

SEVENTH DAY CHURCH OF GOD  
(REFORMED) INC.

SEVENTH DAY CHURCH OF GOD (REFORMED)  
CONVOCATION 2019  
**GOING FORWARD IT'S  
THE LORD'S COMMAND**  
BAPTISMAL SERVICE Join us at 100 East Road, Kingston 10  
Saturday, December 28 @ 9:00 a.m. & Sunday, December 29 @ 8:30 a.m.  
Come to Jesus! He will set YOU free! Worship God together!  
INSPIRATIONAL PREACHING



# LESSONS *from the* BOOK OF LIFE

*THE CHURCH...ROOTED & GROUNDED*

*March-July 2020*

# LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE

March - July 2020

## VOLUME 1

### THE CHURCH...ROOTED & GROUNDED...

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:  
Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been  
taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving”.

*Colossians 2:6-7*

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# EDITORS' NOTES

For this the Church's 60th year of existence, the Lessons being provided for the further edification of the Body of Christ, are geared towards strengthening our understanding of the foundation on which God's True Church is built; thus preserving our legacy, as we celebrate God's influence on the Church.

The Lessons have been aligned to the following pillars which undergird the principles and doctrines of the Church:

- “Striving for Righteousness”
- “Biblical Prophecies”; and
- “Conformity to Bible Teachings”

Volume 1 presents twenty-one (21) topics ranging from the inception of the Church to its impact on individuals who have committed themselves to God, and concludes with the 10 guiding principles – The Commandments.

It is our prayer that as you study, you will allow God to open your understanding towards the Biblical truths on which the Church thrives, and that you will strive to make the necessary adjustments to your lives to ensure that you get in, or remain in step with His requirements, in order to move forward in Christ.

Happy Studying!

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## HOME STUDY FOR LESSON 1

1. 1 Sam. 3:1-21 : The call of Samuel
2. 1 Sam. 16:1-13 : The call of David
3. Judges 6:11-16 : The call of Gideon
4. Matt 4 : 18-22 ; Rom 11:1-25 :The call of the disciples & people of these days

# LESSON 1

## GOD CHOOSES A PEOPLE

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to:

- i. expand their knowledge of the different ways in which God calls His people;
- ii. place greater emphases on the call of God.

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 7:6-9 | **Key Verse:** John 10:16

### INTRODUCTION

In various walks of life, persons are known to have responded to one call or another. Whether it is in the secular world or in religious circles, some persons have become passionate about new philosophies or some popular schools of thought. Others are known to have become disciples of persons who develop concepts and beliefs which appear to provide responses to some long-asked questions which might have occupied their minds.

Today's lesson does not seek to highlight something new but to bring to focus a special call from Someone Special. The response to this call, which men and women of different dispensations have heeded, has resulted in rewarding experiences.

### THE LESSON

As brought out in the Home Study, men like Samuel, David and Gideon in the Old Testament period were specially called by God to occupy distinct and significant roles. Similarly as recorded in the New Testament, we read of the call of the disciples and people of these days (Matt 4: 18-22; Rom 11:1-25). Each person's experience was influenced by God's particular intervention which was advised by what He wanted to be done in such times and situations.

This was also true of New Testament times. During His three and a half (3 ½) years' ministry, Jesus made disciples of men whom He had called. He taught them the way they should behave and how they should relate to God and their fellowmen. Jesus informed the disciples that they were to be His witnesses in an area which covered the world, as they knew it at that time (Acts 1:8). This they did, as they continued where Jesus left off, spreading the message of repentance and baptism and signaling that "the Kingdom of God was at hand" (Matt. 10:7).

One needs to consider that the call is important and may vary. Your call may not be as dramatic as that of Paul's (Acts 9:1-9). Some might be called through a dream, a song, a message or even through sickness. Peter, on the day they celebrated the feast of Pentecost echoed the prophecy of Joel which states that God would be calling people of different nationalities and generations (Acts 2:38 & 39). This call would include the Gentiles (Romans 11:25). The Apostle Paul, who was dramatically called, concentrated much of his efforts in ministering to the Gentiles (Acts 9:1-6, 20-21; 13:46-48, 2 Timothy 1:1&11).

Jesus, at His ascension, commissioned the disciples to go to earth's remotest bounds to preach and teach, thus preparing people for His return. It was therefore His whole intention that the exercise should be a relay in which the baton would pass from one to another through the ages. Similar to the call of the Israelites in our scripture passage, God does not call one because there is anything special about that individual, but the call is extended because of His love for mankind. He continues to call today! It is now in our hands. We have been called to carry on. Do we not sing **CARRY ON FOR JESUS?**

The Church of God (Reformed) is one of such 'institutions' called out to carry on the teachings of Jesus. In the Church's history, we recall how a man, H.J Waugh, on his 'sick bed', promised God to evangelize Jamaica if he were healed. God healed him and the work started. God be thanked. All over the world, God's Church exists to be a light, to point the way to God (Isaiah 42:6 & 7). God still calls today as He did in Bible times (1 Cor. 1:26-28).

**LET US VALUE OUR CALLING!!**

# LESSON 2

## THE CHURCH: ITS BIRTH & GROWTH

*(A Divinely Established Institution)*

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

To inform/remind participants of:

- i. aspects of the Church's history;
- ii. the Church of the present era;
- iii. things for which the Church rejoices;
- iv. the need to volunteer their services to the work of the Lord.

**Scripture:** Psalm 84 | **Key Verse:** Matt. 16:18

### INTRODUCTION

According to The Compact Bible Dictionary, church is derived from two Greek words: kuriakus (belonging to the Lord) and ekklesia (an assembly). In its definition, Oxford Concise Dictionary cites church as being:

1. a building for public (usually Christian) worship;
2. a meeting for public worship in such a building;
3. the body of all Christians;
4. an organized Christian group or society of any time, country or district, or distinct principles of worship.

Given the many aspects of the definition stated, an attempt has been made to simplify/restate the meaning of church as: a universal organization which operates through local assemblies and which embraces believers and engages them in carrying out the mission of worship, fellowship and the propagation of the gospel of Christ. In its true form, the believers comprising the church are expected to be active disciples of Christ, walking in newness of life.

## THE LESSON

The church which has come a long way in history had its beginnings in Old Testament times. Although the earliest Bible reference to the word “church” is in Matthew 16:18, Deacon Stephen in Acts 7:38 made mention of the church in the wilderness which indicates that the church did in fact exist long before the Apostles’ era. An understanding of the reason for a church is bound up in the knowledge that God wanted to have a special people for Himself with whom He could interact – a people who would honour and reverence His Name and to whom He would show His favour and express His love.

As recorded in Exodus 25:8 & 22, God Commanded Moses to have a sanctuary erected where the interaction with His chosen people would be realized. Further information can also be drawn from the relationship that God had with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3, 17:1-8), Isaac (Gen. 26:1-4) and Jacob (Gen 28:10-15; 35:1-3). This Command to build the sanctuary, which was obeyed, marked the inauguration of the first organized assembly of believers (the church). The building which was a movable structure was known as the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:9; 26:30). Its movable capability was obviously designed to facilitate Israel’s nomadic situation at that point in time (Ex. 40:36-38).

In subsequent years, places for worship were known as synagogues or temples, depending on the time and situation. Smith’s Bible dictionary states that synagogues were instituted during the time of captivity, when it was not possible for Israel to worship in temples. Temples were more permanent and elaborate buildings. Bible history bears record of three temples: one built by King Solomon (2 Chron. 3:1; 5:1), one by Zerubbabel (Ezra 5:2; 6:15; Hag. 1:1-2 & 14) and the third, an enlargement of Zerubbabel’s by King Herod (Smith’s Bible Dictionary p. 681).

During the time of the Apostles, local churches were founded - some of which were in houses. From every indication churches in houses were established to facilitate numbers, proximity of members, content of worship, and maybe the cost of construction. Another very likely reason for these make-shift arrangements could have been the immediate need to facilitate new converts in places where no church existed.



## **The Church in the present era**

It must be admitted that many religious organizations exist all over the world in the era of the twentieth to the twenty-first century.

This aspect of the study is not intended, however, to investigate the various religions of the day, but rather to concentrate on a particular religious organization which was specially called by God to reform His work and thus make a difference in Christendom.

### **The Seventh Day Church of God (Reformed) Inc.**

In 1958, a man who was called by God for service, accepted and went forth with the message to call people from the world into the light of God's love and salvation. On his bed of affliction, he vowed that if God healed him, he would carry through the work of evangelism throughout Jamaica and by extension, wherever God would lead him.

This man - Hixroy Joseph Waugh - became the Pastor and Overseer of the chain of churches which was named Seventh Day Church of God (Reformed) Inc. ('Seventh Day' included to indicate that the church observes the Sabbath, 'Reformed'<sup>1</sup> to highlight its reformed status and 'Inc.' being the abbreviation for Incorporated). So not only did Pastor Waugh answer the call, but on divine instruction, he carried out the task of erecting the first of many structures to house the people whom God called and the others who would adhere to the call.

