

JEHOVAH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

2024 FIRST QUARTER

# BIBLE

STUDY

EVERY WEDNESDAY

7PM



YouTube



**2024 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS MOVING FROM EARTHLY  
CONFORMATION TO SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION  
(ROMANS 12:1-2)**

**JANUARY EMPHASIS: KINGDOM CITIZENS INITIATING AND EMBRACING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**THOUGHT:** Kingdom Citizens know that we must reject unwholesome worldly influences and cultivate transformed minds that lead us to live in accordance with the Word of God.

**KEY WORDS/PHRASES: Transformed, Steadfast, Newly Committed**

**LESSON ONE: A BOLD DIRECTIVE FOR THE NEW YEAR**

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. What is a personal sacrifice you made in living for God?
2. What is the most tempting pleasure you refuse to conform to?
3. What explanation would you give for your transformational process?

**TEXT: ROMANS 12:1-2**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON: A NEW YEAR TRANSFORMATION**

**INTRODUCTION:** Happy New Year to everyone! This is an exciting new beginning of the year 2024 for us as we focus on “Moving from Earthly Conformation to Spiritual Transformation.” This theme encourages us to make a spiritual transformation in our lives. We must keep in mind that this process will be ongoing and will affect our generations to come. Our theme Scripture enlightens us on this transformational process being taken with body, soul, and mind operating in conjunction. With that in mind, as the Body of Christ and spiritual leaders, we have a responsibility to lead and follow this transformational endeavor. Kingdom Citizens know that conformity to earthly concepts and ways of operating do not work for kingdom living. Therefore, we must engage in Spiritual Transformation! Our theme for the year is taken from Romans 12:1-2 and is powerful to use as we consider this process. The writer of this epistle is the Apostle Paul who writes with intentional and purposeful application. Paul writes this letter to the church of Rome which was predominantly Gentile. His primary theme in Romans is the basic gospel, God’s plan of salvation and righteousness for all mankind. The purpose Paul wrote this epistle was from at least three perspectives: (1) He wrote to prepare the way for his coming to Rome. (2) He wrote to present the basic system of salvation to a church that had not received this kind of teaching. (3) He sought to explain the relationship between Jew and Gentile in God’s overall plan of redemption and kingdom living. Therefore, as we look at this 12<sup>th</sup> chapter and verses 1-2, we plainly see the idea of living sacrifices and being spiritually transformed.

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT LIVING FOR GOD TAKES SACRIFICES.**

In the first verse of this 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans, Paul opens with a plea urging his readers as brothers and sisters of Christ to recognize God’s mercy and in view of it present themselves to God as living sacrifices. Just as Jesus Christ took on himself a body in order to accomplish God’s will on the earth, so we should give ourselves to God as living sacrifices for His earthly mission.

Kingdom Citizens know that we are the hands, feet, and mouthpieces of God on the earth. We must also realize that the enemy knows and uses the earthly or worldly concepts and mindsets to distract us and persuade us to conform to its ways. However, when we consider the Word of God in our text, we will not conform, but be transformed. The text says, ***“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy, pleasing to God- this is your spiritual act of worship.” (V 1 NIV)*** Paul, in this verse, not only encourages us to present our bodies in view of God’s mercy, but also to offer them as living sacrifices, holy, and pleasing to God. This living and holy lifestyle implies that we live our lives as vessels of God guided by the Holy Spirit of God living inside of us operating spiritually in a worldly environment. Paul suggests that this is our spiritual act of worship. Everything we do or say is an act of worship towards God and must not be taken lightly. **How are you living your everyday life as a sacrifice to honor God?**

## **2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT CONFORMING TO THE EARTHLY MINDSET.**

Paul opens this 12<sup>th</sup> chapter with another powerful statement. The text says: ***“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is- his good, pleasing, and perfect will.” (V 2 NIV)*** Paul sees the need to be strong and intentionally straight forward with his words. He makes it clear that he understood that previously the people had taken on worldly patterns and concepts, but it was to their advantage to no longer conform to the world’s patterns. Kingdom Citizens know that as we grow in Christ and are engaged in leadership in the kingdom, we must move and operate in a spiritual transformation mindset. With all of this world’s evil and corruption being displayed, we need leaders and kingdom citizens to be transformed. This is not a single event but a lifestyle! Kingdom Citizens must transform to the mindset of Christ. In Philippians 2:5, Paul says: ***“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.” (NIV)*** In other words, our mindset ought to transform from the ways, thoughts, and attitudes of the world into the kind of ways, thoughts, and attitude of Jesus Christ.

## **3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THE TESTS OF LIFE WILL CAUSE US TO SEEK TO PLEASE GOD.**

Kingdom Citizens go through many different changes and challenges in life. Many times, God just allows us to face these situations and circumstances in order to draw us to Him. Even though, we know what we should do and what God desires for us to do, we still fight against transforming. Things would be much easier for us if we would keep the Scriptures in the forefront of our minds like when Jesus says: ***“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matt. 6:33 NIV)*** This Scripture is a vivid reminder that our lives and lifestyles ought to be focused on pleasing God. When we seek to please God, it takes us to a place of worship. That is really what Paul is encouraging us to do in our text today. The text says: ***“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is- his good, pleasing, and perfect will.” (V 2 NIV)*** The last portion of this verse lets us know that through the test, we are approved by God and headed for spiritual maturity. Transformation is good and pleasing to God as we grow into mature Kingdom Citizens.

**2024 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS MOVING FROM EARTHLY  
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(Romans 12:1-2)**

**JANUARY EMPHASIS: KINGDOM CITIZENS INITIATING AND EMBRACING  
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

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**KEY WORDS/PHRASES: Transformed, Steadfast, Newly Committed**

**LESSON TWO: CALLED TO BE A TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER**

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. What is the most miraculous experience you witnessed by God? Explain.
2. What is an example of a time when God revealed His answer to your misery?
3. What are some of the ways God showed up in life and brought you out?

**TEXT: EXODUS 3:1-10**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON: TRANSFORMED BY AN ENCOUNTER**

**INTRODUCTION:** We are truly blessed to continue this new year's study on spiritual transformation. Last week, we touched the surface on what promises to be a life changing study and focus this year. We move this week and month into encouraging leaders and all kingdom citizens to move from earthly conformation to spiritual transformation by learning from this awesome leader God calls into an encounter with Him named Moses. In our lesson, this week we find in the book of Exodus that Moses has a life changing experience and encounter with God. This study that we continue with has a very appropriate book and study to be considered as we deal with leaders. The very name Exodus is a Latin word derived from Greek "Exodos", the name given to the book by those who translated it into Greek. The word means "exit," departure. Therefore, when we consider the thought of transforming, we can relate these terms "exit" or "departure" to this term transforming because in order to transform, we must exit, depart, or change. Moses, who wrote some of this historical book, gives us a great foundation for leadership. "Exodus lays a foundational theology in which God reveals His name, His attributes, His redemption, His law, and how He is to be worshiped. It also reports the appointment and work of the first covenant mediator (Moses), describes the beginning of the priesthood, defines the role of the prophet and relates how the ancient covenant relationship between God and His people came under new administration." **(NIV Study Bible)** In the same way this awesome leader Moses has an encounter with God, all leaders, kingdom citizens, and followers of Christ will have life changing experiences and encounters with God. We can also be assured that just as the Israelites had to exit bondage and seek a promised land, we must strive to transition out of our bondages of life and move into a spiritual transformation.

