

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY ONE (1)

THEME: "The Sovereignty of God"

KEY TEXT: 1 Tim. 6:15; Isaiah 40:12-14, 25-26, 28; Isaiah 45:7; Psalm 135:6-12; Rom. 9:10-24; Isaiah 40:13-14, 25; Isaiah 43:7, 10, 13, 16, 19-20; Isaiah 44:6-7; Isaiah 45:7, 23; Psalm 83:18; Psalm 93:1-2; Isaiah 40:10a, 22-23; Psalm 45:6; Psalm 103:19; Job 12:13-25; Proverbs 21:1; Isaiah 44:25-28; Isaiah 66:1-2; Revelation 4:1-11; Job 9:1-12; Psalm 139:1-6; Dan 2:19-23, 47; Exodus 19:8-9; Numbers 9:18-19, 23; 1 Samuel 8:7; 1 Samuel 12:12-15; Isaiah 45:9-10; Genesis 2:16-17; Rom. 9:19-24; Isaiah 40:11; Isaiah 43:4; Romans 8:28

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 93:1-2; Proverbs 21:1

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

God, the blessed and only Ruler; the King of kings and Lord of lords; He forms the light and creates the darkness, brings prosperity and creates disaster. Raised Pharaoh up for the purpose of displaying His power and that His name be proclaimed in all the earth. Does not the potter have the right to make some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use? Who has understood the Spirit of the Lord or instructed Him as his Counsellor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten Him? To whom will you compare God; or who is His equal? I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. Your throne was established long ago. Your throne O God will last forever. To God belong wisdom and power, counsel and understanding, strength and victory. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; He directs it wherever He pleases.

How can a mortal be righteous before God? His wisdom is profound; His power is vast. If He snatches away, who can stop Him? O Lord, you perceive my thoughts from afar; before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely. If you do not obey the Lord, His hand will be against you. Then why does God still blame us? For who can resist His will? He tends His flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart. We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

In our relationship with God, one fact we need to understand is that God is sovereign. He is King - supreme in power. He is the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). He can do anything (Isaiah 40:12; 45:7; Psalm 135:7-12) and He does whatever He pleases (Psalm 135:7-12). No one counsels Him (Isaiah 40:13-14). He cannot be compared to anyone (Isaiah 40:25; 43:10 ending; Isaiah 44:6).

He is almighty and the creator (Isaiah 40:26), creating for His own glory (Isaiah 43:7). He is everlasting; He never grows tired or weary. No one can fathom His understanding (Isaiah 40:28). When He acts no one can reverse it (Isaiah 43:13); when He speaks no one can revoke it (Isaiah 45:23). He makes a way where there is none, and causes streams to appear in the desert (Isaiah 43:16, 19). He knows the future (Isaiah 44:7). If we submit to Him, He will guide us in love (Isaiah 40:11); and work for our good (Romans 8:28).

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean to say that God is sovereign?
(Refer to 1 Tim. 6:15; Isa. 40:12-14, 25-26, 28; Isa. 45:7; Psalm 135:6-12; Rom. 9:10-24; Isaiah 40:13-14, 25; Isaiah 43:7, 10, 13, 16, 19-20; Isaiah 44:6-7; Isaiah 45:7, 23)
2. Who have declared or acknowledged the sovereignty of God?
(See Psalm 83:18; Psalm 93:1-2; Isa. 40:10a, 22-23; Ps. 45:6; Psalm 103:19; Job 12:13-25; Proverbs 21:1; Isaiah 44:25-28; Isaiah 66:1-2; Revelation 4:1-11)
3. Why must humans submit to the sovereignty of God?
(See Job 9:1-12; Psalm 139:1-6; Daniel 2:19-23, 47)
4. What is the result when humans submit to the sovereignty of God?
(Refer to Exodus 19:8-9; Numbers 9:18-19, 23)
5. What results when humans reject God's sovereignty?
(Refer to 1 Samuel 8:7; 1 Samuel 12:12-15; Isaiah 45:9-10)
6. If God is sovereign, then do humans have a free will?
(See Genesis 2:16-17; Romans 9:19-24)
7. Need humans be intimidated by the fact that God is sovereign?
(See Isaiah 40:11; Isaiah 43:4; Romans 8:28)

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

1. Do you acknowledge the sovereignty of God?
2. Are you happy to submit to God?

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY TWO (2)

THEME: "God's Love and Man's Love"

KEY TEXT: A. (i) Deut. 7:6-9; Jer. 31:3; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Isaiah 49:14-16; John 15:13; 1 John 3:16
(ii) Jeremiah 29:11; John 3:16 (iii) John 3:16; 1 John 3:1; Romans 5:8

B. (i) Deut. 10:12; (ii) John 14:15, 23; (iii) Ps. 18:1; Psalm 73:25; Psalm 84:2; (iv) John 16:27; Ephesians 6:24; Psalm 31:23; Hebrews 6:10

