

JEHOVAH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH



BIBLE STUDY

Fourth Quarter 2025

7:00 PM EVERY WEDNESDAY

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2025 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTANDING AND EMBRACING COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY, THE CHURCH, AND THE COMMUNITY (Psalm 103:17-18 NKJV)

OCTOBER EMPHASIS: KINGDOM CITIZENS SUPPORTING THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens must be committed to support the testimony of the church. They must diligently strive to embrace the disciplines and doctrine of the church and to cheerfully support the church with tithes and offerings.

KEY WORDS/PHRASES: Attendance, Discipline, Doctrine, Giving

LESSON FORTY: THE BENEFITS OF FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How important is attending church to you?
2. Why do people feel attendance is unnecessary?
3. How does skipping church reflect your commitment to the community?

TEXT: HEBREWS 10: 24-25

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS EMBRACING THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

INTRODUCTION: Fellowship with each other is an integral part of our covenant responsibility. Hebrews 10:24-25 emphasizes the importance of gathering with fellow believers. It reinforces our faith, offers encouragement, and prepares us for eternal joy. This verse reminds us of the value of community support as we await Christ's return. By coming together, we uplift and motivate each other in faith, contributing to a supportive community, encouraging and caring for each other. Every Kingdom citizen should remember Hebrews 10:24-25 when seeking the benefits of assembly and appreciating the blessings of being an active member of a faith-filled community. **Internet church attendance is good, but physically coming together is much better.**

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST APPRECIATE THE POWER OF ASSEMBLING OURSELVES TOGETHER.

The Book of Hebrews was penned to Jewish Christians amidst persecution, urging them to stand firm in their faith. [Hebrews 10:24-25](#) underscores the significance of regular communal worship and fellowship for spiritual growth and mutual encouragement. Some believers had begun neglecting these gatherings (They had stopped coming to church), possibly due to fear or complacency.

The writer leads into verse 25 by sharing the purpose for persevering in the faith, *“and let us consider how we may spur on toward love and good deeds,”* (V 24) through communal worship and support. Kingdom citizens must recognize that our covenant commitment to come to church (the church house) together brings many benefits, some of which are: **Recognizing strength in numbers**: Coming together strengthens our faith. When we share our experiences, we encourage each other to persevere. Another is **spiritual growth**: worship services, small group Bible studies, and corporate prayers offer learning and growth. Engaging with others helps us **deepen our understanding of God’s Word**. Also, coming together **builds a support system**, a network of support during difficult times. Fellow believers can uplift and pray for one another, reflecting the love of Christ. **What other benefits can you identify?**

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST RECOGNIZE THE DANGER OF FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLY.

In Hebrews 10:25, the phrase *“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”* serves as a caution. The author highlights that some had begun to neglect gathering with other believers. This behavior could lead to isolation, discouragement, and weakened faith. The warning isn’t just a suggestion; it’s a reminder of what happens when we try to walk our faith journey alone. The strength we gain from the community acts as a shield against the challenges life throws our way. We can encourage one another in faith by meeting together regularly. This means seeking fellowship with other believers, whether it be in a small group, church service, or prayer meeting. When we gather, we have the opportunity to share our struggles, victories, and testimonies, which can strengthen and inspire those around us. In today’s post-pandemic world, when so many have chosen not to return to church, applying Hebrews 10:25 means prioritizing communal worship and remaining actively involved in the faith community.

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT ASSEMBLING OURSELVES TOGETHER STRENGTHENS OUR COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS.

The latter part of Hebrews 10:25 instructs us to *“exhort one another.”* This involves encouraging, motivating, and uplifting fellow believers. In a world replete with negativity, providing encouragement can profoundly influence an individual’s spiritual journey. We are encouraged to offer kind words, a simple compliment or note can significantly uplift someone’s spirit. We must continue to pray together because prayer strengthens bonds and reassures individuals that they are not alone in their struggles. The final portion of Hebrews 10:25 references *“as you see the Day approaching.”* This pertains to the return of Christ and the fulfillment of God’s promises. Recognizing this imminent event should inspire believers to convene more frequently. **We are encouraged to not get disconnected from the faith by staying home.** Fellowship becomes crucial for nurturing a resilient faith that will persist until Christ’s return. As we invest in our work and family, it is equally important to invest in our spiritual community.

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LESSON FORTY-ONE: SUSTAINING WORSHIP, ORDINANCES, DISCIPLINE, AND DOCTRINE

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How do I actively seek to understand the core doctrines of my faith?
2. How do I respond when I encounter teachings that challenge my beliefs?
3. Do I understand the significance of the ordinances practiced in my faith community (baptism and the Holy communion)?

TEXT: 1 CHRONICLES 22:6-16 and 29:1-9

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING WHAT WE BELIEVE AND WHY WE BELIEVE IT

INTRODUCTION: The organized church is built on solemn beliefs and spiritual principles that must be understood and embraced by the members. God is not the author of confusion, nor does He expect the church to be operated in a scattered and chaotic manner. In our Scripture, we find that David's charge to Solomon as described in 1 Kings 2:1-9 and 1 Chronicles 22:6-16, shows that David emphasizes the importance of sustaining worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine for covenant faithfulness. As David prepares for the temple's construction (1 Chronicles 29:1-9), he provides resources and rallies the community, demonstrating leadership and dedication to God's vision, even though the task will ultimately fall to Solomon.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST RECOGNIZE THAT WORSHIP AND BELIEF REQUIRE ORDER. (1 Chronicles 22:6-13)

Discipline in worship is a concept deeply rooted in the biblical narrative, emphasizing the importance of order, reverence, and intentionality in approaching God. The Bible provides numerous examples and teachings that highlight the necessity of discipline in worship, both individually and corporately. David advises Solomon to remain faithful to God, follow His commands, and build the temple using the resources and plans provided.

Keeping this command requires the people to recognize that worship and belief require order. What a message this is for us today. *“Now, my son, the Lord be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee.” (V 11)* He further charges Solomon to keep the law of the Lord thy God, *“Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. (V 13)* Every Kingdom citizen has a solemn covenant responsibility to understand, embrace and sustain the principles of worship, the ordinances, disciplines, and doctrine of the church.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS STRENGTHEN THEMSELVES BY REMAINING FULLY GOD-CENTERED. (1 Chronicles 22:14-16)

David assures Solomon that keeping the covenant leads to success. In the construction and operation of the Tabernacle, God provided specific guidelines to ensure that worship was conducted in a manner that honored His holiness. **Shouldn't the same principle apply to us today?** This meticulous attention to detail underscores the importance of approaching God with reverence and order. **We must appreciate the necessity of solemn worship, a worship that is orderly and completely God-centered!!** By the ordinances, we mean those outward rites which Christ has appointed to be administered in his church as visible signs of the saving truth of the gospel. We must understand why we believe in baptism and Holy communion. Understanding church disciplines and doctrine helps us understand what we believe, and more importantly why we believe what we believe! Knowing what and why keeps us wired to the covenant and lays a strong foundation for success in all our spiritual endeavors. David's charge to Solomon now transitions into the God directed task of building the temple.

