

CHURCH OF HOPE EVANGELISM AND MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE BY EMAIL AND WEBSITE: **STUDY GUIDE: WEEKS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN**

TOPICS THIRTEEN AND FOURTEEN: LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP / LIVING IN THE MIRACULOUS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMITMENT

INTRODUCTION TO WEEKS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN:

In this teaching we will be looking at the importance and urgency of reaching out into the harvest field and the importance of taking steps of faith so that all that God has planned for our lives and churches will come to pass. God is never limited by our ability or by our circumstances, only our availability and willingness to pursue His plan and purpose for our life and churches. God is able to meet our every need when we step out by faith to follow His plan for our life and churches. In this concluding study guide, I really sensed the Lord put on my heart to encourage all Pastors and Christians to take steps of faith, so as to fully embrace all that God has planned for their lives and churches.

In the first part of this teaching (Topic thirteen) I will be looking at aspects of launching out into the deep and living in the miraculous that can be studied in God's Word. We must not let our current circumstances determine what we do for the Lord. The whole Christian walk is one of a walk of faith. When we move out by faith to do what God has called us to do, He moves on our behalf. In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

God's desire is that none would perish (**2 Peter 3:9**) (**1 Timothy 2:3-4**) (**Ezekiel 18:32**) so when He puts on our heart things to do to reach the lost, we can be assured that God will meet every need and expense that is required to see these things being accomplished. A great key to living in the miraculous is walking in obedience and doing things God's way. God's work done in His ways will NEVER lack provision. The bible makes it clear that God's ways are higher than our ways. (**Isaiah 55:8-9**)

Now is the time for the church to rise up and to share the hope that we have in Christ Jesus with all people. There is power in the gospel message to transform our cities. (**Acts 8:4-8**) There are multitudes in the valley of decision. The early church moved in power and miracles and signs and wonders were the norm. How we need to be praying for God to move in power in our lives and church meetings. In the book of Acts we see after Peter and John had been severely threatened for their faith, that the believers prayed for God's power and miracles to be evidenced in their lives through the Name of Jesus.

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, ‘by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the Name of Your Holy Servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:29-31)

Given the imminent return of the Lord and that there is world around us so in need of salvation, how we need to be prepared at this time in history to step out by faith into all that God directs us to do in our lives and churches. We must be prepared to get out of our comfort zones and launch out into the deep as the Lord directs us to.

In the gospel of Luke we read,

“So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid, from now on you will catch men. So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him." **(Luke 5:1-11)**

FROM THIS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE WE CAN LEARN MUCH

- 1) In our own ability we are limited in what we can do. Peter had fished all night and caught nothing. For us as believers we need to have the hand of God upon all that we do in life. Jesus Himself said, **"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."** *(John 15:4-5)*
- 2) The Lord will sometimes ask us to do things when it is not convenient for us to do so. Peter had toiled all night and would have been tired. However at the command of Jesus to launch out into the deep and to let down his nets for a catch Peter did so. It is important like Peter that we are always willing to do what God calls us to do, even when it is not convenient for us to do so. God's strength is always made perfect in our weakness. **(2 Corinthians 12:9-10)** Often it is when we are prepared to make big sacrifices for the Lord that we see the real miracles and blessings in our life.
- 3) When we follow the directions of the Lord we will see the miracles in our life. Fruitfulness and success comes from just doing what Jesus tells us to do. How we need to be continually led by the Holy Spirit in all that we do. Peter simply did what Jesus told him to do and then he saw the miraculous catch of fish.
- 4) At times the Lord will tell us to do things that in the natural do not seem logical. The best time to fish is normally at night. But when Jesus tells us to do something there will be success and fruitfulness
- 5) The importance of doing everything that God directs us to do in life. Jesus said to Peter to launch out into the deep and to let down his NETS (plural) but he only let down ONE net. (Partial obedience) Jesus knew that there would be a massive catch of fish for Peter. We can so often limit what God wants to do through our life based on our own human logic (the morning was not the best time for fishing in the natural) and based on our past experiences. (Peter had fished all night and had caught nothing)
- 6) God has so much more planned for us than we could ever imagine. **(Ephesians 3:20)** "For with God nothing will be impossible." **(Luke 1:37)** Peter and his fishing partners "were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken" **(Luke 5:9)**
- 7) When we do things God's way and in His timing we see the miracles. How important it is that we allow the Lord to direct our steps in life continually. **(Psalm 37:23)**
- 8) We see how Peter had to call for his partners in the other boat to help bring in the catch of fish. There were so many fish caught that both boats began to sink. How we need to work together in the body of Christ and to pray for and support one another. Every church needs to be involved in bringing in the harvest of lost souls. How important it is that we all work together at this time to help see the harvest of lost souls coming to Christ. There are multitudes of unsaved people who need to come to Christ, and
- 9) Peter responded immediately to Jesus' command to launch out into the deep for a catch AND then to follow Him to become a fisher of men. It is so important to immediately respond to what God calls us to do. It is so important that we redeem the time **(Ephesians 5:16)** and that we make the most of every God given opportunity to reach the lost with the message of the gospel. Jesus Himself emphasised the urgency of reaching out to the lost when He 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)*

