

Hatfield Christian Church

**Ladies Cell Meeting Guidelines
Term 1, 2007**

**What the Word says about
GROWTH**

Compiled by the pastor's wives
of Hatfield Christian Church.
Including insights adapted from
Fasting For Spiritual Breakthrough,
by Elmer Towns

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New King James Version

Dear Lady Leader.

We hope you had a great holiday or break. May you all be rested and ready for all that God has planned!

So, what happens after fruitfulness and breakthrough? These seem to be the ultimate in conquering. After conquering, I would suggest, comes the development of the new land. The excitement of discerning where what needs to happen, the planting of new seeds and so on ...

Maybe the new ground is a bit different from the previous land! We may have to use other methods to cultivate and harvest other kinds of livestock and other kinds of crops? It sure will not be a dull, boring time!

If all of this seems a bit overwhelming to you, remember that in the Kingdom of God pioneering never stops. We are called 'more than conquerors' and, by the Spirit, we are fully equipped to be just that.

'In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!'

Romans 8:37

A promise for 2007 is in Isaiah 41:15, 'See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth'.

Some changes for 2007:

- The new name for cells is **Life Groups**.
- The new guidelines are a bit more 'meaty' than usual, so that further study can be done at home.
- The Life Group leader can choose to do only a certain portion of each guideline that will fit into your time together.
- Ladies Guidelines are free for Life Group leaders, but will also be on sale at a nominal price for anybody else.
- Ladies seminars are planned for each term. These will take place in the evenings to accommodate those who cannot attend Life Groups during the day.
- Seminar topics will be relevant to the times we live in. Keep yourselves updated through regular contact with your pastor's wife, other leaders and the notices.
- Ladies seminar evenings will be known as **NEWSGIRLS** evenings.

The Lord gives the word (of power): the women who bear and publish the news are a great host.

Psalm 68:11 (Amplified)

Together with you, in the power of our God.

The Hatfield pastors' wives.

Contents

Week 1	LADIES' DAY OF PRAYER	1
Week 2	BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT	2
Week 3	HEARING GOD'S VOICE	7
Week 4	PROPHECY AND TAMING THE TONGUE	11
Week 5	THE POWER OF KNOWING AND OBEYING THE WORD	17
Week 6	BLESSINGS AND CURSES	20
Week 7	EXCELLENCE HONOURS GOD	24
Week 8	SPIRIT, SOUL, BODY	28



Week 1 *LADIES' DAY OF PRAYER*

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We would like to encourage you to bring your ladies to the **Function Hall** at HCC today at 09:30. This will be an opportunity to spend time with the Lord, by reading the Word, praying, interceding, listening to God, resting in Him, meditating on His revelation, etc.

At 11:00 we will serve tea and coffee, and enjoy some fellowship. (Please organize with your ladies to bring some eats)

Note: The congregations that are not in close proximity to the church are welcome to make a more convenient plan. Your pastor's wife will contact you in this regard.



‘And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation;
but be filled with the Holy Spirit’
Ephesians 5:18 (Emphasis added)

Objective

To find out what the Word of God says about being **filled** with the Holy Spirit and why God wants us to lead this kind of lifestyle.

Ice-Breaker

How would you manage if you suddenly could not see and have to be led by another person? Describe what you would need them to tell you to guide you.

Tell the group of a time when you **know** that you received a word from the Holy Spirit that you know was not from your own wisdom, which brought breakthrough in a situation.

Word and Discussion

We are going to discover why Jesus commanded the disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to **wait** there **until** they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:4-5)

And here’s a thought: Just as people do and say things when they are under the influence of alcohol that they wouldn’t normally do when they are sober, so we can do and say supernatural (but edifying) things when we are led by the Holy Spirit that we would

not normally do otherwise. However, as the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet (1 Corinthians 14:32) we can be in control of our spirits and not behave unwisely, but be clearly led by the Holy Spirit before we act (Romans 8:14).

1. The Holy Spirit gives us BOLDNESS

‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto Me ...’
Acts 1:8

‘... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness’
Acts 4:31 (Emphasis added)

- A witness gives evidence of either hearing or seeing something that took place.
- We can be those who tell others what we have heard or seen or experienced Jesus do in our lives or in the lives of others (Acts 4:20).
- There is nothing as powerful as our own testimony.
- Write down/or discuss a few instances that you can recall where you experienced an amazing Holy Spirit boldness or where you missed an opportunity to share a testimony because you lacked boldness.

