

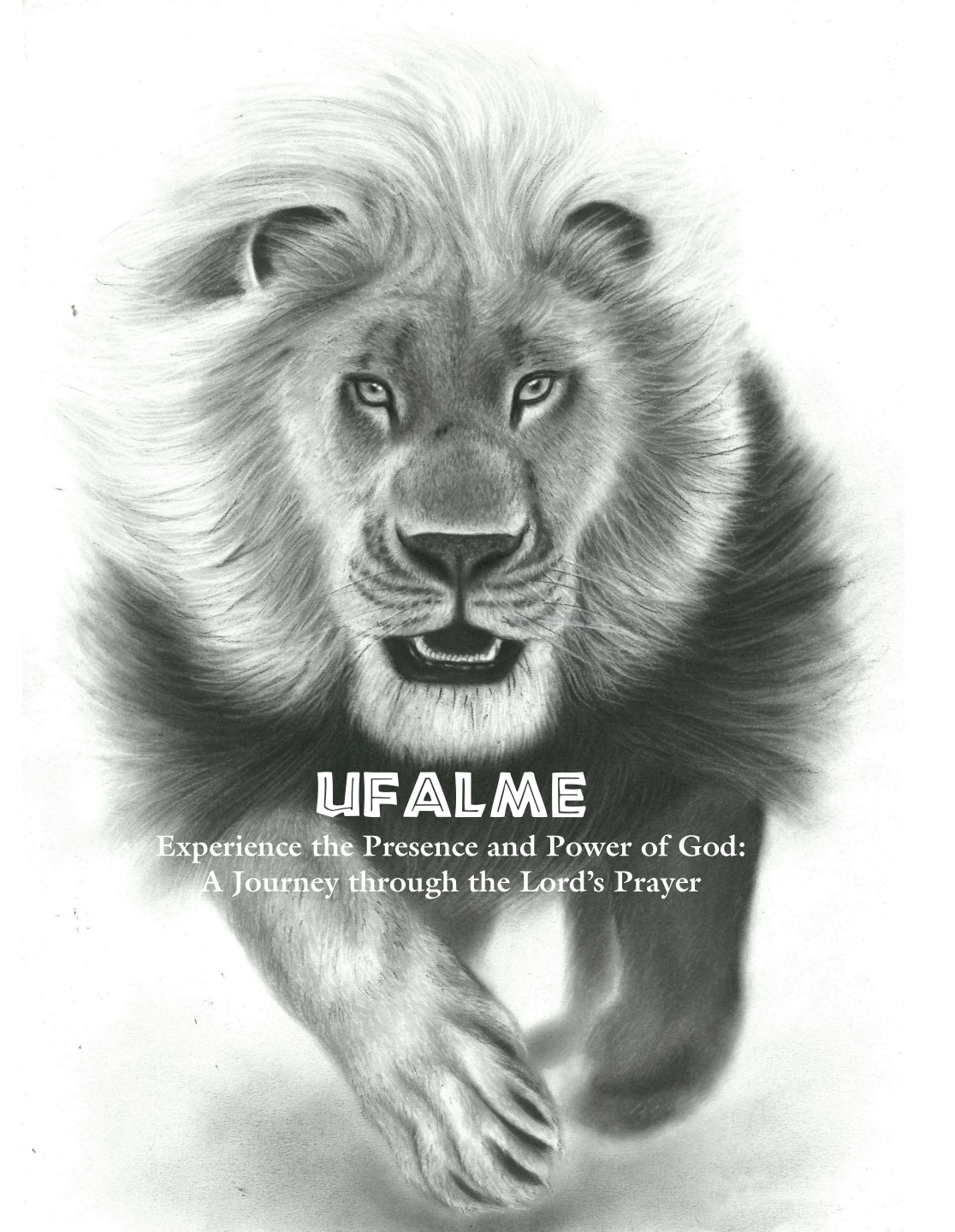
Developed by Kenyan pastors and ministry leaders, this book is designed to help people connect with God the Father and experience life in God's kingdom. The experience is recommended to be done in small groups in a home or a church setting. Learn more at:

www.ufalme.site



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UFALME

Experience the Presence and Power of God:
A Journey through the Lord's Prayer

Salini hivi:

Baba Yetu uliye mbinguni,
jina lako litukuzwe;
ufalme wako ufike,
utakalo lifanyike
duniani kama mbinguni.
Utupe leo mkate wetu wa kila siku,
utusamehe makosa yetu,
kama tunavyowasamehe na sisi waliotukosea.
Usitutie katika kishawishi,
lakini utuopoe maovuni.
Kwa kuwa ufalme ni wako,
na nguvu na utukufu hata milele
Amina.

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Rev. Dr. Reuben Langat
Melvin Maina
Winfred Akinyi
George Ang'edu Opejo
Asherrey Wesonga

Next Steps. . .



Now that you've gone through the Ufalme Experience, would you consider sharing it with others?

Ask God to put on your heart a few friends who you could invite to start a small group. Pick a co-leader to pray with you and help you. Then invite your friends over and walk through this book again with them, covering one chapter each time you meet.

You can download and print copies of this book and get access to all of the videos at:

www.cslewisinstitute.org/ufalme

UFALME WAKO UFIKE

Your Kingdom Come

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Karibu Sana! (*Welcome*)

Are you ready to grow deeper in your faith and experience the power of a transformed life? Join us on a journey into the heart of God's kingdom. Along the way you'll build strong friendships, strengthen your prayer life, and experience God's love and power.

Ufalme is a Swahili word which means Kingdom. In this ten-session guided experience, you'll explore the Lord's Prayer that Jesus taught His disciples. Featuring Kenyan pastors and Bible teachers, original artwork, videos, discussion questions, and an interactive guidebook, this course is designed to help you know and grow in the love of the Heavenly Father and experience God at work in your daily life.

You'll be able to access all of the videos and resources for this course by signing up at: www.ufalme.site

During our sessions you'll be nourished and grow in five key areas:



Head

Study and learn important truths about God.



Heart

Experience God's love and allow God's Spirit to shape your emotions and will.



Hands

Take specific steps to apply what you've learned.



Helps

Reach out to others with God's love and grow in a community of friends.



Habits

Develop disciplines to nourish your soul.

asked for forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15). In God's eyes, our forgiveness is dependent on two things. First, that we forgive others. Second, that we seek His forgiveness. These two work in tandem.

God has revealed Himself as our **Protector**. We respond by entrusting ourselves and all the affairs of our lives to God. God did not create us and place us here on earth, only then to fend for ourselves. Right from the start, He intended that He would walk with us and we with Him, and that He would be involved in every facet of our lives. He says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5b). As we entrust ourselves and all our affairs to God, He steps in to direct our path, to keep us holy and to protect us from falling away on account of temptation (Proverbs 3:5-6, 1 Corinthians 1:8-9, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, Jude 1:24-25).

God has revealed Himself as our **Deliverer**. He delivers us from the Evil One and all his evils. You see, the Devil wants nothing good for anyone. Jesus referred to him as the thief who

comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). But God sent His Son, Jesus, so that in Him we would be delivered (John 3:16). Indeed, God is our Mighty Deliverer, whose deliverance is for the present life and for all eternity (Psalm 118:14, 124:8, 144:1-2). When the Devil raises a fight against us, as we are bound to experience from time to time, our response should be to run to God, our Mighty Deliverer, who trains our hands for war and fights for us to victory.

For God's Glory

In conclusion, worship is our response to who God is and what He does as He reveals Himself to us. As we respond to God, our worship will take shape and our lives will be a pleasing sacrifice for Him. In this way, His kingdom will be manifested, His power will be displayed before a watching world, and His glory will shine through. And it will be true of our lives: "For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours. Now and forever."

Footnote:

¹ Adapted from *Music as an Essential for Congregational Christian Worship* by Tim Gough, p.8.

the fulfillment of God's reign at all times, wherever it is that we find ourselves. This response comes with a special reward. Jesus promised that if we make God's kingdom our primary and only focus, God will meet all our needs (Matthew 6:31-33).

Another way in which God has revealed Himself to us is as **Ruler of all the earth**. That is why as we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask for His will to be accomplished here on earth just as He has willed it in heaven. The acceptable response is for us to seek to learn and to know God's will and, having known it, to obey it. This may be what King David meant when he said, "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands" (Psalm 119:10). In this way, we live lives that are obedient to God's will. We learn God's will through the practice of listening in prayer and the reading and hearing of God's Word (John 17:17).

God has revealed Himself as **Provider**. Child of God, please understand that it is your Heavenly Father's pleasure to

attend to you and to provide everything that you need. The proper response is for us to bring every need to God in the full faith that He knows our needs and is pleased to attend to us (Philippians 4:6-7). He will provide. This kind of trust-filled dependence is best expressed in the practice of prayer. And when God provides for us, let us receive His provision with humility and thanksgiving, always remembering that all good things come from Him (James 1:17, Deuteronomy 8:10-18).

God has revealed Himself as the **Merciful God**, forgiving us all our sins, even as we forgive those who have wronged us. Two related responses are required. The first is that we should bring our sins to God daily, seeking forgiveness. He has promised that when we do so, He will forgive us (1 John 1:8-10, Psalm 103:11-12). The second response is connected to the first. Just as we look to God to forgive us of our wrongdoing, He requires that we forgive everyone who has wronged us. If we do not forgive, we too shall not be forgiven before God, even if we have

Ahadi Yangu (*My Commitment*)

Welcome to the Ufalme Experience. We are so glad that you are here!

It is best to go through this experience together with others in a small group. If you're not already in a group, invite a few friends or neighbors to join you on this journey. Set aside a regular time to meet and make a commitment to God and to the others in your group.

I commit to participate fully in the Ufalme Experience. With God's help, I will attend each of the small group sessions and complete each of my action assignments.

Signed by:

Name

Date

Our prayer for you:

Heavenly Father, minister to each person who reads these pages. May they encounter You through your Word. Bless their discussions, small group meetings and times of prayer. May they experience Your presence, power, protection, and provision. May they know and follow You as King and enjoy fullness of life in Your Kingdom. Use them, Father, for Your honor and glory, and may Your Kingdom come.

SAFARI IANZEE!

Let the Journey Begin



discussion, we will explore what it means to respond to God in the ways that He has revealed Himself to us in the Lord's Prayer. Jesus revealed God to us as Father, Holy, King, Ruler, Provider, Merciful God, Protector and Deliverer. Let us consider the ways we should respond to Him.

“Jesus revealed God to us as Father, Holy, King, Provider, Merciful, Protector and Deliverer.”

God has revealed Himself to us as our **Eternal Heavenly Father**, One who deeply loves His children and who in His love has given everything as an inheritance to His children. There are many ways that we could respond to our Heavenly Father but the most basic is to receive His love and to love Him back.

