

# CHURCH OF HOPE EVANGELISM AND MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE BY EMAIL AND WEBSITE: **STUDY GUIDE: WEEK FIVE**

## **TOPIC FIVE: THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING INTIMACY WITH THE LORD AND GOD'S HEART FOR THE LOST**

### **INTRODUCTION TO WEEK FIVE:**

This week the Lord put on my heart to focus on two areas in our studies, 1) the importance of maintaining an intimate walk with the Lord and 2) God's heart to reach lost souls. These two areas of study go hand in hand because having an intimate walk with the Lord is the key to having God's heart for the lost. We are now living in a time when there are multitudes in the valley of decision (**Joel 3:14**) that need to turn to Christ. How we need revival in our own lives and churches so that we can see those living in our cities and nations turning to Christ on mass! I will begin by looking at a passage of Scripture in 2 Chronicles. The LORD said to King Solomon, **"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."** (**2 Chronicles 7:14**)

Given the lawless and perilous times that we are now living in, (**2 Timothy 3:1-5**) how important it is that we are intimate in our walk with the Lord and that we delight in spending time in His presence. Jesus Himself said in relation to those times just prior to His return, **"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved."** (**Matthew 24:10-13**)

Jesus also said in the Parable of the Persistent Widow, "Hear what the unjust judge said, "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. ***Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*** (**Luke 18:8**) Our intimacy with the Lord and hunger for the Word (bible meditation) is a key to seeing revival in our hearts. (**Psalm 119:36-40**) King David in a prayer of repentance wrote, **"Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit."** (**Psalm 51:10-12**)

In the midst of all our church ministry, programs and activities, we must never lose our passion to spend time with the Lord and to know Him intimately. We only get to know anyone by spending time with them. The Apostle Paul wrote, **"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."** (**Ephesians 3:17-19**)

Jesus rebuked the church at Ephesus, though it was full of good works and could not bear those who were evil, because they had left their first love for Him. (**Revelation 2:1-4**) **Jesus said to this church "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place- unless you repent."**(**Revelation 2:5**) A congregation may continue to exist without being a light in the darkness. How as a church we need to seek God's presence in all of our meetings, that we are truly the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (**Matthew 5:13-16**) Churches that are filled with worshipping believers who passionately love the Lord will make a great impact in their communities for Christ. So as leaders we need to lead by example and have a great passion to know Christ in an intimate way ourselves. We need to be like the Apostle Paul who was a lover of God and not a user of God. He wrote in the book of Philippians, **"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ."** (**Philippians 3:7-8**) I will now look at a few things to consider in relation to the importance of maintaining an ONGOING intimate relationship with the Lord before finishing with some brief thoughts on God's heart for the lost as part of our Evangelism teachings.

- 1) INTIMACY WITH THE LORD HELPS US TO BE NOT AFFECTED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD** (As we turn our eyes upon Jesus the things of this world grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and Grace) (**Psalm 37:4**) (**Colossians 3:1-4**) (**Matthew 6:19-21 – Especially verse 21**) (**James 4:1-10**) (**1 John 2:15-17**)
- 2) The importance of MAKING time to spend with the Lord** (**Psalm 63:1-5**) (**Psalm 37:7**) (**Jude 21**) (**Psalm 27:8**)
- 3) The importance of having a place where you can meet with God alone.** (**Matthew 6:6**) **Revelation comes in isolation as you seek the face of God.** (**Jeremiah 23:18 & 22**) **The enemy will continually try and bring distractions into our life to stop us from being still before the Lord.** (**Psalm 46:10**)

