

**CHURCH OF NIGERIA
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)
PROVINCE OF NIGER DELTA
DIOCESE OF EVO**

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL MANUAL FOR 2015

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME

INTRODUCTION

“Occupy till I come,” the 2015 Diocesan Adult Sunday School theme, is apt for the times in which we have found ourselves. This is so in as much as it has become expedient to call the attention of Christian faithful to the fact that Jesus Christ, our Lord and indisputable King of the Kingdom, is very much interested in the ways and manners in which we conduct the business of the kingdom which He has so graciously bequeathed to our charge.

The theme is culled from the “Parable of the ten minas” as recorded in Luke 19: 11-27. Jesus sought to use this parable to explain to His disciples, many of whom believed and taught that the kingdom would appear immediately, that the kingdom would not be readily apparent and that there would be need for stewardship and faithful service in His absence.

Occupy till I come was certainly not a call to merely fill up space, fold hands, do nothing and just wait till the master returns. It was rather a serious call to stewardship, absolute commitment and fruitfulness in the master’s business. Evidently, the master was a core business person who wouldn’t want any lull occasion or season in his business, not even in his absence. And even as it became expedient for him to step aside for a while in pursuance of some equally important project, He had the confidence that His business would not be stagnated nor closed up. After all, he had servants who had been with him and unto whom he had bequeathed the wherewithal to keep the business afloat and progressing, even in his very absence.

Being fully aware that businesses are not set up just for the fun of doing so, and that no business can be sustained or grow which is not positively disposed to efficient management, productivity, profitability and sustainability, the master called every manager in his estate to task. So, before embarking on that very important journey, he called ten of his servants together and committed to every one of them equal amount of resources. He would, no doubt, have instructed them to invest these so that they would keep the business alive and progressing.

At his return he called them together to individually account for their stewardships. Two of the ten were commended and generously rewarded for their outstanding performances; one was roundly condemned and severely punished for his ill-motivated, negative mindset cum attitude which culminated in abject unproductivity and non performance. Funny enough, no further mention was made of the seven other servants.

For better comprehension and more positive impact of this subject on study participants, the theme has been subdivided into five compartments or subthemes.

Subtheme A, “Foundation for Effective Kingdom Business”, focuses on issues intended to expound our knowledge and understanding on the nature, scope and terms of the Kingdom business. In the subtheme are ten topics.

Subtheme B, “Equipping for Effective Kingdom Business,” highlights study areas dealing with the necessary preparations and attributes that shape us up for efficiency and fruitfulness in the daily operations of the kingdom business. They deal with resources and other stuff that must be accessed, developed, manifested and sustained by genuine operators and managers of the kingdom estate. Dearth or total absence of any or all of this stuff makes the business process cumbersome, frustrating and unproductive.

Subtheme C, “Engaging in True Kingdom Business”, recognizes that kingdom citizens and the various segments and denominations of the body of Christ, the Church, are most times encumbered or weighed down with projects, programmes and activities which are totally at variance with the true kingdom task. As such, this subtheme embodies fifteen study areas or topics that picture the various segments of the core missionary mandate of the Church.

Subtheme D, “Opposition to the Kingdom Business”, deals with the various factors or forces that are hostile to or which constitute huddles and snares to operators on the various paths and terrains of the kingdom estate. These are human and environmental elements and issues that would render the Master’s business ineffectual or totally useless if not competently managed. Ten topics in this subtheme will, therefore, be focusing on the various levels, shades and colours of the opposition to the kingdom project.

Subtheme E, “Return of the Owner of the Business”, embodies three topics that are designed to remind Church folks that we are just stewards graciously assigned to manage and oversee various aspects of the Master’s Estate, for which we shall be required to render proper account to Him for our stewardship. And because it is not certain when the master would return for this purpose, proactive steps and measures should be taken consistently to ensure that we remain focused and ever ready so that whenever He does appear, we would not be caught unawares but would rather be prepared, in season and out of season, to account to him for our stewardship and so be positively disposed to His commendation and reward.

SUB THEME A: FOUNDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS

STUDY 1

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME

SUB THEME: FOUNDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: WHAT IS KINGDOM BUSINESS?

TEXT: MATTHEW 28:18-20, JOHN 4:34-38, 9:4,5

AIM: To explain to brethren what kingdom business is all about.

INTRODUCTION:

When the master of that estate said, "Occupy till I come", he left the servants with no doubt that they were not just to sit, fold their hands, relax and wait for his return, but that they were to hold forth, do business, and work conscientiously for the growth and expansion of the master's estate. Business in this context, simply defined, is the specific task for which a thing, person or group exists or is charged with. On this premise, we can simply define Kingdom business as that fundamental task which Kingdom citizens are charged with. It is the task for which the Church exists.

Kingdom business is a serious task requiring time and effort and the avoidance of distractions. . It is the Master's task which must be undertaken with every sense of responsibility, resources and commitment. In this study we shall endeavour to understand what that task really is.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. (a) What do understand by the phrase 'Kingdom business?'
(b) What actually constitutes Kingdom business? Matt. 28; 18- 20, Mark 16; 15- 20, Acts 1; 8
2. From the above texts, whose responsibility is it to execute the business of the Kingdom?
3. "As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work" John 9; 4. Explain this statement as it relates to Kingdom business?
4. (a) Using yourself and your church as reference points, can you sincerely say that the Kingdom business is being conscientiously executed in our generation?
(b) Suggest specific areas of the business you think you and the church need to improve upon.

CONCLUSION:

A clear understanding of what Kingdom business is all about will help us re-evaluate our personal and collective approaches, attitudes and commitments to the very task which the Master assigned to us, with a view to making amends where necessary. This way, individual Christians and local churches will focus properly and ensure the overall prosperity of the Kingdom estate.

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 9:4, "As long as it is day we must do the work of Him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work."

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you sincerely committed to the Kingdom business?

STUDY 2

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME

SUB THEME: FOUNDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: CHARACTERISTICS OF KINGDOM BUSINESS

TEXT: JOHN 4:23-38, (NLT), PHILIPPIANS 4:8,9

AIM: To help the brethren clearly distinguish and commit themselves to genuine Kingdom business.

INTRODUCTION:

The Kingdom business is peculiar in so many ways. Unlike the worldly business which is anchored on sheer pursuits of worldly gains and accomplishments, the fundamental purpose of the Kingdom business is to enlarge the kingdom of heaven and severely deplete the kingdom of darkness. In other words, the Kingdom business is driven primarily by a genuine concern for the souls of men.

Jesus Himself had set us examples and passionately demands that we do not approach this business in ways and manners that are contrary to laid down standards and procedures. In this study, we will be looking at the scriptural qualities of the Kingdom business and how these traits practically distinguish this heavenly business from other businesses that men are saddled with.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the term “Kingdom business”?
2. What are the peculiar characteristics of Kingdom business? Matt. 28; 18-20, Luke 4; 18, 19, Mark 16; 15-18, John 9; 4, John 4; 23-25
3. Kingdom business is anchored and built on principles and standards that are deeply rooted in the scriptures. What are these principles and standards? Phil. 4; 8,9, Romans 14:17, Matt. 6:33, 10; 24-28, Luke 9; 51-62.
3. In view of these scriptural standards and principles, how would you sincerely evaluate your personal approach and commitment, as well as those of your local church members to true kingdom business?
4. Today, all manner of persons, ministries, and churches make a show of engaging in the Kingdom business. How can one distinguish the genuine kingdom businessmen from mere pretenders and charlatans? Matt. 7; 15-23

CONCLUSION:

In John 15; 16, Jesus clearly affirmed that He chose and ordained every bona fide disciple to go into the field and bear fruits that will endure the test of time. There is no doubt that a proper understanding of the peculiarities of this kingdom business will help us refocus and properly channel our hearts and all resources at our disposal to meeting the expectations of our Master.

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 4:35b “Look around you! Vast fields are ripening all around us and are ready now for the harvest.”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How much value do you place on the kingdom business?

STUDY 3

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME:	FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	WHY KINGDOM BUSINESS?
TEXT:	LUKE 4:18, 19
AIM:	<i>To intimate us with the reasons for and importance of this great task</i>

INTRODUCTION:

We have a lot to learn from the pattern of our Lord Jesus' ministry. Before He came down from heaven, He was fully prepared for His mission and knew the exact task given to Him by His Father. And because He knew why He came, He could not be distracted, not even by intimidating audiences and Teachers of the Law. He saw the kingdom business as His core mission on earth and was determined to complete His own part of the task. Before He ascended back to the Father, He asked us to continue from where He stopped.

In this study we shall closely look at the task Jesus actually handed over to us, why He did, and why it is expedient that we carry it out.

STUDY GUIDE:

- 1.(a) From Luke 4:18, 19, identify all that constitute our Lord's Kingdom Business.
 - (b) How important is this business to the Lord? Luke 2:42-49, John 4:34, 6:38-40,
 - (c) Why was it expedient for the Master to hand over the kingdom business to us? Matt. 5:13-16, John 14:1-14
- 2.(a) What were the driving forces that enabled the Lord pay undivided attention to the kingdom business? John 4:34, 1 John 3:8b, Luke 4:18, 19, Acts 10:38
 - (b) Of what importance are these in our own kingdom enterprises today?
3. From Jesus' point of view, how must we necessarily engage in the Kingdom Business today? Luke 2:49, John 9:4a, Matt. 6:33
4. Discuss practical steps the Church can take to make the true Kingdom Business a matter of utmost priority for individual Christians and the local churches.

CONCLUSION:

There is no doubt that Jesus' coming to the earth was partly to introduce the kingdom business, establish the rules, standards and procedures guiding it, tutor a few devoted persons on the nitty-gritty of the business, and to send them out to continue with the business, to bring others in, teach, and inculcate in them the enabling resources to keep the business alive and prospering until He returns for the final harvest.

The Kingdom Business is a task for all believers and requires urgent and consistent attention. It is the heart-beat of God. When we do it willingly, we receive a sure reward from the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: John 9:4a: "As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent me."

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How much value do you place on the kingdom business?

STUDY 4

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME

SUB- THEME: FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: RESOURCES FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS

AIM: To teach that we cannot do the Kingdom Business with our own power or might but must depend essentially on the resources ordained by the Master, the owner of the business.

TEXT: Acts 1: 8; 1 Cor. 12: 1-11;

INTRODUCTION:

When God assigns us a task, He always releases the resources to carry out that task. He equips His messengers with whatever they need to effectively execute whatever tasks He assigns to them. We cannot do divine task without divine equipment. The Owner of the task has made available all He wants to be used for the task. It is very dangerous to carry out a spiritual task with the arm of flesh. This study sheds more light on this and teaches us what resources the Lord has made available for the kingdom business.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. (a) What is the Chief Resource for the kingdom business? Acts 1:8
(b) What happens when we receive this all-important Resource? Acts 2:1-4, 43, 4:33, 6:8-10, 10:38
2. Identify the ministry and importance of the Holy Spirit from the following passages: John 14:16-18, 16:7-14, 1 Cor. 12:1-11: John 16:7-15
3. (a) List and discuss other resources for the kingdom business in the light of Eph. 6:10-19

(b) Is it possible to (i) access these other resources in the absence of the Chief Resource? (ii) execute the kingdom business effectively without any of these? Why do you think so?
4. Discuss the dangers in doing the kingdom business without these resources. Read Acts 19:11-16, Matt. 25:1-13, Lk. 7:20-23

CONCLUSION:

A song writer stated so aptly; "The arm of flesh will fail us; ye dare not trust your own." If we must succeed in the Lord's assignment, spiritual matters should not be undertaken carnally. We must therefore seek to be in tune with the Holy Spirit as we carry on the Master's business.

MEMORY VERSE: Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Have you been fully equipped for kingdom exploits?

STUDY 5

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME: FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: HOW DO WE DO KINGDOM BUSINESS?
TEXT: Mark 10:35-45; Matt 6:33, 25:31-46
AIM: *To let us know that we must have the kingdom mind-set for us to effectively do the Kingdom Business*

INTRODUCTION:

One major crisis in Christendom today is that we have people who are doing the Kingdom work with worldly mindset. It is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish the average Christian's attitude and approach to kingdom matters from what obtains in core worldly circles. Yet it is on record that shortly after His baptism, as Jesus began His ministry, one of the things He paid serious attention to was the re-orientation of His disciples. At any given opportunity, He took time to teach them how things ought to be done in the kingdom. He began from what they knew: "You have heard that..." and then introduced the Kingdom way: "But now..." This study should help us understand what this kingdom mindset is, and the urgent need to see and approach the Master's business in its right frame.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. The two sons of Zebedee made a very sensitive request from the Lord, (Mark 10:37).
 - (a) How would you describe that request?
 - (b) Explain the word "sit" in the context of that request?
2. From the following passages, what did our Lord teach on what should be the right mindset for those doing the Kingdom Business? Mark 10:42-45; Matt 6:33; Matt. 25:35-45
3. What should be the believer's priority in kingdom life and ministry?
Discuss Matt.6:33, 10:7

4. In what ways are “the sons of Zebedee” manifesting themselves in the Church today?

CONCLUSION:

Until we have the right mindset, we cannot do the work of the Kingdom of God effectively. Let us stop being worldly but allow God to transform our minds. We must consider seriously Paul’s admonition in Romans 12:2 “Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to Him and what is perfect.”