This first building (Headquarters) which was constructed at 20 East Road, Kingston 10, Jamaica, West Indies, was built to divine specification and was dedicated in 1960 and thereafter commissioned into service.

### **Blessings for which the church rejoices**

Since the church was organized, many significant events occurred. Among them are:

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<sup>1</sup> **Reformed:** *Through persecution and false teachings, the church had deviated from full truth. This Reformed Movement, therefore is aimed at restoring the Church to its former truths.*

- conversion of many souls,
- healings,
- prophecies and their fulfillment,
- spiritual gifts received, and
- lives and families improved in significant ways.

Apart from the Headquarters, where the church began in a house with one Minister, there have been significant increases to the number of assemblies and its cadre of Ministers.

In this, the sixtieth year of the church's existence, the believers are rejoicing in God's leading and other blessings which can be summed up in the words of Samuel (following Israel's victory over the Philistines) "Hitherto, hath the Lord helped us".

Today the Church recognizes the need for more valiant workers in the vineyard of the Lord. Believers should therefore strive to live according to God's prescription, so that they can be eligible for service.

# LESSON 3

## BENEFITS OF GREAT SACRIFICES

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

For participants to be:

- i. aware of the sacrifices made by individuals in the quest to keep alive the ethos of the Church;
- ii. aware that sacrifices made for the work will be rewarded by the Lord;
- iii. motivated to recognize the need to make sacrifices for the work of the Lord.

**Scriptures:** 1 Kings 17:8-16; Mark 12:41-44 | **Key Verses:** 1 Kings 17:13-14

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the life of individuals, as well as that of Organisations, there have been times when persons were called upon to make demanding sacrifices. These sacrifices would range from giving up time, sharing talent and personal belongings. This lesson seeks to showcase persons who have sacrificed much so that the work of the Lord can be preserved.

### THE LESSON

A sacrifice suggests giving to the extent that there is some form of discomfort. Some individuals who have made sacrifices in Bible times include:

- i. Abraham who offered his only son at the request of the Lord (Genesis 22);
- ii. The widow who made the cake for Elijah when all she had was a little meal (1 Kings 17:13-14);
- iii. The widow who gave her two mites to the cause of God (Mark 12:42)

One cannot forget that God had set the example for us when He offered His only Son to die in our stead (John 3:16). Likewise, He expects us to make sacrifices for His cause. Indeed, Jesus instructs in Luke 9:23 that anyone who seeks to follow Him should first deny self and take up the cross. It requires great sacrifices to discipline self against the pleasure of sin so as to please the Lord.

### **Sacrifices made in the Seventh Day Church of God (Reformed) Inc.**

One of the well talked about sacrifices made in the life of this Church occurred in 1972 when the then Overseer, Pastor Waugh vacated his home at 20 East Road, Kingston 10. This was in response to a Command by God that he should do so to facilitate the extension of the building for worship services.

Imagine a man with his family of 10, leaving his “house and land” to occupy a rented house. Near to the time of leaving 20 East Road, he had absolutely no idea where he and his family would be living. This was a sacrifice indeed! Other notable sacrifices individuals have made over the years include:

- i. donating their land for the erection of sanctuaries;
- ii. quitting jobs to work full time in the service of the Lord;
- iii. freely making their motor vehicles available for use in the service of the Lord;
- iv. giving their time to pray for others or carry through tasks as required;
- v. making significant financial contributions towards the work.

It must be noted that although members may not be rewarded here on earth for these and any other sacrifices, the Lord will reward them with eternal life in the earth made new, if they remain faithful. In the same breath we should be thankful for these and other individuals who sacrificed so that those who are not yet saved may have the opportunity to hear the Word.

# LESSON 4

## GREAT MOMENTS

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to be reminded or made aware:

- i. of some significant experiences of the Church that are worthy of being celebrated,
- ii. that God's awesome power was manifested during these experiences,
- iii. that God's promises are true

**Scripture:** Psalm 136 | **Key Verse:** Psalm 118:23

### INTRODUCTION

It is important to be knowledgeable of the 'past' to understand and appreciate the 'present' as these experiences usually act as a chart to steer the happenings of the future.

When one reflects on the past he/she realizes that there are many things to appreciate - some very special moments that give reason(s) to celebrate. Sometimes these moments are shared by many or at other times by individuals. For example, Moses by the burning bush or the pentecostal experience. When an individual or an organization attains a significant milestone, it is generally attended by celebratory activities, which are sometimes marked by symbols and ceremonies.

The Seventh Day Church of God (Reformed) Inc. referred to hereafter as 'the Church', is grateful to God for leading her into its 60th year of existence. As we reflect on the life of the church since its inception, some significant/great moments that remain vivid in the minds of many members are being recalled in this lesson.

## **THE LESSON**

We are called through the Words recorded in Psalm 107:8 to praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to us. Therefore, as we recall some of the great moments/achievements of the Church let us celebrate by giving thanks to God.

The following are some of the happenings which occasioned celebrations:

### **I. God's Healing Power**

- The Founder/first Overseer – Pastor H.J. Waugh, received Divine healing after doctors failed to diagnose his condition. This resulted in him making a vow to God that if he were healed, he would evangelise for Him – herein lies the birth of the Church.
- The late Brother Alphaeus Satchel who was given over by doctors, wrapped in a sheet and left to die, benefitted from God's healing power and became the Church's official driver for many years.
- A visitor to the Church, who after giving birth and was placed on life support machine, was healed through the power of God, and went on to live happily with her family.

There continues to be many individuals who share their testimonies of God's healing power, for which we rejoice.

### **II. God's Saving and Protecting Power**

- Lives of believers and their families were saved after their houses were either burnt or shot-up by gunmen.
- Some believers were held-up at gun point, and one even shot in the head, but thanks be to God, they remained alive. Also, despite many accidents believers continue to testify of God's protecting power.
- The late Brother Merton Hall from the Brandon Hill Assembly was miraculously rescued after he was literally buried alive by over 3ft of land slippage while working on the church building. He lived many years after and never failed to share his testimony.

### **III. The Power of Prayer and Faith**

- Through prayer and faith the Leaders of the Church have led the people to God through the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. The Church now has a significant number of members worldwide who have indicated their willingness to walk the 'narrow way' and committed themselves to achieving the Church's mission.
- God has blessed us as a Church and through faith and prayer we have acquired numerous assets.
- Many Assemblies have been built or renovated in a short period of time through the generosity of members and visitors who contributed to the cause. One such example is the New Ground Assembly, which received significant sums to replace their building which was deemed unsuitable for worship. Although financial resources were limited great faith was demonstrated.

### **IV God's Promises Fulfilled**

- The Church, with its Headquarters at 20 East Road, Kingston Jamaica, was given the mandate to 'build alone' (not aligning itself to any other denomination). It was also prophesied on January 20, 1965 that this Church would extend its borders to foreign lands. Today, there are twenty-six (26) branches in Jamaica, 2 in the United States of America and 1 in the United Kingdom. In addition, there are a number of faithful believers residing in other areas such as Grand Cayman, Canada, Chicago and Florida, who, despite not having an established assembly, are still a fulfillment of the prophecy that the Church will be established in foreign lands.
- The promise that the Church would gain possession of adjacent properties to its headquarters, was realized after many challenges.
- The Lord said there would be a mighty army of young people in the church as well as numerous teachers. This prophesy has been fulfilled, and today many of these persons have grown and are now serving in the ministry.

The words of the song "The voices of a million angels could not express my gratitude" summarize our appreciation of God's faithfulness.

As we move forward, let us be resolute to firmly stand for Jesus Christ knowing that He who has kept us safely over these many years will lead us home.

### **ACTIVITIES**

1. Share a “Great Moment” experience relating to any of the topics mentioned above, not mentioned in the lesson, that you think is worthy of celebrating.
2. Make a prayer giving God thanks for all the great moments of the church so far.



# LESSON 5

## REVERENCING GOD'S SANCTUARY

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

This Lesson serves to:

- i. show the importance God places on His house;
- ii. motivate believers to reverence the sanctuary.

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 5 | **Key Verse:** Ecclesiastes 5:1

### INTRODUCTION

For most religious groups, their place of worship is held in high regard. Followers of the various religions have on occasions given their all to protect their temple, mosque, synagogue or church, even to the extent of giving up their lives. This is so because to them the place where they worship is representative of the being they deem to be supreme. Subsequently, any desecration of this area is often considered 'an attack' on their god. For some, though, places of worship are treated with scant regard. This is true even of some of the worshippers. Coupled with this, the respect that the unbelievers had for these sacred places has eroded over the years. Many no longer fear a reaction from the entity being worshipped and will often break into places of worship to steal and to kill. God requires that His house be viewed in a particular manner and this lesson seeks to bring this to our attention.

