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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this little manual is to help those who have come to treasure the love of God and want to help others to find, what they have been so blessed to receive.

It is a manual that has been put together, the writers trust, by the Holy Spirit. It is, in it's simplest form, no more nor less than the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We live in a world that is surely in the time of the great apostasy. For this reason many have sought to spend much time and money warning others of false doctrine, but they have failed to see that, that activity is in itself a form of deception.

We were commanded to preach the Gospel to all creation, and to teach them the things that Jesus taught us. (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19-20). The Gospel is the only message that can open the way for changed lives. (Rom. 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:17-18; 2:1-5).

Many brethren have had the great privilege of experiencing the life changing effects of the manual's contents. In addition to this have gone on themselves to teach others about that blessed thing which they have received. (2 Tim. 2:2).

Today more than ever, and thank God for this, we are seeing a return to the early church lifestyle. People are seeking a greater knowledge **of God**; (not just knowledge **about Him**) they are seeking the realities of loving God more deeply. They are seeking to experience loving one another in a more meaningful way...they are seeking **to be the church**, rather than just **to attend one**. They are seeking to see the real power that the book of Acts speaks about. *To those that desire these things...it shall be given them.*

This manual seeks to help, in whatever way that it can, those precious people, as spoken of above, to attain their desires. Many have already experienced such desires through this Gospel of His great love, and are today effectively ministering the life of Jesus to little groups in houses.

Essentially, the manual is to be used by those who are willing to lead a small group (from ONE other person upwards) and disciple them faithfully, 24 hours a day, EVERY day of the week, until they are able to do the same for others.

There are some 'do's and don'ts; regarding this manual that you should accept, before using it.

Firstly, please **do** copy the manual freely, and as you have not had to pay for receiving it, don't charge others even for your copy work. If you do not have the means for copying, write to us, we'll gladly send you the amount of copies you need...free of charge.

Should you require help as far as teaching others is concerned we will joyfully help you in any way we can, just as the Lord leads.

There are other manuals, which follow on in series to this one. We will gladly send these to you when you are ready for them. The first manual consists of very basic teachings and is designed to take souls from a state of unregeneracy to being born again. Yet it is equally as essential for even those who have been born again to go through these basic teachings.

In conclusion, it is the earnest desire of those who have been used as vessels in putting these manuals together, that those using them would be brought to a greater knowledge of God and love of their neighbour. *It is not their desire to recruit members for a manmade organization.* Please take everything you read directly to God for confirmation and do not quickly reject anything even if it goes against your own biblical interpretation. The material in the manuals has already produced much fruit to the glory of God.

Please address your requests and enquiries to:

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

THE LOCATION AND TIMES

These teachings were designed to be taught anywhere. The material was originally used in a home situation, where people could easily hear what the teacher was saying and preferably a place free of distraction. Never discourage children from being present, but be very firm in your discipline of them or they will distract those wishing to learn. If possible, try to have the meetings in turn, at the homes of those who have children. (Always be very patient and understanding of the distress that children feel when in strange homes).

One of the finest ways of dealing with the above situation, and to make the teachings more fruitful, is to have them **at least** weekly around a bring-and-share meal (after the meal of course).

Parents should put the children to sleep, and this prayerfully, ministering to their needs before beginning the teaching. If the children are too fearful, allow them to lie at the feet of their parents during the teachings, but as we have already said making sure that they are disciplined. It is not important that husbands and wives jointly participate in these teachings together.

THE TEACHER

Anyone who has a desire can teach from this manual. Desire is the greatest single qualification. It has been the experience of the writers that there exists no greater way of learning about God's word than the experience gained from teaching others.

A good method to use in the first few sessions is to have a group sharing, in place of straight teaching. This way the teacher will become familiar with the word before he himself begins to teach.

Those teaching must never lose sight of the fact that *The Holy Spirit* is the only real teacher of God's word. He teaches through a vessel from what information is already in that vessel. In other words, no man will ever teach (life) beyond the level of his own testimony.

THE METHOD

The teacher arranges with those that he is going to work with to be at the appointed place at a specific time. Prior to this time he needs to lift up the session to God in prayer. Do not treat this important action lightly - it will be the make or break of those being disciplined.

Pray according to how God leads you. This could take the form of interceding for the individuals attending the gathering. If the teacher is not a seasoned pray-er then he should take note of the words in the modules on prayer.

Please ask all those that attend to bring their bibles and both something to write with and write on. Transcripts would be obtained by the teacher photocopying the relevant section from the manual. If you do not have this facility write to the address given in the beginning of this manual, requesting copies of the transcripts.

Once all are comfortably seated in a position that will not restrict their hearing, (Please be sensitive to older people who often have hearing difficulties, and are too afraid to mention this fact), begin the meeting by asking someone to open in prayer. If none of the group are able to do so, then the teacher should pray God's blessings upon the meeting.

Begin the teaching, or as the case may be, group sharing. Ask questions, encourage the brethren to ask questions. If the teacher cannot answer the questions then he or she should never be afraid to say so. This is much more preferable than attempting to give vague or uncertain answers.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a complete teaching, and for this reason, questions that are raised in one meeting are usually answered at a later one, by virtue of the teaching alone. So try to avoid lengthy discussions and especially contentious one's. Where scriptures are quoted, call for volunteers to read them. Usually there are one or two of the same people that will always volunteer. After a few weeks, when the group have more confidence, then the teacher should ask those who don't volunteer, to read the scriptures.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL (cont.)

It is very important to encourage participation as this reduces the incidence of 'fear of man'. (called shyness in the world) In later discipleship (especially teachings on The Holy Spirit) boldness is of paramount importance.

Where real doubt enters the proceedings, stop and ask the group to agree in prayer, asking God to reveal the truth. Then continue in faith believing that God will respond at the best time...and He surely will!

At the end of the session, ask each person to open up their bibles at any Psalm of their choosing and to read at least two lines of this Psalm. Go around the group clockwise with each person reading in turn. Then the teacher should close in prayer, requesting that anyone who wishes to pray for a particular person or situation should do so before he closes.

Each module should take on or about an hour to go through.

These teachings will only be assimilated by revelation and not by man-made methods, no matter how good. Therefore it will soon become evident that the teacher will have to be a man or woman to much prayer.

If you are so lead, contact us and we will pray for you in our intercessory times. We pray even now for whoever may be reading this that God will bless your labours abundantly.

Lastly, take courage, because this work is a work of discipleship and shepherding. The sheep need attention all day every day and as a result this work is a full time commitment. In spite of this many will desert you (as they did Jesus - John 6:66 - numbers are not an accident!) and often what begins as a large and very excited group, soon dwindles to a mere one or two faithful's.

DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY FORMAT

...A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher (Luke 6:40)

Member Care

How is your family?

What are you thankful for?

What needs do you have? How can the group meet these needs? (Prayer/Ministry)

Worship

A time of relevant worship

Accountability

What did you learn last week?