Given the urgency to reach the masses with the gospel message, how important it is as pastors and leaders that we help to equip and empower all believers to become soul winners. **(Proverbs 11:30)**

The second area of this study guide (Topic Fourteen) that we will be looking at is the importance of commitment. As Christians we are in a continual spiritual contest in which the enemy, the Devil will continually try to distract and discourage us from fulfilling God's plan for our life. **(1 Peter 5:8-9) (Matthew 10:16) (John 10:10)** If we remain fully committed to following God's plan for our lives and churches we will see God doing great things in and through our lives and churches. Commitment is a key to seeing all that God has planned for our life and churches coming to pass. The Apostle Paul wrote, **"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."** *(1 Corinthians 15:58)*

For the remainder of this study guide I will be looking at things to consider and study from the bible that relate to living in the miraculous and to the importance of commitment for every believer. As we learn to step out by faith to wholeheartedly follow God's plan for our life and churches, we will see many miracles in our life and God's continual provision. As we focus on reaching out to the lost with the gospel message, which is God's heart (Jesus Himself said that He came to seek and to save that which was lost – Luke 19:10) we can depend on God's faithfulness to meet our every need in life.

LIVING IN THE MIRACULOUS (TOPIC THIRTEEN)

When we read the bible we can see many keys that can help us to live in the miraculous. These include:

1) Being where God calls us to be. Blessing and favour comes from being where God has called us to be

In 1 Kings 17:1-6 we see how the LORD provided for Elijah the Prophet during a time of drought when he *obeyed* the instructions of the LORD and *went to dwell by the Brook Cherith*. When we position ourselves where God has called us to be, the place of blessing, doing what He has called us to do, we will always see God's provision in our life.

"And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook." **(1 Kings 17:1-6)**

2) God is able to provide our needs in many different ways. We must not put God in a box. God will use different people at different times to supply our needs. God knows how to meet our every need.

The Apostle Paul wrote,

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." *(Philippians 4:19)*

We see in 1 Kings Chapter 17 how when the brook dried up that the LORD made another way for Elijah the Prophet to be provided for.

"And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." **(1 Kings 17:7-9)**

(Please read 1 Kings 17:8-16 to see how God supernaturally provided for Elijah through the widow)

3) The importance of continually putting the Lord first in all of our plans. Jesus Himself said,

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' Or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." **(Matthew 6:31-33)**

4) **When we do things God's way we see the supernatural miracles. It is so important that we follow God's plans for our life and churches and allow Him to direct our steps. Following God's blueprint for our life and church is a key to seeing God's ongoing favour and blessing upon our lives and ministries and to seeing miracles of provision in our life.** We see an example of a great miracle in the book of Joshua when the wall of Jericho fell down flat after Joshua, the men of war and the seven priests bearing trumpets of rams' horns had followed completely the LORD's specific instructions as to how to take possession of the city of Jericho which the LORD was giving to them. The LORD gave them specific instructions as to how many times they were to march around the city. **(Please read Joshua 6:1-20)**

5) **The importance of ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is always best to pray for people when the gifts of the Holy Spirit are operating in our lives during our church meetings. Worship is a great key to helping us to flow in the gifts of the Spirit.** *(Please read Attachment One – Gifts of the Spirit)*

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.”

(1 Thessalonians 1:5)

“I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” **(1 Corinthians 2:3-5)**

JESUS HIMSELF DEPENDED ON THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HIS MINISTRY HERE ON EARTH. In the book of Acts we read,

“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” **(Acts 10:38)**

It is so important that we are continually filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit. When we minister in the power of the Holy Spirit we see the operation of the gifts of the Spirit such as the gifts of healings and the working of miracles as the Holy Spirit wills. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

6) **That we continually put our trust in the Lord to meet our every need. We must always look to God to meet our every need. (Philippians 4:6) (Philippians 4:19) He may then put on our heart to make known our need to others.** George Mueller was a missionary evangelist who all his life only prayed to God in relation to his needs. He was challenged to completely rely on the Lord to meet his every need in ministry and to not make known his needs to others. With this simple dependence on God he achieved much. Over the course of his lifetime he cared for 10,024 orphans, he established 117 schools and offered education to over 120,000 children (many of them orphans)