### THE LESSON

As Israel journeyed through the wilderness on their way to Canaan, God directed Moses to build a tabernacle which was to serve as a place for Him to meet with His people (Ex 25:8). He gave detailed instructions regarding its construction and handling. This was a temporary, portable structure and so, some years later, King Solomon erected a permanent place of worship (the temple) for Israel.

The process of building as well as the dedication of the Temple gave an indication of the reverence that was placed on it. It was built with costly ornaments and precious stones. During its construction, all preparatory work was done elsewhere, apparently to maintain an atmosphere of reverence at the actual site (1 Kings 6:7). At the dedication, no effort was spared to make it a grand occasion, with sacrifices being offered, and the congregation, musicians and singers sending up praise to God.

In both cases, referring to the building of the tabernacle and the temple, God showed His approval of the completed structures by setting His glory upon them. This was a clear sign that He was pleased with the efforts of the people and accepted the building that was dedicated to Him as 'His House'.

God is not confined to buildings made by men but He has ordered that a place be set apart for Him to meet with His people. He directs that such a place, including its furnishings and surroundings, be treated with due respect, awe and reverence (Lev. 19:30).

Cited below are instances where persons did not treat the sacred areas or vessels in the right way and ended up suffering the consequences:

- Nadab and Abihu slain for offering strange fire (Num 3:4)
- Uzza died from touching the cart bearing the Ark (1 Chron. 13:9 & 10)
- Money changers abused the temple and were chased out (John 2:13-16)

It must be borne in mind that the sanctuary, its furnishings, and precincts, although held in high esteem, are not to be worshipped. The area is held sacred because it indicates that we are in the presence of God.

David pointed out in 1 Chronicles 29:1 that it is no ordinary house. Those who enter should bear in mind where they are and should, as such, walk, talk, and otherwise act in a manner befitting the House of God. Its instruments and equipment should also be handled with care, and, by duly authorized and consecrated persons. Overall, everyone should strive to make it a place worthy of the Name of God.

Psalms 84:10 and 122:1 further expand on the attitude the believer should

have towards the sanctuary. As we seek to respond to this very important call to adjust our attitude on matters concerning God's sanctuary, the following represents some areas to which we should pay attention:

1. No eating, drinking or chewing of gum is allowed in the sanctuary
2. Individuals should desist from holding private conversations during worship sessions
3. If one arrives while worship is already in progress, that one is expected to enter discretely, so as not to create any distraction.
4. Similarly, if one has to exit the sanctuary during the worship session, this is to be done discretely, thereby minimizing any semblance of distraction
5. Children are also to be taught how to conduct themselves during worship sessions
6. Individuals who take their children/wards to worship are required to control the activities of these children. Importantly, the items (toys, books, etc.) that are provided to children, should not lend themselves to creating a distraction. Books in particular should be of a religious nature, thereby training the minds of the children

In viewing the holy edifice in such a manner, we would accord it the reverence it is due as Commanded by God, and, as a result, benefit from His presence continually dwelling among us.

# LESSON 6

## THE IMPACT OF THE CHURCH ON THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to be aware that:

- i. there are benefits to be derived from the Church as a major socializing agent;
- ii. these benefits should elicit thanksgiving from such individuals and from the Church family.

**Scripture:** Proverbs 4 | **Key Verse:** Proverbs 22:6

### INTRODUCTION

The Key verse as recorded in Proverbs 22:6 speaks to the fact that when children are exposed to Christian upbringing/ training, it ought to impact significantly on their lives in adulthood. Paul also testifies of this in 2 Tim.1:5, recognizing the importance of the examples set by Timothy's grandmother and mother, Lois and Eunice, who themselves were greatly influenced by the Church.

### THE LESSON

The Church today can be thankful that she has assisted in producing well-principled men and women, who contribute significantly in maintaining the moral and spiritual fibres of our society. The Bible contains many instructions on how the Church should nurture her young to ensure the longevity of the institution and moreso the saving of souls. In Titus 2:4-8, Paul again dispenses sound advice which this Church has followed and has seen results such as:

- i. sober, discrete, chaste young women (v. 4 - 5);
- ii. sober, sincere and uncorrupt men (v. 6 - 8)

In the scripture lesson our children are admonished to listen to their ‘father’ so that they would:

- i. keep His Commandments and live (v. 4);
- ii. be preserved (v. 6);
- iii. be honoured/promoted (v. 8);
- iv. have long life (v.10) among other things.

When we examine the calibre of the individuals whose lives have been moulded by the Church, we can attest to the fact that it pays to serve Jesus and to do so in an environment/institution that upholds the ‘Word’. Believers should feel proud and indeed give thanks for such an institution – Church.

In a world where there is a lack of many positive role models, we have those among us whom we can pattern. Where corruption is rampant, we can say “there is a people”. Where looseness and frivolity seem to be the order of the day we can be grateful that there are still some individuals who are exemplary, thus serving as models for boys and girls who are in need of direction.

Below are testimonies from individuals who have been nurtured by the Church.

### **Testimony of Deaconess Julia Baker Francis**

*I have been associated with this Church all my life as I was born to parents who were ardent Christians and members. From childhood I was taught the principles of God. The Ten Commandments were instilled in me from that early age insomuch that when in adulthood these principles were tested I could have triumphed.*

*I can recall being part of a training session which over the years, had its official culmination on a Saturday. Pressure was placed on me but I stood resolute that I would not transgress the Lord’s Sabbath. As a result, for the first time in history this activity was shifted from a Saturday to another week day. I stood up for what I believed in and brought about a change in customs. In the end God’s name was glorified.*

*During my working life my beliefs were tested on numerous occasions but I held on to the principles that I was taught.*

### **Testimony of Evangelist Ann-Marie Hyde:**

*I feel privileged and blessed to be born into a Christian family that has impacted my life in many remarkable ways. I attribute the woman of substance that I am today to the spiritual and social influence the Church has had on my life.*

*I have received a solid foundation on which faith and trust in God is built. Therefore today when I encounter various challenges I know where to resort for strength and guidance. I have never forgotten the words of wisdom that was imparted to me during those formative years. I find the words of the Key verse to be indeed true. I do not for one moment project that I am perfect, but fervently believe that I am able to overcome the imperfections because I have been instructed by the Church in living a victorious life.*

*The Church has taught me how to make proper judgments and responsible decisions. In the event that I err there would always be a word or reminder of the requirements and expectation which helped me to get back on track.*

*I can recall that from as early as age five /six I was given the opportunity to participate in the activities of the Church, thus helping to build my self-confidence and communication skills. I now serve in a profession that requires me to communicate with people at different levels.*

*Today I am able to offer a word of encouragement to all parents, guardians and anyone who has the opportunity to touch the life of any young person, to do so with love and diligence, never shunning, but guiding them in the way of the Lord, because their future is influenced by those who impact their lives.*

The two individuals who shared their testimonies are grateful for the impact that the Church has made on their lives. Today Deaconess Julia Baker Francis serves in many capacities in the church, to include Chorister, Bible Study and Finance Committees and Youth & Sabbath School Ministries;

Evangelist Ann-Marie Hyde, has served in many other areas of the Church such as Missionary, Chorister, member of the Youth Executive and the Sabbath School . For them the lines of the song – “***All that I am and ever hope to be, I owe it all to thee,***” is a reality.

Let us celebrate the difference the Church has made in their lives and seek to nurture other young lives in order to sustain the future.

### ACTIVITIES

1. Examine the story of the Prodigal Son and relate it to the focus of today's lesson
2. Share testimonies of benefits derived

# LESSON 7

## BACKGROUND TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

To help participants to:

- i. be able to define (and/or defend) the basic tenets of the Christian belief;
- ii. realise that in most cases, the Ten Commandments are the guiding principles for law makers;
- iii. understand the circumstances under which the Commandments were given.

**Scripture:** Exodus 19 | **Key Verse:** 1 John 3:4

### INTRODUCTION

It had been three months since the Israelites had left Egypt (Exodus 19:1). They arrived at Mount Sinai (also called Mount Horeb – Malachi 4:4) - a desert peninsula which joins Egypt to Canaan, where they remained for some months. History teaches that the region was probably named for the Babylonian moon god – ‘Sin’. This section is an isolated mass of rocks rising abruptly from the plain in awful grandeur (Halley’s Bible Handbook). It is to this day, a very rugged wilderness. God led the Israelites to the southern point of this peninsula and spoke His laws.

One may very well imagine the fear of the Israelites, as they felt and saw the mountains shaking and smoking and heard the thundering and the noise of trumpet. The lightening which accompanied the voice of God must have made them even more fearful.

### THE LESSON

Lawlessness has taken over almost every nook and cranny of the world. It is a lawless age. It would seem that few have respect for law, order and authority. This was perhaps the very reason Daniel prophesied that the wicked would do more wickedly (Daniel 12:10). Ironically, despite the



scant regard given to the laws, world leaders, politicians and governments sit daily to make more laws – new ones which they think will curb the masses. However, the slide deeper and deeper into anarchy continues. God inspired Paul to say that He (God) gave the people over to their reprobate minds (Romans 1:28). Genesis 6, records Noah's experience of the evil which such a mind is capable of generating.

