



youth on fire

ABLAZE

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Quarterly newsletter from the Youth Wing of The Pentecostal Church of God, Ahmedabad – Affiliated to Sharon Fellowship Church

Greetings to all our readers in the sweet name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour

You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry— Psalm 10:17

When we know we are doing what God has called us to do, there is a sense of security and surety that surrounds our lives. In today's world, we see the word "self" followed by a multitude of hyphens: Self-assertion, self-preservation, self-satisfaction, self-righteousness, and many more. God's purpose today is shadowed by selfishness. Most of us focus on what we want to do for ourselves and not what God wants. It should never be difficult to trust in the Lord because His love for us is great. What He has planned for us is much beyond anything we could have imagined for ourselves. He hears our every prayer, even the silent one. We can trust Him fully because He knows all about us and loves us unconditionally.

As the song says:

Trust in the Lord and don't despair, He is a friend so true
No matter what your troubles are, The Lord will see you through!

With this issue of Ablaze, we invite you to read articles on Relationships, Christian fellowship, the Great Commission, speaking in faith, and of His love which never fails. We hope that these articles will be a blessing to you and help you along in your Christian journey.

Do not forget to answer the quiz section and do share your write-ups and feedback with us. We'd love to hear from you!

*Editorial Team,
(Winny Mathews, Annie Royson, Bejini Sajan)*



"JOINED ... TO BE UNITED"

WITH REFERENCE TO MATHEW 19:4-6

PASTOR BENSON ABRAHAM

What is the mystery of marriage? It began in the Garden of Eden when God himself fashioned a woman perfectly suited to Adam and "brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:22). From Genesis 2:24 we glean this divine description of marriage: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." From the earliest pages of Scripture, we see that marriage—an oneness, exclusive, passionate, and permanent relationship between a man and a woman—owes its very existence to God. So marriage was not to be entered into carelessly or lightly.

Jesus, too, in this passage is dealing with the issue of divorce and explicitly establishing marriage as God's initiative to the Pharisees who are deliberately trying to involve Jesus in controversy.

On the basis of the selected scripture, I would like to share a couple of insights on the topic "Joined ...to be united". Let me ponder on the question – 'Why Joined to be united'?

1. To have Oneness in a relationship

The quality of being united into one is the understanding hidden in 'one-ness'. In other words, marriage is the total union of two personalities. In reality today, two persons can exist together in a variety of ways. One can be a dominant partner to such an extent that nothing matters but his/her wishes and his/her convenience and his/her aims in life, but the other is totally obedient to authority to serve the desires and needs of the other. Secondly, two people can exist where there is continuous tension and opposition, and continuous collision between their wishes. Life can be one long argument, and such a relationship is based at best on an uneasy compromise. Thirdly, two people can base their relationship on a more or less resigned acceptance of each other. While they live together, each goes his or her own way, and each has his/her own life. In short, they share the same house but in two identities, defiling the institution of marriage, not according to the plan of God. Clearly, none of these relationships are ideal. The ideal is that in the state of marriage two people find the completing of their personality. Jesus quotes, 'therefore no longer two, but one flesh'.

Becoming one is a process which happens only in marital covenant relationship. John Wesley once stated "if you love someone you are never the best". Yes, in marital relationship oneness can happen in the condition of love. Each partner has to think unconditionally the best of other and thus accomplishing oneness in relationship.

2. To have Permanence in Relationship:

Marriage is a permanent relationship. Jesus states that "... What then God has joined together let no man separate". Marriage is joined by God and no man has the right to separate it. But today the meaning and understanding of marriage is diminishing. Even the Indian society which once gave importance and honored the value of marriage is in the state of deteriorating. Contract marriages, live in relationships, gay and lesbian marriages, and so on have infiltrated into our cultures. Thus, defiling the meaning of marriage. These are the days of glamour. Married partners see each other in their best clothes and their time spent in pleasure before marriage. Marriage means constantly living together. But today divorce or separation murders marital living. Selfishness is the root cause of marriage break-ups.

The true basis of marriage is love; the love which is proud to serve will take the marriage into a permanent relationship. This love will be able to understand, and therefore always able to forgive. Marriage should not narrow life; it should complete it. For both partners it must bring a new fullness, a new satisfaction, a new contentment into life. It is the union of two personalities in which two complete each other. That doesn't mean that adjustments, and even sacrifices, have not to be made; but it does mean that the final relationship is fuller, more joyous, more satisfying than any life in singleness could be. May the Good God enable us to be united in oneness and permanent relationship in the God Instituted Marriage covenant so that we will be bringing Glory to God.



'UNITY IS STRENGTH'

IN THE CHRISTIAN CONTEXT: 'CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP' IS OUR STRENGTH!!

RINI GEORGE

'Fellowship', is a word that we come across very often, in the ordinary course of our Christian lives – but also something that we seldom give a serious thought to. Stated below are a few points which will help us realize and accept the power of Christian fellowship in our day to day Christian living.