God has revealed Himself to us as **Holy One**. In the Lord's prayer, we pray that His name will be hallowed or 'kept holy'. The proper response to God's Holy name is for us to

keep it holy. We do so in two ways. First, we should avoid misusing His name, especially by desisting from using swear words (Exodus 20:7). As Jesus taught, let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'" (Matthew 5:37). The second way that we apply this is to live to honor and not bring shame to God's name. When we live lives of sin while calling ourselves Christians, this brings shame to God's name. Instead, let God's light shine through you as people see God doing good things through you. They will attribute your good works to your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

God has revealed Himself to us as **King**. As God's children, we are not merely subjects in His kingdom, we are co-heirs along with Jesus (Romans 8:15b-17). Notice that although God is King of all the universe, Jesus instructs us to refer to Him not as "Our Almighty King in Heaven", but as "Our Father in Heaven". God is first our Father and then our King. As sons in the Kingdom, God has chosen to exercise His reign through us. We bring His kingship into effect here on planet earth. The proper response is for us to seek



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the following article
by Rev. Moses Kimani



Understanding Worship

Let us begin by briefly unpacking what we mean by “worship”. What is the first image that comes to your mind at the mention of the word “worship?” For many of us, it’s the image of a church building with people in it singing songs to God and performing religious rituals. While these activities may be a part of worship, they do not comprise the full picture of what it means to bring true worship to God.

Worship and Obedience

Throughout the Bible, we see that people worshiped God as they encountered Him. In each case, worship was a response to their experience of God. We can take a cue from that and begin our definition of **worship as ‘man’s response to God’** - who God is, what He has done and how He has revealed Himself to us. But that is not all. The Bible also teaches us that there is a way God wants to be worshiped. This brings to mind the idea of ‘right’ versus ‘wrong’ worship and ‘acceptable’ versus ‘unacceptable’ worship. Over and over again, we

see that ‘right’ and ‘acceptable’ worship is characterized by ‘obedience’. This means that the worshiper has come to God in the way that God wants to be worshiped.

Defining Worship

In order to get a more wholesome definition of worship, we shall bring together the ideas of ‘response’, ‘obedience’ and ‘right’ worship. We could then say that “worship is the right, loving and obedient response of man to God - loving Him as Eternal Father, bowing before Him as King, serving Him obediently as Lord, and expressing all this through our daily lives and religious rituals.”¹ Another way to look at it would be to say, “worship is the total sum of our relational response to God, expressed through the total giving of ourselves to Him in reverence and service, and in our love for our neighbour.”

Our Response to God

In the remaining part of the

1

The Lord’s Prayer

Watch the video [Introduction to the Lord’s Prayer](#).

When Jesus’ disciples asked Him how to pray, He taught them these words.

The Lord’s Prayer is full of riches. In this session we’ll learn about the structure and petitions of the Lord’s prayer and how we can use it as a model to communicate with God and experience His presence and power in our lives.

Read Matthew 6:5-13



Discussion Questions

- What are some of the ways people prayed during Jesus’ time?
- What do you typically do when you pray? What are your prayer times like?
- How many times does the word ‘Father’ appear in this passage? Why do you think it is important that Jesus calls His disciples to pray to God as their Father?
- How does Jesus instruct His disciples to pray?



Habit to practice: Kukariri Biblia (*Memorization*)

Memorize the Lord’s Prayer. Write it out and pray it three times a day until it becomes fixed in your mind and heart. Bible memorization is a great way to store God’s Word in your heart and equip you to live for God. As a bonus, try memorizing the prayer in your mother tongue, Swahili, and/or English.



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the following article
by Rev. Dr. Joel Woodruff



A Lesson from the Greatest

What if the greatest footballer in the world offered to teach you his best moves for scoring goals? Or your favorite recording artist wanted to share her tips with you on being a lead vocalist? Or a respected and successful CEO invited you to be his junior partner in business? Wouldn't you jump at the opportunity to learn from the best?

Jesus' disciples were devout Jews who grew up praying traditional religious prayers and reading the Hebrew Scriptures. Yet when they realized that Jesus was unlike any other teacher and was the godliest man they had ever met, they made one of the smartest moves of their lives. They asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. The good news for us is that Jesus' response to their important question on prayer has been passed down over the past 2,000 years so that we too can learn from the greatest person to ever live!

The Lord's Prayer, also called the "Our Father," or The Disciples Prayer by some since it was given to Jesus' disciples to pray, can be found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4.

A Revolutionary Prayer

This prayer which begins with the words, "Our Father, who art in heaven," is prayed by Christians all over the world. Yet sometimes our familiarity with the words of the prayer can lead us to take the words for granted or repeat them mindlessly. This is a far cry from the way Jesus intended this prayer to be used.

When the disciples first heard Jesus' teaching through the Lord's Prayer, they would have been shocked by the revolutionary idea that the Holy, All-powerful, All-knowing, and Ever-present God of the Universe could be addressed informally as "Abba," "Papa", "Father" or "Daddy." The implication that God wants an intimate relationship with us as a father to his children, was and still is a radical idea to

10

Worship: Our Response to God

For Yours is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.
Now and Forever.

Watch the video [Responding to God in Worship](#).

In our journey through the Lord's Prayer, we have encountered God as He has revealed Himself to us in different ways. He has made Himself known to us as Father, Holy One, King, Ruler, Provider, Merciful God, Protector and Deliverer. How, then, should we respond to Him? The right and acceptable response to God is worship. In this session, we will explore what worship looks like in everyday practical life.

Read aloud The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

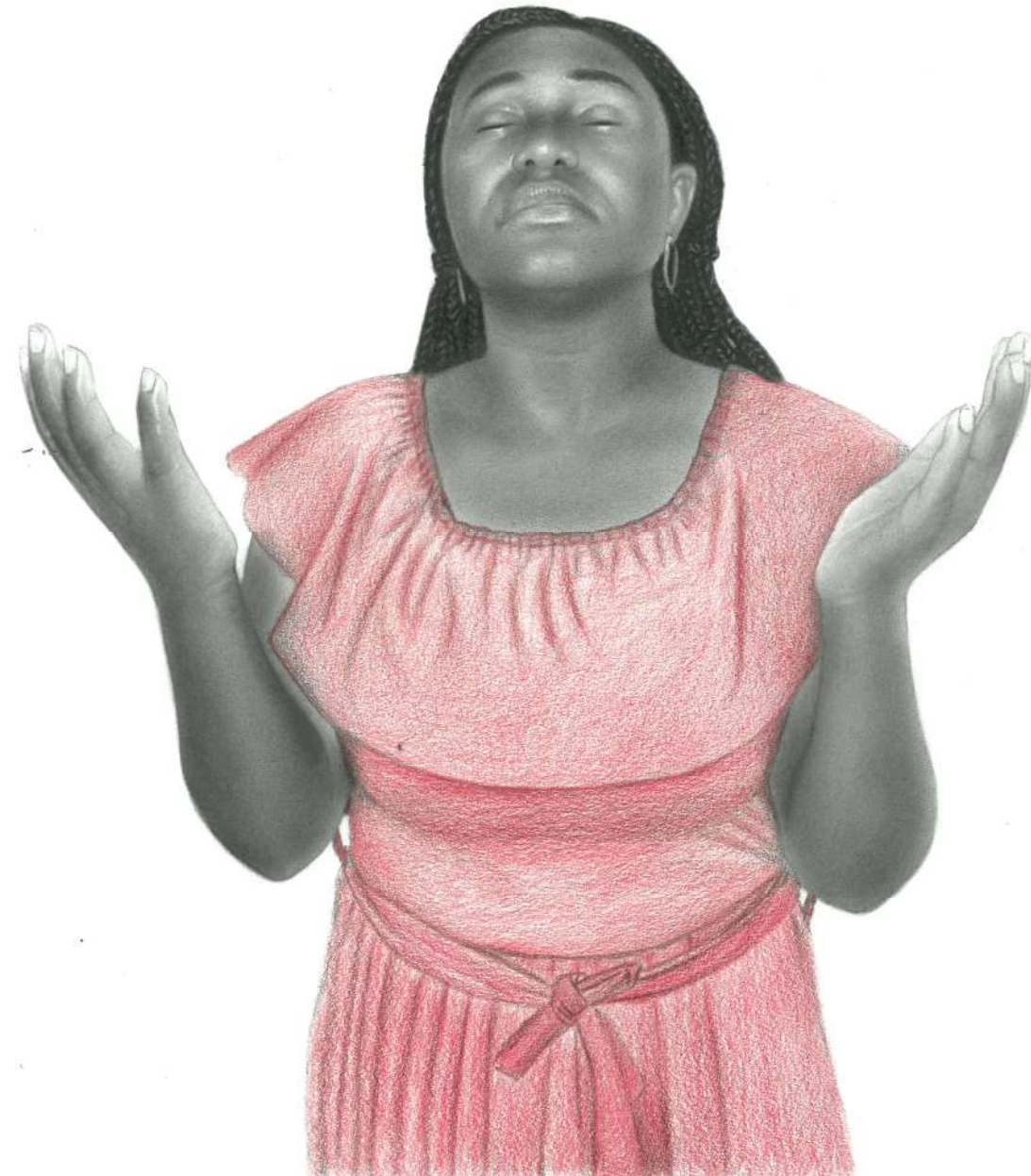
Discussion Questions and Final Activities

- Which of God's names connects with you the most?
- What does worship mean to you and how do you worship?
- Take turns sharing testimonies and stories of how you've experienced God throughout the *Ufalme Experience*.
- You've been a participant in *Ufalme*, would you consider joining together with a friend to start and lead a new group and share this experience with others? Discuss.
- Worship involves celebration. In this final session take time to celebrate God together, and pray for one another as you complete your final Action Assignment.



Habit: Kumwabudu Mungu (*Worship God*)

Continue practicing each of the habits you've learned. Begin each day by reflecting on who God is and what He has done for you. Then allow yourself to respond in worship. Offer yourself daily in worship to God. Remember that our good and great God desires and promises that His kingdom, power and glory shall be demonstrated through your life surrendered to Him.



“Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, ‘Lord, teach us to pray. . .’”

-John 2:24-25 (NLT)

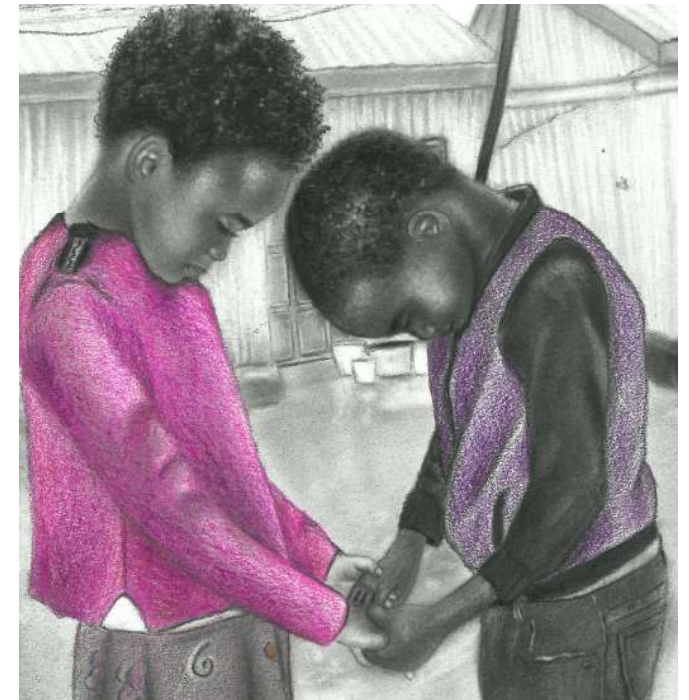
most people on the planet. Yet, through a study of the Lord’s Prayer, we will discover that God wants to include us in His family business, the redemption and restoration of individuals like you, me and others throughout the world.