C. (i) John 15:12; Eph 5:2; Colossians 3:14 (ii) 1 John 2:10; (iii) 1 John 4:21; (iv) John 15:12-13; Deut. 10:19; Matt 22:39; Rom 12:9; 1 Thess 3:12 (Philippians 1:9-11); 1 Peter 1:22; Proverbs 10:12 (1 Peter 4:8); (v) John 13:35

MEMORY VERSE: Jeremiah 31:3 and 1 John 3:16

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

- A. The Lord ... has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession ... because the Lord loved you and kept the oath He swore to your forefathers. Know therefore that the Lord ... is faithful ... keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commands (Deuteronomy 7:6-9). I have loved you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). I will not forget you; see, I have engraved you in the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me (Isaiah 49:14-16). God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).
- B. Fear the lord your God, walk in all His ways, love him, serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul (Deuteronomy 10:12). If you love me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15). If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him (John 14:23). Love the Lord, all his saints.
- C. My command is this: Love each another as I have loved you (John 15:12). Put on love (Colossians 3:14). Whoever loves his brother lives in light (1 John 2:10). And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother (1 John 4:21). Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: that one lay down his life for his friends (John 15:12-13). Love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:39). Love must be sincere (Romans 12:9). Love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). All men will know you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:35).

BRIEF OVERVIEW

In this study, we have teaching on the following:

- A. God's love for mankind
- B. Man's love for God
- C. Man's love for fellow men

A. God's love for man

The first revelation given us is on the nature of God's love for us. That

- (i) God initiates this love relationship. He chooses us, and this love is based on His covenant with us (Deuteronomy 7:6-9)
- (ii) His love is everlasting (Jeremiah 31:3)

(iii) His love is patient, kind, not self-seeking, not easily angered; keeps no record of wrong, does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth; always protects, always perseveres, never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

(iv) God's love never forgets (Isaiah 49:14-16)

(v) God's love is self-sacrificing (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16).

Secondly, we have a revelation on the purpose of God's love; that God loves us in order to prosper us, give us hope and a future eternal life (Jeremiah 29:11; John 3:16).

Thirdly, the revelation is on how God demonstrates His love for us. He adopts us as His children; and He loves us even while we are still in sin (1 John 3:1; Romans 5:8).

B. Man's love for God

On this subject, the following are important: That

(i) God commands us to love Him (Deuteronomy 10:12)

(ii) Our love for God is to be demonstrated by obedience to Him (John 14:15, 23)

(iii) Others before us have loved God dearly (Psalm 18:1; Psalm 73:25; Psalm 84:2)

(iv) Our love for God is always rewarded (John 16:27; Eph 6:24; Psalm 31:23; Hebrews 6:10)

C. Man's love for His fellow man

The following are noteworthy: That

(i) God commands us to love others (John 15:12; Ephesians 5:2; Colossians 3:14)

(ii) Love is like light. It brightens our path so that we do not stumble (1 John 2:10)

(iii) Our love for God should be demonstrated in love for the brethren (1 John 4:21)

(iv) Christ's love for us is the standard. We are to love the brethren as Christ loves us (John 15:12-13). We are to love those who are aliens to us (Deut 10:19). We are to love others as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). Our love must be sincere (Romans 12:9). Our love must abound the more (1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philippians 1:9-11). Our love must be deep -- from the heart (1 Peter 1:22). Our love must be protective -- cover sins of others (Prov 10:12; 1 Peter 4:8).

(v) Our love for others is proof of our discipleship (John 13:35).

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

A. (i) What is the nature of God's love for man?

(ii) What is the purpose of God's love for us?

(iii) How has God demonstrated His love for man?

B. (i) Why must we love God, and to what extent must we love Him?

(ii) How must we demonstrate our love for God?

(iii) What examples do we have of people who have loved God deeply and dearly?

(iv) What benefits are there for those who love God?

C. (i) Why must we love others?

(ii) Love is likened to light. The person who loves dwells in light and does not stumble. What is your understanding of this?

(iii) By what means are we expected to demonstrate our love for God?

(iv) To what extent are we expected to love others?

(v) What are some important characteristics of the love we are to show others?

(vi) What one proof of true discipleship (our Christian belief) is expected from us to the world?

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

1. Do we truly love God? How do we demonstrate this?

2. As God's children, are we trying to love as God does?

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY THREE (3)

THEME: **“Service: Christians Are Called to Serve”**

KEY TEXT: Matthew 25:14-30; Mark 10:35-45; Romans 12:3-8; Phil 2:3-11; John 13:2-15;
James 2:14-18; Matthew 24:45-51; 2 Corinthians 9:11-15

MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 25:40

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

Variety of service but the same Lord; You did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me; Depart from me, you cursed into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; I as your Lord and Teacher have given you an example that you also should do as I have done.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

As stewards of God's good grace and gifts, Christians are called upon to serve their fellow human beings (Matthew 25:31-46). This we are to do faithfully and diligently, as to the Lord, since we shall be called to give account some day (Matthew 25:14-30; Matthew 24:45-51). Unlike the people of the world, our elevation to positions of authority and honour is an opportunity to serve rather than to lord it over others (Mark 10:42-46). This fact is exemplified in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself (John 13:2-15; Phil 2:3-11). Service to our fellow men should be considered as service, obedience and thanksgiving to God (Matthew 25:40; 2 Corinthians 9:11-15). Therefore, the Christian who turns his/her back on service to others in their time of need is indeed a poor witness of the Lord Jesus (James 2:14-18).

