

JMBC

2020 Theme

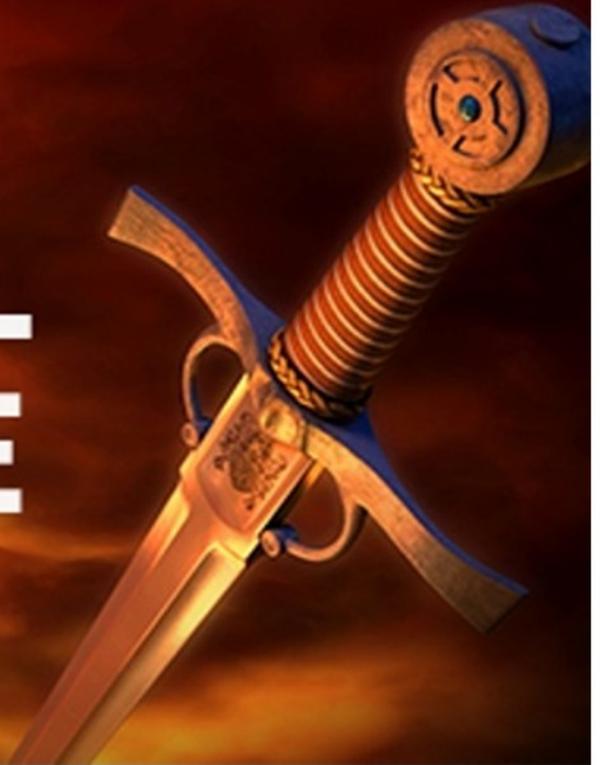
Kingdom Citizens Engaged in Spiritual

Warfare Equipped for Victory

Ephesians 6:11

BIBLE STUDY

SPIRITUAL WARFARE



January Emphasis Spiritual Warfare

SCRIPTURES

January 5 - Ephesians 6:10-13
January 12 - Ephesians 6:14-15
January 19 - Ephesians 6:16-17
January 26 - Ephesians 6:18-20

Thought

Kingdom Citizens engaged in spiritual warfare must be equipped with the whole armor of God to fight, not just the effects of the war, but the root of the conflict. We must understand who, what, and why we are fighting.

Key Words

Truth, righteousness, faith,
Salvation, peace, prayer,
The Word of God

February Emphasis Social Warfare

SCRIPTURES

February 2 - Luke 4:14-29
February 9 - Amos 5:21-27
February 16 - Deut. 6:1-9
February 23 - Zechariah 7:9-10

Thought

Kingdom Citizens engaged in social warfare must be ready to stand for those who can't and be a voice for the voiceless; we must look out not only for our own interest, but look out for the interest of others.

Key Words

Disciple, justice, help, statutes,
obedience

March Emphasis Personal Warfare

SCRIPTURES

March 1 - I Peter 5:5-11
March 8 - Ephesians 4:20-24
March 15 - I Timothy 4:11-15
March 22 - Isaiah 41:10
March 29 - Joshua 1:8-9

Thought

Kingdom Citizens engaged in personal warfare must prepare for the devil's attacks; his strategy is to use what we desire against us, the direct use of deception, and the temptation of pride. All of these lead to sin and death. Our counter attack is study, prayer, and the assurance that we have the **VICTORY!**

Key Words

Submission, humility, courage,
study, strength

Week of December 30– January 5, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

JANUARY EMPHASIS: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Spiritual Warfare must be equipped with the whole armor of God to fight, not just the effects of war, but the root of the conflict. We must understand who, what, and where we are fighting.

WORDS: Truth, Righteousness, Faith, Salvation, Peace, the Word of God, Prayer

LESSON ONE: FIGHTING WITH THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. When you hear the words “The Whole Armor of God,” what comes to mind?
2. When you think of the word “Warfare,” what comes to mind?
3. Is spiritual warfare a daily battle or a seasonal thing?

TEXT: EPHESIANS 6:10-13

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: PREPARING FOR BATTLE: STEP ONE

Introduction: There are two primary errors when it comes to spiritual warfare—over-emphasis and under-emphasis. Some blame every sin, every conflict, and every problem on demons that need to be cast out. Others completely ignore the spiritual realm and the fact that the Bible tells us our battle is against spiritual powers. The key to successful spiritual warfare is finding the biblical balance. Jesus sometimes cast demons out of people; other times He healed people with no mention of the demonic. The apostle Paul instructs Christians to wage war against the sin in themselves (**Romans 6**) and warns us to oppose the schemes of the devil (**Ephesians 6:10–18**). This text teaches some crucial truths: we can only stand strong in the Lord’s power, it is God’s armor that protects us, and our battle is ultimately against spiritual forces of evil in the world. (gotquestions.com) The imagery is of an armed Roman or Israelite soldier prepared for battle. When Paul compares the armor of God with military gear, each piece represents a part of God’s strength that He extends to us when we become His children.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS SHOULD STRIVE FOR SPIRITUAL CONTENTMENT. (V10)

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.” (NIV) As the apostle Paul comes to the end of the Book of Ephesians, he gives the believers a final command. After all his teaching about life, marriage, children, and Christian living, he concludes by saying “finally.” He says to them, above all, we must find our strength for battle in the Lord. The **(NLT)** says, ***“A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”*** This is written almost like a father who is about to leave his children, and he is concerned that they remember some very important things. In any fight, one’s individual strength is one of the determinate factors of the outcome. Paul has already concluded that our victory is in the Lord. Another aspect of this is that when we are persecuted, God is our strength; when we are attacked, God is our strength and when we feel defeated, God is our victory. Finally, no matter what comes, rely on, lean on, and trust God’s strength.

2. **DRESS SPIRITUALLY FOR SUCCESS.** (V11) *“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.”* (NIV) Our success depends largely on whether or not we are dressed properly. We are called to be dressed with the FULL armor of God. This is necessary to be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. This verse reminds us that we are not fighting against an enemy who fights fairly. The text says, “So you will be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.” To scheme means to make plans, especially in a devious way or with intent to do something illegal or wrong. As we look closer at the Spiritual warfare, this verse tells us to “Take our stand.” It is easy to say the Lord will fight my battle, but we must remember that we are active participants in the battle. Take your stand!

3. **THE BATTLE IS SPIRITUAL NOT PHYSICAL.** (V12) *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”* (NIV) What a loaded verse. The (AMP) says, *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this [present] darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) places.”* Consider some of the loaded words in this verse: **struggle, rulers, authorities. Powers of this dark world, spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm.** One commentary said that each of these represent a different level of spiritual engagement, and none of them are physical.

4. **WE MUST OBEY GOD’S COMMAND TO WIN THE BATTLE** (V13)

“Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” (NIV) Whenever something is repeated in the Bible, it is done for emphasis. The emphasis is there to show the importance of the matter. Please don’t miss this. The word ‘stand’ appears several times in this verse. God has put us in a position of victory, not defeat, but we must stand. He has made us the head and not the tail, but we must stand. We are called to ‘PUT ON’ ‘SO THAT.’ We will fail miserably if we do not follow God’s instructions for spiritual battle. He reminds us that the EVIL day will come; he does not say, if it comes; the text says, when it comes. If we are to truly be prepared for spiritual warfare, we must be ready every day. As a teacher, it amazed me that a student I thought I would have problems with some days, turned out to be the best student of the day, and one I have never had a problem with caused me unbelievable headaches. This is true in any area of life. We never know who or what the enemy will use to strike. Never think you have it under control in your own strength, power or might. Find your strength, hope and victory in His mighty power.

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD!

Week of January 6– January 12, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

JANUARY EMPHASIS: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Spiritual Warfare must be equipped with the whole armor of God to fight, not just the effects of war, but the root of the conflict. We must understand who, what, and where we are fighting.