God's knowledge of mankind's inclination to sin, made Him institute laws to guide their conduct. These laws have been in existence since the beginning of time. Many Government-made laws are linked to the Ten Commandments and are usually enacted after the wrong has been committed.

Ever so often they are reviewed to address the new norms and standards of society. How different from God's laws, which were there to point out wrong doing when and if it happened (1 John 3:4 & Romans 3:20 lp). God's laws are forever and cannot be altered (Psalm 111:7 & 8, Romans 7:12). To show how important and lasting the laws of God are, and to remind us that they cannot be changed or altered, the Apostle James (2:9-12) said that mankind will be judged by this law, which he referred to as the Law of Liberty. John in Revelation (22:14) said that it is by keeping this law, that mankind would have right to the Tree of Life. These ideas further cement the truth that the laws have not been changed nor abolished in any way. The laws of God are still for the times and seasons in which we live today. The act of killing now, is still as wrong as when Cain killed Abel many years ago.

One popular teaching today, is that love is the greatest Commandment and therefore no other Commandment is necessary. It is an absolute fact of truth that "LOVE IS indeed THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT"; as it is the foundation for all Ten Commandments. The statement of Jesus in Matthew 22:38-40, agrees to this as it points out that the Commandments embrace loving God and our fellowmen/neighbours. Interestingly, the Ten Commandments, are actually divided into two parts. The first four, tell that we should love, serve and reverence God. The remaining six tell how human beings are to live with and love their fellowmen/ neighbours. One of the anti-law philosophies is that man is guided in right/wrong living by his conscience. The problem with this belief is that one might

never find two consciences agreeing on the same thing without some guiding principles. What if to steal or to commit fornication/adultery or to tell lies were not to go against one's conscience, while it goes against another's? The world would be a place of double standards. Just as 'faith without works is dead,' 'conscience without law is a bad master!'

A question which may be asked repeatedly is, "why were the Commandments given for the first time on Mount Sinai?" The truth is that the Ten Commandments were in effect before Exodus 20 (examine Genesis 4:8-10, 6:5 & 39:9). Let us note that it was in Exodus 20 where they were codified.

Consider one reason God gave the laws as presented in Exodus 20. The Israelites had lived in Egypt for over 400 years and were slaves to the Egyptians. Under the Egyptian bondage, they were forced TO FORGET God and His laws including the Sabbath Day. They then had to be reminded of God's standards and principles for their lives. The awesome and powerful way in which God displayed His might, was in fact to cause the Israelites to realise that none of the gods in Egypt could be compared to Him.

A popular modern day belief is that Moses gave these Ten Commandments and as a result, they are called the laws of Moses. The Bible teaches, however, that:

- a. God spoke the laws (Ex. 20:1; 18 & 19; Deut. 4:12 & 13)
- b. God wrote them two times (Ex 24:12 & 31:18; Deut 10:1-4)

There is nothing here to suggest that they were Moses' laws and as such, must be regarded as the laws of God which are to guide people on their earthly pilgrimage. Remember what John through the Spirit said of those who keep the laws of God (Rev. 22:14)? Should we not all pray, **"Lord have mercy on us and incline our hearts to keep Thy Laws?"**

# LESSON 8

## STRIVING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: AN EXCELLENT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

For participants to be reminded/informed that God expects His people to please Him in all things

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:3 -11 | **Key Verse** : John 14:15

### INTRODUCTION

Man's connection with God was evident from creation, as after making man (Gen1:27), God it would seem, according to Gen. 3:8 had a regular meeting-time with them. This relationship became estranged when on one such occasion, man went into hiding as he had disobeyed God's instructions.

### THE LESSON

God effected new means in order to renew and sustain His relationship with man. He established a covenant with Abraham, through whose lineage the Messiah and Saviour of the world would come.

As a peculiar God, He ensured that His 'called out' would have guidelines to direct their behaviour, hence the Commands He gave in Exodus 20:3 - 11. To underscore His ownership of, and love for man, God repeats it over and over that He is a Jealous God and demands loyalty and reciprocal love from man (Ex. 20:5-6 ; 34:14). Jesus reiterates this in John 14:15 as he admonishes that loving Him means total obedience to His Commands.

As the manufacturer and owner of mankind, God is fully qualified to make of him any request He wishes. It is man's responsibility to respond accordingly. When God gives a Command, man's position should be like

that of Isaiah or Saul (Paul) who said respectively, “Here am I send me” or “What wilt Thou have me to do?”

The Bible is replete with messages to the effect that it is man’s duty to please God in all things. Ex. 20:3-11 sets out very clearly the fundamental principles which should guide man’s relationship with God.

It is important that mankind live by these principles as in doing so there will be no separation from God.

### **ACTIVITY**

Identify other verses in the Bible that support the Commands as given in Ex. 20:3 - 11

# LESSON 9

## THERE IS ONE GOD!

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For those who study to know that:

- i. the God of heaven is the only true God;
- ii. mankind should pay homage to the only true God

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 10:6-16 | **Key Verses:** Deuteronomy 6:4-5

### INTRODUCTION

The first of the ten major Commandments (Laws) given to the children of Israel (Jacob's descendants), was to them a strong reminder that there is only one true God. These people needed to be told again that there is one true God because for over four hundred (400) years, they lived in Egypt where the people believed in many gods. To remind them was both timely and important, since they would now be expected to return to the belief in, and show allegiance to one God – the Creator of the world. This God only they were to serve!

### THE LESSON

The first Commandment (Exodus 20:3) reads “**THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME**” (apart from me). Before giving the law, God, the Creator, prefaced it by saying, He was the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt – out of slavery. This ought to have caused the Israelites to reflect on the God who triumphed over the gods of Egypt.

Although this law is recorded in Exodus 20, it must not for one moment be believed that this was the first time it was given. The belief in only one God (monotheism), was something that was known and practised by early Old Testament characters such as Noah, Abraham and Jacob (Gen. 6:8-9; 22:12 & 35:1-4). The first human inhabitants of earth, Adam and Eve, it should be noted, believed in one God, as they even met with

Him in the Garden of Eden (Gen.3:8).

The belief that there was more than one god, was introduced by Satan when he tricked Adam and Eve into thinking that they too could be as gods (Gen. 3:5). Since then the idea has spread like wildfire and the belief in other gods has taken deep roots in religious circles worldwide. Remember the words of Paul when he told the people that they worshipped and served the creature above the Creator (Rom. 1:25). Mankind has made gods out of rivers, trees, animals and even other human beings. Jehovah who is the only God to be worshipped, caused Isaiah to tell the people that He, God, would not give His glory to anyone else (Is. 42:8).

Paul told the worshippers on Mars Hill, who believed in many gods, that there was, in fact, only one true God. This God who made the heavens and the earth and all the dwellers therein was very near to them (Acts 17:22-29). The general fact is that no god is like the God of Heaven. He is the only God who has given His Son to die for the sins of the world and the only God without beginning or end of days.

God has established Himself as the one true God, and has declared in the law, that no other god should be considered along with Him. He said that He is the Lord God and that there is none like Him. Be sure to acknowledge Him as God and bear in mind that there is none to be compared to Him. ***Get to know Him and worship Him today!***

## ACTIVITIES

1. Apart from the one true God, name some of the gods people worship today.
2. Why should we teach the belief in one God?
3. What is the word for the belief in
  - a. one God?
  - b. more than one God?
4. Repeat this first Commandment!

# LESSON 10

## IDOLS - MAKE NONE, SERVE NONE!

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to:

- i. get a better understanding of the term 'graven image';
- ii. know the consequences of worshipping idols;
- iii. be able to detect an idol in whatever form it might be and to guard against having another god in their lives.

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 4:1-20 | **Key Verses:** Exodus 20:4-6

### INTRODUCTION

As if the first Commandment were not strong enough to ensure total reverence/worship to the Supreme Being, God now introduced the second Commandment that hits directly at what the Israelites had seen for over 400 years. They, no doubt, saw the many gods the Egyptians used to worship and were forced, perhaps at times, to join in the worship. To think that the idea of the "TRINITY" was prominent in Egypt during the Israelites' sojourn, is enough to tell that they were somehow introduced to the 'many-gods' concept. In addition, the Israelites might have learnt that one must see the god who is being worshipped. This was evident when they made the golden calf as an object to worship while Moses was on the mount meeting with God. (Ex. 32:1-3).

### THE LESSON

It would be absolutely impossible to make something that would be a true representation of God. This is obvious since no one had/has ever seen God (Deut. 4:15 & John 1:18). This amazing truth is suggesting that everything used to show a likeness of God would be a false impression. The Commandment emphatically states that no graven image or anything in earth, the waters, or in the heavens should be used as an object of

worship as none of these give a true reflection of God.

