but his.

Read and study Ezekiel 46:18.

9. What was the prince forbidden to do?

Certainly the Lord restricted the power of a ruler over the inheritance of the people. He was not allowed to drive them away. There is a story told in 1 Kings 21 which shows the limits of a ruler's power over an ordinary person's farm. The farm of a man called Naboth was next to the king Ahab's. So the king said to Naboth:

Read and study 1 Kings 21:2-4.

10. Why did Naboth refuse to sell his vineyard?

11. Did the king agree with Naboth's answer?

If you read the rest of the story you will see how by lies and murder the king seized the vineyard. If the king had the authority to take the vineyard he would not have needed to resort to lies and murder in order to get it for himself.

There is also a story in the book of Nehemiah which relates to today's lesson.

Read and study Nehemiah 5:3-5.

12. To whom had the ordinary people mortgaged their fields and houses in order to get grain?

13. As a result of losing their fields and homes, what had they become?

If a man loses his home and field, he becomes powerless and a person to be pitied.

Nehemiah 5:7 - *So I called together a large meeting*

Nehemiah didn't only complain about it, but he sort a way to solve the people's problem.

14. What did Nehemiah do?

Nehemiah was very angry with the rulers and he showed the officials how they had wronged the people. Read and study Nehemiah 5:8-11.

Nehemiah 5:11 - *"Give back to them immediately their fields, and houses and also the usury (interest) you are charging them - the hundredth part of the money, grain, new wine and oil."*

15. What did Nehemiah want them to do?

Nehemiah 5:12 - *Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised.*

16. What did Nehemiah make the officials and nobles do?

It is as if in Nehemiah's time things were exactly the same as they are today! It is sad how religious leaders today keep quiet when the ordinary people are oppressed in this way.

ANSWERS

1. It prevented the powerful from increasing their ownership of houses and farms, and leaving poor people without shelter or farmland.
2. They must not remove the boundary stones.
3. So that the boundaries would be clear.
4. So that they knew exactly where the boundaries were when the property was returned to the owner at the year of jubilee.
5. To defraud people of their inheritance, their fields and houses.
6. They are the people who have authority who use their high positions to drive out the owner and his family.
7. They were taking over more and more houses and fields for themselves.
8. In a short while all the fields and houses will belong to the rich.
9. He must not take any of the inheritance of his people.
10. Because it was inherited land which he could not let the king have.
11. Yes, but he was angry about it.
12. To their fellow countrymen.
13. Powerless.
14. He called a meeting of those concerned.
15. To give back to the people everything they had taken from them.
16. He made them take an oath to do what they had promised. (That is to return everything back to the people.)

DISCUSSION

If people are being driven from homes and farms in order that a so called project to improve the standard of living can be established, what can they do if they do not agree? Should they leave and say nothing? What did Nehemiah do? To whom did he go?

**WEEK 7: WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT:
STEWARDSHIP AND POLITICS**

DAY 5: THE PLACE OF POLITICS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The importance of politics in the teaching of the Bible

Since the church was first established in Northern Nigeria it has always had doubts about politics. There are many reasons for the doubts, but the primary one is the mistake which we have been explaining since the beginning of this book. It is right to thank the Lord for the coming of the Gospel to our country but those who brought the Gospel to us were not entirely free from mistakes. From the start, Christians were encouraged to give themselves to working for the church. They were not encouraged to serve the Lord by entering politics. Previously, those who did go into politics were viewed with suspicion as having taken a different way to that of Christ.

1. What was the basic reason why Christians in Nigeria were not strong in politics at the beginning?

Since the church tried to ignore politics, it had nothing to say to those of its members who wanted to enter politics. There was no teaching on this subject. They were simply ignored. So if no Bible teaching was given concerning a certain job, how were those who did this job to manage? How were they to know the way to serve the Lord in their work? Apart from the problem of temptation which is found in politics, the lack of teaching left them ignorant of what the Bible says in regard to political matters. As a result they fell into temptation.

2. What caused the politician to fall into temptation, making it impossible for them to continue in the truth?

There was yet another problem for those early politicians. The church not only ignored politics but it came to ignore the politicians as well. It left them alone with their problems. It did not teach them, it did not pray for them and it did not give them advice. It treated them as backsliders. The Christian politicians were not supported by their fellow Christians so it was

inevitable that they fell into dishonest ways. The way the church ignored them was the second reason why they went astray from their faith.

3. Explain the second reason why the Christian politicians did not stand firm in the faith?

When the military government stepped down and the civilian government took office in 1979, Christians changed their minds about politics and stopped doubting them. They realised that if they didn't go into politics, others would in order to benefit themselves. They saw that Christians must go into politics. Prevention is better than cure. They realised that if Christians entered politics they would be able to improve our country in the name of Jesus Christ.

4. What was the aim of Christians going into politics after the military government had stepped down?

However by the end of the first civilian government in 1983 our country was in sad state. Some Christians and Muslims had not acted as fairly as they should have. It was as if there was no truth to be found anywhere, only evil and the desire for money. The Christian politicians slandered each other in an attempt to win votes. There was widespread giving of bribes. If anyone suggested that they should act honestly the reply was "If you act honestly you will not win". They did not believe in the power of the Lord. Christians and unbelievers together despaired of the situation. In this situation it is easy for Christians to go back to the way Christians used to think and refuse to have anything to do with politics. But brothers and sisters it is not right to go back to past. In the Bible politics is a very important subject. If we ignore politics because of the evil done by some politicians we are letting Satan rule. Let us think about what we learnt in Week 3, Day 3 concerning the first command.

5. What is the first command and what is it's chapter and verse?

Genesis 1:28 - God said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground".

In Week 3, Day 3 we heard how this verse concerns the work human beings do. It concerns every kind of work including politics and government. The Lord told us "subdue the earth" and to rule over every living thing. Well, if this isn't about politics, then what is it about? The first command in fact is particularly about politics. How amazing! The first command which the Lord gives us in the Bible is particularly about politics. So who are we to ignore the subject of politics?

6. Why isn't it right for Christians to ignore politics?

In the Bible there are many stories which involve politics, especially in the Old Testament. Genesis chapters 37 to 50 contains the story of Joseph.

7. In what way is the story of Joseph about politics?

The Lord used Joseph's political position in Egypt to save his people from starving. So we see how politics can become a way of serving the Lord.

8. In what way is the story of Moses about politics?

Moses used political action when he rescued the people of Israel from Egypt. In other words, the Lord used Moses' political position to fulfil his will.

9. (a) Who succeeded Moses as the leader of the people of Israel?

(b) What sort of work did he do?

10. What about the leaders in the book of Judges? What position did they hold?

11. In what way does the subject of kingship in the book of Ruth concern politics?

12. What was Samuel's most important work?

13. In what way did Samuel's work concern politics?

Samuel anointed two kings, Saul and David.

14. What are the books of 1 and 2 Kings 1 and 2 Chronicles mainly about?

The books of the prophets are full of stories of how the rulers oppressed the ordinary people. If you take out the stories about the government, politics and administration from the books of the prophets there will be very little left in any of them.

Something else which shows how important political matters are to the Lord, is that He, the Almighty one, has names connected with government. How many times does the Bible call God and his Son Jesus Christ, "King of Kings"? It's many times.

Read and study 1 Chronicles 29:11-12.

15. What do these verses say about God?

The basis of these verses is that the rule of Almighty God far exceeds every other government in power and greatness. His rule knows no limit for it covers the heavens and the whole earth.

Read and study Psalm 10:16, Psalm 24:8-10, Psalm 49:2-7, Zechariah 14:9 and Malachi 1:14.

John 18:37 - "You are a king then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born and for this I came into the world"

16. In this verse what title did Pilate give Jesus?

17. Did Jesus accept this title?

There are many verses in the New Testament which call Jesus "King".

18. In your opinion why do both God the Father and God the Son call themselves "King" in the Bible?

19. If God despised the affairs of government and saw them as useless, would he call himself "King of King's"?

So it is clear that the affairs of government and politics are very important to the Lord. So we should not ignore or despise them.

ANSWERS

1. Those who brought the Gospel did not encourage it. They tended to think that those who entered politics were leaving the way of Christ.
2. Because the church had not taught them what the Bible says about political matters.
3. It was because the church did not support them.
4. To improve our country through the teachings of the Lord Jesus.
5. To rule the earth. Genesis 1:28.
6. Because concern with political matters is commanded in the Bible.
7. God used the political position of Joseph in Egypt to fulfil his will and to save his people.
8. Moses was the political leader of the Israelites. God used him to free the people from slavery in Egypt.
9. (a) Joshua. (b) He governed the Israelites. He was a political leader.
10. They ruled the people. They were political leaders.
11. One purpose of the book is to tell the story of the ancestors of King David.
12. Judging and governing the people - that is political work.
13. He twice appointed a king - first Saul, then David.
14. The history of the rule of the kings.
15. They say how great he is. He is ruler of all things.
16. He called him, "King".
17. Yes, he accepted it.
18. Because the title "King" is one which indicates great importance and honour. God wants us to understand how very great he is.
19. No.

DISCUSSION

1. Why does the Old Testament talk a lot about political matters?
2. If politics had no use or value to God, would he talk about them?

WEEK 8: THE PLACE OF POLITICS AND RULERS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 1: THE PURPOSE OF POLITICS ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Last week we saw how important politics was in the teaching of the Old Testament. Political matters are mentioned a lot in the Bible. If you take out political matters completely from the Old Testament, very little is left. So today we will discuss the purpose of politics.

First we should understand that the Bible is not a dictionary, so it will not give us an exact meaning of the word "politics". The exact meaning can be found in a dictionary or in a book dealing solely with politics. In one dictionary the word politics is explained thus: "It covers a lot of things such as the purpose of government and the way government carries out that purpose. It also includes the activities of political parties and the candidates seeking election or support from the people." In short, politics is about governing the land. Someone has defined politics as being about power, that is the seeking of power and the use of power.

1. What is the purpose of politics?

However, one Hausa to English dictionary translates the Hausa word "siyasa" (politics) as "doing someone a favour" or "showing clemency" (compassion). This is the root meaning of the word in Hausa. But today people want to change its meaning and combine it with the idea of power. It is as if politics links power with kindness.

2. What is the root meaning of the word "politics" in Hausa?

The Bible does not completely explain the meaning of the word "politics", but it does show us how rulers should behave and how they should act. How they should behave is shown in the Bible in two ways. Firstly, the character that all Christians should adopt; that is, the kind of behaviour which we have learnt about in the principles of the kingdom of God (Week 2, Day 3). Secondly, through those verses which speak about ruling.

3. Explain the two ways in which the Bible shows us the kind of people politicians ought to be?

(a) _____

(b) _____

Now let us see how the principles of the Kingdom of God affects politics.

Read the first principles in Week 2, Day 2.

4. Write down the first principle.

5. How does the first principle affect political matters?

6. Write down the second principle from Week 2, Day 3.

7. How does the second principle affect political matters?

8. Write down the third principle from Week 2, Day 4.

9. How does the third principle affect political matters?

10. Write down the fourth principle from Week 2, Day 5.

11. How does the fourth principle affect political matters?

12. Write down the fifth principle from Week 3, Day 1.

13. How does the fifth principle affect political matters?

All these characteristics mentioned above should be seen in all Christians not just in politicians and rulers. Nevertheless, these principles affect them

in a special way as we saw in our answers. A politician or ruler who wants to do his work according to these characteristics will not harm anyone. Instead he will carry out his policies in a spirit of love and truth. He will not support some, whilst disregarding others. Truly, these characteristics are the foundation for the kind of politics which will bring blessing to our country. The church should teach the politicians these principles so that they may build up our country and honour the Lord's name in their politics. Apart from these principles, the Bible contains verses which will discuss these passages tomorrow.

ANSWERS

1. The affairs of government.
2. To do someone a favour, i.e. to show mercy and compassion.
3. (a) Behaving in a Christian way, that is in accordance with the principles of the Kingdom of God. (b) Through passages in the Bible which concern the subject of ruling.
4. Love.
5. It requires that people take political action in order to help one another, not just for their own advantage or that of their own tribe or religion.
6. Man is made in the image of God.
7. We should not despise other people whatever their tribe, religion, political party or the amount of money they have, because they are made in God's image.
8. Humble yourself.
9. A politician or ruler should not honour himself. He must be humble before God and his people. This will prevent him from wasting money on himself.
10. Carrying one's cross i.e. suffering for others.
11. If a ruler gives himself to his work as Jesus Christ did to his, he will do his utmost to help the ordinary people, even those who do not support him politically.
12. Unity and fellowship.
13. The politician will consider all the people to be his own without any discrimination of religion and tribe. He will stand by them in their troubles and in their joys. He will see their troubles as his own.