2. The Holy Spirit as our HELPER

‘Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses ...’
Romans 8:26 (Emphasis added)

- Read Romans 8:14-16, 26. The Holy Spirit reveals our ‘sonship’ to us and as He **fills** us, there is no room for fear! (2 Timothy 1:7)
- The Holy Spirit will **help** us to do the works / and greater works than Jesus did. (John 14:12-18)
- What are some of the works that you would like the Holy Spirit to do through you?

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- The Holy Spirit wants to **help** us to pray His will and to intercede for situations and for others by praying through our spirits in a heavenly language *i.e.* in **Tongues**. (Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 14:14-15, 18)
 - The Holy Spirit helps us in praising and worshipping God (John 4:23-24; 1 Corinthians 14:15)

3. The Holy Spirit as our TEACHER

‘But God has revealed them to us through His spirit...’
1 Corinthians 2:10

‘... and He will tell you things to come’
John 16:13

- Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-14. The Holy Spirit wants to show things to us that God wants us to know about – things that are part of our Godly inheritance that we are missing out on right here on earth.
- God wants us to experience _____ in times of turmoil (Romans 14:17)
- God wants us to experience _____ in times of trial (Romans 14:17)
- God wants us to experience _____ in times of sadness. ‘Helper’ or ‘Comforter’ is *Parakletos* in Greek, and means ‘One who comes alongside’ (See John 14:16-18)
- God wants us to experience _____ in times of weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- No wonder God wants us **filled** with the Holy Spirit!

3. The Holy Spirit is our EDIFIER

‘... Building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit’
Jude Verse 20

- Write down some times and places when you can pray in the Holy Spirit (*i.e.* in Tongues) and be built up in your inner man, e.g. while driving your car.
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- Let’s do it! Remember what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:18.

5. The Holy Spirit fills us with WISDOM

‘... It is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit’
Mark 13:11

- Read Mark 13:11. If you are in a tricky situation and you do not know what you should say, if you are **filled** with the Holy Spirit, this verse is for you.
 - Read John 16:13. How do we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit when we are full of the Holy Spirit? (Acts 6:3-5, 7, 8; 1 Corinthians 12:8; John 10:27)
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6. The Holy Spirit fills us with LOVE

‘... the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.’
Romans 5:5

- When we are **filled** with the Holy Spirit we can love people that we wouldn’t find it possible to love in our own strength.

7. The Holy Spirit gives us REST and REFRESHING

‘This is the rest ... This is the refreshing ...’
Isaiah 28:11-12 (Emphasis added)

- This speaks about a rest and refreshing that we experience when we speak in tongues, praying in the spirit. (A cross reference scripture for Isaiah 28:11 is 1 Corinthians 14:21). Read Isaiah 28:11-12 and meditate on it for a moment.

8. The Holy Spirit is a FOUNTAIN of LIFE flowing from us

'... out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'

John. 7:38

- Read John 7:37-39. Is the Holy Spirit a fountain inside you?

Ministry

- If anyone has not yet experienced being **filled** with the Holy Spirit and would like to experience what the disciples did when they 'waited for the Promise of the Father' (Acts 1:4-5; Acts 2:1-4) you **can**. **How?** – You ask. All you need to do is to **ask**.
- Read Luke 11:9-13. **Everyone** who asks for the Holy Spirit **receives** the Holy Spirit. Then, if you would also like to ask for a heavenly language, ask for Tongues and you will receive them too.
- This ministry can take place in the group or privately with individuals as they prefer.
- The group leader must be well-prepared to lead people into this wonderful experience and be filled with the Spirit herself.
- An exercise to do in your own time:
 - Write down the steps that you would take to lead a friend of yours into this experience of being **filled** with the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Focus

- Ask the Father for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray in the spirit together.
- Wait quietly in His presence and then pray for the leaders in our communities as the Holy Spirit prompts you.
- Pray for them to be saved and Spirit-filled, so that the Lord can lead them to **boldly** take Godly leadership.



'When he has brought out all of his own, he goes ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.'