The Israelites were reeling from the effects of having lived with/among the idolatrous Egyptians for more than 400 years. They were affected by the things they had seen and for a very long time it caused their downfall (Judges 10:6-7, 1 Kings 12: 25-30). The old saying “tradition dies hard” proved true. In spite of all this, God, in giving the Commandments, was pointing the Israelites back to the old path (Jer. 6:16) as He was not willing to compromise anything. He insisted that the Israelites were to begin once more to worship only Him - the Only True God and do so without making any representation of Him.

God must be seen as limitless, but the moment an object is made to represent Him, He would become very limited in one's mind. It does not matter whether the image is mental or physical, the outcome is the same. It is important to remove all humanly devised concepts of God, as such concepts will drive us into wanting to get something to represent Him, and prevent us from experiencing His limitless power. This second Commandment, in a nutshell, warns against using any visible objects in worship to represent the invisible God (Lev. 26:1, Isa. 44:8-10, 1 John 5:21).

It now becomes imperative to explain the difference between ‘graven images’ and ‘different visual art forms’, such as sculpture and photography. In 2 Chron. 2:7; 4:2- 4 & 13; 5:7-8, God commanded that carved things should be used in the temple which Solomon built. Picture taking, which is used to remind of events or to capture beautiful scenery is very legitimate and does not constitute a breach of the second Commandment. Remember the law states, “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them.” If, however, pictures, art and/or sculpture are used as objects of worship, it is wrong and this is what God condemns.

The term ‘graven image’ actually means idol and an idol is created when worship is ascribed to an object. It must be realized that carved things of whatever sort, trees, rivers, and animals are considered as graven images (idols) if they are worshipped (for example, the River Nile is worshipped by the Egyptians); in this regard, the River is considered to be an idol. The Commandment continues to point out that the consequences of iniquity will be passed from one generation down to the third and fourth.



When for example one generation worships idols and comes under the influence of that false worship, it is setting the stage for other generations that follow; this has ripple effects. Are we not accustomed to hearing people say that they are doing 'this' because their parents and grandparents did it (the born-come-see attitude). The beauty though is that the Almighty God promised to be merciful to those who will accept and do His will.

Be wise and give up the graven images/ idols and worship the One True God!

### **ACTIVITIES**

1. How will God deal with those who serve other gods?
2. When is an object considered a 'graven image'? Explain.
3. Explain how an object can be an idol to one person and not to another.

# LESSON 11

## A NAME TO BE REVERED

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to understand:

- i. that God's name is to be revered;
- ii. what is meant by taking the name of the Lord in vain

**Scripture:** Psalm 111 | **Key Verse:** Exodus 20:7

### INTRODUCTION

People often wonder and sometimes argue about whether or not God should be so meticulous about things which they regard as trivial. They contend that God is not seriously interested in what one eats, what one says and how utterances are made. Maybe this explains why even some professing Christians say worthless things, get into loose arguments and at times speak carelessly about God. Such persons say that all God requires are “clean hands and a pure heart”, but they have very little regard for what it means for the hands to be clean and the heart to be pure.

Today's lesson focuses on the third Commandment which states “*THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN, FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTLESS THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN*” (Ex. 20:7).

### THE LESSON

It must be understood that whereas God accepts as His friends, those who serve Him, and extends love and care for the whole world, He is superior to all. In fact, He rules the world. He owns everything, He is all powerful. He is the BIG WONDERFUL GOD who made everything and everyone and who alone is Eternal. His superiority puts Him in a different category from man, “whose breath is in his nostrils” (Is. 2:22), and who is ever so frail and weak.

This Great God has Commanded that mortal man should not take His name in vain. What does it mean to take the Lord's name in vain?

To understand what it is to take or not to take God's name in vain it is important to look at the meaning of the Hebrew word, vain. 'Shawv' (pronounced shav) the Hebrew word translated vain means empty, meaningless, frivolous, worthless, and groundless. It implies thoughtlessness, insincerity, senselessness and hypocrisy.

In light of that meaning the following can be considered as some of the ways of taking God's name in vain:

1. Many times individuals, in a rage or in an attempt to overcome fright or show excitement /displeasure will be heard saying things like, 'Lord Jesus, Lord God, Jesus Christ, Oh God, Lord have mercy, Sweet Jesus, The Big Man up there'. These expressions, if not used genuinely can be considered as a frivolous use of God's name; as the Name is used in a light/an irreverent manner, which is vain. There are times too when some people, use the name of God to gain popularity. This is for their own ascendancy as it is not done in sincerity.
2. The prophet Isaiah made a statement which was repeated by Jesus. It speaks of those who honour God with their mouth/lips while their hearts were far from Him (Isa. 29:13 & Matt.15:8). Jesus added in verse 9 that, that was to worship in vain - taking God's name in vain. In Matthew 23:28, Jesus made it clear that it is hypocrisy to appear outwardly righteous unto men.
3. In the well-known Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the listeners (Matthew 5:33-37) that they were not to swear. At times some folk are heard to swear to tell the truth and they ended up saying things that are not truthful. This is often seen in the legal court system. Even when some persons know they are not talking the truth they call upon God to bear them witness (Isa. 48:1). That is taking God's name in vain - empty and frivolous.
4. It is understood that God's name must be used in a sincere way in worship, prayer, and in witnessing. Everything must be done to the honour and the glory of God (Rev.4:11). All must be done from a sincere and true heart; remember the words of Jesus when He spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well; worship must be done in Spirit and in Truth (John 4: 23 &24).

This Commandment warns against the use of a wide range of vain utterances included in which is the use of profanity and vulgarity, as some commentaries agree. It must be realized that the breaking of this Commandment will result in eternal death. Let us all be careful that no one is found guilty of taking God's name in vain.

# LESSON 12

## THE LORD'S SABBATH (PART 1)

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to:

- i. understand that from creation Sabbath observance was established as a pattern for mankind to follow;
- ii. be enlightened concerning the relationship between the Sabbath and creation.

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:1-3 | **Key Verse:** Exodus 20:8

### INTRODUCTION

What a big topic for study today? It is the topic of nations and generations. As far back as we may recall, the Sabbath question has always provided discussions, even intense controversies among those so inclined. Some argue that the Sabbath can be any day, some say it is Sunday, some say it was for the Jews, while others totally downplay its significance and its existence, suggesting that there is no need for 'the Sabbath' as all the days are the same. Persons have often been heard to say that all one needs are clean hands and a pure heart without any concern for, or interest in what it takes to make the hands clean and the heart pure.

It does seem, however, that the Sabbath question is more prominent in these days than it has ever been. It is discussed on street corners, in homes, at work places and anywhere people meet who have an interest in the subject. Whether or not their motives are pure, they have given the topic its full share of publicity, but not without some persons using every opportunity to deride those who observe the day.

### THE LESSON

To best understand about Sabbath observance, attention is hereby drawn to the scripture reading that puts the matter in perspective. It explains

how Sabbath came into existence, who instituted it and the purpose for which it was intended. The entire chapter of Genesis 1 tells that God created the world with all the things for which He saw the need. After completing the exercise (Chap. 2:2&3), He rested on the seventh day.

This was the first reference to Sabbath keeping which was instituted and observed by God. The important question that comes to mind is, was God tired after creating the world? Certainly not! Not only is He incapable of being stressed, but the creation work was not one that demanded exertion, because God simply spoke the word and each aspect came into being.

God really needed no rest because He was not tired. He is not subject to the weakness of man who needs rest after labour (Consider Isaiah 40:28). Since God was not tired, why did He then rest? The obvious therefore, as will be noticed throughout this study, is that He must have been teaching a lesson and setting an example for His people.

As we would recognize, the Sabbath was instituted before the handing down of the Ten Commandments, yet it was also included as one aspect of that package. The Ten Commandments were given to Moses by God to communicate to the people. Of further significance is that the Commandments were actually written with the finger of God (Exodus 31:18 & 32:16).

As described in Exodus 32:19, Moses was on his way to make the presentation when he saw the people worshipping an idol. In his rage and displeasure, he threw down the Tablets and broke them. Let us consider that God's Commandment Tablets did not have to give in to this impact, for God could have allowed them to withstand any level of violence, but it must have been for a reason.

Notice that He forthwith ordered Moses back to the mountain to have them replaced. Might it not have been to show the importance of the Commandments of which the Sabbath is a part? One could choose to downplay the usefulness of the Commandments (and hence that of the Sabbath) if the Tablets were left broken. However, it was recorded (and is worthy of note), that they were re-written by God and again given to Moses who carried them to the people (Deut 10:1-4).