DISCUSSION

Invite a Christian politician or someone in local government to your meeting. Explain to him the principles of the kingdom of God which you have been studying. Then ask him how he is trying to follow these principles.

WEEK 8: THE PLACE OF POLITICS AND RULERS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 2: THE BIBLE'S STANDARDS FOR POLITICAL WORK AND GOVERNMENT

Yesterday we studied the meaning of the word "politics" and how the principles we learnt about earlier affect political matters. Today we will study what the Bible says about political matters. We have already seen that the Bible recognises their value. (see Week 7, Day 5)

1. In which Bible chapter and verse did the Lord command human beings to rule the earth?

Many different kinds of rulers are mentioned in the Bible. Some ruled in the fear of God; others gave the Lord's people a hard time. In the Bible there is a story about one of the first rulers.

Read and study Genesis 12:14-15 and Genesis 20:1-7

2. Although Abraham did not tell the truth about sara, what was wrong in Pharaoh's attitude towards her?

Pharaoh followed the customs of his country, but they were pagan customs, which allowed the king to take any woman who pleased him.

3. Do you know any ruler or politician in Nigeria who behaves in this way? Write down their names.

Read and study Genesis 14:1-12.

4. How were these kings ruling? Was it a peaceful rule?

It is not possible for us to study all the kings recorded in the Bible but let us look at the story of Joseph's time in power. If we compare the way the kings of Genesis 14:1-12 ruled with that of Joseph there is a difference. It is between the rule of worldly men and that of a God-fearing man. Since all of you using this book already know the story of Joseph, I do not need to give you a summary of it.

5. If Joseph had been like the kings mentioned in Genesis 14, would he have allowed his brothers to live?

If Joseph had been like those kings he would have killed his brothers. But he understood the Lord's purpose in making him a ruler.

Read and study Genesis 50:19-21.

Joseph understood perfectly well that they had intended evil against him and not good. What they had done was sufficient reason for a ruler to have them put to death. But Joseph understood the Lord's purpose in making him a ruler.

6. What was the Lord's purpose in making Joseph a ruler?

That is to say God used Joseph's position of authority to save his people. Joseph made himself the Lord's servant, rather than just a powerful ruler over the people. The Lord used him to save his people; and Joseph accepted his official position for that purpose. Certainly this is the kind of rule the Lord wants in the world today. This kind of rule builds up a country.

In the book of Exodus we read about the story of Pharaoh who oppressed the people of Israel very harshly. **Read and study especially Exodus 1:11-22.** Later on their oppression was more than they could bare.

Read and study Exodus 2:23-25.

7. What did the people of Israel do?

The burden of slavery was too much for the Israelites, so they cried to the Lord for help. The Lord heard them and he remembered the covenant (promise) which he had made with their ancestors. The Lord in fact already knew about their trouble and had begun to prepare a way for them to be saved even before they cried to him.

8. Who had the Lord prepared to save his people?

Exodus 3:7-10 - The Lord spoke to Moses, ".... and now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

9. What kind of task did the Lord entrust to Moses?

So we see the reason why the Lord gave Moses the position of leadership over his people. It was not so that he could use the power to benefit himself, but to save the Israelites from slavery. This is the most important task of rulers; that is to redeem slaves and to deliver the poor and needy. The ruler who does not deliver the poor is not a good ruler and is not a true servant of the Lord. He is an oppressor.

We have already discussed the way some kings and rulers lived as recorded in the first five books of the Bible. We saw how their behaviour varied according to their relationship with the Lord. We saw the reason why the Lord gave positions of authority to Joseph and Moses. It was to save their people. But the other kings we read about ruled only to oppress and murder people.

Through Moses the Lord entrusted the people of Israel with his laws. He also gave them instructions about kingship in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. Let us study those instructions. Even though Moses ruled the Israelites in the wilderness, he was not a king. The Lord knew that later on when the people of Israel settled in the land he was giving them, they would certainly want to have a king appointed.

Read and study Deuteronomy 17:15.

10. Did the Lord allow them to appoint a king in the future?

The Lord did not refuse, but he showed them the kind of king they were to appoint. He must be one of them, not a foreigner.

11. This verse also says that the Lord would not accept anyone as king; only the person that he himself chooses. Why did the Lord say this?

The main reason is that the person who puts himself forward is not capable of ruling or else he has some purpose of his own which will not be for good of the country. How are we to know the one whom God has chosen? There are two ways. Firstly, to pray that the Lord will show us the person he has chosen. Secondly, look and see if there is someone who is honest and able to rule. It is possible that this person is God's choice. Pray about that person.

12. How can we know the person God has chosen?

These days all kinds of people are ruling us, either because they were elected to be governors or because they obtained a position in politics. It is as if they have chosen themselves. They think they can do it, so they want a chance to try. They even despise the attempts of others.

13. In your opinion, is the way in which some people stand for election fitting for us Christians? Explain the reason for your answer.

14. In your opinion why did the Lord prevent a foreigner from ruling?

It is possible there is more than one reason, but the main reason is that the Lord did not want a ruler who did not know his laws. At that time only the Israelites knew God's laws.

15. If a ruler didn't know the Lord and his laws, in what way would he rule?

16. If you know a ruler in your town or state or in the federation who does not know the Lord and his laws, describe the way he rules.

ANSWERS

1. Genesis 1:28.

2. He used his power to his own advantage, and took another man's wife.

3. You have your answer. I who am writing this study-book know some rulers who use their power like this, even today. I have even heard of a chief who was elected by Christians, yet he took many wives.

4. They did not rule peacefully. They treated their people as nothing more than things which they owned and which they could do what they liked with. They did not recognise the worth of individuals. They were only interested in war and murder.

5. No. He would have paid them back for what they had done to him.

6. In order to save many people from hunger and death.

7. They cried out to the Lord for help because of their slavery.

8. Moses.

9. He was to go to Pharaoh and to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

10. Yes.

11. It's possible that the person who puts himself forward will not be suitable and may have an evil purpose in mind.

12. Look out for the person who has the right qualities for leadership. Then pray for him.

13. Most of them have put themselves forward without a call from God. Therefore we, as Christians, should help our fellow Christians to find the people who are suitable.

14. The main reason is that at that time there was no nation which knew the Lord as the Israelites did. The Lord wanted a king who feared him.

15. He would rule selfishly and with oppression.

16. You have your answer.

DISCUSSION

Think about the lifestyle of your representatives to the State Assembly or Federal Parliament. Do they observe God's instructions to rulers? Which of them do observe these instructions? Which of them do not observe them?

WEEK 8: THE PLACE OF POLITICS AND RULERS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 3: CHOOSING RULERS

Yesterday we studied Deuteronomy chapter 17 which sets out instructions about choosing a king. We noticed some important points about ruling. Let us revise them here.

1. What was the Lord's purpose in making Joseph a ruler?

2. What was the Lord's purpose in making Moses a ruler?

3. Who chooses rulers?

4. Why did the Lord command the Israelites to choose a ruler only from their own people? Was it because of tribalism?

Yesterday we asked the question, how can we know who God has chosen. We asked the question but did not answer it. Since in today's political scene politicians choose themselves we need to discuss this matter further.

1 Samuel 9:17 - *When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, "This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people."*

5. How did Samuel know that the Lord had chosen Saul to be king?

No one knew the intention of the Lord but he himself revealed it to Samuel. Later the Lord rejected Saul because of his sin of disobedience. So the Lord chose David to become the king. In 1 Samuel 16:1-13 we read how the Lord showed Samuel the one he had chosen. The sons of Jesse came and stood before Samuel. When David arrived the Lord spoke to Samuel.

1 Samuel 16:12 - *..... Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him, he is the one."*

6. How did Samuel know who the Lord had chosen?

The answer is the same as that to question 5. The Lord chose him. In these two stories the Lord tells the prophet whom he has chosen. Sometimes the Lord does it differently. Here is an example from the story of Moses.

Exodus 3:10 - *"So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out to Egypt."*

7. How did Moses know for certain that the Lord had called him?

8. What is the difference between the way the Lord called Saul and David and the way he called Moses?

Here we see two ways the Lord uses to call people. Sometimes he calls a man directly. At other times he uses one of his messenger like a prophet, to call a person. There is a third way in the story of Joseph. After Joseph had interpreted the meaning of Pharaoh's dream to him, Pharaoh was impressed.

Read and study Genesis 41:38-40.

9. Why did Pharaoh make Joseph a ruler?

No one told Pharaoh or Joseph that the Lord had called him to be a ruler. As God's wisdom was seen in him, he was appointed the governor under Pharaoh. So another way that the Lord calls a person to a position of authority is when others recognise that he is wise. We should not ignore this way.

So we see how the Lord calls people in different ways to be rulers. It is clear that Joseph was called because of his wisdom. But how can we know that the Lord called Moses, Saul and David? The Lord prepared them and then the people recognised that they were the right ones for the position of the ruler.

The Lord prepared Moses through his forty years spent in Pharaoh's palace and through his forty years of living in the desert. When the time came for the Israelites to be redeemed, the people recognised straight away that Moses was the one suited to be their leader.

10. How did the people of Israel recognise that the Lord had called Moses to this task?

The story of Saul's call is found in 1 Samuel 10:20-24.

11. Read and study this passage. Then explain the way by which the people agreed that Saul should be their king.

Since the election of Saul was carried out honestly no-one had any doubts. But there are different kinds of elections. This one was not a rigged election as so often happens today.

1 Samuel 10:17 - *Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the Lord at Mizpah.*

12. According to this verse what kind of election was it?

This election was carried out before the Lord so who would dare to lie to the Lord? This certainly solved the problem of election rigging. As a result of this election the people accepted that God had chosen Saul.

How about the call of David? The Lord had indeed prepared him through his time spent in the king's palace. In 1 Samuel 16:14-23 we read the story of how Saul called David to his palace to play the harp for him. Through his time at the palace David became familiar with the affairs of kingship. So his time at the palace was like an education for the future.

13. How did the Lord prepare David to be king?

The Lord also prepared the people to accept David as their king. David became popular with the people when he killed the champion Goliath (1 Samuel 17:41-54). Later, he was given a high rank in Saul's army.

Read and study 1 Samuel 18:5-7.

14. What does this story tell us about how the people regarded David?

When king Saul died it was not difficult for the people to appoint David as their king, especially the people of Judah.



Figure 7: Fair elections.

We have seen some important things relating to the choice of a person for a position in government or politics. Here they are:

- (1) The Lord chooses a person.
- (2) The Lord chooses a person who fears him.
- (3) The Lord enables the person he has chosen for the task.
- (4) The Lord causes the people to recognise the one he has chosen.
- (5) The Lord causes the people to agree with his choice.

If you compare the way the Lord prepared a person for politics and government then with the way it is done in our country today, you will certainly see a great difference.

ANSWERS

1. In order to redeem God's people from starvation.
2. To redeem the people of Israel from Egypt where they were slaves.
3. God does.
4. No, it was not tribalism. It was because only the Israelites knew the laws of the Lord.
5. The Lord told him.
6. The Lord told him.
7. The Lord spoke to him.
8. The Lord called Moses without any mediator, but he called Saul and David through the prophet Samuel.
9. Pharaoh saw the wisdom of God in Joseph.
10. The Lord has prepared him in such a way that he knew how to rule and how to live in the wilderness. The people recognised this.
11. Samuel cast lots.
12. It was done publicly, in the presence of the Lord.
13. The Lord caused King Saul to call David to live at the palace.
14. They liked David better than Saul.

DISCUSSION

Read points (1) to (5) above and compare the difference between the way a person is chosen today in government and church with that of the Old Testament times.

WEEK 8: THE PLACE OF POLITICS AND RULERS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 4: THE CHOICE OF LEADERS AND THINGS FORBIDDEN TO THEM

Yesterday we discussed the way election candidates get into power. We noted five things at the end of the last lesson which we talked about in our "Discussion". Since the subject of elections has become very important in our country now, we must seek the full light of the Lord on this matter. Christians must know the way to correct the conspiracies.