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT SUCCESS IS ASSOCIATED WITH DISCIPLINE AND ORDER IN OUR COVENANT RELATIONSHIP. (1 Chronicles 29:1-9)

By the time we get to 1 Chronicles chapter 29, the people have embraced the covenant command to sustain worship, ordinances, disciplines, and doctrine. The success that David assures Solomon clearly comes into focus. *“Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly” (V 6)* toward the building of the temple. Our task may not be to build a temple, but we can see that God promises success if we adhere to David's charge. Worship is one of the primary functions of the church, and a proper environment is necessary for it. Believer's baptism and Communion are important ordinances prescribed by Jesus for believers to practice. Sustaining these practices helps maintain a faithful evangelical ministry in the church. The church's worship, ordinances, disciplines, and doctrine should be upheld to promote spiritual growth and the spread of the Gospel.

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LESSON FORTY-TWO: SUPPORTING FINANCIALLY WITH TITHES AND OFFERINGS

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Why should I tithe?
2. Can time, talents, or service be considered a form of tithing?
3. How can I teach my children or others about faithful giving?

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 16:2; MALACHI 3:10

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: PLANNING TO GIVE AND GIVING IS A COVENANT RESPONSIBILITY.

INTRODUCTION: There is harmony in messaging throughout scripture which reminds us that our relationship with money and possessions needs to align with our spiritual values. **1 Corinthians 16:2** encourages setting aside money regularly; it emphasizes the proactive nature of investment into the cause of Christ. It calls for discipline—a quality that reflects our dedication to God. The intentional practice of regular giving cultivates a heart of generosity and nurtures a connection with God and the work of His kingdom. **Malachi 3:10** is a significant verse that emphasizes the importance of **faithful giving and tithing**. It invites believers to bring their tithes to the storehouse, promising that God will bless them abundantly in return. Overall, these verses serve as a reminder of the blessings that come from honoring God with one's wealth. **Do you believe tithing is a covenant responsibility?**

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST DEVELOP A HABIT OF FINANCIALLY PLANNING. (1 Corinthians 16:2)

This verse is one of the many teachings from the Apostle Paul, written to the church in Corinth. It holds significant meaning in guiding faithful followers on how they should approach giving and generosity. Paul emphasizes the importance of consistency and planning in giving.

“On the first day of every week,” The instruction to set aside money each week indicates that generosity should be intentional, not haphazard. In our daily lives, we often conduct our finances with careful planning; similarly, Paul urges us to bring that same diligence to our spiritual lives. Each person’s contribution is to be in accordance with what they have earned, ***“each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up”***, which reminds us that everyone’s capacity to give is different and should be respected and understood. This verse also signifies that giving should be regular practice in our lives, not a last-minute scramble. When we put thought into our offerings, it is a reflection of our gratitude and commitment to God and His church. In essence, Paul is encouraging the members of the Corinthian church to exhibit faithfulness in their financial contributions, teaching them about accountability, regularity, and personal responsibility in their giving. **These principles should be taught to our children at an early age.**

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST KNOW THAT OUR GIVING REFLECTS A SINCERE COMMITMENT TO HONOR GOD FIRST. (Malachi 3:10)

Malachi chapter 3 occurs in the temple of Jerusalem, where the prophet addresses Israel during a solemn assembly. The atmosphere is serious as Malachi calls for repentance and obedience. Priests, Levites, and Israelites gather to understand why they have fallen out of favor with God. He urges them to fully return to the Lord. A key phrase is ***“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse,”*** which emphasizes complete trust and obedience by giving a tenth of one’s income. This verse covers the concept of tithing, defined as giving a portion of one’s income or resources—typically one-tenth—to support the church. Bringing the whole tithe into the storehouse signifies a faithful commitment to dedicating resources for the benefit of the community or church. The storehouse refers to a place where offerings and tithes are collected and redistributed to meet community needs. Being consistent in tithing means giving back as a sign of obedience, trust, and gratitude to God. This act acknowledges that everything we possess belongs to God, making us stewards of His resources.

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT GIVING IS A GOOD AND NECESSARY REFLECTION OF OUR COVENANT RELATIONSHIP.

Through faithful tithing, we demonstrate our commitment to God and dependence on Him for provision and blessings. Tithing prioritizes God’s kingdom and the work of the church, emphasizing spiritual values over material possessions. Reflecting on this verse, we are encouraged to evaluate our own lives. Are we contributing our ***“whole tithe”*** to the storehouse, or are we withholding due to fear or uncertainty? God invites us to test His faithfulness by promising that He will ***“open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”*** This promise extends beyond financial gain and encompasses experiencing the fullness of God’s provision and grace in all aspects of our lives. **What actions can you take today to trust God more completely with your resources?**

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LESSON FORTY-THREE: SUPPORTING WITH SACRIFICIAL AND FREEWILL OFFERINGS

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Am I giving out of obligation, habit, or genuine gratitude?
2. How has giving impacted my spiritual life or trust in God?
3. How can I budget to prioritize giving to the church?

TEXT: EXODUS 36:6-7

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: OUR COVENANT RELATIONSHIP IS STRENGTHENED BY OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GIVING.

INTRODUCTION: In the Bible, offerings were a form of worship, either mandatory or voluntary. Sacrificial offerings, such as burnt and sin offerings, served purposes like atonement and fellowship. Freewill offerings were voluntary gifts given out of gratitude or to support specific goals, like building the tabernacle. Both types aimed to express devotion and thankfulness to God. Last week, we discussed giving tithes. This lesson focuses on sacrificial and freewill offerings, highlighting the Israelites' generosity in Exodus 36:1–7. We can learn a lot from their heart set of unselfish giving, both freewill and sacrificial.