John 10:4

Objective

To know that God truly speaks to His people and that by hearing God's voice, we will grow into mature believers, who are led by the voice of God.

Ice-breaker

Tell the group of a time when you saw an orchestral production (musical, ballet, etc.) with a conductor leading them.

Were his body movements interesting, funny, ...?

How did you perceive the responses of the cast and orchestra?

Was their timing and concentration good?

Did all of them make a better sound than one instrument would have made on its own?

Word and Discussion

Just as in an orchestra or choir, God is the conductor, and He knows the part that everyone needs to play in life.

So if we all listen intently, watch Him and do our part well, there will be an awesome harmonious sound that fills the universe, the sound of **obedience to a call**.

When we don't wait on God to hear His voice and we do all the talking it blocks out God's voice.

This makes me think of a quote I once read, 'Home is where man is free to say anything he pleases because no one pays attention to him.' (In: *More Holy Wit* by Rev. James Simpson)

We wouldn't want this to be the situation with God in our home and lives!

Let's take a look at some examples of hearing God's voice in the Bible.

1. God's voice can bring conviction of sin.

In Genesis 3:8 we read, 'Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.'

- Many people hear God's voice, but because of sin, disappointment, trauma, etc they choose to hide from Him.
- The same kind of challenge can cause people to either run to God or from God. It's a choice.
- God does speak to sinners as well as to His children as it is His will that none should perish. – John 3:16
- Warning against unbelief and hardness of heart. – Hebrews 3:7-13

Think about a time that you ran from the voice of God. Take a moment to write down your thoughts about it, and maybe share it with the group.

2. God's voice can be a quiet voice

'After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.'

1 Kings 19:12

- More often than not God speaks to us in a 'still small voice'.
- He is after the diligent inquirer to share with him His many mysteries, and His love. – Deuteronomy 4:29 ; Jeremiah 29:12-14.
- David was called a man after God's own heart. He always waited on God for guidance. – 1 Samuel 30:8-9; 2 Samuel 1:1; 2 Samuel 5:19, 23-24; 2 Samuel 7:18a.

- God rewards those who diligently seek Him. – Hebrews 11:6.
- Read Isaiah 41:31 (NKJ)
- In the book of Revelation, we are encouraged time and again to **hear** and respond correctly. – Revelation 3:20; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; Revelation 3:6, 13, 22

Discuss 'waiting on God' and the results of it.

3. God's voice can also be majestic and audible

'... and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with His glory.'

Ezekiel 43:2

- The power of the voice Ezekiel heard was like many rushing waters.
- It was heard very far away and was impressive.
- God's majestic voice can be heard through creation: Thunderstorms and waterfalls...
- The majestic roar of a lion... The sound of a multitude of Christians singing His praise!
- He enabled the lion to roar, and gave us vocal chords to sing.
- Are you uncertain about a course of action?
- Read Isaiah 30:21

4. God's voice is a source of fruitfulness

'If You remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.'

John 15:7-8

- Knowing and hearing God's voice is vital in our Christian walk. How can a soldier follow his commander's commands if he does not hear his voice? How would you know what God wants of you if you don't listen to His voice?

- We show our love to God by listening to His voice and by obeying it. – 1 John 5:3

Ministry

Let's encourage one another to hear God's voice.

- Knowing the Word of God aids us in hearing His voice, as He will never contradict His Word.
- If you feel a bit uncertain ask the Lord for the name of someone whom you can pray for, then pray for the first name that enters your mind. This is safe because even if it is your own voice you are still obeying God's Word to pray for one another.
- Ask God to confirm what you feel He is saying with a scripture.
- If unsure, speak to and pray with someone who does hear the voice of the Lord clearly.

Prayer Focus

- Pray that you will know God's voice just as the sheep know the shepherd's voice.
- Pray for all Christian leaders to hear God's voice clearly to lead God's people in integrity and wisdom.



'A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.'

Proverbs 25:11

Objective

To grow in wisdom and the prophetic, so that in our communication with others we may be a blessing to them and cause them to grow in the Lord.

Ice-breaker

Proverbs 15:4 tells us that the tongue that 'brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit'.

Here are some jokes to undergird this scripture:

- 'One of the first things you learn when studying a foreign language is that the word *tongue* is feminine!'
- 'There will always be two kinds of people: those who say what they think, and those who keep their friends.'