WORDS: Truth, Righteousness, Faith, Salvation, Peace, the Word of God, Prayer

LESSON TWO: STAND FIRM IN THE LORD

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. When it comes to a battle, why is standing firm so important?
2. What are some things that hinder us from standing firm as Christians?
3. What are some things that can help us stand firm as Christians?

TEXT: EPHESIANS 6:14-15

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: PREPARED FOR BATTLE

Introduction: In life, there are many different struggles. For the business man trying to get a certain promotion, he struggles against possible opponents or competitors. For the NFL player who wants to prove himself, there are many obstacles to prevent him from succeeding: opponents, injuries, lack of confidence after a few bad games, and the list continues. For the man who left his wife and children and now is trying to regain their trust, he faces much opposition; however, the key to victory for each is whether or not he is adequately prepared for the task ahead. This preparation includes the mind, the body, and the will. As in the natural, so it is in the spiritual; we must possess a firmness of mind and spirit.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST BE CLOTHED WITH TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

(V13 NIV) Paul states, *“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place.”* A typical armed soldier wore a breastplate made of bronze or chain mail. It covered the vital organs, namely, the heart, and was fitted with loops or buckles that attached it to a thick belt. If the belt was loosened, the breastplate slipped right off. The breastplate of righteousness refers to the righteousness purchased for us by Jesus at the cross (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). At salvation, a “breastplate” is issued to each repentant sinner. It is specially designed by God to protect our heart and soul from evil and deception. Are you and I standing on the truth of God’s word? **John 8:31-32** “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. **Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**” In **John 14:6**, Jesus answered, “I am the way and **the truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Eph. 4:25, “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak **truthfully** to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”

As Christians, we cannot speak truth to God and lie to our brothers and sisters. We cannot praise God on Sunday and lie to our employer on Monday. We cannot love some people and hate others. God is looking for people who look like Him, walk like Him, talk like Him, and live like Him. Are you a man or woman of truth? We can say we are Kingdom Citizens, and it might sound spiritual, but the proof is in the way we live daily.

We need to embrace the truth about God, the truth about ourselves, the truth about those around us, and the truth about the world we live in. One of the harshest statements we hear today is “You are a liar!” and yet if the truth be told, this is an accurate statement sometimes based on our public testimony.

A. Truth is not easy, but it is freeing. To live a lie is to deny the truth.

B. We cannot stand firmly without the truth of God’s Word.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST EMBRACE AND PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL

(V14 NIV) “... *and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.*” One of the greatest tasks ever given to the Church is what we call “the Great Commission.” **Matt. 28:19-20**: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Acts 1:8, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*”

I Cor. 15:1-5, “*Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.*”

The church cannot grow unless it both teaches and applies the Word of God. In many circles today, preaching is considered old fashioned. In many churches today, people want to hear good stories from a storyteller, but as the people of God, in the pulpit and in the pew, we are called to proclaim the gospel of peace which comes from the Prince of Peace. We are not in a popularity contest; we are in a war. As individuals, as families and as a church family, we are called to proclaim the gospel. Paul said in **Romans 1:16-17**, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous (just) will live by faith.”*”

1. Do you leave home each day prepared to tell someone about Jesus?
2. When was the last time you told someone about Christ?

**KINGDOM CITIZENS ARE READY TO
TELL THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KING.**

Week of January 14– January 19 , 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

JANUARY EMPHASIS: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Spiritual Warfare must be equipped with the whole armor of God to fight, not just the effects of war, but the root of the conflict. We must understand who, what, and where we are fighting.

WORDS: Truth, Righteousness, Faith, Salvation, Peace, the Word of God, Prayer

LESSON THREE: PROTECTION AGAINST THE DEVIL'S DARTS

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Who are some of your physical protectors?
2. Who are some of the people you protect?
3. What are some ways you have seen the Lord's protection in your life?

TEXT: EPHESIANS 6:16-17

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS USING THE ARMOR TO PROTECT AND TO CONQUER

Introduction: Every soldier who goes into battle knows what piece of equipment he or she needs to be victorious. We are instructed to “put on” this armor, which implies that we do not automatically wear it all the time. Putting on the armor of God requires a decision on our part. The American military prides itself in being one of the best fighting forces in the world, if not the best. However, there is a statement that is known worldwide which simply says, ‘Talk is cheap!’ A country’s ability to protect its citizens will surely be tested at some point. A proclamation of being the best is just words. The proof of this proclamation is seen when the battle readiness of our country is put to the test. So, it is in the Christian life, what we say and profess on Sunday and Wednesday will be tested in the home, the market place, the workforce and in the church. Saints, are you ready for BATTLE?

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS, TAKE UP THE SHIELD OF FAITH; POSITION YOURSELVES.

(V16 NIV) *“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”* The **(ESV)** puts it this way: *“In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.”* The Roman shield of the time was called a *scutum*. This type of shield was as large as a door and would cover the warrior entirely. Such a shield was not just defensive but could also be used to push opponents. When fighting as a group, a group of soldiers could position their shields so as to form an enclosure around themselves, called a *testudo* (“tortoise”). This was especially helpful to protect against arrows launched from the walls of cities they were attacking. Shields, often made of wood and then covered in hide, when wet, could extinguish flaming arrows.

For the believer, faith is the hallmark of our walk daily. The writer to the Hebrews said, ‘without faith, it is impossible to please God.’ Jesus often said to his disciples, ‘be it unto you according to your faith.’ We begin the Christian life by faith, **Eph 2:8-9**, we walk the Christ life by faith, and we die in faith. We can only win the battle by FAITH.

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS, DO YOU HAVE THE HELMET AND THE SWORD?

(V17 NIV) *“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*

THE HELMET: **Ephesians 6:17** instructs us to put on the whole armor of God and to “take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” When a soldier suited up for battle, the helmet was the last piece of armor to go on. It was the final act of readiness in preparation for combat. A helmet was vital for survival. It protected the brain, the command station for the rest of the body. If the head was badly damaged, the rest of the armor would be of little use. The assurance of salvation is our impenetrable defense against anything the enemy throws at us. Salvation is not limited to a one-time act of the past or even a future hope. God’s salvation is an ongoing, eternal state that His children enjoy in the present. It is daily protection and deliverance from our sin nature and Satan’s schemes.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT: The phrase “Sword of the Spirit” is found only once in Scripture in **Ephesians 6:17**. The sword is one of the pieces of spiritual armor Paul tells the Ephesian Christians to put on as part of the “[full armor of God](#)” that will enable us to stand our ground against evil (**Ephesians 6:13**). The sword is both an offensive and defensive weapon used by soldiers or warriors. In this case, it is a weapon belonging to the Holy Spirit. Swords were used to protect oneself from harm or to attack the enemy to overcome or kill him. In both cases, it was necessary for a soldier to get rigid training on the proper use of the sword to get maximum protection. All Christian soldiers need the same rigid training to know how to properly handle the Sword of the Spirit, “which is the Word of God.”

When the devil came to Jesus in **Matthew 4:1-11**, Jesus responded by using the Sword of the Spirit. *“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”* (VV 1-4)

If Jesus depended on the Word of God for victory, then so must we; If Jesus defeated the attacks of the enemy with the Scriptures, then so must we, and if Jesus followed God’s will according to the Scripture, then so must we.

KINGDOM CITIZENS, USE THE ARMOR TO WIN THE BATTLE.

Week of January 20– January 26, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

JANUARY EMPHASIS: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Spiritual Warfare must be equipped with the whole armor of God to fight, not just the effects of war, but the root of the conflict. We must understand who, what, and where we are fighting.