Yesterday we saw how the Lord chooses a person to rule.

1. In your opinion, does the Lord still choose a person for this kind of work?
-
2. In your opinion, will the false ways we follow in choosing leaders today bring us God's blessing? Will the Lord use this kind of way to bring honest people into power?
-

There is nothing which can prevent the Lord from using man's mistakes to bring about good for the people. Look at how the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart in order to save the people of Israel. The Lord has the power to make use of Satan if he wishes because the Lord is more powerful. As a result of this the Lord has the power even to make use of the election conspiracies and cause those who fear him to come to power. But that does not mean that He likes conspiracy. Not at all! The Lord wants honest elections. He wants us, his children, to do our best to elect honest people to government through honest elections. He wants us to seek out those he has chosen, not simply the ones we have chosen.

3. How can we know the ones whom the Lord has chosen? (If you have forgotten, read yesterday's lesson again).
-

We will know them by the way the Lord has enabled them for the task.

4. How can we know the ones whom the Lord has enabled for the task?

If we see a God-fearing person who is compassionate to the ordinary people, does what is right and has the gifts of leadership, then he is the sort of person we are looking for. He is also the kind of person God has chosen.

5. What is the difference between the election of a person who is suitable and one who is not suitable?

If a person does not possess the qualities we have mentioned then God has not chosen him/her. He has chosen himself or the people of his party may have voted for him but, God has not chosen him.

6. In your opinion, if a person chooses himself, will he be able to do his work in a way that is fitting and which meets the needs of the community?

How can he meet the needs of the community if God has not chosen and enabled him? He cannot do it unless God wants to do an amazing thing through him. So if we choose a political candidate, the country's president, or a state governor or any other senior official whom God has not chosen, then our choice is utterly foolish! Even before he takes office we already know he cannot meet the people's needs. If Christians choose a person who does not know God or one who is a Christian in name only, they act foolishly, no matter how many promises the person makes to them.

From our study of Deuteronomy chapter 17 we learnt what the Lord commanded about appointing a king. They were not to appoint a person whom the Lord had not chosen. They were not to appoint a foreigner as their king. We will continue our study of this in Deuteronomy 17.

Deuteronomy 17:16 - The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, "You are not to go back that way again."

In this verse the Lord forbids something which was to become a great temptation to the kings of Israel; that was acquiring horses. Horses, in those times, were the main weapons of war, just as fighter aircraft are in some countries today. At that time they did not have the kind of weapons we have today. Horses represented the military might of a king. The king

who had many horses was the one to be feared because he would win the war. As a result some kings acquired many horses for themselves.

7. In your opinion, why did the Lord forbid the king of Israel from acquiring a large number of horses like other kings?

The main reason was that in a time of war the king might trust in his horses and boast his strength, thinking that no-one could conquer him. This kind of person would forget the Lord and not trust in him. So the Lord forbade the acquiring of lots of weapons lest they should forget the Lord, thinking they were strong enough to conquer on their own.

8. Why did the Lord forbid the acquiring of lots of weapons?

The Lord did not want the rulers to acquire lots of weapons lest they put their trust in them and forget the help which they needed from the Lord. He wanted to prevent them from becoming proud of their own strength.

9. In your opinion, is the government of our country acquiring more weapons than it should?

It is difficult to answer "Yes" or "No" since most of us reading this book do not know what the government is doing. We don't know how many aircraft or other weapons the government has. One thing is clear, our government is seeking respect and power in the continent of Africa, even praise because of her strength.

10. In your opinion, is Nigeria close to breaking God's law against acquiring weapons by following this policy?

It is indeed possible that Nigeria is close to breaking God's law since she is seeking to be great in Africa. Christians must watch this trend carefully. It is not hard to break this law. Notice what happened to King Solomon.

1 Kings 10:26 - Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses

Notice that soon after this, Solomon fell from power.

11. In your opinion, why did Solomon fall from power?

The reason for his fall was that he allowed prosperity to separate him from the Lord. Despite Solomon's wisdom, he still committed sins. He began to trust in his weapons rather than in the Lord.

We should realise that some churches renounce warfare and the weapons of war altogether. They say that God has forbidden all war, and the making of weapons completely. Some of the churches who teach this view are the Church of the Brethren, the Mennonites and the Quakers.

We have not yet mentioned the reference to the land of Egypt. The king was told not to go there and buy horses for battles. Why was this? It was because in the past they had been slaves in Egypt but the Lord had delivered them from that land. So the land of Egypt, in Old Testament times, is seen as a sign of being enslaved to Satan. After the children of Israel left the land of Egypt they longed to go back there when things were difficult. Read and study Numbers 11:5, 18, 20. But before they left Egypt the Lord had already forbidden them to return there. Read Exodus 13:17. The prophet Isaiah also warned them not to return. Read Isaiah 30:1-7 where it says that Egypt's help is utterly useless. So Egypt became an example of living in slavery and of Satan's kingdom; living in darkness to which they were never ever to return.

12. In what way does the Lord want us today "never to return to Egypt"?

It means that we must not go back to where we were before. But we must continue in the new light we now have both in our work for the Gospel and in politics. We must go on with the Lord in faith, always seeking His will.

There are some other instructions regarding the behaviour of a King.

Deuteronomy 17:17 - *He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray....*

13. Why did the Lord forbid the king to take many wives?

Perhaps you answered so that his heart would not be led astray. That's true. But the truth is deeper than you think. In those days kings gave their children in marriage to each other for political reasons. For example, if the

king of the Philistines gave his daughter to the king of Israel in marriage this meant an alliance had been made between them. In future they would do some things together. In the time of the Old Testament the Lord did not want his chosen people to make alliances with those who did not know his laws because they would cause the people to turn away from him. We are not only talking about wives but about making alliances with worldly people. That is what the Lord forbade in this verse.

14. Why did the Lord forbid the king to take many wives?

If you read and study 1 Kings 11:1-9 you will hear how King Solomon married many wives. These heathen women turned Solomon's heart away from the Lord. As a result he even began to worship their gods and serve their idols. This is the third reason why the Lord forbade the king to take many wives.

15. What is the third reason the Lord forbade the king to take many wives?

Deuteronomy 17:17 - *.... He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.*

16. What must the king not do according to this verse?

17. In your opinion, why was he not to accumulate large amounts of money (silver and gold)?

There is more than one reason. The first is that seeking wealth can become a lustful desire. That is, it can so control a man's thinking that it will separate him from the Lord. The second reason is that the king has only one way to become rich, that is by taking it from his people. If a king accumulates a lot of money, then he has not acquired it by fair means. He has used his power to rob his people of their money, that is he has used oppression.

18. Briefly write down two reasons why the Lord forbade the king to accumulate large amounts of money.

(a) _____

(b)

It is not difficult for us to understand this matter. In our country today many people in authority are enriching themselves by cheating the ordinary people. Look at any of our rulers who have become rich. It may be in the government or in the military or in some other area of authority. If you look closely into it you will almost certainly find that he used corrupt means. That is the reason why if an important person is accused of corruption, it is very hard to investigate his activities because those who will investigate him are themselves corrupt; they are all friends in theft.

19. The Lord has forbidden rulers to accumulate wealth. So what should we do about Christian rulers today who have become rich by dubious means? Should we ignore them or should we investigate what they have done?

ANSWERS

1. Yes, he does.
2. You have your answer.
3. We should look for those people whom God has enabled for the task.
4. We will know them by their gifts of leadership, their upright character and their faith.
5. If the Lord has not chosen a person, then that person has chosen himself, even if the people vote for him.
6. He will not be able to do it because God has not chosen him.
7. Write your opinion, then read the explanation which follows.
8. Lest the rulers should forget the Lord and think they could manage on their own, trusting in their weapons of war.
9. You have your opinion.
10. It could be that she is in danger of doing this because any person or nation which seeks to be great, begins to boast and to forget God.
11. He fell from power because he began to boast of the strength of his armaments. He no longer trusted in God.
12. The Lord does not want us to go back to where we were before, in slavery to sin. We as Christians, have the light of the Gospel. So we should use it in politics and government.
13. Because they could become a stumbling-block to him, and take him away from God.
14. To prevent alliances with heathen nations.

15. So that he wouldn't worship idols.

16. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

17. You have your answer.

18.(a) Seeking wealth could so dominate his thoughts as to separate him from the Lord. (b) A king gets all his money from his people. To become rich he has to take lots of money away from his people.

19. You have your answer.

DISCUSSION

Discuss your answer to question 19. Try to find an example of a Christian ruler who has become wealthy by doubtful means. Look closely at the way that man lives.

WEEK 8: THE PLACE OF POLITICS AND RULERS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DAY 5: CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD RULER

Yesterday we looked at things which God has forbidden rulers to do. Let us test ourselves and see if we can remember them.

1. Why did the Lord forbid the king to acquire many horses?

2. Why did the Lord forbid the king to take many wives?

3. Why did the Lord forbid the king to accumulate wealth?

We have not completed our study of Deuteronomy chapter 17.

Read and study Deuteronomy 17:18-19.

Since the beginning of the church in Nigeria, Christians have said, "Let's leave the business of government and politics alone because they do not fit in with the way of the Lord."

4. What did the Lord command the rulers to do according to this passage?

So the Lord wants rulers to study the Bible, not just sometimes or when they have a problem, but *continually*. This way they will understand how they should rule. The ruler who governs without knowing God's laws will not rule well. He will be like those bad rulers we read about earlier.

Let us use the car as an example. A car has brakes and an engine. The purpose of the brakes is to help the car stop in an emergency or simply to stop. The purpose of the engine is to make the car go. The car's strength is its engine. Think carefully about this example.

5. To rulers, is the Bible meant to act like the brakes or like the engine?

Although the Bible sometimes acts like brakes to prevent a person from continuing with a wrong course of action, its primary purpose is to be like the engine, to drive you forward. It will give you strength and take you where you should go. So the most important purpose of the Bible is that it is like an engine.

6. What effect should the Bible have on us?

There is another reason for reading the Lord's instructions.

Read and study Deuteronomy 17:20.

7. According to this verse what does the Lord want to prevent?

The important thing which the Lord wants to prevent in this verse is for a man in power to consider himself better than everyone else, whether it be in rank or power or children. This is the way we tend to behave, but the solution to this is found in the Bible. Here the Lord continually reminds us that he is King of kings and therefore everyone should serve him. Everyone must obey him, including the rulers.

8. Read and study Deuteronomy 17:20 again, then briefly write down the promise contained in it.

What a good promise this is! If the king will obey the Lord, both he and his people will last for a long time and his kingdom will be established. If

you study the history of the kings you will see that this promise and its conditions were the basis for each king's story. The kings who obeyed established prosperous kingdoms. The rest fell from power very quickly. Either they were killed or another king defeated them in war. The reigns of king David and King Solomon lasted a long time. They were honourable kings yet when King Solomon started to disobey the Lord and to break his laws, then he fell from power.

9. According to the Bible in what ways did kings behave?

Now let us return to the story of Solomon.

Read and study 1 Kings 11:9; 11.

10. What had Solomon done?

He had turned away from the Lord. Notice how he had accumulated wealth and horses and wives.

Read and study 1 Kings 10:23, 26, 29 and 11:1-8.

He had done all the things which were forbidden according to Deuteronomy chapter 17.

11. What kind of punishment did the Lord say would happen to him?

Here is what the Lord did to Solomon.

1 Kings 11:14 - *Then the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite*

1 Kings 11:23 - *And God raised up against Solomon another adversary Rezon son of Eliada*

12. What happened to Solomon?

Later on the prophet called Ahijah came to Jeroboam, one of Solomon's officers.

Read and study 1 Kings 11:31.

13. Who was going to inherit Solomon's kingdom?

Although the Lord would not take all the kingdom away from the house of David, nevertheless after Solomon's death, when his descendants ruled, it was going to be a lot smaller. Later the nation of Israel was divided into two parts, reducing its power. This happened because of the disobedience of their rulers.

14. Think carefully about the above and then explain what will cause a kingdom to fall.

So the basic strength of any ruler lies not in his weapons or wealth but in his obedience to the Lord. King Solomon had lots of weapons and wealth, never the less his kingdom collapsed. The secret of success lies in obeying the Lord, not in anything else. As you study the history of the other kings in the Old Testament you will see that the basis of all their stories lies in whether they obeyed the Lord or not.