The Seven Petitions

Using a rabbinic teaching technique, Jesus thoughtfully designed the Lord’s Prayer to be an outline for prayer consisting of seven petitions which if followed can properly align our lives with God’s priorities and purpos-

es. When a person commits these seven petitions to memory, they can be taught easily to others and practiced by taking time to reflect, meditate upon and pray through each area of the prayer as it pertains to an individual’s life.

The prayer begins as we call upon God with confidence as our “Daddy” who is in heaven. This is followed by the seven petitions which can be divided by the words “your” and “our”. The first three petitions focus our attention upward toward God in worship. We praise His



character, “Hallowed be your name,” acknowledge His position as King, “your kingdom come,” and align ourselves with His purpose, “your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

It’s easy in this challenging world to be consumed by our own fears, wants, and concerns. But by beginning our prayers with praise and worship we can refocus, get our Father’s perspective and find hope and direction in this broken world. Everything else falls into place when we put God first. As Jesus follows up on His teaching on prayer in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

The next four petitions move to addressing “our” needs which are both physical and spiritual as we ask for God’s provision, “give us this day our daily bread”; God’s pardon, “forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us”; God’s prudence or wisdom, “lead us not into temptation;” and God’s pro-

tection, “but deliver us from the evil one.”

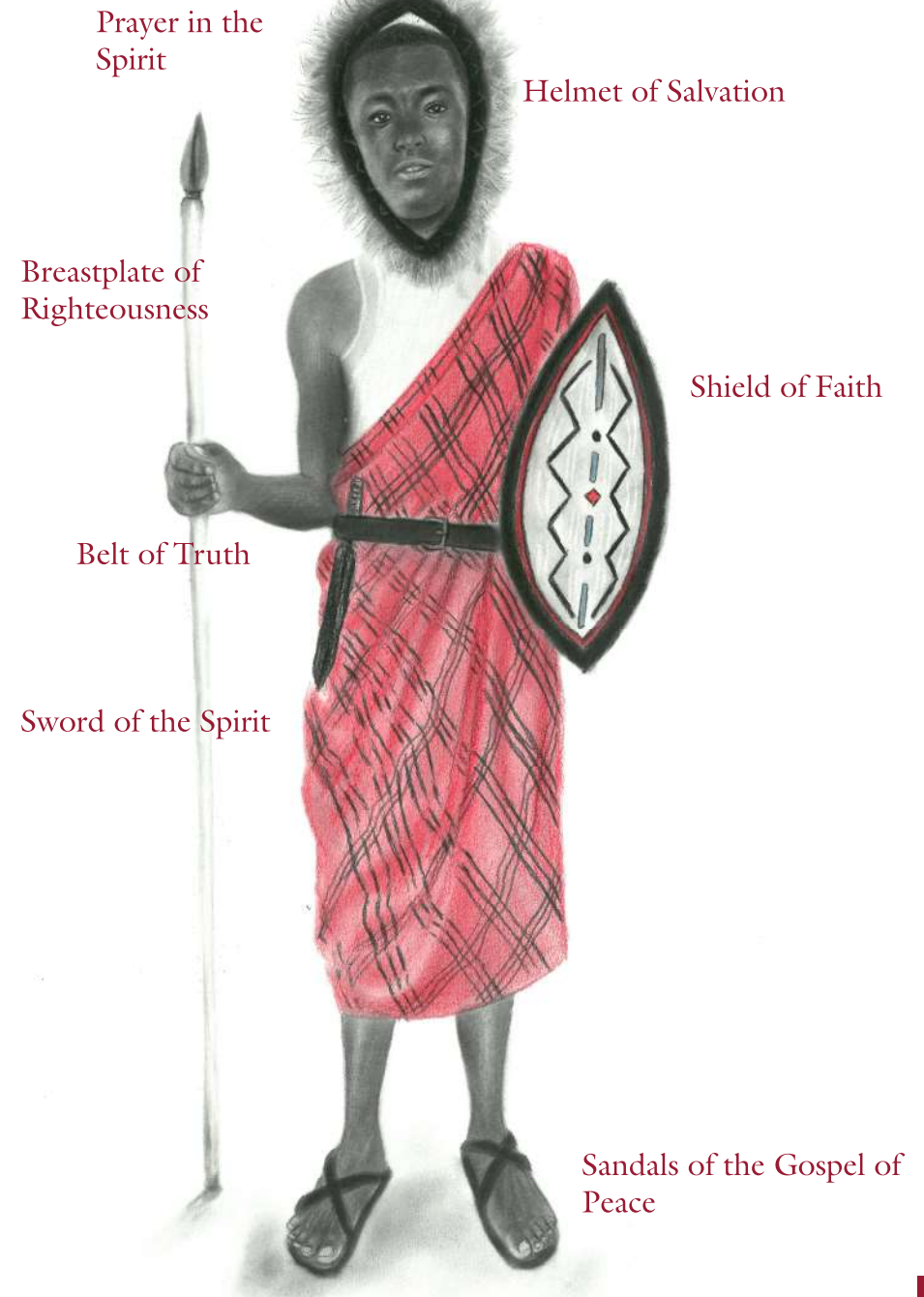
When the Lord’s prayer is prayed corporately in churches, some end the prayer with a song of praise that the kingdom, power and glory belong to God forever and ever, which is an appropriate way to end a time of prayer.

As you spend this season exploring the depth and riches of Jesus’ teaching on prayer as found in the Lord’s Prayer, may you commit it to memory anew. I also encourage you to put it into practice in your personal prayer life and teach it to others so that they too might find the peace and guidance that comes from God when we put Him first and align ourselves with His redemptive plan for the world.

Next Step:

Review the Structure of the Lord’s Prayer on the next page.

Based on Ephesians 6:10-18





The Armor of God

The belt of truth: In the name of Jesus Christ I put on the belt of truth. God's truth protects me from sin and temptation and delivers me from the lies of the devil. Knowing God's truth makes me ready for battle and helps me to stand firm in my faith.

The breastplate of righteousness: My self-righteousness will not protect me. Therefore I clothe myself with the righteousness of God. I become right with God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. God's righteousness protects my heart and character.

The sandals of the gospel of peace: Heavenly Father, I put on the good news of the gospel - that Jesus died and rose for my sins. This gospel is the only message that brings true peace with God and others. I will walk confidently as a messenger of good news.

The shield of faith: In the name of Jesus Christ, I take up the shield of faith. By this shield the attacks of the enemy will fail.

The helmet of salvation: I have a sure hope in Jesus Christ who delivers me from sin and from death. Today I put on God's salvation to protect me in every situation and every encounter I face.

The sword of the Spirit: I take up the Word of God, which is my weapon against evil. I will pray as God's Spirit leads me, and I will apply God's Word to my life.

By God's strength I arise today as a warrior in the kingdom of God. God's truth guides me. God's righteousness surrounds me. God's shield defends me. God's message is in my heart and in my mouth. God's salvation covers me and I am saved from sin and death. Father may Your love and Your truth go forward with power. Lead me by Your Holy Spirit. May I walk with You prayerfully throughout this day and experience your victory in all things. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

The Structure of the Lord's Prayer

Opening Address Our Father in heaven,

- 1 May your name be kept holy.
- 2 May your Kingdom come soon.
- 3 May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- 4 Give us today the food we need,
- 5 and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
- 6 And don't let us yield to temptation,
- 7 but rescue us from the evil one.

Seven Petitions

Closing Worship

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen.

-Matthew 6:9-13 (New Living Translation)



separated from a normal life and sent to live in the grave yards. A critical reflection of this text reveals that anything or any person that separates us from God's design for life in our families (both church and kinsmen) is intentionally evil.

“they saw the man who had been freed from the demons. He was sitting at Jesus’ feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane.”

-Luke 8:35

Like this man, there are instances today where one may run away from the family set up, strategically destroying the unity of a family. This kind of disintegration opens up the family for easy attack by evil forces. The good news is that at the place of separation and isolation the love of God can reach out to us like it happened to the Garesene man.

Deliverance and Reconnection

The story ends with two powerful things: Deliverance and Reconnection (vs. 39). Jesus delivered the demonized man

from evil, and he reconnected him to God and to his community. And Jesus can deliver us from evil too and restore our relationships.

May Jesus find you in that place where the enemy has isolated you to finish you. May He reconnect you back to Himself, to your own self, to the family of believers and back to your own family.

In conclusion, what then shall we do? Let go, and let God. After Jesus calmed the storm, the disciples asked “who is this man that even the waves and the water listen to and obey?”

You could be in a situation where you are asking: Who will deliver me, who will come through for me, who will rescue me? There is an answer dearly beloved, **ONLY JESUS SON OF THE MOST HIGH GOD CAN DO IT**. Let go of everything else, let go your own way of fixing yourself, and **LET GOD DO IT** for you through Jesus Christ. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Amen.



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the following article
by Ven. Peter Omondi



Jesus Our Deliverer

In this reflection, I am not going to give much attention to evil, or even demons and demon possession. Instead I would like us to look to the deliverance of God who can rescue us from evil and all life threatening situations and issues. In a world of great uncertainty and great fear, we must always choose to stand in the assurance that Jesus is our Deliverer.

The basis of my reflection is that;

- God can use every adversity or situation as an opportunity to draw us nearer to Him.
- We must always live in the promise of Christ that nothing, not even demons or any evil, can ever separate us from the love of God.

In Luke 8:26-39 the Garesene demoniac is bound in chains. Occasionally he would break away, but he would remain possessed, and evil remained his master. Eventually, the Garesene demoniac repulsed anything about God, and that is why he shouts to Jesus to leave him alone.

Brothers and sisters, God's intention is that we live in freedom and experience life in abundance. Any person or anything that denies such life is evil.

Freedom from Bondage

Jesus desires to be the resident King in our lives. But we often choose to replace God with things in our lives and allow evil to reign instead. Some of these conditions include; worldliness, self-exaltation, greed for wealth and power, pride, prayerlessness, nominalism, idolatry, or self-destructive tendencies like drug and substance abuse or sexual immorality. Each of these conditions can hold us captive. The good news is that Jesus Christ can deliver us from all of these evils.

Evil is like both a sickness and a prison. It defiles people physically, mentally, and spiritually. It holds them in captivity, but it also causes them to wander restlessly. The Garesene demoniac was

2

God's Fatherly Love

Our Father, Who Is in Heaven

Watch the video [The Father's Love](#)

Jesus introduces us to God as Father. Discover what it means to know God as Father and experience the gift and freedom of God's love. Knowing God as Father is key to our salvation, spiritual life and growth. The Father has the best intentions for His children and He always has the ability to carry them out. Learn what it means to be a true son or daughter of God.

In this session we'll explore the Parable of the Lost Sons and the Merciful Father.

Read aloud Luke 15:11-32



Discussion Questions

- How does the father relate to each of his sons in this parable, and how do you feel about the father's behavior?
- Which character in the story is most like you?
- In what ways have you rebelled against the Heavenly Father just like the prodigal son?
- How do we return to the Heavenly Father and experience His forgiveness and embrace?
- Is there anyone God is impressing upon you to help restore in relationship to God or to family?



Habit: Kutafakari kwa Biblia (*Bible Meditation*)

Read and reflect upon this Bible passage each day for one week. Imagine the story in your head and put yourself in the shoes of the younger son, the older brother, the people watching, and even the father. Read it aloud and share it with others. Throughout the week reflect on the love of the Father and how He receives those who return to Him.