WORDS: Truth, Righteousness, Faith, Salvation, Peace, the Word of God, Prayer

LESSON FOUR: THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Is prayer an active part of your battle strategy?
2. What are some things that happen when we pray?
3. Why do some people choose not to pray?

TEXT: EPHESIANS 6:18-20

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Introduction: As we come to a close of the lessons on Spiritual Warfare from Eph. 6:10-20, we are once again reminded of the power of prayer. There is no aspect of the Christian life that should ever be devoid of prayer. We need to pray individually, with our family members, with other Christians, with those who are sick, with those struggling with addiction, and etc. Prayer to the Christian is as vital as air to the physical body; we cannot live without it. Prayer is one of the keys to spiritual victory. We hear these words from **(Daniel 10:12 NKJV)** Then he said to me, *“Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.”* God responds when we pray.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS MUST BE PEOPLE OF PRAYER. (V18 NIV) *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”* The Greek word translated “pray in” can have several different meanings. It can mean “by means of,” “with the help of,” “in the sphere of,” and “in connection to.” Praying in the Spirit does not refer to the words we are saying. Rather, it refers to how we are praying. Praying in the Spirit is praying according to the Spirit’s leading. It is praying for things the Spirit leads us to pray for. **Romans 8:26** tells us, *“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”* Our prayer for each other needs to be Spirit led, Spirit prompted. We are called to pray on ‘ALL occasions.’ As believers, we should be ready and prepared on any and every occasion. There is no place we should go where we would be ashamed to pray; there should be no gathering where we are afraid or unprepared to pray.

God often uses our testimony through prayer to touch the hearts of the unconverted when we demonstrate humility in and through our prayers. Consider some verses on prayer:

John 15:7 - “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

Psalms 34:6 - “This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him*,
And saved him out of all his troubles.”

II Chron. 20:12 - “O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes *are* upon You.”

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS NEED TO PRAY FOR EACH OTHER.

(VV 19-20 NIV) “*Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*” For most of us, praying for others tends to run along these lines: “Lord, provide my friend with a job, a car that runs, good health, and safety.” If we really know someone well, we might pray for his or her marriage or other relationships. There is nothing wrong with praying for these things. However, most of the prayers recorded in the Bible are of another type. When Jesus was praying for others, He prayed for their faith (**Luke 22:32**). He prayed against temptation in their lives (**Luke 22:40**). He prayed for their unity (**John 17:11**). He prayed for their sanctification (**John 17:17**).

Paul prayed for the salvation of the lost (**Romans 10:1**); he prayed that the brothers would stay on the right path (**2 Corinthians 13:7**); he prayed that believers would be strengthened by the Spirit, rooted and grounded in love, able to comprehend God’s love, and filled with the fullness of God (**Ephesians 3:14–19**). These are all prayers for *spiritual* blessings; they are all “in Jesus’ name” and according to the Father’s will—prayers that are guaranteed to find a “yes” in Christ (**2 Corinthians 1:20**).

An Example of Intercessory Prayer: A wonderful model of intercessory prayer is found in (**Daniel 9**). It has all the elements of true intercessory prayer. It is in response to the Word (**V2**); characterized by fervency (**V3**) and self-denial (**V4**); identified unselfishly with God’s people (**V5**); strengthened by confession (**VV 5-15**); dependent on God’s character (**VV 4, 7, 9, 15**); and has as its goal God’s glory (**VV 16-19**). Like Daniel, Christians are to come to God on behalf of others in a heartbroken and repentant attitude, recognizing their own unworthiness and with a sense of self-denial. Daniel does not say, “I have a right to demand this out of You, God, because I am one of your special, chosen intercessors.” He says, “I’m a sinner,” and, in effect, “I do not have a right to demand anything.” True intercessory prayer seeks not only to know God’s will and see it fulfilled, but to see it fulfilled whether or not it benefits us and regardless of what it costs us. True intercessory prayer seeks God’s glory, not our own. Paul’s words call to us: **PRAY ALSO FOR ME . . .**

KINGDOM CITIZENS ARE A PRAYING PEOPLE.

Week of January 27– February 2, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

FEBRUARY EMPHASIS: SOCIAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Social Warfare must be ready to stand for those who can't and be a voice for the voiceless; we must look out not only for our own interest, but look out for the interest of others

WORDS: Disciple, Justice, Help, Statutes, Obedience

LESSON FIVE: LIBERATION FOR THE NEEDY

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How are you personally involved in bettering your community?
2. What is your church doing to enrich the community?
3. How would you explain the Gospel message to the poor and needy?

TEXT: LUKE 4:14-29

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THE LIBERATING POWER OF THE GOSPEL IS SPECIALLY DIRECTED TO THE POOR AND UNDERSERVED OF THE COMMUNITY.

Firmly entrenched in the spiritual warfare battle is the concept of social justice. In fact, addressing social justice issues is at the heart of the Gospel, clearly defined by Jesus at the very beginning of His ministry. As we look at the life and ministry of Jesus, we see Him engaged in social justice actions at every turn - He feeds the hungry, He defends the oppressed, and He stands up for the rights of every element of society to be treated equally and fairly. Jesus showed by his actions and teachings that He loves the outcast, the despised, and the rejected, and He calls on the rich and powerful to contribute to the uplift of the poor and to attend the needs of the helpless. The mission and message of Jesus is pretty clearly summarized in **Luke 4:18-19**. He wants to give sight to the blind, liberty to the captives, and deliverance to the oppressed. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus did these things both spiritually and physically, sometimes meeting people's physical needs before He addressed their spiritual needs. At other times, He addressed their spiritual needs first. In our lesson today we find Jesus laying the foundation of the social teachings of the Gospel at the very beginning of His ministry.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THE SPIRITUAL SOCIAL WARFARE BATTLE MUST BEGIN IN THEIR HOME COMMUNITIES. (VV 14-16)

In his travels around Galilee, Jesus finally comes to his hometown, Nazareth. It is described as *"the place he was brought up."* (Verse 16) How interesting that the beginning of His social justice teachings occur in His home community. What a message for us today. All we need to do is look around our own home towns, our own communities, and our own neighborhoods to see the need for social action. Some parts of town have been the most neglected, the most ignored, and the most underserved. The captives need to be set free on our own side of town!! Jesus begins the process on the Sabbath in the temple. *"He stood up to read, and the scroll of*

the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the LORD is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor." (Verses 17-18) Here we see that the message of social justice is a message for all – the church and the community. Our home town faith community- the churches and the church leaders, and the membership - must be engaged in social warfare in and for the community. The local church has an obligation, clearly established during the early ministry of Jesus, to take the lead in social justice action. **What are you and your church doing to address the needs of the community?**

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT AGGRESSIVE SOCIAL ACTION WILL BREAK DOWN BARRIERS THAT DIVIDE THE COMMUNITY. (VV 18-19)

Jesus chooses to read from **(Isaiah 61:1-2)**. He reads a quotation that refers to the Spirit of God, the same Spirit who brought him to Nazareth. We know that the Holy Spirit as characterized in the Gospel of Luke guides and empowers people for prophetic ministry. In this quotation the Spirit of the Lord is resting on Jesus for the purpose of proclaiming **good news** to the poor -- to those who are economically disadvantaged and marginalized. Along with the poor as a broad group, good news is also proclaimed to specific groups of people within the broad group: prisoners, the blind, and the oppressed, all of whom might also be described as "poor." So, what is this Good News? **It is news that the time for liberation is now!!** That this is the acceptable "**year of God's favor.**" The year of God's favor describes the Jubilee year when God will restore Israel. Those who are at the bottom of society are the Spirit's chosen recipients of the Good News. There will be no social classes in the Kingdom. There will be no discrimination and no unfair treatment of those who have nothing. The Gospel is for all!! Social barriers will be broken down. **No "big you" and no "little me"!!** As the Gospel unfolds, the poor will be identified as worthy hearers and receivers of the Good News, as the recipients of God's Kingdom and as invitees to the Kingdom feast.

