

BIBLE FAITH EVANGELICAL MINISTRIES (BFEM)

Gospel headquarters, Akure, P.O. Box 1569

Weekly Bible Study Outline 2013 Series

TOPIC: YIELDING TO GOD'S GUIDANCE

Texts: Psalm 25: 1-22, Gen. 12: 1-5, Matthew 1:18-25

Throughout the entire scripture, one glaring thing is the way God leads His people from the creation of man, God always given him a instructions on what to do to prosper and live in peace. The guidance of God steer his children away from calamities and move them closer to His chest. In Genesis Chapter 2, not long after He created Adam, He guided him “..... of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die” Gen. 2: 16-17.

This instruction was to steer Adam clear of death. God leads men in the path of life from the days of old but the ultimate choice of yielding belongs to man. To yield is beyond obedience. It is a step forward. To yield to God is total surrender to His will without asking questions. To yield to God is to trust Him entirely believing that it is impossible for God to go wrong. The guidance of God may not appear right or sensible – but it is right because it is from God. What usually appear right before man often leads to his woes (Pro. 14:12). No man is wise or knowledgeable enough to understand fully the ways of life without God's guidance (Jer. 10:23).

Psalm 25 is a cry of David to God for deliverance from waywardness. He repeatedly pleaded to God to show him how to walk in His ways (vs. 4-5). He acknowledge the accuracy of God's instructions (vs. 8, 10) and testified to the blessings of yielding to Him (13-14). When the Lord instructed Abram to leave his country, the idea did not sound great, considering the wealth of the family and the fact that no specific destination was given to him. The instruction of God need not sound great but yielding to it will surely result in greatness.

Same applied to Joseph when he was contemplating to put his wife away. The instruction he received was odd but he obeyed. The result was great.

NATURE OF GOD'S GUIDANCE

1. **DIVINE** – God's instructions are from above and cannot be manipulated. They may be hard to understand but they are meant to be obeyed because God is Omniscience and Omnipotent. He knows all – an attribute no one else possesses on earth. Obeying God's instructions bring us to his joyful presence and the result is always brilliant testimony (Psalm 16:11).
2. **CLEAR** – God's instructions are usually clear for He is not a God of confusion and will never lead His own astray. For instance, should a believer marry an unbeliever? The instruction about this is clear enough in 2 Cor. 6:14-16.

3. **CONTINUOUS** – we need God every minute of our lives and His guidance gives us victory over every obstacle of life. God knows that the way of man is not in his hands so he guides us continually (Jer. 10:23, Psalm 48:14, Isaiah 58:11).
4. **GRADUAL** – we don't carry our two legs at the same time when we walk. Life journey is step by step. At every step or stage of life, we must look unto Him for guidance. He orders our steps and He is always delighted as we obey and fulfill His purposes in our lives. Psalm 37:23.
5. **STRANGE** – when Eve looked at the fruit God forbid her not to eat it was strange to her. How could God forbid her and Adam not to eat the fruit that was good for food, pleasant to the eyes and desirable to make one wise? The journey from Egypt to Canaan was not supposed to last for forty years. Yet God guided Israel through longer and tougher terrain to humble and test them in order to toughen them spiritually Deut. 8:2-3. God's guidance may result in hunger and even hardship yet it remains the way of God.

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TOPIC: **REMAINING FIT FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE**

Texts: 2 Tim. 2:14-26

One glaring thing about the lives of the early apostles was that none of them stood idle in the vineyard. They were all occupied for Christ and his kingdom in one way or the other. We learn from them that nobody is born again to be idle or onlooker while the harvest is so plenty and the labourers are few.

Today, many believers think they cannot be involved in God's service because they do not have special abilities. Some think they are not eloquent enough while some think only good preachers or those who see vision are fit for God's service. All these beliefs are wrong. Actually God does not look for people with special abilities or paper qualifications to work in the vineyard but willing hearts, willing to go out for Him. (I Cor. 1: 26-31). We must not allow our enemy, satan to rob us of the rewards and crowns waiting for those who diligently serve Him.

Every child of God who has given his life to God is fit to serve in God's vineyard. So the first qualification is the new birth experience. We are not fit for Christian service without this experience, no matter how nice, zealous or humanly qualified we are. Those working in God's vineyard without this experience are polluters as all they do in carnality will not yield spiritual fruits.