MEMORY VERSE: Colossians 3:2 “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things”

***EXAMINE YOURSELF:** Are you better than the sons of Zebedee?*

STUDY 6

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME: FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: WHERE DO WE DO KINGDOM BUSINESS
TEXT: ACTS 1:8, MATTHEW 10:5, 6, GALATIANS 2; 9

AIM: *To let brethren understand that even though the scope of kingdom business covers the entire universe, yet God has designated areas of operation for every kingdom citizen and does not want us to do His work just when and where we want.*

INTRODUCTION:

God is a Master Planner and Wise Administrator. He works with plans and expects that His workers will have the same understanding and disposition. When He sent His disciples out for the Kingdom Business He assigned them designated areas to enable them work effectively. Today each one of us needs to identify our callings and where God wants us to work for Him. This study will help us understand this better so that we can operate effectively in our work for Him.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Read the following scriptures, Acts 1:8, Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:15, and identify the exact geographical scope which the kingdom business is designed to cover.
2. In Matt. 10:5, 6, Jesus issued a specific command to His disciples on where to go and minister. (a) Why do you think He did so? (b) What is the implication of this for bona fide kingdom citizens and the Church today?
Read Acts 1; 8
3. Apart from the issue of assigned geographical scopes for individuals and churches' operations, what other factors would sometimes determine where we carry out missionary activities? Acts 16:6-10, 23- 32, Gal. 2:9,

4. Do you sincerely think that many contemporary ministers of the gospel are driven in their church planting endeavors by some or all of these scriptural considerations?
5. What could result from doing kingdom business in areas not approved by the Master?

CONCLUSION:

The Holy Spirit will be glad with us if we carry out our tasks at heaven's designated areas. It will be good for all labourers in the Lord's field to identify where He has called us to operate and concentrate there for efficiency and greater productivity.

MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 10:6, 7, "Go rather to the lost sheep of the whole house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand'"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: *Are you where the Master wants you to be?*

STUDY 7

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME: FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: QUALIFICATIONS FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS
TEXT: JOHN 3:1-8, 15:16
AIM: *To let us know what is required of us if we must effectively conduct the Kingdom Business*

INTRODUCTION:

It is common today to see people who make a show of *working* for God but do nothing about *walking* with Him. We must note from the onset that God is much more interested in our walk with Him than He is in the works we do for Him. In this study, we will strive to establish that it is our very special and intimate relationship with God that primarily qualifies us for participation and relevance in Kingdom Business.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Read John 3:1-8
 - (a) Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus by night?
 - (b) What evidences do we have in verses 1-2 that Nicodemus was already engaged in the Kingdom business?
 - (c) What do we learn from Jesus' response to Nicodemus in verse 3?
2. (a) What is the main qualification for the Kingdom Business? Vs 3
 - (b) Why is it that a man who does not have this qualification should not work for God? Rom 8:5-8, 1 Cor. 2:14
 - (c) What other qualifications are required for engaging effectively in Kingdom business? Heb. 12:14-17,
3. What is the process of obtaining this qualification? Acts 16:31, 1 John 2:8-9, James 4:7-8
4. What are the consequences of engaging in Kingdom business without this basic qualification? Matt. 7:23, Matt. 25:1-13

CONCLUSION:

To be born-again is not optional if we must be relevant and effective in the Kingdom Business today. Let us take time and examine ourselves once again whether we have this all-important qualification.

MEMORY VERSE: John 3:3 “verily, verily, I say unto thee except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you genuinely born again?

STUDY 8

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME:	FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	EXPECTATIONS FROM THE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TEXTS:	LUKE 19:12-27; MATTHEW 25:14-30
AIM:	To remind brethren that for every investment made by the Lord in our lives, He expects a corresponding fruitfulness.

INTRODUCTION:

Every business venture is entered into with great expectations; usually expectations of gains/profits. For these to be achieved, certain actions (work) must take place.

The master's instruction to the ten servants he gave the minas was very clear and direct to the point; "Do business till I come", he said. To him, therefore, it was a serious investment from which he expected a handsome return. This was exactly what our Master had in mind when it became expedient for Him to commit the business of the kingdom unto us before ascending back to the Father. For every single resource committed to our charge, the Lord says; "I chose and appointed you that you should go and bear fruits, and that your fruits shall remain...." (John 15:16).

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Every one of us who have obeyed the gospel has become bondservants of Jesus Christ. We have therefore placed ourselves under obligation to serve Him with all the various talents He has blessed us with. Exodus 31:1-6, Gal. 5:22-23
Mention some of these talents.
2. Why did the master give the minas to his servants? Luke 19:13, Eph.4:11-14
3. How did the servants use the talents given to them? Luke 19:16-20, Matt. 25:16-18.
4. What are those expectations of the Master that we ought to fulfill? 2 Tim. 4:2, 1 Thess. 5:17, Matt. 3:8, John 15:16
5. What will happen to the servants of the kingdom who do not meet the Master's expectations? Luke 19:24-27, Matt. 25:28-30,

6. What becomes of those servants who meet the Master's expectations?
Prov. 16:7, 1 John 3:22, John 13:17, Luke 19:16-19, Luke 19:26a, Matt.
25:21

CONCLUSION:

If people are busy using their talents, they won't have any time to be getting into trouble. The one-talent person may conclude that his small ability is not worth much, and so fail to use what he has. He may conclude that if he can't teach as well as someone else, or sing as well as someone else, then he had better not do it at all. Let us be reminded that the widow gave her two mites even though it was small ([Mark 12:43-44](#)). She gave all within her limited ability.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Calling ten of his servants, he ... said to them, 'Trade with these till I come.'
(Luke 19:13 - RSV)

EXAMINE YOURSELF: What has heaven gained from your talent recently?

STUDY 9

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME:	FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	WHO IS A KINGDOM SERVANT?
TEXT:	MARK 10:42-45, MATTHEW 24:45-50, EPHESIANS 5:1,2
AIM:	This study is geared toward helping brethren understand the hallmarks of a true Kingdom servant.

INTRODUCTION:

It is common today to see people who claim servant-hood or loyalty when truly they are not. A servant is someone in the service of another. That is to say that a Kingdom servant is one who is engaged in the service of the Lord. This service does not necessarily need to be carried out in the church and must not be directly related to the church or its activities. Moreover, one must not necessarily bear any tag related to church administration to be called a kingdom servant. This is to say, in other words, that kingdom servants' act, consciously or otherwise, as God's representatives in whatever sphere of society they find themselves. In this study we will strive to paint a detailed portrait of what kingdom servant hood truly is.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Identify some of qualities found in the life of a kingdom servant? Num.12:3; Gal. 5:22-23, Eph.5:2; Mark 10:35-41, Mark 10:44-45, Matt.24:45-46
2. According to Leviticus 21:17-20, some blemishes listed (and briefly explained) below can hinder a Priest from coming within the veil and can; therefore, disqualify such persons from being Kingdom servants. Discuss them.

*Blindness – Lack of vision, unwillingness to see new light. Proverbs 29:18; 2 Peter 1:12; Matthew 11:12.

*Lameness – An injured walk, from getting off God's path and falling in the pit. Hebrews 12:13. Lameness can be healed.

*Flat Nose – The nose is an instrument (or member) of discernment. Your sense of smell affects your ability to taste. Isaiah 5:20; Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23.

*Broken Footed – Foot broken, or out of joint. Proverbs 25:19.

*Broken Handed – Unable to grasp and retain what God gives us. Hebrews 2:1; Titus 1:9.

*Crooked back (Hunchbacked) – A flaw in the backbone. Speaks of a lack in moral uprightness; impurity...Galatians 6:5.

*Dwarf – One who never grows up or comes to spiritual maturity, 1 Corinthians

13:11; Ephesians 4:14-15.

*Blemish in the Eye – Hypocrisy. Matthew 7:1-5.

*Scurvy - Caused by malnutrition, bad diet. Matthew 5:6.

*Broken Stones – Unfruitful, unable to reproduce. John 15:8.

3. Kingdom servants can be found in every field of human endeavor.

(a). Discuss this statement in the light of such public figures as Daniel, Isaiah, etc.

(b). What lesson does this have for Christians occupying privileged positions in public service and the entire corporate world?

4. What happens when kingdom citizens fail to approach their daily callings with the kingdom service mindset? Matt.24:48-51.

CONCLUSION:

Are you a kingdom servant? Are you really working for God's kingdom? Time will tell!

MEMORY VERSE: Matt.24:45, "Who is the wise and loyal servant that the master trusts to give the other servants their food at the right time"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Can you be truly called a kingdom servant?

STUDY 10

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: FOUNDATION FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: DIVINE INSTRUCTIONS TO KINGDOM SERVANTS
TEXT: MATTHEW. 5: 1- 16

INTRODUCTION:

It is not hard to pick out the theme of "The Beatitudes". We read the same word in all of them - "Blessed". The Greek word being used is "makarios"; and in its normal sense, it means "happy". The word "beatitude" itself comes from the Latin word 'beatitudo' meaning, perfect happiness or bliss.

In the beatitudes, Jesus declared them that conform to certain kingdom behavioural patterns as blessed. These should be happy because they have all it takes to live the prosperous kingdom life. This they do because they walk in obedience to certain divine principles. Knowing and walking in the light of these principles or divine instructions gives one the leverage for success in kingdom business.

STUDY GUIDE:

- 1 (a) Discuss the specific divine principles for a happy and prosperous kingdom life and business identified by Jesus in Matt.5:1-16.

(b) What becomes of those who walk in the light of each of these principles?
2. What does it mean to be 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light' of the world'?
Matt.5:13-16, 43-48, Eph. 5:5-11, Phil.2:12-16,
3. What happens when we fulfill our role as salt and light in the world?
Matt. 5:3-12, 16,
4. What are the consequences of neglecting or failing to abide by these divine rules? Matt. 5:13, 1 Cor. 6:9-11a

CONCLUSION:

A hymn writer aptly captured this truth in these lyrics; “when we walk with the Lord in the light of His word, what a glory it sheds on our way!” Knowledge of God’s ways, and walking in obedience to Him in and out of season should be uppermost in our priority lists if we must succeed in this business of the kingdom. In obeying Him we are blessed and the world is blessed through us.

MEMORY VERSE: JOHN 13:17 “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: As you stand before this ‘mirror’ (the beatitudes), how would you describe what you see?

SUB THEME B: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS

STUDY 11

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TEXT: EPHESIANS 6:10-19

AIM: To teach us that apart from divine resources, there are devices/tools (God's armour) which we must use/employ to effectively execute the kingdom business.

INTRODUCTION:

Tools can be simply defined as instruments used in facilitating operations in any field of life. An auto-mechanic needs mechanical tools/devices to fix a car and prevent it from being grounded. In the same manner the kingdom citizen (Believer) needs spiritual tools to enhance kingdom operations and thus remain relevant in kingdom life and business. Dearth or absence of any one or more of these tools affects kingdom operations adversely. Any believer who must overcome all challenges/oppositions to Kingdom operations and occupy till the Master's return must understand the eternal intricacies of these tools and ensure that they are effectively appropriated.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the concept 'tools for kingdom business', and how do they differ from resources for kingdom business?
2. Read our main text, Eph. 6:10-18, again; point out all the tools mentioned therein and the purposes for which they were provided.
3. Why do we need these tools? Eph. 6:1-2, Jude 1:3, 1 Pet. 5:8, 2 Cor. 10:3-5, Acts 14: 22.
4. (a) The Scripture assures us of God's victory and instructs us to occupy till the Master comes. Is it possible do so effectively in the absence of any of these tools? Why do think so?

(b) What does it mean to (i) pray always (1Thess. 5:17) and (ii) to pray in the spirit on all occasions (Ephesians 6: 18)?

CONCLUSION:

For us to prevail and succeed in the execution of the kingdom business handed over to us by God, we must use the tools or devices He has specifically provided for it. It will be a thing of Joy for the master to come back and meet us at our duty posts succeeding.

MEMORY VERSE: Eph. 6:13 – “Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you truly armed with the full armour of God?

STUDY 12

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME

SUB THEM: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: THE PLACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TEXT: JOHN 16:7-15, ACTS 1: 8

AIM: To remind believers about the reality and mission of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION:

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He was sent to us purposely to be our Counsellor, to guide us unto the truth about Christ, to convict us of our sin, and to call us to repentance, to reveal and teach God's standard of righteousness and to demonstrate Christ's judgment over Satan by miraculous signs and wonders.

