NOVEMBER 18TH ZOOM WORKSHOP TEACHING

(A TEACHING FROM THE CHURCH OF HOPE 17 WEEK EVANGELISM AND MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE)







WEEKS 16 AND 17 - PART TWO TEACHING

The importance of commitment and character

IN TODAY'S TEACHING I WILL BE LOOKING AT THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMITMENT AND CHARACTER IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER



I will firstly look at the importance of being a person of commitment as I look at some areas in which commitment is so important if we are to <u>live in the fullness</u> of what God has planned for our life.

- Commitment is crucial if a believer is to fulfil God's plan for their lives and ministries during their time here on earth.

- The simple fact is that the moment we come to Christ we enter into a very real spiritual contest
- The bible makes it clear that through many tribulations we enter the Kingdom of God. **(Acts 14:22)**



The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy,

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." **(2 Timothy 3:12)**

- In many ways the Christian walk is like rowing upstream against the tide of this world that would try and pull us away from our God given assignment here on earth

- For this reason having a commitment to our calling is crucial in our Christian walk if we are to fulfil our God given assignment here on earth



- Vision and commitment are two important keys to fulfilling all that God has planned for our lives and churches.

- Commitment is a great key to seeing God's vision and plan for our lives coming to pass. Every believer and every church has the ability to make a great impact in this world for eternity.



- Given that pastors and leaders have the potential to influence the lives of many; it is so important that they model the Christian life in the way that they live their own life. **(1 Timothy 4:12) (1 Peter 5:1-4) (Titus 2:6-8)**



The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy,

"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." **(1 Timothy 4:12)**

In His explanation of the Parable of the Sower, Jesus said, "Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." **(Mark 4:18-20)**



In this Parable Jesus made it clear that many things can choke the Word in our heart and cause us to lead unfruitful lives.

- The Christian walk requires discipline and commitment if we are to see all that God has planned for our life coming to pass. (We are in constant spiritual warfare as believers)



- Again, the Christian walk is always one of rowing upstream against the tide of this world that would try and drag us away from God's best plan for our life.

- We also have a very real adversary, the Devil, who will continually try and prevent every believer from making a difference in this world for eternity.



The Apostle Peter wrote, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." **(1 Peter 5:8-9)**

Jesus Himself said, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." **(John 10:10)**



- *The Devil* **(1 Peter 5:8)**, *The World* (the sphere of evil operating in our world under the dominion of Satan – the spirit of this world) **(1 John 2:15-17)** and *The Flesh* (our fallen human nature) **(Galatians 5:19-21)** are all hindrances that can prevent God's plan for our life from being outworked in our lives as believers.

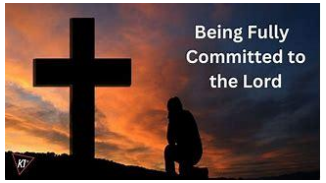
- FOR THIS REASON, COMMITMENT IN OUR LIVES AS BELIEVERS IS CRUCIAL IF WE ARE TO SEE GOD'S PLAN AND PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES AND CHURCHES UNFOLDING AND OUR LIVES BEARING MUCH FRUIT.

- God has so much in store for every believer's life.



The Apostle Paul wrote, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." **(Ephesians 3:20)**

I will now look at some areas in which commitment (or discipline) is so important if we are to live in the fullness of what God has planned for our life and churches and if our lives are to impact the lives of many for eternity.

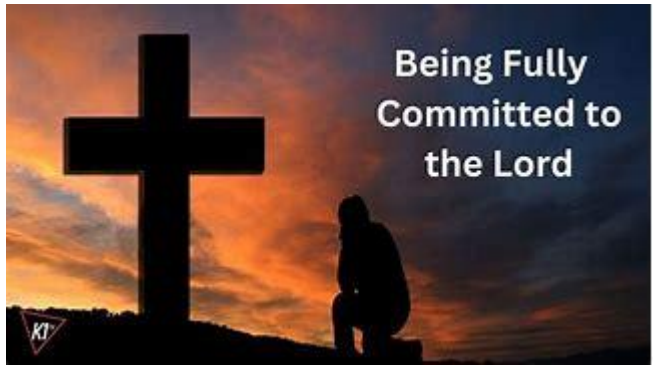


1) A commitment to living a life set apart for the Lord

- This needs to be a continual daily choice (Luke 9:23)
- Without this ongoing commitment to living a consecrated life, we are more likely to be distracted and discouraged from fulfilling all that God has planned for our life