## 1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT IN LIFE WE FACE MIRACULOUS EXPERIENCES.

In our text today, we find Moses having an encounter that is unbelievable. Moses sees this bush, and it's on fire, but the bush is not burning. That's one thing, but the most startling thing is God speaks to him from the bush. Now we most likely won't have this kind of encounter, but perhaps you had a dream that seemed so real, and maybe days later the same thing you dreamed about was your reality. Perhaps there was something you imagined and moments later it happened. Or perhaps, you just felt strongly in your spirit that God was telling you to do something and you listened to the Spirit and later realized that God had just given you a miraculous experience. Many times, things like these happen to us and we say, "Something told me to do this or that." We can be assured that God still uses different types of encounters and experiences to get our attention. The text says: ***"When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from the bush, Moses! Moses! and Moses said, Here I am."*** (V 4 NIV) Moses truly gave the right response, and God offered him an invitation that changed Moses' life and made him transition to another level of reverence to God. The text says: ***"Do not come any closer, God said. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."*** This verse shares the first level of reverence of holy ground which we also must reverence, but the text goes on to say: ***"Then he said, "I am God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God."*** (VV 5-6 NIV) When we have our encounters and experiences with God, we must also learn to reverence certain spaces and definitely reverence our God and the God of our forefathers. In verse 6, the writer uses the term "afraid" which in context means reverence. Therefore, we should realize that when we come to a place of reverence, it's expected for us to move into a spiritual transformational place with God.

## 2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT GOD HEARS OUR CRIES.

God gives us assurance throughout scripture that He hears our cries. Not only does God hear our cries, but He is present in our situations. Psalm 91:15 says: ***"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him and honor him. (Psalm 91:15 ASV)*** Our text says: ***"The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. (V 7 NIV)*** Just as the Lord heard the cries of these people, God hears our cries as well, and is expecting us to move in the right direction towards Him. Perhaps He allows the situation to happen in our lives to encourage us to make a spiritual transition. The other thing the text tells us is that not only does God hear our cries, but the text says: ***"So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land... (V 8 NIV)*** God is the same for us today as He was for them in the past. We have even more evidence in life and the Word of God. We know that ***"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."*** (Psalm 46:1 NIV)

## 3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT AT TIMES GOD WILL SEND US TO REPRESENT HIM.

We as Kingdom Citizens are God's representatives on the earth, however we are not to use the worldly tactics to carry out God's mission. God is always preparing us to fulfill His mission. Just as God used Moses in our lesson and sent Him to be the leader of the people, perhaps God wants to use you! The text says: ***"So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."*** (V 10 NIV) Kingdom Citizens must be ready especially as leaders to be used by God. Even when leaders and others are sent before powerful and dangerous people or places, they must know that God is with them. **We must know that God is with us!**

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**KEY WORDS/PHRASES: Transformed, Steadfast, Newly Committed**

**LESSON THREE: PRAYING FOR OUR LEADERS**

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Do you pray for leaders even when they are wrong? Explain why or why not.
2. How can God use you to bring godliness and holiness to newly committed Christians?
3. Who is the person, and how did God use him or her to lead you to God's Truth?

**TEXT: 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON: NEWLY COMMITTED KINGDOM CITIZENS**

**INTRODUCTION:** This week as we continue to focus on leadership and moving into spiritual transformation, we learn even more insight from another spiritual leader named Paul. Last week, we looked into the Old Testament book of Exodus and considered this steadfast dynamic leader named Moses. This week we will focus on this leader Paul who teaches his protégé Timothy to be an awesome leader of the church. Paul gives Timothy instructions to care for the church at Ephesus while he went on to Macedonia. This letter is labeled as a pastoral letter that Paul wrote to Timothy in order to develop the charge that he had given this young assistant for him to refute false teachings and to supervise the affairs of the growing Ephesian church and to assist in the appointment of qualified church leaders. Paul called Timothy "my true son in the faith." Therefore, this letter or epistle is a great model to use for instructing leaders in the church and for instructing kingdom citizens to lead in kingdom ministry. Timothy is a good example to use as we consider young leaders in today's church. Timothy not only had Paul as a mentor, but he also had a mother and grandmother who were godly examples for him in life. Our lesson this week begins in the second chapter of 1 Timothy and is giving us "Instructions on Worship." Paul makes an intentional effort to remind Timothy and us that it's important for us to make requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving for everyone. This strong suggestion Paul makes is vital for all kingdom citizens to practice as they worship God; it is especially vital for newly committed kingdom citizens.

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYING FOR EVERYONE.**

The text opens with: "*I urge, then first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. (V 1 NIV)* The fact that Paul opens with the word "urge" points to the fact that He wants Timothy and us to take his advice seriously. Paul knew that it is imperative for all believers to pray, make intercession, and be thankful for everyone.

Kingdom Citizens know that newly committed Christians need a solid foundation to begin with. They know that everyone needs to be steadfast in prayer and to know the importance of “intercession” which is praying for others. Kingdom Citizens also know that as we do for others and pray for others, God always makes provisions for the intercessor and provider. Paul also makes the point that kingdom citizens and everyone ought to be thankful and give thanks to God for everyone and everything. He then pushes this thought to another level as he writes this next verse. The text says: **“for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (V 2 NIV)** Paul understood that sometimes it’s difficult to pray for political leaders when they display immoral, ungodly, unethical, and wrong behaviors. We even at times find these kinds of behaviors in the church. However, we must remember that ultimately, God is in control, and as kingdom citizens or newly committed Christians, we must pray for them. The power of prayer can reach the deepest level of sinner and cause a spiritual transformation to happen in their lives. The song writer said: “If He has to reach way down- Jesus can pick you up.” We can go to our theme Scripture in Romans 12:1-2 as Paul says: **“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is- his good, pleasing, and perfect will.” (Romans 12:1-2 NIV)**

## **2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW WHAT PLEASES GOD.**

In the previous commentary, we discussed a very important factor of praying for leaders and everyone. Praying for everyone is the responsibility of everyone especially kingdom leaders. We know this is vital in the kingdom because it pleases God. The text says: **“This is good, and pleases God our savior.” (V 3 NIV)** This verse is the answer to the previous verse that says: **“Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.” (V 2 NIV)** Paul is intentionally encouraging us to pray because he knows the importance of prayer and the power of prayer. Paul also knew that this kind of prayer life and leaders please God. The reason kingdom citizens must do this is for us to live in peace, live like God, love like God, and live with dignity. Kingdom Citizens know that prayer pleases God especially when we pray in the will of God.

## **3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT GOD WANTS ALL TO BE SAVED.**

The text says: **“Who wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the Truth.” (V 4 NIV)** In this verse Paul points out at least two very important statements from God. Even though they coincide with each other, he makes the point “and” “come to a knowledge of the Truth.” God, who is by nature a savior, wants all people to be saved. He doesn’t want anyone to perish. However, God not only wants all to be saved, but he wants all to come into an intimate and personal relationship with Him. God is “Truth” and has all knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, once we are saved, we must grow to know the Truth and share the Truth with others. Jesus said in John’s gospel: **“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”** We must be willing as kingdom leaders and citizens to share the Truth because it’s the Truth “Jesus” who sets all men free!

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**KEY WORDS/PHRASES:** Transformed, Steadfast, Newly Committed

**LESSON FOUR: PUTTING OFF YOUR OLD SELF**

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. What are some habits and lifestyles you had to let go of?
2. How has the Spirit of God transformed your attitude?
3. What are some of the new lifestyles and nature you have put on?

**TEXT: EPHESIANS 4:22-24**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON: LIVING LIFE NEWLY COMMITTED**

**INTRODUCTION:** This week's lesson is taken from another one of Paul's letters or epistles. We started the month and year off in Paul's letter to the Romans 12:1-2, which is our yearly theme's Scripture. Then, the second week we went to the Old Testament book of Exodus 3:1-10 and week 3, we moved to another one of Paul's letters 1 Timothy 2:1-4. Now, we come to the close of the month in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. All of the lessons this month have given us insight on leadership. Of course, our theme for the year is "**Kingdom Citizens Moving from Earthly Conformation to Spiritual Transformation.**" Therefore, as we consider this powerful epistle to the Ephesians, we must recognize the key theme of the letter which is "**The Believers' Riches in Christ.**" "Unlike several of the other letters Paul wrote, Ephesians does not address any particular error or heresy. Paul wrote this letter to expand the horizons of his readers, so that they might understand better the dimensions of God's eternal purpose and grace and come to appreciate the high goals God has for the church." (**NIV Study Bible Commentary**) When we consider the verses of our text, we find that Paul addresses at least three aspects of kingdom citizens and leaders: **1.** Old self, **2.** mind, and **3.** New self, created like Christ. We must also keep in mind that in the content of scripture, we find these verses under the title, "**Living as Children of Light.**" The focus of this content is excellent for kingdom leaders and kingdom citizens because it teaches us how to live for Christ as His representatives on the earth.