As such, we cannot do anything on our own without the Holy Spirit. He is our source of power. No wonder Jesus said that it was expedient for him to leave so that the Holy Spirit would come.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?
2. What business did the Holy Spirit come to do? John 16:7-11, Titus 3:5, Rom 8:16, Acts 1:8, Luke 4:18, Acts 4: 31, Rom 8:11.
3. How can we receive the Holy Spirit? Acts. 19:1-6, Luke 11:9-13, 1Cor 6:19, Acts 8:1-17.
4. What is your personal experience/testimony about the Holy Spirit? (i) in your life, (ii) in your family, (iii)in your Church?
5. What are the consequences of not having or walking/working with the Holy Spirit in Kingdom life and business? Gal. 5; 19- 21

CONCLUSION:

Without the Holy Spirit, no believer will make any progress in his/her Christian life. To carry our crosses and follow Jesus involves trials, temptations, persecutions

and rejection, and only the Holy Spirit can help us cope victoriously with such challenges. Therefore, we must welcome Him into our lives and rely wholly on this Power that energizes, encourages, guides and sustains.

MEMORY VERSE: John 16:13 – “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Is your life totally yielded to the Holy Spirit?

STUDY 13

SUB THEME: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: THE PLACE OF THE WORD OF GOD IN KINGDOM BUSINESS

TEXT: JOSHUA 1: 8, DEUT 32:46- 47, PSALM 19: 7-12

AIM: To remind believers of the importance of the word of God in the kingdom business.

INTRODUCTION:

Our text in Deuteronomy, and the words of Jesus in John 6:63 clearly tell us that the word of God is our 'life', meaning that everything that will make us succeed in life is contained therein. It is our guide and road map to success in kingdom business as designed by the master himself. Physically, lack of food or imbalance in its nutritional composition would cause malnutrition, sickness, disease and even death; in the same way, deficiency or lack of the word of God brings spiritual malnutrition, sickness or even death. We must, therefore, if we want to succeed in the kingdom business, covet, study and meditate on the Word of God always (day and night) just like we would need to eat to stay alive.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Where can we find the word of God? Why was it given to us? 2Tim 3:15-17, John 20:31.
2. Every form of business activity, including kingdom business, is guided by laws and principles which must be understood and conscientiously applied by all stakeholders who wish to get the very best out of them. How does this apply to the kingdom business? Josh. 1:8, Psa. 119:11, 105, Matt. 4:4, Deut. 11:18-23, 1Tim 4:16, 2Tim. 2:15.
3. How have you as a person benefited from the ministry of the word of God in your Church or elsewhere? Discuss, and be specific.
4. In which ways can the word of God not help us in doing the kingdom business?. Heb. 4:2, Matt. 22:29, 2cor 4:2, Titus 3:9, Isa 5:24, Zech. 7:12-13.

CONCLUSION:

The word of God is eternal (Ps 119:89) and it is contained in our Bible to help us live rightly with God. Every activity on earth has guidance in the word of God and it will benefit us a lot to read, memorize and meditate on portions of it if we must grow and succeed in the kingdom business. Don't starve yourself.

MEMORY VERSE: Matt 22:29 – "Jesus answered and said to them, You are mistaken, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Do you make light of the word of God?

STUDY 14

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME

SUB THEME: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN KINGDOM BUSINESS

TEXT: LUKE 18:1-8, 1 THESS. 5:17

AIM: To remind us that we must constantly commune with God in prayers if we must succeed with the kingdom business

INTRODUCTION:

Prayer is a communication process that allows us commune with God. It is our direct line with heaven. Prayer is like talking to your best friend, and it is easy to talk to someone whom you know loves you unconditionally. In prayer we approach God with confidence, with joy, and with a great expectation that He will respond positively to us. The prayer process comprises thanksgiving, supplication, intercession and a host of others. Because it is communication, prayer involves petition and response or feedback. So it demands that in prayer, we must listen attentively to hear from the God with whom we are communicating, and we must persist until an answer is given.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. (a) What is prayer? (b) How are we supposed to pray? 1Samuel 1:15-17, Ps 95:2, Phil. 4:6, John 14:13-14, Ps 1:2, Jonah 1:6, Luke 5:16,
2. Read. Matt 6:9-13 and explain the different components of prayer as given by the Lord.
3. (a) What are the conditions to be met to get our prayers answered? Mark 11:22-25, Heb. 11:6, John 5:14, James 4:6-8, 1John 1:8-9.
(b) Why are some prayers not answered? James 1:5-7, Isa 1:15, Ps 66:18-19, Isa 59:1-2, James 4:3, Luke 18:10-14, Matt 6:7-8.
4. (a) What consequences await a Christian or Church that does not take prayer seriously?
(b) How would you assess the prayer life of your church?

CONCLUSION:

Prayer is our communication link to heaven and when we don't make use of it, or use it in a manner outside the will of God, we are cut off from God and remain powerless Christians. It is by prayer that we tap from the power source to live our spiritual lives. No wonder it is said that a prayer-less Christian is a powerless Christian. But as we have seen in this study, it must be done God's own way and on His own terms in order to receive his attention and answer.

MEMORY VERSE: Jonah 1:6 – "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How effective is your prayer life?

STUDY 15

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: THE PLACE OF PREPARATION FOR EFFECTIVENESS IN KINGDOM BUSINESS
TEXTS: MARK 3:13-15, 2KINGS 2:1-End, Luke 19:28-34
AIM: To examine the importance of adequate preparations for effective execution of the Kingdom Business.

INTRODUCTION:

Every business is established to maximize profit. When businesses fail to make profit, they fold up or are disorganized. The kingdom of God is in business to make profit. It aims at turning sinners into saints and establishing saints in the faith to do exploit for God. To succeed in this direction requires a great deal of preparation. How do we prepare ourselves to effectively do business for God? That is what we want to discuss in this study.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. "Then He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach" Mark 3:14. Explain this statement in the light of the topic of our discussion.
2. Identify the other areas of the kingdom business we have been assigned to carry out. Mark 3:13-15, 16:15, Matt. 28:19-20
3. What are the necessary preparations for successful execution of the kingdom business? Luke 19:30, Eph. 6:13-18, 2 Tim. 2:15,
4. Why is it necessary to adequately prepare ourselves for kingdom business? Eph 6:10-12, 2 Tim. 2:15,
5. Discuss the factors that are responsible for failures in kingdom business in our time? 2Kings 2:2,4,6,9-11, James 5:7-10, 1 Tim. 1:19

CONCLUSION:

Serious minded people do not rush into any business unprepared. They take time to study the business environment, the workability and the return in investment. We cannot do less than that, more so; when we know that our battle is not against flesh and blood. We need prayerful preparations, godly lifestyle, and must wear constantly the whole armour of God in the business of preaching, healing and casting of demons.

MEMORY VERSE: Eph. 6:13

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand."

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How prepared are you for kingdom business?

STUDY 16

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: EQUIPPING FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS (i)-
REVELATION GIFTS
TEXT: 1CORINTHIANS 12:4-11
AIM: To ascertain the revelation gifts, their operations, and how to effectively administer them in the day to day execution of the kingdom business.

INTRODUCTION:

The Holy Spirit is the gift of God to the Church. He girds us with the ability to carry out the kingdom business through the impartation of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts come from the Greek word *charismata* (gifts) and *pneumatika* (spirit) and are the plural forms of *charisma* which means expression of grace. These gifts are given as He, the Holy Spirit, determines. Among such gifts are the revelation gifts. The revelation gifts include: *word of wisdom*, *word of knowledge* and *discerning of spirits*.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Identify the operations of word of wisdom in the following passages. Luke 20: 22-26, Acts 6:1-5, 15:28-29. (Note: The word of wisdom supplies one with immediate wisdom to know what to say or do in a given situation. It is a revelation concerning divine plans and purposes about an individual, church or nation; it is not academic wisdom nor wisdom gained from experience).
2. How did Jesus and others exhibit the word of knowledge in the following passages: John 4:18-20, 1:47-50, Acts 9:10-20, 5:1-11, (Note: It is not human knowledge, but a special revelation by the Holy Spirit about information unknown to the person).
3. How is the gift of discernment of spirit manifested? See Acts 16:16-18, Mark 1:23, 5:7-8 (Note: It is a gift that helps to distinguish spirits operating in people, prophets, wrong doctrine and strange diseases).
4. How can the revelation gifts help us to further the kingdom business in your church? What are the consequences of ignoring or misappropriating these gifts?

CONCLUSION:

The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and the discerning of spirits, all work together to help in counseling sessions, teaching, deliverance and healing ministry. The church of God needs these gifts especially in the current proliferation of false prophetic pastors, seers, false teachers/preachers, and strange illnesses. May the Holy Spirit give us more and more of these gifts and deliver the church of Jesus Christ from error and apostasy.

MEMORY VERSE: 1Cor.12:8 "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge of the same Spirit".

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Have you been able to identify your gift and are you using it?

STUDY 17

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: EQUIPPING FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS II; POWER GIFTS
TOPIC: SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
(ii)-POWER GIFTS
TEXTS: 1CORINTHIANS 12:4-11, Acts 3:1-10
AIM: To Identify the Power Gifts and their Necessity in Doing Kingdom Business.

INTRODUCTION

The power gifts or the gifts of ability, suggest a set of gifts that are more about the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. They are action gifts and include: gifts of healing, gifts of miracles and gifts of faith. How do these gifts manifest, how do we receive them, use them, and keep them, will form this part of our study.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. The gifts of miracles can further the kingdom business. How? Acts 5:12-14; 16:25-34; 8:5-6.
2. What examples of the gift of faith can you find in the following scriptures: Joshua 10:12-14, 1Kings 17:1, Acts 13:8-11. (Note: It is the ability given by God to enable someone to take humanly impossible actions)
3. What is the gift of healing and why is it necessary in the church today? Acts 10:38, Mark 16:17-20, Mark 2:12, Matt. 4:23&25.
4. How are these gifts received today and for what purpose? Acts 2: 38-39, Acts 1:8, 1Cor. 13:2,8, 12:25-26.
5. Do you think that these gifts are adequately accessed and appropriated in your local church?

CONCLUSION:

These power gifts – healing miracles and faith – are given by the Holy Spirit to build up the body of Christ and edify one another (Eph.4:12). But many have and are making fortunes out of them. Rather than engage them for the overall interest of the church, some members who have them use them to establish personal ministries. It ought not to be so. We can use them to draw sinners to Christ, launch the gospel into difficult areas and prove to the world the power of the resurrected Christ. We need to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit to receive them, and use them in love.

MEMORY VERSE: 1Corth.12:7

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal”.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Is your gift helping to build the kingdom of God or to tear it apart?

STUDY 18

THEME: OCUPPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS (iii)-
UTTERANCE GIFTS
TEXT: 1 COR: 1- 11, ROMS 8:26-27

AIM: To understand and fully utilize the utterance gifts for personal edifications and for the overall growth and prosperity of the Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION:

Utterance gifts include; the gift of prophesy; the gift of speaking in tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues. These are also known as the inspired messages given by the Holy Spirit.

Prophecy is a special spiritual gift that enables a believer to bring a word or revelation directly from God under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues is the supernatural ability to speak in a language or tongue unknown to the speaker. It involves the human spirit and the spirit of God intermingling so that the believer communicates directly to God in prayer, praise, blessing or thanksgiving. Interpretation of tongues is a supernatural showing forth or explanation of that which has been said in an unknown tongue. The utterance gifts involve expressions or utterances at the level of one's spirit rather than the mind in order to bring fruitfulness in our lives and ministry. This largely depends on God's providence and on his direct interaction.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Briefly illustrate these 3 sources of speaking in tongues and prophecy using the following passages
 - (a) Holy Spirit
 - (b) Psychological influence
 - (c) Satanic influence(1 John 4:1, Acts 2:4, 19:6, Acts 16:16-18, 1 Sam 28:8-14, 1 Kings 22:6-8, Ezekiel 13:3-7, Jeremiah 14:14,
2. How can we effectively use the gifts of prophecy, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues to build the Church. 1 Cor. 14
3. The Holy Spirit explicitly warned of hypocrisy in the Church in the later days, Is there manifestation of this in the use of utterance gifts in today's

Church? Matt. 7:22-23, 2 Thess. 2:8-10, 2 Cor.11:13-15, 1 John 3:6-10, 4:1-4, Matt. 24:11, 24.

4. (a) What benefits accrue to persons and churches that understand the value of these gifts and appropriate them wisely?
- (b) What are the consequences of neglecting or misappropriating them?

CONCLUSION:

The gift of prophecy in the Church is motivated by the Holy Spirit, not primarily to foretell the future but to strengthen the believer's faith, spiritual life and moral resolve to remain faithful to Christ and his teaching. Speaking in tongues with interpretation are equally important to the Church but prophecy edifies the Church more than un-interpreted tongue. Speaking in tongues and prophesying should be regulated so that order is maintained in the Church.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Cor. 14:4, He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the Church.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Do you have a hunger to edify yourself and the Church through the gift of utterance?