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the following article

by Rev. Dr. Robert Langat



The Prodigal Son

The story of the prodigal son is one of the most redemptive stories that can be found.

There is a young man who through his poor choices loses everything. He rebels against his father and runs away from his home, his family, and his people. This son engages in wild and selfish living and ends up experiencing the pain of sin, total poverty, and separation from his father. The son finds himself in a distant land, starving, and yearning for anything good to eat. In this distant land the son works, but the Bible says “no one gave him anything.”

The rebellious son now lives among pigs, and he has become their servant. The Jews viewed pigs as unclean animals, unfit to eat, and even defiling to those who touch them. And now this young man spends his days cleaning up after pigs. Because of his rebellion, the boy has

exchanged his dignity, his freedom, and even his identity as a son. He has ruined his life and become like an outcast, totally separated from all that is good.

Separated from the Father

Now you may think that you’ve never behaved like the prodigal son, but I want to tell you that there is a younger son in all of us. In fact the world we live in is in a state of rebellion against God. Each of us is born into sin, rejecting God and His ways, and living in selfishness.

In the parable the son asked for his inheritance early. This young man was saying to his father, I don’t want you or your rules. Just give me my money and let me live my own life. It was as if he was wishing that his father was dead. Many of us live as though we want things from God, but we don’t actually want Him in our lives. In Africa today, many of our people have left the disciplined life of the village for the excitement and pleasures of the city. They spend their money

9

God’s Deliverance

But Deliver Us from the Evil One

Watch the video [Deliverance and Freedom](#)

There is evil in the world around us. Broken relationships, injustice, suffering, and death affect every individual. The evil systems of this world, the temptations of our flesh, and the activity of the devil are great enemies of our souls.

But the good news is that Jesus Christ has overcome evil, and God can deliver us. We do not need to be afraid, but we can learn to walk in the power and victory of God through Jesus Christ.

This week we will learn more about Jesus’ power over evil and how God can deliver us from evil too.

Read Luke 8:26-39 (*Jesus Casts out demons*)



Discussion Questions

- How did evil and demons affect the man in this story? In what ways does evil operate in your community today?
- Is there anything in your life that is binding you and preventing you from living for God? Sinful thoughts, habits, or addictions?
- Are you ready to come to Jesus and invite Him to be your Deliverer? Pray for one another in your group.



Habit: Silaha za Mungu (*The Armor of God*)

God can equip you and make you strong for spiritual battle. Read through Ephesians 6:10-18 and reflect on the armor and weapons that God provides. Look at the image of the warrior on page 52. Read the descriptions of the armor and prayerfully apply each element of armor over yourself.



“A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.”

-Luke 15:13 (NLT)

on alcohol, discos, and sex and find that they end up empty and broken.

The prodigal son really got lost. And for many people today you may be thinking that I’m lost, there’s nothing that can be done, I’m hopeless. But I’m looking at that young man in Jesus’ parable. He had sold literally everything. He had disrespected his father. He had no more inheritance. It was the worst of situations.

The Decision to Come Home

He sat and said to himself, my father has workers and these workers enjoy better opportunities and a better life than what I have here. I think it is a lesson which says we can

turn around no matter how far we have gone and come back to the Father. It is a message of hope. It is a message of a second chance. The Bible says: “So he got up and went to his father.”

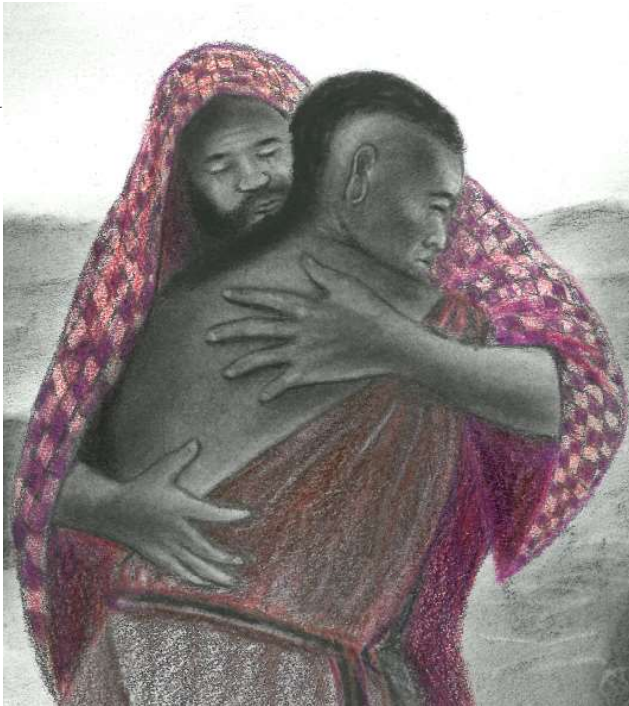
The son made a decision to go home, and we can make that decision too. We have to reach that point where we decide to turn our back on our sin and set off for the Father. When you look at the story of the prodigal son you learn that no matter how far you go, the love of the Father is always open for you to come back home. God is able to redeem that which is lost and even lost in a terrible way and bring that person back. God is waiting for you, and He is willing to receive you back.

Experiencing The Father’s Love

Jesus uses this parable to teach us about our Heavenly Father’s love. The father honored the son’s request even though it was shameful. The father looked for the son even while he was a long way off. The father’s heart was filled with compassion for his lost son. The father ran to his son and embraced him. And the

father restored the son and invited him into a celebration and a new life. When we turn to the Father through Jesus Christ, God is ready to embrace you, to call you His child.

As the son comes home he is given three signs of sonship: a robe, a ring, and sandals on his feet. When the robe is wrapped around his shoulders, the father is covering his son with his love and protection. He is saying the boy is restored to his full position as a son. He is no longer clothed in rags, but now has the dignity of the righteous father. A ring is placed on the boy's finger as a symbol of the father's riches and the father's authority being given to the son. The son can now exercise the father's authority to do good in the land. And while the prodigal son had come home without any shoes, the Father says he is not to be treated as a servant or a slave, but as a



son. The sandals will not only protect his steps, but they are to help him to set out on a new way of life. The son who was lost is now found, and though he was dead in sin he is now brought to life. The community celebrates his return with a feast.

Living as Children of God

When you look at the whole scheme of the Lord's Prayer it begins with the person of God, Our Father who Art in Heaven. Then it comes to the purity of God or the holiness of God. God's relation-

by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."

Jesus shifts the focus from the enemy's provision of temporal bread that will satisfy momentarily to eternal bread that whoever feeds on shall "hunger no more". When the enemy parades worldly possession before us; shift your focus to Jehovah Jireh who is our eternal provider. Jesus says ask, seek and knock (Matthew 7:7) from the Father who provides.

Responding to the second temptation to worship the devil in exchange for worldly kingdoms and authority, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:13 "You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him..." Again Christ shifts the focus from temporal kingdoms and authority to God who is the Supreme Authority and the Creator and owner of all. Christ acknowledged the place of God as the Supreme above all kingdoms and authority.

Satan the deceiver, notices Jesus' strength in knowledge and use of Scripture and imitates likewise by quoting Psalm 91:11-12 that "... He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear

you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone." This reminds me of the classic lines boys use to lure Christian girls into "sex", that the Bible commands us to, "Love one another".

While the scriptural quote is true the context is deceptive and a lie. Psalm 91 talks about the safety of those who abide in the presence of God. Jesus was in the presence of "Satan" trying to push Jesus into a "suicidal" attempt of throwing Himself down. How often Satan has lied to many that by one jump from a building all your pain and sorrow will be gone forever. Likewise, while the Bible commands us to love one another, it only permits sex among those who are appropriately joined in matrimony.

In summary, Jesus relied on and was led by God's Spirit. And He overcame all of the devil's temptations through God's Word. God can also help us to overcome temptation as we submit to Him each day of our lives. Look to Jesus and find the grace, wisdom and strength to overcome temptation.

self has robbed the church and our nation of servant leaders, when “Pride” pushes leaders to be served and not to serve.

The Worthiness of Temptation

The word in the New Testament that is translated “temptation” has the idea of testing metal to determine if it is genuine, true, and pure. When the Christian believer thinks of temptation, there is need to change one’s perspective. Rather than seeing the “devil” near, let’s consider temptation as a process that leads to an outcome. Every baker puts the dough in the oven and pierces the cake with a sharp object to help them know if the cake is well cooked from the inside. When cooked well the cake is served to all, but if uncooked the cake is thrown away. Temptation can lead one to “fail”, but it can also help us draw nearer to God to rely on His strength and provision so that we become stronger in Him.

Our Response to Temptation

We can either respond to temptation with faithfulness to God and His Word or by disobeying God and running after false

pleasures and empty promises that will ultimately hurt and trap us. Notice how Jesus integrates the knowledge of God’s Word and puts the Word into practice to defeat the devil’s advances. It is during temptation that the knowledge of God’s Word is put into practice through obedience.

With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”

-Psalm 119:10-11

Weapons to Face Temptation

Jesus used God’s Word to counter the Devil’s temptations. He exposed the devil’s promises as false and contrary to God’s Word and God’s purposes for His people.

To deflect the first temptation of commanding stone to bread Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 where the author reminds the Israelites the meaning of manna from heaven. He says “...So God humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live

“while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.”

-Luke 15:20 (NLT)

ship with us is a holy relationship. We call it holy love.

Once we return to the father we are not meant to keep sinning. We are not to stay destroyed in sin or to live a failing life. We are meant to live a victorious, holy life as true children of God.

The Bible puts it clearly, “be ye holy for I am Holy.” In purifying our relationship with Him and our relationship with others, God invites us to be holy as He is holy.

The Bible calls us to a life of holiness and living a life of total love. It is the best of what Christianity is intended to be. You ask me what holiness is. The best way of describing holiness is to love God with all

your heart, mind, and strength and out of that vertical love with the Father you then have the horizontal love for your neighbor as yourself. This is the celebration of the Father’s love. It not only rescues us from sin and death, it moves us into a life of holiness.