1. ENTHUSIASTIC AND GENEROUS GIVING YIELDS GOOD RESULTS. (VV 1-3)

There is something very special about giving, particularly when the giver has confidence that their gifts will be used to honor God. This chapter tells the story of the work of the artisans as they followed the instructions Moses brought from God for the construction of the Tabernacle. The people gave some freewill offerings and some sacrificial offerings for the work to be accomplished. They had done so with unselfish and enthusiastic attitudes. Moses recognizes that who is going to be handling the gifts is also important. This is why the selection of stewards and trustees in the modern church should be a very careful and spiritual matter. The text says, “then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab and *“every gifted artisan in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom.” (V 2)*

Moses was confident that these “*wise men*” would be effective stewards of the generous gifts of the people. They were entrusted with the offerings, “*And the people continued to freely give offerings every morning, everyone whose heart was stirred.*” (V 3) In what ways has God stirred your heart? Are you an enthusiastic giver?

2. BLESSED GIVING CAN LEAD TO AN “OVERFLOW” MOMENT. (VV 4-7)

A freewill offering is a voluntary gift given to God, stemming from a willing heart and motivated by gratitude or devotion, rather than being a requirement. Sacrificial offerings were a core part of worship, particularly in the Old Testament, where they served as a means of atonement for sin, expressing gratitude, and symbolizing dedication to God. An amazing result flows from the right attitude towards giving. The craftsmen were overwhelmed by the abundance of the gifts. They reported to Moses, “*the people bring more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded us to do.*” (V 5) Wow!! Can you believe this result? This shows how blessed giving can be free from human manipulation and tricks. The people gave of themselves. No cake sales, chicken dinners or raffles were involved here. No baby contests or other fundraising gimmicks. **Willing hearts and the right attitude toward giving always lead to a blessed result.** When hearts are truly stirred, the people become willing, and the result is a mighty overflow. They gave freewill and sacrificial offerings for the cause. They gave because they felt that it was a God given responsibility for them to do so.

3. GENEROUS GIVING CAN LEAD TO A “MORE THAN ENOUGH” MOMENT. (VV 6-7)

What an unexpected problem. The people working on the tabernacle were confronted with an unusual problem - The giving was so generous. **The problem was not that the people did not bring enough material – they brought too much!** Moses took action by issuing a command to the people with a proclamation that was circulated throughout the camp. “*No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary.*” *And so the people were restrained from bringing more, because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work.*” (VV 6-7) Moses had to intervene and tell the people to quit bringing their donations for the Tabernacle. The people responded accordingly. The overwhelming generosity of the people was an indication of their allegiance to the renewed covenant with the Lord and to the Lord himself. **Wouldn't it be wonderful if in today's time our giving would rise to the level of “more than enough” for the cause of ministry?** Giving sacrificial and freewill offerings are an important part of our covenant relationship. God only wants from us a little of what he has blessed us with. We learn from this story that if we are truly enthusiastic about our giving and that if we allow God to stir our hearts, the result will be “**more than enough**” for us to perform the ministry tasks that are a part of our covenant responsibility.

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THOUGHT: As Kingdom Citizens, we have rights and responsibilities in and to our local church. Our God is a covenant keeping God, and He expects us to do the same. He calls us to be faithful in our service and honest in our dealing with one another.

KEY WORDS/PHRASES: Covenant, Commitment, Mission, Body

LESSON FORTY-FOUR: WHEN YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE THE FELLOWSHIP

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What are some reasons why people leave a church or The Church?
2. Why do we have difficulties receiving people who left us at a critical time in ministry?
3. What should be some of the guidelines for stepping away from a church?

TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 4:9-13

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: WHEN PEOPLE LEAVE THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION: For many of us, the very mention of the subject of church members leaving knots up our stomachs faster than a phone call from the IRS. Painful memories flood my mind as I sit down to write – and I thought I’d gotten “good at” letting people go. Not that we really want to *get used to* losing people, but most of us would like it to be less painful for ourselves and we’d also like to see our departed ones have a quick turnaround time: to get fully engaged quickly in a new church without cynicism or bitterness. *Why is this so hard for us?*

I have met pastors who are able to say goodbye, even to long-time, committed, godly, church members, without breaking a sweat. Certainly, this has something to do with temperament and spiritual giftedness. The spiritually gifted leader/administrator is going to find it easier to look to the future with optimism – no matter who has just departed – than those of us who are primarily shepherds or mercy-showers. Having a high degree of self-confidence or Christ-confidence really helps too. Oh, how I suffered as a young and insecure pastor when people left my flock! Many a time I took it *so personally* when it wasn’t meant personally at all. What a waste of sorrow! People leave every church for a plethora of reasons.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTAND THAT PEOPLE LEAVE THE CHURCH FOR A HOST OF REASONS. (VV 9-10)

As the Apostle Paul is coming to the end of his life, he wrote these words, “**Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.**”

Three of his ministry team members left him; however, he only shares why one left. Paul urges upon Timothy to ‘Come quickly.’ He is in need of help. As pastors and ministry leaders, there will be times when people, faithful and not so faithful, will leave us at a difficult moment.

How should we handle members departing the church for various reasons? One of the great challenges of any ministry is maintaining sufficient staff on a regular basis. **What are some challenges your church or ministry is currently facing because of the departure of laborers?** **What are some keys to always having enough people to effectively do ministry?** Even when servants depart for good reasons such as Crescens and Titus, it can still be challenging for the leader, the ministry and the church. **What is the positive side of people leaving, or is there one?**

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST EMBRACE THE IDEA THAT SOMETIMES WE NEED TO ASK FOR HELP. (V 11)

Ministry is fluid; it is constantly changing. We must learn to monitor and adjust. It is very normal to grieve the loss of fellow laborers, no matter how the loss occurred. In the best-case scenario, we can only clean up spilled milk. When individuals leave our fellowship, we cannot stand still and talk about what we used to be, we must forge a path forward. In verse 11, Paul mentions two people, 1. Luke who was still with him, and 2. Mark, for whom he is sending. Luke has been a faithful companion, but John Mark has vacillated. Listen to the text, **“Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.”** There is a sense of loneliness or aloneness in the voice of the great apostle. He seems to be at a point when he doesn’t desire to be alone, yet key people have left him. Many pastors and Christian leaders have made grave mistakes because pride would not allow them to ask for help. **What is the positive side of a leader asking for help, and what are some of the negatives that might occur?**

In Acts 15:36-41, we encounter the incident where Paul and Barnabus separated over a dispute concerning John Mark; however, now Paul sees him as being profitable. **“Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.”** There may be times when we will need to ask for help from those with whom we have disagreed in the past. **Why are we sometimes hesitant about asking for help?**

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST BE WILLING TO ASK FOR MINISTRY NEEDS AND PERSONAL NEEDS. (VV 12-13)

Chapter four of Second Timothy is one of the most touching passages of all the Pauline Epistles. Some have called 2 Timothy, Paul’s swan song, his final act.