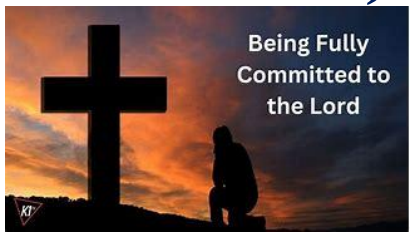
Jesus Himself said,

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it." **(Luke 9:23-24)**



Jesus also said,

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of what falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it *produces much grain*. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour." **(John 12:24-26)**



2) **A commitment to continually doing the will of God for our life** (A great key to fruitfulness in our Christian walk and to experiencing God's favour upon our lives)





The Apostle Paul wrote,

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." **(Ephesians 5:15-17)**

- We are the greatest blessing and the most fruitful in our Christian life and ministry when we flow in God's will for our lives and ministries

- We are the greatest blessing to others when we flow in our own unique gifts and callings and in God's unique plan for our life



The Apostle Paul wrote,

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. **(Romans 12:6-8)**



- Our <u>time</u> is the most precious resource



- We can also see the imminent rapture of all true believers
- So how important it is that we are not unwise, but that we know and follow God's will for our lives in the times that we are now living in



- That we are not distracted by the things of this world, but that we stay connected to following God's will and plan for our lives during our time here on earth

3) **A commitment to walking in the Spirit and being continually led by the Holy Spirit** (A great key to growing in the fruit of the Spirit and to consistently making right choices in life)





The Apostle Paul wrote, "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." **(Galatians 5:16-18)**

- The way that we live our lives matters



Jesus Himself said,

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." **(Matthew 5:16)**

- **It is so important that we continually choose to walk in the Spirit so that people can be attracted to Christ in us the hope of glory**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." **(Galatians 5:22-23)**



- **It is so important that we simply commit to cooperating with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives by continually choosing to walk in the Spirit and refusing to react out of our fallen human nature so that we can glorify God with our lives**

- **BEING CONTINUALLY GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A GREAT KEY TO CONSISTENTLY MAKING RIGHT CHOICES IN LIFE AND TO REMAINING IN THE WILL OF GOD FOR OUR LIVES. Jesus Himself said,**

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." **(John 16:13)**



4) **A commitment to meditating on the Word of God. It is important that we continually renew our mind with the Word of God to develop faith filled Kingdom thinking.**



- The real battle ground for all believers is the mind
- We live in a world full of negative and secular values
- For this reason, we need to be continually renewing our mind with the truth and promises contained in God's word

The LORD said to Joshua before he was about to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." **(Joshua 1:8)**



The Apostle Paul wrote, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." **(Romans 12:2)**

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)



- Building our lives on the word of God is a great key to building our lives on a firm foundation (Matthew 7:24-25)

- God will continually give us wisdom and direction for our life through His word



The Psalmist wrote,

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

(Psalm 119:105)

"Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me." **(Psalm 119:133)**



- **Especially given the challenging times that we are now living in it is crucial that our faith is always built up**

The Apostle Paul wrote, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." **(Romans 10:17)**

- So especially given the ungodly times that we are now living in, commitment to meditating on the word of God on a regular basis must be a great priority in our lives



Jesus Himself said,

"Therefore, **<u>whoever</u>** hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the **rock**; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock." **(Matthew 7:24-25)**



5) A commitment to a lifestyle of prayer and worship

- This is a key to gaining God's perspective on things continually, to seeing breakthroughs in our life and ministry, (Acts 16:25-26) and to keeping our faith alive and active.