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT SOME OLD THINGS HAVE TO GO!**

Kingdom Citizens understand that as they grow in Christ some things have to be left behind. In fact, sometimes they have to let habits, people, mindsets, and lifestyles change because in the process of growing in Christ, we become new creatures.



The Scripture teaches us: ***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17 NIV)*** Kingdom Citizens realize that they have an old nature and a new nature. The old nature or lifestyle that is opposed to Christ and His example of spiritual lifestyle must be changed or transformed to His lifestyle. Even the mindset of a believer must change as he or she grows into the person God desires him or her to be. When we consider verse 22 of our lesson, we can understand what Paul is saying about this old self. The text says: ***You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by deceitful desires.” (V 22 NIV)*** Paul was probably talking about the kind of person the kingdom citizen used to be. He was talking about the old lifestyle that resulted from the deceitful desires of the flesh. Those corrupt lifestyles and mindsets will always lead to destruction. Kingdom Citizens must realize the danger of the old self and commit to a spiritual transformation. This thought takes us back to the reason Paul gives us this content of scripture titled, “Living as Children of Light.” Paul’s desire is for kingdom citizens to walk in the light as Jesus is the light of the world. Since kingdom citizens bear the name “Christians,” we must follow His examples of how to live! **As a representative of Christ and a kingdom citizen and leader, how much of your old self have you taken off?**

## **2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT ATTITUDES.**

Kingdom Citizens know that their attitudes are in direct relations to their mindsets. The Word of God says: ***“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he... (Proverbs 23:7 KJV)*** The things that are in the heart of a person will come out in their attitudes. When Paul in our lesson talks about the mindset of the old self, he is talking about the evil thoughts of unbelievers. However, kingdom citizens must realize that at some point all were unbelievers. Therefore, as kingdom citizens and leaders, we must be aware of what we say, how we act, and even the lifestyles we live. We must be willing to live life with the right new attitude. The text says: ***“to be made new in the attitude of your minds.” (V 23 NIV)*** Kingdom Citizens realize that they have been raised to new life in Christ Jesus! There are times in life we must get rid of certain attitudes because they are detrimental to our living a godly lifestyle and attitude. Paul said: ***“I die every day...” (1 Cor. 15:31 NIV)*** Of course, Paul was not talking about physical death, but transforming to the likeness of Christ.

## **3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT WE ARE CREATED TO BE LIKE CHRIST.**

The text says: ***“And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (V 24 NIV)*** “Since the new self is created; it cannot refer to the indwelling Christ, but rather to the kind of person he produces in the new believer. Nor is it some kind of new essential nature the believer has because that would have been brought into existence at his new birth. In contrast, this is a new way of life that one not only “puts on” positionally at conversion, but is also urged to “put on” experientially as a Christian.” **(NIV Study Bible Commentary)** This speaks directly to transformation! Paul says in Colossians: ***“Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your creator and become like him. (Col. 3:9-10 NLT)***

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**FEBRUARY EMPHASIS:** KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSFORMATIONAL POWER OF LEARNING AND CULTIVATING AN APPRECIATION OF THEIR RACIAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE

**THOUGHT:** Kingdom Citizens know that they must identify and cultivate an understanding and appreciation of how God works through history and heritage. They must pass this knowledge on to their children and grandchildren.

**KEY WORDS/PHRASES:** Knowledge, Understanding, History, Heritage

**LESSON FIVE:** The Command is that YOU Teach It!!

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. How important is it to teach your children about your family history?
2. Are you ashamed or embarrassed to talk about your history during Bible study with other races?
3. How do you think God wants us to avoid racial stereotypes when addressing fellow Christians of another race?

**TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 32:7**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON:** WE ARE COMMANDED TO PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE AND HISTORY.

**INTRODUCTION:** Heritage is something that is handed down from the past. A heritage may be property, a reputation, traditions, or a position in life. It is a legacy. Our national or racial heritage refers to the customs, geography, or race of the people or countries into which we were born. For example: “She is proud of her African American heritage.” Property heritage refers to the inheritance left by ancestors. The Bible has a lot to say about heritage and the fact that children of God are given a spiritual heritage (**Ephesians 1:11**). The book of Deuteronomy is the last of the books of the law. It provides a reminder of the history and heritage, commandments and directives God had given in the previous four books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers). Deuteronomy **32:7** is the key verse to the book. This verse commands Israel to do exactly what the entire book does... **REMEMBER.**

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST KNOW THAT THE WORD OF GOD ENCOURAGES US TO REMEMBER OUR PAST.**

Sixteen times in the book of Deuteronomy the word “*remember*”, or remembrance appears. Not only is Deuteronomy a book about remembrance, but the whole Bible is a book about remembrance. Much of the work of the Scripture is to get us to remember and consider. **Have you ever attended a testimony service when someone got up to testify “What the Lord has done for them?”** Testimony services are “remembrance” services!! God sends preachers to get us to remember. He sends events to get us to remember. He sends people into our lives to get us to pause, remember, and consider.

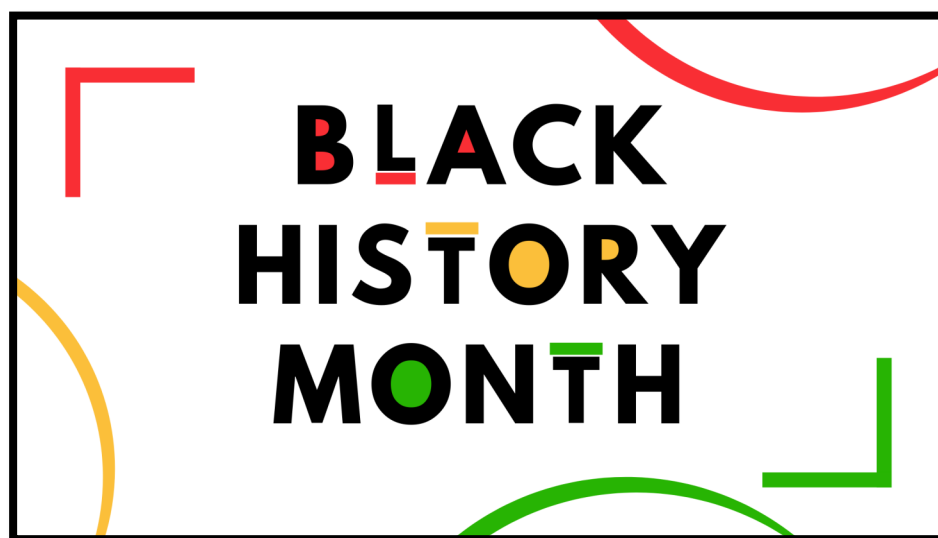
He sends trials, pain, heartbreak, and difficulty in our lives many times for the sole purpose of pressing us to pause, remember, and consider. As you reflect on the past, *What testimony can you make today about what the Lord has done for you?* It takes nothing away from another race's heritage for you to remember your race's heritage.