Service to God and to others is actually one of the spiritual gifts, given of the Holy Spirit to Christians (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6). It is mentioned in the same breath as prophesy, teaching etc., all given as God wills. It is a wonder that so few Christians earnestly desire this gift. There is however great reward promised in our good and faithful service to mankind (Matthew 25:34; Philippians 2:11).

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Romans 12:6-8

1. (a) How is service regarded in the list given in Romans 12:6-8?
(b) What is the purpose for which God gives out spiritual gifts? (1 Cor 12:7)
(c) Like other spiritual gifts, how is the gift of service obtained? (1 Cor 12:11)
(d) Why do so few Christians desire this gift of service? Discuss.

Matthew 25:14-30; Matthew 24:45-51

2. (a) From these parables, on what basis are talents given out?
(b) As stewards of our Master's gifts, in what ways may we "trade" with what we are given today?
(c) What warnings can we derive from these passages about the use of our gifts?

Matthew 25:31-46

3. (a) From this parable, what are some other forms of service God expects from us?

- (b) Why is service to our fellow men equated with service to God? (Matt 25:40)
- (c) What warning is there in this for us (See also James 2:14-18)
- (d) How may we put these lessons into practice at home, at school, at work and in the community?

John 13:2-15; Philippians 2:3-11; Mark 10:35-45

- 4. (a) How does the world regard rendering of service to others? (Mark 10:42). What illustration of bad service is seen in Matthew 24:45-51? What are we rather supposed to do (Mark 10:43-44)?
 - (b) How is Jesus an example to us all in the type of service expected of us by God (Refer to John 13:2-15; Mark 10:45 and Philippians 2:3-11)?
 - (c) What other commendable examples of service can we find in Luke 8:1-3; Luke 10:38-42? Any other personal examples to share?
- 5. In what other ways can our service to others be regarded by God? (2 Cor 9:11-15)
- 6. What rewards are promised to Christian stewards who faithfully serve their fellow human beings (Matthew 25:34)? What punishment can we expect for not serving others? (Matthew 25:41).

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

- 1. Do you regard service to your fellow man as rather degrading or even a bother?
- 2. Have you ever considered service to others as service to God?
- 3. How is this knowledge going to affect the way you live towards God and relate to other men and women, here on earth?

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY FOUR (4)

THEME: "Worship: The Christian's Response to God"

KEY TEXT: 1 Chronicles 16:7-36; Psalm 96:7-10; John 4:24; Psalm 149:1-3; Revelation 5:11-14; Revelation 7:11-12; Rev 14:7; Revelation 19:9-10

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Chronicles 16:25

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

Give thanks to God, make known what He has done; sing to Him, tell, glory in His holy name; Rejoice, remember the wonders He has done. The Lord our God remembers His covenant forever, the oath He swore to Isaac when they were few ... He allowed no man to oppress them. Proclaim His salvation, declare His glory among the nations. Great is the Lord, most worthy of praise above all gods. The Lord made the heavens; ascribe glory and strength; bring an offering; tremble before Him. He comes to judge the earth. He is good, His love endures forever. Worship, praise the splendour of His holiness. The Lord reigns; the assembly of the saints rejoice in their Maker with dancing, with tambourine and harp. God is Spirit; worship in spirit and in truth. Voices of many angels sang: "worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and praise". Every creature ... sing to Him who sits on the throne. To the Lord be praise, honour, glory and power for ever.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The chief purpose of worship is to glorify God; to go before Him in all humility in order to express our adoration of Him. In worship, we recognise who God is -- the mighty One, Creator of the whole universe, the One who has loved us as far as to even die for us in order to save us from spiritual death and condemnation. God is the One who continually loves, cares and provides for all His creatures; and who does mighty acts in the world. On the other hand, worship reveals who we are -- creatures of this mighty God made to honour Him. We respond in worship as we lift up our hearts and spirits to praise, honour and glorify God in recognition of His majesty and the fact that He alone deserves our worship.

When we worship in this way, we ourselves are lifted up spiritually as humans, able to give such a high form of expression of love and devotion to our God.

Worship should involve our whole being -- body, mind, heart, soul and spirit. We communicate our devotion in words and songs, with instruments, dancing etc.

Worship should come from a proper knowledge of God -- who He is and does. We cannot offer God worthy enough worship if our knowledge of Him is only superficial. We need therefore to seek to know Him more deeply, through the study of His word and depending on the Holy Spirit to reveal Him more and more to us. In this way, we can offer better and true worship, similar to that offered by the angels, living beings and elders around the throne of God, as described in Revelation 5:11.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. From 1 Chronicles 16, Psalm 96 and Psalm 149:1-3, what specifically are those who desire to worship God called upon to do?
2. For what reasons are people to respond to God in worship:
 - (a) regarding who He is, and
 - (b) what He has done and continues to do?
3. Why do you think David (in the verses from Psalms and 1 Chronicles just read) calls on God's people to "make known", "tell" and "proclaim" God's acts?
 - (a) Do you consider these actions part of worship?
 - (b) What of "trembling" and "fear"?
4. In John 4:24, what does it mean to worship God "in spirit and in truth"?
5. What can we learn from the example of the angels and other living beings around God's throne for our own worship? (See Revelation 5:11-14; Revelation 7:11-12).
6. From Revelation 19:10 and Revelation 14:7, what do we learn about whom to worship and whom not to worship?