1 Kings 15:25, 26 - *Nadab son of Jeroboam became king ---- He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, walking in the ways of his father and in his sin, which he had caused Israel to commit.*

1 Kings 15:33-34 - *Baasha ---- became king of all Israel ---- He did evil in the eyes of the Lord ----*

15. What kind of information do the verses give us about those kings before they tell us the rest of their story?

16. Why do they give us this information first?

17. What does this kind of information mean to us today in our country?

We ought to choose those who fear the Lord, so that they may rule us according to God's plan and our country may prosper. But at present we are staggering about, not knowing what will happen next. The only reason for this is that we have not chosen rulers who fear God.

ANSWERS

1. Lest he trust in them instead of in the Lord.
2. Because kings used to marry many wives in order to make alliances with each other. The Lord did not want his people to ally themselves with unbelievers.
3. Because kings had no way of accumulating wealth except by oppressing their people and because they would only rely on their riches instead of God.
4. To read God's law all the days of his life.
5. Write your opinion.
6. The most important purpose of the Bible is that it is like an engine.
7. He wants to prevent a man in power from considering himself better than his brothers.
8. If the ruler obeys the Lord, he and his descendants will reign a long time.
9. Whether or not they obeyed the Lord.
10. He had turned away from the Lord.
11. The Lord was going to tear the kingdom away from him and give it to one of his subjects.
12. The Lord raised up an adversary against him.
13. Not Solomon's son, but Jeroboam.
14. Disobeying the Lord.
15. Their relationship to the Lord, whether it was good or bad.
16. *Because the success of their reign depended on whether or not they were obedient to the Lord.*
17. We should be careful to choose rulers who obey the Lord.

DISCUSSION

1. If we separate religious matters from those of governing what will happen in our country?
2. Why, at this time are we in such great danger that everyone is fearful of tomorrow?

WEEK 9: THE RIGHT OF MAN

DAY 1: RIGHTEOUSNESS AND MAN'S FREEDOM

We have been studying Deuteronomy 17:14 and following, and we have already looked at the instructions on how rulers should behave. Now we will turn to a different subject, but it is not a new one, it has still to do with political matters.

These days people say that the job of a ruler is to redeem people from every kind of slavery, that is to obtain freedom for them. It's possible to say that their work is to set the people free from their various chains so that the people have the opportunity to serve the Lord where they are. The ruler who strengthens man's freedom fulfils his responsibility and also the longings of his people.

1. Briefly write down what the responsibility of a ruler is.

2. What kind of ruler can be called righteous?

The rulers who give the people the freedom they need are the righteous ones. They are the true servants of the Lord. They will be popular with all the people and they will be the ones that the people will vote for. It's as if righteousness and freedom are like twins in political matters. Where one is missing, the other is missing too. They are always together! So now we need to know what the Bible gives as the meaning of the words, 'righteous' and 'freedom'. The apostle Paul spoke about the work of rulers.

Romans 13:4: - For he is God's servant to do you good He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

3. What is the role of a ruler before God?

4. What is the responsibility of a servant?

A ruler is the servant of the Lord. Therefore he needs to fully obey the Lord and to do the work the Lord has assigned him.

5. In the verse above two kinds of work are mentioned. Briefly write them down.

(a) _____

(b) _____

The meaning of the word "work" in this verse is that rulers give us the chance to serve the Lord in all the various aspects of our daily life, whether it is in our job or at home or in the church. Those rulers who do us good are the righteous ones and the true servants of the Lord. But it's very sad to see how many rulers don't serve the Lord. Instead they make themselves the masters not the servants. Instead of doing good to their people they only do good to themselves. Instead of bringing wrongdoers to justice they join forces with them and become wrongdoers themselves. They do not punish the wrongdoers, instead they strengthen them. These kind of rulers are not righteous, they are workers of Satan. They change the purpose of their work, treating the people merely as a means to enrich themselves.

6. Briefly write down the characteristics of rulers who serve Satan

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

In brief, these rulers are not from God, they don't obey him nor do they help their people. Take good note of this: the freedom which man needs is a gift from God. God has not given anyone the right to suppress man's freedom. Even rulers do not have the right to suppress a man's freedom. We are not saying that rulers are the ones who give freedom. The extent of their responsibility is to protect it. Their responsibility doesn't go beyond this. The purpose of all their work and all the laws they make for us is to protect our freedom. If the laws they make concerning trading, money and other things, do not benefit the people and strengthen their freedom, then these laws are not good laws.

7. Who gives man freedom?

8. Who suppresses man's freedom?

9. What is the responsibility of rulers regarding man's freedom?

10. Do rulers have the legal power to reduce or increase our freedom?

In brief God alone has the power to give freedom not the rulers. Their responsibility is simply to protect the freedom which God has given us.

From rulers let us look at government workers, those whose responsibility is to carry out what the rulers have imposed. Rulers are the servants of God to do good to the people. The workers too are God's servants. They

have no power of their own. Their work is to obey the rulers. But it is very sad to see that just as many rulers refuse to serve the people, so it is with their workers. Many times they refuse to do what they should. Many of them refuse to do good to the people. Instead they do good to themselves by means of deception and fraud just as the rulers do.

11. Give two examples of how government workers cheat and deceive people.

- (a) _____
(b) _____

Since everyone knows the kind of cheating that goes on, write down the things that you know about, not just what you think we would like to hear.

So it appears that all of our studies about rulers and their workers goes back to one thing which is the subject of obeying the Lord. We are not talking about obeying people, but the Lord himself. Rulers have no rights or powers of their own. God gave them the rights and powers which they possess. If they take any right or power beyond this, they no longer hold the position of being God's servant and become rebels instead.

12. What is the basic responsibility of rulers?

13. When do rulers and their workers become rebels?

There is still another way by which some rulers become rebels. That is if they join forces with evil men or do not bring evil men to justice.

14. What is the second way by which rulers and their workers become rebels?

15. Give an example of a ruler who joined forces with evil men or failed to bring evil men to justice.

16. Give an example of a government worker who joined forces with evil men or who failed to bring evil men to justice.

ANSWERS

1. To free his people from every kind of slavery.
2. The one who strengthens his people's freedom.

3. He is his servant.
4. To obey his master.
5. (a) To do good. (b) To bring punishment on the wrongdoer.
6. (a) They consider themselves to be masters instead of the Lord's servants. (b) Instead of doing good to their people, they treat them as a means to fill their own pockets, to do good to themselves. (c) Instead of punishing wrongdoers, they join forces with them.
7. God gives it.
8. Sometimes rulers do this.
9. To protect that freedom.
10. They do not have the authority either to reduce or to increase it. Their responsibility is only to protect freedom.
11. (a) and (b) You have your answers.
12. To obey the Lord.
13. When they give themselves more power than God has granted them.
14. When they join forces with wrongdoers, or fail to bring them to justice.
15. You have your answer.
16. You have your answer.

DISCUSSION

Today we have studied the basis of man's freedom, but we have not yet talked about what is included in that freedom. In your local church do you Christians discuss about the power which the rulers and government workers have? There will be no shortage of rulers and government workers who break God's laws as they exercise their authority in your area. What do you do about these people in your church?

WEEK 9: THE RIGHT OF MAN

DAY 2: AN EXPLANATION OF MAN'S RIGHTS

Yesterday we talked about rulers and our freedom. We do not get our freedom from them, but from God. The responsibility of rulers is to guarantee our freedom, and not to allow anyone to take it from us, whoever he may be. But what is this freedom? That is our subject for today.

The Bible contains a lot of teaching about the subject of freedom. We won't look up all the verses, only those which concern us most. The basis of our freedom is found in the following verse:

John 1:12 - Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

1. According to this verse what kind of freedom or right was given?

No one has the power to prevent a person from becoming a child of God, that is becoming a Christian, a person who obeys and serves God. This is a very important right. In certain places in our country there are rulers and their workers who are trying to prevent people from becoming children of God or Christians.

2. If you know an example of someone who prevented people from having this kind of freedom, write it down here.

Yes, there are many examples of this. Some states pay the salaries of those who teach a certain religion, but they refuse to pay the salaries of those who teach the Christian religion in schools. They also try to prevent Christians from obtaining a plot of land on which to build their church. In some places the local people are neglected because they are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than of a different religion. Some Christians can't get a particular position or job unless they first give up their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. These are all examples of how those in authority hinder a man's freedom.

In Week 7, Day 3 and Day 4 we explained the Lord's plan concerning the right of everyone to a farm and a house. The Lord created the world for everyone. He did not put some people in it to go on accumulating farms and houses for themselves until they caused the poor to lack a place to farm and somewhere to sleep. This is an important right which we must guard in these days.

3. Briefly write down the right just mentioned above.

There is still another right or freedom.

1 Corinthians 9:9 For it is written in the law of Moses "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."

Read and study Deuteronomy 25:4 and 1 Timothy 5:18.

Luke 10:7 the worker deserves his wages.

Leviticus 19:13 Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight.

4. What right are these verses talking about?

The person who hires workers to do a job for him, but then doesn't pay them their wages, suppresses the workers' rights. The Bible lists certain rights in the Ten Commandments in Exodus chapter 20. Perhaps one might say that these are laws and don't affect our rights. Yes, that's true, but we must not forget the purpose of these laws which was to protect everyone's rights. Let's read about some of them.

Exodus 20:10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates.

5. What freedom or right is mentioned in this commandment?

6. Who does this right affect? Does it affect you alone?

This right is a very good one because if a person does not get the chance to rest he will become too tired. Notice also how this right includes the servants and the animals not just the master of the house.

Exodus 20:12 Honour your father and your mother

7. Explain what kind of right is contained in this commandment.

8. Why was this commandment given?

This is a very serious commandment. If you do not honour your parents or those who bring you up, you will not obey them. Instead you will become a 'good-for-nothing' whom nobody wants. No one will help you. You will not bring up your children properly and you yourself will be cast off by them when you are old. The person who keeps this commandment will be accepted in the community and people will help him. That is to say, he will enjoy his right.

Exodus 20:13 You shall not murder.

9. Explain what kind of right is contained in this commandment.

This is the right to life. No one has the power to kill you, not even rulers, unless they have a good reason. For example, if you have killed someone. A person's life belongs to the Lord, not to men. This commandment doesn't only forbid murder, it forbids abortion as well. Abortion is the removal of a baby from the womb before it's time to be born. This is

allowed only when there is special reason. For example if the health of the mother is seriously endangered.

10. As well as murder, what else does this commandment forbid?

This commandment is full of meaning for us today. At present in Nigeria, there are rulers and politicians who want to give women the right to abortion, even when there is no serious reason for it.

Exodus 20:14 *You shall not commit adultery.*

This commandment protects marriage and family life. If a person commits adultery regularly, their marriage soon dies and their family life is ruined as a result of the unfaithfulness between the husband and his wife.

11. What does this commandment protect?

Exodus 20:15 *You shall not steal.*

This commandment protects all you own, your home and farm, in fact everything you possess. This commandment also concerns the subject of accepting bribes and the other crooked practices which go on in government and church areas. The person who takes government property is stealing. So this commandment holds the answer to every kind of corruption. It forbids them all!

12. What does this commandment protect?

Exodus 20:16 *You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.*

This commandment forbids lying, such as false witness and damaging a person's reputation. Everyone has a reputation which should be protected. If a person's reputation is damaged, he loses respect and everyone despises him. But that person whose reputation was damaged or who was the object of false testimony was born in the image of God. God himself respected him. So in no way can it be right to damage the reputation of someone who God respects. What do the politicians do about this?

13. What does this commandment protect?

In some ways today we have rights which the people who lived in Bible times didn't have. In Bible times slavery was not forbidden. In the history of the church for many years slaves were kept in Africa, Europe and America. It is only in the last 120-130 years that Christians have come to

reject slavery. Why is this? Do you remember the promise which Jesus Christ made regarding how the Holy Spirit would guide us?

14. Why do Christians today reject slavery even though it's not forbidden in the Bible?

Today we have studied what the Bible says about certain rights or freedoms. We have not looked at all of them yet. God willing, tomorrow, we shall continue with this study.