## **2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST KNOW THE PAST SHOULD BE TAUGHT AND PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.**

In our text, Moses urged the people of Israel to “*remember the days of old*” (**V 7**); that is, to call to mind the things of the past to better live in the present. This verse is a call to remember the past and learn from it. It encourages us to seek wisdom from those who have gone before us and to learn from their experiences. As they remembered the past, the Israelites were urged to consider “*the years of all generations*” and be reminded of the deeds of God (**Deuteronomy 4:32**). If they had trouble remembering, Moses told the people to “*ask your father, and he will inform you, your elders, and they will tell you.*” Think of the past, of the time long ago; ask your parents to tell you what happened, ask the older people to tell of the past. **How God has worked in your history and heritage is a great testimony for the rest of the world to hear and see.**

## **3. KINGDOM CITIZENS HAVE A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO TELL THE STORY OF THEIR HISTORY AND HERITAGE!!**

In ancient Israel, where oral culture was predominant, fathers and elders were responsible to keep track of history and to pass it on to their descendants (**Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19**). So, Moses encouraged the current generation of Israelites to consult with their *fathers* and *elders* to understand their history. The same must be done of us today. **Who will tell your story?** Who will tell the history of your race? There is a danger in not knowing or in having your history defined by someone other than you!! Do not depend on the government, the philosophers or anyone else to tell your story or the story of your race and ethnicity. **YOU TEACH THEM!** God entrusts parents with the responsibility of raising and training their children to know their history and heritage and to honor Him. With the Lord's help, we are exhorted to “**REMEMBER.**”



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**KEY WORDS/PHRASES:** Knowledge, Understanding, History, Heritage

**LESSON SIX:** A Nubian Man Aids God’s Prophet!!

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. When was there a time in your life when you were in trouble and God sent someone to deliver you?
2. How much are you willing to risk helping someone in trouble?
3. Would you hesitate to help someone because they are of a different race?

**TEXT: JEREMIAH 38:6-13**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON:** SHOWING LOVE ACROSS RACIAL LINES

**INTRODUCTION:** Jeremiah 38:6-13 tells the story of how Jeremiah was thrown into a mud pit and left to die. However, a man named Ebed-Melek had compassion on him and rescued him from the pit. This story is a powerful reminder of how God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. The story of Jeremiah and Ebed-Melek is a story that resonates with us because it's about ordinary individuals, like you and me, who are called upon to do extraordinary things. Ebed-Melek, a Cushite (a dark-skinned brother) and an official in the royal palace, was not a prophet, not a priest, not a king. He was an ordinary man, but God used him to save the life of His prophet Jeremiah.

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST BE READY TO RESPOND TO GOD’S CALL FOR ACTION. (VV 6-7)**

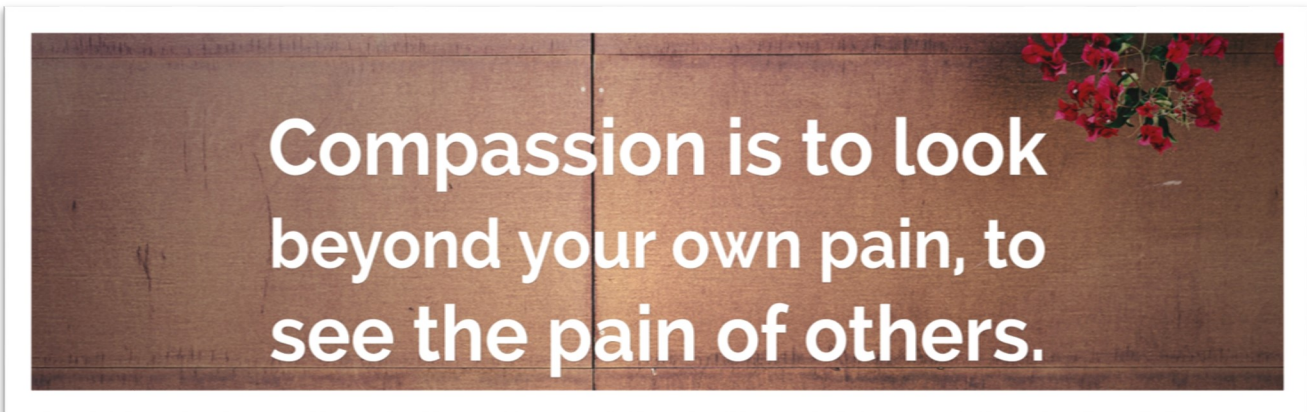
The prophet Jeremiah is in trouble. He has preached God’s word and made prophecies against ungodly corruption, but now evil men have seized him and put him in a dire situation. *“So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king’s son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud.” (V 6)* Their aim was to silence God’s prophet with a slow death. Who will come to the Prophet’s aid in his time of trouble? God doesn't always call the equipped; he always equips the called. Ebed-Melek, a foreigner who served as the king’s eunuch, didn't have any special skills or qualifications to rescue Jeremiah. He was not a soldier or a strategist. But he had something that was far more important - he had faith. He had the courage to stand up to the king and speak the truth, even when it was unpopular. He had the commitment to take action, even when it was risky.

## 2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST BE ENCOURAGED TO STEP OUT ON FAITH. (VV 8-11)

Many opposed the words of Jeremiah when he spoke them, but Ebed-Melek was willing to stand for what was right and to stand against the enemies of the truth and of Jeremiah. The amazing thing is that this foreigner goes to the king to petition for God's prophet, and he does so, calling the princes of Judah evil men. He was taking a risk in standing up for what was right! Who knows what could have come upon him if the king did not agree. He may have been thrown into the same pit as Jeremiah. Ebed-Melek went out of the palace and said to the king, ***“My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all they have done to Jeremiah the prophet. They have thrown him into a cistern.”*** (VV 8-9) What would we have done in Ebed-Melek's position? Would we have stood up for the Lord and His prophet? Would we have put our necks on the line to do what is right for someone of another race? God's call to action often involves taking risks: Ebed-Melek risked his position, his reputation, and even his life to save Jeremiah. He took a stand for what was right, even when it was dangerous.

## 3. KINGDOM CITIZENS SHOULD BE BOLD AND COMPASSIONATE!! (VV 12-13)

***“Then the king commanded Ebed-Melek the Cushite, ‘Take thirty men from here with you and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.’”*** (V 10) God's call to action often involves serving others: not about gaining power or prestige. It was about saving Jeremiah, serving the truth, and ultimately, serving God. In our lives, God's call to action often involves serving others - caring for the needy, standing up for the oppressed, sharing the gospel with the lost. Ebed-Melek the Cushite said to Jeremiah, ***“Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to pad the ropes.”*** Jeremiah did so, and ***they pulled him up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern.”*** (V 12) We need to be compassionate like this Ethiopian Eunuch, helping our brethren to be lifted out of the mire in their lives. We need to be willing to share our struggles and be willing to help each other out of the sin we are sinking in.



Compassion is to look  
beyond your own pain, to  
see the pain of others.

**2024 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS MOVING FROM EARTHLY  
CONFORMATION TO SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION**  
(Romans 12:1-2)

**FEBRUARY EMPHASIS:** KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSFORMATIONAL POWER OF LEARNING AND CULTIVATING AN APPRECIATION OF THEIR RACIAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE

**THOUGHT:** Kingdom Citizens know that they must identify and cultivate an understanding and appreciation of how God works through history and heritage. They must pass this knowledge on to their children and grandchildren.

**KEY WORDS/PHRASES:** Knowledge, Understanding, History, Heritage

**LESSON SEVEN:** An Ethiopian Man Seeks Understanding

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. How comfortable are you to carry the Word of God into new places?
2. How difficult is it for you to initiate a conversation with a stranger about the love of Christ?
3. How difficult is it for you to ask someone to explain a scripture to you that you don't understand?

**TEXT: ACTS 8:26-35**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON:** BOLDLY MINISTERING ACROSS RACIAL LINES

**INTRODUCTION:** Today we are introduced to **Philip**, one of the seven deacons appointed to tend the Christians of Jerusalem. His energetic preaching earned him the title of Philip the Evangelist and led him to minister successfully in Samaria and Palestine. Philip's missionary journey ended at Caesarea (Acts 8), where he raised his four daughters, reputed to be prophets, and where he entertained the Apostle Paul and his companions on their last journey to Jerusalem (Acts 21:8). In our lesson today we find Phillip, led by the power of the Holy Spirit, transforming the life of an Ethiopian eunuch.