- Prayer and worship also helps to keep our love and passion for Jesus alive and our focus on living wholeheartedly for Him. *(Matthew 6:19-21)*

Jesus Himself said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." **(Matthew 6:21)**



- King David was the only man referred to in the bible as being a man after God's own heart. (Acts 13:22)
- Though he was very rich his greatest desire was to know God intimately.
- He was a great worshipper of God and wrote many of the Psalms

King David wrote, "O GOD, Your are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for you; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You." **(Psalm 63:1-3)**



The Apostle Paul wrote, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." **(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)**

- Especially given the times that we are now living having a lifestyle of prayer is crucial



- Life is full of important choices.

- Having a commitment to a lifestyle of prayer helps us to consistently make right choices in life (James 1:5) and to see the breakthroughs that we need in life. “For with God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37)

In the book of James we read,

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." **(James 1:5-8)**



Jesus Himself said, “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” **(Mark 11:22-24)**



6) A commitment to being accountable to other mature Christians (The importance of having godly mentors)

- There is wisdom in a multitude of counsellors.



- We must never become an island to ourselves.

In the book of Proverbs we read,

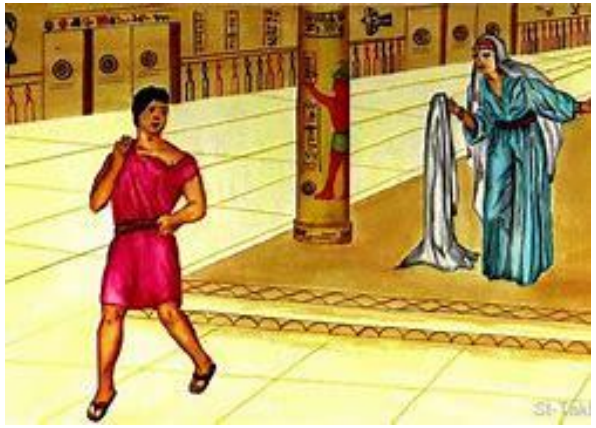
"Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." **(Proverbs 11:14)**

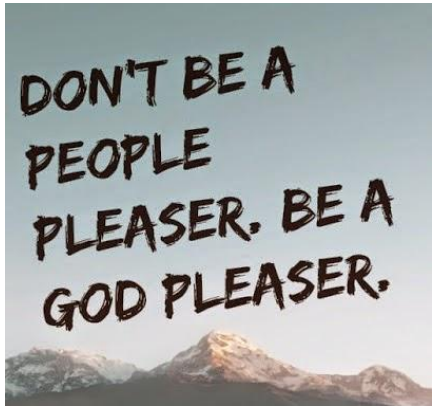
7) A commitment to always wanting to please God rather than men



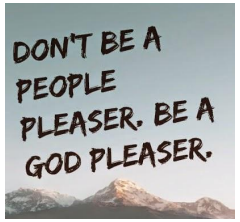
- We must always choose to do the godly thing rather than the expedient thing.
- As we continually choose to live a God glorifying life in every area of our life, we will see all that God has planned for our life coming to pass.
- Our greatest priority should always be to love and please the Lord. We must refuse to compromise our values to gain favour from others by being man pleasers

- As we continually stand up for what is right, we will see the fullness of what God has planned for our life coming to pass. **(Philippians 1:6)**
- When we look at the life of Joseph in the book of Genesis, we see how he refused to compromise when continually enticed by Potiphar's wife to sin. **(Genesis 39:6-13)**





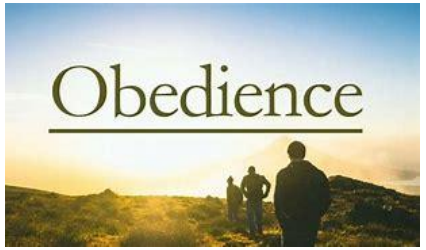
- After many years of testing and trials God raised Joseph up from the prison to the palace in just one day. **(Genesis Chapter 41)**



- Promotion in God's Kingdom comes from above.
- As we are faithful in the little things God will entrust to us greater responsibilities. **(Matthew 25:14-23)**
- **How important it is that we always have a commitment to pleasing God rather than man**

8) A commitment to living a life of obedience

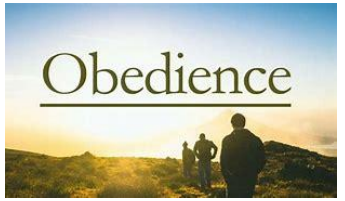
- This is a key to experiencing God's ongoing favour and blessing in our life and to seeing all that God has planned for our life coming to pass.