How did you put it into practice? What changed? (Obedience)

Vision Casting

With who did you share the lesson with last week (CONNECTING/SHARING)

Did you get a chance to share your testimony with someone? (WITNESSING)

Discover Truth

Read and/or listen to the scripture passage (DON'T EXPLAIN OR TEACH)

How would you restate this in your own words (UNDERSTANDING)

Ask discovery questions: (You are not limited to these – see SPECK tool)

What does this passage teach us about God? (KNOW GOD)

What does this passage teach us about man – my own life?

If the Bible is true how am I going to OBEY what it said?

Practice

What you have learnt and how to share your testimony

Take some time in pairs to share with someone what you have learnt

Practice sharing HIS STORY/YOUR STORY

Goals and Prayers

Where is the HARVEST FIELD you as a group are working in? who are you planning to reach here?

Pray for your goals and plans; pray for those who God is laying on your heart (INTERCESSION)

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

1. The King and His Kingdom — PART 1

Luke 1: 31-33

Some people think they will only enter the Kingdom of God when they pass from this earth. For the purpose of this session, we would like to say there is a difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of God is that area where God does things according to His ways (His principles or His Government), which we enter here and now. The Kingdom of Heaven is that place we will see when we pass from this earth – provided we have followed the Lord in this life.

The Kingdom Prophesied

The Word of God predicted the arrival of a kingdom belonging to Jesus, which, once established here on earth, would last forever (Luke 1:33). In Matt 3: 2 John the Baptist came proclaiming the arrival of this kingdom and warned all at hand to repent.

In Matt 4: 17 Jesus said the same thing. In Matt 16:28 he promised that there would be some that would not die before they see Him 'coming in' this kingdom. Three of His disciple's saw Jesus transfigured before them (fulfilment of Matt 16:28). They were able to see with "Kingdom eyes" the resurrection body of Jesus. (Matt.17:1-2).

The coming of the kingdom was no more than the time when Jesus, by His death and resurrection, would permit as many as were willing, to receive sight of an invisible system. (Known as the Government of God – and which has been in operation since the beginning of time).

This circumstance is portrayed when Jesus speaking to Pilate explained that His kingdom was not OF THIS WORLD (John 18:36). In other words, His kingdom did not run by the world's system, but rather by His principles (a system called the Government of God).

The promise of the Old Testament (Isa.9:6-7), reiterated in Luke 1: 33 was fulfilled by the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. His birth (vs31) was accomplished as predicted. The events of His life were recorded in the Gospels. In these records are the sayings of Jesus making reference to the kingdom - more than one hundred times.

Where is the Kingdom of God?

The Kingdom of God is here and now. Jesus said it is within us (Luke 17:21) and therefore among us. He explained that the kingdom has suffered violence, since it's proclamation by John the Baptist, and further, that entrance to this kingdom will be attained by one who is driven with a 'violence of devotion' (Matt 11: 12).

How do we get into His Kingdom?

We are able to enter the Kingdom of God today! Jesus said that firstly, one has to be 'born again' for this is the way that we catch sight (become aware of) of this kingdom. (Jn 3: 3) Next we need to be '...born of water and born of the Spirit...' in order to enter this kingdom. (Jn3: 5).

Sight of this kingdom is the place that we are released to in order to come to the understanding of what is really happening in this world—or simply put, we become more an aware of God.

Entry is the place where we begin to fully understand that which we see with the human eye is very far from the real picture of what God is doing.—again more simply put, our lifestyle reflects Godly behaviour.

How do we walk in the Kingdom?

Do those with Kingdom eyes see physically into another dimension? – NO. Those with kingdom eyes see with the sight of faith. 2 Cor.5:7 tells us that FAITH must replace human sight. The reason for this is simple. The system of the kingdom is opposed to the system of the world. Yet God has allowed, ever since the fall of Adam, the worldly system to function, opposite, yet in parallel to the system of His Government (Rom.8:1-14).

Remember that Paul said “It is no longer I that live..... “ (Gal.2:20; Rom.12:1)

Obedience in the Kingdom

In any Kingdom, the King owns everything. In God's kingdom He is the owner of everything. In this sense, you and I own nothing in this world, but are stewards of God's things. We are accountable to Him for our stewardship.

Romans 13:1-7 tells us that there is no authority on earth, which has not been put in place by God. We are all accountable to someone in our lives, whether it is the government of the country, the management of a company or parents in our family. ALL have been elected by God to have authority over us.

Therefore, if we choose to disobey the worldly authority above us (God's appointed), we are indirectly disobeying God (Rom.13:2).

When we rebel against God's appointed authority, we bring condemnation on ourselves (Rom.13: 2).

God's appointed authorities are accountable to God, and when they disobey God and treat those in their care badly, God will judge them (Rom.14:12)

As children of the Lord, we are not obliged to obey authorities who instruct us to do things which are not within Gods government.

A kingdom's most important asset are it's people. We can judge how Godly a king is by the condition of the people in the kingdom.

In PART 2, we will explore the following:

- How we should walk daily in the Kingdom of God
- What part obedience plays in God's Kingdom
- The benefits of living by Kingdom principles
- The downfalls of not obeying Kingdom principles
- Examples of Godly principles
- The purpose of His Kingdom

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

1. The King and His Kingdom — PART 2

In Part 1 we saw that the word of God predicted the arrival of a Kingdom belonging to Jesus (Isa.9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33). The coming of the kingdom was no more than the time when Jesus, by His death and resurrection, would permit as many as were willing, to receive sight of an invisible system. (Known as the Government of God – and which has been in operation since the beginning of time).

The Kingdom of God is here and now. Jesus said it is within us (Luke 17:21) and therefore among us.

We are able to enter the Kingdom of God today! Jesus said that firstly, one has to be 'born again' for this is the way that we catch sight of this kingdom (Jn 3: 3). Next we need to be '...born of water and born of the Spirit...' in order to enter this kingdom (Jn3: 5).

Those with kingdom eyes see with the sight of faith. 2 Cor.5:7 tells us that FAITH must replace human sight (Rom.8:1-14).

Remember that Paul said it is no longer *I* that live..... (Gal.2:20; Rom.12:1)

What are the benefits of living in His Kingdom?

Deut.28:1-14 is a very good description of the one who lives according to the principles of His Kingdom. In the Kingdom of God, we live according to His 'rule' or 'government' and the results are that we are a people that are blessed (Psa.1:1-3).

2 Cor.1:20 - His promises are 'in Him' and 'in Him' is the Amen!

The more we walk in His principles, the more God's authority will flow through us (Acts 19:14-19).

We become 'agents' of the Kingdom here on earth – permitting/forbidding that which has been permitted or forbidden in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt.16:19).

What happens when we do not live according to His principles?

Duet 28: 15-68 describes this situation only too well. In short, the more we are in His perfect will (His Government), the more we will experience blessings in this life and reward in the next life (Psa.1:4-6). **(Fig.1)**

Examples of Godly Principles

There are many of God's principles to be found in His word. Spend time looking for them and be enriched as the Lord opens these principles to you. Let's look at some examples:

- As you sow... Gal.6:7
- For in the way you judge... Matt.7:2
- Say you are in the Light but hate your brother... 1 Jn.2:9
- Let your speech be encouraging... Col.4:6
- If we think about committing sin... Matt.5:27-28



In the shade of God's blessing

As we adhere to God's principles, we are blessed and walk in His authority.



In the shade of God's blessing

As we partly adhere to God's principles, we are partly blessed and walk partly in His authority.



In the shade of God's blessing

When we do not adhere to Godly principles we cannot be blessed and do not walk in His authority

Fig 1

What is the purpose of His Kingdom?

Under the New covenant He has permitted all who are willing, to gain sight of the kingdom, and by the power of His Spirit to enable them to live, not according to the world's system, but according to kingdom principles.

God uses His principles on this earth to refine us (Ph.2:12). Each difficulty we face, God has permitted into our lives so that we will turn to Him and be strengthened as we overcome it (Rom.8:28).

From the viewpoint of Marriage, God requires 'Godly offspring' (Mal.2:15). God's Principles will help us fulfill our roles as Godly Husbands and Wives in order that we will produce Godly offspring. This to ensure that the authority of God is passed on from generation to generation.

It is impossible for us to live according to God's Principles in our own strength. We need the power of His Spirit indwelling us to strengthen, teach and guide us.

All of this being done in order to prepare us for the greatest fulfillment of Prophecy, (Luke1: 33) the ruling of the saints with Jesus over the "House of Jacob" in the millennial reign.

When will the purpose be fulfilled?

Jesus said that as the events predicted in Luke21: 5-28 come true we would know that the kingdom is "nigh at hand". (vs31)

Here Jesus is saying that the time has come for the system of the world to be destroyed and for his kingdom to take final, everlasting control of the earth. (Rev11: 15; Luke22: 30)

Until this purpose is fulfilled it is important that we live our lives according to the principles of His kingdom so we can experience His blessings.

In conclusion – as we daily walk in God's principles we are blessed here and now. We also walk in God's authority (**Fig 1**). We cannot do this in our own strength – we will become demoralized. Seek the Father for His help all through the day.

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

2. Discover Scripture - Godly Principles in Daily Life

Mat 5:11 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Mat 5:13 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

Mat 5:25 Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

Mat 5:26 I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Mat 5:27 You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'

Mat 5:28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart

Mat 5:37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Mat 5:42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Mat 5:43 You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

Mat 5:44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Rom 8:6 For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace:

Rom 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Rom 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Rom 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Rom 12:17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

Rom 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Rom 12:19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Rom 12:20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Rom 13:1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Rom 13:2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

Rom 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling.

Rom 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

1Co 10:32 Give no occasions of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God:

1Co 13:4 Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

1Co 13:5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil;

1Co 13:6 rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth;

1Co 13:7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

1Co 13:8 Love never faileth:

2Co 9:6 But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

2Co 9:7 Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

1Pe 2:15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

1Jn 3:18 My Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.

Pro 11:15 He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; But he that hateth suretyship is secure.

Pro 11:28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; But the righteous shall flourish as the green leaf.

Pro 12:1 Whoso loveth correction loveth knowledge; But he that hateth reproof is brutish.

Pro 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; But he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel.

Pro 13:18 Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth correction; But he that regardeth reproof shall be honored.

Pro 14:29 He that is slow to anger is of great understanding; But he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

Pro 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath; But a grievous word stirreth up anger.

Pro 15:6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure; But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

Pro 15:27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; But he that hateth bribes shall live.

Pro 16:7 When a man's ways please Jehovah, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Jas 1:23 For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror:

Jas 1:24 for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

Jas 3:8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison.

Jas 3:9 Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men

Jas 3:10 out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

Php 2:3 doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself;

Php 2:4 not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.

Php 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and questionings:

Php 2:15 that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world,

Php 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

3. The Role of the Husband

1 Peter 3:7

God designed marriage as the corner stone of our society. When we “go and make disciples” (Matt.28:19-20) we need testimony of a solid marriage because we can only disciple others to the level we ourselves are with God.

Never before in history has there been such a need for examples of Godly marriages, as now. Therefore – what does God expect from us in our marriages?

Until we have some knowledge of the character of God, it is difficult to understand what He expects of us. Next it is important to understand what He desires from us in the long term, eternally speaking, before we will be able to perform according to His will.

God's Government (The Kingdom of God)

Isa.55:8-11 shows us the fact that God is sovereign. He is supreme and not accountable to anyone except Himself. His government, another expression for His word or law. (Zech.14:9; Daniel 2:44) is beyond debate or question and is final and irreversible. The Kingdom of God (His government) is a separate system under which God does that which pleases Him. (Psa.135:6; 1.Tim.6:15). God himself is powerless to reverse His own Government. (Is.40:8) Pray for a revelation to understand this fact to gain meaningful change in our lives.

Anyone who obeys the perfect will of God is blessed. Anyone who does not walk according to His perfect will, will struggle through life (Psa.1:1-3). God is powerless to help the one who willfully disobeys Him (Heb.10:26), yet His infinite mercy provides us with 'grace' – the power to obey Him.

His government is precise and exacting and has far reaching and often devastating consequences for those who will not follow in it.

Clearly defined area

The role of the Husband, like the role of the Wife and that of the church, is specific and VERY CLEARLY detailed in the word of God. There are NO grey areas, no aspects of uncertainty. If we have a heart desire to be the type of Husband God intended us to be we shall be blessed among all people. If we do not have this desire, we need to pray for it because without it we shall struggle much in this life. Not only will we suffer, but we may drag others into our situations.

Both the role of the Husband and the role of the Wife are Godly principles

(See Part 2—The King and His Kingdom)

Suitable Partner

Genesis 2:18 says that God decided that it was not good for man to be alone. He needed a 'help meet'. Someone to help him in his need: spiritual, emotional and physical. The animals were paraded before man and whilst he named them all, NONE WERE FOUND AS A SUITABLE HELP FOR HIM! (Gen.2:19-20).

God put Adam to sleep and created a helpmeet for him from his own body ... from a rib taken out of Adam (Side?). She was "brought unto the man" she was given to him as his possession, and it was him that named her 'woman' (Gen.2:21-23).

She came from his rib, out of his side; this is symbolic that God intended her to always be at his side, to be an assistant to him and him alone. Not a slave, who would have had to walk behind him – or ahead of him to take authority - they became inseparably linked, by their spirits. (Gen.2:24).

All of this is the government of God (God's Kingdom) - Undisputable, irreversible and final.

Understand your wife

The husband is commanded to live with his wife in an understanding way. He is commanded to honour her. He is commanded to treat her as a weaker vessel, yet as a joint heir to the blessings of eternal life. (1 Pet.3: 7; Col.3:19)

****Special Note on 1 Peter 3:7 - "...so that your prayers may not be hindered..."**

In addition to this he is commanded to teach his wife that which she desires to know. (1 Cor.14:35).

To live with one's wife in an understanding way is to accept by faith that which the scriptures say of her, and pray for a Christ like attitude toward her and the way she has been created - putting yourself in her shoes.

Honour and love your wife

To honour one's Wife according to the scripture is to esteem her in the HIGHEST degree - to maintain her dignity. She is honoured because she was given by God as a helpmeet, a critical support to man: such as a leg for instance, without which a man would find life very difficult. She is honoured because she is critically a part of man and because **she is a gift from God** (Prov.19:14). Not honouring the wife will limit God's blessings on the husband (Mal.2:13-14).

Paul says that husbands should love their Wives as their own bodies! - even as Christ loved the Church (Eph.5:25; 28; 33). He says in Colossians that we should love our wives and not bear any unforgiveness (bitterness) towards them – neither for past or present circumstances (Col. 3:19). A husband will be desirable because of his kindness (Prov.19:22).

The husband should be a provider for his wife and family (1 Tim.5:8). This not only materially, but spiritually and emotionally.

To treat her as a weaker vessel is to accept that she is weaker (not a negative connotation) physically, emotionally and spiritually, but being his partner, she complements the usefulness of her husband.

She is treated as the weaker vessel because in order to perform her task as a helpmeet, loving her husband and children, managing the home, she has to be sensitive. Her position calls for sensitivity, but it can leave her vulnerable and therefore she needs understanding and protection.

But NEVER is she inferior in terms of her ultimate reward of eternal life, because in the Kingdom of Heaven there is neither male nor female. (Gal.3: 28).

God's Line of Authority

The Husband is also the head of the Wife. Jesus is the head of the Husband and God is the head of Jesus (1 Cor.11:3). Therefore the husband is the spiritual authority of the wife. He is to instruct her in the ways of the Lord, by word and by example. (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

God seeks Godly seed from the covenant of marriage. This is the SOLE OBJECTIVE of the union (Mal.2:15 NLT), but it is imperative to accept that this objective will only be achieved jointly. The scripture says that the two are one. (Gen. 2:24).

Therefore never can a husband fulfill his role as a Christian unless he is fulfilling his role as a husband.

He has a very essential partner, assistant and spiritual, physical, emotional, support in his wife. It is almost like the pair who run the 'two legged' race. They can never be out of step, the stronger even carrying the weaker at different times. However that very 'carrying' must be done in the position that the partner occupies. The positions can never be usurped or taken over.

Our Role Models

Tragically today the family model is being poorly moulded. Beginning with our parents: if we had a father who was dominated by our mother, we as children grow to accept that this is the norm. The boys of the family will marry dominating women and the girls will dominate their husbands. In some communities today 'Fathers' are scarcely even seen, never mind fulfilling their roles - having left to find employment in other areas.

The world, through the vast availability of media at its disposal pounds our minds with all kinds of false impressions and possible worldly solutions, when all the time the only lasting and workable solution is the word of God.

We face a 'dog chasing its tail' circumstance. The professing church of the day does not teach the truth (The Gospel). it seeks its help from worldly concepts and all this because it was never taught the truth in the first place.

We as Christians need to take a firm stand in this last hour. This situation must be reversed. The best place to begin is in the family. Husbands as the spiritual authority must be the initiators.

Next Step...

The beginning for the husband is to go earnestly before God and pray for the desire to change, whatever the cost. Whilst this prayer may seem frightening; in terms of eternity, no price can be too great. However, all of the effort of the husband to fulfill his role will amount to nothing, if it is not borne out of his relationship with God (Ps.127: 1). Only in this way will he be the type of husband God wants him to be.

1 Peter 3:7

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.
(English Standard Version)

Mal 2:15

Didn't the LORD make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. [5] And what does he want? Godly children from your union. So guard yourself; remain loyal to the wife of your youth.
(New Living Translation)

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

4. The Role of the Wife

1 Peter 3:1

God designed marriage as the corner stone of our society. When we “go and make disciples” (Matt.28:19-20) we need testimony of a solid marriage because we can only disciple others to the level we ourselves are with God.

Never before in history has there been such a need for examples of Godly marriages, as now. Therefore – what does God expect from us in our marriages?

Until we have some knowledge of the character of God, it is difficult to understand what He expects of us. Next it is important to understand what He desires from us in the long term, eternally speaking, before we will be able to perform according to His will.

God's Government (The Kingdom of God)

Isa.55:8-11 shows us the fact that God is sovereign. He is supreme and not accountable to anyone except Himself. His government, another expression for His word or law. (Zech.14:9; Daniel 2:44) is beyond debate or question and is final and irreversible. The Kingdom of God (His government) is a separate system under which God does that which pleases Him. (Psa.135:6; 1.Tim.6:15). God himself is powerless to reverse His own Government. (Is.40:8) Pray for a revelation to understand this fact to gain meaningful change in our lives.

Anyone who obeys the perfect will of God is blessed. Anyone who does not walk according to His perfect will, will struggle through life (Psa.1:1-3). God is powerless to help the one who willfully disobeys Him (Heb.10:26), yet His infinite mercy provides us with 'grace' – the power to obey Him.

His government is precise and exacting and has far reaching and often devastating consequences for those who will not follow in it.

Clearly defined area

The role of the Wife, like the role of the Husband and that of the church, is specific and VERY CLEARLY detailed in the word of God. There are NO grey areas, no aspects of uncertainty. If we have a heart desire to be the type of Wife God intended us to be we shall be blessed among all people. If we do not have this desire, we need to pray for it because without it we shall struggle much in this life. Not only will we suffer, but we may drag others into our situations.

Both the role of the Wife and the role of the Husband are Godly principles

(See Part 2—The King and His Kingdom)

Suitable Partner

Genesis 2:18 says that God decided that it was not good for man to be alone. He needed a 'help meet'. Someone to help him in his need: spiritual, emotional and physical. The animals were paraded before man and whilst he named them all, NONE WERE FOUND AS A SUITABLE HELP FOR HIM! (Gen.2:19-20).

God put Adam to sleep and created a helpmeet for him from his own body ... from a rib taken out of his SIDE. She was "brought unto the man" she was given to him as his possession, and it was him that named her 'woman' (Gen.2:21-23). She came from his rib, out of his side; this is symbolic that God intended her to always be at his side, to be an assistant to him and him alone. Not a slave, who would have had to walk behind him – or ahead of him to take authority - they became inseparably linked, by their spirits. (Gen.2:24).

All of this is the government of God (God's Kingdom) - Undisputable, irreversible and final.

Wife's Obedience

The wife, or helper is under authority. She needs to OBEY her husband (Titus 2:4-5). As a wife, no earthly career should be above obeying her husband, loving him and her children and caring for the home. She can work to support the family's need, with her husband's consent (Prov31:10-31) or perhaps to work with her husband to support the work of the Lord. (Acts16: 14-15, 40; Acts 18:2-4).

God's Line of Authority

In 1.Cor.11:3 we are told that a woman is under a DIVINE authority order. Her husband is her head, his head is Jesus, whose head is God. 1.Cor.11:8-9 says woman was created for man, NOT the other way around. However, not as a slave, but as an assistant so THEY could jointly achieve God's divine purpose. (1.Cor.3 :12 ; 1.Pet.3: 7 ; Mal.2: 15)

Submission - A great Blessing

Submission, which is the role of the wife, is perfectly portrayed in the scripture of 1Peter 3: 1-6. In obeying this scripture the wife **honours God** through submitting to her Husband and brings blessings upon her home, household and all those she comes into contact with. In this way also, she prepares herself, her husband and children, for God's ultimate and eternal plan – HIS BRIDE.

Our Role Models

We are victims of models: that firstly, our parents were responsible for giving us, and subsequently the world shows us via television, magazines and other media. These worldly models do not work. (1.Cor.1:18) Only adhering to the government of God works

God will bring us to a place where we submit to our husbands on an unconditional basis, (the only basis for submission). We submit to **OBEY GOD** not because we expect to see the fruit of our labours. Submission is doing all things as unto the Lord for the benefit of others. The lives of those around us change, especially our husband, because we submit and serve. We submit whether our husbands receive it or not. (1.Peter 3: 1).

If wives feel the need to correct their husbands it should be done according to 1 Tim.5:1. 'Exhort' your husband or encourage him. Try not to constantly repeat the topic with him but instead seek the Lord and pray for him and also for God's will to be done. This is an exercise of trusting God for the wives.

The Government of God is not difficult to follow ... it is impossible in our own human strength! By His grace alone can this be accomplished.

Next Step...

We begin by praying to God to change us and give us the mind of Christ, which is imputed to us in the scriptures. (1Cor2: 16) As we pray this in all earnestness and sincerity, DAILY, we will begin to experience change. We will become the wise woman that builds her house, and not the foolish one that tears it down. (Prov14: 1).

Discuss: Matt. 16:24-25 (Amplified Version).

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

5. The Role of the Parents

Gen.18:17-19

God's Promise

God is going to make a great nation of His people, because He has made a covenant with them promising this very thing. They are a redeemed people from every nation, who have been made into kings and priests for the sole sake of God, to reign with Him ... even on earth. (Rev5: 9-10).

Man was created to give glory, honour and power to God. He was created for NO OTHER REASON. In his fall in the Garden of Eden he did not give glory to God, nor did he subsequently realize this purpose in his fallen state. Jesus came to restore this circumstance and now man has been redeemed to live for God's good pleasure alone (2 Cor.5:14-15).

This objective of living for God alone is so singularly important that both Jesus and Paul advised against marriage, as it could distract the focus of establishing God's purposes on earth. (Matt.19: 10-12; 1 Cor.7: 8, 32-33). Jesus says in fact, that there ought not be a single relationship or possession that should take precedence over our love of Him (Luke14: 26,33).

We must bare in mind here that it was God who instituted marriage and that separate principles apply to married disciples, so the Gospel can continue to be shared through the testimony of marriage.

Godly Seed

Husbands and wives are a team effort for God's objectives being carried out on this earth and ultimately in the Kingdom of Heaven as they are co-heirs of His Kingdom. (1 Pet.3: 7; Col.3:19). But by virtue of their acceptance of marriage they will be accountable to God because of their status as parents and also teachers. (James 3:1).

They will have the unique role of bringing children into the world and then raising them as Godly seed, whilst their marriage and family life will both encourage other believers and give hope (salvation) to the lost; thereby producing Godly seed in others (Mal2: 15 NLT).

This will ensure that God's authority will flow through the family and be passed onto the next generation.

Family Unit

From the viewpoint of the Church, it is reliant on strong functional family units, to make it as a body, effective for the Gospel. The strength of the local church is directly related to the strength of its family units.

The strength of the family unit will see God's authority flowing out into the community, into work places and eventually into the nation.

Next we must clearly see that outside the Christian marriage and family unit, the world does NOT HAVE A GODLY MODEL, and therefore has no hope.

Role Models

Today we witness the result of marriages not working according to Godly principles – crime, drugs and all types of debauchery. Parents operating outside of God's principles will project the wrong role models for their children. Children will not experience God's authority through their parents and therefore will not know how to pass this authority onto future generations.

To raise Godly seed in our children we need to firstly have both the role of the husband and the wife working according to God's government or our words of instruction will have no life giving qualities. Effective communication for Jesus comes from an authoritative communicator, not an articulate one. (Matt.7:29; 2 Cor.10:10) - "No man can preach beyond the level of his own testimony" – EM Bounds.

How does God see Children?

We need to see children in the important light that God sees them:

Matt.18:1-5; Matt.19: 13-15. We MUST become like little children, they are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. When we respect little children and serve them, it is as good as doing it to Jesus. If we reject and ill treat them, we may as well be put to death! (Matt.18:6;10). Perfect praise comes from children (Matt.21:15-16).

Obedience produces Fruit

Gen.18:18-19. God's covenant with Abraham was affected because he was obedient regarding the bringing up of his child. Further he was an effective communicator. Isaac hears his Father prophesying ... then he witnessed the dagger over his body (Gen.22: 8-11). He knew that his father had prophesied life but first and foremost Isaac was obedient, because of the way he was brought up.

Communication

Communication follows the form of speaking words of life. Prov18: 21 warns us that either death or life flow from the tongue. The only way we can communicate life is by abiding in Him so that He abides in us (Jn.15:5). When we are led by His Spirit out of the abundance of our hearts our mouths will speak (Jn.7:38).

Communication also involves listening. James 1:19 tells us we need to be better listeners. If Jesus was willing to minister to the need of children, so it is that if we abide in Him, we will seek ministry opportunities when our children approach us wanting to speak to us.

A child who is accustomed to communicating with a receptive parent will never struggle to communicate with his parents in latter years. Just as our communication habit with God needs to be cultivated, so does that apply to our communication with our children.

Lastly communication involves lifestyle. Whilst talking and listening are important, it is a scientific fact that the human brain only retains 7% of all that it hears; but on the other hand retains 38% of all that it sees and hears – Lifestyle.

Parental Examples

Someone once said, 'Zip the lip and walk the talk'. **Children will be most affected by what they see in our lifestyle.** Particularly up until they are able to have their own relationship with God, they see and communicate with God through us. Any child who has had a poor relationship with his parents will struggle to have a relationship with God. Their trust in God is founded on their trust in you.

It must be always remembered that with regard to our disciplining our children, we have strong competition from Satan. He works through the very effective media of television, magazines, worldly friends, education and worldly entertainment.

The scriptures speak much of child discipline. Discipline is never an easy thing to effect, but without it your child may not inherit the Kingdom of God (Prov.23:13-14). This is because the Adamic nature causes a child to have a sinful heart (Ps.51:5). There is only one thing that drives it out ... discipline! (Prov.22:15). We've need to discipline with diligence (Prov.13:24). Discipline must be effective, but not damage (Prov. 20:30).

Discipline

Society today has a negative outlook on the use of Biblical discipline, largely because, over years, the biblical methods have not been correctly adhered to, resulting in perceived abuse of children. Discipline may take many forms. Parents should seek the Lord diligently over this issue.

Some 'Do's' and 'Don'ts'

- Don't keep threatening verbally.
- Do act after speaking twice.
- Do discipline promptly.
- Don't discipline hastily or in anger.
- Do follow through with, and complete the punishment.
- Don't discipline in front of friends or in public.
- ONLY discipline after:
 - a. A child has broken the rules that you have set them—after understanding your instruction.
 - b. You have gone the second mile with them.

If you do not discipline your children, when they break the rules you have set, then you undo valuable work (Matt.5:19 and 37).

In a Nutshell...

The role of the parents is to disciple their children to a place where they will hunger and thirst for God.

In a practical vein Prov22: 6 says we are to 'train up a child ..' We do this first of all by communication, and secondly by discipline.

Disciple children according to Godly principles - 'permit' what has already been 'permitted' in heaven and 'forbid' what has already been 'forbidden' in Heaven (Matt.18:18).

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

6. The Working Person

2 Cor.4:16

In the beginning

Adam was given a free reign in the Garden of Eden, and was told by God, "...I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth...to you it shall be for meat". Everything was placed at his disposal. There was certainly no need for him to toil for his food. (Gen 1:29)

The result of disobedience

When Adam and Eve ate of the tree of 'the knowledge of good and evil', they were cursed. Fallen man was then destined to work all his life long. Gen.3:19 shows us that this work (Job) would not be easy, because he had lost his wonderful 'image' (Gen.1:26 5:3), and would now be burdened with a body which would be a disadvantage to work in - the human body as we know it today. Gen.3:17 confirms.

Mankind's Part

In the book of psalms, an unknown author wrote in Ps.104 about creation, showing how God has laid the foundation for flora and fauna to co exist. In verse 23 we see one of fallen mans parts in the plan - to labour for the rest of his days on earth as part of the curse.

What about Christ's Body (Church)?

Within the true body of Christ (the bride), it is evident that not all members will receive the gifts of appointment (Teacher, Apostle, Pastor, Evangelist or Prophet). Only those God has destined will grow in those gifts (Eph.4:11). These gifts cannot be obtained by study at a school or bible college, but are given free by God to those whom He has ordained. As the body (church) grows, some or all of the members of the five fold ministry (gifts of appointment), may need to be supported by the remaining members of the body as they enter full time ministry. This means that others would continue working in the world (although not be part of it), to generate funds for the furthering of the gospel.

How will they work?

Paul exhorts the employee to obey those in authority over them and to be sincere in their daily tasks as unto the Lord. That means all tasks (Eph.6:5-8). Work done on a daily basis should not be done 'halfheartedly' just to make it appear as though a good job has been done, but should be done with total commitment as if the Lord Himself had requested the job to be done (1 Timothy 6:1-2). We will all stand before God one day and if we have not obeyed His word, He will want to know why?

Set Apart

Your behaviour as a Christian in the work place is always under the watchful eye of the world. ("...and he calls himself a Christian!!!"). It is therefore imperative that our behaviour is unto the Lord.

Who must Listen

This word applies to everyone, from house keepers reporting to home owners, to directors reporting to a company board. Know that the Lord will reward those willing to adhere to His word, but those who disobey will be severely dealt with, without partiality (Col.3:25).

Follow in the steps of His Sufferings

At times it may be very difficult to do what your superior has instructed, particularly if you do not agree, or worse still, if they are prejudiced towards you! (1 Pet.2:18-22). The Lord said He would reward those who follow His word as well as deal with the superior who has been acting outside of the Lords will. To the employer, Paul says that they should treat their subordinates with fairness and justice. If they take advantage of subordinates, "...ye also have a Master in heaven" (Col.4:1 Eph.6:9).

Points to Meditate....

There are many similarities between the husband and wife relationship and the employee/employer relationship. True to Gods heart, what would happen if:-

- The employer treated the employee with understanding - loved and honoured them as fellow heirs of the grace of life? (1 Pet.3:7).
- The employee was obedient and submissive to the employer? (1 Pet.3:1-6).
- Both employer and employee focused their eyes on the Lord? (Taking the pressure off each other)

Employer and employee have responsibilities to God in terms of His word. Provided we stay in those boundaries, we will be blessed. If not we will be continually finding life difficult (Ps. 1:1-6).

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

7. Discover Scripture - Godly Principles in the Work Place

Employees

Eph 6:5 Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Eph 6:6 not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Eph 6:7 with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men:

Eph 6:8 knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

1Ti 6:1 Let as many as are servants under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed.

1Ti 6:2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but let them serve them the rather, because they that partake of the benefit are believing and beloved. These things teach and exhort.

1Pe 2:18 Servants, you must obey your masters and always show respect to them. Do this, not only to those who are kind and thoughtful, but also to those who are cruel.

1Pe 2:19 God will bless you, even if others treat you unfairly for being loyal to him.

1Pe 2:20 You don't gain anything by being punished for some wrong you have done. But God will bless you, if you have to suffer for doing something good.

1Pe 2:21 After all, God chose you to suffer as you follow in the footsteps of Christ, who set an example by suffering for you.

1Pe 2:22 Christ did not sin or ever tell a lie.

1Pe 2:23 Although he was abused, he never tried to get even. And when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he had faith in God, who judges fairly.

Employers

Col 4:1 Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

Eph 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening; knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

Blessing

Col 3:25 For he that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

1Pe 3:8 Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded:

1Pe 3:9 not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Employees -

1Pe 3:1 In like manner, ye wives (employees), be in subjection to your own husbands (managers, employers); that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives (employees);

1Pe 3:2 beholding your chaste behavior coupled with fear.

1Pe 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel;

1Pe 3:4 but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Employers, Managers –

1Pe 3:7 Ye husbands, (managers, employers) in like manner, dwell with your wives (employees) according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman (employee), as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered.

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

7. Kingdom Business or Business in the Kingdom?

Matt. 28:19-20

Today's business market is extremely competitive. There has never been a time in our history when all aspects of business need to be so well honed in order to merely just stay 'afloat'.

We believe, by faith, that God can do anything. Can we trust Him to help us take our businesses to a level where He can freely bless us? In reality, what is our personal motivation for God to help us in our businesses?

- To have a business where we would like God to be a partner with us?
- A business where we can bless the less fortunate through proceeds?
- A business we can use as a vehicle to share the Gospel with others?

There is nothing wrong if we have answered 'yes' to any of the above.

Let's look at some Scripture...

Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches and that apart from Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5). He says that if we want to bear good testimony to Him in our daily lives, we need to abide in Him, and He in us. We need to be spending time with Him in prayer, in His word and with other believers. (Spending time with other believers for fellowship and encouragement – not for times of criticising and judging one another!).

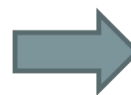
Paul tells us in Romans 8:14 that those who are sensitive to, and obey the Holy Spirit, are His children. Again, we need to spend time with Him if we want to learn how to hear Him through His Spirit. We learn His character through reading the word, meaningful fellowship and prayer (in our closets).

Jesus says that we will be able to recognize believers by their actions (Matt.7-16-19;20). Our actions reflect the depth of our relationship with the Lord.

Worldly Business

A person who does not know the Lord and owns a business, will pass on his character through that business. The following 'fruit' normally categorizes business in the world without God:

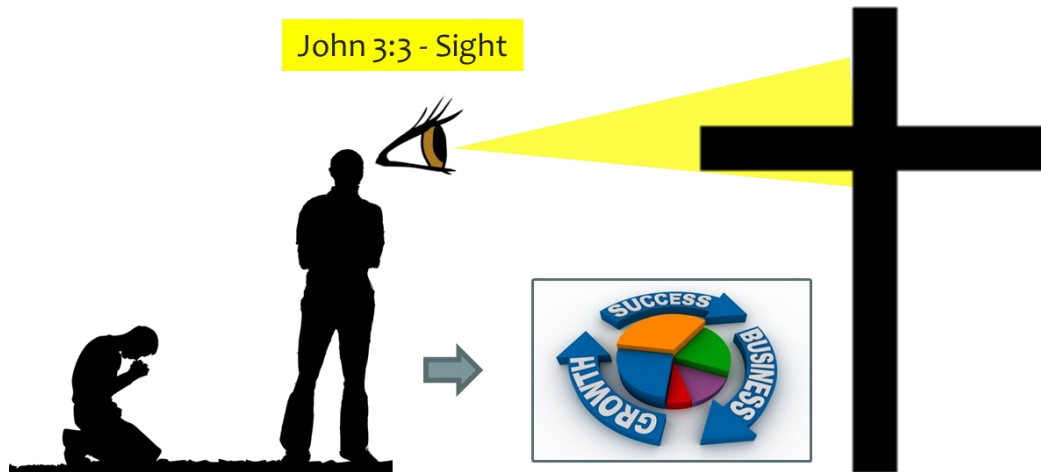
- 100% self-centred
- Not Caring about Staff/Suppliers/Customers
- Profit at any cost



A.L.A. Agencies (Pty) Ltd.

After the Lord has touched a repentant heart, change begins to take place in the business owner. When the first part of the salvation process, '**sight**', has come to the individual (John 3:3), they become enlightened about the things of God and their personal sinful nature. However, at this point they have not '**entered**' into the Kingdom of God. This business owner has a business, which we will call "As Long As Agencies (Pty) Ltd."

Some 'fruit' of this business would be:

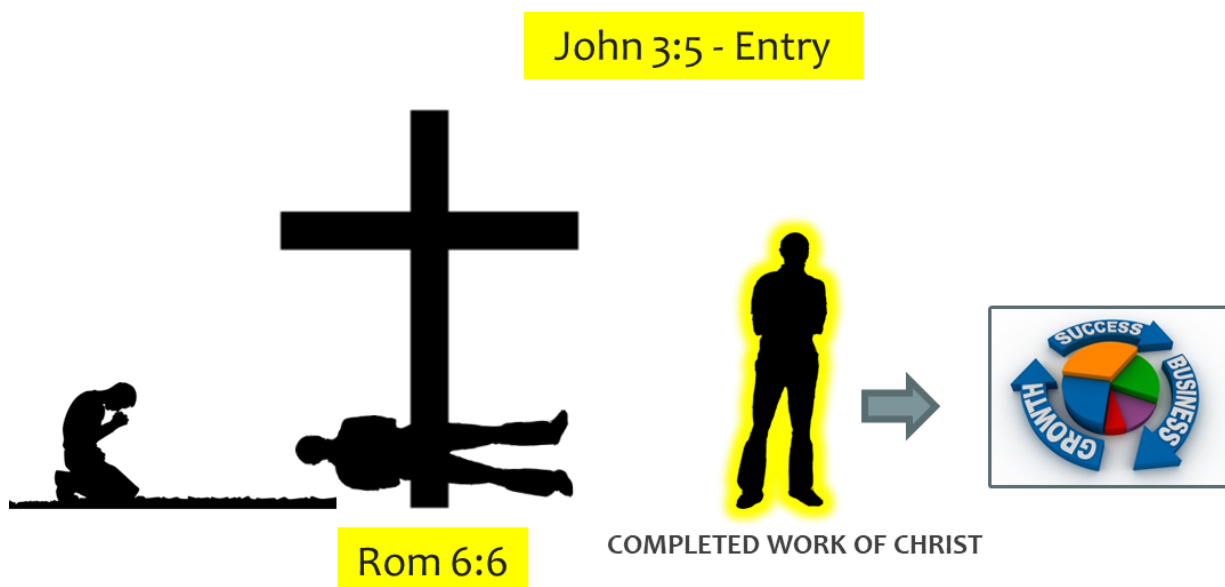


- Pay Staff fairly (Min Wage) – **AS LONG AS** it's comfortable
- Fair Exchange of Value – **AS LONG AS** it's comfortable
- Give resources to Kingdom work – **AS LONG AS** it's comfortable

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However, once the second part of the born again process takes place – being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5) – then true entry into the Kingdom of God takes place. At that point, the repentant heart realises their old nature has died with Jesus on the cross and they now start to operate from the new heart of Jesus. This business owner has a business, which we will call "As Led by the Lord Realities Inc."

Some of the 'fruit' of this business would be as follows:



- Pay Staff fairly – **AS LORD LEADS**
- Fair Exchange of Value – **AS LORD LEADS**
- Give resources to Kingdom Work – **AS LORD LEADS**
- This business will go over and above to make sure Godly principles apply throughout.

Our Measure

If we use Matt. 28:19-20 as the Kingdom ruler to measure business success, this is what we will see:

Share the Gospel and make disciples

Worldly business is not involved at all in sharing the Gospel and making disciples.

Share the Gospel and make disciples

"As Long As Agencies (Pty) Ltd." is involved in sharing the Gospel and making disciples as long as it is comfortable for the business.

Share the Gospel and make disciples

"As Led by the Lord Consultants (Pty) Ltd." is completely committed to making sure ALL aspects of the business operate according to Godly principles. Sharing the Gospel and making disciples will be a 'fruit' thereof.

In Conclusion....

Therefore, Kingdom business and business in the Kingdom are the same thing – one is not possible without the other. Jesus said that apart from Him we cannot do anything. We are transformed from our old nature to our new nature in Christ, on a daily basis. As this happens, the fruit displayed in our lives is more reflective of the Lord. If we are business owners, then this fruit is carried down through all aspects of our business.

OUR ROLE IN THE KINGDOM

1. The Divine Romance

Matt.25:1-13

God's Plan

It was God's plan from the beginning to create a bride for Adam, the first man. It was also his intention on the final stage to create a bride for the second man, Jesus.

Irrespective of our end-time translations, views or standpoints the above statement is an irrevocable spiritual truth.

Based on accepting this fact, it is a great help, in understanding the parable of the ten virgins, to have a look at what the Jewish marital tradition was in the day of Jesus.

Jesus' Parables

It is also good to know why Jesus taught in parables. On their enquiry, as to why he did so, He told his disciples that parables were only for their ears. To explain parables to them, he took them aside privately and revealed their meaning. (Matt.13:10-13; 36-37; Mark 4:10; 34.)

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

The parable of the ten virgins is no different; Jesus is taking us aside today so He can explain the meaning to us.

The Contract

When it became time for a young Jewish man to be married (we should understand here, that for the most part his bride had already been chosen – by none other than his father!) he accompanied his father to the home of his bride-to-be. At this meeting between father and son, the young lady and her father, a proper binding legal contract for their marriage, was drawn up.

The price that the young man had to pay was critically important, but there were also issues of blood relation and older sisters on the young girl's side. Remember the story of Jacob, Leah and Laban? (Gen 29:16-30).

Finally agreement was reached between the parties and then the young man made a speech and toasted his bride-to-be with a glass of wine. On leaving her house, he told her that he was going to his father's house to prepare a place for her.

The Day and the Hour

The custom of the day did not allow for a fixed wedding date. The date was determined by when their wedding chamber would be ready for occupation.

The chamber had to be readied and stocked with provisions for the seven days they would be in there, initially, to consummate their marriage contract.

The young man's father was the one who approved of the structure before it could be occupied because it was at his (the father's) house. So, he alone, knew the day and the hour in which the young man could go and collect his bride.

For her part, the bride would have to do a lot of waiting. She would know that the little chamber was being built. Perhaps her friends would report secretly to her about the building progress, but she would never know the day or the hour of completion.

Preparing Herself

She busied herself collecting items for her trousseau and getting her wedding gown ready. Whenever she went out, she wore a veil over her face to show that she was betrothed. This would discourage any other man from approaching her father for her hand in marriage.

As time moved on she would light an oil lamp and keep it in her window, in case her bridegroom arrived at night.

Stolen Away!

The Jews of the day had an understanding of the heart of a woman and therefore, they would 'steal' their brides away. For the most part, the best time to do this would be at night and because of this, as time drew nearer, the bride and her maids slept together in their wedding garments. They did this in readiness for being stolen away.

Eventually the bridegroom arrived. As he neared his bride's home, a shout would go up, "Behold the Bridegroom"! With that, his party would rush in and snatch the bride and her maids away. The merry group would go down the village street singing and shouting. People would peer out of their windows to watch the merrymakers passing by. They could identify the groom, but the bride wore her veil so she would not be known.

During the seven day period in the chamber together, they would become acquainted and according to Jewish law, were not allowed out, until their marriage was consummated. Following this event, they celebrated their wedding feast with all their guests.

In Relation to Matt.25:1-13

How shall we now relate this traditional Jewish marriage ceremony with our interpretation of the parable in Matt.25?

We must begin by understanding that the major purpose of our salvation is that we, the body of Christ, the Church, must be made ready to be married to the Lamb – Jesus. (Rev. 19:7-8; 21:9, 2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:27)

The Contract

It is God the Father, who has chosen a bride for Jesus from His body of believers. Even as the first Adam's bride was taken from his side, whilst in a dead sleep, likewise, did the second Adam, Jesus, have His bride taken from His side after He died; **His bride is His Church.**

Jesus and His Father had to negotiate to purchase this bride from her fallen state as the daughter of Adam (Gen.5:3). She was a slave to her sinful nature (Gen.6:5) and was unable to redeem herself (Jer.13:23). So the price that was paid was high – the very life of Jesus in fact.

On completion of the agreement (John.3:3-5). Jesus drank wine (Luke.22:17-18) and later told His bride that He was going to His Father's house to prepare a place for them (John.14:2-3).

Preparing Herself

He left His disciples with the task of waiting. Preparing their trousseau of 'good works'. (2Cor.5:10).

These works however were only works that emanated out of their love relationship with the Father (Jas.2:26). Why emanating from a love relationship with the Father? Because no works of eternal value, can be achieved any other way (John 15:5).

Jesus does not want His disciples to walk in the world without a veil of righteousness; they must never flirt with the world's system. In other words, they must be seen to be believers (1Pet. 2:9-12).

Believers are cleansed by the blood of the Lamb and thus forgiven their sins.

They have the power of the Holy Spirit to be overcomers in this life and their relationship with God the Father will prepare them, in this life, for the Lamb's wedding feast in Heaven.

Who are the 10 Virgins?

In the parable, there are ten virgins. Who do the virgins represent? The Greek root word says they were unmarried daughters, brides, and separated, to mention just a few definitions. In terms of our day, we would say that these virgins are symbolic of the Church.

Just the wise ones? No, both the wise and the foolish. We say this because they were all waiting for the arrival of the Bridegroom.

If the bridegroom had arrived before midnight, would they all have been ready? Yes.

What caused the five foolish not to be ready? They ran out of oil. What is the importance of oil? Oil is symbolic of a relationship with God. No oil – no relationship with God!

The five foolish once had a relationship God and followed Him but they had left their first love and waxed cold (Rev 2:4-5).

The Day and the Hour

Disciples of Jesus do not know the hour nor the day of the return of Jesus, but they know of the times and seasons (1Thess:5:1-4). They can see today that we are surely living on the knife-edge of time. The world is witnessing an astounding fulfilment of biblical prophecy in this age, including the climax of the antichrist reign in the form of the one world government or new world order.

Witness the steady removal of cash transactions in our society and control of information and power into the hands of a few select people. We all see this and know Jesus spoke of these times.

Stolen Away!

Jesus will soon steal his bride away. Paul talks about this event (1 Cor. 15:51-52), saying that it will happen "in the twinkling of an eye". This event is commonly known as the rapture (translated from the Latin – Raptiere , meaning caught up). (1 Thess.4:16).

As we look at the scripture, we see that the bridegroom shouts and we will be drawn up to meet Him in the clouds. In other words, His bride must be dressed in her wedding garment complete with lighted lamp and ready to go.

Preparing Herself

How does the bride become ready? The scripture says she makes herself ready (Rev. 19:7).

Paul says she must not be sleeping, but awake (1Thess. 5:6). He says she must also be watching. Finally, she must be sober (not practising sin).

The bride is with Jesus for seven days. During this time she will receive her rewards at the believer's judgement (2 Cor. 5:10) and attend the marriage feast of the Lamb (Rev. 19:8).

The corresponding time on earth is seven years. (Num.14:39). This will be a fearful time on earth, as God's judgement is poured out on all those remaining on earth (Luke 21:25-36). Many believers will emerge from this time (Rev 7:9; 14), these will all be martyrs (Rev.13:16-17).

Why would God remove his bride from the holocaust on earth? It is a Godly principle - He never places the righteous under a time of judgement (see Noah and the flood, Lot at Sodom & Gomorrah). He promised that the bride would escape His wrath (1Thess.5:9, Rev.3:10, 2Pet.2:9)

Lastly, over the years there have been many speculations about the Rapture, Second Coming of Jesus and the end of the world as we know it. Yet the scripture is clear, "ye know neither the day nor the hour, when the Lord shall return" (Matt.25:13).

This much we do know; God is timeless and the moment any members of the bride die, they shall be translated into eternal real-time and would be part of the rapture too (1Thess.4:15). So if God were to tarry another thousand years; for those that are His bride that die along the way; they will be part of the rapture!

Even if you cannot accept the theology or interpretation of scripture in this discourse, we urge you to go to God and ask Him to reveal the truth to you and just as Jesus has done with His disciples over more than two millennia, He will take you aside and explain to you personally.

Whatever you do, DO NOT pass this message off as 'Just another one of those end-time hypes to stir the Church up', but earnestly seek God for His personal revelation to you.

NOTES