Word and Discussion

What is the difference between a prophet and one who moves in the gift of prophecy?

- A prophet is a messenger who is chosen by God and widely recognized by men to hear from God and speak it forth. Constant accuracy would be a measuring stick.
- Like a pastor, the prophet is one of the five-fold ministries.

'It was He (Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be **prophets**, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up'.

Ephesians 4:11

- The Word tells us that everyone can prophesy without occupying the office of a prophet:

'In this way, all who prophesy will have a turn to speak, one after the other, so that everyone will learn and be encouraged. Remember that people who prophesy are in control of their spirit and can take turns.'

1 Corinthians 14:31-32 (New Living Translation)

Prophecy is one of the nine gifts of the Spirit. (See 1 Corinthians 12:7-10)

How do we qualify to be used by the Lord in this capacity?

- We need to be in a relationship with the Lord. In John 10:27 Jesus says that His sheep listen to His Voice - we spend time with Him and respond to Him.
- He knows us – this 'know' suggests an intimacy through personal relationship.
- We follow Him – we are willingly obedient.
- Communion with God (intimate conversations and waiting to hear Him speak) on a regular basis is vital.
- In 1 Corinthians 14:1 Paul encourages us to follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

1. The purpose of prophecy

'But everyone who prophesies, speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.'

1 Corinthians 14:3 (NIV)

- **Strength** – a state or quality of being physically or mentally strong; ability to withstand or exert great force, stress or pressure; a source of power.
- **Encouragement** – to inspire someone with courage or confidence to do something; to stimulate by approval or help.
- **Comfort** – a state of ease or well-being; relief from affliction or grief; to soothe and cheer.
- Ephesians 4:11 tells us the purpose of a prophet is to:
 - Build up the Church
 - Prepare God's people for works of service
 - Build up God's people until we all reach maturity and attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Meditate on these two Scriptures. Consider how you could be used of God to bless others through the gift of prophecy.

2. Workings of prophecy

'Let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance.'

Proverbs 1:5

- The wise **listen**, not merely hear.
- *Hear* – to perceive a sound with the sense of hearing.
- *Listen* – to concentrate on hearing something, to take heed, pay attention.
- Listening:
 - Carries with it a sense of obedience and applying what we hear.
 - Initiates God's people to action. In Acts 11:27-28 - the disciples were stirred to action by the words of Agabus who warned them of the famine and they took steps to provide famine relief for the Christians in Judea
- It can include a prophetic action. In Acts 21:11 Agabus prophesied and bound Paul's hand, warning him of hardships to come.
- It can be accompanied by a vision and gives direction. In Acts 16:9-10 Paul was told in a vision to go to Macedonia
- Timothy was spurred on to 'fight the good fight' in 1 Timothy 18

Spend a time to reflect upon the times in the past when you have been encouraged by a word of prophecy and share it with the group to encourage each other.

3. The tongue plays a major part in the prophetic ministry

Let's see what the Word has to say about the tongue:

- 'The tongue is also a fire, a world of evil, among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.' – James 3:6
- 'The tongue is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.' – James 3:8
- 'Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.' – Proverbs 12:18
- 'The tongue has the power of life and death.' – Proverbs 18:21
- 'The wicked sharpen their tongues like words and aim their words like deadly arrows.' – Proverbs 64:3

Consider these Scriptures, which show that the tongue can be used for good or evil, to bring life or death. What experiences have you had in your life with words that have been spoken out over you?

Whether good or bad, write them down. Thank the Lord for the good ones, and cancel the bad ones, in a prayer, in the Name of Jesus.

4. We need to learn to exercise control over our tongues

'Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears attentive to their prayer.'

1 Peter 3:10-12

If we love life and want to experience good days, we need to use speech to benefit and build up others. This means do not be critical, don't speak negatively and to not be argumentative.

'He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.'
Proverbs 21:23

Consider these words. How do you put a guard at your mouth? Take a moment and reflect how you need to apply this Scripture in your own life.

5. Results of taming the tongue.

- 'The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is right.' Psalm 37:30
- 'The tongue of the righteous is choice silver.' Proverbs 10:20
- 'The lips of the righteous nourish many.' Proverbs 10:21

Think about these Scriptures and ask the Lord to make them a reality in your life.