- God's ways are higher than our ways.

- When we live a simple life of obedience, we see God opening up doors that no man can close. **(Revelation 3:8)**

- Ultimately, we will be rewarded in heaven based on how faithful we have been in <u>doing what God has called us to do in life</u>.

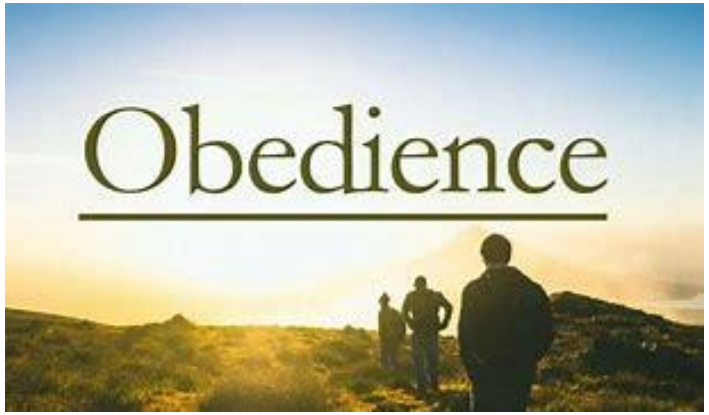


Jesus Himself said, "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." **(Matthew 16:27)**

- **Living a life of simple obedience helps us to fully embrace all that God has planned for our lives and ministries and to experience God's favour in our lives**

In the book of Isaiah we read,

"If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land." **(Isaiah 1:19)**



Jesus Himself said,

"More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" **(Luke 11:28)**

9) A commitment to NEVER GIVING UP ON WHAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO DO in life.



- It is important that <u>we finish</u> what God has called us to do in life.
- If we do, many other lives will be impacted for eternity
- It is easy to start something in life but it will take courage and commitment to complete those things that God has called us to do in life

At the beginning of His earthly ministry Jesus said,

"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." **(John 4:34)**

Just prior to the end of His time here on earth Jesus said, "I have glorified You on earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." **(John 17:4)**



The Apostle Paul wrote, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." **(Galatians 6:9)**

In the book of Hebrews we read, "For God is not unjust to forget you work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." **(Hebrews 6:10-12)**



Towards the end of his life here on earth, the apostle Paul wrote,

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." **(2 Timothy 4:7-8)**





10) A commitment to <u>trusting God</u> at ALL times and in ALL circumstances



- We must simply just take God at His Word and refuse to be moved by our circumstances and what others may say negatively about our life and circumstances.

- We can be assured that what God starts in our life He will complete if we just keep trusting the Lord and allowing Him to direct our steps in life. **(Philippians 1:6)**

- **King David was a man who loved God wholeheartedly and who knew God's character and faithfulness in a real and personal way**



King David wrote, "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? **(Psalm 56:3-4)**

"In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me." **(Psalm 56:11)**

King David also wrote,

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. **Delight yourself also in the Lord**, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass." **(Psalm 37:3-5)**



"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of *them all*." **(Psalm 34:19)**

- **In the book of Proverbs, we get some great wisdom for how we should live our lives and believers**



In the book of Proverbs we read,

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." **(Proverbs 3:5-6)**

In the book of Jeremiah we read,

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.” **(Jeremiah 17:7-8)**



11) A commitment to spending quality time with our families

- It is important to keep our home front strong and united



- Ministering to our children by example and teaching them to grow up in the ways of the Lord needs to be a great priority in our life as parents

- Our family must be our most important ministry

- In the busy program of ministry, it is important that we schedule in quality time with our spouses and families



- In doing this we will help to safeguard and protect our marriages and families from the attacks of the Devil

- The Devil will always try and divide and conquer Christian families if he can

- Jesus made it clear that a house divided against itself will not stand



Jesus Himself said,

"Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand." **(Matthew 12:25)**

- Having stability in our home life is a great key to being able to effectively minister to others

- As Christian parents we have the opportunity of investing our lives in our children so that they will be the next generation of believers who can make a great difference in this world for eternity



- Praying together as a family is one great key to seeing families remaining strong and united.