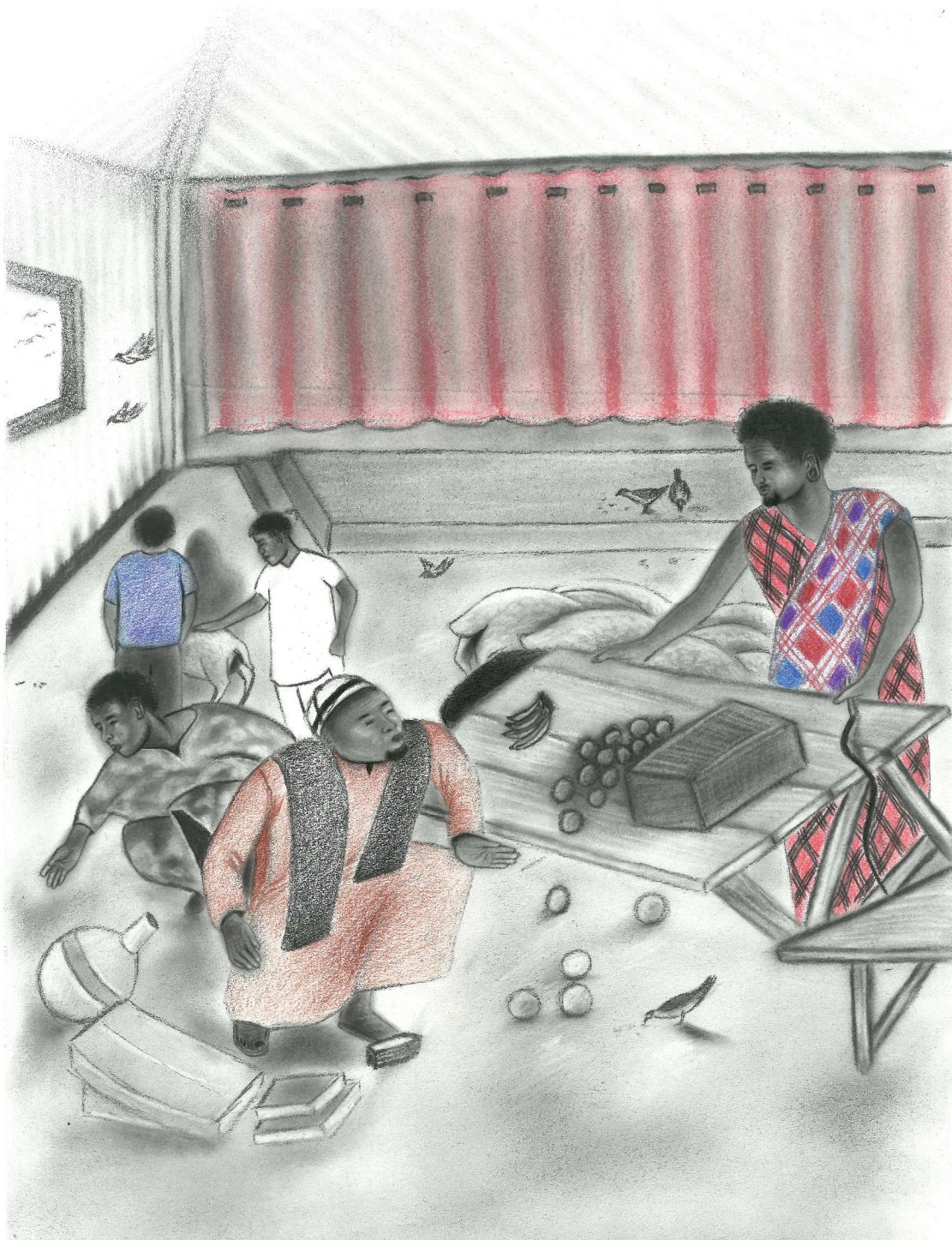
Reflect:

Is there any way in which God is calling you to come back home?



Pray:

Talk to God about what you’ve been learning this week. Pray to God as your Heavenly Father and ask Him to let you experience His love, forgiveness, and embrace. Ask God to help you to live a holy and victorious life.



if He would bow low to worship the devil.

3. *The pride of life* refers to self-worship or boasting about what one has or does. After Jesus refuses to worship the devil, it seems the tempter shifts the focus to self-worship, by enticing Jesus to a self-confidence of His divine abilities to defy the laws of nature and “throw” Himself to the ground, probably provoking Him “aren’t you God?” and of course the angels would attend to Jesus!

“For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.” -1 John 2:16

Learning from the Old Testament, the children of Israel passed through the wilderness for a season to wean them from their “Egyptian influences and habits” until they had fully embraced the law of Yahweh that would govern their relationship with God and their neighbors in readiness to enter and occupy the promised Land. “Wilderness” moments not only help strengthen the individual for future conquests but also deepens one’s reliance and rela-

tionship with God.

Besides, God’s leading one into the “wilderness” experience, James the apostle cautions the Christian against blaming God as our source of temptation but rather to watch out that each one is “...lured and enticed by one’s own desire” (James 1:14). James summarizes the sequence in yielding to temptation as: Desire Delivers Sin; Sin Matures to Death.

Similarly, every Christian believer will face, is facing or has just come out of a temptation. Learning from Jesus our Lord, being tempted is not sin but yielding to the tempter is sin. The avenues of our temptation may be our “Possession, Power or Pride.” We live in a culture that demands and promotes instant gratification and is impatient to wait upon God’s provision. The desire to own property like land or housing has led many to engage in corrupt or unjust acquisition. The hunger for “Power” has left leaders refusing to hand over their offices even when their terms are expired. And the worship of



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the following article
by Rev. Meshack Habib



Readiness for Temptation

In our Bible passage we learn that Jesus was led by God's Spirit into the wilderness where He faced temptation.

Sometimes God can lead us into testing and sometimes we take ourselves there. God's provision may expose us to circumstances or scenarios that help shade off our undesired traits and help us to become more like Jesus. It is helpful for us to consider our vulnerable circumstances and environments. What are the situations that lead you into temptation?

Luke tells us that "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit ...was led by the Spirit."

Probably the greatest undoing of the Christian today is not the magnitude of temptation but our lack of preparedness. Christ was well ready for the encounter He was about to face. Oh that like Jesus we would be "full of the Holy Spirit" that when the enemy comes with temptation, we would withstand because

we are strong enough and our relationship with God is sure enough.

The Reality of Temptation

We should expect to face temptation in life, and God may lead us into specific times of trial and testing.

Bible scholars have generally divided Jesus' temptation into three categories:

1. *The lust of the flesh* refers to the quick gratification of our physical desires. Could Jesus be satisfied by His Father in His most vulnerable state of hunger and His body's need for food? Would He wait upon God's providence or yield to the temptation to command the stone to become bread?

2. *The lust of the eyes* refers to sinful desires to have things that we see such as money, material possessions, or power. The devil showed Jesus things that were very appealing, the splendor of "all the kingdoms of the world." He offered to give it all to Jesus

3

God's Holiness

Hallowed be Your Name

Watch the video [Understanding Holiness](#)

In the Lord's Prayer, we ask that God's name be "hallowed." This means that we are praying for God's holiness and glory to be seen, and that people everywhere would honor and worship God as He is due. This week we will reflect together on God's holiness and how Jesus is concerned with His Father's holiness as well as our own.

Bible Study Method

A practical way to study the Bible is to follow these three steps:

Look: What does the text say?

Learn: What does the text mean?

Live: How do I respond?

In your group, read aloud John 2:13-25.
Study the passage by following the three steps:



Look: Read carefully and gather the facts from the text. Ask questions like Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?

Learn: What does the author intend to communicate? What are the main messages of the passage? What have you learned?

Live: How can you apply what you've learned in this passage to your everyday life? What steps is God calling you to take?



Habit: Nyimbo za Sifa na Kuabudu (*Songs of Worship*)

Hallow the name of God by reflecting on His holiness. Ephesians 5:19-20 invites us to sing Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs to worship God. This week read a Psalm each day. Do you have any favorite spiritual songs? Listen and sing along to music that celebrates the holiness of God.



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the following article
by Rev. Harrison Mungai Macharia



The Holiness of God

One of the most striking descriptions of God that we find in the Bible is that He is holy. When we hear the word holy, we might get the idea of moral purity or sinlessness and that is correct but the word means much more – it means ‘separate’, ‘distinct’ or ‘unique’. This means that God is unlike any other person or being. When Moses met God in Exodus 3, He (God) introduced himself in a way that would seem rude if it came from a friend: “I Am Who I Am”. Yet it is indeed fitting coming from God to say that because there is no one like Him and there is no comparison to Him. It is no surprise therefore that the first four commandments echo this unique nature of God. That He alone is to be worshipped. That we should have no one else or anything else elevated to the same level with Him. That His name is to be honored and His Sabbath day is to be set aside.

The Challenge of Idolatry

Unfortunately, our fallen human nature is the very opposite. Our most distinct quality is that we are sinful. The great French reformer John Calvin said that our hearts are like a factory that manufactures idols by the minute. Sin is idolatry. It involves putting things and people far above God and in direct rebellion to His Word. Sin is when we don’t think highly about God and instead put ourselves, our needs and cravings above Him. Therefore, God’s name is dishonored not only when we use it in vain but also when we ignore it and live like God doesn’t exist. This is what was happening when Jesus appeared in the temple for Passover.

The sin in John 2 is not just that the Jews were using the temple like a market place but that God had stopped being at the heart of their lives. The temple had become like any other building in Israel and no longer a symbol of God’s dwelling among them. The Passover was no longer a

8

God’s Protection

And Lead Us Not into Temptation

Watch the video [Dealing with Temptation](#)

This week we’ll explore how the devil tried to tempt Jesus to sin, and what we can learn from this encounter.

Read aloud Luke 4:1-14



Bible Study

Use the Bible Study method described on page 16 to study this passage together as a group. Remember the three steps: Look, Learn, and Live.

Discussion Questions

- What temptations and tests do you face in your life?
- When are you most vulnerable to temptation?
- What steps is God calling you to take to find victory over temptation?



Habit: Kufunga (*Fasting*)

Just as Jesus fasted in the wilderness, God can use the habit of fasting to help you focus your prayers, hear from the Lord when making decisions, battle temptation, or intercede on behalf of others. Practice the habit of fasting by giving up eating for a meal, a day, or longer as God directs you and as appropriate for your health.



“But Jesus didn’t trust them, because he knew all about people. No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person’s heart.”

-John 2:24-25 (NLT)

pointer to God’s salvation in the past but merely a consumer holiday like what the Christmas season has become for many today. Although everything indicated that the people were religious, God was not really in the picture. It is not surprising then to see the reaction Jesus gets in this passage – the people did not immediately repent and turn away from their desecration of the temple, instead their leaders get angry asking who Jesus thinks he is to interfere with their business.

Hallowed Be Your Name

Is God’s name hallowed or held in high regard in our lives? What idols in our lives are stopping us from honoring God? Are we caught up in our businesses so much so that God has no place in our lives?