STUDY 19

THEME: OCUPPY TILL I COME

SUB-THEME: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: SPIRITUAL GIFT FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS (iv)- HELP, SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

TEXT: ACTS 6:1-7, 9:36-42, 1Cor. 12:28–30,

AIM: To demonstrate that we can use the gifts of Help, Service and Administration to grow and sustain God's kingdom.

INTRODUCTION:

The three (3) words; Help, Service and Administration appear to have a common denominator; providing assistance to somebody.

Help means, the God's given desire, ability and power to help and comfort those in need or distressed.

Serving (service) is the God given desire, ability and power to give practical assistance to members and leaders of the Church to help them fulfil their responsibilities to God. Administration (Leadership) is the God given desire, ability and power to guide and oversee the various activities of the Church for the spiritual good of all.

We shall look at how these can help us build the body of Christ as we wait for His glorious coming.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Explain how the following spiritual gifts; Help, Service, and Administration can be effectively applied as tools for growing and strengthening the Church. Acts 9:36-42, Phil. 2:25, Philemon 11, Eph. 4:11-12, 1Tim. 3:1-7, Heb. 13:7, 17, 24, Acts 6:2-5, 15:1-19.
2. Every true leader should be a helper, a servant or even a bond slave in order to maximize the profit of the kingdom business. Explain this truth in the light of the following passages (Mark 10:45, Phil 2:7, John 13:16, Gal 5:13)
3. What should be our attitude as we help, serve and lead others to the kingdom.(Luke 10:38-42, 1 Sam. 15:22-23, 2 Kings 5:20-27, 1 Cor. 13:3)

4. The manifestation of these gifts in the Church is for the mutual good of all members and was an indispensable part of the early Church's life together. Can this be true of your Church?
 - a. In manifesting the grace, power and love of God. 1 Cor. 14:25; Rom 15:18-19; Eph. 4:8.
 - b. In making the preaching of the gospel more effective. Mark 16:15-20, Acts 14:8-18; 16:16-18, 19:11-20, 28:1-10
 - c. In meeting human need, strengthening and building up both the Church and individuals. 1 Cor. 12:14-30, 14:3, 4, 12, 26.

CONCLUSION:

We are exhorted to serve one another in love (Gal.5:13). This is a command, not a suggestion and this applies more especially to leaders. Are you blessed with any of these; Help, Service or Administration gifts? Irrespective of your primary vocation in life, you can equally serve God faithfully in a Church or any missionary arm of the Church. Always remember that someday all of us will give account to our Master on how we have served, helped or led.

Memory Verse: Mark 10:45. "For even the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How often do you render help, service and godly leadership to those in need?

STUDY 20

- THEME:** OCUPPY TILL I COME
- SUB-THEME:** EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
- TOPIC:** MINISTRY GIFT FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS; (1)
TEACHERS
- TEXT:** EPHESIANS 4:7-15, JOHN 21:15-17
- AIM:** To reiterate the great need of Teachers who will build a stable, focused and firm Christian who will abide in faith.

INTRODUCTION:

Teaching is simply a Spirit-given ability to build God's word and the urge for its application into the thinking and conduct of kingdom citizens. When the good news of the kingdom has resulted in conversion, these new Christians must then be taught. The service of an instructor is therefore needed if the Church is to make good profit of the kingdom business while we await the second coming of the king (Jesus). The goal of a true Christian teacher is to bring conformity of Christians to the likeness of Jesus with such great brokenness and compassion that oftentimes make ears flow freely from their eyes.

In a world where people jump from one Church to another, we shall in this study see how through effective teaching ministry, we can build Christ centred Christians.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. From the book of Matt 28:18-20, who do you think is primarily to be taught? Compare Acts 2:41
2. Why do you think the Church should lay more emphasis on teaching ministry as a means of effective kingdom business? Hosea 6:4, 2 Tim 4:2-4, John 21:15-17, Acts 8:26-40, 18:24-26, Eph. 4:12-14.
3. What should be the content of our teaching? Matt. 10:7, 28:20a, Acts 2:38-40, Deut. 4:1-2, 6:1-2, 2Tim 1:13-14, 4:2a, Titus 1:13-14, 2:1-6, 7-15,

4. The Church that rejects or refuses to hear from teachers who remain faithful to scriptural revelation will stop becoming concerned about the genuineness of biblical messages and correct interpretation. How true is this statement in today's Christendom. 2Tim. 4:3-4

CONCLUSION: The purpose of biblical teaching is to preserve truth and produce holiness in God's people by leading the Church into an uncompromising commitment to the godly lifestyle set forth in God's word, expounding and proclaiming it with effectiveness and power in order to build up the body of Christ, as well as producing evidence of Christian learning and a sincere faith, not just in what one knows but how one lives.

MEMORY VERSE: Col. 1:28 "We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you drinking from the spring of God's wisdom.

STUDY 21

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: MINISTRY GIFTS FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS
(ii)- PASTORS
TEXT: EPHESIANS. 5: 7-15
AIM: To inform the brethren that God has given some the kingdom gift of pasturing people.

INTRODUCTION:

A pastor is one who tends or cares for God's people or flock. It may not necessarily be an ordained leader of a Christian congregation. The pastor feeds, tends and protects the church, and does all the things that a shepherd would do for a flock. In this study therefore we shall know who a pastor is and what roles he or she plays in the church.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. (a) From the following texts, Eph. 4: 11, Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5: 2, who would you say a pastor is?
(b) Must one necessarily be "ordained" to qualify to do the ministry of a pastor?
2. What do you consider to be the functions of a pastor from the following passages? Prov. 27:23, John 21:15-17, 1 Timothy 4:16, Acts 20:28-30, 1 Thess. 5:14.
3. What are scriptural qualifications for the pastoral ministry? Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-2,
4. Is there any difference between the pastoral and other ministry gifts? Discuss and give example of model pastors you know.

CONCLUSION:

A pastor's work is important for the kingdom business. He feeds, nurtures, comforts, corrects and protects God's people. Without a pastor the church of God will find it difficult to reach maturity. The Church of God cannot afford to do without the pastor.

MEMORY VERSE: John 21:16b - "He said to him tend my sheep".

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Do you have what it takes to tend God's flock?

STUDY 22

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: MINISTRY GIFTS FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS (iii)-
APOSTLES
TEXT: EPH. 5:7-15
AIM: To teach the brethren that God has given some the kingdom gift of Apostleship for the expansion of the church.

INTRODUCTION:

The word "apostle" is derived from the Greek word 'postolos' which means messenger or ambassador. An apostle is usually a trail blazer who ventures into virgin, unharnessed mission fields with the message or good news of salvation. Wherever he goes, into whichever community, village or town enters, he would nearly always make a very positive mark by planting a church before leaving for other mission fields. He is a highly gifted leader in the church of God. In this study we shall find out who an apostle is and how different he is from a disciple.

1. Who is an apostle from the following passages? Romans 1:1, 16:7, Hebrews 3:1-2, John 20:21, Matthew 10:2-8, Mark 3:14-19,
2. Many claim today to be Apostles. What are the true marks of an Apostle? 1 Timothy 2:7, 2 Cor. 12:12, Gal. 1:1, Luke 6:13, 1 Cor. 2:11-14, 2 Peter 1:21, Acts 5:12.
3. Are there genuine Apostles amongst us today? Discuss with practical examples.
4. (a) How do we identify false Apostles today? Matthew 7:20-27, 2 Cor. 11:12-15.

(b) What is the place of the apostolic ministry in the Anglican Church today?

CONCLUSION:

We still have apostles in the body of Christ today, and the church is in dire need of them to give direction amidst confusing doctrines in the church today. Again, there are still vast fields that are ripe and long overdue for harvesting. It takes Apostles who clearly understand their calling to launch out into the very deep and harness these fields for the Master.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Cor. 3:6 "I planted the seed, and Apollos watered it. But God is the One who made it grow.

STUDY 23

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: MINISTRY GIFTS FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS (iv)-
PROPHETS
TEXT: EPH. 5:7-15
AIM: To teach the people that God has given some of his people prophetic gifts for the enhancement of the kingdom business.

INTRODUCTION:

Prophets are persons called by God to be His representatives on earth. When prophets speak, they speak for God. Prophets testify of and for Christ. They teach the truth and interpret the Word of God, calling the unrighteous to repentance. They receive revelations and directions from the Lord for the benefit of His people. They have the ability to see into the future and foretell coming events. In this study we shall know more about the place of this ministry in the execution of the kingdom business.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Who is a prophet?
2. What do you understand about prophets and the prophetic ministry from the following scriptures? Deut. 18:18, Eph. 4:11, Ezekiel 1:3-4, Jer. 1:17, 19.
3. (a) Identify prophets from the following scriptures. 1 Samuel 7:3, Jer. 1:5, Hebrews 1:1-2, Rev. 1:1-2.
(b) What roles do prophets play in the Church today?
4. Are there false prophets today? How do we distinguish the true from the false prophets? Matt. 7:15, 1Cor. 14:3, 2Pet. 1:21, Deut. 18:21-22, Num. 12:6, Jer. 28:9,

CONCLUSION:

Prophetic ministry is very important ministry of the Church. Through prophets God reveals His will, His character, and His truth. However, it is no secret that the Church has been besieged by hordes of false prophets who are daily leading many Christians into error. We need to pray to God to raise genuine prophets amongst us for the building up the people of God.

MEMORY VERSE: Amos 3:7 "Surely the Lord God will do nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you among those who have been led into serious error through prophetic messages?

STUDY 24

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME:	EQUIPPING FOR EFFECTIVE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	MINISTRY GIFTS FOR KINGDOM BUSINESS (v)- EVANGELISTS
TEXT:	EPHESIANS 4:7-15
AIM:	To make participants understand the role and impacts of the ministry of the Evangelist in the kingdom business.

INTRODUCTION:

An Evangelist is a person with a special gift and calling from the Holy Ghost to announce the good news of the Kingdom. The Greek word for Evangelist means one who announces the good news. He uses every opportunity to declare the good news of Jesus Christ, to the end that people may understand God's offer of salvation and respond in repentance, faith and discipleship. This ministry entails moving from place to place to make Jesus known, appreciated and embraced.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Who is an Evangelist? What makes the Evangelist's ministry different from other ministry gifts? 2 Tim 4:5, 2 Tim 4:2-3, Mark 16:20, Luke 4:18, 4:43,5:31-32, 6:17-20, 15:7, Act 21:7-8
2. What is the work of an Evangelist? Matt 9:35-36, 20:32-34, Mark 1:35, Eph. 6:19
3. Discuss the importance of this ministry gift to the Church. Eph. 4:12-13, 4:15, Act 1:8
4. From the following passages identify the challenges associated with the ministry of the Evangelist? Matt 10:9-13, 8:18-20, 21:12-15,

CONCLUSION:

The Evangelist's ministry is predominantly a preaching ministry but is not restricted to that alone. Some of them are specially equipped for revival work. At the local church level, the Evangelist also engages in the ministry of pastoral support, working alongside the Pastor to assist in the edification of the saints and building up of the local church. He is to work under the direct oversight of the pastor, and never to usurp his authority. His major driving force should be "the edification of the body of Christ"

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Tim 4:5. "But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an Evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry".

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Have you been able to identify your ministry?

SUB THEME C; ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS

STUDY 25

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME

SUB THEME: ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: PROCLAMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS

TEXT: MARK 16:15-18

AIM: To remind the people of God that it is mandatory for every bona fide citizen of the Kingdom to approach with utmost urgency and seriousness the divine mandate to preach the good news, in season and out of season.

INTRODUCTION:

Proclamation of the good news is the conscientious spread of God's word, with emphasis on the redemptive work of God through Jesus Christ. It is to announce or loudly declare God's word for the conversion of the listener and for spiritual growth. Christ's major task on earth was to preach the message of the Kingdom of God. This He did with dedication and passion. Lives were transformed and those who were troubled were roundly relieved of their troubles. The Church is expected to engage in the constant preaching of the gospel as that is the primary mandate of God for her. 2 Tim 4:2. 2 Tim. 4:17,

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Who should proclaim the good news, and to whom? Matt. Rev 14:6-7, Col 1:23,
2. What should be the core message in the good news being proclaimed? Matt 28:20, 4:17, 1 Cor. 1:17, Eph. 1:13, 6:15, Acts 16:31, Romans 5:8,
3. From these passages identify the importance of effective proclamation of the good news? Mark 16:17-18, Matt 4:16, 1 Thess. 1:5, 2Cor.9:13, Acts 2:41,11:19-22 19:17-20
4. What are the sacrifices to be made in preaching the good news? Mark 16:15, Rom 15:16, 1 Thess. 2:2, 2:9, Phil 1:7, 2:25-29, Eph. 3:6-7

5. Can you sincerely say that the good news is being effectively preached by you and your church? (b) What consequences await a church that treats proclamation of the gospel with triviality?

CONCLUSION:

Proclamation the good news is a necessity and is paramount in the sight of God as is it the only effective medium of salvation of mankind. When we proclaim the gospel, the power of God shows up as evidence; lives are transformed, and souls are translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God.

MEMORY VERSE: Matt. 24; 14; "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How committed are you to the preaching of the gospel?