Paul continues, “I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.” Language is very powerful. Paul says, I sent Tychicus to Ephesus, not that he left and went to Ephesus, but he was sent; however, Paul does not tell us why he sent him. Hum. Let’s move on. **Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas.** According to David Guzik, “This tells us that it is likely that Paul was arrested at Troas, resulting in this second imprisonment at Rome. In those days the arresting soldiers had claimed to any extra garments in the possession of the one arrested. It may be that Paul was forewarned of the arrest and therefore committed his few books and this **cloak** — an outer garment — to the care of an honest man named **Carpus**.” He asked for his scroll and the parchments; he wanted the scriptures. Nothing, not even death changed his desire to **STUDY TO SHOW HIMSELF APPROVED.** **As a servant in the Kingdom of God, what do you need help with, and who do you need help from?**

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LESSON FORTY-FIVE: DILIGENT COMMITMENT TO KEEPING THE COVENANT

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What is a spiritual or biblical covenant?
2. What is the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant?
3. As a Kingdom Citizen, what are some of the blessings of keeping the covenant you have made with your church?

TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 28:1-14

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: COMMITMENT INDICATES THAT WE ARE DEDICATED TO THE COVENANT.

INTRODUCTION: A covenant is a binding agreement between two or more parties, similar to a promise or a contract. A covenant defines the relationship between two parties, how they will act, and the promises they will fulfill with one another. Covenants often contain both conditional and unconditional elements. While covenant relationships are almost obsolete in our culture, there is one that survives that we can understand: Marriage is a covenant relationship between two people; it is legally binding, but more importantly, it defines the relationship between husband and wife. They both make certain promises to each other that they are expected to fulfill, yet even when promises are broken, they vow to love each other unconditionally and continue to fulfill their covenantal relationship. Covenants are used throughout the Bible to establish a relationship between God and His people, and they form the backbone of the narrative structure. This is made fellowship more obvious when we understand that in the Bible the word *testament* is another word for *covenant*; the Old Testament could be rendered Old Covenant and the New Testament, the New Covenant.”

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THE STRENGTH OF A COVENANT BEGIN WITH OBEDIENCE. (VV 1-4)

This week’s lesson takes us to the 28th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, one of the clearest chapters on covenant relationships, especially between God and the people of Israel. Here God delineates the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience. Listen to the opening words of the chapter, “**If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God:**”

God is ready to give Israel the fat of the land, nothing good will be withheld from them if they simply obey Him. **Why is it so difficult for us to follow God's commands?** Let's look at the list, **"You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks."** When you look at the blessings listed in verses 3-4, **what do you think these blessings represent for the nation as they are about to enter the promise land? As Christians in 21st century America, what can we glean from these verses? How can we apply them?**

For our covenant with the Lord to mean anything, to produce anything or to be strengthened in any way, we must obey and keep obeying. These are definitely conditional blessings; God is responding to the obedience of Israel and to our obedience.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT GENEROSITY IS AT THE HEART OF OUR COVENANT RELATIONSHIP. (VV 5-8)

Most of us at one time or another has said, "the Lord is good." And oftentimes this statement is really attached to His generosity. He provides a job, we say, "The Lord is good." He opens a door to a new financial opportunity, we say, "The Lord is good." And the list goes on. God said to Israel, if you walk in the spirit of this covenant, then, **"Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed."** All your physical needs will be met. You will never lack bread for your table or milk for your baby. The Lord continues, "My generosity does not stop with physical sustenance." **You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.** In His generosity, He promised to protect them as they moved around the community. **"The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven. The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you."** Oh, what a good God we serve. The songwriter was right; *He keeps blessing me over and over again.*

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THE BLESSINGS OF THE LORD ARE UNLIMITED WHEN WE OBEY THE COVENANT. (VV 9-14)

The verb 'to know' is used often. As we look at the last section of the covenant blessing of Deuteronomy 28, let consider two definitions for 'to know.' 1. *To be aware of through observation, inquiry, or information,* and 2. *To have developed a relationship with (someone) through meeting and spending time with them; be familiar or friendly with.* To know is not the same as to do. This covenant is centered around obedience – the doing. Listen to God's unlimited promises: **The Lord will** establish you as his holy people, as He promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. **The Lord will** grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you. **The Lord will** open the heavens, the storehouse of His bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. **The Lord will** make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

2025 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTANDING AND EMBRACING COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY, THE CHURCH, AND THE COMMUNITY (Psalm 103:17-18 NKJV)

NOVEMBER EMPHASIS: KINGDOM CITIZENS RESPECTING THE COVENANT THEY HAVE MADE WITH THE CHURCH

THOUGHT: As Kingdom Citizens, we have rights and responsibilities in and to our local church. Our God is a covenant keeping God and he expects us to do the same. He calls us to be faithful in our service and honest in our dealing with one another.

KEY WORDS/PHRASES: Covenant, Commitment, Mission, Body

LESSON FORTY-SIX: BEING THANKFUL FOR THE MISSION

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Let's discuss some of the challenges from the TV show or the movie MISSION IMPOSSIBLE? What makes our mission possible?
2. When you hear someone say, "Praise the Lord." What comes to mind? How do we praise the Lord?
3. What are some reasons we praise the Lord?

TEXT: 1 CHRONICLES 16:1-2, 7-16

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: A GRATEFUL HEART IS LIKE GOOD MEDICINE.

INTRODUCTION: Thankfulness is a prominent Bible theme. [First Thessalonians 5:16-18](#) says, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Did you catch that? Give thanks in all circumstances. Thankfulness should be a way of life for us, naturally flowing from our hearts and mouths. Digging into the Scriptures a little more deeply, we understand why we should be thankful and how to have gratitude in different circumstances. [Psalm 136:1](#) says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever." Here we have two reasons to be thankful: God's constant goodness and His steadfast love. When we recognize the nature of our depravity and understand that, apart from God, there is only death ([John 10:10](#); [Romans 7:5](#)), our natural response is to be grateful for the life He gives. [Psalm 30](#) gives praise to God for His deliverance. David writes, "I will exalt you, O Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me. O Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me. O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit. . . . This psalm of thanksgiving not only praises God in the moment but remembers God's past faithfulness. It is a statement of God's character, which is so wonderful that praise is the only appropriate response. When we consider that God has included us in His work on earth, then our response should be one of Thanksgiving. **Pause and give thanks!**

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S PRESENCE THROUGH PRAISE AND WORSHIP. (VV 1-2)

When we consider God's assignment for us, it can seem like a daunting task, especially when we have made some mistakes in the past. Israel is preparing to return the Ark of the Covenant back to its rightful place in the right way.