Getting specifically back to the Sabbath, it is of crucial importance to recognize that the Sabbath Day was the only Commandment that God gave with a reminder, “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy...” He also gave the reasons it should be observed, “for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and rested the Seventh Day...” (Exodus 20:8-11). God wanted His people to remember and appreciate His creation and creative act, so He called them to a halt on that day. Furthermore, the God who created man knows that man’s body un replenished will not be able to withstand life’s drudgery, so He gives him rest (Ex 23:12; 31:17). The Sabbath is a day of rest and reflection on God, by whose creative work and redemptive power people exist and have hope.

It is also important to know that the Sabbath, though given to Israel in the Ten Commandment package, does not mean that it was only for Israel. It was never given as a Jewish Sabbath, but was always referred to as the Sabbath of the Lord. It was given before Israel was a nation and (as observed previously) before its inclusion in the Ten Commandment package. It was Jesus who said that the Sabbath was made for man - the human race (Mark 2:27). Just in case someone still believes that it was a Jewish concern, one should read Isaiah 56:6-7 regarding the Gentiles’ position. Is there not a blessing pronounced on them for observing the Sabbath?

But what of those who say the Sabbath was an Old Testament concern? To such persons, the question arises, what of Jesus whose custom was to attend the synagogue (church) on the Sabbath? (Luke 4:16) and Paul whose manner was to keep the Sabbath? (Acts 17:2). God kept it at creation and Jesus observed it during His earthly life. Whose example should we then follow? God’s or man’s?

## ACTIVITIES

1. Find other scripture passages where Sabbath was observed after Jesus’ ascension.
2. Discuss Matthew 5:17 in relation to Sabbath observance.

# LESSON 13

## THE LORD'S SABBATH (PART 2)

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

- To establish which day is the Lord's Sabbath

**Scriptures:** Genesis 2:1- 3 & Exodus 20:8-11 | **Key Verses:** Exodus 20:10-11

### INTRODUCTION

The questions are often asked “which day is the Lord's Sabbath?”, and “how does one know that the days are the same as when the Sabbath was given?” An attempt is made in this Lesson to deal with such matters.

### THE LESSON

In the preceding lesson, the question was asked “whose example should we follow, God's or man's?” For those who believe in God, they would certainly say “God's”. But even among the skeptics, those who are guided in any form of logic would surely agree that if God is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler, His directives should be followed. But hear what the Apostles said in Acts 5:29, “we ought to obey God rather than men”. The Apostle Paul also showed to the Athenians how necessary it is to serve and reverence God since people's existence and hence their ability to do function depends totally on Him (Acts 17:28).

All sane and reasonable persons should understand, therefore, that God is Supreme and must be obeyed in all areas, including the observance of the Ten Moral Precepts of which the Sabbath is a part. To this end, God reminded His people that they should obey Him for it was He who brought them out of bondage to serve Him.

Perhaps even some of those who do not observe the Sabbath do believe that it was given by God for man to observe. Some such persons might be interested in keeping the Sabbath, but they need to be sure which is the day specified by God so that they can follow in the right path.



The next aspect of this study focuses on which day is the Lord's Sabbath.

## When is the Sabbath?

The Bible teaches that "the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God" (Ex. 20:10; Deut 5:14). Genesis 2:2 states that after God finished His work, He rested on the Seventh Day, the day He blessed and made holy, not the first, the second nor any other. "Seventh" does not mean anything else but "seventh".

## Which is the Seventh Day?

In early Bible times, days were regarded as First Day, Second Day and so on, up to the Seventh Day, which has been established to be the Lord's Sabbath. One should not expect, therefore, to see the names of the days of the week as we know them (e.g. Sunday, Monday, Friday etc.) written in the Bible. As time went by, however, days were named in different languages for ease of reference; the following table bears this out:

BIBLE NAMES	LATIN NAMES	SAXON NAMES	ENGLISH NAMES
1st Day	Dies Solis	Sun's Day	Sunday
2nd Day	Dies Lunae	Moon's Day	Monday
3rd Day	Dies Martis	Tiw's Day	Tuesday
4th Day	Dies Mercuri	Woden's Day	Wednesday
5th Day	Dies Jovis	Thor's Day	Thursday
6th Day	Dies Veneris	Friga's Day	Friday
7th Day	Dies Saturn	Saturn's Day	Saturday

Despite the different names used over time, the first day was still the first day, the second remained the second ... and the seventh was still the seventh. The only difference was that each had a name as is observed in the table above.

It is to be noted that time has not been lost or changed<sup>2</sup>. Despite name changes and adjustments in days per month etc., a week was always a

*2 In accepting the Gregorian Calendar over the Julian Calendar (1752), the British forwarded the date only, so that September 2 to September 14 without affecting the order of the days.*

week with a 'first' through to 'seventh' day. Man always knew when the seventh day came; it came obviously after the sixth which came after the fifth, and so on. Presently, in the English Language context, the seventh day is Saturday. The problems and uncertainties came about, when the prophecy which said that, 'man would think to change time and laws' was partially fulfilled (Daniel 7:25).

Unfortunately, the Sabbath was one of the targets. This was discussed in a previous issue of Lessons, in which notice was drawn to a religious power which was to undertake the attempted change (attempted because the Sabbath cannot be changed as it is still the seventh day). What has changed is man, who has become disobedient to God and is practising what in St. Mark 7:7 & 8 is regarded as the "commandment of men".

For those who want to be obedient to God in the observance of the Sabbath, the next Lesson should be useful.

# LESSON 14

## THE LORD'S SABBATH (PART 3)

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

- To explain how the Sabbath is to be observed

**Scripture:** Isaiah 56:1-8 | **Key Verses:** Isaiah 58:13 &14

### INTRODUCTION

Many persons agree that God's Sabbath must be observed, but there is disagreement as to how it is to be kept. In some quarters, people say that the Sabbath should not be a burden, and as such they suggest that one does not need to give attention to what they regard as "minor details." In other cases, people believe that it should be observed to the letter regardless of the situation.

This Lesson which will serve as a guide as to how God intended His people to observe the Sabbath is not exhaustive, as it could not possibly contain everything. The main areas will be covered and it is hoped that those who study will keep/continue to keep the Sabbath the way God intended.

### THE LESSON

Two points will be established before identifying the specific matters concerning the actual keeping of the Sabbath.

Firstly, the Sabbath should not be observed just for someone to say that he/she is obeying God, although one ought not to downplay how important it is to obey Him. It should not be taken for granted either, or treated in a matter-of-fact way as if to say that, "it is the Sabbath so what can I do?" This might just be the way some dependents merely endure the Sabbath so that they do not fall out of step with their Sabbath keeping elders or guardians. If it were to be observed in such ways, it might be seen as a burden or be observed grudgingly.

Instead, the Prophet in Isaiah 58:13 emphasized that it is something that one should be excited about. He said that we should call the Sabbath “a delight.” When the Sabbath approaches, the believer should be animated with the freshness of the blessed thought that “it is Sabbath again.” For this reason, persons have been heard to wish others, “a Happy Sabbath.” One poet puts it, “Day of all the week the best, emblem of eternal rest.”

Secondly, the Sabbath should be observed from the evening of the sixth day (Friday) to the evening of the Seventh day (Saturday). This can be substantiated in Leviticus 23:32. The creation story clearly supports that argument – **and the evening and the morning** were the first day/the sixth day (Gen.1:5 & 31).

In Exodus 20:8-10, God explained that when the Sabbath comes, no work is to be done, neither by the householder, family members, visitors nor even the dumb animals. It should be concluded that even the tools, equipment and/or motor vehicles one uses for his/her daily chores for financial gain/support should not be used for those purposes until after the Sabbath.

God left an example for man to follow. He worked for the first six days of the week and rested on the seventh day according to Genesis 2:2. One can assume that Adam and Eve also rested on the first Sabbath with God. Attention should be drawn to the fact that God ceased His activities and rested. So God both laboured and rested setting an example for His people to follow.

At times there is confusion as to whether work can be done on the Sabbath as Leviticus 23 speaks to doing no servile work. If the chapter is to be understood, it makes mention of some yearly Sabbaths on which no servile work (extremely strenuous work) should be done. And on others when no work was to be done as obtains with the Seventh Day Sabbath (Lev. 23:4-44) note verses 4, 8, 27-30 & 35. On the Seventh Day Sabbath no work should be done (Lev. 23:3).

The following points require our careful consideration as we seek to obey this Commandment:

### **DAILY EMPLOYMENT:**

God's people should not engage in their regular employment on the Sabbath, whether it be manufacturing, farming, (to include preparing field, sowing, pruning, fertilizing or reaping). All other types of employments including those that are less strenuous are included whether it be full time or part-time.

### **COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES:**

God's people should not be engaged in any commercial activity on the Sabbath whether it is for normal trade or for providing food for the family. Nehemiah was very concerned about those who brought their wares for sale in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. In admonishing the people not to purchase these wares, he Commanded that the gates be closed to prevent the vendors from entering (Neh. 13: 15-19). The child of God should not ask non-believers (in fact anyone) to conduct any business transaction on his/her behalf on the Sabbath.