- There is a saying those who pray together stay together.
- Some good Scriptures to meditate on in relation to family life are: **(Ephesians 5:19-33) (Ephesians 6:1-4) (Colossians 3:18-21) (1 Peter 3:1-2) (1 Peter 3:7)**

In the book of Proverbs we read, "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." **(Proverbs 22:6)**

- **I WILL JUST LOOK AT A COUPLE OF SCRIPTURES THAT RELATE TO FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**



Firstly, the Apostle Paul wrote,

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." **(Ephesians 6:1-4)**

The Apostle Paul also wrote,

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."

(Colossians 3:18-21)



12) A commitment to walking in humility and to having a humble dependence on God. We must always be careful to give all the glory to God, especially when God begins to bless our churches and ministries.



The Apostle Paul wrote,

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." **(1 Corinthians 10:31)**

- **Pride can be very subtle so we must always be committed to walking in humility which is a great key to promotion in God's kingdom. God's Kingdom is an upside-down kingdom.**



- The lower we get, (the more we humble ourselves) the more God can raise us up to do great things for His glory.

In the book of James we read, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." **(James 4:10)**

- **The bible also makes it clear that God <u>resists the proud</u> and that <u>pride precedes a fall</u>**

The Apostle Peter wrote, "Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

"God resists the proud,

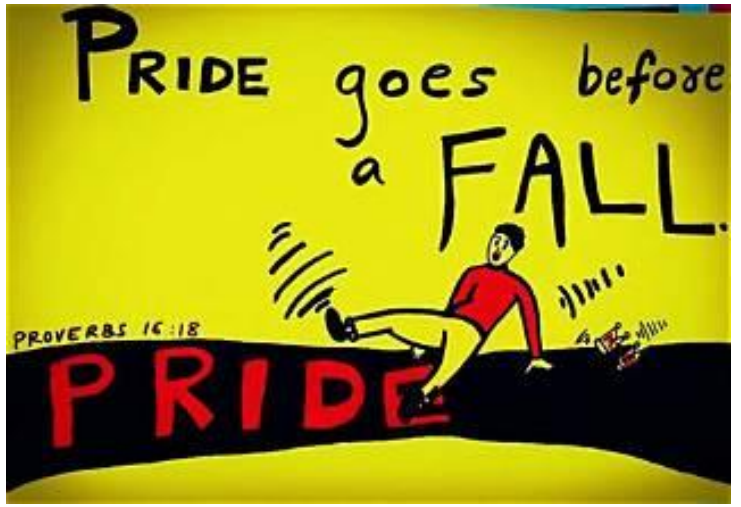
But gives grace to the humble."

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time," **(1 Peter 5:5-6)**

In the book of Proverbs we read,

"Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall." **(Proverbs 16:18)**





- **Jesus was our example of humility during His time here on earth.**



The Apostle Paul wrote,

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant, and coming in the likeness of men." **(Philippians 2:5-7)**

“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” **(Philippians 2:8-11)**



Jesus Himself also said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet is shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” **(Matthew 20:25-28)**



- **As Christians and particularly as pastors and leaders, *(teachers will receive stricter judgment – James 3:1)* we must always maintain a humble dependence on God knowing that apart from Him we can do nothing. (John 15:4-5) (Philippians 4:13)**



- **<u>We must continually depend on God's enabling power in all that we do in life and ministry</u>.**

The Apostle Peter wrote,

"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" **(1 Peter 4:11)**

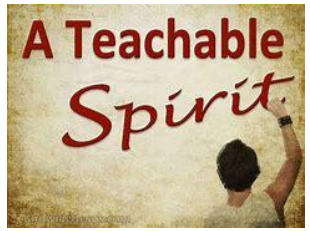


The Apostle Paul wrote, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." **(Ephesians 6:10)**

- It is so important that we always have a humble dependence upon God and that we always rely on His enabling power in all that we do in life and ministry 

The Apostle Paul also wrote, "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."… **(2 Corinthians 12:7-8)**

13) Commitment to always having a teachable spirit.