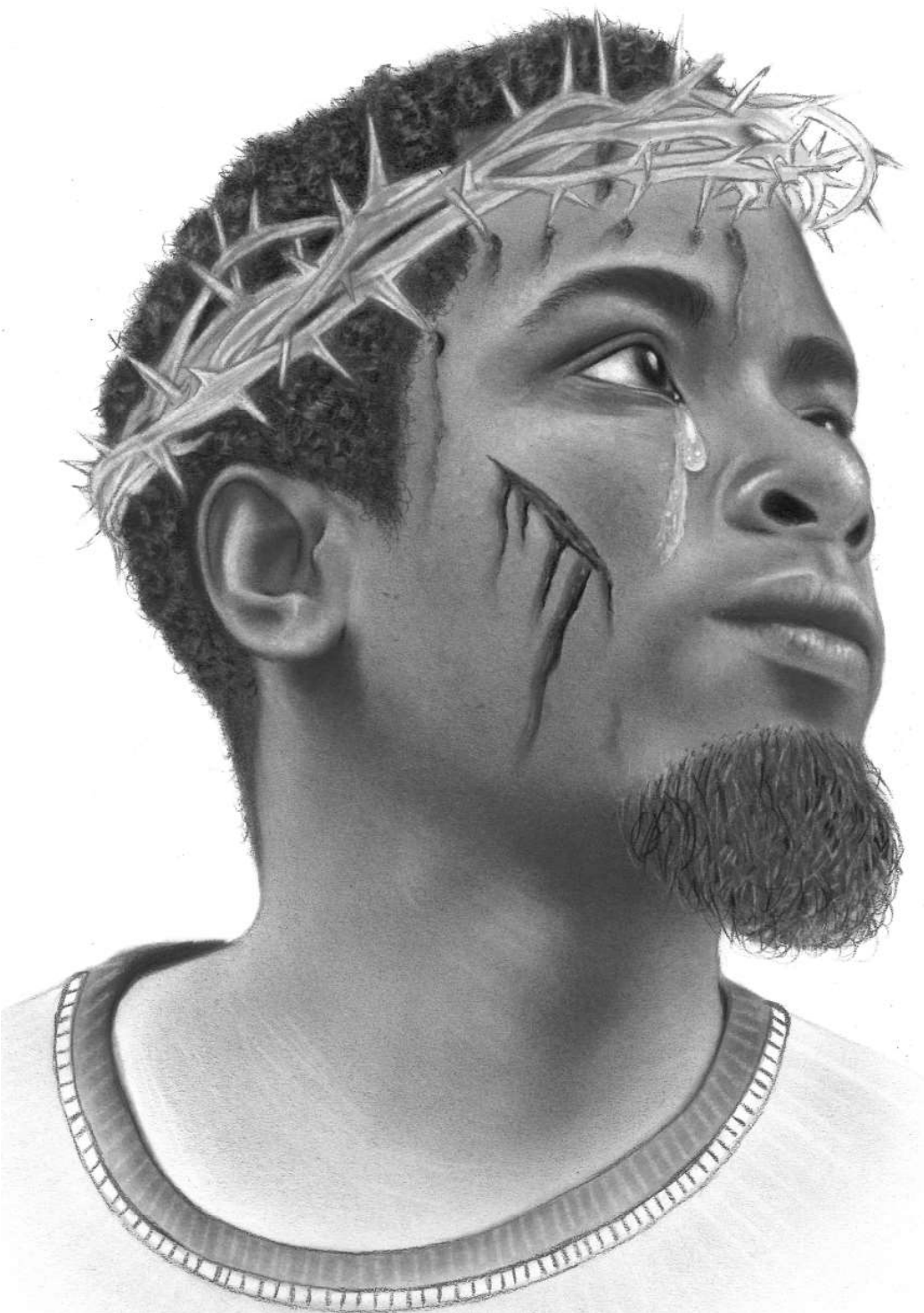
Is it possible we just speak a lot about God and yet He is not really at the center any more?

My prayer for you and I is that we would have a renewed zeal for God and that we would indeed hold His name in high regard for indeed that is what worship truly is. May God’s name be hallowed in our lives, in our homes and in our work. May the Lord help us so that we will not have the appearance of godliness without any power, but that we will experience the beauty and power of God’s holiness at work within us.



An Exercise for Your Heart

In our passage we learn that Jesus knows what is in each person’s heart (2:25). What is in your heart? Is there anything that needs to be cleaned out? If Jesus were to visit you what would He say? Reflect on these questions and invite God to clean out your heart.



A Prison of Pain

The situation lasted for about three years, and I kept hoping for an apology that wasn't to come. As much as I felt I was the one wronged, holding on to the pain was not making me healthy or happy. I felt stuck and unable to move beyond the point of pain, but at the same time I was convicted while praying the Lord's prayer specifically the part that says "forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." I remember asking the Lord to help me forgive, I couldn't do it on my own, I didn't know where to begin.

The Gift of Forgiveness

One day I reached out to my former friend in an attempt to reconcile. Things didn't go as I hoped - I didn't get an apology, but one thing was different, I felt the Lord lifting the burden from me.

Even though I was disappointed, it seemed like the anger was fading away. I felt stronger and more in control of my emotions. I walked away that day, not with what I wanted but with what I needed. My friend didn't apologize until years later but that day I felt like healing had begun, I felt

"forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."

-Matthew 18:27

strong enough to let go of my expectations, I felt strengthened by the Lord and slowly the weight of anger started to fall. Eventually I was able to give the Lord my expectation for an apology, and in exchange I received strength to choose joy even when things were not going my way.

I've realized that forgiveness is a gift from God. I've also learned that forgiveness is a gift for me. The decision to forgive healed me. I am not quite sure how it benefited my friend, but I know that the peace and healing within brought back joy and an abundance of strength to withstand hardships. Today I know for sure that forgiveness is a gift that actually benefits me the giver. By God's grace, I practice it quite frequently, I love reaping the benefits.

convicted, and come to God in repentance.

God's mercy leads us to forgiveness. When we experience God's mercy and recognize the cost He paid for our sin, we are led to extend forgiveness to others.

We're encouraged to show this kind of unconditional love as we settle our wrong-doings or trespasses with our brothers, friends, fellow workers, and neighbours. As we forgive one another the kingdom of God comes in our midst.



A Story of Forgiveness

Testimony by Lucy Amina Chaves



When I was younger, I thought forgiveness was an easy thing, if someone did something wrong all they had to do was say "sorry" and that was the end of the story. As I grew older, I began to realize that forgiveness isn't always so simple - it is a journey, one best walked with Christ. This lesson did not come easy.

A Painful Experience

I once had a very dear friend who was more like a sibling than a friend to me. But one day she started a rumor about me. The rumor was not only false; it was one of the most painful things I've ever experienced. In one moment I lost my bosom buddy as well as my reputation.

This also happened to be the time when I was preparing for my wedding. How was I going to do this without my dearest friend? I felt betrayed. How could the most joyous period of my life also be the worst?

Needless to say, things went sour very quickly, and the rumors kept spreading like a bad tumor. It is hard to explain how I felt, I just remember shaking with anger every time I saw my friend. I would feel the frustration and could barely speak. It was at this point that I knew forgiveness was hard; I was unable to forgive on my own.

4

God's Reign and Our Redemption

Your Kingdom Come

Watch the video [The Reign of the King](#)

What is God's kingdom and how do we experience it? In this session we will learn together about God's reign and how God's kingdom comes through Jesus Christ.

Read aloud Matthew 27:11-31



Discussion Questions

Have you invited Jesus to be King of your life? Share your story with the others in your group. Tell them about when you made your decision for Jesus and what it means for you. If you've not yet accepted Jesus as your King, what is holding you back? Take turns sharing in your group and then pray for one another.



Habit: Kupumua Kiroho (*Spiritual Breathing*)

Begin each day this week by asking God to reign in your heart. "Breathe out" by confessing any known sins or wrongful attitudes or actions. Look at the picture of Jesus and recognize that he suffered the full penalty for your sins. Then "Breathe in" by inviting God to rule in your heart and be your true King.



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the article and testimony

Article by Rev. Capt. Livingstone Nyanje



Your Kingdom Come

God desires that His kingdom will break into your life as well as mine. But the kingdom of God does not come through the normal systems of our world. It does not arrive through politics or education or a new job. The kingdom of God comes to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

Matthew's gospel begins with the birth of Jesus, God's promised King. Jesus' coming had been prophesied for thousands of years. From the royal line of David, Jesus came to "save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

In Matthew 2 the wise men ask, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?" When Jesus started His ministry he declared that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). Throughout His life and ministry, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God, and He demonstrated God's Kingdom

in action. But Jesus was not the type of king that people expected. This King will be King over all the earth. His kingdom is radically different than the kingdoms of the world, and it seems that Jesus' kingdom is opposed at every step of the way.

The King Delivers from Evil

In our passage for this week, Pilate tested Jesus by asking Him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" (Matthew 27:11). Pilate tested the might of Jesus by telling Him to defend Himself. He also gave Him an opportunity to deny being a king and escape the cross. But Jesus knew that there is only One who has power over death and life. Jesus knew that He cannot become a King simply because people are proposing Him to be one. For He knew He already was the King.

Jesus' trial before Pilate at the end of His life is similar to His temptation before Satan in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry. In Matthew 4, God's enemy, Satan, tells Jesus

be paid in a short time but required more than an entire lifetime of work. In his mercy, the king chose to forgive the servant unconditionally setting him free.

Jesus, who is our king, chose to pay the very high price for our debt of sin. We are sinners (Romans 3:23), and our penalty is death but the gift of God is

"Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt."

-Matthew 18:27

eternal life in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:23). The servant in the narrative did not deserve to be set free but the love and mercy of the king set him free. It is this kind of love that God gives us (John 3:16) and that sets us free from the bondage and slavery of sin. God had mercy on us and sent His only Son as a ransom for our sin. It is by grace that we can receive such a gift from God without any strings attached. We receive the offer given to us by believing in Jesus Christ and the work He did on the cross on our behalf.

The prison of unforgiveness

The servant who was forgiven did not regard the mercy that the king showed him. He took pride in himself; he saw himself as entitled. He went ahead and threw his fellow servant to prison for not paying what was owed him. What the fellow servant owed was little compared to what he owed. He forgot that he could have been behind bars in prison until he settled his debt with the king.

Because the man did not reflect on his own forgiveness, he failed to listen to the pleas of his fellow servant. His unforgiving heart led him to prison.

The love of God should be our example

The moral and spiritual lesson we can learn from this narrative is that we can choose to forgive or we can imprison ourselves through unforgiveness. Christians are brethren in Christ, and they ought to forgive one another just as God has forgiven each one of them. This does not apply to Christians alone; it should extend to those who do not have a relationship with God so that they can too think about such a great love, be



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the article and testimony
Article by Professor Josephine Mutuku



How many times shall I forgive my brother?

Peter posed this question to Jesus in Matthew 18:22. He thought he was being generous by offering to forgive up to seven times. But Jesus' response to Peter's question surprises His audience. He offers a new perspective of forgiveness, that one should forgive seventy-seven times the sins of his fellow brother.

Peter's question exposes his heart. Peter did not consider that he might sin against his brother. Like most of us, he was more concerned with being wronged by others than with his own sin.

Jesus' response looks impossible to many. The number of times that one should forgive his brother is unlimited. It can be likened to the number of times that God can avenge for the sins of someone (Gen. 4:24). Forgiveness should be all the time. Love covers multitudes of sin, and where there is love, there are no limits of forgiveness. A constant forgiveness helps us overcome sin in our own lives.

How great is our debt?

The king in this parable decided to settle accounts with his servants, and his verdict was that anyone who was unable to pay whatever amount he owed the king would be sold off. The debt that the servant owed was ten thousand talents, a huge amount that the servant was unable to pay.

We owe God our lives. The penalty for sin is death, and because of our sin and the sin committed by our forefathers in the Garden of Eden, we are required to settle our debt of sin with our master by death (Gen. 2:15-17). God has already judged sin and we must pay its equivalent. This does not mean that God is not fair, His justice and righteousness demands that we pay the penalty.

Who will settle our debt of sin?

The servant was at the judgment of the king to decide his fate. His debt could not

“From then on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.’”

-Matthew 4:17 (NLT)

to jump down for it is written “He will command His angels concerning you and with their hands they will support you lest you dash your foot against stone.” Satan uses people, especially those in authority, to twist God's Word in order to trick and enslave people.

Remember how he tricked Eve? Satan asked her, “Did God say that you are not allowed to eat any of the fruit from the trees in the garden?” (Genesis 3:1) Satan knew what God had said to Adam, but he changed it just a little. Satan is a liar and a deceiver. Satan made people think that they should demand that God perform miracles to prove Himself to them. Satan tries to draw their attention to the spectacular and the miraculous and at the same time tries to

keep them from giving attention to what God really says in His Word. Satan told Jesus to throw Himself down from the temple to test God who had promised to take care of His Son.