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

1. How deep and meaningful is your worship of God?
2. Is God your only object of worship?

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY FIVE (5)

THEME: **“What the Bible Teaches About Obedience”**

KEY TEXT: 1 Samuel 13:5-14; 1 Samuel 15:13-23; Deuteronomy 28; Deuteronomy 26:16-19;
Joshua 1:7-8; Joshua 11:15; Matthew 7:21; Acts 5:29; Luke 2:39; Hebrews 5:7-9;
Philippians 2:5-11

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Samuel 15:22

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

You acted foolishly; you have not kept the Lord's command. To obey is better than sacrifice. You have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you as king. I have sinned; I violated the Lord's command. If you fully obey the Lord and are careful to follow all His commands, blessings will come upon you. If you do not obey the Lord your God ... curses will come upon you. If you carefully observe with all your heart and ... soul, walk in His ways and keep His decrees, the Lord has declared this day that you are His people ... a people holy to the Lord. Be careful to obey all the law, do not turn from it. Do not let this book ... depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night; be careful to do everything written in it; then you will be prosperous and successful. And Joshua did it; He left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded. Not everyone who says Lord, Lord ... but only he who does the will of my Father. Obey God rather than men; Have done everything required by the law of the Lord; reverent submission; learnt obedience, obedience unto death. Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Obedience to God i.e. giving heed to, or doing what He requires of us to do, arises from our relationship to Him. As in the case of the Israelites (Deuteronomy 26:16-19), the call on the Christian to obedience is based on the covenant relationship with God. God becomes the Christian's Father, Saviour, Lord and Master when he/she accepts His offer of salvation through His son Jesus Christ.

In this relationship, the primary responsibility of the believer is that of obedience -- one given wholeheartedly, humbly and from a loving, willing submission to God, at any cost. Such obedience pleases God, and keeps the covenant relationship vibrant and ongoing. It brings blessings in all areas, as well as enriching the Christian's life (Deuteronomy 28; Joshua 1:7-8). We are given examples of this kind of obedience in the life of Joshua (Joshua 11:15), Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:39), Peter and John (Acts 5:29) and the Lord Jesus Himself (Hebrews 5:7-9; Philippians 2:5-11).

Disobedience, on the other hand, is equated with idolatry, divination, foolishness, not keeping God's word (or rejecting it), rebellion and arrogance (1 Samuel 13:5-14 and 1 Samuel 15:13-23). Such an attitude grieves God, brings curses and rejection by God, as well as the loss of all the good things God has promised for His children.

May God grant us grace to learn the true value in obeying Him, in all things.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. (a) From Deuteronomy 26:16-19 and Deuteronomy 28, what do we learn about why the people of Israel were obliged to obey God?
(b) From what does this obligation to obey God arise in the case of the Christian?
2. (a) What other words or phrases can we find in the following passages (i.e. Deuteronomy 26:16-19, Deut 28, 1 Samuel 13:5-14 and 1 Samuel 15:13-23) that are used for (i) Obedience and (ii) Disobedience?
(b) How do these words or phrases help us to better understand exactly what obedience involves?
3. What are some of the things that result from (i) Obedience and (ii) Disobedience from the passages considered above? (See also Joshua 1:7-8 and Phil 2:5-11).
4. How will the examples of King Saul, Joshua, Peter and John, Joseph and Mary, and Jesus, help us as Christians to be more obedient to God?

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

1. How obedient are you to God's word?
2. How has this study helped you to better realize the importance of obedience?

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY SIX (6)

THEME: "The Christian at School"

KEY TEXT: Matthew 5:13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Psalm 1:1; Exodus 23:2;
1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12; Romans 13:1 & 7b; Philippians 2:1-4

MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 5:16

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

You are the salt of the earth; You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men; You are Christ's ambassadors. Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. If a man will not work, he shall not eat. Submit to the governing authorities. Look not only to your interest, but look also to the interests of others.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

As in all matters, the Bible gives us principles to guide us, as well as practical teaching in specific areas of living, such as what to do at School as a Christian.

The main principle established here is that, in all places and in all situations the Christian should see him/herself as "salt" and "light" (Matthew 5:13 and 15), or as Paul put it in 2 Corinthians 5:20, as "Christ's ambassadors".

The Christian student is also called upon to work hard, and not to be lazy in his/her studies (2 Thessalonians 3:6-12). He/she should submit to School authorities (Romans 13:1 and 7b); should be different, and not just follow peers, especially in doing wrong (Exodus 23:2 and Psalm 1:1); should be careful in the choice of people he/she associates with (2 Corinthians 6:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:33).