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT LIBERATION POWER COMES ONLY FROM JESUS AND IS AVAILABLE TO ALL. (VV 20-21)

When He finished reading, Jesus sat down; the congregation fixed their eyes on Him to hear His teaching. Jesus begins explaining the Scripture by telling them that today when they heard the Scripture read it was fulfilled in their presence. ***"Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*** Jesus himself will be the location for the fulfillment of this prophesy. Amen!! In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is the one who has been anointed to preach and proclaim the good news of God. As His earthly ministry develops, He will be seen traveling from town to town, community to community, and neighborhood to neighborhood; wherever He goes He will teach, heal, and liberate. As Kingdom Citizens, this is our task today. Notice that no where in this message is the government mentioned. Clearly, Kingdom Citizens must rely on the principles of the Gospel and not the uncertainties of the government (which is man made and man manipulated) for spiritual liberation. **YOUR COMMUNITY CALLS! IT IS TIME TO ANSWER!!**

LORD, HELP US TO BECOME MORE ENGAGED IN SOCIAL JUSTICE BY GRANTING US THE WILL TO REACH OUT TO THE POOR AND THE UNDERSERVED OF OUR COMMUNITY, EMPOWERING THEM WITH THE LIBERATING MESSAGE

Week of February 3– February 9, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

FEBRUARY EMPHASIS: SOCIAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Social Warfare must be ready to stand for those who can't and be a voice for the voiceless; we must look out not only for our own interest, but look out for the interest of others

WORDS: Disciple, Justice, Help, Statutes, Obedience

LESSON SIX: GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE UNJUST

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Do you tend to look down on a person because he is poor?
2. Have you ever compromised your religious values so you can be with the "in" crowd?
3. Do you think folk with money should get special treatment?

TEXT: AMOS 5:21-27

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT GOD WILL JUDGE THOSE WHO UNJUSTLY TREAT THE POOR AND NEEDY.

We live in a world where some folk feel that all they have to do is come to church occasionally, sit in the pew, be entertained by the service, pay a couple dollars in the offering and then go home, smug and satisfied that they have had church. They wrap themselves in the false idea that this is all that's necessary to fulfill their Christian obligation. They conveniently ignore the call for effective ministry and will not embrace the social action directives of the Gospel to go beyond the walls to lift up others. They conveniently look the other way when they should be giving an attentive ear. They refuse to work to transform the community. They turn a blind eye to the plight of the poor and needy. The Prophet Amos prophesied in the Northern Kingdom of Israel somewhere between the years 760-750 B.C. at a period during which a privileged few were "having church" enjoying their personal prosperity while the vast majority of their brothers and sisters in the community were facing dire poverty. Amos condemned their spiritual blindness and their unjust exploitation of the poor. The words of Amos were adapted by Martin Luther King, Jr., in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C. in August 1963 and brought a new meaning to the words of Amos: "*Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.*" (Amos 5:24)

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THEY MUST NOT TURN AWAY FROM PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AS DEFINED IN GOD'S WORD.

(VV 21-23) Amos spoke to an oppressed society, and his concern for the poor and the oppressed made him a prophet for all times. His words are relevant for our situation today because we live in a time when the gap between rich and poor has never been greater. The sources of oppression and injustice may look different today, but people's concern for material prosperity reflects the days in which Amos lived. Amos' message of God's opposition to

injustice, his criticism of the people's worship of material things, and his witness of God's special concern for the poor and oppressed affirm that the worship of God in any age is worthless if social oppression and injustice are ignored. He does not mix words or hold back his disdain for the hypocritical religious practices of the upper class, *"I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps."* The upper class had turned a blind eye to the plight of the poor and for this they must be confronted for their unrighteous behavior. Their phony religious practices and offerings are unacceptable and firmly rejected!!

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE NECESSARY TOOLS FOR FULFILLING GOD'S SOCIAL WARFARE AGENDA. (V24)

Just like in the time of Amos, today Kingdom Citizens must confront social issues head-on. He declared the judgments of God, disavowing any possibility of lenience on the basis of partiality, *"But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"* When the words "justice" and "righteousness" are used in Amos, justice is the primary word. Justice is the result of seeking and loving good, as in [Amos 5:15](#). Justice is also the fruit or the result of righteousness as in [Amos 6:12](#). Thus, according to Amos, righteousness is essential to the well-being of the community. **Righteousness has to do with the proper relationship between a person and God and a relationship between members of the community.** Righteousness is a quality of life which is displayed by people who live up to the demands of the covenant. **The righteous person does what is right to other persons involved in the relationship.** Kingdom Citizens must never look down on another person because of his or her social condition. In fact, we must never turn a blind eye to seeing the true worth that exists in everyone regardless of his or her social condition. Our cause is to look over, join hands, and then all rise up together.

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT GOD WILL PUNISH THOSE WHO TREAT THE POOR AND NEEDY UNJUSTLY. (VV 25-27)

Amos set the standard with a laundry list of which attributes a Kingdom Citizen should have: **boldness, steadfastness, compassion, and love.** The oppression and injustice Amos found in the Northern Kingdom was evidence that righteousness had been thrown to the ground as something worthless by those who were in power. *"Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel? You have lifted up the shrine of your king, the pedestal of your idols, the star of your god - which you made for yourselves."* (Verses 25-27) Righteousness no longer had any meaning for the powerful people of Israel as a requirement for the worship of God. Amos proclaimed that Israel had violated the ancient traditions of fairness. Therefore, they are to be condemned. *"Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Damascus," says the LORD, whose name is God Almighty.*" (Verse 27) **What condemnation is God handing down for us today because we have deviated from justice and mercy, because we have become so content with "having church" and not engaging in community transformative ministry, and because we have not reached out?**

LORD, HELP US TO BECOME ACTIVE SOLDIERS ON THE SOCIAL WARFARE BATTLE FIELD, NEVER LOOKING DOWN ON THE POOR AND NEEDY, BUT ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN LIFTING THEM UP.

Week of February 10– February 16, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

FEBRUARY EMPHASIS: SOCIAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Social Warfare must be ready to stand for those who can't and be a voice for the voiceless; we must look out not only for our own interest, but look out for the interest of others

WORDS: Disciple, Justice, Help, Statutes, Obedience

LESSON SEVEN: TEACH CHILDREN HOW TO PREPARE FOR SOCIAL WARFARE

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Do you take time to discuss the meaning of life with your children?
2. Have you taken the time to introduce your children to God?
3. Have you taken the time to help your child develop ways of learning their purpose in life?

TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THEY MUST GIVE THEIR CHILDREN A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY GROWING INTO THE PERSON GOD WANTS THEM TO BE AND TO GIVE THEIR LIVES A SENSE OF VALUE AND WORTH.

An important dimension of spiritual warfare for Kingdom Citizens is incorporated in how well they instruct their children. In today's world, many parents have deviated from teaching their children principles of personal responsibility. They often look the other way when little Johnny has done wrong, or they create a convenient excuse for accepting bad behavior. The child sees this and develops a belief that unacceptable behavior is okay. Children must be taught early how to prepare for the social warfare battles they will engage during the growth process. The first task is to help them develop an attitude of positive self-worth, starting with an introduction to God and how He should be a part of their lives. Then comes the task of handling social interactions, learning how they can positively fit in the world that exists beyond their homes. The Book of Deuteronomy provides a clear blueprint and gives wise instruction to parents and how parents should prepare their children. Social warfare is real life experience. A child who is not properly taught is prone to grow up to be an irresponsible adult. He will never develop an appreciation for who he is, nor will he value his life or the life of others.