Ministry

Pray for those who want to move in the prophetic more, for activation and insight. Give those who have recognized that they need to exercise more control over their tongues a chance to make right before God.

Prayer Focus

- Pray for people you know who are under stress and who use their tongue to destroy and not to build.
- Pray for those who have been hurt in the past through 'untamed' tongues.
- Pray for God's truth to be spoken over our country, and the challenges we face.



'For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit... it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.'

Hebrews 4:12

Objective
To know and obey the Word as is necessary for victorious Christian living.

Ice-Breaker
Send half of the ladies of the life group to stand outside the closed door of the lounge. Now try to recognize who is standing there by letting them talk, one by one, as they stand behind the closed door.

Word and Discussion
1. To know the Word is to KNOW Him.

'Jesus said: "And this is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."'

John 17:3

What a dynamic statement: eternal life is knowing God! To know Him is the ultimate purpose of our lives, but to know Him we need the revelation of who He is and that comes by knowing His written (*Logos*) and revealed (*Rhema*) Word.

- Remember the difference between **knowing about** someone, (information) and actually **meeting** the person. You need to personally meet Jesus, and then **get to know** Him.

The word used for 'know' is *ginosko* and it means "to be involved in an intimate, growing relationship." Paul 'knew' this precious truth as he cried out in Philippians 3:10, "O that I may know Him."

Discussion:

- Do you know Him:
 - intellectually (study);
 - through a mediator only (Deuteronomy. 5:27); or
 - intimately (face to face)?
- Has your relationship with the Word changed over the years? Explain why and how.

- Share one example of a situation in your life where the *Logos* Word became *Rhema*.

'Search for Me with all your heart so that I can reveal Myself to you.'

Jeremiah. 29:13

2. To know the Word is to know:

- The will of God. – John 7:16-18 ; Romans 12:2; Colossians 1:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5
- The mysteries of God. – Ephesians 1:9; 1 Corinthians 4:1; Luke. 8:10; Jeremiah 29:13.
- The power and authority you have in God. – Ephesians 6:15.
- Your freedom in Christ. – Isaiah 61:1; Romans 7:14; Acts 5:16.
- The truth – to test other ‘truths’ against. – John 15:26; John 14:6.
- The love of God the Father. – John 3:16; John 14; Joel 2:12.
- The character of God. – Exodus 33:18 -22; Acts 10:38.

Discussion:

Let each person choose one of the above and let them share how they have experienced ‘Him’ in this way.

3. To know is to obey

‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.’

Hebrews 3:15

‘But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.’

James 1:22

- To obey is to love Him. John 14:15
 - To obey is better than sacrifice. 1 Samuel. 15:22
 - To obey brings you into His rest. Hebrews. 3:18
 - God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. Acts 5:32
 - By obedience to the word we choose life. Deuteronomy. 30:1 – 10.
 - The obedient life is a blessed life. Deuteronomy. 28:1 – 14.
 - Take time to journal how you have experienced obedience to the Lord in your life.
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Six blessings from Deuteronomy 28:1-14 to those who obey His word:

1. Material comforts. – Verses 2-5; Matthew 6:32-33
2. Unfailing protection – Verse 7; Joshua 23:10
3. Prosperous work – Verse 8; 1 Timothy 4:8
4. Abiding fellowship – Verse 9; Ephesians 2:22
5. Abundant supply – Verse 12; Philippians 4:19
6. Special honour – Verse 13; Ephesians 1:20-21; Ephesians 2:6

Discussion:

Share with group how God showered you with one of these promises.

Ministry

Allow time to ask the Lord to reveal where you have disobeyed His Word, and repent of disobedience. Lead people to accept Jesus as Saviour if necessary.

Prayer Focus

- Pray for a new hunger and understanding of the Word of God.
- Pray for God’s Word to become the guideline for our community, especially schools.



‘However, the LORD your God ... turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you.’
 Deuteronomy 23:5

Objective

To have an understanding of the biblical view on blessings and curses, and how one can move from areas of curse to those of blessing.

Ice-Breaker

How were you disciplined when using foul language as a child?

Word and Discussion

Blessing – advantage ,benefit ,bounty ,favour ,gain, godsend, good fortune, help, kindness, profit, service, windfall .