STUDY 26

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME:	ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	SOUL WINNING
TEXT:	1 CORINTHIANS. 9:19-23
AIM:	To sensitize the brethren on the urgent need to take the scriptural mandate on soul winning very seriously.

INTRODUCTION:

In its simplest explanation, Soul winning is starting a conversation with an unsaved person, and sharing God's plan of salvation with him, from the Bible, so that he clearly understands how he may receive Christ as his Saviour, and have eternal life. It is leading a person to Christ. It is a command that God gave every Christian and to the Church. The primary purpose of soul winning is to snatch men out of the kingdom of darkness. On this, the Lord expects complete compliance.

We came to know the Lord as a result of some obedient children of God who considered soul winning a necessary exercise. Without soul winning a lot of people will be streaming to hell. Ways of life can be affected with much deviation caused by sin and disobedient to God. It is therefore our responsibility to go out and preach the gospel.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Discuss soul winning in light of these passages 1 Cor. 9:19-23, Act 3:19, 11:19-22
2. Why do we need to embark on soul winning? Mark 16:15, Act 4:4, 3:19, Heb. 9:27, Ezek. 33:7-8, 18:23, 32, 2 Cor. 5:11, 18, 20, Dan. 12:3, proverbs 11:30, Luke 14:23,
3. What are the benefits of winning souls for the Lord? Prov. 11:30, Dan. 12:3, Luke 15:7,10, 6:7, 8:4 -8, 8:14-17, 11:24
4. What does soul winning do to the preacher? Acts 4:13-16, 10:38, 11:23
5. What consequences await Christians and churches that make light of the issue of soul winning? Discuss

CONCLUSION:

The sinful nature of man and the enormous works of the devil, demand that the Church wake up from her sleep and slumber to engage in soul winning. People are fast engaging in evil against the will of God for their lives, and heaven is counting on us to salvage them through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: Prov. 11:30 "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who win souls is wise"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How many souls have you won for the Lord?

STUDY 27

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME:	ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	TEACHING AND NURTURING BELIEVERS
TEXT:	JOHN 21:15-17, PROVERBS 27:23, JOHN 15:5-14
AIMS:	To show that nurturing and teaching is a responsibility of the church today as well as an effective weapon for knowledge, growth, sustenance and defence.

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus was very emphatic when He admonished Peter in John 21:15-17, “.....Feed my flock, showing that concern for the flock was key to His heart. Feeding the flock requires teaching and nurturing as our topic connotes. It requires knowing their state and doing the needful (Prov. 27:23). Caring for the flock is a mark of love and true discipleship. The responsibility that was given to Peter is also responsibility for the church today. This is because many believers have experienced the joy of receiving Christ but are left feeling overwhelmed and confused. .

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What essential truths do believers need to be taught? 1Jn 5:11-13, 2Tim. 2:15, Phil.4:6-9, Heb.10:25
2. Who needs these most, and what useful materials can facilitate the teaching / nurturing process of believers. 2 Tim. 3:16
3. Why is it necessary to teach and nurture believers? 1Peter 5:8-9, Col.2:7, 1Peter 2:2, Jude 1:3, 20, 23a
4. What are the consequences of not teaching and nurturing believers? Heb.5:12; Eph.4:14; 1Cor.3:1,

CONCLUSION:

The need to teach and nurture believers, irrespective of whether they are new or old, is quite obvious. However, specific plans, strategies and budgets have to be made to bring-up and follow-up believers for growth, sustenance and

effectiveness. Those who have been helped must rise to help others so that none would be lost in the world.

MEMORY VERSE: Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds Prov.27:23

EXAMINE YOURSELF: What honest contribution do you make towards teaching and nurturing of God's flock?

STUDY 28

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME:	ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	BAPTISM
TEXT:	Matt.28:19-20, Acts 2:38-41, Acts 8:12, 13,
AIM:	To ascertain that baptism is a spiritual exercise that that supersedes our salvation.

INTRODUCTION:

The word baptize is from the Greek word *baptizo*, and the word baptism is from the Greek word *batisma* or *baptismos*. Together they are found 100 times in the New Testament. Thayer's Lexicon lists three primary meanings of the word baptize:

1. to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge
2. to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water
3. metaphorically, to overwhelm

In a biblical sense baptism means to put someone under the water and raise him up again. Symbolically a new Christian identifies with Christ's death, burial and resurrection. It is a public profession of a person's repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and a way of giving outward ceremony to an inward work of God. It is a testimony of salvation. When God baptizes you into Christ, you become a new creation in your spirit, not in your body but something inside changes. Your heart is washed clean by the blood of Jesus and our spirit is quickened (made alive) by the Holy Spirit.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the term, water baptism? What does water baptism do to a Christian? Rom.8:11, Col.2:12-13
2. What are the biblical applications of baptism Acts 8:12-13, Acts 16:33, Acts 2:41
3. What is the scriptural requisite for baptism? Matt.3:8, Acts 26:20, Acts 2:41
4. If baptism is a public declaration of one's personal decision to declare fully for Christ, why then do some Christian denominations like our church practice infant baptism? Discuss in the light of the following scriptures. Gen. 17: 9- 14, Acts 10: 44- 48, 16: 30-33.

CONCLUSION:

It is worthy of note that water baptism is essential for salvation. However, salvation is and always has been about faith in Jesus Christ. You must be baptized into Christ in order to be saved as water baptism is purely an outward sign of God's cleansing work in a person's heart and is therefore meaningless without a prior spiritual birth into Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: Acts 2:38 and Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized that your sins may be blotted out.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: What value do you place on your baptism?

STUDY 29

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME

SUB THEME: ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: HOSPITALITY

TEXT: 2KINGS 4:8-10, MATTHEW 25: 34- 46, ROMANS 12: 10- 13

AIM: To emphasize the need for hospitality to be practiced by believers in the church and in any other environment wherein they find themselves.

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality is the friendly reception and treatment of guests, or strangers, in a warm and generous way (Random House Dictionary).

Hospitality, as given to us in the Bible, is a sacred process of 'receiving' outsiders and changing them from strangers to guests

Sometimes we may think hospitality is optional or a specialized spiritual gift that only a few people possess. While it's true that some may be 'better' at hospitality than others, everyone has a stake in it.

Hospitality is a command by God, and is as important as other divine injunctions such as assembling with the saints. "Be hospitable to one another without complaint" (1 Pet. 4:9). This implies that we'll be faced with challenges as we strive to obey this command. Practicing hospitality entails a lot of sacrifices. So, we should look at hospitality as an acid test that reflects whether we're truly God's children.

Hospitality is enjoyable if we love God. Because we love God, we want to do everything He commands. Therefore hospitality should not be a burden but should rather be enjoyed. "For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn. 5:3).

Hospitality is also enjoyable if we love people.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Mention ways we can show hospitality? Matt. 25:34-38, Rom.12:9-13, 2Kings 4:8-10
2. Who can we show hospitality to? 2Kings 4:8-10, Lk. 10:30-37, Gal.6:10
3. What are the rewards of hospitality? 2Kings 4:13-15, Heb.13:1-2, Matt.25:34-36
4. What difficulties do we have in showing hospitality?

CONCLUSION:

God wants us to eagerly endeavor to be hospitable like Abraham who pleaded with three angels (thinking they were men) to stay with him long enough to rest, while he washed their feet and fed them, and like Lydia who pleaded with Paul to lodge with her. As we practice hospitality we touch the heart of our Master and may thus be marked out for special divine reward.

MEMORY VERSE: Heb.13:2, be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you practicing genuine hospitality?

STUDY 30

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: HELPING THE POOR AND NEEDY
TEXT: MATTHEW 25:34-46, DEUTERONOMY 15:7-11, 24; 19-21
AIM: To confirm that helping the poor and needy is a key part of our Kingdom business

INTRODUCTION:

A common theme running through most of our home movies today is that of a poor man or woman in the village to whom a young man from the city renders monetary help and the money is taken to a witches' coven or native doctor's shrine to cast spell on the man and so render him useless. Most of us have taken this as gospel truth and are thus reluctant to render help to those who are genuinely in need. This no doubt contravenes God's command that help should be rendered to those who are in need.

Our study today is to remind us of our duty to the poor and needy, not minding the report of the evil one that has gone abroad in our society. The question is, upon whose report will you rely?

STUDY GUIDE:

1. From the passages we have read in our key texts, can you list the responsibilities we have to those who are poor and needy.
2. Why do you think God asks us to render this help to those in need? Luke 6:30 – 36, Pro 21:13, 14:31, 19:17, 1 Sam 2:7
3. Discuss the fears, difficulties, or challenges you have encountered that hinder you from rendering help to those who are in need?
4. What advise can you offer those who have difficulties carrying out these responsibilities? Gal. 6; 9, 1 Cor. 15; 58
5. What rewards accrue to those who faithfully and sincerely carry out these responsibilities? Prov. 28:8,27; 22:9, Eccl. 4:6, Psa. 41:1-3, Acts 20:35, Gal 6:9-10

CONCLUSION:

The Lord Jesus commands that we be as generous and compassionate as he was while he was on earth. We should give food to those who are hungry, clothe those that are naked, visit those that are sick and in prison. We are not to shut our hearts against the needs of our brethren, but open our hands wide and give to him that is in need. God has promised to bless us in all that we do, if we do this cheerfully with all of our hearts.

MEMORY VERSE: Pro 21:13 "Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Do you sincerely consider yourself liberal towards the poor and needy?

STUDY 31

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: MINISTERING TO THE SICK AND THE AGED.
TEXT: LUKE 5; 18-26, MARK 16: 18 -20; JAMES 5; 14-16
AIM: To awaken us to our duty to those who are sick and the aged.

INTRODUCTION:

We live in a world in which there is a growing tendency for people to be concerned about their own affairs and care less about how others are faring. Our calling as believers however calls us to a duty to look out for those vulnerable people in our society who must by necessity depend on others for help. Prominent among these are the sick and those who are aged, as they are not able most times to easily do some of those things required for daily life, like taking care of themselves and their environment. In a world where isolation is becoming the order of the day, we must let our light shine to those around us by being there for this vulnerable segment of our society. In this study we shall strive to acquaint ourselves with what the Lord says concerning this.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. (a) What do you think are the major needs of the sick and the aged in our society?
(b) Is there any among them that is very difficult to meet?
(c) What are the difficulties you identify in meeting them?
2. Why must we minister to the aged and sick in our society. Mat 25:34 – 40; Mar 16:18 -20
3. How are we expected to minister to those who are sick and aged? James 5:14-15, Acts 28:8; Psa. 35:13; Mat 25:36, Mk. 16:18b
4. What can you begin to do after today to meet this responsibility we have been given?

CONCLUSION:

Visitation is a key part of what the Lord expects us to do for the sick and the aged. It is only as we visit that we can see areas where we can offer help to them. Such help would include running necessary errands for them, reading the scriptures with them, or simply engaging them in soul lifting conversations. The enemy has created a mental image of this as a very difficult or inconveniencing task. But the truth is that it is the easiest task that every one of us can get involved in.

MEMORY VERSE: Mat 25:36b “I was sick and you visited me”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: When last did you consciously visit the sick or the aged?

STUDY 32

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: PROTECTING THE CAUSE OF WIDOWS.
TEXT: EXODUS 22:22-24, JAMES 1:27, Isaiah 1:17
AIM: To awaken us to our duty to those who are sick and the aged.

INTRODUCTION:

One of the most vulnerable people in our societies are widows. These are often subjected to terrible treatments by relatives of their husbands, sometimes, even while their demised husbands have not yet been buried. We live in a society where the traditions in most of our tribal communities support values and practices that leave widows at the mercy of relatives who have no concern for the widow and her children. In this study we shall be exploring the prevalent negative attitudes towards widows in our society, sometimes even within our church communities, and explore what the word of God enjoins us to do to right these wrongs and alleviate their sufferings.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What specific traditions associated with widowhood are still being practiced in our native cultures or in other communities around you? Can you identify some abuses associated with these traditions?
2. Do you think any of these abuses in the name of tradition are justified? Why do you think so?
3. From the following passages Ex 22: 22-24, Deut. 24:17–21, Acts 6:1-3, 1 Tim. 5:3-16, James 1:27.
 - a. Identify the responsibilities the church/believers have to the widows?
 - b. Why do you think the word of God is concerned so much about widows?
 - c. Whose primary responsibility is it to care for the widows?
 - d. How has your church been taking care of widows?
4. Do the traditions practiced in your village or around you align with the command of the word of God concerning widows. How?
5. What actions are you going to take from today to help in making your society take better care of widows.

CONCLUSION:

Widows are women who have lost their husbands through death and are thus left alone to cater for their families without the help and support of their husbands. Women are, by nature, weaker vessels, and were thus originally fashioned to be under the authority and protection of their husbands. Therefore, when a woman loses her husband, she is often left without a substantial means of support. As believers it is our duty to take care of such women who are among us and lend them the support they need.