The Christian student should learn to fellowship with other believers, always in a spirit of unity and unselfish consideration (Philippians 2:1-4).

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. (a) For the Christian at School, what important principles of life are given in Matthew 5:13-16? What does it mean to be "salt and/or light"?
(b) How does 2 Corinthians 5:20 help us to understand the Christian's role at School?
(c) Suggest some ways in which Christian students can play this role more effectively.
2. (a) From Exodus 23:2, 2 Corinthians 6:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:33, what other principles or guidance for successful Christian living at School are we given?
(b) In practice, what challenges have we experienced when associating with other students?
3. How should a Christian student approach his/her studies? (Refer to 2 Thess 3:6-12)
4. What should the Christian's relations with School authorities be? (Refer to Romans 13:1 and 7b). What problems do you have with this particular teaching?

5. In practice, how well have we done as Christian students when we have followed the instructions in Philippians 2:1-4, specifically in the following two areas:
 - (a) Fellowshiping in love and unity?
 - (b) Unselfish consideration for others?

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

1. In the light of this study, how well are you doing at School, as a Christian?
2. What areas of your relationships at School do you need to work on?

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY SEVEN (7)

THEME: "The Christian and Money"

KEY TEXT: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12; 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19; Psalm 62:10; Matt. 6:19-21, 24;
2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 9; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 6:24

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

Christian; love of money is root of all evil; cannot serve two masters -- God and mammon. All wealth is God's; Stewards of God's grace. Honour God with our substance; No one can serve two masters -- You cannot serve God and mammon.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The Christian view of money differs radically from that of the world which holds that money is something we obtain by our own effort, good fortune or luck, and therefore should be used for self gratification.

Money (either too much or too little) and its proper use, can be a problem to the rich and poor alike (Proverbs 30:8-9). Christians need to have a right view and attitude towards money. God our Father unambiguously declares that all things are His (Psalm 24:1), including money (Haggai 2:8). There is therefore nothing we have in this world which we have not received from God (1 Timothy 6:7; John 3:27). This includes life itself and the energy to work and enjoy the fruits of our toil (Ecclesiastes 6:1; Haggai 1:5-6).

As stewards of God's wealth then, we are accountable to Him for the way we use it (1 Peter 4:10; Matthew 25:14-30). We need to enjoy God's gifts responsibly. Wealth should be used only in ways that bring glory to God, the giver (Proverbs 3:9). Christians are called upon to support evangelism (Matt 23:23; Luke 12:21; Romans 10:14) and to address the needs of the world (Ephesians 4:28; 2 Corinthians 9:1-5; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 11:29). It is only then that we call blessings upon ourselves (Proverbs 11:24-25).

Finally, Christians are warned not to fall in love with, or be greedy for money (1 Timothy 3:3 and 1 Timothy 6:10). When we learn to be truly thankful for our daily bread and not worry about tomorrow (Luke 12:22-31), or realize what the world offers are only temporary (1 John 2:15-17), we learn the secret of being content, whether rich or poor (Philippians 4:12). May God grant us grace to love and trust Him, like Job (Job 2:9-10 and Job 1:21), even when we lose all our financial resources.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

A. The Christian and World views of money

1. (a). How is wealth regarded in this world i.e. its acquisition and use?
(b). How does such a view influence the way money is sought after or used?
2. From the following passages, what is the Scriptural view of money or wealth:
(a) Psalm 24:1; Haggai 2:8
(b) 1 Tim 6:7; John 3:27

3. What is your understanding of who a **"steward"** is? (Refer Luke 16:1-3; Luke 19:12-26; 1 Peter 4:10). Do you consider yourself a steward of God's money?
4. What are some ways in which the Christian is expected to use money or wealth as a good steward, from the following passages:
 - (a) Matthew 23:23; Malachi 3:6-10; Nehemiah 13:11-13
 - (b) Romans 10:14; Luke 12:21
 - (c) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6; Acts 11:29; Galatians 6:9-10; Acts 3:1-6
 - (d) James 3:37; Ephesians 4:28
 - (e) Romans 13:6; Matt 17:24-27
 - (f) Matt 25:14-20; 2 Corinthians 12:14

B. Some Dangers and Warning concerning money/wealth

5. (a). What warning is given regarding use of wealth in 1 Tim 3:3 and 1 Tim 6:10?
 (b). What is your understanding of **"loving money or being greedy for money"**?
 (Mention some every day examples)
6. (a). The impression is created that the problem with money applies only to the rich.
 How does Proverbs 30:8-9 sum up the two-edged nature of this problem?
 (b). From Job 1:21 and Job 2:9-10, what lessons may we learn from Job's attitude to the problem of how to rightly handle money or wealth?
7. What secrets about handling money or wealth is shared with Christians today from the following Scriptural passages:
 - (a) Luke 12:22-31
 - (b) 1 Timothy 6:6-10
 - (c) 1 John 2:15-17
 - (d) Philippians 4:12

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

1. What is your understanding of ownership and stewardship of money or wealth?
2. What is your attitude towards the acquisition and use of money in your daily life?
3. The spirit of greed does not go away meekly. It has to be dealt with by grace, or it will triumph over any Christian.