ANSWERS

1. The right to become children of God.
2. You have your answer.
3. The right to a house and farm.
4. If someone works for you, it is his right that you pay him his wages.
5. The right to a day of rest.
6. It affects everyone, including servants and animals.
7. It is your right to honour those who gave you birth and brought you up.
8. It was given so that you would obey them when you were a child; because they knew what was right more than you did. Then, when they are old you will provide for them. If you don't do that for them, you own children will not do that for you. You will suffer and not have any peace of mind.
9. The right to life. Murder is forbidden.
10. It also forbids abortion, i.e. the forced removal of a baby from the womb before it is borne. (Except for special reasons.)
11. It protects marriage and family-life.
12. It protects all your possessions. It also forbids the misuse of government property.
13. A person's good name or reputation.
14. Because the Holy Spirit has taught Christians that to make a man one's slave is to take away his rights.

DISCUSSION

Examine how people's rights are upheld in your town or village. Are they upheld or are some of them suppressed? It's possible that some of them are suppressed in the church. Discuss this subject thoughtfully.

WEEK 9: THE RIGHT OF MAN

DAY 3: THE RIGHT OF MAN ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTION OF NIGERIA

Today we continue with the study of man's freedom. Yesterday we saw how the Bible teaches us about certain rights which the government or rulers have no authority to take away from us since the Lord himself established them. The responsibility of rulers is simply to protect these rights.

1. Who established the rights we are talking about?

2. What is the responsibility of rulers in relation to these rights?

There are other rights to be found in the Bible, but if we study them all we won't finish, since it would take a lot of reading and research. So instead we shall look at what some people say about man's freedom. The United Nations Organisation has made a statement concerning man's rights which has been accepted by most countries in the world, including Nigeria. This statement forms the basis of a charter in the Constitution of Nigeria. In this lesson we want to summarise these rights in order that Christians will know what they are and how to use them. Then everyone will have complete freedom.

3. Write down the name of the big world organisation which has set out a statement regarding the rights of man.

4. Write down the name of the charter which here in Nigeria talks about the rights of man.

The subject of man's rights is found in chapter 4 of the Nigerian Constitution, pages 30 - 42. The rights which are mentioned in these decrees are important ones which Christians ought to observe. So let us summarise them now.

The first right is the right to life (section 30). No one has the right to take away your life, unless you have committed an offence for which the penalty is death.

5. What is the first right according to these decrees?

6. What does this right prevent?

7. Is this right in the Bible?

The second right (section 31) is a very important one. According to this right everyone is to recognise the value of his neighbour. If you recognise the value of your neighbour you won't cause him great suffering, or make him your slave or force him to work for you against his will. But this right doesn't prevent a chief from calling his people together to work on a public project.

8. Why do we want everyone to recognise the value of his neighbour?

The third right (section 32) is the prevention of detention; that is no one has the authority to put someone in prison unless there is a valid reason. These reasons are stated in the decree. For example, a policeman or a judge or a governor or someone may put a person in prison. If they don't have a valid reason for doing this; that is to say one of the reasons already stated in the decree, then they are guilty of an offence. If a mistake of this kind has been made, the person imprisoned must be set free immediately. If this is not done the official responsible will be punished.

9. Summarise this decree.

This decree is full of meaning. It shows that neither a chief nor a governor neither the Head of State himself nor a policeman have the right to put you in prison if you have not committed an offence. If you have committed an offence, the case against you must be heard before you can be convicted. If it was not for this decree, any person in authority could easily throw someone they didn't like into prison. But now that's not possible.

10. Even if the Head of State doesn't like you, can he throw you into prison? Explain your answer.

There are two important issues connected with this right which everyone ought to know about.

(a) If you are imprisoned, the reason for it must be explained to you in writing within 24 hours, once you know the reason for your arrest you will be able to seek for someone to aid you. If you have been arrested without an adequate reason, then you can show the written evidence which you have in your hand. With this written statement you can bring a charge against the person who imprisoned you.

(b) If you have been imprisoned without an adequate reason, the person who had you imprisoned must apologise to you publicly. It will be very

embarrassing for him, an important person seeking your forgiveness with everyone listening! This is indeed a good arrangement.

11. Briefly write down these two important issues.

- (a) _____
(b) _____

The fourth right (section 33) in the charter is this; if someone brings a charge against you, you will not be judged until the case has been thoroughly and fairly investigated. Your trial must not be held in secret, but publicly. Also you must be given adequate time to answer the charge against you.

12. Summarise the fourth right.

The fifth right (section 34) is this; no one has the authority to open your letter or to discuss your private family matters, nor to listen to your telephone calls except the person whom you choose.

13. Summarise this fifth right.

The sixth right (section 35) is the freedom of religion. That is, everyone has the right to follow the religion which he prefers. He also has the right to change his religion if he wants to. This right concerns the matter of teaching religion in schools. The government should not support the teaching of one religion and reject another.

14. Summarise the sixth right.

In this right there is a very important statement, that is that everyone has the freedom to witness to his religious beliefs without being opposed.

15. Who has the authority to prevent you from preaching the gospel.

But notice how this decree doesn't mention the way in which you may witness. There are many ways of witnessing, it doesn't have to be in the open. Today we've explained half of the rights people have in Nigeria. God willing, tomorrow, we shall study the rest of them.

ANSWERS

1. God established them.
2. To protect them and not to reduce them.

3. The United Nations Organisation.

4. The Nigerian Constitution.

5. The right to life.

6. Murder.

7. Yes.

8. So that we will not make anyone a slave or force him to work for us.

9. It is forbidden to imprison anyone without a good reason, that is a reason mentioned in the decree.

10. No, the law forbids it.

11. (a) Within twenty four hours you must be told the reason, in writing, why you have been arrested. (b) If someone has imprisoned you without adequate reason, he must apologise to you publicly.

12. If someone brings a charge against you, you cannot be convicted unless the court has investigated the matter carefully and fairly. Also, the trial must be conducted publicly, not in secret.

13. It protects everyone's right to privacy in what they say and in what they write in letters.

14. Everyone may follow the religion of his choice.

15. No one has the authority to do this.

DISCUSSION

1. Examine these six decrees. Do any of them contradict the teaching of the Bible, or are they in agreement with it? Explain your answers.

2. Is death penalty an appropriate punishment in New Testament perspective?

WEEK 9: THE RIGHTS OF MAN

DAY 4: THE RIGHTS OF MAN ACCORDING TO THE NIGERIAN CONSTITUTION

Today we will continue looking at the Nigerian Constitution from the place where we left it yesterday. It concerns the rights of man as we find them in the Constitution. We have completed six decrees and six remain.

The seventh right (section 36) is freedom of speech. The freedom to express your opinion by word of mouth, or by writing in a newspaper or book. Every person, whoever they are, has this right not just important people. This right does not apply to those government workers who know the government's secrets. They don't have the right to reveal the country's

secrets, nor do they have the right to give their opinion on political matters. But everyone else has complete freedom to express their opinions.



Figure 8: Making decisions together.

1. Summarise this seventh right (apart from the way it affects certain government workers).

2. In what way does this right not apply to certain government workers?

3. Why do you think government workers are prevented from expressing their opinions about political matters?

The main reason is that a worker who supports one political party will find it difficult to meet the needs of the whole community where political views may be different.

The eighth right (section 37) is the freedom to establish unions of different kinds, including political parties, and the freedom to become a member of one of these unions. That is, anyone can establish a union together with others in order to meet their needs; however it must not be for a destructive purpose. You do not require the permission of those in authority in order to set up this kind of union or club.

4. Summarise the eighth right.

The ninth right (section 38) is divided into four parts. Every Nigerian citizen has the right to travel wherever he wants to in the whole country. All Nigerians have the right to live wherever they want in the country. Also no Nigerian can be expelled from the country of his birth or be prevented from returning to it.

5. Summarise the ninth right.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

The tenth right (section 39) concerns showing discrimination, (i.e. treating people differently). This decree forbids showing discrimination against a person because of their tribe or religion or on account of their sex or political views. This means that if a person refuses to employ you on account of your religion, or tribe or sex or political views he commits an offence. If anyone shows this kind of discrimination against you, you can take him to court.

6. Summarise the meaning of this right.

The eleventh right (section 40) forbids someone from driving out a person from his home or farm in order to set up a building project, unless they first pay the person compensation. For example, suppose the government wants to build a dam. This means that the local people will have to leave the area and move to another place. The decree allows for this but it states that the local people who have to move must be paid compensation immediately or else have a new place provided for them.

7. Summarise the eleventh right.

The twelfth right (section 41). We will not study this right now as it is unlikely to concern any of us who are reading this book. But the thirteenth right (sections 1 and 2 are very important). The decree says that if anyone suppresses one of these rights a charge can be brought against him in the state court. It's possible that you have not got the money to pay a lawyer to help you with your case. Well, the Law Assembly of Nigeria has prepared a fund to help those who want to bring a charge but don't have enough money to do so.

8. Summarise the thirteenth right.

9. If you don't have enough money, what should you do?

So now we have completed the list of rights which Christians and all the citizens of Nigeria possess. Freedom is a good thing. As a result we should not despise or ignore it. The character of governments worldwide is to reduce the freedom which their people have, especially if the people don't stand up for it. So let us as Christians guard our freedom. We should be grateful for the freedom which we enjoy, since we have more freedom here in this country than some people have in other countries. In these times we tend to run down ourselves and our country, but let's remember that we have more freedom than people in many other countries have. If we do not stand up for our rights and guard them, after a little while we'll see our freedom being decreased.

10. Why do we need to guard our freedom?

11. Why should we be grateful for the kind of freedom we have in Nigeria?

Often government workers suppress the rights of the community, especially those of the ordinary people. They are not afraid to act in this way because they know no one will take them to court.

12. What in your opinion has brought this about?

There are many reasons for this, but the main one is that it is very unlikely that an ordinary person would try and take this kind of government worker to court because he is afraid of him and uncertain of how to handle the situation.

13. Summarise the reasons why the ordinary people don't usually want to take their oppressors to court.

(a) _____

(b) _____

14. Can you remember if those in authority have ever oppressed your people and your people did nothing about it? Write about it briefly.

15. Can you remember if those in authority have ever oppressed your people and your people did something about it? Write about it briefly.

In our studies these past days we have seen how rulers need to obey two kinds of laws.

16. Write down the two kinds of laws.

(a) _____

(b) _____

They need to obey the Lord and the laws of their country. Rulers who fail to obey the Lord and the laws of their country will not see their rule established. The people of that country will not live in peace and happiness. There will be unrest instead in their country.

ANSWERS

1. The right to express your opinion.
2. They do not have the right to reveal state secrets or to give their political opinions.
3. Because if they show that they are supporting one particular political party, it will be difficult for them to work for the government and to meet everyone's needs without showing favouritism.
4. Anyone has the right to join with others to form a union or group for a

certain purpose.

5. (a) Every Nigerian citizen can go anywhere he wants in Nigeria.
 (b) Every Nigerian citizen can live anywhere he wants in Nigeria.
 (c) No Nigerian can be expelled from Nigeria.
 (d) No Nigerian can be refused entry into Nigeria.
6. Showing discrimination between people is forbidden.
7. It is forbidden for anyone to drive a person from his home or farm without immediate compensation.
8. If anyone prevents you from having one of these rights, you can take him to the state court.
9. The Law Assembly has arranged for funds to be made available for those who want to bring a charge but do not have enough money to do so.
10. Because it is the practice of some governments to gradually reduce their people's freedom.
11. Because we have more freedom than do the people of some other countries.
12. You have your answers.
13. (a) Fear. (b) They do not know what they can do.
14. You have your answer
15. You have your answer
16. (a) The laws of God. (b) The laws of our country.

DISCUSSION

1. How can we, the ordinary people, protect our freedom?
2. What do we do if someone suppresses our freedom?

WEEK 9: THE RIGHTS OF MAN

DAY 5: OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE

A few days earlier we were studying rulers and discussing how they should obey the laws of the Lord as well as the laws of the country. But the rulers are not the only ones who should obey. Today we shall discuss how the people should obey their rulers.

Romans 13:1-7 - Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted. For he (the one in authority) is God's servant Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's

servants Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.

Read and study also Titus 3:1-2 and 1 Peter 2:13-17.