Curse – affliction:, blight, burden , calamity , disaster , misfortune, scourge , tribulation , trouble , torment , vexation

- God’s original intention was not only that we would be blessed, but that we would be a blessing to others.
 Read Genesis 12:2-3; Acts 3:25; 1 Peter 3:9.
- How would being blessed or cursed influence one’s life practically? Read (scan) through Deuteronomy.28 quickly. taking specific note of the different areas affected by blessings and curses. Rephrase some of the sentences in Verses 3-14, so that this will be applicable to our lives today.

- No matter how hard we try to keep all God’s commands, we all fail at some point. Therefore God sent Jesus to become a curse for us, so that we could move from a life of desperately trying to dodge curses, to a life of being wonderfully blessed by God. Read Galatians.3:10-13, preferably in more than one version.
- Even when we are Christians, curses can affect our lives in specific areas if we wilfully commit gross sin, e.g. dabbling in the occult, immorality, dishonouring our parents, etc.
- People can also be affected by *bloodline curses* (sins committed by our parents, grandparents, great-great grandparents, etc. – read Exodus 34:6-7.

Name some issues that can be related to bloodline curses.

- What do I do, if I think there may be curses affecting my life?
 NB. Get a leader or strong Christian friend to pray with you. Do not do it alone, it is important in the spiritual realm that you have a witness. (Power of agreement) – Matthew 18:19
 - Revelation – recognize any specific area that the Lord is pinpointing.
 - Repent – ask forgiveness for any sin that you or your ancestors committed.
 - Release – forgive anyone who wronged you in this area. – Matthew 6:14-15
 - Renounce – speak out: “I renounce (the curse or spirit behind it)_____ in the name of Jesus.”
 - Rebuild – make sure that you **follow** a new pattern in this area of your life. – Romans 12:1-2

- What should I do if someone curses me? Discuss in the group. Read Luke 6:28; Romans.12:14 – bless those who curse you. Proverbs 26:2 – undeserved curses can't affect you. Can you think of some people you need to bless as 'enemies'?

- Ask all the ladies to look up James 3:9-12. The Message translation puts it this way:

This is scary : you can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue – it's never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women he made in his image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth! My friends, this can't go on. A spring doesn't gush fresh water one day and brackish the next, does it? Apple trees don't bear strawberries, do they?

Let us allow the Holy Spirit to cleanse us, in order to bring forth good fruit from our tongues!

- How has the Lord's blessing affected your life? Do you recognize any of the following in your life: (consider these blessings with deep gratitude to the Lord)
 - Wealth – Proverbs 10:22 _____
 - Spiritual treasure Ephesians.1:3 _____
 - Blessed home – Proverbs 3:33 _____
 - Peace – Psalm 29:11 _____
 - Provision in need – Psalm 37:25-26 _____
 - Name others that are not listed here; _____

Ministry

Pray for each other in any areas that are affected by today's discussion of blessing/curse. If there are major issues for specific people, it may be wise to meet later in the week because of time constraints. It is important to deal with any issues that surface timeously!

Prayer Focus

Use the following scriptures as you pray for, and speak out blessing over our city and our country:

- Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. – Psalm 33:12
- Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed. – Proverbs 11:11

Imagine these scriptures are arrows that you are shooting by prayer right into a target.

(Note to Life Group Leader: Feel free to speak the blessing in Numbers 6:24-26 over your group in closing.)

Some extra scriptures for study at home:

The attributes and attitudes that will cause your life to overflow with blessing:

- Merciful, peacemaker, hunger after righteousness, meekness. – Matthew.5:3-10
- Believing without seeing. – John 20:29
- Faithfulness. – Proverbs.28:20
- Perseverance. – James 1:12
- Suffering for what is right. – 1 Peter 3:14
- Holiness. – Revelation.22:14
- Calling on God. – Romans.10:12
- Kindness to the needy. – Proverbs14:21
- Generosity. – Proverbs 22:9
- Maintaining justice. – Psalm 106:3
- Unity. – Psalm 133:3
- Read Balaam's story in Numbers 22-24, where God turned curse into blessing.