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST BE PREPARED TO GO WHEREVER THE HOLY SPIRIT DIRECTS THEM. (VV 26-28)**

*“Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (VV 26-27)* So he started out, and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). *This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, (V 28)* and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. This man is from a culture that is entirely foreign to the members of the early church. They had had little or no dealings with people from this culture. They knew nothing about it and understood it even less. His race is different. He is an Ethiopian, probably with very dark skin. And if you think race is a big issue today, imagine how delicate an issue it must have been for the early church, where Jews and Gentiles couldn't get along. The man was a eunuch. This is significant because The Torah forbade the Jews to have any contact with eunuchs; they were considered unclean. But that didn't stop Philip. **Has someone's race ever stopped you from ministering to them?**

## 2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST NOT BE AFRAID TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP IN MINISTRY SITUATIONS. (VV 30-33)

The Holy Spirit told Philip to take the initiative, ***“Go to that chariot and stay near it.” (V 29)*** It seems the Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53:7, aloud. Philip “heard him read” from the scroll. Philip asks an interesting question: ***“Do you understand what you’re reading?” (V 30)*** This is a powerful question. How often do we find ourselves reading the Bible but not understanding what we are reading? Do you just read over it and keep going or do you seek other sources or persons to help you gain an understanding? The response here is very compelling, ***“How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” (V 31)*** The eunuch was sincere in his response. So, he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. He ***“opened the door”*** for Philip to explain the passage. It can be said that he is seeking transformational power through the reading and understanding of God’s Word. The Ethiopian’s response showed he could indeed read, but not understand. Isn’t that common to many of us today? He asked a sincere question and Philip was able to give him a straight answer. Transformation has begun!!

## 3. KINGDOM CITIZENS SHOULD REJOICE AND PRAY!! (VV 34-35)

***“The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. (VV 34-35)*** A little further in the chapter we learn that the Eunuch was indeed transformed through this encounter. ***Along the way they found a pool and the Ethiopian asked to be baptized. (V 37)*** And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, ***I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (V 38)*** Philip baptized him. The important thing is that he first read the Scripture, then studied the Scripture, asked questions when he didn’t understand what he had been reading, and then exercised ***“saving faith”*** in Jesus! What a testimony he had when he got home! He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, now he was a member of God’s family! They could be too. Salvation is now a part of his Ethiopian Heritage. He had been saved and transformed!



**2024 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS MOVING FROM EARTHLY  
CONFORMATION TO SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION**  
(Romans 12:1-2)

**FEBRUARY EMPHASIS:** KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSFORMATIONAL POWER OF LEARNING AND CULTIVATING AN APPRECIATION OF THEIR RACIAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE

**THOUGHT:** Kingdom Citizens know that they must identify and cultivate an understanding and appreciation of how God works through history and heritage. They must pass this knowledge on to their children and grandchildren.

**KEY WORDS/PHRASES:** Knowledge, Understanding, History, Heritage

**LESSON EIGHT:** Transformed by a Spirit of Inclusion

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Have you ever had to deal with racially prejudiced people?
2. What characteristics do you use to determine if someone is prejudiced?
3. What do you think the Lord wants you to do this week to deal with your prejudices and to widen your circle of unlikely friends?

**TEXT: ACTS 10:34-38**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON:** KINGDOM CITIZENS WRESTLING WITH THE SPIRIT OF PREJUDICE

**INTRODUCTION:** A part of our human growth and development is a belief system that is built on how we were raised and what we have been taught from childhood to adulthood. Every human being develops a belief system and sometimes racial prejudice is an unfortunate part of it. From time to time, it's good to ask our Lord Jesus to search our hearts to see if there is any sin of prejudice there. If it is, then we need to be willing to ask Him to cleanse our racial prejudice. Leaving our old beliefs behind for better ones is hard to do, but not impossible as we shall see in our lesson today.

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST ACCEPT THAT GOD HAS PREPARED THE WAY FOR US TO CONFRONT UNGODLY PREJUDICE.**

Our lesson today concerns an event in the life of the Apostle Peter. He had come a long way in his walk with the Lord, but he had restricted his preaching of the gospel to a limited audience focusing only on the Jews. Now he has been directed by God to go to Cornelius, a Gentile's house. If someone had asked Peter if he were prejudiced, he would probably have emphatically denied it. **Do you think that you are prejudiced?** Being prejudiced means you have a pre-conceived idea that could be favorable or unfavorable, but generally it is understood to be a negative action rather than a positive one. God was preparing Peter's heart to accept Gentiles as equal under the Grace of God.



Paul wrote in Galatians 3:8 *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.”* Are there prejudices that you need to confront in your Life? You can be prejudiced against people for their race, color or creed.

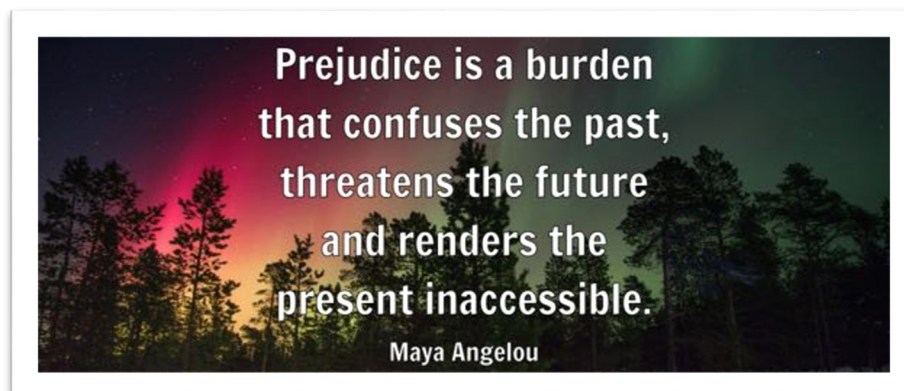
The Gospel is for all so Kingdom Citizens must develop a spirit of inclusiveness.

## **2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST BE OBEDIENT TO GOD’S CALL TO CROSS RACIAL AND SOCIAL BARRIERS. (VV 34-35)**

Today’s Scripture pointed out to Peter that he had some pre-determined beliefs that were limiting his ability to reach out to people who were **“different”** from him. Possibly one of the reasons why Peter was appointed to this task was that he was usually willing to step out and try new things. Most of us resist change, and if we are reasonably comfortable, we don’t want to change whether or not the change would improve things for us or for the persons to whom we are to minister. The next day Peter started out on the 30-mile journey from Joppa to Caesarea. He and his Jewish traveling companions arrived the next day, entered the house of Cornelius who was expecting them and had gathered all his relatives and friends for the occasion. Peter explained that he was only willing to come after God made it clear that His Grace extends to both Jew and Gentile. Then **Peter** began to speak: *“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.”* (VV 34-35) His message was as much about himself as it was for Cornelius and his household.

## **3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT TRANSFORMATION CAN COME THROUGH A SPIRIT OF INCLUSION!! (VV 16-18)**

Peter was in unfamiliar territory when he stood before Cornelius and those gathered at his house, but he preached a Holy Spirit guided message to these waiting people. The gospel was preached to people that Peter had initially written off. Think of the limits you have placed on people. How would others feel if you moved beyond these limits? The Jews regarded even people like Cornelius as pagans unless they fully submitted to Jewish practices. **Would you be criticized if you made friends with certain people? Would that matter?** Considering the make-up of your community, church, or small group would some people ASSUME your church or small group is not for them? If so, how can you change that? If we are open to the Lord’s leading, He will use ordinary daily circumstances to confront our prejudices and to help us tear down walls that cause us to reject certain people who are different from us. **Peter was obedient and walked in the truth and reversed his prejudicial thinking.** As we think about preserving our history and heritage, we should strive to overcome racial prejudices of the past and the present and concentrate on allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us to unburden such hard attitudes in the future.