- 4) **The importance of INVOLVING the LORD in all that we do in life** (Proverbs 3:5-6) (Psalm 37:3-5) – **God’s ways are far Higher than our ways.** (Isaiah 55:8-9) (Jeremiah 33:3) (Ephesians 3:20) **God’s plans for our life and churches unfold progressively over time.** (Psalm 37:23) Staying close to the Lord helps us to stay on the narrow path that God has planned for our life, the “... good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10) and to remain in the centre of His will for our life and churches. 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) **Being CONTINUALLY in the centre of God’s will for our life is the key to seeing much fruit in our life. (John 15:16) We need God’s strategies for our lives and churches. Amen**
- 5) **Our Greatest priority needs to be Jesus ministering to us.** (Luke 10:38-42) Spending time in the Word of God and in His presence and being continually guided by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13) helps us to remain strong and focussed in our walk with the Lord. In the book of Isaiah we read, **“He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:29-31)**
- 6) **Spending time in God’s presence helps us to be more sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and to knowing and heeding the voice of God, which is a key to experiencing God’s blessings in our life.** (Deuteronomy 28:2-8) Being sensitive to the promptings and guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) helps us to make good choices in line with God’s will for our life and to avoid unnecessary pain. We see the consequences of disregarding the cautioning of the Holy Spirit in Acts Chapter 27 where Paul perceived that the ship would come to disaster if they were to sail. (Acts 27:10) This did indeed happen shortly after they chose to set sail. (Acts 27:41) In this account we see that the majority can at times be wrong (Acts 27:12) and even circumstances may appear right to pursue a course of action (Acts 27:13) but whenever we go against the cautioning of the Holy Spirit there will invariably always be repercussions.
- 7) **As leaders our love for and dependence on the LORD is crucial. We are in a very real Spiritual Contest. (John 10:10) (2 Timothy 3:12) (1 Peter 5:8-9) (John 16:33)** Sometimes we may have to stand alone in times of trials, when pioneering new things or when experiencing persecution for our faith. The enemy will always try to smite the shepherd to scatter the sheep. As leaders we need to **“be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”** (Ephesians 6:10) When the people were speaking of stoning David at Ziklag after the Amalekites had invaded and carried away all of their family members, David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. (1 Samuel 30:6) After overcoming this trial, David was shortly after appointed King of Judah (2 Samuel 2:4) before he went on to become King over all of Israel (2 Samuel 5:1-3)
- 8) **We must not allow pride, wrong and critical attitudes or unforgiveness to affect our intimacy with the Lord.** We must be quick to deal with wrong attitudes and offences. (1 John 1:9) (Mark 11:25) (James 4:6)
- 9) **Intimacy with the LORD is also a key to:**
  - i) God’s perfect love flowing through our lives to minister to others (Romans 5:5) (2 Timothy 1:7) (1 John 4:18)
  - ii) Maintaining our joy. (Psalm 16:11) The joy of the LORD is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10)
  - iii) Maintaining God’s peace in our hearts and lives (Isaiah 26:3-4) (Philippians 4:6-7)
  - iv) Avoiding burnout as we continually minister in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:3-5) (1 Peter 4:11)
  - v) Preaching a word in season to those that we minister to (Proverbs 15:23), vi) Believing for revival (Luke 1:37)
  - vii) To having a boldness in sharing our faith with others (Acts 4:13) and viii) Keeping a right heart (Proverbs 4:23)
- 10) **WORSHIP IS A KEY TO HAVING INTIMACY WITH GOD. God is raising up worshippers in this hour who have a great desire to worship Him in spirit and truth. (John 4:23-24) Heart Felt Worship is a key to seeing revival in our churches and cities and nations. (Psalm 22:3) Over the last 12 months God has put on my heart a fresh passion to worship Him. Worship connects our heart with God’s heart of compassion and helps to create an atmosphere in our meetings in which God can move. Worship helps to open up people’s hearts to receive the gospel. WORSHIP HELPS TO GIVE US GOD’S HEART FOR LOST SOULS**

**GOD’S GREAT LOVE FOR THE LOST (John 3:16) - The urgency to evangelise – The value of every soul (Luke 15:1-7)** Evangelism is more caught than taught. Church leaders need to seek God’s heart for the lost. (Matthew 9:35-38) The role of the five fold ministry is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. (Ephesians 4:11-12) **The importance of equipping and encouraging all Christians to become soul winners: THE HARVEST IS RIPE NOW (John 4:35)**