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY EIGHT (8)

THEME: "The Christian and Our Customs/Traditions"

KEY TEXT: Matthew 15:1-9; Colossians 2:8-10; Galatians 1:13-17; Exodus 20:4-6; Jer. 7:18 and Jeremiah 32:29

MEMORY VERSE: Mark 7:8

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

Traditions of the elders; you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition; hypocrites; honour me with their lips but their hearts are far from me; their teachings are rules taught by men, hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human traditions rather than on Christ.

In Christ, all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form; you have been given fullness in Christ; head of every power and authority; I was extremely zealous for traditions of my fathers. But when God called me by His grace I did not consult any man.

You shall not make an idol; you shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I the Lord your God, am a jealous God. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger. Babylonians will burn it down where the people provoked me to anger by burning incense to Baal and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Customs/traditions refer to the way of life of a people passed down from generation to generation. This includes their beliefs and practices, embracing their religious, social, economic and political ideas and organizations. Everyone is born into such traditions. But when one comes into the New Life by faith in Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, then the issue arises as to how one should regard and relate to these customs.

Where tradition agrees with the teaching of the Bible, there is no problem. For example, Ghanaian tradition demands respect for elders just as the Bible teaches in 1 Timothy 5:17-19. The problem arises when demands of tradition are in conflict with that of our Lord. In such cases, the Christian has a duty to obey God rather than the traditions of men. In Jesus' days on earth, He clearly taught this to His disciples (see Matthew 5:1-9).

Particularly in matters of idol worship and pouring of libation, which is such a vital part of Ghanaian customary belief and practices, the Bible warns children of God against participation in them (Exodus 20:4-6; Jeremiah 7:18 and Jeremiah 32:29). Such participation would incur God's anger and bring down harsh punishment on offenders. All Christians need to take such warnings seriously.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why was the issue of washing of hands so important to the Pharisees and their Jewish friends? (Refer to Matthew 15:1-2 and Mark 7:1-5).

2. (a) What answer did our Lord Jesus give to their question? (See Matthew 15:3-9 and Mark 7:6-13).
(b) How does this help us in dealing with issues relating to the traditions of our people?
(c) Why did our Lord refer to the Pharisees and Friends as "hypocrites"?
3. From Exodus 20:4-6, what does God's laws teach about idol worship, a practice so pervasive in our traditional beliefs and practices?
4. What is God's attitude towards the pouring of libation to idols and ancestors? (Refer to Jeremiah 7:18 and Jeremiah 32:29)
5. What are the consequences of such idolatry and libation-pouring for those involved?
6. What answer would you give to someone who argues that we will incur the wrath and punishment of local deities if we refuse to honour or sacrifice to them? (Refer to Jeremiah 7:18; Jeremiah 32:19; Colossians 2:8-10).
7. What does Paul's testimony in Galatians 1:13-17, teach about what the Christian's position should be, with regard to the traditions of his/her people?
(See also 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 2 Corinthians 6:16).

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

How free do you feel from the burden or pressure of having to obey the customs and traditions of your people, as a Christian today?

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY NINE (9)

THEME: **“The Christian and Other Religionists/Atheists/Agnostics”**

KEY TEXT: Acts 17:22-31; 1 Kings 18:20-40; Psalm 53:1; Luke 12:16-21; 1 Peter 3:15-16;
Colossians 4:5-6; 2 Tim 2:22-26; Romans 1:19-25

MEMORY VERSE: Acts 4:12 and John 14:6

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

Worship; unknown gods; fool says in heart there is no God; Salvation found in no one else; God seen in creation; correct with gentleness

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Most religions are essentially a "do-it-yourself" proposition i.e. follow a prescribed way of life to gain favour with God and eventually, maybe, attain salvation. In all these "works religions", man seeks and struggles towards God, and yet is never sure if he has done enough good works to merit God's favour. Because one never knows, and never can know, fear persists.

Christianity on the other hand, emphasis salvation by grace alone i.e. what God has already done for man (Ephesians 2:8-9). God first sought and reached out to man. In Jesus Christ, God offers a relationship and His own righteousness, all "**as a free gift**". So man can be sure of salvation. Thus although all religions acknowledge a Supreme Being called "God", only in Christianity is this God "remotely one with His creation".

Jesus is different from all other religious leaders because He claims to be God i.e. more than just a prophet or great teacher -- indeed the only way of salvation and true relationship with God (John 14:6). Many religionists find this rather too exclusive and thus a stumbling block to faith. But all of mankind needs to come to terms with the person of Jesus Christ. Was Jesus a liar, self-deluded or the real thing?

Atheists, unlike religionists, do not recognize God, either as a being or influence in the universe. All of creation and unfolding events are purely a result of chance. The bible refers to such people as "fools".

Agnostics on the other hand are "fence-sitters". They believe it is impossible to be sure whether there is God or not because there is just not enough evidence to make an informed judgement. So they'll rather not make any. The bible is equally hard on both Atheists and Agnostics (Psalm 53:1; Luke 12:20; Romans 1:19-20).