Carnality will give room for little sins here and there and therefore hinder fruitful harvest, carnality breeds inordinate ambition, selfish pursuit, greed and pride of life. God's will must be our ambition and services rendered to God and man must be done in total humility.

Keeping fit for Christian service requires that we separate ourselves from worldly entanglements and live a life of purity even in this impure world (2 Tim. 2:4, Isaiah 52:11). Those who find it difficult to obey God totally are not fit for God's service. Such will provoke God and end up as an outcast like Saul. To God, disobedience is an act of rebellion. Total submission is what God looks for in a man. Nobody chooses for God but He leads, directs and makes His will perfect in us. Wherever the Lord leads us, must be where our hearts will embrace.

Reliance on the grace of God and His power delights God in a worker. The earlier we realize human strength cannot accomplish anything in a spiritual vineyard, the better for us. When we are strong in grace, we shall be able to endure hardship and hold on to the anchor of Christ even in times of distress.

Since the work of God is about saving the souls of men, workers must have deep love for humanity and compassion for perishing souls for God does not delight in the death of sinners but their redemption.

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TOPIC: HELPS ON PRAYER

Texts: John 16: 23-24, Mark 11:22-26

There is no doubt that Christians know the importance of prayer in daily life. But we sometimes pray without following proper guidelines. Whereas we find rules and regulations guiding us in many areas of life, we sometimes ignore some simple but important guides to prayer. Imagine how many hours of sweating it out on Prayer Mountains only to get nothing in return. Think about the frustration in prolonged fasting with nothing to show for it all because we neglect some basic facts on prayer.

We must take note that the one who prays from morning till night without food is not regarded as the prayerful until he shows the result of such prayer. If you pray amiss for weeks, it means you have asked nothing as pointed in John 16:23-24. We only begin to pray when we are doing it right. The entire counsel given by Christ in our second text is about getting our prayer efforts right. If we get it right, we shall surely move mountains. Let us see how to get it right each time we are on our knees.

1. PRAY ONLY IN JESUS NAME

Jesus made this clear while giving his disciples instruction on prayer and assured that it is a key to getting the right result. Peter followed this instruction after Christ's death when in the company of John, he went to the temple. He asked the lame man to walk in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And God, the father answered. Only by placing faith in the name and power of Jesus, the one, who came, died and was raised again, can a person receive anything from God. Though blessed and honourable is Mary, there is nowhere in the scripture where Christians are instructed to pray in her name. Chanting repeatedly that Mary is the mother of Jesus is only saying the obvious. The world knows that but she is not the key to answered prayer (Acts 3:6, 4:12).

2. BELIEVE THAT YOU RECEIVE

God is a faith God while believers are children of faith. We must always approach the mountain of prayer with faith that we are not coming down empty handed. This is very pleasing to God. Many will not believe their ailment is gone until they see the physical disappearance. But healing begins from the invisible realm and so we must believe that we have already received what we asked for after each prayer sessions. This makes us to thank God after every prayer. Some do not thank God after praying, they want to wait for the physical first. (Eph. 2:8-9, 2 Cor. 5-7)

3. LEARN TO FORGIVE

This may be hard but it helps a lot. Forgiveness frees the heart from malice, bitterness and revenge and gives us clear conscience before God. Hard as it seems sometimes, through forgiveness, our prayer life becomes more blessed and rewarding. We can also help ourselves by comparing the sins committed against

us with the ones we commit against God. Which side is heavier? When you fail to forgive, you are not hurting the other person, you are hurting yourself. Unforgiving heart makes our spiritual life heavy, our prayer life slow and our faith unattractive. (Mark 11:25-26, Heb. 12:15, James 4:7, Eph. 6:18).

4. DEPEND UPON HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit helps our inability to pray if we depend on him and not on our flesh. He prays for believers to the point that we cannot even reach. He reaches the spiritual realm and brings some powerful prayer points to our notice. We are then energized and together we pray to the father. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us before the father in an unexpressed, unspoken language. As children, we do not always know what to pray for or how but we can know the purpose of God which the Holy Spirit desires to accomplish. (Rom. 8:26-27, I Cor. 14:14-15).

5. INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS

Let us avoid selfish prayer life. Concerning ourselves with only personal prayers and having no place for others in our heart will not make us Christ-like. Jesus did not come into the world for self. Esther was safe in the king's palace, yet she risked her life to intercede for the Jews. As the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we must endeavour to intercede for other as well. When we learn to water other people's garden, then God waters our garden. Even when we are neck deep in personal problems. Let us remember the sick, the backsliders, the poor and even those who minister over us. This helps to build up our spiritual life as the Holy Spirit often joins us as we pray over things we do not know the cause.

6. PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

Carnality must not be allowed to render our prayer ineffective; having it in mind that prayer is spiritual. This leads us into speaking in tongues which is an initial evidence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Our focus must be in the spirit as we pray, drawing strength from the throne of grace even when the flesh is weak (Jude vs. 20)

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TOPIC: TYPES OF PRAYER

Texts: Acts 4:13-31

One of the pillars of Christian faith is prayer and one glaring mark in believers' life is prayer. Really the Christian's life revolves around prayer and praises to God Almighty and if the prayer factor is removed from a Christian's life, he becomes powerless and vulnerable. Imagine the results of prayer offered in vs. 31 of our text. Jesus, despite his unequalled status of Godliness, did not toy with prayer during his earthly ministry. He started his ministry with prayer and concluded it with prayer. He taught his disciples how to pray, where and when to pray and even warned them about the pitfalls of hypocritical prayers (Matt. 6:5-6,7,9-13).

Prayer is one of the channels of outpouring of God's power in Christians. With our tongue, we can invite fire from heaven, either to devour our enemies or to empower us; we can move mountains without any

equipment, we can open doors, and even overcome intimidating mountains. Prayer is the way to communicate with our creator on all issues. The way to severe contact with God is to stop praying.

Just as we have different sorts of food, drinks, games and habits, so do we have different types of prayer. Each type of prayer has its peculiar mental attitude. For instance the attitude of someone facing death sentence is quite different from someone who just got a new employment or pay rise. Let us look into certain prayers and the attitudes that flow with them:

1. PRAYER OF PETITION (vs. 23-26)

To be honest, this is commonest type of prayer and this is so because of our ‘Oliver Twist’ nature. It is prayer that is based on asking or taking from God. In this type of prayer, we usually remind God of His biblical promises the way children remind parents of their birthday gifts. However, it is biblical and God answers because God is a covenant keeper (Jer. 33:3, 19-21). Since, it is a prayer of needs, whether urgent or not, it must be accompanied with an attitude of faith (Matt. 21:22; Mk 11:24).

2. PRAYER OF AGGRESSION (vs. 29-31)

This is fire brand, red-eyed prayer coming out of situational urgency. This type of prayer, though may be petitional is different in intensity. This type of prayer is either spitting fire or swallowing fire. Shedrack, Meshack and Abednego will call it, ‘prayer in the midst of fire’. Elijah will call it ‘prayer of consuming fire’. Joshua will call it ‘moon stopping prayer’. Daniel will call it ‘prayer in the Den of Lion’. Jonah will call it ‘Prayer in the belly of whale’. The attitude is aggression whether one is under attack or launching attack. It involves praises, worship and prayer. This type of prayer often leads to death of enemies, deliverance of God’s children and divine intervention in the most dreadful and hopeless situations like the Red-Sea miracle (2 Chr. 20:15-23).

3. PRAYER OF TOTAL SURRENDER.

Jesus is our example of this type of prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. He saw death with its cruel face. But he had a divine mission to fulfill and the road to accomplishment is death. The flesh prompted Christ to retreat and fail but the spirit urged him to move on and conquer. Jesus conquered. The prayer he offered in the garden though hot was not that of petition but total surrender to the will of God. (Lk 22:42-44).

4. PRAYER OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

It is true that God wants us to approach Him with our needs but He also desires praise and true worship from man, His image. One of the reasons God created man was to have fellowship with him on earth, enjoy the pleasure of praising lips and hearts. Each time, we come alive and give God this food, unusual miracles follow. When Paul and Silas were in prison, they had no reason to sing and praise. But they did not grumble or complain against God, they resorted to praises and worship, most probably in an aggressive manner. Take note that believers do run into troubles, but our attitude can make a lot of difference in the final outcome. Paul and Silas praised God loud. Men heard them. Heavens heard them. Their chains were broken and the prison doors opened. Praise the Lord.