The text says, **“They brought the ark of God and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and they presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before God.”** In First Chronicles 13, when the Ark was bought back initially, it was not done correctly, and two men lost their lives. The passage in First Chronicles 13 should remind us that we don’t do ministry our way, but we must do ministry God’s way.

After David had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord. When we consider the mission God has entrusted to us, we must pause and thank God not only for the mission but also the mission partners. The Bible said, **He (David) blessed the people in the name of the Lord.** As Christians, we are participants in a much larger ministry than just what we are doing. Don’t miss the truth that we are co-laborers with Christ and with one another.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS NEED TO UNDERSTND THE POWER OF PRAISE, WORSHIP AND THANKSGIVING. (VV 7-9)

The text continues, **“That day David first appointed Asaph and his associates to give praise to the Lord in this manner . . .”** Every musician is not a praise leader. The ones chosen to lead as we have a time of reflection and thanksgiving should be those who are studying the Word and understand the ministry of praise, worship and thanksgiving. *What are some of the challenges we encounter in corporate times of praise and thanksgiving?* These are some of the instructions David gave Asaph, “Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. WHY? Mission accomplished. We have the Ark back where it belongs. Verse 10, **“Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.”** *What reasons do you have to rejoice?* Eddie Robinson said, *“I have so many reasons to rejoice.*

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS SHOULD REJOICE IN GOD’S FAITHFULNESS. (VV 11-16)

When David called on Asaph and the praise team, he wanted to make sure certain things were included in the praise songs. At the top of the list is God’s faithfulness. He said of the Lord, “He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. **(VV 15-16)**. In other words, this is not new Israel, God has demonstrated faithfulness for a long time. As the patriarch of the Hebrew people, Abraham is a revered name in Isreal. In their praise, David calls them to remember God. Some of the Israelites might ask as we sometimes ask, why? The scripture continues, verses 12 14, **“Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced, you his servants, the descendants of Israel, his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.”** He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. The writer reminds them; **YOU DID NOT DO THIS ON YOUR OWN.** One of the saddest commentaries in Israel and in the modern church is when we brag on what we have done. No not what we have done, but what God has done. John 15:5c Jesus warns us that, **“apart from me you can do nothing.”**

Where have you seen God’s faithfulness in your family when you were a child or, in the direction your life took as an adult, or where you landed professionally? **GOD IS FAITFUL IN LIFE AND IN MINISTRY.**

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LESSON FORTY- SEVEN: EXALTING THE SAVIOR – THANKSGIVING WORSHIP

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What does it mean to exalt a person or a thing?
2. How does humility play a role in the exaltation of the believer?
3. What are some of the differences between being exalted by man and being exalted by God?

TEXT: PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION: Philippians chapter 2 is a powerful passage that emphasizes humility, unity, and selfless service, using Jesus Christ as the ultimate example. It encourages believers to have the same mindset as Christ, who, though divine, humbled himself to become human and ultimately die for humanity. The chapter also highlights the importance of working out one's salvation, doing all things without grumbling, and shining as lights in the world.

Humility and Unity: The chapter begins by urging believers to be united in mind and purpose, emphasizing the importance of humility and considering others as more important than oneself. *How are humility and unity connected in a healthy church?*

The Example of Christ: Verses 5-11 focus on Christ's self-emptying and subsequent exaltation. This section is often called the "hymn of Christ" and highlights his willingness to take on human form and suffer for humanity's sake. *What does the Christian life look like when we choose to follow Christ?*

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS ARE CHALLENGED BY HUMILITY AND UNITY. (VV 1-4)

Because of pride, humility seems to be one of the hardest virtues to achieve personally and in the church. And there is no unity without humility. Here is the admonition of the great apostle, **“Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.”** The call to be like-minded is a tall order. He explains what it means to be like-minded, **having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.** Like-mindedness refers to the state of sharing similar opinions, ideas, or preferences with others. It implies a degree of agreement or concord in thought and perspective.

Vocabulary.com says that it can be found among people who share the same interests, allowing them to easily connect and discuss related topics.

How do we, as the Body of Christ, become likeminded? Paul continues, **“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”** Selfish ambition kills both unity and like-mindedness.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST MODEL THEIR LIVES AFTER CHRIST. (VV 5-8)

The Blue Letter Study Guide says that “This passage is often known as the kenosis passage.” Kenosis means self-emptying. So, Paul instructs us: **“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.”** *How can one be equal to God and not use it to one’s advantage?*

Many people try to take advantage of that which does not belong to them, but Jesus surrendered what was His in order that we might have what was not ours. The Words says, **“Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”** *Who chooses a cross?* Most of us are afraid of a needle, but Jesus accepted death, even death on a cross. If Jesus is the model, then we are called to die to self and prestige. We too are called to give our lives for the sake of our brothers and sisters and the lost world around us. Luke 9:23 sums up the life of a Christ-Follower: **Then he (Jesus) said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”**

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THE GREATER REWARD IS GOD’S REWARD. (VV 9-11)

Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him: This is the general heading for the material in verses 9-11. These words describe how God has exalted Jesus. Indeed, highly exalted could also be translated “super exalted.” “The Greek elegance imports super exalted or exalted with all exaltation.” (Matthew Poole)

“Now, just pause over this thought — that Christ did not crown himself, but that his Father crowned him; that he did not elevate himself to the throne of majesty, but that his Father lifted him there, and placed him on his throne.” (Spurgeon)

God has **Given Him the name which is above every name:** This goes beyond giving Jesus the Divine name Yahweh. When we consider the Hebrew concept of the name, it also implies that God declares that Jesus has a character and person above all. And **that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. “Paul does not imply by this a universal salvation but means that every personal being will ultimately confess Christ’s lordship, either with joyful faith or with resentment and despair.” (Homer Kent) This picture of Christ’s suffering and exaltation has given them at least two things: 1. This picture has equipped them to act in a way towards each other that will promote unity in the body of Christ. 2. This picture has shown them how to follow Jesus’ pattern of patient, humble obedience — something Paul will call them to continue in the following verses.