In all things, Christians are called to know what they believe and why they believe it. When dealing with non-believers, Christians are to share their faith boldly and confidently, but with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15-16; Colossians 4:5-6).

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

A. The Bible's view of God and Jesus

1. From the following passages, consider what the Scriptures teach about Christ:
John 1:1 and Titus 2:13; Mark 2:5-7; John 5:18 and John 10:31-33
What is the implication in each case of: **(i)** Jesus knowing the claims He makes are false? **(ii)** Jesus believing these claims, even though they are false? **(iii)** Jesus speaking the truth, when He makes such monumental statements?

B. The Bible's view of Other Religionists:

The use of the term "God" is a source of confusion to many since it gives the impression that we all worship the same "Being", only through different ways.

A useful test for the Christian to undergo is to probe further and find out whether:

- (a) "God" as used, means the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor 1:3),
 - (b) That faith accepts the deity, incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 John 4:1-3).
2. From the following passages what do the scriptures say of other religions?
 - (a) Exodus 20:3-6; Acts 17:24-25, 29
 - (b) Acts 4:12; John 14:6
 - (c) 1 John 5:11-12

C. The Bible's view of Atheists and Agnostics

3. What is the verdict of scriptures on Atheists and Agnostics from these passages:
 - (a) Psalm 53:1
 - (b) Luke 12:16-21 (Why is the hardworking planner called a fool?)
 - (c) Romans 1:19-25

D. The Christian response to Other Religionists/Atheists/Agnostics:

Two contrasting but useful examples of ways in which unbelievers are handled in the scriptures are listed for discussion:

4. What lessons may present-day Christians learn from each of these encounters?
 - (a) Acts 17:22-31
 - (b) 1 Kings 18:20-40
5. From the following passages, in what other ways are Christians urged to behave towards non-believers?
 - (a) Colossians 4:5-6
 - (b) 1 Peter 3:15-16
 - (c) 2 Timothy 2:22-26
 - (d) Acts 17:30-31; Hebrews 1:1-2 and 2:1-3a

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

Jesus' death on the cross, satisfied God's righteous nature so man could be forgiven and not be separated from God by his sins. In Jesus Christ, God paid the penalty for man's sin. Only sinless Jesus, not under the sentence of death Himself could do this. No other religious leader or prophet could or can.

For further study: Romans 3:10-12 and 22b-23; Romans 6:23; Romans 3:24-26; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 4:15-16 and Hebrews 7:26-27.

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY TEN (10)

THEME: "What the Bible Teaches About Heaven and Hell"

KEY TEXT: Job 14:14; Revelation 21:1-4; Revelation 1:18; John 14:1-6; Matthew 7:13-14; Isaiah 6:1-3; Rev 20:11-15; Isaiah 55:6-8; Rom 11:33; Isaiah 33:14; Luke 16:19-31

MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 25:41 and John 14:1-3

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

Shall a man live after he dies? Heaven, Hell, Sin. God is love, but also righteous, holy and just; He cannot look upon sin. A place of eternal torment; none can deliver. Hell was created for the devil and his angels. Heaven is the dwelling place of God; indescribable beauty for the redeemed of God, whose sins have been washed by the blood of the Lamb. God has no delight in the death of the wicked. Sets before you death and life. Choose life.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The belief in life after death is almost universal among all cultures. The Bible affirms that God has placed a universal longing for eternity in the heart of man (Ecclesiastes 3:11). The issue of eternity is therefore an important issue every person alive needs to examine or be confronted with. Only the Christian faith gives a sure word concerning life after death. This was given certainty by Christ when He rose from the dead, the first fruit of many (1 Corinthians 15:20). Mankind was freed from bondage brought on by the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 1:18). Because Christ died, rose again, and lives today, all who die will live as well (John 6:57; John 14:2-3).

No subject probably appears as repugnant to the human mind as hell. How can a loving God consign anyone to hell? But this is a dangerous doctrine based on an inaccurate premise. For while God is love (1 John 4:8), He is also holy (1 Peter 1:15-16), just (Deuteronomy 32:4) and righteous (Ps 145:17); of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; who will by no means clear the guilty (Isaiah 6:3; Romans 1:18). No sinner therefore can come into God's presence without being consumed (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29).

Though the Bible declares it repeatedly, many today still do not believe in hell. But they should, because Jesus did (Luke 16:19-31; Matt 25:41). The Bible describes hell as a place of everlasting burning (Isaiah 33:14); with no light (Psalm 49:19); a burning fire not quenched, but where worms do not die (Mark 9:48); and none can deliver (Isaiah 26:14). Hell is a place of eternal punishment, with no beginning or end; no past or future; forever and ever and ever. The good news is that God never intended a terrible place as hell for any human, but for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

Heaven on the other hand is described as the dwelling place of God (Deuteronomy 26:15; Acts 7:55). A place of indescribable beauty (2 Corinthians 12:2-4; Rev 21); where God is and where the redeemed will be with Jesus forever (John 14:1-3). It is a place of no pain, crying or dying (Revelation 21:1-4); a place of light, where God's glory resides permanently (Psalm 19:1).