### **PERSONAL PLEASURE:**

God made it clear that the Sabbath was not a day for personal pleasure / enjoyment (Isaiah 56: 4-7; 58:13, 14). There are things from which God's people are to abstain on the Sabbath. Some of these are hobbies, sporting activities (actual engagement, viewing or listening to them on the television or the radio). One should refrain from travelling for leisure or from visiting with friends or relatives on the Sabbath.

### **KINDLING OF FIRE:**

With the introduction of modern technology the child of God is to be careful that he/she does the utmost to obey God. One has to understand the reason for the Command in Exodus 35:2 & 3. Some argue that it is impossible to obey that Command, as the need for heating the house or heating water for shower will certainly demand that fire be kindled. The fact though is that the Command spoke to kindling/using fire for the purposes of food preparation or preservation. Read Exodus 16:23-27 to help to clarify. To be blunt, the microwave and other electrical gadgets which generate heat for cooking or to keep things hot should not be used on the Sabbath.

## **NECESSITIES:**

God never intended for the Sabbath to be a burden. Jesus showed and taught that in some cases of emergency some things can be done on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1-6). This He said as he battled with the Scribes and the Pharisees who had placed many restrictions on what could be done/not done on the Sabbath. One of the problems, in these days, is that there are those who 'create emergencies.' The setting of a funeral service, graduation or a wedding ceremony/reception on a Sabbath can never be regarded as an EMERGENCY. Be guided by the Apostles in Acts 5:29 "We ought to obey God rather than men."

As noted earlier, the Sabbath should be a delight with the soul-filling beauty and joy experienced by those who love the Lord and are making the effort to obey Him. May God give us the inclination and the will to observe this fourth Commandment: **REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.**

# LESSON 15

## STRIVING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: EXCELLENT INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

- To help participants to better manage interpersonal relationships

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 12 – 17 | **Key Verse:** Matthew 7:12

### INTRODUCTION

The Bible is a very efficient manual that can aid any individual in applying the right attitude towards social interactions. The last six of the Ten Commandments as given and written by God Himself, if adhered to, would help to diminish many of the problems we face today.

### THE LESSON

Individuals are social beings who constantly seek the company of, or interaction with others. These interpersonal associations, where two or more individuals influence each other's lives and engage in many joint activities, are supported by the words of God in John. 13:34 -35. We are admonished to strive to maintain healthy relationships with the persons with whom we associate as God places much value on these relationships.

Some interpersonal relationships that exist are:

- Kinship** – family relationships
- Co-workers/Business Partners** – those with whom we share business relationships
- Social Groups** – people with whom we interact, who have similar characteristics and share a sense of unity, e.g. Church, Neighbours, Clubs & Societies
- Friendship** – closer more intimate relationships

Interestingly, the above relationships may be strengthened or maintained when we adhere to the guidelines given in the Lesson Scripture.

As we strive to build relationships, we must allow for constant evaluation to ensure that we remain in line with what the Lord requires. We should, as children of God, rely on His guidance and direction to monitor each stage of the relationship and to give us the strength to take corrective measures if we are veering from what the Lord desires of our relationships. Most importantly, a healthy relationship with God will steer us towards healthy interpersonal relationships.

### **ACTIVITY**

Identify the Commands recorded in Exodus 20:12-17 and say how they may relate to the different types of relationships recorded in the lesson.



# LESSON 16

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF 'CHILDREN TO PARENTS'

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to:

- i. explore the scope of this responsibility;
- ii. understand God's promise to the faithful children.

**Scripture:** Ephesians 6:1-3 | **Key Verse:** Exodus 20:12

### INTRODUCTION

Honour, which is interchangeably used with respect and esteem, as is defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, means to respect highly or to confer honour on. Honour also means to recognize someone as important. It should be noted that in fulfilling the duty of honouring one's parents, one ought to be respectful, obedient and dutiful.

### THE LESSON

In interpreting the fifth Commandment (Ex. 20:12) given by God, it is noted that, the children of God, are called upon to honour/respect/obey their mothers and fathers. The statement "...obey your parents in the Lord..." in the scripture lesson gives rise to two schools of thought. The first is argued from the point of view that "parents in the Lord," refers solely to Christian parents. The second makes reference to obeying only one's biological parents. However, all parents (Christian or non-Christian, biological or otherwise) are to be obeyed once their instructions are in keeping with God's will.

An understanding of the words of God speaks to obeying those who have the rule or are set to guide or to be caretakers (Heb.13:17). The truth then is that respect/honour/obedience must be shown to persons who help in the homes, those in authority in the Church and to those in schools responsible for one's upbringing or general guidance. The belief

that this applies only to the very young is not in keeping with the biblical understanding but it goes beyond the sphere of the very young and takes in everyone irrespective of age.

In Matthew 15:4-6 and Mark 7:9-13, Jesus speaks of children honouring and respecting their parents. In this context, it is noted that honouring goes beyond just respecting and being in obedience, but also that children should show respect to their parents by actually taking care of their needs. Jesus was keen on correcting the error of the Pharisees, who taught that children would be free from taking care of or supporting parents, if what should have been given to them were given to God/Church (Corban)<sup>3</sup>. This, He pointed out, was according to the tradition of man, and was not in keeping with the Way of God.

Parents are to be honoured whether or not they shoulder their parental duties/responsibilities. If this principle were to be observed, there would be fewer instances of parents being 'abandoned' in homes for the aged since a part of honouring is taking responsibility and seeing that parents are taken care of irrespective of how they are viewed.

As we seek to uphold this fifth Commandment, let us consider our commitment to God's Command and the blessings promised if we are obedient.

### **FOR DISCUSSION**

In light of today's Lesson, discuss 1Timothy 5:4

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3 *A gift offered (or to be offered) to God*

# LESSON 17

## DO NOT KILL!

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to:

- i. respect the sanctity of life;
- ii. obey God's law which forbids killing.

**Scripture:** 1 John 3:9-12 | **Key Verse:** Exodus 20:13

### INTRODUCTION

In giving the Commandments God made it very clear how He wanted man to live in relating to Him as well as in relating to his fellowmen. One such Command that speaks to the latter is “Thou shalt not kill” - the sixth Commandment. Some translations and Bible commentaries render the Commandment, ‘THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER’/ ‘THOU SHALL NOT MURDER.’ This Commandment forbids human beings from committing murder which is the taking of the life of another human being.

### THE LESSON

God at creation breathed His breath into man to bring him to life. Man is the highest of God's earthly creation, so being made in His likeness and image, man's life is sacred. Therefore, in order to protect the sanctity of this life He gave the sixth Commandment.

The first account of murder mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis where Cain killed his brother Abel. God was not pleased with Cain and chastised and cursed him (Genesis 4:8-15). Jesus emphasizes in St Matthew 5:21-22, that to kill /to murder is wrong. One could argue that a close look at the statement of Jesus shows that He was pointing out that anger could lead to murder; as was the case with Cain (Genesis 4:5-7).

In 1 John 3:15 we are advised that if someone hates his/her brother that one is a murderer and that hell is his/her portion. Can you imagine therefore if someone actually commits a murder? One might argue that it seems ironic that the God who gave this sixth Commandment, at times ordered Israel to kill and to be engaged in wars (which often led to killing). The wars that Israel fought which were ordered by God were for the purpose of gaining possession of their physical inheritance or for other reasons ordained by Him.

It is important then to recognise that God the Creator of life is the only one who can dictate man's destiny and so Israel were acting as agents of God when He used them to get rid of His enemies. Let us note however, that God would not, in these days ask His people to fight any physical wars. Instead, according to Ephesians 6:11-18, we are now engaged in spiritual, and not carnal warfare. Consider also the statement of Jesus in Matthew 26:52, when He forbade Peter from defending Him with a sword.

Jesus in His teachings, Commands individuals to love each other (John 15:12). When there is love, and obedience to God's words, one would not think of hurting others which would then make killing null and void. In the absence of love the world will continue to experience wars and killing because nations and individuals will often have vendettas to settle.

God expects mankind therefore to respect life and to resist any temptation to take the life of another human being. The child of God, more so is required to be exemplary in respecting the sanctity of life, thereby leading the way for the world to follow.

## **FOR DISCUSSION**

For further consideration, examine:

- a. Isaiah 2:4
- b. John 8:44

# LESSON 18

## THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

- i. for participants to recognize that God wants us to live according to His Divine will - having one wife /husband;
- ii. to encourage wife and husband to remain faithful to each other

**Scripture:** John 4:5-24 | **Key Verse:** Exodus 20:14

### INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a bond whereby two people (male and female) make their relationship public, official and permanent. It is considered to be the basis of a decent society as it provides structure for many basic social and personal functions; this includes provision of food, clothing and shelter, satisfaction of personal needs for affection, status, companionship and sexual gratification.

God gave the Commandment “Thou shalt not commit adultery” to protect the honour and sanctity of this sacred relationship. This law makes evident the fact that all unchaste behaviour adultery/fornication (***sexual conduct before and/or outside of marriage***) is wrong.