1. THE DIRECTIVE TO TEACH CHILDREN COMES DIRECTLY FROM GOD.

(VV 1-3) In Deuteronomy 6, God instructs the Israelites to properly prepare for the legacy that He has for them by encouraging them to teach about the commands, decrees, and laws. They must be instructed to carry those principles wherever they go. The directive is generational. Upon this foundation is teaching that will not only be for children, but for grandchildren and future generations to come. *“These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children, after them may fear the Lord your God as long*

as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.” (Verses 1-2) These principles are to be carried in their hearts regardless of where they are physically located. Children should be cautioned to take the Lord with them wherever they go. They should be taught how to act when they are beyond the watchful eyes and attentive ears of their parents. He assures them that this is necessary for them to grow and prosper. Sadly, too many parents take a “hands off” approach when it comes to rearing their children, giving the child absolute authority in decision making at an early age. This often happens at times when children are too immature to make responsible decisions and at a time when they especially need guidance and direction. This is why children go and come when they please, refuse to do simple chores around the house, or make the decision as to whether or not they are going to church.

2. WISE INSTRUCTION BEGINS WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO GOD AND WHO GOD IS. (VV 4-5) Many children grow up without an early introduction to who God is. Parents who know God can introduce God to their children. Yet persons who don’t know God are hard pressed to expose their children to who God is. *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”* (Verses 4-5) This opens the door for satanic influences to become rooted in the child’s growth and development. This opens the door for pride, selfishness, disrespect, and inconsideration. A messed up child can easily grow into a messed up adult. Parents should strive to be the one who introduces their children to who God is and how God has already blessed them before they were born. Therefore, a life of thanksgiving and appreciation for life itself is a primary teaching. Children must be taught that they have a God given purpose in life that they must diligently seek to understand. A child who does not value his own blessings, indeed his own life, will never be appreciative of the blessings of others. His selfish spirit will not let him do so. Therefore, he has no conscience to not harm, not rob, not injure or not take the life of another. Children must also be taught that family integrity is to be valued. Another part of it is how godly children should handle peer pressure and conflict resolution.

3. TRAINING UP A CHILD INVOLVES CONTINUED REINFORCEMENT. (VV 6-9)

In the society where moments of family socialization are getting scarcer and scarcer, parents must find new and creative ways to provide the right setting for sincere socialization. When is the last time that your family has prayed together or have just had a talk without cell phones and tablets around? The scripture says talk to them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. This is an admonition to be diligent and to never tire from reinforcement. *“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”* (Verses 6-9) Reinforcement is necessary and can be the difference between your child becoming a part of a negative stereotype. Teach them and train them using constant reinforcement as necessary for them to grow into responsible adult Kingdom Citizens.

LORD, HELP US PREPARE OUR CHILDREN FOR SPIRITUAL WARFARE BY TEACHING THEM TO LIVE A PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE, TO KNOW YOU WILL BE BY THEIR SIDE EVERY DAY, STRENGTHENING AND EMPOWERING THEM TO FACE THE SOCIAL WARFARE CHALLENGES OF GROWING UP.

Week of February 17– February 23, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

FEBRUARY EMPHASIS: SOCIAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Social Warfare must be ready to stand for those who can't and be a voice for the voiceless; we must look out not only for our own interest, but look out for the interest of others

WORDS: Disciple, Justice, Help, Statutes, Obedience

LESSON EIGHT: JUSTICE AND OBEDIENCE

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Do you consider yourself a soldier in God's army?
2. Do you have a receptive heart to the teachings of the Word?
3. Do you wrestle with **"low energy"** spirituality?

TEXT: ZECHARIAH 7:9-10

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THEY MUST NOT ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BECOME "HARD-HEARTED" AND RESISTANT TO THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL, THEREBY GIVING SATAN AN "UP" POSITION ON THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE BATTLEFIELD.

There are periods in the life of every Kingdom Citizen when Satan attempts to enter the battlefield of the mind. His obvious goal is to block the human desire for spiritual growth, replacing it with an attitude of self-assurance. The end result is that the heart and mind of the believer become paralyzed; the weapons used by the believer on the spiritual warfare battlefield of the mind are voluntarily surrendered. The ears of the believer are voluntarily closed to the Word of God. A hard-hearted condition sets in. Bible Watch defines the concept this way, **"Hard-heartedness comes from a proud and rebellious attitude that leads a person to reject God's Word."** You cannot serve in God's army if you have rejected God's Word. Many of us have already surrendered because we have become blinded to the reason to fight. The Biblical Prophet Zachariah prophesied to the exiles returning from captivity. He warned the people of the consequences of becoming complacent and tone deaf to what God was saying to them. His word to them is a word for us today.

1. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT SPIRITUAL SOCIAL ACTION MUST BE UNDERGIRDDED WITH A SENSE OF OBEDIENCE AND COMPASSION THAT BEGINS IN THE HEART. (VV 9-10) *"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."* (Verses 9-10) The prophet uses the term **"true judgment"** in the first verse. Usually when we judge, we do it pretty selfishly. How unfortunate that we tend to label someone or decide that people aren't worth our time because of something they've done, or often just because they don't look like us or they don't worship like us. We end up becoming self-righteous in our attitude resulting in us becoming quite comfortable looking

down on others. This mindset puts us in a losing position in the spiritual warfare battle. True judgment is not like that. Kingdom Citizens know that when they hold themselves out as the perfect example, they are fooling themselves and aiming too low. True judgment takes into account how we see ourselves as well as other people's circumstances, and sees us as we actually are: **Imperfect, and in need of help from each other**. Part of that true judgment is to show mercy and compassion to the people around us, to not oppress people who already are oppressed by circumstance, and to never imagine evil against others. Sounds like it makes sense, right? But how often do we actually live up to that? And how often do we look in the mirror of our own hearts to see our own imperfections?

2. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THAT THEY MUST SINCERELY GO BEYOND THE LIMITATIONS OF THEIR OWN HARD HEARTS SO THAT THE OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD CAN TAKE HOLD IN CONCEPT AND PRACTICE. (VV 10-11)

The prophet makes a stunning assessment of the people, *"They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts"*. (Verses 10-11) Other translations say that they made their hearts as an *"adamite stone"* which may mean like granite. This is the hardest stone with which the common people could be acquainted. The people in Zechariah's time had arrived at such a prodigious height of vice, that it is said, *"Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone."* Adamant is the hardest of all stones: it is found by the best chemists to be indissoluble. The prophet is identifying the worst condition of the heart using the most extreme example. For the Kingdom Citizen today, the point is to exhibit the real state of the human heart; which cannot be melted, or reduced to the genuine image of Jesus, the teachings of the Gospel, by human art or power. **Do you have an "adamite" heart??** The words of God are not heard because the people have shut God out. They had succumbed into a state of satisfied disobedience. The inflexible adamant heart defeats the gracious designs of the Gospel. It is inflexible to the motions of God's Holy Spirit. This is the crowning sin. God knocks by the motions of His Holy Spirit, yet the hard heart refuses to give Him admittance. This spiritual sickness is just as much of a problem today as it was during the time of the Prophet Zechariah.