Scripture

'For His divine power has bestowed upon us all things that (are requisite and suited) to life and godliness, through the (full, personal) knowledge of Him Who called us by and to His own glory and excellence (virtue) ... ' 2 Peter 1:2-4 (Amplified)

Objective

We have to come to the understanding that God did not call us to a mediocre life. In Him we have whatever we need to excel.

Ice-Breaker

If you could be a 'Minister of Excellence' in Parliament, what would you change to work better?

Word and Discussion

Excellence – notable proficiency; surpassing; betokens pre-eminence or superiority; signifies beyond or out of measure; to overstep any limit; to perform good actions to an unusual degree

1. God has called us to excellence

Referring to our key scripture, knowledge of the character of God and Jesus, as the Word, gives us access to supernatural life. His promises which we were given are exceeding the natural life. Not accepting the status quo is to go after these promises. See 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 2:7-8,11,12; Titus 3:1,2,8.

2. Our examples of excellence

Daniel

Philippians 2:14-15 calls us to 'become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation'. See Daniel 1:8-17; Daniel 5:12, 14. (NKJV)

Daniel:

- was a true prophet, led by God, hearing His voice clearly,
- was completely devoted to God as an exile, in a foreign, heathen country,
- was promoted to the heathen king's court, above all the other advisors and magicians, because of his notable prophetic accuracy,
- displayed an excellent spirit, serving king Darius well, yet never compromising his love for God,
- by a miracle of God survived a den of lions, which
- resulting in King Darius decreeing that Daniel's God was the only God to be served.
- purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. In the end he and his three friends received 'knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom'.

The apostle Paul

Paul said: 'Follow me as I follow Christ.'

Paul:

- had been a **diligent** scholar of the Word (Law),
- had a definite, defining meeting with Jesus,
- had an excellent grasp of the **will** of God.
- wrote 13 of the books of the New Testament,
- traveled to many countries, cities and towns to preach the gospel, (Book of Acts)
- identified and trained men and women to take up leadership responsibilities,
- established churches and encouraged them through letters,
- disciplined others to visit and exhort those churches. – Philippians 2:19-20 (NLT)
- endured persecution and many hardships in spirit soul and body, to build the Kingdom. – 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (NLT)
- lived out God's call on his life with abandon and excellence.

Jesus came to earth, taking on the form of a man, so that we are able to identify with Him as a person, and have the example of God becoming a servant, to save all mankind.
What an awesome example!

John 5:19b says ‘the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do;’ Excellence depicts our Father’s character which was modeled by Jesus, whom we follow.

‘Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father.’ – John 14:12

‘Now to Him who is able to do **exceedingly** abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.’ – Ephesians 3:20 (Emphasis added)

3. Excellence pleases God

- 2 Corinthians 4:7
- ‘But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.’ – Hebrews 11:6
We need to believe God’s word by faith. His promises are ours by faith only. To seek God requires diligence which equals excellence.
- ‘By this my Father is glorified that you bear **much** fruit;’ – John 15:8
Many times you hear people say “I’m trying my best.” That might be fine for a new believer, but Father is calling us to excel.
- Discuss and write down how you practically get to bearing ‘much fruit’.

4. Excellence is to revere/fear the Father

See 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1. Verse 7:1 says, ‘Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.’

We need to cleanse ourselves. **We need to perfect our holiness.**
Discuss what this means.

5. Excellence calls for endurance

Going against the worldly norms will be opposed, ridiculed, challenged, but Hebrews 12:1b-2a says, ‘let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher if our faith,’

Take a few minutes to journal about the scripture that has touched you the most today. Which one is it? What does God say, and what is your response?

6. Conclusion

We are called to live beyond the measuring stick:

- *Good* is within the measurement.
- *Best* is the top of the measurement.
- *Excellent* goes beyond any measurement.

Decide today! To live a life of excellence, not mediocrity. – Proverbs 23:7

Ministry

Pair up and pray for the hunger excellence in each other’s lives.

Prayer Focus

- Pray for sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s promptings, and the decision to be obedient.
- Pray for opportunities of excellence to come your way. To be able to recognize them, in order to display the character of the Father to your neighbours.



'May the God of peace himself make you holy in every way. And may your whole being-spirit, soul, and body-be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'
1 Thessalonians 5:23

Objective

To obtain an insight into the value that God has on man, namely our spirit, soul, and body.