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LESSON FORTY-EIGHT: EVANGELIZE THE LOST

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What is Evangelism?
2. In what ways have you sought to evangelize the lost?
3. What are signs of true Christian conversion?

TEXT: LUKE 19:1-10

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: SALVATION IS THE GIFT OF GOD.

INTRODUCTION: When trying to decide how to share Christ with someone, the starting point should be the same as that of John the Baptist and Jesus Himself. [Matthew 3:2](#) tells us that John began his ministry with the words “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” Repentance refers to a “change of mind,” which implies sorrow for past offences ([2 Corinthians 7:10](#)), a deep sense of the evil of sin as committed against God ([Psalm 51:4](#)), and a conscious decision to turn from sin to God. The first words Jesus spoke when He began His public ministry were identical to John’s ([Matthew 4:17](#)). Three truths about Biblical Evangelism:

Biblical evangelism delivers both the good news and the bad news (God loves you; you are a sinner)

Biblical evangelism exalts the holiness of God (Sin separates mankind from holy God)

Biblical evangelism teaches Salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT EVERY DAY IS A GOOD DAY TO REACH SOMEONE WHO IS LOST. (VV 1-4)

Jesus was the master evangelist. He knew where people were, and He knew their needs. The text says, “Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short, he could not see over the crowd. So, he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.” Jesus was very intentional about evangelism. In John three, He met with Nicodemus at night and in chapter 4, He met the Samaritan women at midday. Now, He comes to Jericho to meet and witness to Zacchaeus. **How intentional are you when it comes to sharing the Gospel with those who do not know Christ?**

In this story, not only did Jesus want to see Zacchaeus but Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. One lesson from this example is that there may be people we are dealing with who are waiting for us to share the Gospel with them. Not only must we be intentional, but also prayerful and strategic. Evangelism does not begin with individual speaking; it begins with prayer. Oftentimes, to do evangelism well, we will have to go out of the way, get off the beaten path.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT EVANGELISM INVOLVES MORE THAN PRESENCE. (VV 5-7)

Much of Biblical evangelism is centered around going to where the individual is. The Bible says, **“When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ So, he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.”** Even without cell phones or the internet, the word got out quickly, grew like wildfire. The Teacher from Nazareth went home with Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus! You must be joking; he’s the worst sinner in town, that lying, thieving, . . . And listen at this, he invited himself to Zacchaeus’ house; He said, **“Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”** Jesus, along with his disciples, went to the home of a despised tax-collector. **Are you willing to risk friendship and reputation to lead someone to Christ?** Now Zacchaeus is excited about Jesus coming to his house, can’t you imagine how elated he was when he thought, The Master is coming to my house. Do you remember the day you were converted; the day the Lord Jesus changed your life? If you do, you have an idea of how this sinful, ostracized man felt. One song writer said, “I said I wasn’t going to tell anybody, but I couldn’t keep it to myself.” Oh, the joy of Jesus coming to your house. **All the people saw this and began to mutter, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.’** It never ceases to fail, there is always someone who is not happy about the conversion of a lost soul; nevertheless, keep introducing lost sinners to Christ, and leave the naysayers to God. HALLELUJAH!

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT CONVERSION LEADS TO A CHANGED LIFE. (VV 8-10)

You cannot be saved and remain the same. Conversion itself indicates a change; it’s the same as the butterfly and caterpillar. The caterpillar is who I was; the butterfly is who I have become. The following words are those of a CONVERTED man: **“But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now, I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’”** *What changed in your life after conversion, or after you were saved?* The Lord Jesus never leaves us the way he finds us. Salvation is a wonderful work of the Spirit of God in our hearts. II Corinthians 5:17 reminds us, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”** When Jesus declares you are saved, you are saved. “Jesus said to him, **“Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”**

Are you as concerned about the salvation of the lost? If so, what are you doing to get others into the Kingdom? Remember, a person must do more than just die to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” (John 3:3)

EVERYONE NEEDS SALVATION.

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KEY WORDS/PHRASES: Faith, Diligence, Love, New Beginning

LESSON FORTY-NINE: EXECUTING MISSION

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. As a believer, what do the words “Executing Mission” mean to you?
2. Do you believe that you have a personal responsibility to share Christ?
3. How comfortable are you talking to others about Jesus?

TEXT: JOHN 20: 19-22

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST BE DILIGENT IN CARRYING THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

INTRODUCTION: John 20:19–23 describes the appearance of Jesus to His disciples following His resurrection, during which He imparts peace and commissions them to carry forward His mission by disseminating the message of forgiveness and reconciliation through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This passage underscores foundational principles for those who identify as members of the Kingdom and embrace the tenets of the covenant, highlighting a collective responsibility to engage in mission work. The authority to fulfill this mandate is conferred upon all who accept it, as evidenced by the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. A closer examination of this text provides further insight into its implications.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST SPREAD THE GOSPEL. (VV 19-20)

These verses present a pivotal moment in the life of Jesus and His disciples. After His resurrection, Jesus appears to His followers, bringing them peace and reassurance. *“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” (V 19)* He proves His identity and strengthens their belief in Him by showing them His wounds. *“After he said this, he showed them his hands and side.” (V 20)* His presence also signifies the empowerment and commissioning of His disciples to continue His work on earth. This is important for us who adhere to the covenant because it tells us and shows us that we too must be empowered to continue the work of Christ. It is also important because our covenant calls us to execute mission. We have an imperative responsibility to go to work representing Christ in the world.

The disciples demonstrated enthusiasm when presented with this challenge, as reflected in the scripture: ***“The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.” (V 20)*** It is not sufficient to simply receive God and remain passive. Rather, there is an obligation to **fulfill the mission** of sharing the gospel, whether within our homes, communities, or beyond. This responsibility includes reaching those who are unchurched or non-believers, guiding them towards the exemplary path provided by Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST FULFILL THE MISSION. (V 21)

As Jesus shows them His hands, the disciples’ doubts dispelled, and His identity as the Lord was confirmed. In a profound gesture, He commissions them with a mission echoing His own, ***“As the father has sent me, I am sending you.” (V 21)*** This charge signifies a continuation of His work on earth, now to be carried out by His disciples. With divine empowerment, the disciples are equipped for the task ahead. Just as Jesus spoke with clarity and focus on the requirement for salvation, they now had the responsibility to do the same throughout the world. He infused in them the strength and guidance needed to fulfill their mission. Our covenant relationship with God and each other commands that we do the same. **When is the last time you spoke to someone about receiving Christ in their lives? Are you working to fulfill the mission?**

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (V 22)

This passage highlights how, like the disciples who faced fear and uncertainty, people today grapple with anxiety and apprehension executing Kingdom mission. **Does carrying the cause of Christ make you feel uncomfortable?** Jesus offers peace as a source of comfort and strength, and His call to continue His mission—empowered by the Holy Spirit—encourages believers to live with purpose, courage, and faith. **We must carry the Good News into all the world.** As Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, ***“Receive the Holy Spirit” (V 22)***, He assured them of support. We have that same support. We are urged to rely on His presence and the Spirit’s empowerment as we fulfill our roles of executing mission!!