1. According to these verses what duty do the people owe their rulers?

2. What are the reasons for obeying them? Write down two here.

(a) _____

(b) _____

It's true. Although in these days we complain and grumble about some of the things the government does, nevertheless if we consider how they are building roads, hospitals and schools we should not run them down or disrespect them. Many government workers in Nigeria are trying to improve the lot of the people. So we should not forget about their efforts.

3. Write down three things which the government has done for your area.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

If you can't remember three things ask your friends. There is still another duty which people owe to their rulers.

Read and study 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

4. According to these verses what should the people do for the king?

5. Why should they pray for him?

They are asked to pray for their rulers so that they may establish a peaceful environment for everyone. Unrest doesn't help anyone. It is better for a person to get on with the job he has than to interfere in other peoples rights and duties.

Before we continue, you ought to understand that we as Christians have a big task before us in relation to the government; that is to obey them and to pray for them. By doing this we will help them to meet the needs of all the community and improve the everyday life of people.

6. Before we continue, briefly write down the important duties which as Christians we owe to our rulers.

(a) _____

(b) _____

There is still another reason why we should keep on praying for rulers. The reason is on account of the many temptations which face them in their work. The chance to deceive or to increase their power as well as other temptations which surround them continually. No one can stand firm unless there are those praying for him. A ruler needs wisdom and love. Man himself is not naturally wise or loving. A man who doesn't know God is a fool. His heart is full of all kinds of evil. Because of this we must pray for them.

7. We have just explained two more reasons why we ought to pray for rulers.

(a) _____

(b) _____

We are not just told to obey and pray for Christian rulers alone but for all governments be they Christian or Muslim or Traditional Religionist. The verses which teach us about obeying rulers were written when the Romans were in power in the places where Paul and the other apostles were preaching the Gospel. The Romans were heathen not Christian. Nevertheless the Christians were taught that it was right to obey and pray for them. So whether those ruling us in Nigeria are Christians or followers of a different religion, the Bible says that we must obey and pray for them.

8. It is right that as Christians we obey and pray for our rulers but does this only apply to Christian rulers?

Brothers and sisters have you really understood this teaching about obedience and prayer? No Christian would deny the necessity of these important duties. But here are some stories in the Bible which teach something else.

Remember the command which Pharaoh gave to the midwives in Exodus 1:15-16. They were told to kill all the baby boys born to the Israelites.

Read and study Exodus 1:17.

9. Why did the midwives not obey Pharaoh?

These midwives knew that what they had been commanded to do was not God's will. So because they feared God, they decided not to obey the King.

The King asked them why they had disobeyed. They made the excuse that the Israelite women gave birth very quickly, before the midwives had arrived.

10. Was this the correct answer?

Their answer was not true, but notice what is written about them.

Read and study Exodus 1:20-21.

11. Was God angry with them for not telling the truth?

So we see here how those who feared God did not obey the King because of their faith in God. Their fear of God was the reason for their lack of obedience. Pharaoh wanted them to sin by killing the baby boys which was not God's will. They were faced with two choices: if they obeyed the one then they would not obey the other. They chose to obey the Lord. They made the right choice.

In the book of Daniel there are two stories about how the people of God refused to obey the King. These are found in Daniel chapter 3 and 6. The King wanted everyone to worship him, they refused to do this on two occasions. In both cases the Lord delivered them from the punishment which they were given; first from the fire and secondly from the lions den.

12. Why did the Lord deliver them, seeing that they had disobeyed the king?

The reason in this story is exactly the same as that of the midwives in Exodus chapter 1. The king wanted them to disobey the Lord. In this kind of situation the children of God must disobey their rulers because obedience to God is compulsory. Where our duty to obey is divided like this, we must choose to obey God.

There is also the story of Moses. He rebelled against the king. If you read and study the summary of his life in Hebrews 11:23-28 you will see how much he is praised. Why is this? It is because he freed the Israelites from their slavery in the land of Egypt. The Lord asked that they be allowed to go but the king refused. Moses did not obey the king at all but instead he answered the Lord's call to work for the freedom of the people.

13. Why did Moses rebel against the king?

It was so that Moses could free the children of Israel from slavery. In brief we have seen two reasons why God's people disobeyed rulers in the Lord's name.

14. Write down the two reasons here.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____

So, for the followers of God it's not always right to obey rulers. Sometimes they must disobey rulers. This is not because they are rebellious, but because they must obey the Lord.

ANSWERS

1. To obey them.
2. (a) Because God has established them. (b) Because the purpose of their work is to improve things for the people.
3. (a), (b) and (c) You have your answers.
4. Pray for them.
5. In order to live peacefully.
6. (a) To obey them. (b) To pray for them.
7. (a) Because of the temptations they face. (b) Because human beings often fail, they lack wisdom and love.
8. No, it applies whether they are Christians, Muslims or of some other religion.
9. Because they feared God.
10. No.
11. No, he was kind to them.
12. Because the king wanted them to disobey the Lord.
13. In order to set his people free.
14. (a) When to obey the king would have meant disobeying the Lord.
(b) When rulers were oppressing the people.

DISCUSSION

Do you know of any Nigerian who has disobeyed the authorities because of his fear of God? Briefly tell his story. What did he do, and what happened to him as a result of his disobedience?

WEEK 10: OPPRESSION

DAY 1: BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT OPPRESSION

Recently we have been talking a lot about the subject of obedience. We saw how the Bible teaches that rulers ought to obey the Lord. He has established various laws so that they will rule justly and improve the lot of their people. We have also learnt that Christians have a responsibility to obey our rulers since they are God's servants, ruling in his name.

1. The subject of obedience and rulers has two parts to it. Summarise them here.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____

Nevertheless there are occasions when it is not right to obey them, as we learnt in yesterday's lesson.

2. Summarise the two reasons why a Christian should sometimes not obey the ruler.

- (a) _____
- (b) _____

We should be grateful for the big Christian associations such as Tarayar Ekklesiyoyin Krista a Nigeria (TEKAN), the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). They protect our freedom of religion. Any time that the Federal Government or one of the state governments plan or cunningly devise a way to suppress the freedom which Christians have according to the constitution; then these associations speak up strongly against it. They also go straight to the Governor or Head of State to get the problem resolved. We should be grateful for this, it is a very important job.

3. Explain the way in which the big Christian Associations help all Christians.

There is something else about which we must speak openly. There is a certain kind of protection which the Church ought to provide for the ordinary people. But it's very unlikely that it happens some time. A little while ago a certain leader said that if a pastor helped people to stand up

and reject the oppression they were suffering, he would be treated as a trouble maker by the elders of the church. Why is this so?

4. What kind of protection does the church fail to provide?

5. According to your opinion, why does the church fail to protect the ordinary people?

Today we will learn one of the reasons. It is that the church appears to have forgotten one part of the Bible and has not taught it to us. Christians have become like blind men when it comes to the Bible's teaching on oppression. This is one of the reasons why the church has not fully protected the rights of the ordinary people.

Let's be very careful here. We are not saying that the church doesn't help the ordinary person. It helps them in many ways, like providing hospitals, dispensaries and schools. Preaching the Gospel is a great help too. It is just in one case that the church fails. If we want to understand how it fails we need to go back to the teaching of the Bible.

What does the Bible say about oppression?

This is what we are going to discuss now. We won't be able to deal with all the verses which talk about oppression, just a few. If you want to find them all you will need to buy the book called 'Living in God's World', published by the Institute of Church and Society.

6. Write down the title of the book which contains most of the Bible verses about oppression.

Remember what we learnt in Week 5, Days 2 and 3 about accepting bribes.

7. What is the main reason why the Lord rejects the acceptance of bribes?

The main reason is that bribery is a form of oppression. It suppresses a man's freedom and prevents a man from having his rights according to the constitution of the country. Remember also what we learnt in Week 7, Days 3 and 4 regarding the business of selling houses and farms.

8. Why did the Lord forbid the wealthy from acquiring lots of houses and farms for themselves?

We haven't finished our revision yet. Think about the principles of the kingdom of God which we learnt about in week 3.

9. What does a man do if he doesn't keep the first principle?

10. What does a man do if he doesn't keep the second principle?

We will not study all the principles of the kingdom of God again, but if you look at them carefully you will see how they all concern oppression. They all oppose oppression as well. Oppression is one of the main things which the Lord rejects in his kingdom. The Bible teaches us that if a person is a member of God's kingdom, he must reject oppression.

Mathew 6:33 - But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Righteousness is the opposite of oppression. Let us look at some more verses.

Proverbs 14:31 - He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker

Read and study Proverbs 17:5.

11. When someone oppresses the poor what else is he doing?

Proverbs 28:27 - He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them (the poor) receives many curses.

12. What does the person who closes his eyes to the poor receive?

Deuteronomy 27:19 - "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow."

The alien, the fatherless and the widow represent all the ordinary people in the Old Testament.

13. What happens to the man who cheats the ordinary people?

Notice the difference between the teaching of Deuteronomy 27:19 and Proverbs 28:27. In Proverbs 28:27 the people will curse him.

14. But according to Deuteronomy 27:19 who will curse him?

God curses every person who oppresses the poor! These are very strong words. This kind of person has no share in the Lord Jesus Christ and there is no salvation for him unless he repents. This curse also extends to those who accept bribes. These words apply to the man who drives ordinary people from their homes or seizes their farms. We are talking about a CURSE here! Today we don't worry very much about what these verses say but the Lord has not changed his Word.

ANSWERS

1. (a) Rulers should obey God. (b) Christians should obey their rulers.
2. Christians should not obey their rulers: (a) if the rulers want them to disobey the Lord. (b) if the rulers are oppressing the ordinary people.
3. They guard our freedom of religion.
4. Protection of the ordinary people from oppression.
5. Because the church has forgotten what the Bible teaches about oppression.
6. 'Living in God's World.'
7. It is because accepting bribes is a form of oppression.
8. To prevent the oppression of the ordinary people.
9. He does not love his neighbour; he just treats him as the means to make himself rich. That is oppression.
10. He sees only his own worth, not that of his neighbour. So he oppresses him.
11. He shows contempt for the Lord. 12. He receives many curses.
13. He is cursed. 14. God will.

Have you ever heard a Christian speak out openly like this about important people who were oppressing the ordinary people? What should the church do about the oppressors?

WEEK 10: OPPRESSION

DAY 2: BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT OPPRESSION

Yesterday we started to discuss the Bible's teaching about the subject of oppression. Today we will continue with this study in order to understand how unpleasant it is to the Lord. We have seen how both the Lord and the people curse those who practice oppression.

Read and study Isaiah 3:14-15.

Notice how the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, accuses the leaders in everyone's hearing, not in secret.

1. What had the leaders done?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____

To the Lord these people are thieves and oppressors! Now to be frank, today, there is more than one kind of thief about. There are those who break into homes at night in order to steal. If they are caught they are put in prison. But there is another kind of thief which is more difficult to catch because they have joined forces with those who would arrest and judge them. Theft is not just committed by armed robbers. That is the kind of theft government workers commit. The Lord has not said a lot about armed robbers but he has spoken very seriously against those who receive stolen goods.

Read and study Isaiah 1:23.

2. Which kind of thieves does the Lord speak about the most, armed robbers or those who steal people's goods by other means?

3. What does the prophet Isaiah call these rulers?

4. What did these rulers fail to do?

Isaiah 10:1-3 - *Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey What will you do on the day of reckoning?*

In Week 9, Day 2 we read about some of the rights which God gave to man. These rights are our inheritance and God has not given leaders the power to suppress them. But in this verse we see how the leaders were trying to suppress the rights of the people.

5. How were the leaders suppressing the people's right?

6. Can you give an example of this kind of law?

Here's an example. If a man needs something from the government, it is very difficult to get it, unless he goes to the headquarters a long way away in the state capital. When he gets there he has to wait several days before his need is met. This type of journey is very expensive for the ordinary man and so it is a way of oppression to ordinary people. The arrangement was made to help the wealthy officials in the city, not the ordinary people.

Read and study Ezekiel 45:9.

7. What had the princes done?

Yes, they had driven the people from their homes and farms just as King Ahab did to Naboth. Remember too the story in Nehemiah chapter 5.

8. What kind of rule must they give up?

Read and study Daniel 4:27.

We as Christians find it difficult to accuse those in authority over us. But look at what Daniel said.