MEMORY VERSE: 1Tim 5:3 “Honor widows that are widows indeed”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Have you truly been honoring widows in your church/family?

STUDY 33

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME

SUB THEME: ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS

TOPIC: TRANSFORMING UNHEALTHY TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

TEXT: MATTHEW 15:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

Unhealthy, or harmful, traditional practices refer to all forms of practices that violate rights of affected individuals, especially those that lead to unequal power relations in communities, or those that curtail individuals or groups' rights from freely expressing themselves within given cultural or traditional settings. Such practices are based on tradition, culture, custom, religion or superstition. They have often been embedded in communities for a long time, and are committed, condoned and actively endorsed by a significant chunk of society. They include rituals or other practices that have detrimental effects on the physical, mental and emotional health of the victims. Instances of these abound- female genital mutilation, child marriages, mistreatment of widows, osu caste system, etc.

It is part of the business of all bona fide kingdom citizens to strive, at individual and corporate capacities, to exert positive pressure on societies to quickly resolve all such contentious issues and ensure that godly traditions are instituted to the glory of God and for the eternal benefit of all segments of society.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. With practical examples, explain what you understand by "harmful cultures or traditional practices."
2. (a) At what point is a culture considered unhealthy? Matt. 15; 1- 6.
(b) Identify some of the unhealthy cultural practices that obtain in and around your indigenous community.
3. (a)What are the dangers of unhealthy cultural or traditional practices?
James 4:4, Matt. 15:1-6

4. How should Christians respond to unhealthy traditional practices? Acts 15:22-29, Ezra 7:10, Acts 5:29, Jude 1:3,

CONCLUSION:

Harmful traditional practices affect men, women, boys and girls as the case may be. However because the causes lie in deep rooted inequalities, dealing with them often meets with very serious resistance and complications. This notwithstanding, Kingdom citizens should see themselves as God's instruments for positive social transformation and enforcement of divine rules in our own little corners.

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Cor. 6; 17; "Therefore, come out from them and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you." (NLT)

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Can you truly be identified as a committed vanguard for the transformation of unhealthy cultural practices?

STUDY 34

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME:	ENGAGING IN GENUINE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	TACKLING SOCIAL ILLS; CHILD ABUSE
TEXT:	EPHESIANS 6:4

INTRODUCTION:

Child abuse is the physical sexual or emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child or children. Child maltreatment is any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregivers that results in harm, has potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.

STUDY GUIDE:

- 1) In your own words, explain the following levels of child abuse- neglect, physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, and sexual abuse.
- 2) Identify incidents of child abuse from the following passages? Gen. 21:9-16, 2 Kings 6:28-29, 1 king 3: 16-27. Are there others you know?
- 3) Differentiate child abuse from child discipline Col. 3:21, Pro. 22:15, 23:13
- 4) Mention dangers of child abuse you know? Col. 3:21

CONCLUSION:

Child abuse has far-reaching effects on its victims, both in childhood and later in adulthood. Child abuse is unchristian and should not be mentioned among God's people. Christian parents and caregivers should set examples with their children and their wards.

MEMORY VERSE: “And you fathers, do not –provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you giving care or abusing children?

STUDY 35

- THEME:** OCCUPY TILL I COME
- SUB THEME:** ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
- TOPIC:** TACKLING SOCIAL ILLS; HUMAN TRAFFICKING & EXPLOITATION
- TEXT:** GENESIS 37:27-28, 39:1, DEUTERONOMY 24:7
- AIM:** To understand the dangers of human trafficking to the society and how we can contribute effectively to stopping or reducing it to the barest minimum.

INTRODUCTION:

The United Nations defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. Anytime a person is held in a forced labour situation, or engaged in any form of exploitative labour, it is defined as human trafficking.

STUDY GUIDE:

- 1) (a). Identify instances of human trafficking and exploitation from the following Bible passages. Gen. 37:27-28, 39:1, Ex. 1:7-14.
(b). Give instances of human trafficking in modern societies.
(c). At what point can the case of domestic servants be seen as a form of human trafficking and exploitation? Be practical
- 2) Does human trafficking agree with the principle of Biblical love or the “Golden Rule” as encapsulated in Matt. 7: 12, 22:39. Mark 12:31

3) What is God's position on human trafficking and exploitation? Deut. 24:7,
Ex. 21:16

4) What should be our role as kingdom citizens in stopping human trafficking?
Proverbs 31:8-9, James 5:16

CONCLUSION:

Human trafficking is a gross abuse of the dignities of men, women, and children created in God's own image. As followers of Christ, we have a responsibility to pray, to speak out against human trafficking and modern slavery, and to live in ways that help create changes in the lives of those impacted by this tragic crime.

MEMORY VERSE: Matt. 7:12; "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How do you treat your workers, your wards, and or those over whom you wield control?

STUDY 36

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: TACKLING SOCIETAL ILLS- VIOLENCE, INTIMIDATION & OPPRESSION.
TEXT: GEN.34:25-29, EXODUS 1:7-22, 21:12-32, LUKE 3:14,
AIM: To remind us that tackling societal ills is a key part of our Kingdom business

INTRODUCTION:

Our contemporary news sources today are filled with stories of violence, oppression and intimidation, ranging from terrorists beheading harmless civilians and bombing cities, adults raping minors, political oppression, spousal abuse, religious exploitation etc. In a society where Christianity is focused on “what is in it for me”, the tendency is to ignore these as long as it has not affected us, or at most discuss it in an indifferent way.

The question however is, what does the word of God demand of us in the face of such situations? Are we supposed to respond in any way to these actions as part of our Christian duties? Am I justified to turn a blind eye to them as long as it does not affect me?

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the terms violence, intimidation and oppression? Can you share with us some instances you have witnessed?
2. What kinds of emotions arise in you when you come across cases of oppression, violence and intimidation? Do you think these feelings are justified?
3. Read the following passages Exodus 3:7-9, Mic. 2:1-2, Jer. 22:3.
What would you say is the mind of God towards violence, intimidation and oppression against the weak?
4. What should be our reaction as Christians to violence, intimidation and oppression against the weak? Lk. 3:14, 1Pet 5:2-3, Is. 1:17.

CONCLUSION:

We have a duty as believers to defend the weak and those who are oppressed in our society, to provide succor to them in their times of trouble and to speak out against violence and intimidation where we have the opportunity and it is within our power to do so.

When we are given offices as believer’s we are representing our Lord Jesus and we are expected to execute our responsibility in such office as if it were Him in the office and this includes ensuring that all form of violence, intimidation and oppression, within our sphere of influence is tackled under the guidance of the Holy Spirit

MEMORY VERSE: Ps 82:3.” Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: What has been your response to violence, intimidation and oppression around you?

STUDY 37

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: DIVORCE
TEXT: MATTHEW 19:3-9, MARK 10:1-12, 1COR. 7:10-16
AIM: To remind us that divorce, in whatever guise, is unacceptable to God and should therefore be strongly discouraged among God's people.

INTRODUCTION:

It is God almighty who created the institution of marriage as captured in Gen. 2:18–24. From the very inception, God made it clear that marriage is for life and should not be tampered with. For this reason, declared the Lord, a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

In Malachi 2:16, God declares, "I hate divorce" And, in response to questions about divorce, Jesus admonished that what God has joined together, no man should put asunder.

Divorce has, however, become very common in our society; even among believers and key church leaders, such that the mind of God concerning the matter of divorce has been watered down. We have a duty as believers to make clear the mind of God concerning every societal issue, especially one as topical as divorce.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the following terms marriage, divorce, and remarriage?
2. From the following passages, what characteristics of marriage can we identify- Gen. 2:23-24, Matt. 19:4-6, Rom 7:1-3, Heb. 13:4, Mal 2:14-15,
3. What can you see as the mind of God concerning divorce and remarriage from the following passages Mal 2:16a; Matt. 19:3-10; 1Cor 7:10–16.
4. What are the possible effects of the increasing rate of divorce around us to the families, church, and society?
5. How can we as believers assist the society around us to reduce the rate of divorce? What solution can we offer those having marital problems?

CONCLUSION:

Divorce rate has been on the increase in our society and the world at large, and this has grave consequences on the stability of the family unit, which is the nucleus of the society we live in. Studies in societies where divorce has been common in the last fifty years show that there are negative effects on both the children and the couples involved in the divorce. These include increased tendency to drug abuse, cohabitation, sexual immorality, juvenile delinquency etc. We as believers are to model the ideal marriage in a sense that does not create a hypocritical impression. Though, like all others in society, believers are likely to sometimes have problems in our marriages, we are able, through the grace of God, to resolve them and come out stronger in our marriages. This will put us in a good position to help those who are passing through such challenges, as they

should be able to relate with our own story and see from it how they also can make the very out of their marriages.

MEMORY VERSE: Mal 2:16a: "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel."

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How can you model a true Christian marriage in your community?

STUDY 39

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME:	ENGAGING IN TRUE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	TACKLING SOCIETAL ILLS; SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE
TEXT:	GEN. 39:7-20, 34:1-5, LEV. 18:6-24, 2SAM 13:1-21,
AIM:	To inculcate in us the right attitude towards sex and to teach us that God abhors those who sexually abuse themselves and others.

INTRODUCTION:

Sexual harassment is any form of undue sexual advance, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct or gestures of a sexual nature. Whereas sexual abuse has to do with all kinds of sexual misconduct ranging from assault, rape, intimidation, harassment meted out to either a male or female at any point or stage of his or her life. It has to do with all kinds of sexual activities against the will of the victim. A spouse could also be sexually abused.

The victims of such immoral and irresponsible sexual abuses are both males and females; but it is more pronounced on the females of all categories-children, adolescents, adults (including mothers and grandmothers).

Incidences of sexual harassments and abuses are seen in offices (by bosses or superiors), at home, by parents and relations; while in school, by teachers and lecturers, and even in church by laity and Clergy alike. This study will x-ray the increasing spate of the incidences of sexual harassment and abuse, their effects on the victims, families, the church, and society at large, and what attitude we ought to develop to help curb this ugly menace.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. (a) What do you understand by the terms “sexual harassment” and “sexual abuse”?
(b) What meaning do the following words convey to you? - Lev. 18:6-34
 - i. Adultery
 - ii. Fornication
 - iii. Rape
 - iv. Incest
 - v. Bestiality
 - vi. Lesbianism
 - vii. Homosexuality/Gayism
 - viii. Pornography

2. Does God tolerate any form of sexual harassment and abuse? What is the injunction of God concerning sexual abuse?
Exodus 20:14, Heb. 13:4, 1Cor. 6:13-20, 7:2, 2Tim. 2:22, Matt. 5:28, Mk. 7:21-23, 1Cor 3:17, Prov. 5:20-23, Lev. 18:24-25, 30.
3. Is your local church safe from the incidences of sexual harassment and abuse?
4. What are the effects or consequences of sexual harassment and abuse on the victims, perpetrators, families, the church and the society at large?
5. What should be the attitude of the church towards infidelity, premarital sexual activities and other forms of sexual harassment/abuse?
Joshua 1:8, Ps 119:11, Job 31:1, Daniel 1:8, Hebrews 13:4, 1Cor 6:18-20, 2Tim 4:1-2, Eph. 5:3-7,
6. What should we do in the event of the incidence of sexual harassments and abuse and what safety precautions should we practically take against sexual harassment and abuse?

CONCLUSION: Sexually harassed and abused persons are usually confronted with various kinds of threats and problems such as unwanted pregnancy, hatred, phobia or fear, emotional instability, depression or low esteem, perennial brokenness, loss of trust, stigmatization, physical injury or bruise, sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), suicide and even death. Bona fide kingdom citizens should always endeavour to ensure that such ungodly acts are not as much as mentioned around us, not to talk of being fingered as culprits.

To all perpetrators of such acts, be warned! God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows he shall surely reap. So child of God, shun all semblances of this evil act, pick up your pieces and engage in true kingdom business.

MEMORY VERSE: Lev.18:24, Defile not yourself in any of these things; for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you.”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Human life does not end in pleasure, for a minute of sexual sin can send you to an eternal abode in hell fire.

STUDY 40

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME:	OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	SELFISH AMBITION
TEXT:	PHIL 1:15-17, JAMES 3:13-18, 1PETER 3:8-10
AIM:	To teach us that doing kingdom business entails that we extend God's abundant grace in us to our brethren and that selfish ambition is never gainful but destructive.

INTRODUCTION:

Selfish ambition means to be self seeking and always looking out for one's own interests above that of anyone else. The Greek word for selfish ambition is "eritheia". The ancient Greek Philosopher, Aristotle, defines selfish ambitious people as "those who want to achieve political offices by making themselves look bigger and better before others through trickery and deceits. They are always putting themselves forward without reference to the truth. They are full of such slogans as "make way for me and I will be your saviour". Satan himself is an example of a selfishly ambitious person.