3. KINGDOM CITIZENS KNOW THEY MUST OBEY GOD'S COMMANDMENTS TO SHOW REAL SOCIAL ACTION IN LINE WITH JESUS' TEACHINGS.

Many people today have become satisfied being in a **"hard hearted"** state of mind. They have become **"low energy"** Christians. Yet the mission of salvation or the aims of the Gospel cannot be satisfied until the people open their minds to and receive God's commandments. Hard heartedness is prominent when there are pride and stoutness of heart against God, particularly the calls of His providence, and the admonitions of His holy Word sets in. God has given man a free human will that can either receive or resist God's Word. The social warfare battlefield requires the right choice. To pick the wrong side - the side of resistance to God's Word - is a position that leads straight down the path of destruction. We cannot let Satan win the spiritual warfare battle. We must find a way to break down our hard heartedness condition, re-equip ourselves with the armament of the Holy Spirit, and march boldly into the war that attempts to consume us, ready to stand for those who can't and to be a voice for the voiceless, looking out not only for our own interest, but also for the interest of others!

LORD, HELP US TO BECOME SOCIALLY HEALTHY BY EMPOWERING US TO RESIST SPIRITUAL HARD-HEARTEDNESS. KEEP US SPIRITUALLY ENERGIZED SO WE CAN BETTER SERVE YOU.

Week of February 24– March 1, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

MARCH EMPHASIS: PERSONAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Personal Warfare must prepare for the devil's attacks; his strategy is to use what we desire against us, the direct use of deception, and the temptation of pride. All of these lead to sin and death. Our counter attack is study, prayer, and the assurance that we have the VICTORY!

WORDS: Submission, Humility, Courage, Study, Strength

LESSON NINE: STAY READY FOR THE ATTACKS OF THE DEVIL!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Have you ever been attacked by someone or something?
2. Did you realize that you can be attacked both physically and spiritually?
3. What is or was your defense against those spiritual attacks?

TEXT: 1 PETER 5:5-11

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THAT ATTACK AND ALWAYS KNOW THAT GOD HAS YOUR BACK!

Peter writes this letter, and he is sending words of inspiration to Christians who were being attacked because of their faith. Christians were being abused because they believed in Jesus. Peter knew on a personal level all about being attacked because he had been beaten and thrown in jail himself. Peter was threatened on a regular basis, and he also witnessed others suffering in the same way. It still seems to be that way in this day and time, but we must understand as Christians that when we are attacked, our safety and security are in Christ Jesus. We must also understand that although we still suffer and are still attacked both physically and spiritually, it is Satan that attacks us spiritually. We must be prepared to defend ourselves in this personal warfare! When we are attacked physically, it's usually through sickness and disease, and we go to the doctor. When Satan attacks us, he attacks our minds by casting fear and doubt. The question is, "Who do you go to then?" When we are attacked by Satan, we must realize that his attacks should make us stronger by strengthening our faith in God! We should know that God is always in the midst, and His Word is what offers us hope in those times of trouble. As you study His Word God will reveal his plan of attack (with him being our first line of defense). However, we must also know that there are things that we have to do to prepare ourselves against the attacks of Satan.

1. HUMBLE YOURSELF TO ACCEPT THE TRAINING OF EXPERIENCED CHRISTIANS! (VV 5-6) Peter begins this chapter by telling us about the role of the elders in the church. The Elders are the leaders who provide supervision and training. In other words, they are experienced and can provide instruction and direction. All too

often we convince ourselves into believing that we don't need help from anyone and when we do that, that's when the attacks come... What we don't realize is... this is spiritual warfare, and Satan doesn't play fair. Satan preys on the prideful and can pit one against the other, and that's why the text tells us in V5 **(NLT)** ***"You younger men, accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for "God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble"***. What this means is that the elders are God's authority in spiritual matters but sometimes pride gets in the way, and it can limit the elders in understanding and hearing the young much in the same way it hinders the young from listening to the Elders who are more experienced. The Word clearly tell us that we need the spirit of humility just like Jesus. V6 **(NLT)** ***"So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and in his good time he will honor you!"***

2. PAY ATTENTION, BE AWARE, STAY STRONG, AND WATCH OUT FOR THE ATTACK! (VV 8-9)

Often times we become complacent and let our guard down especially when things are going well. When we do that, we become easy prey for the attacks of Satan. We forget that this is spiritual warfare, and there are some basic principles of war that Satan uses and that we need to understand as Satan has an objective and an offense to attack, to seize, to retain and to surprise so that he can exploit you in your weakest moment so beware as the text tells us in V8 **(NLT)** ***"Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour."*** Satan chooses the weak minded, the sick, and anyone who is not alert or who is alone and cut off from others just as an animal hunts his prey. We must do as the scripture tells us in V9 **(NLT)** ***"Take a firm stand against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are."*** You are not alone; I am here with you!!!!

3. THE BATTLE HAS BEEN WON. STOP FIGHTING A DEFEATED DEVIL! (VV 10-11)

Start enforcing your victory in Christ! Learn how to fight FROM victory and not FOR victory. Often times in spiritual battles, we feel as though it will never end. Spiritual warfare has gone on since the beginning of time, but Jesus says Victory is mine! 1Cor 15:57 says ***"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*** God will heal you as stated in V10 **(NLT)** ***"After you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.*** Satan will attack at any time especially when he thinks it's to his advantage ...but....

THE BATTLE IS NOT YOURS; IT'S THE LORD'S!

Week of March 2– March 8, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

MARCH EMPHASIS: PERSONAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Personal Warfare must prepare for the devil's attacks; his strategy is to use what we desire against us, the direct use of deception, and the temptation of pride. All of these lead to sin and death. Our counter attack is study, prayer, and the assurance that we have the VICTORY!

WORDS: Submission, Humility, Courage, Study, Strength

LESSON TEN: DEALING WITH ANGER

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What are some of the things that annoy you and make you angry?
2. Have you ever been overwhelmed with emotions?
3. Did you know that anger damages your relationship with God?

TEXT: EPHESIANS 4:20-24

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: DEALING WITH YOUR EMOTIONS AND NOT LETTING ANGER HINDER YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND OTHERS

The book of Ephesians is a letter written with the purpose of strengthening and encouraging the faith of the believers in the church (unity in the body). Paul addresses the effects of being in the body of Christ and being in constant battle with dark forces (which is Satan) and how believers should always use their spiritual weapons. Satan's anger was directed at God because the highest rank ever recognized for him was "prince", and his realm was outranked "power". Satan was also angry because he, along with everything and everyone held within his power, is accountable to God. Paul also speaks of God's anger and how those who reject Christ will receive the wrath of God. This chapter also tells of the anger of the Jews when God gave the Gentiles equal share in all the riches inherited by God's children, but their anger was misguided. Paul should have been angry for what he went through; he was on house arrest and considered himself to be a prisoner, but he used his anger in a purposeful way just as Jesus did and continues to do. Jesus expressed anger because the Pharisees didn't want to see the power and love of God. The question is ... How do you deal with your anger? The Holy Spirit should empower you to overcome this feeling as The Word of God never says that we shouldn't feel angry, but it suggests how we should handle our anger because God doesn't like outburst of anger. (Gal 5: 19-21)

1. WHEN DEALING WITH ANGER, ALWAYS REMEMBER WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED! (VV 20-21)

There will be times in all of our lives when we will get upset, and it will cause us to respond in anger. When dealing with anger, it is important to reflect on what you were taught. (VV 20-21) (NLT) says, *“But that isn’t what you were taught when you learned about Christ. Since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus.”* We have been taught to be tolerant of others even in disagreements. This text is saying to us is that when we became Christians, there was a spiritual transformation that took place, and we were taught a different way of handling those situations in our lives that cause us unhappiness... When we get angry, the Word tells us that we are not to act out and retaliate in anger but to let our thoughts and actions be guided by what we have learned. As Christians, our anger should not cause us to commit murderous acts, not to think murderous thoughts, and never to speak murderous words. If our anger has hurt someone, we should always look to resolve our differences as soon as we can. This text is saying that we’ve heard and hopefully learned the truth. If we keep listening, we will keep growing and changing because we continue to trust in God!