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LESSON FIFTY: EDIFYING THE SAINTS

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. In what ways have you encouraged a fellow believer?
2. Are you able to maintain a fellow believer's confidence?
3. To what extent do you interact with other members of the body?

TEXT: EPHESIANS 4:13-16

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER.

INTRODUCTION: We turn our attention now to the last lesson on covenant principles by examining another part of our mission statement. Ephesians 4:13–16 describes the goal of Christian maturity and unity within the church. The verses emphasize growing in faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ, becoming like Him, avoiding being easily swayed by false teachings. This passage highlights the importance of speaking the truth in love and the interconnectedness of the body of Christ where each part contributes to the growth and edification of the whole. Edification of the Saints encompasses every principle of our covenant relationship.

**1. EDIFICATION OF EACH OTHER HELPS US MAINTAIN UNITY IN THE BODY.
(VV 13-14)**

The word *edifying* means “**building up.**” Verse 13 explains and focuses on reaching a state of unity in faith and knowledge of Jesus, leading to spiritual maturity, and a likeness in Christ. We must work together “*until we all reach unity in the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measures of the likeness and fullness of Christ.*” **(V 13)** **As Kingdom citizens, we have the responsibility of embracing edification of the saints as a primary personal responsibility.** This is a part of the very foundation of our covenant. Verse 14 explains that Christian maturity helps believers avoid being easily deceived by false teachings and manipulative individuals.

Paul said that we need to be like Jesus, but in order to be like Jesus, we must know what the Bible says! This is why continuous Bible study is essential. Edification strengthens us to ***“no longer be infants, tossed back-and-forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceit for scheming.”*** (V 14) The goal is to keep the body strong and resistant to the temptations of the world. **Being strong inside helps the body stand strong on the outside.** The concept of edifying the body of Christ relates to the distribution of spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts are ***“for the common good”***, for the benefit of others, not to be hoarded as if they were only for our own good, but to be used to serve one another.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID TO SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE. (V 15)

Verse 15 emphasizes the importance of speaking the truth in love, which is crucial for spiritual growth, and becoming more like Christ, ***“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”*** (V 15) In a time when Christian doctrine has been watered down and manipulated by man to fulfill various personal and ungodly desires, we must edify each other by encouraging each other to remain strong and committed to our foundational covenant principles. We are all members of the same team and each member is important to the team!! This principle also applies to every ministry in the church. **Kingdom citizens must not be afraid to speak the truth in love.** We must practice edification by being warm and inviting from the heart, demonstrating encouragement with our attitude and actions, and by always pressing towards the positive. What other ways can you think of? **Every believer should strive to be a source of encouragement for those God has placed around them.**

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST EMBRACE THAT WE ALL ARE INTERCONNECTED WITHIN THE BODY. (V 16)

Edifying one another is integral to the church’s identity and mission. When we edify or build one another up in love and truth, the church becomes what God intended it to be, ***“a holy temple in the Lord”***. Kingdom citizens must understand and embrace the knowledge of how the entire body of Christ is interconnected and dependent on each part for growth and edification, with each part contributing to the overall health and strength of the body. **We are all essential in the body.** God calls on every member of the body to contribute. We are taught to strive for spiritual maturity, unity and love. ***“From him the whole body, joined, and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and bills itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*** (V 16) Recognizing our interconnectedness contributes to the overall health and strength of the body. **DO YOUR PART TO STAY POSITIVELY CONNECTED!!**

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LESSON FIFTY-ONE: EMBRACING JESUS AS OUR OWN

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What is the greatest gift you have ever received from others?
2. What is the greatest gift you have ever given to another?
3. What is the greatest gift you have ever given to yourself?

TEXT: MATTHEW 1:18-25

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST EMBRACE JESUS IN EVERY SITUATION.

INTRODUCTION: Matthew 1:18–25 recounts Jesus' miraculous birth, highlighting Mary's virgin conception by the Holy Spirit and Joseph's obedient response after receiving guidance from an angel in a dream. This lesson examines Joseph's decision to accept Jesus as his own, encouraging us to embrace Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our own lives. We find that Joseph gives himself an amazing gift – the gift of accepting Jesus as his own.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT UNEXPECTED DILEMMAS CAN ARISE AT ANY TIME. (VV 18-19)

This passage begins by introducing the circumstances of Jesus's birth. Mary, a young woman betrothed to Joseph, has become pregnant. He knows that he has never slept with her so he cannot be the father. She has declared to him that she has not slept with anyone. What is he going to do? At that time Joseph did not know that the pregnancy was not the result of natural relations, but that Mary's pregnancy was conceived by the Holy Spirit and the virgin conception would set Jesus apart as a uniquely divine, fulfilling, God's redemptive plan. Joseph is described as a *“just”* man, meaning he is righteous and committed to God. *“When he learns of the pregnancy he plans to divorce her quietly, which would spare her public shame and punishment.” (V 19).* His response reflects compassion and a desire to act with integrity, even in what seems like betrayal. **How many of us would have acted like Joseph if faced with his situation?** Learning that his betrothed was pregnant, though he knew he wasn't the father, left him uncertain about what to do. Like Joseph, we all encounter perplexing situations requiring careful decisions.