5. HABITUAL PRAYER

If there is something Christians should be addicted to, it is prayer. We must be incurably prayerful in our daily Christian walk. So was Jesus, the disciples and so are we supposed to live. We must be well tutored in all types of prayers, matching every prayer point with appropriate words of God and putting on the right mindset in every situation will make us really untouchable to our enemies and fearful to Satan (Lk 24:52-53)

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TOPIC: THE UPPER ROOM

Texts: Acts 1:12-26

In our text, we see how the disciples in obedience to the word of Jesus, despite his physical death, waited on the Lord in the upper room. The number of them in the room was one hundred and twenty (120) but amazingly, they all agreed, that is they were united for a common purpose, both physically and spiritually. It was a retreat where they separated themselves from the affairs of this world, the fears and activities of this world and focused on heaven. As believers and a church, we need the upper room separation at agreed times in order to seek the Lord afresh and renew our spiritual strength.

Though all these people did not share the same background but they set aside personal feelings and committed themselves to the task of doing the Lord's will. If these disciples could do it in yester years, we can do it today and get the same result as they did. The church must put away divisions, envy, backbiting and pursue love with unity without which we cannot gather together in one mind

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

The church was born in the upper room when the saints gathered together to fulfill the Lord's will. That upper room unity, sense of oneness, sincerity of purpose is what we need today to do more than what the disciples did. Let us begin to take note of certain expressions in our text. **Firstly**, in the life of the Christian there must be the "shut door" (private prayer) experience regularly in order to experience certain divine encounters with God. **Secondly**, in the life of any church, there must be an "upper room" (public or corporate prayer) experience regularly in order to have same encounter with God. Actually there is no private prayer for the church, it must be corporate. For ten days they waited in oneness until heaven opened and the outpouring of the spirit took place (Acts 2:4). **Thirdly**, they "ALL" attended. What can we learn from this? All members of the church must always be present in all our programmes. This shows our commitment to the church and Christ (Acts 1:14-15). Fourthly, they "CONTINUED IN PRAYER". Their prayer was consistent and persevering. It was not easy but they remained strong. None of them slept, or ate or engaged in private discussion or business (Acts 12:5-17). They were too united to be defeated by the devil. (Eph. 4:3, Psalm 133:1-3).

RESULT OF SPIRITUAL UNITY

The first result is receiving answers to their prayers. They waited on the LORD in oneness without wavering and heaven opened for them. The same thing still happens today if we can wait. (Jer. 33:3).

Two, they received guidance in the administration of the church. God is so organized as we observe in the creation of the world, so His work in our hands must be well organized. Good administration began when Peter and others decided to fill the vacant seat left by Judas. Matthias was chosen and the choice was respected by all (Acts 1:26, Acts 6:2-4). Our church must be well organized beginning from departmental levels to the upper echelon of leadership. We may not need to depend on human education for this but we must allow the Holy Spirit to be the administrator.

Three, coming together in unity often will bring the presence and power of Holy Spirit upon us and the church. Holy Spirit loves the assembly of the saints and he always manifest there (Acts 4:23-31).

Four, as we come together for Christ, his gospel will prosper in our hands because that is his perfect will. After the upper room experience, doors were opened for the church and the world was set on fire with their messages and their witnessing prayer raises workers for the church (Acts 1:8, Matt 9:38).

Five, we should not be surprised or fear or shaken if after ceaseless prayer in unity, the devil rears his head to torment trouble in the church. It is normal. Is it not surprising that after Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, the first person to come to his side was Satan? Satan knew Jesus was about to launch out. He had listened to all his prayers and had been deeply hurt. Same thing happens today. As a living and God filled church, it is not strange for Satan to make some rumbles. But we need not fear because he is a defeated enemy (I John 4:4). He does not need to trouble certain churches because such churches are just 'religious clubs' propagating the carnal gospel of fashion, money and worldliness. Satan will always support such ministry. (Gal. 1:6-7)

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TOPIC: **VICTORY OVER SIN**

Texts: Gen. 4:1-8, I John 3: 4-12

Introduction

Genesis Chapter 4 leads us to the first murder ever committed in human history. But before we looked into the sin of murder committed by Cain, let us remind ourselves that both Cain and Abel were conceived and born in sin. After the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, both continued their lives under the weight of curses and sin. Both never repented of their sin. In other words, from that day of encounter with the serpent, they never had victory over sin again.

So Cain took over the sinful nature of his parents. When his offering was not respected by God, rather than seeking the face of God, he became angry and jealous of his brother. Many times, when our leaders rebuke us in the church, our countenance will fall and we begin to backslide in spirit.

We begin to handle the work of God with bitterness and grudges and constitute stumbling block to those with cheerful spirit. Next thing, certain brethren will engage in self imposed fasting programme seeking to know whether to stay in the ministry or move out. This is the delicate stage where Satan reveals himself to many as an angel of light. Here he has a golden opportunity to mislead such believer and send him out of God's chosen vineyard. These are marks of a life that is not yet broken down.

Let us consider vs 7 of Gen. 4 and apply it to our lives when we are being chastised by our leaders. Sin lies comfortably at the door of those who do not do well. Rather than do well, Cain grew worse until he committed murder.

UNDERSTANDING SIN

Christians who desire victory over sin must first obtain adequate knowledge about it and the source. Sin is beyond just eating of a forbidden fruit. It is a defiant act of rebellion against God and a declaration of independence from God. The very nature of man is sin but this is no more the case from the day we are saved. Yet we are still vulnerable to sin and this is why we must always make conscious efforts to overcome it, because whether we admit or not, we will sometimes find ourselves at the junction of life where sin will become so attractive and yet we want to please God.

HOW TO HAVE VICTORY OVER SIN

Believers must always bear in mind that the wages of sin is death. And since no one wants to die we should avoid this agent of death – sin. (Rom. 6:23). We must know that sin enslaves even before death will come. Now that we are saved, our enemy (Satan) has not given up. His weapon of bondage is sin. Having tasted the freedom of righteousness and its blessing, should we go into sin again, beloved? (Rom. 6:18-23).

Again let no believer who finds himself in deep troubled water think that he has suffered beyond endurance or that no one else can face his type of problem and survive. No matter the problem or temptations you go through, many believers have been through the same and overcome. So you will overcome. That temptation is not enough for you to turn against God. Remember sin is a choice. Satan can tempt but cannot push the forbidden fruit down anyone's throat. (I Cor. 10:13)

We have victory over sin when we avoid its temptations. No one should believe he is strong enough to jump into fire and come out unhurt. (I Cor. 10:12) We must also recognize our weak areas and do something to avoid injury. Someone's weak area may be visiting a particular brethren of opposite sex alone. It is either he let someone else do the visitation or he goes in the company of someone.

Another way is to RUN – Run from that brother or sister. Stop reading that magazines that sets you on fire. This applies in particular to sexual temptations. Like Joseph, when we come face to face with sin, we must run, even if it results in trouble (Gen. 39:11-12). We must learn from Joseph that it is pointless to smell what we do not intend to eat. Take yourself out of harm's way and do not be like those who will not run because they secretly enjoy their sin (I Cor. 6:18, 2 Tim. 2:22).

Another scriptural way to victory is in James 4:7. “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you”. Since we cannot serve two masters, submission to God will move us clearly away from Satan’s zone. To submit to God is to defy the devil, flesh and its invitations.

Substitute sinful habit. Stopping a habit is just half the measure. That habit must be substituted with a godly one. The arrogant person must not just drop the habit but must go ahead to practice humility. He can begin to give up his seat when the occasion arises. Meditating in the scripture can replace the time spent on reading sinful magazines or watching sinful programmes. One who is greedy or tight fisted can begin to pay his tithes or begin to give generously. This will lead to permanent victory. The very reason why many go back to their old ways is because they fail to substitute such habits with scriptural alternatives.

We must be accountable to someone – every believer must have a respected father figure he holds in high esteem. He must be someone we can trust, who is strong and with whom we can freely share our feelings. Victory over sin is a must. You are never truly defeated until you give up.

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