God meant to share heaven with mankind (Philippians 3:20). God affirms this when He assures us that He has no pleasure in the death and destruction of anyone (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus wept over the imminent destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37).

The choice of where anyone spends eternity is entirely up to him/her. Choosing to ignore God and do as we please tie in our lot with the devil. His end therefore will be ours -- permanently away from the presence of God. Christians must be concerned enough to proclaim the whole counsel of God; not just what is pleasant, for there is a coming judgement (Revelation 20:11-15).

The good news is that Jesus has already paid the penalty for our sins. No man or woman need ever end up in hell with the devil and his angels. But the choice is ours. God urges us to choose life not death (Ezekiel 33:11). But time is running out. Today is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:1-2; Isaiah 55:6-7).

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. We are sure about life and death. But can we be sure of a heaven and a hell? Why isn't death the end of everything? (See Ecclesiastes 3:11; 1 Corinthians 15:20; John 14:2).

Luke 16:19-31 (Jesus teaching: Lazarus and the rich man)

2. (a) Who is the source of this story? What then is Jesus' view on heaven and hell? (b) From verses 22-23, what two destinations did the dead men in story end up?
(c) List characteristics of the two places mentioned in story (verses 24-25)?
(d) What relations do the two places have in common between them?
3. What other things may we learn about hell from the following scriptural passages?
 - Matthew 25:41; Isaiah 33:14; Psalm 49:19; Isaiah 26:14 and Mark 9:48
4. What may we also learn about heaven from these passages?
 - Psalm 19:1; Deuteronomy 26:15; Isaiah 6:1-3; John 14:1-3; Philipp 3:20
5. What would you say to this: Why would a loving God send anyone to hell?
(Refer to 1 Peter 1:15-16; Psalm 145:17; Deuteronomy 4:24; Matthew 25:41; Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9)
6. From Revelation 20:11-15, what is in store for all of mankind, upon death?
7. What choices are placed before all men and women, while here on earth?
(Refer to Deut 30:15-20; Isaiah 55:6-7; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 1 John 5:11-13).
8. What responsibility to the world does this knowledge place on all Christians?
(See Ezekiel 3:16-19 and Luke 16:27-31)

REFLECTIONS/THINGS TO PONDER

Why do you believe in a heaven and a hell?

UNIVERSITY INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES
GENERAL THEME: PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING
STUDY ELEVEN (11)

THEME: **“The Christian and Single Life”**

KEY TEXT: 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, 7-9, 26-29, 32-35; Matthew 19:11-12; 1 Corinthians 6:14, 19-20; Galatians 5:24; Genesis 29:14b-30; Acts 21:8-9; Luke 2:36-38; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16

MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 19:11-12

KEY WORDS/PHRASES

- It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband (1 Corinthians 7:1-2)

- If you marry you have not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life (1 Corinthians 7:26-29). An unmarried man is concerned about how to please the Lord, but a married man how to please his wife (1 Corinthians 7:32-35).

- Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Those who belong to Christ have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24). Live by the Spirit and you would not gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:16).

- Philip the evangelist had four unmarried daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:8-9). A prophetess, Anna, lived with her husband then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying (Luke 2:36-38).

BRIEF OVERVIEW

There are many Christians in single life. Some are not married yet, though they will do so later. But some will never marry. Also, some previously married persons are now widowed, divorced or separated from their spouses for some reason.

The revelation from this study is that Christians can live a single life to the glory of God. As they submit their wills to God, He is able through His Holy Spirit, to give them self-control so they do not yield to the lure of an immoral life (Matthew 19:11-12; 1 Corinthians 6:14, 19-20 and Galatians 5:16).

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1 Corinthians 7:1-2, 7-9, 26-29 and 32-35; Matthew 19:11-12

1. Paul says that it is desirable to stay single, like him.
 - (a) What, according to the passage are some advantages of the single life?
 - (b) What on the other hand are the temptations of a single life?
 - (c) Is it God's design that every Christian would live the single life?
(Refer to 1 Corinthians 7:7).
 - (d) For what reasons do some people remain unmarried?
(Refer to Matt 19:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 7:7).

1 Corinthians 6:14 and 19-20; Galatians 5:24; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16

2. (a) The single life does not pose problems for some people. How do we explain this? (Relate this to 1 Corinthians 7:7b; 1 Corinthians 6:14, 19-20; Galatians 5:24; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16).
- (b) In the light of the above, what advice would you give to single persons?

Genesis 29:14b-30; Acts 21:8-9; Luke 2:36-38

3. What is commendable in the single life experiences of the following persons:
 - (a) Jacob (Genesis 29:14b-30)
 - (b) Philips daughters (Acts 21:8-9)
 - (c) Anna (Luke 2:36-38)?

REFLECTION/THINGS TO PONDER

1. If single, are you depending on God for grace to live this single life to His glory?
2. If married, what is the nature of your prayers concerning those who are single?