Despite strong evidence against her claim of innocence, he chooses compassion and seeks understanding. In his time, breaking a betrothal was akin to divorce under Jewish law. Now, Joseph stands at a crossroads, needing to decide how to proceed.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST TRUST GOD’S INTERVENTION AND GUIDANCE IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. (VV 20-23)

While Joseph is unsure about Mary's pregnancy, an angel appears to him in a dream and tells him not to fear taking Mary as his wife, explaining that her child is from the Holy Spirit. **(V 20)** The angel calls Joseph *“son of David,”* linking Jesus to King David and fulfilling prophecy. Joseph is told to name the child **“Jesus”**, meaning **“Yahweh saves,”** signifying Jesus's mission. Joseph is now at a point where he must ponder the angelic message that is delivered through his dream. **Was he just dreaming and should he give any solace to the dream? Should he accept the fact that God is sending him a divine message through an angel? What would you do? What would your thoughts be under these circumstances?** Joseph reveals by his actions that he understands that he serves a God who can intervene in the midst of a dilemma to provide clarity to the situation. Joseph accepts the dream as a divine message and chooses to trust God's guidance, showing his faith and willingness to let God direct him through uncertainty. The lesson for us: **God can provide clarity in difficult times, and it is our role to recognize and respond to divine guidance.**

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT BEING OBEDIENT IS THE BEST RESPONSE WHEN GOD INTERVENES. (VV 24-25)

Joseph responded to the angel’s message with faith and acted immediately, taking Mary as his wife, yet abstaining from marital relations until after Jesus’s birth. Him naming the child Jesus fulfilled the angel’s instruction and publicly acknowledged him as his son. **Joseph accepted Jesus as his own.** **Shouldn’t we?** Joseph's actions model trust in God's plan even when it defies human understanding. All of us have gotten to a point in our lives when things happen that we really don't understand. We find ourselves asking the question **“What am I going to do?”** The message from this lesson provides an answer: **We must be obedient to God and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us through our decision-making process.** During this Christmas season, a time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, Joseph sends a clear message that should reverberate in our lives now and in the days ahead: Jesus is our own. **THE BEST GIFT WE CAN GIVE OURSELVES THIS CHRISTMAS IS THE GIFT OF “EMBRACING JESUS!”**

2025 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTANDING AND EMBRACING COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY, THE CHURCH, AND THE COMMUNITY (Psalm 103:17-18 NKJV)

DECEMBER EMPHASIS: KINGDOM CITIZENS BEING TRUE TO THE MISSION

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens must embrace and live out the mission of the church. They must demonstrate their acceptance of the commands of God by faithfully acknowledging and practicing a spiritual lifestyle in compliance with the mission statement.

KEY WORDS/PHRASES: Faith, Diligence, Love, New Beginning

LESSON FIFTY-TWO: LOVING GOD AND LOVING EACH OTHER

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Have you engaged in small group Bible study in 2025?
2. Have you ever found it hard to love a neighbor?
3. Do you understand the Covenant better because of our 2025 studies?

TEXT: MATTHEW 22:34-40

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST NOT UNDERAPPRECIATE THE POWER OF LOVE.

INTRODUCTION: Sometimes the greatest challenge to our Christian walk comes from persons who try to undermine the validity of our core Christian beliefs. If they succeed, the validity of our covenant relationships will be weakened and maybe even destroyed. The world often seeks to catch us in a “**got you**” moment. In Matthew 22, Jesus debates with groups like the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes in Jerusalem who are attempting to challenge his teachings. After Jesus silences the Sadducees, the Pharisees test him further. He responds by emphasizing the importance of loving God and one another.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THEY WILL BE CHALLENGED. (VV 34-36)

The Pharisees and scribes questioned Jesus about the greatest commandment. “*When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’*” (VV 34-36) Sensing their motives, Jesus responds to the expert in the law by citing the law as contained in *Deuteronomy 6:5*, stating the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, followed by loving your neighbor as yourself. In a tense public setting, Jesus used this moment to highlight that true obedience to God's commandments centers on holistic love for both God and others. When our core beliefs are challenged, the best response is to always go to the scriptures for answers. We must always lean and depend on God's Word. **Are you engaging in regular Bible study? If not, the time is now to do so.**

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS SHOW LOVE IN EVERY RELATIONSHIP. (VV 37-39)

These verses summarize the fundamental principles of Christianity: **a wholehearted devotion to God and an expectation to extend love and respect to others as one does for oneself.** It invites reflection on the sincerity of one's faith and the integrity of one's conduct toward others. *"He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment."* (VV 37-38) The second part of Jesus' answer references [Leviticus 19:18](#), instructing us to love our neighbors as ourselves, *"And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"* (V 39) This commandment urges empathy, compassion, and care for others. It calls us to love others as ourselves—a challenging but essential principle in a world that often prioritizes individuality over community. **How do we practice this in our relationships, workplaces, and communities?** Demonstrating wholehearted commitment to God signifies recognition of His central role and the establishment of a relationship based on trust, adherence, and dedication. **Jesus has schooled the "expert in the law" with the law itself!!**

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW LOVE GUIDES THE COVENANT. (V 40)

Jesus articulates that the foundation of all moral teachings in Scripture is love for God and love for one's neighbor, as reflected in [Romans 13:10](#): *"love is the fulfillment of the law."* On another occasion, when questioned about the identity of one's neighbor, Jesus responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 11), thereby broadening the definition of neighbor to encompass all individuals in need. While it may seem straightforward to identify the greatest commandment as loving God, Jesus' teachings underscore the indispensable link between love for God and love for others. **Jesus's key insight is combining the love of God and others into a single law of love.** These commandments remain relevant, guiding us to prioritize our covenant relationships and to practice love and compassion daily. *"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."* (V 40) This verse emphasizes genuine connection with God and extending grace to others for personal and communal growth. **Did you achieve this in 2025? If not, there is still time to do so!!**

QUARTER 4: OCTOBER - NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

KINGDOM CITIZENS SUPPORTING THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH

OCTOBER 5	THE BENEFITS OF FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE
OCTOBER 12	SUSTAINING WORSHIP, ORDINANCES, DISCIPLINE, DOCTRINE
OCTOBER 19	SUPPORTING FINANCIALLY WITH TITHES AND OFFERINGS
OCTOBER 26	SUPPORTING WITH SACRIFICAL AND FREEWILL OFFERINGS

KINGDOM CITIZENS RESPECTING THE COVENANT THEY HAVE MADE WITH THE CHURCH

NOVEMBER 2	WHEN YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE THE FELLOWSHIP
NOVEMBER 9	DILIGENT COMMITMENT TO KEEPING THE COVENANT
NOVEMBER 16	BEING THANKFUL FOR THE MISSION
NOVEMBER 23	EXALTING THE SAVIOR
NOVEMBER 30	EVANGELIZING THE LOST

KINGDOM CITIZENS BEING TRUE TO THE MISSION

DECEMBER 7	EXECUTING MISSION
DECEMBER 14	EDIFYING THE SAINTS
DECEMBER 21	JOSEPH EMBRACED JESUS AS HIS OWN
DECEMBER 28	LOVING GOD AND LOVING EACH OTHER