In this study we will learn the basic truth that selfish ambition could be very destructive if not checkmated on time.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the term selfish ambition?
2. What effect do you think the selfish ambition of some brethren may have on the Church? James 3:14-16, Ezekiel 28:16-19, Num. 16:8-11, 25-30, 2Chron 26:16-30, 1Kings 1:1-6, 2:25
3. Read Matthew 20:20-28. Do you think the woman's request was made out of selfishness?
(b) What should be our paramount pursuit as believers? Matthew 6:33a, Phil 2:4, 1Cor 10:24-33, Acts 2:44-47.
5. Give examples of selfish ambitious people in the bible. What lessons can we learn from their tragic ends? 2Sam 15:1-12, 17:1-4, Isaiah 14:13-15

CONCLUSION:

In today's world, selfishly ambitious behaviour is grossly applauded as a mark of boldness. Haven't we been told that we are to look out for the number one position, meaning ourselves? But the bible considers selfish ambition evil. It is one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20), and the wrath of God awaits those who are selfishly ambitious.

Every kingdom child who wants to occupy till the master's return must refrain from every act that portrays selfish ambition.

MEMORY VERSE: Phil. 2; 3-4, "Let nothing be done out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Do you sincerely consider yourself free from selfish ambition?

STUDY 41

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME:	OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	STRIFE AND DIVISIONS IN THE BODY
TEXT:	1 COR. 3:1-11
AIM:	To show the causes of strife and divisions in the body of Christ, their consequences, and how to deal with them.

INTRODUCTION:

The spirit of “strife and divisions” hovers boldly in and around the church and attaches itself to certain members who refuse to yield to the Holy Spirit. Oddly, some of these individuals, by mere outward appearances, seem to be devout and “holy” men and women of God. They have perfect attendance in church services and are actively involved in almost every program and activity offered, and yet when dispute, arguments and the likes arise within the church, they are almost always involved, either as initiators or as supporters.

There appears to be in almost every place where brethren assemble together, at least one individual who is possessed with this spirit. The scriptures tell us to “avoid” those who causes strife and divisions, as evil communications corrupt good manners (1 Cor. 15:33).

In this study, we shall x-ray the causes of strife and divisions in the church, their far reaching consequences, and how to deal with them.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Paul chided the church at Corinth for the strife and divisions in their midst (1Cor. 1:12, 3:3-4). What are the major causes of strife and divisions in our churches? Proverbs 10:12, 15:18, 17:19, 28:25, Acts 20:29- 30, Phil 1:15-17, Titus 3:1-3, James 3:14-16, 4:1,1 John 2:18-19 .
2. How does God see anyone who causes strife and divisions in the church? Proverbs 6:12-14
3. What are the effects of strife and divisions in the church? Proverb 6:12-14, 25:8 Habakkuk 1:3, Mt. 12:25, Acts 6:1-7, 15:38-39, 1Tim 2:14, James 4:2, 1 Pet. 3:7
4. In what practical ways can we deal with those who cause and strive to perpetuate strife and division among us? Proverbs 13:10, 30:33, Matthew 5:39-41, Romans 12:18, 14:1, 16:17, 1 Cor. 6:1-7, 11:16-19, 15:33, Phil. 2:14, Titus 2:11-12, 1 Tim 1:5-7
5. How can we avoid strife and divisions in the body of Christ? Gen. 13:7-11, Psa. 34:12-14, 119:165, 141:3, Proverbs 15:16-18, 17:14, Romans

12:17-20, 1 Cor15:33, Col. 3:12-17, 1 Thess. 5:15, Gal. 6:10, Titus 3:1-2,
11-12, 1 John 2:9-11

CONCLUSION:

When a new disease comes into a community, like the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in some parts of West African region, Doctors and scientists converge to look for the main cause or source of the infection. Once they understand the origin, they can confidently combat and prevent it. Likewise when we understand the root causes of strife and divisions in the church, we are ably equipped to prevent, curb, or wholly exterminate it.

MEMORY VERSE: Proverbs 20:3, "it is an honour for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarrelling" (ESV)

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you a meddlesome interloper or one who is habitually involved in causing dissention in the house of God? God loves you personally and wants you to repent from such act.

STUDY 42

SUB THEME D: **Opposition to the Kingdom Business**

TOPIC: **Doing Violence to Scriptures.**

TEXT: **Ezekiel 22:26, Zeph. 3:41 Tim.6:3-5**

AIM: **To teach Christians that the misuse of scriptures
for selfish interesting is violating God's standard
and is punishable.**

INTRODUCTION:

Violence is an unjust or unwarranted exertion of force or power for the purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing a person, property, course or plan. The scriptures as we know comprise the wills, thoughts, words and works of God. God's word has principles which must be obeyed. Neglecting such principles could be regarded as violating or doing violence to the scriptures. Our text 1Tim 6:3, 5; points out that any teaching which does not consent to the wholesome words of Christ is doing violence to the scriptures. In this study we will diligently analyse ways in which violence are done to the scriptures and proffer solution to it.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What does the word 'doing violence to scriptures' entail?
2. Discuss practical ways in which violence can or has been done to scriptures? Matt 4:3-11, 1Tim 6:3; Jude 16

3. What are the penalties for doing violence to the scriptures? Matthew 5:19;
Luke 11:52; Gal. 1:8; 2Peter 2:1,3, Jude 1:4,

4. How can believers prevent violence from being done to the scriptures?

Gen. 18:19, Joshua 1:8, 2 Tim. 2:15-16, 1Tim1:3, Titus 1:9; Jude 23.

CONCLUSION: Violating, misinterpreting or misquoting the scriptures for selfish aggrandisements and other sinister motives amount to doing violence to the scripture.. We are expected to defend the scripture- to contend for the faith and to snatch people out of the fire of deception. Refusing to defend the scripture will definitely spell doom for us and our generation.

MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 5:19 "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven".

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you violating the word of God for any sinister motive

STUDY 43

SUB THEME D: Opposition to the Kingdom Business

TOPIC: Ignorance

TEXT: Hosea 4: 6-7, Isaiah 5:13

AIM: To teach believers that ignorance can deprive us from manifesting God's glory and power.

INTRODUCTION:

Ignorance in the original Hebrew and Greek context, originate from the word that imply to ignore (take no notice of).

In the Old Testament ignorance is linked to a concept of "hardening of Heart" a sort of willingness to sin and ignoring what one should do. In other word, ignoring what we should do and doing what we want to do is a form of ignorance or hardening of heart. So often, we do just that. Ignorance which is lack of knowledge or fact about a situation or particular subject is the essence people parish unduly. Hosea 4:6 says; "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children".

In this study we will critically discus discuss ignorance.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the term "Ignorance"?

2. Why are people ignorant and what are the consequences of ignorance?

Hosea 4:6; Psalm 14:4, Roman 1:22-32, Acts 13:24, Prov. 15:32, Matthew 22:29.

3. How do we deal with ignorance:

(a) In our personal lives. Matt 7:7, John 3:1-4, Act 17:10-11, 2 Tim 2:15

(b) In the lives of others? Gen. 18:19, Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; 2 Tim 4:2

CONCLUSION: Ignorance is lack and rejection of knowledge, as well as forgetting God's laws and instructions. It often manifests itself in sinful living, self-deception, ingratitude, self-hatred, foolish acts and so on. Ignorance can be deal with by first recognizing that you are ignorant in that particular area, developing the hunger to know, and effective regular study of God's word.

MEMORY VERSE: Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children".

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Have you known enough to fit in all areas of your life?

STUDY 44

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME D:	OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	LUST
TEXT:	1 JOHN 2: 16- 17; 1 THESSALONIANS; 4: 3-12,
AIM:	To remind believers of the need to combat the lusts that war against our effectiveness in kingdom life and business.

INTRODUCTION:

The dictionary defines lust in two ways (a) an intense or unrestrained sexual craving; or (b) an overwhelming desire or craving- for anything.

In the Old Testament, several Hebrew words were translated into English as lust. Two outstanding among them are 'tah-av-aw' meaning longing, desire or lust and khawmad' -meaning to covet, take delight in or lust.

In the New Testament, our Lord Jesus says in His famous Sermon on the Mount; '...everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her...' (Matthew 5:27-31). The word Jesus chose was a Greek word ep-ee-thoo-meh-o; meaning 'to have a strong desire for' or to long for something or someone.

Just as, Apostle Paul who told us in Roman 7:7 that we should not covet...and in 1Cor.12:31 say thus; 'But covet the best gift' and in 1Cor.14:39 that; we should covet prophesy. It implies that our strong desire (longing-lust) should be towards'

God. Hence our text, 1John 2:16; emphasized that all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes,...are not of the father.

Therefore, in this study, we will be looking at the Lust of the Flesh and the Lust of the eyes which are not of the Father but of the world.

STUDY GUIDE:

- 1) What do you understand by the word lust- (lust of the eyes and of the flesh)? 1John 2:16
- 2) From the following passages explain what the bible says about lust? James 1:14-15; Exodus 20:14, 17; Matthew 5:28, Job 31:1, 9-12.
- 3) What are the consequences of lust? James 1:15; 4:1-3;
- 4) How do we overcome lust? Joshua 1:8, Gal 5:16; 1 Thess. 4:3-6, Col 3:5, 2Tim 2:22; 1Peter 2:11-12, Rom 13:14,

CONCLUSION: Lust is a strong longing or craving for something or someone. Craving for someone wife, property, position or that which is not yours is wrong and punishable. But when such desire is towards God-the Holy Spirit and His gifting's, the reward is always amazing: Lusting after evil things in the long run, always amount to destruction. Hence, we should mortify our evil desire, flee youthful lust and put on our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 13:14) often.

MEMORY VERSE: 1John 2:16; For all that is in the world-the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ,is not of the Father but is of the world.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: slay evil desire in your life now before it slays you!

STUDY 45

- SUB THEME D:** **Opposition to the Kingdom Business**
- TOPIC:** **Undue Attachment to Social Status.**
- TEXT:** **James 2; 1-13**
- AIM:** **To teach Christians that attaching ourselves to
mundane titles/positions instead of focusing on
our God's given responsibility will not only render
us inefficient but can lead to eternal annihilation
from Christ.**

INTRODUCTION:

Social status is the position or rank of a person within the society. It can also be understood as the degree of honour or prestige attached to one's position in society. This status can either be achieved or ascribed to an individual.

In the church today, many of us give more attention to titles/positions rather than focusing on God's given responsibility. We often forget that even our Lord Jesus said; 'I come to not to be served but to serve'.

In as much as the bible instructed us to give honour to whom honour is due, we should be careful to ensure that our positions/titles do not take the place of God in our lives. In today study, we be looking at the dangers of undue attachment to social status and measures we should take as the body of Christ to curtail them.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the term 'social status'?
2. (a) Read Daniel 4:20-37 and John 3:1-10 ,7:45-53 and analyze how undue attachment to social status hindered Nebuchadnezzar and Nicodemus from out-rightly standing out for God.

- (b) Give practical instances where such attitudes still play out in the church today.
3. From the following scriptures, mention the dangers of undue attachment to social status? 1 Sam 15:17-23,30 ; James 2:9
 4. What practical steps should the church take to curtail undue attachment of her members to social status? Gal.2:11-17; John 6:14-15, James 2:1-4,12

CONCLUSION: Undue attachment to social status is one of the major things that shrinks our spiritual growth and puts us in the state of unfruitfulness. Meanwhile, friendship with the world is enmity with God. Apostle Paul rebuked Peter when he reclined from Gentile brethren on the account of Jewish position,(Gal 2:11) and our Lord withdrew from the distraction of men who thought of making Him king by force (John 6:14,15), we should therefore do everything within our power to avoid undue attachment to mundane position in order to remain focus and fruitful in ministry.

MEMORY VERSE: James 2:1 my brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Your ego can become an obstacle to your work. If you start believing in your greatness, it is the death of your creativity.

SUB THEME D: OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM BUSINESS

STUDY 46

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME:	OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	UNBELIEF
TEXT:	GEN. 3:4-6, 2KINGS 7:1-20, JAMES 1:6-7
AIM:	<i>to help the Christian understand what unbelief means, how it can hinder kingdom business, and how we can be overcome it.</i>

INTRODUCTION:

One of the greatest forces that are vehemently opposing the progress of kingdom business in our individual lives and the church generally is unbelief. Unbelief is lack of confidence in God to do what he has promised to do. Unbelief is weakness of faith. It means doubting God's willingness or ability to alter positively the circumstances one is in.