- We come into the world knowing nothing.
- How important it is that we are always teachable and open to others speaking into our lives.
- There is wisdom in a multitude of counsellors.

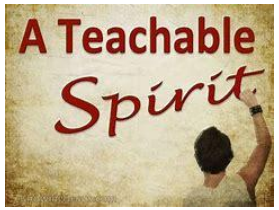
  (Proverbs 11:14) (Proverbs 15:22)

- It is far easier to learn from the wisdom and experiences of others than to learn from our own mistakes

In the book of Proverbs we read,

"Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." **(Proverbs 11:14)**

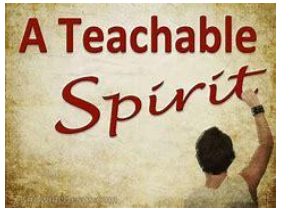
"Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counsellors they are established." **(Proverbs 15:22)**



- It is always better to learn from others than having to learn from our own mistakes. If we are teachable, we can avoid much unnecessary heartache and pain in our life.

- If we are continually teachable, we will grow in knowledge and wisdom and consistently make good choices in life that are in line with God's will for our life.

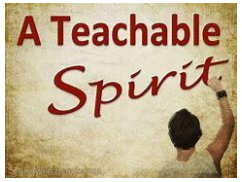
- The bible says much about the importance of having a teachable spirit.



In the book of Proverbs we read, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction." **(Proverbs 1:7)**

In the book of Proverbs, we also read, "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." **(Proverbs 9:9)**

"Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid." **(Proverbs 12:1)**



"Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days." **(Proverbs 19:20)**

In the book of Hosea we read, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." **(Hosea 4:6)**

14) Commitment to loving others at all times.



- As Christians our unconditional love for others is our greatest witness
- All that we do in ministry and for others should always be undergirded by a genuine love for others
- **The Apostle Paul made it clear that without love even the most magnificent manifestation of gifts and the most heroic self sacrifice means nothing**

The Apostle Paul wrote,



“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” **(1 Corinthians 13:1-3)**

Jesus Himself emphasised the importance of loving others when He said,

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." **(John 13:34-35)**



The Apostle Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians,



"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, **and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other**, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure," **(2 Thessalonians 1:3-4)**

- **In 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 we see that those in the church at Thessalonica had to endure persecutions and tribulations.**



- However, due to the great love of all Christians for one another, their faith grew exceedingly.

- How important it is that we are continually committed to loving one another in the body of Christ and to reaching out to the lost with the love of Christ.

The Apostle Peter wrote, “But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.” **(1 Peter 4:7-9)**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

(1 Corinthians 13:13) AND

15)We need to be committed to helping people to come to Christ



- With so many people in need of genuine hope
- With the rapture of all true believers imminent
- Given the reality that there is a hell to shun and a heaven to gain

We need to have a commitment to helping people to come to Christ

Jesus Himself said, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, **lift up your eyes** and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” **(John 4:35)**



Jesus also said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” **(Mark 16:15)**

- **So given the times that we are now living in, we need to both individually and as a church have a great commitment to helping people to come to Christ**

- As we remain committed and disciplined in these 15 areas of our Christian walk and choose to never give up on what God has called us to do in our life and churches, God will use our lives to greatly impact the lives of many others in the days to come



- God never looks at our ability but simply our availability

- Are we prepared to fully break open our lives for the Kingdom Cause



- We can learn much from the Apostle Paul's great commitment to seeing the gospel being preached to all people

In his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, the Apostle Paul wrote,



"And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." **(Acts 20:22-24)**

- I will now conclude this teaching with some final thoughts on the importance of having Christian character



CHARACTER FIRST

- God is more concerned about our character being developed first before He entrusts to us significant ministry roles and responsibilities

- God is continually doing a work of change in our lives as believers as He develops Christlike character in our lives and prepares us for each new season of our lives and ministry.