**2024 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS MOVING FROM EARTHLY  
CONFORMATION TO SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION  
(Romans 12:1-2)**

**MARCH EMPHASIS: KINGDOM CITIZENS EMBRACING SPIRITUAL FOLLOW-  
SHIP**

**THOUGHT:** Kingdom Citizens know we must learn to identify and follow spiritual leadership. We must learn principles of good fellowship, practice them, and pass them on to our children.

**KEY WORDS/PHRASES: FOLLOWSHIP, UNITY, AGREEMENT, RESURRECTION**

**LESSON NINE: STAYING ON THE RIGHT ROAD**

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. As a believer, what are some daily things we need to do to stay on the RIGHT path?
2. Besides scripture and prayer, what are some other Christian disciplines have you developed for spiritual growth?
3. When you hear the word “meditate,” what comes to mind? What are some of the positive benefits of meditation?

**TEXT: PSALM 119:9-16**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS ARE COMMITTED TO A  
LIFESTYLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

**INTRODUCTION:** Each follower of Christ is a work in progress. It doesn't matter if you are 18 or 88. We call this process sanctification. Sanctification is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit of God in the life of every believer; this process starts at conversion and ends at death. While we are positionally holy (“set free from every sin”) by the blood of Christ, Acts 13:39, we know that we still sin (1 John 1:10). That's why the Bible also refers to sanctification as a practical experience of our separation unto God. “Progressive” or “experiential” sanctification, as it is sometimes called, is the effect of obedience to the Word of God in one's life. It is the same as growing in the Lord (2 Peter 3:18) or spiritual maturity. God started the work of making us like Christ, and He is continuing it (Philippians 1:6). This type of sanctification is to be pursued by the believer earnestly (1 Peter 1:15; Hebrews 12:14) and is effected by the application of the Word (John 17:17). Progressive sanctification has in view the setting apart of believers for the purpose for which they are sent into the world: “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified” (John 17:18-19).

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS ARE COMMITTED TO STAYING ON THE RIGHT PATH.  
(VV 9-11)**

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in The Psalter. Each of the sections begins with a Hebrew alphabet. This section begins with the second letter “Beth”. This section opens with a question followed by the answer: **“How can a young person stay on the path of purity?”** To stay on the path of purity, one must have a desire to live a life of purity. The writer offers only one answer: **“By living according to your word.”**

For Kingdom Citizens, there is only one way to stay pure; it's living according to the Word of God. **Are you living according to the Word?** The psalmist continues, **"I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands."** He wants to do life God's way, so he makes a declaration and a prayer request. The life of a Christ follower can never be lived successfully without some personal declarations and a life of prayer. The writer shows that he is committed to staying on the right path when he declares, **"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."** If we are to truly live a sanctified life, we depend on God for wisdom, strength and guidance, but then we must do our part - hide His Word in our hearts.

## 2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS ABOUT AN INTIMATE WALK WITH GOD. (VV 12-14)

As the people of God, our walk with Him is the most important activity we will engage in every day. An intimate relationship with God begins with: a place, a time and a Bible. Intimacy does not happen as a result of a once or twice a week engagement with the Heavenly Father; it begins with: a place, a time and a Bible. The psalmist says, **"Praise be to you, Lord; teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth."** He enters God's presence with a desire to learn: **teach me your decrees.** Learning involves hearing, understanding and applying. Our faith and our relationship grow from intimate time with the Lord. And like the writer, we too can say, **"I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches."** **What is your greatest challenge to spending time with the Lord?**

## 3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT CHRISTIAN MEDITATION IS A DISCIPLINE WORTH PURSUING. (VV 15-16)

The psalmist begins by saying, "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways." To meditate is to think deeply or focus one's mind for a period of time, in silence or with the aid of chanting for religious or spiritual purposes. Pastor Rick Warren says, "If you know how to worry, you already know how to meditate. When we worry, we focus on the problem; when we meditate, we focus on God and His Word." Warren continues, "God says that when we meditate on His Word day and night, we will bear fruit. We will be fruitful, productive people — people full of love, joy, peace, patience, and the rest of the fruit of the Spirit. He also says we will prosper. There are two great promises in Scripture about success; one of them is Psalm 1, and the other is Joshua 1:8. Both say that the key to success is meditating on God's Word." The writer concludes, **"I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word."** **If you are not currently meditating on the Word of God, how can you add meditation to your daily routine?**



2024 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS MOVING FROM EARTHLY  
CONFORMATION TO SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION  
(Romans 12:1-2)

**MARCH EMPHASIS: KINGDOM CITIZENS EMBRACING SPIRITUAL  
FELLOWSHIP**

**THOUGHT:** Kingdom Citizens know we must learn to identify and follow spiritual leadership. We must learn principles of good fellowship, practice them, and pass them on to our children.

**KEY WORDS/PHRASES: FELLOWSHIP, UNITY, AGREEMENT, RESURRECTION**

**LESSON TEN: OBEYING SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- The word ‘obey’ has taken on a negative connotation in modern society. What are some positive meanings of obey in the church and in the world?  
What are some things we can do to make the work of our leaders easier and more enjoyable?  
How much do you think your prayers impact the fruitfulness of your leaders?

**TEXT: HEBREWS 13:17-19**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON: GOOD CHURCH LEADERSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO THE HEALTH OF THE BODY.**

**INTRODUCTION:** The church is strategic to the Kingdom of God. Each member is important, and each member functioning properly is key to the growth and development of the local church. In a growing church there are strong leaders and faithful followers. Problems arise when either the leaders are not leading or the followers are not following; either way, we have a disconnect. If surveyed, most congregations would say they have a healthy church. What Is a Healthy Church? 5 Definitive Characteristics to Look For: ... **1.** The church is Bible-based. **2.** The church is Christ-centered. **3.** The church has a clear shared vision. **4.** The church values everyone equally. **5.** The church has healthy leadership. Are there other characteristics of a healthy church? Remember fat and healthy are not the same. **Why is it important to recognize when a church is healthy? What are some signs that your church is not healthy?**

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTAND THAT SUBMISSION TO LEADERSHIP IS A SIGN OF A HEALTHY CHURCH. (V 17a-b)**

We are admonished to **“Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account.”** The position and the responsibility call us to ‘have confidence’ and ‘submit to leadership.’ The writer of Hebrews is appealing to members of the church to support their leaders.

Of course, there's an expectation of good, godly leadership. No Christian should follow a leader who is not following God. Paul said to the Corinthians, **“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”** 1 Cor. 11:1. Over the centuries, church leadership has gone through many challenges and changes. Some of our churches have experienced poor and inadequate leadership for many years; some stand in disarray even to this day because of poor leadership; however, there are churches who have been blessed with great leaders, but they have run into members who refuse to follow; instead, they have banded together to “fight the preacher.” Lest I be misunderstood, a church must also have strong deacons, deaconesses, trustees and ministry leaders who are committed to the same goals, and members who are supportive. **Why is submission such a difficult thing for some members? Why have some members lost confidence in their leaders?**

## **2. KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTAND THAT JOY AMONG LEADERS IS A SIGN OF A HEALTHY CHURCH.**

Church work alone can be stressful and very demanding at times. It becomes more stressful and more demanding when members are disgruntled and contentious. The writer continues, **“Do this (have confidence and submit to your leaders) so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.” (V 17c)** Health in any arena of life is a very good thing. When a person is physically healthy, then he/she tends to be happier. When a company is healthy, its workers are more productive, and when an individual is healthy financially, he/she tends to be more generous. Good health improves our overall mood. When the church, the body of Christ is healthy, not only is there joy but fruitfulness. We are commanded to ‘have confidence and submit to our leaders’ **“so that their work will be a joy, not a burden.”** We, as members of the body, help our leaders by being obedient to God first, then following their leadership. When leadership becomes a burden to the leader, we have a problem, **“for that would be of no benefit to you.”** It's the little things that bring joy to the hearts of leaders.