2. WHEN OVERCOMED WITH EMOTION, WHAT DO YOU SEE? WHO DO YOU LOOK LIKE? (VV 23-24)

Sometimes we’re blinded by our anger, and it causes us to go into a rage... There is an old saying, “I was so angry until I saw red” or “I was so angry until I turned red in the face.” Those moments of hostility can cause you to see things differently and to be seen differently. Satan is pleased with this type of behavior because anger is the enemy of peace, and anger doesn’t solve problems. It only makes them worse and that is Satan’s goal in this personal warfare. It’s not to make things better but to make them worse. . VV 23-24 (NLT) says, *“Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God’s likeness—righteous, Holy and true.”* Know that when there is a spiritual rebirth you will see differently and you will look different. Your attitude will be different. Your expressions display something different because you have a new outlook, and as the text suggests, you are a new person... You look like the likeness of God!!!!

3. LET GO AND LET GOD ASSIST YOU IN DEALING WITH YOUR ANGER. (VV 25-27)

There may be times when you’re not mindful of your behavior, and you act out in anger towards others. When told of your bad attitude, you don’t want to hear the truth. There are times when we are not truthful with our Christian brothers and sisters for fear of retribution, but there is an old saying... “Give Satan an inch, and he’ll be a ruler.” We should never allow Satan to rule our lives, and when we feel as though he has a grip on us, we should always “let go and let God”! The text tells us in V25 (NLT) *“So put away all falsehood and “tell your neighbor the truth”* V26 *“And don’t sin by letting ANGER gain control over you”* so “cast your burdens unto God” and don’t allow anger to destroy your relationship with God and others. V27 (NLT) *“For anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.”*

IN YOUR ANGER, DO NOT SIN!

Week of March 11– March 15, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

MARCH EMPHASIS: PERSONAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Personal Warfare must prepare for the devil's attacks; his strategy is to use what we desire against us, the direct use of deception, and the temptation of pride. All of these lead to sin and death. Our counter attack is study, prayer, and the assurance that we have the VICTORY!

WORDS: Submission, Humility, Courage, Study, Strength

LESSON ELEVEN: SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Who is the person in your life that set the example for you?
2. Do you lead by example, or do you follow the example?
3. Did you know that Jesus set the example for us to live by?

TEXT: 1 TIMOTHY 4:11-15

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: EMPOWERED BY GOD TO SERVE OTHERS BY BEING AN EXAMPLE FOR THEM

The book of 1 Timothy is a letter written to a young multi-racial not so assertive preacher by the name of Timothy. This young man of God was met with some very intimidating spiritual challenges in his ministry. The issue is the mature leaders in the church not taking him seriously because of his age and who he was. In spite of the circumstances, Paul encourages Timothy to be the example because Paul himself led by example. He encouraged Timothy to use his God given gift. Timothy had two great examples in his life, his mother, Eunice and his grandmother, Lois. These two godly women helped shape his life. There were some false teachers in the church, and Timothy needed to be able to identify them and to respond to them. We must understand that all of us are setting an example for someone, and we should follow the example of Timothy who imitated Paul's example of what a godly Christian leader is. We are to live our lives as good examples because our example can serve as an invitation to the gift of Salvation and be an example of determination to those who are on their Christian journey. ... God has called us to live our lives by being the right type of example by always paying attention to our private and public lives because we are leading others to do the same. We must rely on the Holy Spirit so that we can be positive, effective examples to all who are in our lives.

1. HOW CAN WE EFFECTIVELY BE OR SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS?

(V12) Many of us don't realize that our words expose our character, and what we say can bring people together or divide them. What we say can either build up or tear down, and what we say can either heal or destroy. Our words are very powerful, and that's why one of the ways Paul encouraged Timothy to be a good example was through his words or his speech... V12 **(NLT)** says, ***“Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. BE AN EXAMPLE TO ALL BELIEVERS in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.*** We should always be mindful of what we are saying to others. What are we saying? As Christians, we should be speaking spiritual truth, and it doesn't matter how old we are! The text tells us Don't ever let anyone think less of you because of who you are... God has put something special into each and every one of us to be used for His glory, but that has to show in the way we live, in our hearts and the way we treat others, and mostly through our faith in God!

2. A GODLY EXAMPLE MUST LIVE, LEAD, AND FUNCTION AS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS.

(VV 13-14) A lot of Christians pretend to be something that they're not by saying one thing and living another. We may be a good representative of Jesus, or we may not be; either way... we are representatives. A godly example must live and lead as a follower of Jesus and not act religious by putting on a front...but by imitating Christ. We must stay focused on the task at hand as Paul instructed Timothy in V13 **(NLT)** ***“Until I get there, focus on reading the scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them.”*** All scripture is inspired by God, and we must always go to the Word of God and do what we're supposed to be doing and never lose focus. When we lose focus, we lose motivation, and unbelievers are watching. We must always live our lives in such a way that if anyone should speak badly of us, no one would believe it. We must set the example! Most importantly as stated in V14 **(NLT)** ***“Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecies spoken to you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you.”*** You must first realize what your gift is whether it was spoken of or you realized it on your own. Then you must use that gift and never disregard it. You must function and use your gift whatever it is, and always use it to help others!

3. JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE AND ROLE MODEL, SO YOU USE HIS EXAMPLE AND FOLLOW HIS LEAD! (VV 15-16)

Christians are called to God's service through the gospel of Jesus Christ for the purpose of imitating Jesus in their lives. Jesus taught by example, lived by example, and set the example. We must imitate His example because Jesus intended for us to walk in it. V15 **(NLT)** ***“Give your complete attention to these matters, Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress.”*** Focus on your walk and focus on giving your complete attention to setting the example of Jesus Christ. Throw yourself into His Word and know that when you do, you will see the progress, and you will be that example!

BE THAT EXAMPLE THAT WILL LEAD OTHERS TO CHRIST!

Week of March 16– March 22, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

MARCH EMPHASIS: PERSONAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Personal Warfare must prepare for the devil's attacks; his strategy is to use what we desire against us, the direct use of deception, and the temptation of pride. All of these lead to sin and death. Our counter attack is study, prayer, and the assurance that we have the VICTORY!

WORDS: Submission, Humility, Courage, Study, Strength

LESSON TWELVE: PRECIOUS PROMISES FOR YOUR JOURNEY

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. In your life's journey, where has it taken you?
2. Have you encountered any obstacles that prevented you from moving forward?
3. Did you know that God was with you every step of the way?

TEXT: ISAIAH 41:10

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: IN THIS CHRISTIAN JOURNEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING AND HOW WILL YOU GET THERE SAFELY?

This Old Testament scripture was written by a prophet named Isaiah who was someone that spoke on behalf of God. He was not a popular person. Isaiah realized his calling in the 6th chapter when he saw a vision and prophesized about the coming Messiah. Despite his feelings of inadequacy, he still offered himself for God's service saying "*Here am I, Send me.*" As a result of his response, it marked the beginning of his journey in giving a voice to the Word of God. Isaiah was considered the greatest Old Testament prophet, and he had a powerful message of judgment and hope for the people of Israel. When Isaiah heard the Lord ask "Who should I send as a messenger to my people?," Isaiah didn't feel worthy because he had been lost in sin. He acknowledged it, and when he did, an angel of the Lord took a burning piece of coal and touched his lips saying to him "*See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.*" What we must all remember is that in this Christian journey, God can use anyone of us to do anything, and he will prepare us for the journey ahead. In this 41 chapter of Isaiah and after 52 years of relative peace, the Lord had a message to deliver to the nation of Judah, and he sent Isaiah. God told Isaiah that the people would not listen, but he was to speak anyway because eventually they would listen. What do you have to say? Where will God send you, and are you ready for the journey ahead?