After a long period of famine in the land of Samaria (2kings 6:24-30), Elisha declared by the word of God that the next day fine flour and...barley would be sold at very low prices at the gate of Samaria (2kings 7:1-2), but the king's sceptical aide doubted and questioned the likelihood of such incredible plenty. He saw the manifestation of God's promise, but he never enjoyed it.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Explain with illustration what you understand by the term "unbelief".
2. (a) From the following scriptures, point out some of the things that breed unbelief. Matt 14: 26-31, Gen. 3:4-6
(b) How can the following open our hearts to unbelief: Prayerlessness, Fear, Absence of God's word and Wrong Company.
3. Discuss how unbelief can hinder kingdom business. James 1:6,7, Numbers 13:25-33, 14:11,12,29-35, Mark 6:4-6
4. How can we overcome unbelief James Mark1:35, 2Tim 3:15, Ps 119:9

CONCLUSION:

Unbelief is one of the devil's most potent forces. It has denied many kingdom citizens of the exploits they would have done in the kingdom. It is like a virus that has distorted many of God's agenda for his people. Unbelief is what turned what should have been a sweat-less journey of 40 days into 40 years of labour, sorrow and death sentences in the wilderness. When we doubt God, we lose our inheritance in Him and we limit how far God can go with us in His kingdom business

MEMORY VERSE: *James 1:6, "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind."*

EXAMINE YOURSELF: *Are you living in unbelief?*

STUDY 47

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB-THEME:	OPPOSITION TO KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	PAINFUL CHALLENGES
TEXT:	2 SAM. 4:4, JOB 1:13-22, DAN. 3:1-10, 6:1-28, 2COR. 11:23-27, HEB. 11:17-38
AIM:	<i>To encourage believers not to give up when they face painful challenges</i>

INTRODUCTION:

Suffering and painful challenges are some of the things that draw believers back from facing or executing the work of God squarely. It is mere deception for some believers to assume that challenges or hardship can never near them as long as they are labouring for the Lord. If God removed all challenges, we would never grow and overcome certain obstacles. He often permits difficulties in our lives because sometimes He is trying to reveal something that needs to be strengthened or changed in us. Some of our weaknesses are never revealed in good times, but they quickly show up in times of trial and tribulations. Let us find out more from the study.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the term painful challenges? Dan. 3:1-10, 6:1-28, 2 Cor. 11:23-27
2. Mention and discuss some practical painful challenges that believers are facing today which sometimes deter them from devoting their all to kingdom business. 2Sam. 4:4, 1Chron. 4:9-10, Job 1:13-22, Dan. 6:1-28, Heb. 10:32-34
3. How should a Christian handle painful challenges? 1 Chron. 4:9-10, Job 1:20, 22, Dan. 3:16-18, 6:8-10, Heb. 10:33-36, 11:23-38, 1 Pet. 4:12-16.
4. What are the benefits of tackling and overcoming painful challenges? Ps. 30:5b, James 1:2-4, Rom. 5:3-4, 2Cor. 4:16-18.

CONCLUSION:

If our Lord and Master was subjected to trials and temptations, and all kinds of painful challenges, then we, His servants, should be willing to follow the footsteps of our Master. Painful challenges will not last forever, but the reward of faithful service will last forever.

MEMORY VERSE: 2Cor. 4:8-9, "*We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed.*"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Weeping may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning...

STUDY 48

THEME:	OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME:	OPPOSITION TO KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC:	WITCHCRAFT AND OCCULTIC PRACTICES
TEXT:	DEUTERONOMEY. 18:9-14, EXODUS 22:18, 2KINGS 21:6,
AIM:	<i>To Teach Believers the Dangers of Witchcraft and Occult Practices</i>

INTRODUCTION:

In an attempt to uncover the future and to have supernatural help in making decisions, people sometimes employ many ungodly and satanic techniques. Paramount among these techniques employed are witchcraft, sorcery, divination, necromancy, astrology, hypnotism and all forms of occult practices. These were the same employed by the nations around Israel during their time.

God's hatred for witchcraft and all shades of occult practices was so deep that he commanded the Israelites to drive out those who practiced them from their land (Deut. 18:14). Witchcraft and occult practices pose great challenges on kingdom business in so many areas. Through these satanic practices, agents of the kingdom of darkness have unleashed untold havoc and wasted destinies that would have become mighty vessels in the hand of God.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What is God's stand on witchcraft and occult practices? 1Sam 15:23, Gal 5:20, 21, Rev 21:8 Deut. 18:9-14, Exo. 22:18
2. Identify and discuss some of the witchcraft and occult practices that are prevalent in contemporary churches.
3. In what ways do these activities oppose and hinder kingdom business?
4. How can we dislodge witchcraft and occult operations and manipulations from the Church? Acts 13:6-11, Phil 2:9-11, John 8:32, Hosea 4:6, 1 Thess. 5:17, Zech. 4:6,

CONCLUSION:

The church is marching forward and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. If the church must fulfill God's mandate, then we must arise and exercise the authority of Christ over all forms of satanic operations

MEMORY VERSE: *1 John 3:8b, "For this purpose the son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."*

STUDY 49

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM BUSINESS
TOPIC: HARMFUL CULTURES AND TRADITIONS
TEXT: ACTS 15:1-31

AIM: To alert God's People of the threats posed by certain cultural concepts and traditional practices to the overall success of the Kingdom business and ascertain effective ways of curbing their undue influences.

INTRODUCTION:

Cultures and traditions play very significant roles in the general worldview and behavioral patterns of any people. As individuals grow and mature in their respective environments, they tend to pick up, internalize and build up their beliefs and general approach to life on certain dominant behavioral patterns, cultural values and mores within their immediate environment.

Some of these are healthy and conformable with the Christian worldview and doctrines, while others are not and, as such, pose every serious challenges and threats to the Christian standards of living and behavioral patterns.

We note from our main text, Acts 15:1-31, that among the early Church folks were certain Jewish elements who believed and strongly canvassed the opinion that "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. This teaching became a veritable time bomb waiting to scatter the Church and make a mess of her doctrines, her Kingdom life and business in general.

It took the wise and timely intervention of the Church Leadership at the time to avert the disaster that would have resulted there from.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. "Certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." What was the implication of this teaching? How did it affect the Church?
2. Today, the Church is still grappling with many teachings that are alien and in direct contradiction to scriptural doctrines and traditions. Identify some of these and explain their impact on the Kingdom business. Matt. 15:9, Col. 2:8-23, 1 Cor. 11:1-6, 2 Thess. 3:6 Rev. 2:14-15, 20-23
3. (a) How did the early Church respond to the thorny issues of offensive cultures and traditions? 2 Thess. 3:6, Col 2:8, 3:16, 2 Tim. 2:15, (b) What approach should the contemporary Church adopt in curbing the rampaging menace of certain harmful beliefs and practices in the fold? 1 Thess. 5:17, 22, 2 Tim. 2:15, Col 2:8, 3:16
4. One of the many challenges that the Church in certain contemporary African societies is still grappling with is the traditional demand for widows to shave their heads for their deceased husbands. What is the scriptural

stand on this issue, and how can the Church protect her teeming widows from the intimidations and harassments which follow any attempt to insist on toeing the line of scriptures in this matter? Deut 14:1-2, Romans 8:14-15

CONCLUSION:

The Church is still grappling with multifarious challenges posed by certain popular concepts and practices which are at variance with the set scriptural precepts. Some of these are carry-over from biblical history while many others are issues rooted in the traditional beliefs and practices of the immediate and remote environments in which the churches exist.

The Church leadership must take a cue from the Church fathers and ensure that such issues which cannot stand the test of scriptures are resolved and put in their proper perspectives.

MEMORY VERSE: Gal. 1:9; "As we said before, so say I again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you in the number that mix Christianity with traditional beliefs and practices and insist on enforcing your confusion on others??

STUDY 50

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: RETURN OF THE OWNER OF THE BUSINESS
TOPIC: TIME OF HIS RETURN
TEXT: LUKE 19:15, MATT. 24:36-51

AIM: To remind God's people that though the scriptures do not say exactly when the Lord shall return to take stock of His business, return He must, and all must, therefore, be ready at all times so His return does not take us by surprise.

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus' illustration in the Parable of the Ten Minas as recorded in Luke 19:11ff clearly indicates that the Nobleman would certainly not be gone forever, but will return at an unstipulated time to receive back his estate and take proper stock of his business. And because his servants were not privy to the specific time of his return, the wise among them considered it expedient to make the very best of whatever opportunity they had to maximize profits and keep their records clean and intact. Thus they were ready and waiting expectantly for the master's arrival, anytime, anywhere.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What is the position of the scripture on the issue of time of the Lord's return? Matt. 24:36, 42-44, 1 Thess. 5:1
2. In Matt. 24:37, Jesus said; "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." (NIV).
 - (a) What do you understand by his statement?
 - (b) Relate this statement to the prevailing attitudes to, and currents trends in Kingdom life and business.
3. (a) Do you sincerely think that the contemporary Church is doing enough to sensitize and keep God's people in proper shape for the sudden return of the Master? Mark 16:15, Ephesians 5:27, Romans 1:5, 2 Tim. 4:1-4, Rev. 2:4,
 - (b) What would you suggest to the Church leadership on this matter?

CONCLUSION:

The scriptures clearly support the position that the Master's second coming will be like that of a thief in the night. Many will be taken unawares by His return because they have obviously lost consciousness of the fact of His eventual return, and are, therefore, like every other person in the world, engulfed in worldly and materialistic pursuits. But like Noah, those who remain sensitive and committed to the Master's business will not be caught unawares, however and whenever the Lord returns.

MEMORY VERSES: Matt. 24:36-37

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as in the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: If the Lord will suddenly appear in our midst now, what do you think would be your lot?

STUDY 51

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: RETURN OF THE OWNER OF THE BUSINESS
TOPIC: THE DEMAND FOR ACCOUNT
TEXT: LUKE 19:11-27

AIM: To remind God's people that it will be required of every Kingdom citizen to render account of their stewardship to the Master whenever He returns.

[**INTRODUCTION:**

Every business person operates for profitability and increase. Therefore, every steward engaged in any business or aspects of the business would be required to, at the end of the business season, give a detailed account of their stewardship. Such reports must, of necessity indicate the activities engaged in, areas and degrees of exploits, progress and increase recorded within the period under review. These, of course, also mean that whatever losses recorded cannot be concealed in a clearly scripted report.

According to our main text (Luke 19:11-27), in verse 15; "Upon his return he called his men to whom he had given the money, to find out what they had done with it, and what their profits were." This is exactly how it will be when the Lord returns.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Discuss the statement in Luke 19:15; (TLB) in the light of the scriptural position on the second coming of Jesus Christ.
2. (a) Apart from money and material wealth, identify the various other resources at the disposal of Kingdom citizens. Act 1:8, Eph. 6:13-18,
(b) Explain how they are supposed to impact the Kingdom life and business.
3. (a) What benefits accrue to Kingdom citizens who invest their God-given resources wisely? Isaiah 1: 19b, Matt. 13:43a, 19:27-29, 25:23, Luke 18:28-29, Rev. 2:10b

(b) What happens when we misuse or have nothing to show for the generous investments which heaven has made in our lives? Matt. 13:41-42, 25:24-28, Luke 13:25-28, Rev. 3:16,
4. The servant who had no profit to declare had excuses for his non-performance. What were they, and how do they relate to the inexhaustible

list of excuses Church folks today give for their inactivity, laxity, lack of commitment and non-performance in Kingdom business? Matt. 25:24-25, Luke 9:57-62

CONCLUSION:

Every child of God will be required to give account of their stewardship to the Master at His appearing. And since no Kingdom citizen can truly claim to have received nothing from the Master, it behooves on every one of us to dust up whatever resources we have left buried or unattended to, invest them wisely for Kingdom expansion and development so that whenever we are called to account for our stewardship, we will not have any cause for regrets.

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 14:12 “Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God” (NLT)

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you ready for the day of reckoning?

STUDY 52

THEME: OCCUPY TILL I COME
SUB THEME: RETURN OF THE OWNER OF THE BUSINESS
TOPIC: REWARD AND PUNISHMENT
TEXT: LUKE 19:11-27

AIM: To remind God's people that whatever we do with our lives and with the heavenly resources at our disposal shall be justly recompensed.

[**INTRODUCTION:**

The scriptures are very clear on the fact that how we approach matters relating to Kingdom life and business, what we do with the Kingdom resources at our disposal, and our overall contributions to the prosperity or otherwise of the Kingdom estate will determine the kind of response we receive from the Master at His return.

In the Parable of the Ten Minas in Luke 19:11-27, the first two servants were rewarded handsomely for their effort and productivity while the unfruitful servant was justly punished.

Jesus used this parable to illustrate what will happen at His second coming.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the terms "reward and punishment"? How do they apply to the concept of Kingdom business?
2. What manner of rewards awaits them that are faithfully committed to the Kingdom growth and prosperity? Isaiah 1: 19b, Matt. 13:43a, 19:27-29, 25:23, Luke 18:28-29, Rev. 2:10b
3. What are the conditions for obtaining reward from the Master? Rev. 2:10b
4. "He replied, I tell you that to everyone who has will more be given." Luke 19:26. Analyze this statement in the light of the topic under discussion.,

CONCLUSION:

It is gratifying and serious encouragement to know that God is a rewarder of they that diligently serve Him, who commit themselves and resources selflessly to the business of the Kingdom. And because it is eternally impossible to fool Him like

we do to men, it will be very clear to all that whatever response one receives from will be a just recompense.

MEMORY VERSE: Gal. "And let us not be weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

EXAMINE YOURSELF: What kind of reward are you expecting from the Lord?