## **3. KINGDOM CITIZENS UNDERSTAND THAT LEADERS AND MEMBERS WORK TOGETHER TO GET THE WORK DONE.**

I believe that in the church, we still underestimate the power of prayer. The great apostle spoke of this issue many times throughout his letters. He said on one occasion that, ‘I am helped by your prayers.’ Here the writer says, **“Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.” (V 18)** Leaders are men and women; they are also prone to sin; they are tempted just like everyone else, and sometimes more than others. So, leaders need much prayer. The church might experience more health if the members would pray. The church could accomplish much good, if members would simply pray. The author reminds us, **“I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon. (V 19)** The verse ends with a personal prayer request; it's no longer us, but ‘me.’ The leader said, I NEED PRAYER. **What are ways leaders and members can work better together?**



2024 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS MOVING FROM EARTHLY  
CONFORMATION TO SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION  
(Romans 12:1-2)

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FELLOWSHIP**

**THOUGHT:** Kingdom Citizens know we must learn to identify and follow spiritual leadership. We must learn principles of good fellowship, practice them, and pass them on to our children.

**KEY WORDS/PHRASES: FELLOWSHIP, UNITY, AGREEMENT, RESURRECTION**

**LESSON ELEVEN: FELLOWSHIP PRINCIPLES FOR OUR YOUTH**

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

Why is it important for a child to obey his or her parents?

When you think about ‘honoring’ your parents, what comes to mind?

What are some expected outcomes for children who are disobedient to their parents?

**TEXT: EPHESIANS 6:1-3**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CHILDREN AND YOUTH LEARNING  
AND GROWING IN THE CHURCH**

**INTRODUCTION:** Investing in today’s youth is necessary in growing the body of Christ. Teaching young people in the church to grow in their relationship with the Lord prepares them to serve Christ in all they do. As a result, this nurtures the congregation and allows the church to flourish. Serving young people cannot only prepare them to become future leaders, but also allow them to contribute to the church. This is seen many times in the Bible, as God often used young people to do great things. For example, God used Timothy to pastor and lead the Ephesian church when he was a teenager. 1 Timothy 4:12 says, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.” **Who pointed you to Christ and helped you understand the gospel? In what ways did you have serving opportunities in the church and in the community as a child?**

**1. KINGDOM CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE COMMANDED TO OBEY THEIR PARENTS.**

Ephesian 6 begins with a strong command, **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” (V 1)** Most children at some point will rebel against their parents. As children, obedience does not come naturally. Since the fall in the Garden of Eden, there is something within each of us that causes us to want to have our own way. In the original 10 Commandments, the 5th command is where God instructed children concerning the way they should act toward their parents. The first four commands focus on our relationship with God. The last six focus on our relationship with each other. It is interesting that at the top of the second list is the relationship between parents and children.

This should remind us that teaching begins in the home. **Why do you think that God started with parents and children? What happens when children don't obey their parents?**

## **2. KINGDOM CHILDREN AND YOUTH KNOW THAT OBEYING THEIR PARENTS PLEASES GOD.**

If we, as the people of God, can get to a place in ministry and in the church where we truly grasp the concept of obedience to God's way, we will be happier and healthier as individuals and as families. The Scripture says, **“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— (V 2).** When you think of the word ‘honor,’ what comes to mind? Webster defines ‘honor’ as high respect; great esteem. The Word says when we honor our parents (mother and father), that there is a promise attached. We often want the blessing without obedience. The Bible teaches us that children obeying their parents is so important until God has decided to reward obedient children. Under the Old Testament Law, the penalty for out-of-control children was severe: “If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his town are to stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid” (Deuteronomy 21:18–21). **God is pleased when children obey.**

## **3. KINGDOM CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE BLESSED WHEN THEY OBEY THEIR PARENTS.**

Every parent wants the best for his or her children. No parent wants to see their children hurting, sick or incarcerated. We want God's best for our children.

The Apostle Paul continues, **“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” (V 3)** The first part of the promise is: **“so that it may go well with you.”** There are many who want to say, I want to live well. I want all the blessings God has in store for me, but are unwilling to follow the God pattern laid out in scripture - **Honor your father and mother.** In the modern era, we want to treat parents in any kind of way, and still be blessed - this will not happen. Unlike us, God inspects what he expects. Secondly, God wants to bestow on us a long life. ‘ . . . **and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.**’ The Lord plans that we not only live long but enjoy life. When young people obey God and honor their parents, the Lord says, not only will you live long but that you will also enjoy life. Many people exist on earth for years, but others enjoy life. As a young person, HOW LONG DO YOU DESIRE TO LIVE AND HOW WELL?

## Week of March 18- March 24, 2024 (PALM SUNDAY)

### 2024 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS MOVING FROM EARTHLY CONFORMATION TO SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION (Romans 12:1-2)

#### **MARCH EMPHASIS: KINGDOM CITIZENS EMBRACING SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP**

**THOUGHT:** Kingdom Citizens know we must learn to identify and follow spiritual leadership. We must learn principles of good fellowship, practice them, and pass them on to our children.

#### **KEY WORDS/PHRASES: FELLOWSHIP, UNITY, AGREEMENT, RESURRECTION**

#### **LESSON TWELVE: “SHOUT HOSANNA!!”**

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Give reasons why it is important to follow the instructions of the Lord.
2. Hosanna can be used to express, praise, adoration, or joy. What are other words we use to express praise, adoration, or joy?
3. In our scripture passage, Jesus is celebrated. This is one of the few times that this happened in the gospels. Why do you think this is true?

#### **TEXT: MATTHEW 21:6-11**

#### **THE HEART OF THE LESSON: WE EXPERIENCE MANY BLESSINGS WHEN WE OBEY THE LORD.**

**INTRODUCTION:** Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, one week before His resurrection (Matthew 21:1–11). As Jesus entered the holy city, He neared the culmination of a long journey toward Golgotha. He had come to save the lost (Luke 19:10), and now was the time—this was the place—to secure that salvation. Palm Sunday marked the start of what is often called “Passion Week,” the final seven days of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Palm Sunday was the “beginning of the end” of Jesus’ work on earth. On that first Palm Sunday, the people also honored Jesus verbally: “The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ / ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ / ‘Hosanna in the highest heaven!’” (Matthew 21:9). In their praise of Jesus, the Jewish crowds were quoting Psalms 118:25–26, an acknowledged prophecy of Christ. **What questions do you have about Palm Sunday?**

#### **1. KINGDOM CITIZENS FOLLOW GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS.**

Matthew reported, **“The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on.” (VV 6-7)** As we consider the Passion Week, there are many moving pieces and many lessons to be learned, and they all come back to the basic instructions, “Obey Jesus.” In many of our minds, this seems to be a simple task, and yet it is an important one. **Why do we sometimes minimize what we do in the kingdom?** Here the disciples are a good model for us, **“The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.”** (Mark 11, Luke 19 and John 12). I love this; a simple, basic, mundane task.



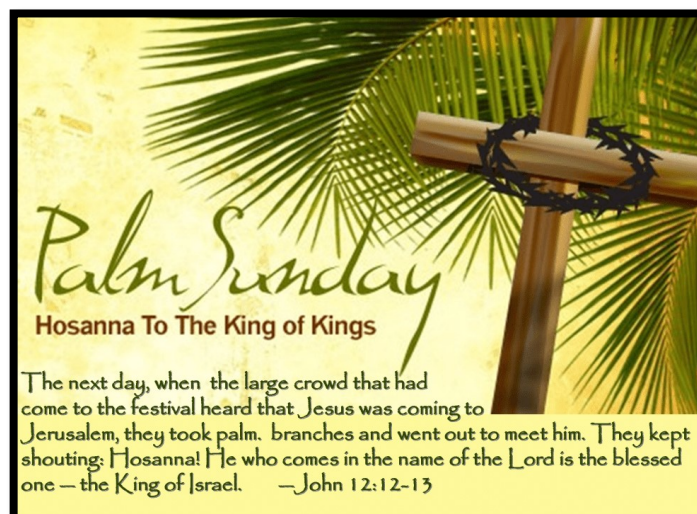
Yet the disciples went with haste and did as they were instructed. *Are you cloaked in the garment of obedience today?* Do you see your spiritual assignment as menial and unimportant, or did you remember that giving a cup of cold water in Jesus' name is rewarded (Mark 9:41). As it was with the Children of Israel, with the early disciples, and even Adam and Eve, following God's instructions are of paramount importance.