According to the Living Webster Dictionary, adultery is the “***voluntary sexual intercourse by a married person with one who is not his or her spouse.***” A similar meaning is given for fornication “*people not married or not married to each other – have sexual intercourse **voluntarily***” Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English.

### THE LESSON

God ordained that a man and a woman should establish a complete partnership – marriage (Genesis 2:18). Genesis 2:24 declares “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh.” In addition, the union involves the begetting

and training of children (Gen.1: 28). Husbands and wives are therefore expected to give themselves to each other in every facet and phase of their lives (1 Cor. 7:4). Hence, sexual relationship should only be engaged in by persons who are married to each other (male to female). Outside of this, individuals would be committing adultery. God's law against committing adultery is inextricably linked to the law of marriage, which dictates that one man must be married to one woman.

The bond of marriage is expected to last until either partner dies; however, due to various circumstances the contract is often broken either by separation or divorce. It must be pointed out that if an individual who is divorced, gets married to another while the spouse is still alive, such an individual would be in breach of the Commandment (God's law supersedes the law of the land). Jesus in answering the Pharisees on the matter of divorce, said that whoever marries her (the woman) that is put away through divorce commits adultery (Matt. 19: 9). This means that at no given time should any one man have two wives alive, nor any woman, two husbands.

Given the importance of the marriage union, God likens the relationship between a wife and a husband (woman and man) to Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22-24). It is little wonder then, that He cautions that those who break this seventh Commandment, would have committed sin which is punishable by death (Romans 6:23). Throughout the scriptures we are encouraged to live a life that is pleasing to God which would enable us to inherit the Kingdom. The following are some passages which admonish us on matters pertaining to adultery/fornication – ***forms of sexual conduct done before and /or outside of marriage:***

- i. Proverbs 6:32
- ii. Romans 1:24, 26-29
- iii. 1 Corinthians 6:9, 13, 15-20
- iv. 1 Peter 2:11
- v. Hebrews 13:4
- vi. 1 Thess. 4:3-5
- vii. Revelation 21:8

Believers, be reminded that 'our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you... therefore glorify God in your body' and do His Command. Never allow yourselves to be led into this sin which is of the devil.

# LESSON 19

## THE LAW AGAINST STEALING

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

- i. To make participants more aware of the spiritual and physical effects of stealing.

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:28 | **Key Verse:** Exodus 20:15

### INTRODUCTION

There are usually two ways by which one can gain lawful possession of anything. *These are i) by free gift (inheritance from another person or from God Himself), or ii) by legitimate exchange (such as purchasing or being compensated for work done).* To obtain anything other than by lawful means is what constitutes the sin of stealing.

The eighth Commandment – ***THOU SHALT NOT STEAL*** – is God’s law to protect all property and possessions.

### THE LESSON

Crime and violence are increasing at an alarmingly fearful rate because among millions of people there is no respect for law nor constituted authority, neither for that of God nor man. These people have lost respect for law because they have forgotten the very source of law and authority (James 4:12).

In our society today, there are many “white-collar crimes”. Many people from different professions have learnt or are learning to steal in a large and organized fashion. Cheating in examinations, forging signatures on cheques, deleting important information from a form and misrepresenting a client, are only some of the ways in which this Commandment is broken.

The manufacturer or distributor who uses false weight/measurements, poor quality material/ workmanship to deceive the public is just as guilty. False

advertising is also an act of stealing. People are sometimes deceived, as the advertised good or service is delivered to a lower standard than expected. James was inspired to warn employers to give just wages (James 5:4). On the other hand, the employee who takes his/her wages and withholds his/her full share of honest labour is guilty of breaking God's law.

Apart from robbing their fellowmen, Malachi 3:6-10 which speaks clearly some people also rob the Creator. The Lord who has blessed us is serious when He requests His portion. A further blessing is promised to those who faithfully give to God that which belongs to Him.

According to Ephesians 4:28, he who has been stealing should no longer steal, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

### **ACTIVITY**

1. Identify and discuss other ways (not mentioned in the Lesson) in which one can be engaged in theft.



# LESSON 20

## SPEAK THE TRUTH AND SPEAK IT EVER

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to:

- i. understand what it means to bear false witness
- ii. be aware that God has no delight in this practice
- iii. resist the temptation to lie

**Scripture:** Acts 5:1-11 | **Key Verse:** Proverbs 12:22

### INTRODUCTION

When an individual willfully misrepresents information to convey an idea other than the truth, he/she is said to bear false witness/give false information. According to Proverbs 14:5, a false witness is a person who utters lies.

There is an old gem that reads “speak the truth and speak it ever, cost it what it will; he who hides the wrong he did, does the wrong thing still.” This suggests that there is no benefit in misrepresenting the truth and an individual who lies to cover his/her wrongs, or to ‘save his/her skin,’ is only making the situation worse. Eventually, the truth has a way of baring itself.

### THE LESSON

It is of significance that numbered among the seven things that God hates (Prov. 6:16-19) are a lying tongue and a false witness that speaketh lies (Prov 6:17 & 19). Recall from the Scripture reading, the story of Ananias and Sapphira, how they lied about the sale price of the land and how God swiftly showed His displeasure by instantaneous death. The Eternal God sees the sin of lying as an abomination.

We are told that the Lord desires truth in the inward parts and that we will only abide in His tabernacle if we speak the truth in our hearts (Psalm 15:2; 51:6,). If a believer lies, he is not yet converted, as lying is a characteristic of the 'old man' (John 8:44; Col. 3:9). We are further admonished in Ephesians 4:25 to lay aside all lying and to speak every man truth with his neighbour. Colossians 3:9 also tells us that we should not lie one to another.

According to Deut. 32:4, the God we serve is a God of truth and without iniquity. It stands to reason therefore, that we should strive to be like Him, if we want to reign with Him. We cannot allow the sin of lying to separate us from our God in whom all truth lies.

Is it necessary to lie? People may argue that they lie to make life easier for themselves or to improve status. They may also find many other reasons to justify lying. However, Proverbs 21:6 teaches that we are playing with death when we lie to obtain treasures, and by extension, any other thing. Besides, Proverbs 19:22 teaches that a poor man is better than a liar.

When we are tempted to lie, let us remember Ananias and Sapphira dropping dead, or imagine our tongues cleaving to the roof of our mouths. Worse yet, we should consider what it would be if the Lord should return and find us lying.

Let us never forget that the Lord delights in those who deal truly and that those who lie will get their reward. In fact, we are reminded twice in Prov. 19:5 & 9 that a liar/false witness will get his/her reward.

Let us then speak truth and live!

# LESSON 21

## THE 'RED EYE' SYNDROME

### PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to:

- i. understand what it means to be covetous
- i. realize that covetousness leads to other sins
- i. learn to be contented with what they possess

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 21:1-20 | **Key Verse:** Luke 12:15

### INTRODUCTION

To covet is to want greedily something belonging to another. It also means jealous envy or desire. This trait should not be named among God's people as we are warned in Ex. 20:17 "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's".

### THE LESSON

It is very easy for an individual to be led along the path of covetousness, especially in these days of financial instability and crisis, where it seems we will never be free of the thoughts: "What will I have to eat tomorrow?" or "Where will I go when my landlord wants the house?" Very often we may look at others who seem to be unaffected by the cares of this life and earnestly desire their lifestyle. However, we should be admonished by the words of the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 13:5, which encourages us to be satisfied with whatever we have, as the Lord has promised to take care of us.

In Col. 3:5, covetousness is said to be idolatry; the greed of the covetous person could drive him/her to constantly desire things which take the focus from God. The desired things take centre stage and their acquisition

takes pre-eminence over the worship of God. Look at the mental and physical stress one undergoes in coveting a neighbour's house or other belongings. That one is forced to scheme, overwork him/herself, and may even get involved in activities with which the Lord is definitely not pleased.

Remember how Ahab, coveted Naboth's vineyard, refrained from eating and agreed with the plot his wife Jezebel made against Naboth. It gets even more serious when an individual covets his neighbour's wife/husband, which could lead into the sin of adultery.

The Bible teaches extensively on the issue of contentment, a virtue a believer must possess if he/she is to avoid the desire to covet. In 1Timothy 6:6-10, Paul teaches that we should be content with food and raiment or whatever we may have because when we die we can take nothing with us. He also stated that when we covet we err from the faith and pierce ourselves through with many sorrows.

In Phil. 4:11&19 Paul further states that he has learnt to be content in whatever state he finds himself and that we can trust God to supply all our needs. Jesus in Matt. 6:25-34, teaches that we should not be overly concerned with the things of tomorrow. If we trust this principle and the promise which accompanies it, we will find ourselves escaping the desire to covet.

### **ACTIVITY**

Give instances in the Bible where someone was covetous. In each case, say what was the consequence of his/her action.

## NOTES