9. What does he want the King to do?

The prophet Amos spoke a lot about this subject. For example, Read and study these verses; Amos 2:4-6, 4:1-2, 5:11-15, 6:1-7, 8:4-7.

These people were totally corrupt. They had no compassion left in them.

10. What will the Lord never do?

Read and study James 5:1-4.

Finally, let us listen to what the Lord Jesus said about the riches of those who oppress others.

Luke 6:24-25 - *"But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep."*

In these verses Jesus is talking about the rich who oppress others, not about all rich people. We have already seen that riches as such are not evil (Week 4, Day 4).

11. Jesus said, 'Woe to you' three times. Write down the three reasons why.

- (a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____

We have only been able to look at a few verses but notice how serious these words are. They were not written by worthless men or trouble makers but by the prophets of the Lord God. They were men who feared God who wrote these verses, including our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. You will find other verses on this subject in the book mentioned yesterday called "Living in God's World."

ANSWERS

1. (a) They had plundered vineyards. (b) They had taken things from the poor.
2. Rulers who steal by other means; or take stolen goods.

3. Rebels and companions of thieves.
4. They do not defend the cause of the poor.
5. By making unjust laws and issuing oppressive decrees.
6. You have your answer. 7. They had been violent, oppressive and had dispossessed the people.
8. Rule of oppression and illegal collection of farmland
9. To do what is right and to show kindness to the oppressed.
10. He will never forget anything they have done.
11. (a) You have already received your comfort. (b) You will go hungry.
(c) You will mourn and weep.

DISCUSSION

Do you see any difference between what the Bible teaches about the subject of oppression and what the church of today teaches about it? Explain the reason for the difference.

WEEK 10: OPPRESSION

DAY 3: THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS AND PRETENDERS

There is only one Gospel. All people great and small have the same sickness in their hearts that is sin. They all have the same need; to find salvation through Jesus Christ. The path they follow is the same regarding what is right and what is wrong. Never the less if you read the Bible you will see how the Bible takes the side of the ordinary people more often than that of the rich. It supports the ordinary people with love and sympathy, but it warns the rich and reproves them. It contains laws which protect the rights of people.

1. According to the teaching of the Bible, what is the difference in the status of the ordinary people and the wealthy before God?

Yes, their status is the same before God.

2. How does the Bible treat the ordinary people and the wealthy?

The Lord does not reject the wealthy, so long as they are helping the ordinary people. But he rejects those who oppress others and tells them they will not succeed.

Before we as Christians, do something to prevent oppression, we must recognise that not all who oppress others are outside the Church. Some are in the Christian fellowship. It's even possible to find them or their friends amongst church leaders. It has been like this since Old Testament times.

Ezekiel 22:25-28 - her princes devour people, take treasures and precious things..... They say, This is what the Sovereign Lord says when the Lord has not spoken.

Ezekiel 22: 26 - Her priests do violence to my law, and profane my holy things,

Read and study also 1 Samuel 2:12-17; 1 Samuel 8:1-3.

3. What were these leaders doing in Old Testament times?

(a) The princes: _____

(b) The prophets: _____

(c) The priests: _____

In New Testament times also the religious leaders, whom God himself had chosen, the Pharisees and teachers of the law, were guilty of oppression and hypocrisy. Listen to what the Lord Jesus said.

Read and study Luke 11:39, 42 and Luke 12:1.

The Pharisees were among the religious leaders of the Jews.

4. What did Jesus say about these leaders?

Notice how the true prophets of the Old Testament and our Saviour himself revealed to the people what the religious leaders were really doing.

5. In your opinion, why did Jesus say this publicly rather than in private?

Without any doubt Jesus wanted the people to know what their leaders were really like. Christ knew their motives, and that they didn't intend to change.

He didn't want the ordinary people to remain in confusion. If they were to be set free, then they must know what the leaders who oppressed them were really doing. The ordinary people must know the truth.

Most church leaders are trustworthy people who don't oppress others, but try to help the community. Nevertheless we don't lack some forms of oppression in the church.

6. Do you know of any type of oppression practiced by your church? Briefly explain it here.

It's possible that in some places, where money is being raised for the church, that the leaders press the ordinary members to keep on giving more and more money, without telling them how it is being used or how much has been paid into the bank. This story is an example of the kind of oppression which occurs in the church in different places.

7. If this sort of thing is happening and a member of the church tries to uncover what is going on, how is he regarded by the leaders?

It's possible he will be regarded as a trouble maker and be disciplined. This is what happened to the prophets in their days. Even the Lord Jesus was put to death for speaking the truth. So if someone sees this kind of conspiracy (illegal, secret planning) going on, he should not be afraid to uncover what the pretenders are doing. He should be bold and speak out as did the prophets and also our Saviour.

8. If you see this kind of oppression in the church, what should you do?

Why do we keep on talking about oppression in the church in this way? It's not because the church is full of conspiracy, but rather that if we are going to fight oppression in the world, we must first begin at home, that is the church. If we fight against oppression in the world but ignore it in the church, we are hypocrites, just like the Pharisees!

9. Why do we need to put things right in the church?

But most oppression is committed by those outside the church, not church members. What should we do about it? In the world there are two kinds of

people who are guilty of oppression: Those who don't follow Jesus Christ and normal Christians.

10. What should Christians do about those who call themselves Christians but who oppress the ordinary people?

We should treat them the same as we treat other believers who fall into sin, in accordance with the teaching of the following passage.

Read and study Matthew 18:15-17.

11. How should we treat oppressors?

But honestly speaking, we as Christians, find it difficult to follow this course of action. In some churches ordinary people are disciplined for having two wives or for committing adultery. But what about the important people who are oppressing others, are they disciplined? Hardly!

12. In your opinion, why are ordinary people disciplined but important people who oppress others are not?

There are many reasons why. But without doubt, one reason is fear. Sometimes Christians are not very brave and are full of fear. The second reason is that we want these important people to give us money, so we don't ask them how they acquired their wealth. The third reason is that these important people who oppress others and our church leaders are old school friends. There are probably other reasons too.

13. Summarise the three reasons given above. If you know another reason write that down as well.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

Instead of disciplining them they are given a place of honour whenever the church has a big gathering. They sit at the front so that everyone can see how important they are. They are seen to be supporting the church and the

church is supporting them!. But let's be careful here. The ordinary people are not fools; they see and hear what is going on. On the day when the Pope from Rome visited Kaduna, there were no ordinary people sitting beside him, only the important people. When the Head of the Anglican Church from England visited Nigeria, it was the same, only important people were close to him. We are not saying that all important people are oppressors, but some certainly are. So we see the church honouring various important people without investigating what sort of life style they lead. There was a man who became a state governor and after only four years in the job he owned four or five houses, some here in Nigeria and others overseas.

14. In your opinion did he obtain his wealth honestly?

Nevertheless we never heard that the church was investigating the way he lived or that it disciplined him.

15. What is the difference between the prophets, the Lord Jesus, the apostle James and Christians today?

Take note of this! If we say that they should be disciplined we must not forget that the most effective form of discipline is through teaching and preaching. After they have taken the Lord's Supper or given a gift, they should not refuse to put things right in the way they live.

16. What is the best way to discipline someone?

The Lord Jesus said that after every way had been tried, the person should be treated as a pagan or tax collector. That means like a person who doesn't know God. His name should be removed from the list of church members. He is cursed.

There is still something else to note. We don't want the laws of our country to be broken. We want these important people who oppress, to obey the laws which they themselves have passed.

17. In putting things right, are we breaking our country's laws?

Finally, let us be clear about the aim of this lesson. We are not rejecting the oppressors, we want to help them. If we stop them from oppressing others or uncover their wrong motives we are helping them and showing them love. If they themselves understand this aim they will thank us because in ceasing to oppress others they will find peace.

18. How can uncovering the wrong motives of oppressors help them?

ANSWERS

1. There is no difference, they are all sinners. They all need salvation. What they may do and what they may not do is the same for all of them.
2. It supports ordinary people with love and sympathy. It warns and reproves the rich. It also states laws which protect people's rights.
3. (a) were devouring people (exploiting by killing and stealing).
(b) were speaking lies in the name of the Lord.
(c) ... were doing violence to God's laws and profaning holy things.
4. Greed and wickedness is in their hearts.
- 5 and 6. You have your answers.
7. They may very well call him a trouble maker.
8. You should uncover it publicly as Jesus and the prophets did without being afraid.
9. So as not to be a hypocrite. 10. You have your answer.
11. We should deal with them as Mathew 18:15-17 teaches us to do.
12. You have your answer.
13. (a) Fear. (b) We want money from them. (c) Church leaders and those practising oppression may be old school friends. (d) Your own reason, if you have one.
14. No.
15. They revealed what the corrupt people were doing. We just leave them to their own devices.
16. By teaching and preaching. Ultimately if necessary, by preventing the person from taking the Lord's supper or giving gifts. If he still does not listen, by removing his name from the church's list of members.
17. No, we will not be breaking the law; we want to encourage our leaders to obey the laws themselves.
18. If they stop doing those wrong things they will find peace.

DISCUSSION

1. Is there anything the church ought to do about the subject of oppression which we haven't mentioned in this lesson?
2. What should the church do about oppression at home?
3. What should the church do about oppression of women in the church?

WEEK 10: OPPRESSION

DAY 4: THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS AND THE ORDINARY PEOPLE

Yesterday we studied what the followers of Jesus should do about those who oppress others. Today we will discuss what the followers of Jesus should do for the ordinary people, those who suffer oppression. Notice how right from the start of this book we have found many verses from the Bible which support the ordinary man, protecting his freedom and rights. We also read about the rights that we as Nigerians, have in our country. Never the less most of the people are not free. They are exploited in all kinds of ways.

1. Write down two ways in which ordinary people are exploited.

(a) _____
(b) _____

There are many examples. They may be prevented from getting fertilizer, insecticides or other things which they need on their farms. They are prevented from getting certain implements unless they first give a bribe. They are driven from their farms without being paid compensation. Yes, there are many kinds of ways in which they are exploited.

2. Do you know of any ordinary person who did something about the exploitation which he was suffering? Write about it briefly.

There may be some examples where the ordinary people have resisted exploitation, but in most places they do nothing except complain about it.

The exploitation is more than they can cope with and they don't know how to handle the matter.

3. In your opinion, why don't the ordinary people do something? Give two or three reasons.

(a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____

There are various reasons. There is the fear of important people. They lack strength. They are hungry, and they lack education. There is also another big matter where we as Christians, are concerned - we are more obedient than we should be. A few days ago we learnt from the Bible that there are times when it is not right to obey those in authority. Do you remember the accounts? Since the Gospel first came, the church has taught that Christians must always obey. It did not teach us that there are times when it's not right to obey. If any Christian refused to obey he would probably be treated as a trouble-maker.

4. Briefly write down five reasons which prevent ordinary people from standing against oppression.

(a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
(d) _____
(e) _____

Yes, and we should call this kind of obedience, 'futile obedience', because it's not appropriate. The Bible has not taught us to be silent. The Nigerian Constitution also doesn't teach us to be silent. Both of them encourage us to stand up and insist upon our rights by speaking out.

Proverbs 31:8-9 - *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."*

5. This passage tells us to defend the rights of the poor. How are we to do this?

This passage shows us clearly that we are not to ignore the helpless but to defend their rights. Not to be silent, but to speak out.

Proverbs 24:11-12 - *Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?.....*

6. What does this passage tell us to do?



Figure 9: Empower the powerless.

That is, we are to try our best to rescue ordinary people from trouble. Probably some Christian leaders would say that it has nothing to do with them, since their ministry is a spiritual one rather than a worldly one.

7. According to these verses does God know their hearts?

Yes, God knows their hearts. He also knows their reasons but he does not agree with them! God wants us to help and rescue them. Saving them is the work of God not of men. Read what Mary, the mother of our Lord, said before he was born.

Read and study Luke 1:51-53.

8. In this passage Mary talks about two kinds of people. Write down who they are and briefly what she says about them.

(a) _____

(b) _____

This does not mean that the Lord Jesus doesn't love important people and rulers. It is speaking about those who oppress others. He will scatter the oppressors, but will lift up the humble and feed them. It's as if Jesus came to turn the world upside down! He came to give us our freedom! Here's what he himself says:

Luke 4:18 - *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed.*

9. What did Jesus Christ come to do for the poor, the prisoners and the oppressed?

Christ came to forgive our sins, to prepare a place for us in heaven and to establish the church. He came for other reasons too, but the basic reason underlying them all was that he came to bring freedom. Not just freedom from some, but for all rich and poor alike. In this verse the poor are especially mentioned. He says he will preach the good news of freedom to them, he will open their eyes and he will set them free. Who then is doing Jesus' work in the world today?