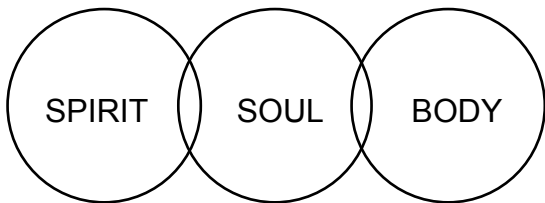
Ice-Breaker

Let two ladies describe their most embarrassing moment. Explain the emotions that you went through when it happened.

Word and Discussion

Read Genesis: 1: 26-27

- We are created in the image of the eternal triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- God created man as a three-fold being with a spirit, soul and body illustrated in the following diagram:



God created man in order to have a meaningful, eternal, relationship with Him. At rebirth man receives an eternal spirit. Christ came to redeem our spirit, soul and body

Let us consider each part of man:

1. Our Spirit:

Is the essential part of man that has to be reborn in order to start our walk with God here on earth.

- Read John 3:3; John 3:15-17
- Read John 7:37 (Amplified and TLB) – We are filled with the Spirit within our spirit,(innermost being) and the fullness of that flows over and touches our soul, and ultimately our body.
- We are to take our example from Jesus, who grew strong in spirit. Read Luke 2:40.
- There are many things we can do to 'grow' strong in our spirit. Write down a few that come to mind:

- God wants us to keep our spirit pure until the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Our Soul

The soul is the seat of our mind/intellect, emotions and our will. We develop our soul through the renewing of our mind.

- 'And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove by you what is that good and pleasing and perfect will of God.' – Romans 12:2
- 'For I say, through the grace given to me, to every one who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. But set your mind to be right-minded, even as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.' – Romans 12:3.
- Let us look at the three different parts of our soul:

a. The Mind

- We have an unconscious mind, a subconscious mind, and a conscious mind.
- We will only refer to the conscious mind, being the seat of our active or chosen thoughts.
- Read Hebrews 4:12 and Romans 8:7.
- There are many other scripture verses concerning our thoughts. Here are a few for you to refer to, and read in your own time:
 - Psalms 139:27; Proverbs 12: Proverbs 16:3; Isaiah 55:7- 9; Luke. 2:35.

b. The Emotions.

- *Emotion* –a mental agitation or excited state of feeling, such as fear, joy etc.
 - We experience different split-second thoughts that are converted into feelings, and felt deep-down as an emotion, which lead to different actions. Emotions are very complex and our actions are often somewhat surprising because they are linked to experiences and trauma that are not always pleasant.
 - Write down a couple of emotions you have experienced, whether good or bad:
-
-
-

c. The Will

- God gave each one of us something unique and very important – **a free will**.
- We can already exercise our will from a very young age.
- Each decision we make has a consequence.
- Read Deuteronomy 30:19.
- We should be willing to bring our soul, *i.e.* our mind, emotions and will into constant subjection to the Holy Spirit, in order to preserve it in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation.

3. The Body

- Our body relates to the world through our 5 senses:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- Satan can attack us through our senses, which are our contact with the world around us.
- Our health is also attacked sometimes.
- Because our body is naturally of a sinful nature, it needs to be delivered from the onslaught of Satan.
- Knowing what the Word says fills us with faith to speak the powerful scriptures over our circumstances.
- Consider the following verses:
 - 'I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.' – Romans 12:1
 - 'If any one is in Christ, that one is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.' – 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - 'Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts ...' – Romans 6:12-13
- Let's look at some of the effects of salvation on the human body:
 - It receives new life. – Romans 8:11
 - It becomes a member of Christ. – 1 Corinthians 6:15
 - It becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. – 1 Corinthians 6:19
 - Our bodies will be resurrected. – John 11: 23-25
 - Our bodies will be redeemed. – Romans 8:23
 - We will receive new bodies. – 1 Corinthians 15: 52-54
- With this in mind, we can look forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in doing so, we can endeavour to live holy lives, yielded to the Holy Spirit.

Ministry

Pair up, and pray for those who are battling with emotions that need healing.

Prayer Focus

- Pray for those who feel they are being oppressed by Satan in body, soul and spirit.
- Pray for all those in authority, that they will make the correct choices. E.g. school principles, political leaders, etc.