7) **The importance of praying in faith and in line with the will of God for our life.**

The bible makes it clear that if we pray in faith and in line with the will of God for our life (1 John 5:14-15) we can be assured that our prayers will be answered. Praying in faith is very important in seeing our prayers answered. In the book of Hebrews we read, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

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)

8) God's timing is always perfect. Sometimes there is a timing delay to our prayers being answered. But God always has our best interests at heart and knows what is best for us. When we pray in faith we need to just keep standing on God's promises and faithfulness until we see the answers and breakthroughs in our life. In Psalm 37 we read,

“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)

When we look at the Word of God we can be greatly encouraged that God can do great things in and through our life when we live for Him. When we look at the accounts of God's supernatural help and provision in the bible and all of the many promises in His Word, we can confidently step out by faith to do what God has called us to do.

From God parting the Red Sea to make a way of escape for the Children of Israel, (**Exodus 14:13-31**) to Gideon defeating an army of 135,000 men with just 300 men, (**Please read from Judges 6:11 to Judges 8:11**) to the Lord protecting three young Jewish men (Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego) who were thrown in a fiery furnace for standing up for their faith, (**Daniel Chapter Three**) the bible is full of inspiring accounts of God's faithfulness to His people in the past which can give us great confidence when stepping out to take on new ventures for the Lord. In the book of Acts we see the many healings that were experienced in the early church, (**Acts 5:12-16**) as well as miracles such as an angel of the Lord freeing Peter from his prison chains and opening the iron gate leading to the city to bring him to freedom. (**Acts 12:5-11**)

The bible is full of great promises that we can build our faith on. It is good to continually meditate on the many wonderful promises in the Word of God to keep our faith strong and alive. Just a few of these worth meditating on are: (**Mark 9:23**) (**Luke 1:37**) (**John 14:12-14**) (**Romans 4:17**) (**Ephesians 3:20**) (**1 John 4:4**) (**Philippians 4:13**) (**Philippians 4:19**) (**Jeremiah 33:3**) (**2 Corinthians 9:8**)

So in conclusion we need to be people of faith and action, (who fully embrace every God given opportunity to advance God's Kingdom) who move in God's enabling power and who trust and depend on God to meet every single ministry and personal need.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMITMENT IN THE LIFE OF EVERY BELIEVER (TOPIC FOURTEEN)

Commitment is crucial in the life of every believer if they are to fulfil God's plan for their lives and churches. 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)

Vision and commitment are two keys to fulfilling all that God has planned for our lives and churches. Commitment is the 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. As 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**)

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. 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. We have a very real adversary, the Devil, who will continually try and prevent every believer from making a difference in this world for eternity. 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**) will all try and oppose and prevent God's plan from being worked out in our life 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 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) Commitment to living a life set apart for the Lord. This is a continual daily choice. 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 wheat 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) Commitment to doing the will of God continually for our life

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**)

3) Commitment to walking in the Spirit and being continually led by the Holy Spirit

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**)

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) 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.

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**)

5) 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*)

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**)

King David wrote,

“O GOD, You 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**)

6) Commitment to being accountable to other mature Christians. 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) 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 men. 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**)

8) 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 doing what God has called us to do in life.

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) Commitment to NEVER GIVING UP ON WHAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO DO in life. It is important that we finish what God has called us to do in life. If we do, many other lives will be impacted for eternity

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 your 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) Commitment to trusting God 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. He 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)

“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)

Proverbs 3:5-6 also gives us some great wisdom on how we should live our life as Christians.

“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)

11) 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. In the busy program of ministry it is important that we also 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. (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)

12) 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)

Jesus Himself said,

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it 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) We must continually depend on God’s enabling power in all that we do in life and ministry.

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)

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.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)

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 better to learn from others than to learn from our own mistakes. If we are teachable we can prevent much heartache 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)

“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), and

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 love

The Apostle Paul made it clear that without love even the most magnificent manifestation of gifts and the most heroic self sacrifice mean 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)**

Here 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.

As we remain committed and disciplined in these areas of our Christian walk and to never giving up on what God has called us to do in our life and churches, God will use us greatly to touch the lives of many.

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)

To conclude this course I have attached a second teaching which comes from our Church of Hope Leadership Training Manual, “An overview of what is important for all church leaders” which can also be downloaded from our Church of Hope Website www.coh.org.au

I will finish this fortnight’s study with some questions for self evaluation for the topics for weeks 16 and 17

- 1) Have there been times when I have ignored the prompting of God to do something due to circumstances not appearing right?
- 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?
- 9) Am I open and accountable to other mature believers? Can people speak correction into my life?