10. Since Jesus came to do this kind of work, who can do this work in his name today?

As Christians, we are the body of Jesus Christ in this world now. We are his temple. We have the responsibility of carrying out this important part of his work.

A few days ago we read from the letter of James chapter 5, but not as far as the following passage.

James 5:6-7 - You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you. Be patient, then brothers, until the Lord's coming

James 5:10 - Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Verse 6 is talking about oppression. Ordinary people were being condemned and even killed.

11. What did they commit?

12. Until when should they be patient?

They should be patient until the Lord Jesus returns. Yes, they will be patient but what kind of patience is the passage talking about?

13. What kind of patience does the apostle James want them to have?

14. What kind of patience did the prophets have?

Yes, but the patience the prophets had did not cause them to keep quiet or to be fearful. The prophets spoke out in the name of the Lord to all kinds of important people. They disclosed the secrets of what those people were doing for all to hear. As a result some of the prophets were killed, some were driven away and some were imprisoned. They suffered all kinds of troubles because they were trying to obtain the freedom and rights to which ordinary people were entitled. So the apostle James is talking about the kind of patience the prophets showed in suffering after they had preached the word of the Lord to those in power.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, keeping silent is not the Lord's way, neither is being fearful. The Lord has commanded us as Christians to stand up for our rightful freedom, not just for ourselves, but for the glory of the

Lord and the deliverance of ordinary people. Let us therefore rid ourselves of the futile kind of obedience and patience. Instead let's be obedient and patient in the way the prophets were.

Before we finish today's lesson we should realise that sometimes we, the ordinary people, are the cause of the oppression which we suffer. Let me explain what I mean. For example there were two villages which we shall call A and B. A man from village A and a man from village B went to work for the government. Both worked very hard at their jobs and gained good positions. One worked honestly, the other used many crooked ways to get money. As a result he was able to help his village with a hospital and a school. All his fellow villagers praised him. They were not worried about the crooked ways he had used in order to help them. But the other man from village B did not use crooked ways to get money, he worked honestly. As a result he did not have lots of money like the man from village A. He was not able to provide his people with the extra things the man from village A had done because he did not have the means.

15. In your opinion, who do you think will be more respected by the people the dishonest man or the honest man?

Yes, there's no doubt that the dishonest man will be more highly thought of by the people regardless of his crooked ways in the city. Since he hadn't cheated them, they didn't worry about whom he might have cheated. They just thanked him for the help he had brought to his home village.

What does this example show us? It shows that sometimes we, the ordinary people, are the main cause for the oppression which we suffer. Because we praise our brothers who have good positions, to do something for their home town. On most occasions, honest workers don't have the means to help their people in the way that dishonest workers do. We don't want to be cheated, but if others are cheated and we benefit, then we don't let it worry us.

If we want exploitation to cease, we, the ordinary people, should stop praising our brothers in good positions, lest we force them into dishonest ways.

16. How do we, the ordinary people, become the reason for the oppression and exploitation that occurs?

1 Peter 2:16 - *Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.* How true these words are "live as servants of God"?

How true these words are: we must live as free men. Let us guard our freedom but not as a way to do evil as some do. We may be free to do whatever we like, but we must live as God's servants in all that we do.

Brothers and sisters, let us live in freedom. Where ordinary people are being oppressed, let us help them to obtain the freedom which God has given them. It is stated in the Bible and in the National Constitution. Let us join together in the name of Jesus Christ and fight the evil doers and pretenders. If you need help, go to see those of your church who are working to improve the lot of the ordinary man, or get in touch with the Institute of Church and Society. In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit let us live as free men.

And those of you who are leaders, what about you? And you who are Christians, in government work, what about you? One day the Lord will test our work. Live as free men from today, you and all your brothers, according to what 1 Peter 2:16 teaches.

May the Lord help us to take on our responsibility. Amen.

ANSWERS

- 1, 2, 3. You have your answers.
4. (a) Fear of important people. (b) Lack of strength. (c) Hunger.
(d) Lack of education. (e) Being more obedient than they should be.
5. To speak up for those who have no help.
6. To rescue those who are in trouble.
7. God does.
8. (a) Proud, rich rulers he has brought down. (b) The humble and hungry he has lifted up.
9. To preach the good news to the poor, to free the prisoner and to release the oppressed.
10. We as Christians.
11. They had not done anything.
12. Until the Lord's coming.
13. The kind of patience that the prophets had.
14. Patience in the face of all kinds of suffering.
15. The dishonest man will be more respected because of what he had done

for his people. They are not bothered about his dishonesty since they were not the ones he cheated.

16. We keep pressing people in high positions to do something for their own village, when they do not have enough money to pay for it.

DISCUSSION

Since you know about the freedom you are entitled to, discuss together how you are being prevented from enjoying these rights, and then the way you can obtain your rights together. Notice we said **TOGETHER!** Not one by one but together. We as Christians, are united; therefore we should work together to obtain our freedom.

WEEK 10: OPPRESSION

DAY 5: REVISION

1. Is working for the government one of the jobs the Lord's people can do? Explain your answer (Week 7, Day 2)

2. Why did the Lord give us laws? (Week 7, Day 3)

3. Why did Naboth refuse to sell his farm to the King? (Week 7, Day 4)

4. Which passage in the Bible is the first to talk about the subject of politics (Week 7, Day 5)

5. What is the root meaning of the word politics 'siyasa' in Hausa? (Week 8, Day 1)

6. What is the main work of rulers? (Week 8, Day 2)

7. What kind of person ought Christians to choose as a candidate in a political election? (Week 8, Day 2)

8. How can you recognise the one whom God has chosen to be a ruler or politician? (Week 8, Day 3)

9. Why did the Lord forbid Israel from acquiring large amounts of weapons like the other nations? (Week 8, Day 4)

10. What two reasons caused the Lord to forbid the rulers from accumulating large amounts of money for themselves? (Week 8, Day 4)

(a) _____

(b) _____

11. Does the Bible act like the brakes or like the engine to rulers? Explain your answer. (Week 8, Day 5)

12. What kind of ruler can be called righteous? (Week 9, Day 1)

13. Do rulers have the authority to suppress the 'rights of man'? Explain your answer. (Week 9, Day 1)

14. When do we consider rulers to be 'rebels'? (Week 9, Day 1)

15. God gave the commandment which says 'You shall not murder'. Explain which right is found in this commandment. (Week 9, Day 2)

16. Apart from murder, what else does this commandment forbid? (Week 9, Day 2)

17. Summarise the rights which we have in our country according to the National Constitution. There are eleven of them. (Week 9, Days 3 and 4)

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

(e) _____

(f) _____

(g) _____

(h) _____

(i) _____

(j) _____

(k) _____

18. Write down two reasons why ordinary people do not usually want to take action against their oppressors. (Week 9, Day 4)

(a) _____

(b) _____

19. What are the two important things which people should do for their rulers? (Week 9, Day 5)

(a) _____

(b) _____

20. According to the Bible's teaching, when should Christians not obey their rulers? (Week 10, Day 1)

(a) _____

(b) _____

21. In what way has the church failed to protect the rights of people? (Week 10, Day 1)

22. What does the Lord say about those who oppress the ordinary people?
(Week 10, Day 2)

23. Why did the prophets rebuke the rulers? Were they trouble-makers?
(Week 10, Day 2)

24. What should we as Christians, do about our brothers who are oppressing ordinary people? (Week 10, Day 3)

25. In wanting to stop oppression, are we breaking the country's laws or God's laws? (Week 10, Day 3)

26. Summarise the five reasons which prevent ordinary people from standing against oppression. (Week 10, Day 4)

- (a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
(d) _____
(e) _____

27. What did Jesus come to do for the poor? (Week 10, Day 4)

28. What is 'futile obedience'? (Week 10, Day 4)

29. What is 'futile patience'? (Week 10, Day 4)

When you have written your answers to all these questions, go back to the Revision on pages 37 and 95. Cover the answers you have already written and try to answer all the questions again. It is a good idea to revise them for four or five days. In this way you will be ready for the final exam. We hope you have enjoyed studying this book. May the Lord help you to

remember what you have learnt and to put it into practice in your daily life. God bless you, Amen.

ANSWERS

1. Yes, because there is no kind of work which is not from the Lord.
2. So that we will live in peace and happiness.
3. Because the Lord had forbidden a man to part with his inherited farm.
4. Genesis 1:28 (the first command)
5. To do some one a favour or show clemency.
6. To save the ordinary people and to free them from any oppression.
7. One whom God has chosen.
8. By prayer and by getting to know the person's character. He should be someone who is honest and has the gifts of leadership.
9. Lest they forget the Lord and think they are strong enough by themselves, trusting in their weapons.
10. (a) Seeking wealth can so distract them that it separates them from the Lord. (b) The only way they can get money is by taking it from their people; in other words, by extortion.
11. It is like an engine to strengthen us to do what is right, not just to stop us doing what is wrong.
12. One who strengthens the freedom of his people.
13. No, they have no authority to do this because God gave the freedom, not the Government. Their job is to protect it.
14. If they give themselves more power than God has given them.
15. The right to life.
16. The forced removal of a baby from the womb before birth (unless there is a valid reason), that is, abortion.
17. (a) The right to life. (b) Everyone should recognise his neighbour's worth. So we are forbidden to make anyone a slave, or to force him to work for us. (c) It is forbidden to imprison someone without a valid reason. (d) If someone brings a charge against you, you cannot be convicted until the court has investigated the matter thoroughly and the case must be tried publicly, not in secret. (e) Your right to privacy concerning letters and speech. (f) Everyone may follow the religion of his choice. (g) The right to express your opinions in written or verbally. (h) The right to join a union to meet a common need. (i) A citizen's right to go wherever he wishes in this country nor refused entry into it. (j) It is forbidden to discriminate between one person and another. (k) It is forbidden to drive out a person from his farm or house without

- paying him compensation immediately.
18. (a) Fear. (b) They do not know what to do.
 19. (a) Obey them. (b) Pray for them.
 20. (a) If the rulers want people to disobey the Lord. (b) If the rulers are oppressing the ordinary people.
 21. Protection of the ordinary people from oppression.
 22. He says they are cursed.
 23. The Lord commanded them to do this, so they were not trouble-makers.
 24. We should take action according to Mathew 18:15-17
 25. We are not breaking any of the laws; rather we are encouraging the oppressors to obey the law.
 26. (a) Fear of important people. (b) Lack of strength/weakness.
(c) Hunger. (d) Lack of education. (e) Being more obedient than they should be. (f) depending on the financial support of the rich.
 27. To preach the Good News to them and to release them from their oppressors.
 28. Obedience to those who exploit and oppress us.
 29. Patience with those who oppress us, thus allowing them to carry on doing it.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

At the beginning of this book on page 3 we asked you some questions. We asked you to give your opinion, answering 'Yes' or 'No'. Your class leader has not counted any of your answers as wrong because they were only your opinions. We said we would repeat these questions at the end of the book. This way you can see for yourself if you have a better understanding of the subject through studying this book. Now write your answers again according to what you have learnt in this book. If you agree with what is written, write 'Yes', if not, write 'No'.

1. Are there any things in life which do not concern religion?

2. The work of spreading the Gospel is more important than the work of improving daily life in the world.

3. In God's eyes the 'spirit' is more valuable than the 'body'.

4. The Bible is used in religious matters, but in worldly matters we need men's ideas rather than the Bible.

5. The Bible's teaching about love, taking up one's cross and fellowship apply only to the work of the church, not to the work in the world

6. A Christian's activities can be divided into two parts, what one does for the Lord, and the rest of our activities.

7. The Christian religion has nothing to do with trading or any other job.

8. Religion has nothing to do with politics.

9. A pastor's work is more useful than that of a politician.

10. The wisdom of God concerns spiritual matters, not the affairs of the world.

Now only one thing remains to be done, but it is an important one. Make every effort to put into daily practice what you have learnt in these lessons, May the Lord help you and bless you. Amen.