## 2. KINGDOM CITIZENS WORSHIP GOD WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM. **VV 8-9**

The body of Christ is made up of so many different personalities. Not only are our personalities different, but our physiques, our emotions, and our praise are all so different. God has uniquely created each of us. Yet within each of us is a desire to worship God enthusiastically. Because we love the Lord, we want Him to receive our best praise. Though it is not displayed the same way for each of us; nevertheless, if we are true Kingdom Citizens, it will be our BEST praise. The Scripture said, **“A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”** This crowd represents each of us as we enthusiastically welcome Jesus into our hearts, homes and churches on this glorious Palm Sunday. Our best worship always includes sacrifice? **Where do you see sacrifice in these verses?**

## 3. KINGDOM CITIZENS ARE IN THE CROWD ON THE FIRST PALM SUNDAY. **(VV 10-11)**

Many say from time to time, I would have loved to have been there on that first Palm Sunday. As we celebrate this Palm Sunday, we are reminded that we were there because each time we read this story, our hearts are moved by the words, **When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”** Those words in and of themselves cause my heart to leap for joy as I anticipate the answer. I too shouted with the crowd, **“This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”** This shout says, the Savior has come; the promised Messiah has arrived. Maybe this Palm Sunday you too will say in a loud voice, “This is JESUS, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.” The fact that he is from Nazareth is no longer a stigma; it now provides hope. For we walk by faith not by sight. **When you think of the name Jesus, what comes to mind?**



**2024 THEME: KINGDOM CITIZENS MOVING FROM EARTHLY  
CONFORMATION TO SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION  
(Romans 12:1-2)**

**MARCH EMPHASIS: KINGDOM CITIZENS EMBRACING SPIRITUAL  
FELLOWSHIP**

**THOUGHT:** Kingdom Citizens know we must learn to identify and follow spiritual leadership. We must learn principles of good fellowship, practice them, and pass them on to our children.

**KEY WORDS/PHRASES: FELLOWSHIP, UNITY, AGREEMENT, RESURRECTION**

**LESSON THIRTEEN: TRUST AND BELIEVE**

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. What is one of the most incredible stories you were asked to believe?
2. Talk about a time when your faith was tested in a BIG way and you were challenged to believe God.
3. How do you explain resurrection to your non-Christian family and friends?

**TEXT: JOHN 11:21-27**

**THE HEART OF THE LESSON: IN ORDER TO BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION,  
WE MUST WALK BY FAITH.**

**INTRODUCTION:** The resurrection of Jesus is important for several reasons. First, the resurrection witnesses to the immense power of God Himself. To believe in the resurrection is to believe in God. If God exists, and if He created the universe and has power over it, then He has power to raise the dead. If He does not have such power, He is not worthy of our faith and worship. Only He who created life can resurrect it, only He can reverse the hideousness that is death itself, and only He can remove the sting of death and gain the victory over the grave (1 Corinthians 15:54–55). In resurrecting Jesus from the grave, God reminds us of His absolute sovereignty over life and death. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is also important because it validates who Jesus claimed to be, namely, the Son of God and Messiah. Another reason the resurrection of Jesus Christ is important is that it proves His sinless character and divine nature, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ not only validates His deity, but it also validates the Old Testament prophecies that foretold Jesus' suffering and resurrection (Acts 17:2–3).

**1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST TRUST GOD IN SPITE OF CURRENT  
CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Chapter 11 of John opens with these words, **“Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha . . . So, the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” (VV 1, 3) “So when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days . . .”** Trust is a powerful thing. God calls us daily to trust Him. Trust takes on many shapes and forms - the child trusts the parent; the employer trusts the employee, and the husband trusts his wife. But trust between us and God goes much, much deeper. Jesus knew Lazarus was sick, rather than coming, he stayed where he was for two more days . . . then Lazarus died. **Are you still able to trust?**

Listen to Mary's words, **"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."** (VV 21-22) If you trust the Lord, your trust will be challenged sooner or later. And sometimes that trust is fraught with doubt. Can't you feel the deep grief in Mary's voice, **"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here . . ."** Can you still trust the Lord when you don't understand what he is doing? Do you see faith in Mary's grief?

## 2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST RELY ON THE WORD OF GOD DURING DIFFICULT TIMES.

The Word of God is the anchor for our souls, firm and secure. The old saying remains true, "Into every life some rain must fall." When we talk about resurrection, then our faith kicks in. Mary and Martha have become our first examples of what it means to trust God with resurrection. During difficult times, we need to hear these words. Jesus said to her, **"Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."** (VV 23-24) For you it may be a mother, father, spouse or child, but the same message is true for all who die in Christ - HE WILL RISE AGAIN; SHE WILL RISE AGAIN. To rely means to need (someone or something) for support, help, etc.: to depend on (someone or something). **Do you need the Lord?** Like Martha, we may have questions about the resurrection. Her understanding is limited to a time. Jesus is prepared to introduce her to a person. **What questions do you have about the resurrection?** First Corinthians 15 gives us the most comprehensive account of the resurrection in Scripture.

## 3. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST EMBRACE THE RESURRECTION.

Listen to some of the most beautiful words in all of scripture: **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."** (VV 25-27) After Martha's confession that her brother would rise on the last day, Jesus declares to her **"I am the resurrection and the life."** **What does this mean?** It means our resurrection is connected to who Jesus is. It is no longer an event; it is a person. Easter really is all about Jesus. The resurrection or resuscitation of Lazarus is a preview of what Jesus could do. When Christ rose from the dead, it showed us even more. **What are some differences between the raising of Lazarus and the Resurrection of The Lord Jesus Christ?** Finally, when it comes to the resurrection, we must answer the question that Jesus asked Martha, **"Do you believe this?"** Your eternity rests on your answer to this question. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay." **Matthew 28:5-6**



## **QUARTER 1: JANUARY - FEBRUARY - MARCH**

### **Kingdom Citizens Initiating and Embracing Transformational Leadership**

- JANUARY 7** A BOLD DIRECTIVE FOR THE NEW YEAR
- JANUARY 14** CALLED TO BECOME A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER
- JANUARY 21** PRAYING FOR OUR LEADERS
- JANUARY 28** PUTTING OFF YOUR OLD SELF

### **Kingdom Citizens Understanding the Transformational Power of Learning and Cultivating an Appreciation of their Racial History and Heritage**

- FEBRUARY 4** THE COMMAND IS THAT YOU TEACH IT
- FEBRUARY 11** A CUSHITE AIDS GOD'S PROPHET
- FEBRUARY 18** AN ETHIOPIAN SEEKS UNDERSTANDING
- FEBRUARY 25** TRANSFORMED BY A SPIRIT OF INCLUSION

**Kingdom Citizens know we must learn to identify and follow spiritual leadership. We must learn principles of good followship, practice them, and pass them on to our children.**

- MARCH 3** STAYING ON THE RIGHT ROAD
- MARCH 10** OBEYING SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP
- MARCH 17** FOLLOWSHIP PRINCIPLES FOR OUR YOUTH
- MARCH 24** "SHOUT HOSANNA!" (PALM SUNDAY)
- MARCH 31** TRUST AND BELIEVE (RESURRECTION SUNDAY)