1. IN THIS CHRISTIAN JOURNEY, GOD PROMISED TO BE WITH US EVERY STEP OF THE WAY (V10) Life is a journey – and the Christian life is the greatest journey of all. It’s not always easy or fun, and we may not like where God sends us, but as believers, we must know that God will help us through those rough times, those times when we encounter conditions that have unforeseen obstacles and no visibility. Such is the case for the prophet Isaiah when in **(V10 NLT)** God tells Israel –“*Don’t be afraid for I am with you,*” and he tells them that because they were given a mission to serve God. It’s the same for us when witnessing to others that may not want to hear what we have to say. We must always remember that God promises to always be with us. **(V10 AMP)** says it this way “*Do not fear [anything] for I am with you*” and that tells us that God is our protector and if he is for us, who can be against us. He will send us places to speak on his behalf, and we should be calm, hopeful and confident because he made a promise and no matter what we face or where this journey leads us, God is with us.

2. STAY FOCUSED ON GOD AND NOT THE THINGS HAPPENING AROUND US (V10)

In this chapter, God promised the children of Israel that they would represent the world and this promise also applies to us because as believers we too are God’s chosen people and we represent God. We must realize that there will be many situations that we encounter and many things going on around us that can cause us to become fearful and scared to move from where we are! Such was the case with the children of Israel who were held in captivity for so long that they were afraid to move from where they were so God sent Isaiah to them with not words of judgment but words of comfort, and that is what’s meant when God tells the Israelites in **(V10 NLT)** “*Do not be dismayed, for I am your God.*” What a way to build confidence! In all that we face in this journey called life, don’t be discouraged, don’t be disheartened, don’t be depressed; just keep the focus on God and not on the problems that we face because when we embrace God’s purpose for our Christian journey, we should let go of our expectations. When we do, we will be filled with the peace that comes from knowing Jesus and be able to move forward to do what we could never do on our own.

3. GOD IS OUR SUPPORT, AND HIS PROMISE IS OUR POWER (V10)

God makes many promises, and unlike man God will never renege on a promise. God’s promises are not options but a means by which God can use to change our lives. His promises take us from bondage and captivity to the freedom of a new life. As with the Israelites, God tells them in **(V10 NLT)** “*I will strengthen you. I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.*” We must understand that in this life’s journey, God is with us every step of the way; the power of the promise is rooted in the character of God and the power of His Word. The victorious right hand is righteousness, and we have been made right with God through righteousness! The victory has already been won!!!

MEDITATE ON HIS PROMISE, AND LET IT FILL YOU WITH STRENGTH!

Week of March 23– March 29, 2020

KINGDOM CITIZENS ENGAGED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE EQUIPPED FOR VICTORY

MARCH EMPHASIS: PERSONAL WARFARE

THOUGHT: Kingdom Citizens engaged in Personal Warfare must prepare for the devil's attacks; his strategy is to use what we desire against us, the direct use of deception, and the temptation of pride. All of these lead to sin and death. Our counter attack is study, prayer, and the assurance that we have the VICTORY!

WORDS: Submission, Humility, Courage, Study, Strength

LESSON THIRTEEN: THE TIME HAS COME TO BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS .

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Have you ever felt weak and unsuccessful?
2. Have you ever found strength in the Word of God?
3. Do you believe that the Word of God can make you strong and courageous?

TEXT: JOSHUA 1:8-9

THE HEART OF THE LESSON: FINDING THE FORTITUDE TO PRESS FORWARD WITH GOD'S WORD

The book of Joshua is a profound book written mostly by Joshua, except for the ending. The ending may have been written by the high priest Phinehas, an eyewitness to the events in Israel. The book of Joshua was written to give the history of Israel's conquest of the Promise Land. It is a story of conquest and fulfillment for the people of God. After many years of slavery in Egypt and 40 years in the desert, the Israelites were finally allowed to enter the land promised to their forefathers. Abraham, who was always a migrant, never possessed the country to which he was sent, but he left it to his children as the legacy of God's covenant that made them the eventual heirs of all of Canaan. Joshua was destined to turn that promise into reality. The Lord initiates this action in our text by charging Joshua as His chosen replacement for Moses to lead Israel across the Jordan and take possession of the Promise Land. God urges courage and promises success for the children of Israel and Joshua if they obeyed the Law of God that He had given to Moses.

1. THE POWER OF BEING FILLED WITH GOD'S WORD

The Lord gives Joshua a powerful mandate as He calls Joshua to take leadership after Moses's death. Many people think that prosperity and success come from having power, influential personal contents, and a relentless desire to get ahead. However, the strategy for gaining prosperity that God taught Joshua goes against such criteria. God said in order for Joshua to succeed he must: 1) Be strong and courageous because the task ahead would not be easy. 2) Obey God's law, and 3) constantly read and study the Book of Instruction—

God's Word. **(Joshua 1:8 NIV)** says, "Do not let this Book of Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." This same advice is important to us today, as we strive to succeed in this challenge of Life. We must meditate on the Word of God, study the Word of God, and live the Word of God. **(Psalm 119: 11 NLT)** says, "I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

2. THE POWER OF BEING STRONG AND COURAGEOUS

God doesn't want us to go through life afraid of everything and living powerless lives. He wants us to stand strong on His Word and have confidence in His power. We must know who we are in Christ, and go into the world with that power all over us. The Bible says: **(Eph 6:10 NIV)** "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power." Our strength doesn't come from us or on our own, but it comes from the Lord. God also wants us to be courageous, meaning He wants us to have the courage to stand, speak, and seek His guidance in everything we do. On the other hand, God doesn't want us to be prideful, puffed up, and promoting ourselves over Him. The Bible says: **(Prov. 16:18 NIV)** "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." We as Kingdom Citizens must know how to have balance between "Pride" and "Power." Joshua asked somewhat of a rhetorical question that emphasized the authority of the speaker. The text says in verse nine **(NIV)**, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Therefore, our responsibility as Kingdom Citizens is to be strong and courageous. We should not be terrified or discouraged.

3. THE POWER OF KNOWING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

It is amazing to know that God is ever present in our lives. Just the idea of knowing God is with us gives us power in our lives. God has made us a promise that He will never leave us or forsake us. The assurance of that power and presence should keep us focused on Him. Joshua says to us from the text: **(Joshua 1:9 NLT)** "This is my command— be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord God is with you wherever you go." We must be willing to go into the world with the power of God surrounding us and empowering us to carry out the mandate God has placed on our lives. This is the mandate placed on our lives: Jesus said in **(Matt. 28:18-20 KJV)** "And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

QUARTER 1: JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH

JANUARY 5 ----- **FIGHTING WITH THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD**

JANUARY 12 ----- **STAND FIRM IN THE LORD**

JANUARY 19 ----- **PROTECTION AGAINST THE DEVIL'S DARTS**

JANUARY 26 ----- **THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER**

FEBRUARY 2 ----- **LIBERATION FOR THE NEEDY**

FEBRUARY 9 ----- **GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE UNJUST**

FEBRUARY 16 ----- **TEACH CHILDREN HOW TO PREPARE FOR SOCIAL WARFARE**

FEBRUARY 23 ----- **JUSTICE AND OBEDIENCE**

MARCH 1 ----- **STAY READY FOR THE ATTACK OF THE DEVIL**

MARCH 8 ----- **DEALING WITH ANGER**

MARCH 15 ----- **SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE**

MARCH 22 ----- **PRECIOUS PROMISES FOR YOUR JOURNEY**

MARCH 29 ----- **THE TIME HAS COME TO BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS**