

VBS 2013 Learnem & Dailey's 3-Ring Circus of Faith  
Lesson 1: Prayer and Bible Study – King Josiah Finds God's Law (2 Kings 22:1 -23:25)

**Introduction:**

- 1- Prayer is the engine that powers our spiritual lives and God's word provide the essential knowledge we need to live the Christian life. If we neglect both, our spiritual growth and maturity will suffer and we will not have enough strength to continue our journey to Heaven.
- 2- Not only are prayer and bible study necessary for our spiritual growth and maturity, but they are also essential to help us develop and sustain a strong and fulfilling intimacy with God.

Indeed, intimacy with God is knowing God and living in conformity with His will. It is having a close walk and relationship with Him.

We have been saved for one purpose: to be reconciled to God and so to restore the fellowship that once existed between God and man before sin entered the perfect world he had created. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 states that "All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sin against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation."

A close walk/relationship with God is only possible through faith, of course, but also and very importantly through prayer and bible study. Prayer and bible study go hand in hand for both are means of a two-way communication system designed by God to trust in Him and to remain in constant and uninterrupted fellowship with Him.

**Prayer and Answered Prayers**

Prayer is communication with God. Prayer is our opportunity to talk to God. We can, through prayer: entreat, implore, make supplication, beg, beseech, offer adoration and praise to God and answered- prayers is a way God speaks to us. Ephesians 1: 3 states that God "has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ".

Prior to our Lord and Savior Jesus' death on the Cross for the forgiveness of our sins and the blessing of receiving the Holy Spirit as a gracious gift from God to dwell in us, very few people had the blessing of the spirit of God dwelling in them, allowing them to pray powerful prayers and walking closely with God.

Prayer is a spiritual blessing that we have received from God since we now can "approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:16).

**Bible Study**

The greatest problem we face and countless generations before us since the beginning of time have also faced is SIN. Sin is everywhere, "crouching at our doors and desiring to have us". Sin is a reality before and after baptism and it must, therefore, be dealt with. But we must turn to the right source for knowing what sin is and how to deal with it in order to develop and sustain a strong and fulfilling intimacy with God.

The only place to turn to is the Scriptures of God for they are mainly instructions from God about sin and death, salvation and life. The Scriptures are God showing us himself: God communicating to us who He is and what He has done so that in the response of faith we may truly know Him and live our lives in fellowship with Him. Bible study is our opportunity to know what God wants to say to us.

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2). “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3: 16-17).

Reading and studying the scriptures is permitting God to speak to us and it will adequately support us against the temptations to sin or wander from his way. The account of King Josiah in 2 Kings 22:1 -23:25, which we are now going to go over, demonstrates the power of God’s word and how it works in the life of one who believes it.

Josiah was the great-grandson of King Hezekiah and figured among the eight good kings to have ruled over the Kingdom of Judah. He was made king by the people of the land when he was only eight years old. He took David as his model and walked in the ways of the Lord (2 Chronicles 24:2-4) and when he was sixteen, he committed himself to the Lord and began to seek His blessings.

When he was twenty years old, he began to purge Judah of idolatry (2 Chronicles 34:3). He tore down the high places, destroyed the idols and the altars dedicated to Baal and the other false gods and he took his reforms to the northern kingdom of Israel to also rid them of idolatry. He personally went on these excursions and participated in removing the idols from the land (2 Chronicles 34:7).

When he was twenty-six years old, Josiah spearheaded the mission to repair the temple of the Lord, which had been neglected, closed, and was in a general state of disrepair. It was during the renovation that Hilkiah the high priest, who was also in charge of the repairs, found the book of the Law of God. Some believe it was the actual copy which had been written by Moses some 900 years before and which he had deposited in the side of the Ark of the Covenant.

The book was quickly taken to King Josiah who requested it to be read to him. From it he learned about the wickedness Judah had already done, and also warnings from God about what He would do if they did not repent. After being assured by a prophetess named Huldah that the book was genuine, Josiah broadened his reforms to comply with Scripture. His zeal was promptly and greatly quickened for the restoration of true religion among the people.

With the help of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of God and the true worship of God were taught throughout the land. Josiah called upon the people to enter a covenant with God and called upon them to dedicate themselves to God – heart, soul, and body – in sincerity and in truth and he began immediately to implement the conditions of the covenant.

Very importantly, he ordered the nation to observe the Passover as they were taught to do out of the book of the Law of the Lord and in fact, 2 Kings 23:22-23 states that “not since the days of the judges who led Israel, nor throughout the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah, had any such Passover been observed. But in the eighteenth year of the King Josiah, this Passover was celebrated to the Lord in Jerusalem”

King Josiah also continued his efforts to rid the nation of every trace of idolatry, superstition, and false religious faith. Unfortunately, he died in Jerusalem after being mortally wounded while fighting against the Egyptian army. He was only 39 years old. “Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did – with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses” (2 Kings 23:25).

Unfortunately for the Kingdom of Judah “the Lord did not turn away from the heat of his fierce anger, which burned against Judah because of all that [king] Manasseh had done to provoke him to anger. So the Lord said, ‘I will also remove Judah from my presence as I removed Israel and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and this temple, about which I said, ‘there shall my Name be’” (2 Kings 23:26-27).

What can we learn from the account of King Josiah?

- 1- If and when we neglect to read and study God’s Word, then we cannot fully know what His will is, the rewards of knowing and doing His will and the consequences of not doing His will.

King Josiah like many of us prior to becoming disciples of Christ probably knew God only through oral traditions but not through His written word and therefore did not fully know God and His will. He also, like many of us prior to becoming God’s children, did not know what true worship of God was. Indeed, it wasn’t until King Josiah read from the Book of the Law of God that he realized the full extent of the sin against God when the nation of Israel had failed to celebrate the Passover, years after years, as prescribed in the book of the Law of God, and the sin of not rendering true and acceptable worship to God.

The celebration of the Passover was to serve as a reminder to the future generations of Israelites that God was the source of their salvation from physical bondage in Egypt and consequently, they were to offer him and him alone true and sincere worship for what he had done for them. Similarly, today, many of us prior to becoming Christians did not know that God was and is the source of our salvation from spiritual bondage and that as such, we must offer him and him alone true and sincere worship for the salvation that he offers us through His Son our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

Indeed, many of us did not have a true understanding of what baptism was and its significance in the plan of salvation until we actually sat down and studied out the Word of God. Many of us also did not fully understand the importance and significance of partaking of the Lord’s Supper when rendering true worship to God.

I, for instance, did not know that I needed to be saved to have a true and fulfilling relationship with God. I was limiting myself to trying to be “good” and saying one or two prayers here and then, convincing myself that I was okay with God.

Six months prior to my coming to the US, my sister had given me a bible, a French Bible of course, and I had never opened it because I did not know how to read the Bible; I did not know where to start: Old or New Testament. But one thing I did was to take it with me when I made the journey to the US and I am certainly glad I did for it had been instrumental in my salvation.

I remember sitting down with our brother Bob, at Adelphi University, going over the Love of God and the Word of God studies: he had his English bible opened and I had my French bible opened and we were studying the Word of God. He was teaching me how to be saved and what true worship of God was. God had taken down the language barrier and was making himself known to me and Bob was my Jeremiah, teaching me the word of God and the true worship of God.

In the same way that there was a King Josiah in many of us prior to obeying the Gospel of Christ, there is also a King Josiah in many other people in the world waiting to be added to the kingdom by God. Our goal is to find them and be a “Jeremiah” to them, teaching them the word of God and the true worship of God.

As parents, our challenge is to make sure that we do not let our sons and daughters grow up with a partial knowledge of God as King Josiah did and as many of us did, but rather to help them grow with a full knowledge of God, helping to develop in them a love for God, for His word and for prayer.

- 2- The Law of God had been neglected and even lost by the people of the Lord. It had not been stolen by evil and wicked men and trashed. It had not been burned by its enemies. Rather, it was the very people whom God had given it to, who had neglected it and lost it. It had been replaced with idolatry and traditions of men. May we never let our bibles collect dust and/or be buried under useless worldly things and “wisdom”.

We should especially be careful in reading too many Christian books, which might have the appearance of being helpful in our Christian walk while in fact could soon take over or replace the Scriptures as the authority, and therefore becoming a source of division and disunity in the body of Christ through the introduction of strange doctrines. This in fact is the work of the Devil and unless we are in the word, we will not be able to withstand the assault of false teachings and false worship of God. Unless we study God’s word and remain in his word, we will not be able to have a discerning spirit.

- 3- A nation’s morals always fall into a state of decay following, or with the loss of true religion. Apart from the eternal moral truths taught in the Scriptures, we have no moral authority to condemn the worst of evils. This is evidenced by today’s acceptance by the world of the alternative lifestyle and many other sinful practices clearly condemned by God and yet becoming more and more mainstream.

God clearly said in Isaiah 5:20: “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.” What are we to do as Christians? Pray and pray, teach and teach.

- 4- When the Book of the Law was found and King Josiah requested it to be read to all people, he began a reform movement that changed the nation of Judah, if only for a brief period. The Gospel is still the power of God (Romans 1:16) and if we study it and preach it faithfully, it can bring about renewed restoration. However, and unlike King Josiah who enforced the renewed worship of God through his royal authority, we should always make sure when we study the bible to let God's word do all the convicting work.

### **Conclusion**

The greatest problem we face in life is SIN. We know the disastrous effects and consequences of sin not only in one's life but also in a nation's life. By submitting to the divine guidance of God through prayer and bible study in order to know how to deal with sin, we will then be victorious in our walk with Christ through a sustained strong and fulfilling intimacy with God.

May we never cause the Lord to remove us or any one of his faithful disciples from his presence and may we never prevent Him from dwelling in His temple, our bodies, because of an unrepentant heart. Let us always pray without ceasing for our leaders. Let us always, in the words of Paul to Timothy "do our best to present ourselves before God as ones approved, workmen who do not need to be ashamed and who correctly handle the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Amen.