Satan always comes at a time when there is real need in your life. When you are in desperate situations is when quick solutions come your way. But it is good to pay attention to what the Scripture says about the situation you find yourself in. Can you pause for a moment and reflect on this?

How many times have you shown a faithless move in your life? When was your last time you failed to resist a temptation?

Pilate, like Satan, tried to offer Jesus an easy way out, but it was really a trick and a trap. Satan could falsely offer Jesus control over the people in this world because when Adam rebelled against God and followed Satan, Satan became the god of this world. Satan gained influence over the minds of the people of the world so he could lead them to do the evil things he had planned.

Who is King of Your Life?

Jesus came to overthrow all the evil powers of this world and to rescue us from sin. And so Jesus' journey of kingship took Him to the cross. Jesus was mocked. He was beaten. He was given a crown of thorns. Jesus then suffered and died on the cross with a sign placed above His head that read: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:37). On the cross, Jesus Christ defeated Satan and overcame death. He cancelled the penalty of sin that was awaiting humanity. Jesus now offers this freedom to those

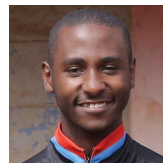
who accept Him as Lord and Saviour. He promises eternal life to those who believe in Him. Are you one?

Have you received Jesus as your King? Have you invited Him to save you from your sin, from evil, and from death? If you've never made that decision, today can be the day where the kingdom of God breaks through into your life. Jesus died for you to pay the penalty for your sins, and He rose again from the dead to offer you new and eternal life with Him. Jesus is the true King. Will you ask Him to reign as King in your heart and in your life?



A Journey of Faith

Testimony by Matthew Gitau



When I was young I didn't attend church because my mum and I were constantly moving. We didn't have a place to stay and we had other financial problems. But we had a Gideon's international Bible and another publication which had the book of Revelation written in it. I used to read those two books and I loved reading them, but I really didn't

understand well what I was reading.

One thing I enjoyed about growing up in Kenya is that most people fear God, from little children to senior citizens. They fear God and respect His Name even if they don't really know Him. As a child people told me that God sees you if you do something bad. I didn't want

7

God's Mercy

And Forgive Us Our Sins

as We Forgive Those who Sin Against Us

Watch the video [God's Abundant Mercy](#)

Our God is rich in mercy. He offers abundant mercy and grace, but they are not cheap. A great price has been paid for forgiveness. This week we will learn about God's forgiveness and how He calls us to forgive others in His name.

Read Matthew 18:21-35 (The Unforgiving Servant)



Discussion Questions

- How often does Jesus say we should forgive others?
- How great was the debt owed to the master in the story?
- What is the relationship between mercy and forgiveness in this passage?
- Have you experienced healing through forgiveness?
- Is there someone you have hurt or who has hurt you? What steps can you take to ask for forgiveness or to offer forgiveness?

Opportunity

If you've never asked God for forgiveness, would you turn to God in prayer now? Confess your sins and your need for God. Ask God to forgive you and look on you with mercy because of Jesus and what Jesus did on the cross.



Habit: Kukiri Dhambi (*Confession of Sin*)

Watch the bonus video on *Forgiveness and Healing*. Practice confessing your sins daily. When struggling with a recurring sin, find a trustworthy brother or sister in Christ whom you can confidentially confess your sins to. When we bring sin into the light we can receive the help from other believers in battling sin.



to get in trouble so that alone made me to behave because I didn't want God to "see me."

A New Way of Life

I decided to give my life to Jesus Christ when I was going through a very difficult point in my life. I didn't have a job. I couldn't help my mum who also wasn't working because she was sick most of the time. I thought before I completely give up in life let me try God. Because Jesus saves from sin, He has power over everything, He will make my life better I thought.

About this time I was invited to join a class that met at a local church. It was here that I learned about repentance and the cross. Repentance to me means to turn from sin and return to God. The cross is a symbol of death and hope all at the same time. Jesus died and rose from the dead. Likewise, our old nature must die so that we can live as a brand-new creation in Christ. When I made a decision to make Jesus my King I didn't make a decision to add God to my life. It was a decision to re-

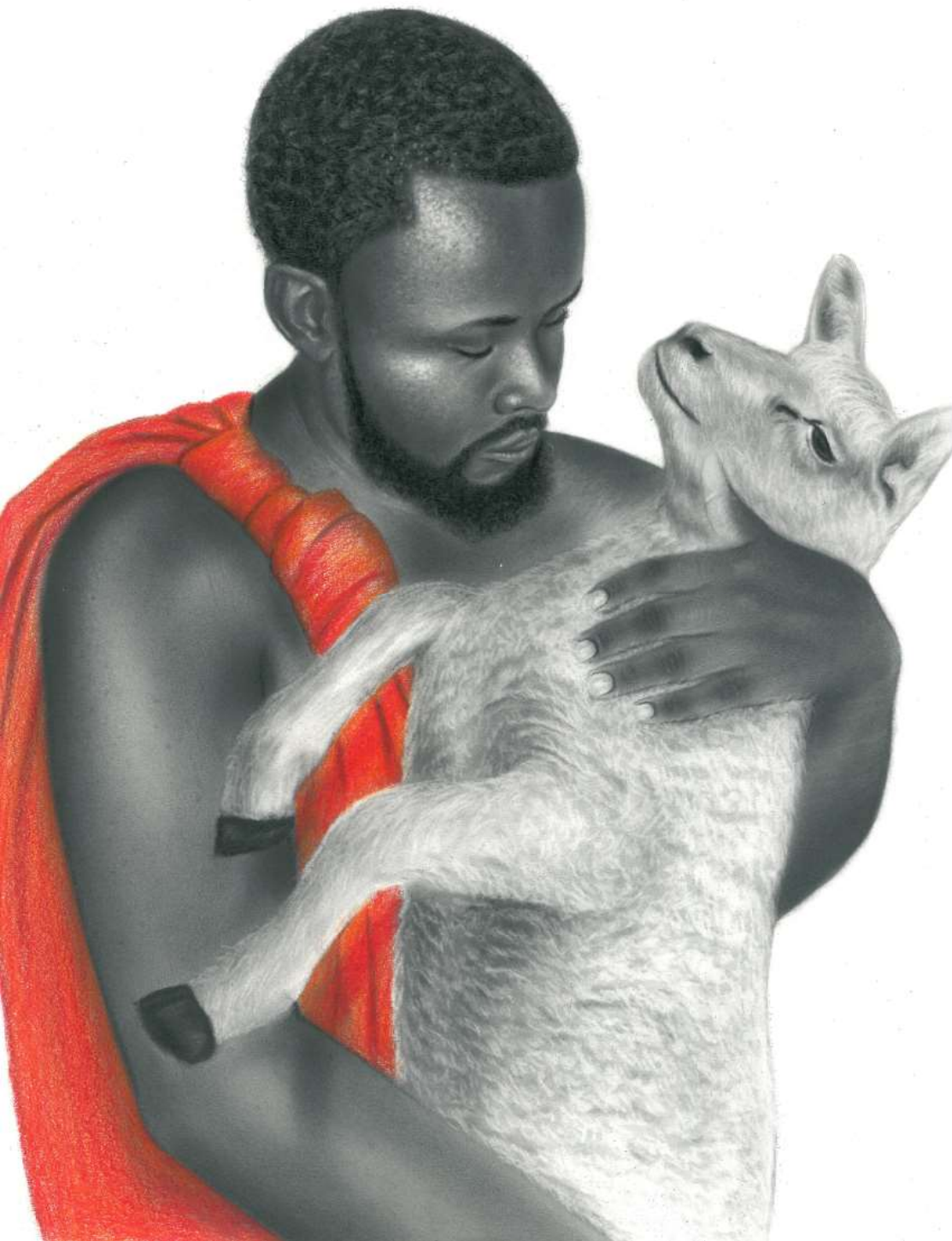
structure my life around God. It was a fundamental change in my life. Jesus saves me by His grace. He died and rose again just to pay the price for my sins.

I was baptized and became a member of the church. I also got an opportunity to serve in the church each week. When I got to know Jesus as my Savior it affected my daily life. I found that I started hating some of the things I used to do. I became more conscious of my behaviour. Knowing God and His Holiness has profoundly deepened my love and thanks and appreciation of what Jesus did for us! It has also helped me to fear Him and pursue righteousness. I compare my life before and after I got saved, and I can truly say that after I received Christ as my Saviour I have seen favor after favor. To call God my Father gives me joy, and knowing I can relate with Him is so comforting.



Mwambie Mtu
(Tell Someone)

Have you made a decision for Jesus Christ either recently or in the past? Share your story with someone else this week.



needs even before we mention them. But He wants each of us to believe in Him as the Bread of Life. Then, when circumstances are beyond our control, we can expect Him to take care of our physical needs, as He sees best. We can trust Jesus to provide for us, for He is the Lord of all creation.

“In the spiritual realm, each individual eats directly from Christ.”

A Testimony of God’s Provision

I have experienced God’s provision in many ways in my own life, but one way that was quite practical was on the eve of Christmas in December 2003. My husband had died earlier that year, and I had only 200 KES to my name. As a widow I was torn between giving thanks to God with this money or buying food for my little children to eat on Christmas day. I made this prayer at night, “God may you provide for us tomorrow in Your own way so that my children do not feel the

absence of their father who has been providing for us.”

In the morning we prepared and went to church. My heart was so troubled, because I thought we would have nothing to eat for Christmas. . . but I gave thanks to God and placed my 200 KES in the offering. My older daughter was only 4 years old, and she asked me on our way back home, “mum what are we going to eat for Christmas?” I found tears rolling down my cheeks, but I answered her, “God has been providing for us, even today He will provide for us.” Alas! As we were passing by my step-mother-in-law’s home, she had just arrived from Mombasa. She called my older daughter who was named after her mother-in-law. My daughter went with my niece. Then they both came back with two heavy cartons loaded with shopping of Christmas goodies and a gift of 20,000 KES. This was indeed God’s provision. God has always provided for me, even in very difficult times, and I have learnt to give thanks to God in everything.



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the following article
by Rev. Capt. Carolyn Adhola



Will God Feed His People?

This gospel of John 6:1-15 records Jesus' feeding of many people with very little. Jesus seemed to have known the crowd's needs. He doesn't ask where they could get food for all these people. He asks where they could "buy" food. Philip's answer could have been, "there are a lot of people, but nothing is difficult for you, Lord."

However, Philip's response shows that he was thinking only in terms of money and the marketplace, for he told Jesus that even if each of the people took only a small piece of bread, it would take more than two hundred denarii to feed them. Let's think about it in the Kenyan context. There are 5,000 men. To feed everyone, even at the lowest of 100 KES per meal, it would take 500,000 KES. This was a huge sum and it must have seemed impossible to the disciples.

The Bread of Life

Did Jesus need a boy's lunch in order to perform this kind

of miracle? Absolutely not. He had the power of God the Father. He could have literally rained down manna from heaven. But I believe that this young boy's sacrifice was at the heart of this great miracle. It was to show the nature of hospitality in the young boy's heart. God multiplies our resources when we give.

Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks and distributed to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish (6:11). John focuses on Jesus as the initial distributor because he links this feeding to spiritual feeding in the discourse that follows (6:26-71). In the spiritual realm, each individual eats directly from Christ, the Bread of Life. In spite of the large number of people and the limited resources, Jesus fed them all until each was satisfied (6:12-13).

Jesus taught us to pray "Give us this day our daily bread." I believe that Jesus knows our

5

God's Will and His Voice


Your Will Be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven

Watch the video [Seeking God's Will](#)

Looking at the world around us, it can be easy to get discouraged by the challenges and troubles that we see. But the God who created the heavens and the earth has a good plan and purpose for your life, and He has the power to bring it about. So how do we know what God's will is?

The Bible teaches us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. We discover God's will and purposes for our life as we listen to His voice and follow Him day by day.

This week we will learn about listening to God's voice and understanding His will. You'll learn to trust in Jesus as the Shepherd of your life and seek God's will in your life, your families, and in the world around you.

Read aloud John 10:1-16 

Bible Study

Use the Look, Learn, and Live Bible Study method described on page 16 to study this passage together as a group.



Habit: Kusikiliza na Kujisalimisha (*Listening to God*)

Spend time with God each day this week through His Word, prayer, and fellowship with other believers. What is God speaking to you about? Write out a prayer of commitment to your Heavenly Father each day. Ask God for His will to be done, rather than your will to be done.



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the article and testimony
Article by Pastor Geoffrey Maritim



The Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd is unlike cattle rustlers or bandits that commonly raid in some parts of Africa. A rustler invades rather than getting into the pen. They do so during the wrong time, mainly at night. Neither do they go in from the gate, but they enter from any or every direction. As they enter in, they pull down the enclosure or jump over it. Worse still, the animals are harassed and driven out forcefully without considering the well-being of the pregnant or young ones. The creatures are then driven through rough terrain with no water or any form of feed on the way.

But Jesus is the Good Shepherd and the Door (John 10:1-13). He is the owner of the sheep who does the opposite of what bandits do. It is He who keeps the sheep secured in the pen in the first place. He hedges and leads His people. He leads his own to good spiritual food and drink, like a good

shepherd does to sheep. He loves, nourishes and protects His people. Other stories of Jesus' earthly ministry reveal that He is the builder of our faith. He led the disciples through experiences that revealed who He was. He protected their faith and lives from the enemy. He also leads, builds, and protects us. He put his life on the line for the sheep through dying on the cross, and He cares for us even now.

Called by Name

Like pastoralists who give a name to each of their livestock, Jesus knows His children by name. He knows their address. He knows what each needs as well as the things they go through. He cares and loves each of them. His children on the other hand recognize their Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. They discern the voice of the Lord through knowing what the Bible says. They know who He is and what He wants. They know that He is good, faithful, merciful, and holy.

6

God's Provision

Give Us Today Our Daily Food

Watch the video [Chakula Chetu](#)

This simple prayer, "Father, give us this day our daily food" is full of meaning. It points us to Our Heavenly Father as the source of all good things that human beings need daily to live.

Read aloud John 6:1-15



Bible Study

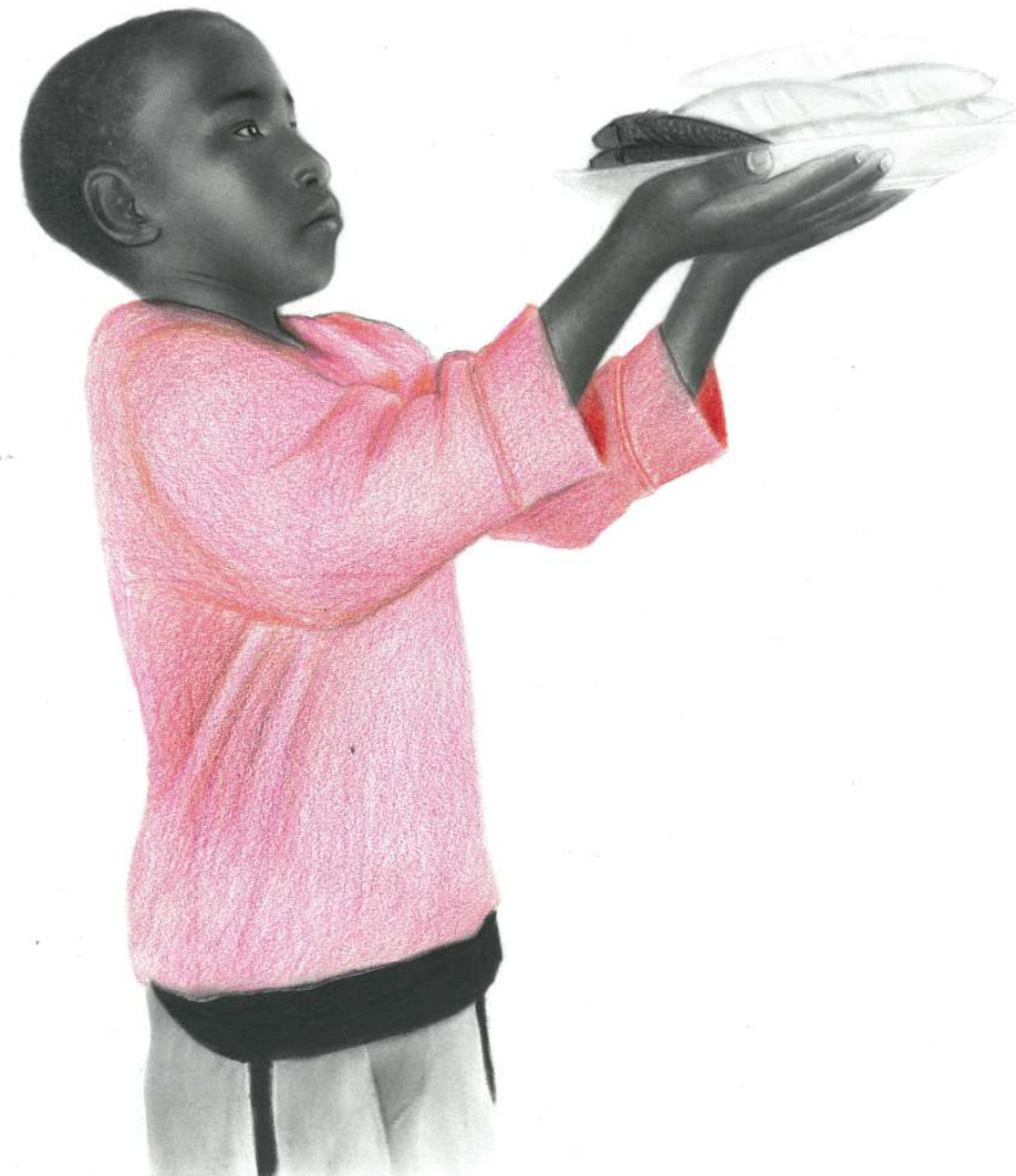
Use the Look, Learn, and Live Bible Study method described on page 16 to study this passage together as a group.

- What does this passage teach us about God as Provider?
- What do you learn from the boy in this story who brought his food to Jesus?
- Jesus cares for our needs and he engaged his disciples to serve food to the hungry. Is God calling you to help someone else in need?
- Are you concerned about a specific need in your life right now? Pray for one another that God would perfectly meet each of your physical and spiritual needs.



Habit: Ukarimu (*Generosity*)

The boy in the Bible story offered his bread and fish to Jesus. In the same way if we offer what we have to the Lord, He can use it to do amazing things. Ask God how you can be generous in giving your time, treasure, and talents. Look for opportunities to give generously to God and others this week and see what God does.



They know that He is the LORD above all other lords. They obey His commandment of love.

A Satisfying Life

Pastoralists guide their livestock to a place where there is pasture and water. They guide them away from dangerous terrain, wild animals and bandits. In the same way

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

- John 10:10

Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, leads his own away from destructive ways. He protects from those who hate us – the devil and demons. Moreover, He leads his own to a life of freedom and rest. He fulfills the purpose for His people. God’s will is to provide a full and satisfying life to all who follow Him.

The Thief’s Purpose

Rustlers steal livestock for slaughter or sale. The live-

stock are mishandled all the way. This manner of handling resembles what Satan does to people. The devil is full of hatred. His chief purpose is to see that people are robbed of anything good. He entices us but also instills fear, anger, bitterness, and all manner of pain. He separates people from the love of God, family, friends, and fellow Christians. In the end Satan’s intent is that people would experience everlasting separation from the life-giving God.

Voices that Lead Astray

There are many voices in the world today that can lead us astray. There are those who



claim to be representatives of Christ. Others even claim to be Christ. They are self-exalting but not Christ-exalting. These voices exploit or fleece God's people spiritually and materially. They stage manage miracles and signs. This is done by enrolling some people to fake sickness or paralysis. Crutches and wheelchairs are transported along with the trained people to crusades in stadiums and other places. Ignorant and innocent people are taught a gospel of works and material prosperity accompanied by fake signs instead of the true gospel of Jesus. It is a stealthy way in which even Christians are misled.

Listening to God's Voice

God's children are called to listen to God's voice and follow the Chief Shepherd alone. His voice utters true love. It is the voice of life and freedom through faith, love and holiness. There is no work we have to do in order to earn acceptance with God. Christ finished all on the cross. Life and peace with God are free gifts that are offered to us. It is unlike Satan's voice which offers false promises based on works, self-centered-

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep."

- John 10:14-15

ness, and exploitation. Furthermore, we are not to listen and follow several voices at the same time, as is common among many in Kenya. There are people who claim to follow Christ but also African traditional religion. Others follow Christ and Allah, Christ and New Age, or Christ and money, in addition to others.

Following God Day by Day

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks to us today. We can listen to God's voice and discover His will for our lives as we spend time with God each day. He is able and willing to guide us each day concerning His purpose for our lives. As we dwell in the place of prayer accompanied by the reading of the Bible, we will hear Him. Fel-

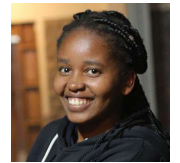
low believers and our Christian leaders assist us to hear God and follow His voice as well because

He speaks to them as well. God is good, loving and faithful to His children.



How God's Word Guides My Day

Testimony by Lillian Banice Makau



Spending time in the Bible helps me to hear from God and find direction for each day. God's Word has been a great source of encouragement to me as a child of God and a Christian. I get daily affirmations from different verses in the Bible which I have memorized and keep saying at the start of the day and during the day. My favorite is Philippians 4:13 which says, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

God's Strength for Each Day

When reading the Bible especially during my quiet time, I have taken notice that God speaks to me in different tones depending on the season. When God is speaking to my heart and mind, I am able to recognize that God is either rebuking, reproofing or instructing me through His Word about something in my life. If I fail to act

upon what He says, my heart is normally troubled till I heed to His word.

Different Bible stories give me comfort in the Lord. From my Sunday school days up to today I like reading and re-reading Bible stories. I find it a good way to stay connected to God besides being interesting. In my rough life experiences, I find myself recalling lessons from these stories which give me hope and faith that God is with me in it all.

Jesus taught us how to pray, and I am still learning how to pray through reading God's Word. Sometimes I pray to God through the prayers written in the Bible by different authors like Nehemiah. The Bible has helped me understand the Word of God in such a way that I find myself thinking about and quoting the Bible regularly.