The Apostle Paul wrote, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." **(Romans 8:29)**

- As Christians we are continually works in progress.
- We will never be perfect until we get to heaven
- **Developing godly character in our life is crucial for many reasons**



Some of these reasons include:

i. **Because it helps us to shine for Jesus in our Christian walk. The way that we live our lives matters**



Again Jesus Himself said,

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

(Matthew 5:16)

ii. **Because it helps us to remain strong in our Christian walk in the ungodly and lawless times that we are now living in**



In the book of James we read,

"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." **(James 1:12)**

iii. Because the way that we live our life has the greatest impact on the lives of others



The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy, "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." **(1 Timothy 4:12)**

iv. Because it helps us to lead fruitful Christian lives so that one day we will receive rewards from Jesus when He returns



Jesus Himself said,

"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." **(Matthew 16:27)**

v. **So that we can leave an eternal legacy in the lives of many others because of our <u>character</u> and <u>commitment</u> to continually living wholeheartedly for the Kingdom Cause**



The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy,

"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." **(2 Timothy 2:2) AND**

vi. Because it will help us to most importantly finish our Christian walk strongly



Towards the end of his time here on earth the Apostle Paul wrote, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." **(2 Timothy 4:7-8)**

So just quickly some important aspects of Christian character that help us to become strong and fruitful in our Christian walk are:



1) Having humility (1 Peter 5:5-6)

2) Having a teachable spirit (Proverbs 12:1)

3) Being faithful in the little things (Luke 16:10)

4) Letting our ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and our ‘No,’ ‘No.’ (Matthew 5:37)

5) Having integrity in the stewardship of money. That money is always our servant (1 Timothy 6:10) (Matthew 6:24)



6) Being faithful first in what is another man's vision (Luke 16:12)

7) Being always truthful and honest in our dealings with others (Having integrity in the way that we do things)

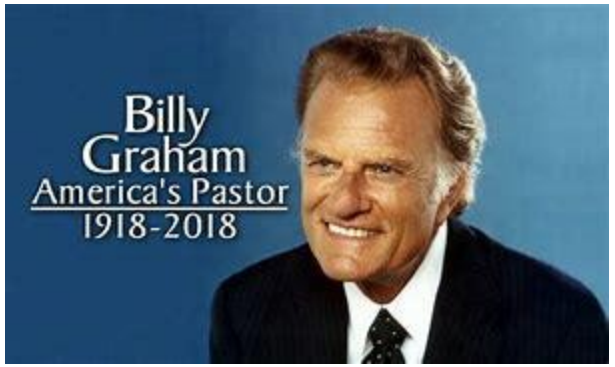
8) That we live a life of simple trust and obedience (Proverbs 3:5) (Luke 11:28) (Isaiah 1:19), and

9) That we always speak well of others and refuse to engage in gossip and slander - (This is a great key to seeing unity in the body of Christ)



The Apostle Paul wrote, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." **(Ephesians 4:29)**

- When we look at the lives of two of the greatest evangelists, Billy Graham and Reinherd Bonnke, they both had great character and finished their ministries here on earth well.





- **We will now finish this teaching with just a few questions just for self evaluation that relate to this teaching**

QUESTIONS:



1) Have there been times when I have ignored the prompting of God to do something due to circumstances not appearing right (leaning on your own understanding)?

2) Am I committed to always stepping out of my comfort zone to take on new challenges as the Lord leads?

3) Do I continually look to God first to meet my every need in life?



4) Do I actively encourage others to take steps of faith?

5) When reflecting back on the past, write down on a piece of paper the times that you have seen God's supernatural provision for your life and church (You will be surprised how many times God has helped you in the past)

6) When confronted by challenges do, I always seek first the counsel of the LORD for guidance and direction?



7) Am I totally committed to allowing the Lord to direct my every step in life?

8) Am I prepared to make sacrifices to see God's plan and purpose for my life and churches come to pass?, And

9) Am I open and accountable to other mature believers? Can people speak correction into my life?