1. What is 'Fellowship'? To address the basics first, let us understand what the term 'fellowship' means: the English dictionary defines it as 'Friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests.' In the Christian context it means 'Spiritual Companionship that believers share in CHRIST'. In John 17:23, it is written 'I have given them the Glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete Unity to let the world know that you sent me and loved them even as you have loved me?'

2. Why 'Fellowship' is important for Christians? It is important to understand that it's not just essential for the 'basic survival' but also the 'growth' of any Christian. As an individual we can pray, sing and meditate on the word of God, but much growth in our Christian life cannot be achieved in isolation. As there are many things that the word of God encourages us to follow 'mutually' (there are over fifty such verses in New Testament) that is – 'Love one another', 'build up each other', 'offer hospitality to one another', 'encourage one another', 'bear with one another', 'pray for one another', 'be devoted to one another', 'forgive each other', 'carry each other's burdens', 'serve one another', 'confess sins to one another', 'instruct one another', 'admonish one another' etc. Christian fellowship is not to be taken lightly, but rather by prayerful dependence on Holy Spirit & should be used for mutual encouragement as Apostle Paul explains in Romans 1:11,12. It is a two-way 'give and take' channel. Vertically you have a fellowship with God and horizontally that same fellowship extends to all co-believers.
3. With who all, can we share our 'Fellowship' with? --- This question is best answered in the contradiction, as in whom we should 'not' have fellowship with – It says in Ps 1:1 'Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or sit in the seat of mockers or stand in the way of sinners' and in 2nd Cor 6:14 'Do not be yoked together with unbelievers, for what does righteousness and wickedness have in common...'. These verses clearly imply one thing that we should keep oneness and companionship with likeminded Christian believers only. No doubt when we live in this world as foreigners, we have to keep relationships and cordial terms with non believers too, as we are messengers of peace. But a kind of overall disassociation from the worldly troop is necessary in the best interests of our Christian health, as the constant company of such sinful people causes us to gradually imbibe their wrong qualities and we somehow start copying their sinful pattern of living. As an eagle will never learn to boldly fly high if it is brought up amongst scared chickens, similarly, Christians can strengthen their faith only if they keep like-minded company.
3. How to keep and continue this 'Fellowship'? ---- The way in which we can encourage Fellowship is by constant spiritual companionship with co-believers by getting together and worshipping our Lord Almighty in unity, by meditating and discussing His scriptures in groups and by praying together with a burden for the lost souls and also for each other needs. Like it says in Act 2: 42 – 'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.' It is also done by becoming part of regular meetings at our local Church; by actively participating in believer groups' activities like prayer cells or Christian youth groups; by seeking counseling/guidance on our day to day problems from our Church pastor or church elders; having a get together or meals to celebrate our blessings with our fellow believers; or by jointly encouraging believers who are new to Christian faith.

Today, take a moment and think about, how you would term your life's most important equation –is it about:

1. 'Just You and Others' (Others meaning the Worldly folk) OR
2. 'Just You and God'?

If it is still either of the above, let us aim and look forward to taking it to a spiritual state, where the relationship is more about - 'God and Us' (Us = 'We' all bonded in the fellowship that is between you and all your fellow Christian brethren, based on the faith in the Father and the Son and encouraged by the Holy Spirit)



CHURCH, YOUTH, DISCIPLESHIP AND THE GREAT COMMISSION: IT'S TIME TO GO

JAISON ABRAHAM

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) - 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

If you know your Bible and the gospel account of Jesus, you will definitely know the above verses which are often known as "The Great Commission" and are the famous last words of Jesus Christ on earth before His ascension. As these were the very last words of Jesus when He was on earth, this definitely holds its importance in the Christian

realm as we all know that the very last words said by anyone would be the closest to their hearts. The commission was given to His disciples who were physically present during His ascension at the mountain in Galilee, but this isn't just restricted to them alone, but to all the followers of Jesus Christ here on earth until His second coming. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ who believes that He died for our sins and was raised from the dead on the third day and is alive forevermore then the Great Commission is for you as well.

But are we really making disciples? Are we really teaching the people to obey everything that Jesus commanded? Or are we rather content in just making converts and then tagging them as 'believers' and treating them just as an attendance number in our churches? Well, these are some of the burning questions which I may not be able to answer here but will definitely try to dissect so that we can attempt to get the answers right.

As you would have already sensed it, that whenever we talk about the Great Commission we simply cannot skip over it without talking about 'Discipleship'. And rightly so, as the Great Commission is given to the disciples of Jesus so that they will go and make disciples of Jesus by baptizing them and teaching them everything that Jesus taught. These two are intertwined, so much so that, if you try to get into action to fulfill either of these independent of each other, you may rather end up in a situation where you figure out that these two are very much inter-dependent and can't be accomplished mutually exclusive of each other.

Paul is a great example – the apostle who knew the crux of discipleship and who carried the baton of Gospel to many nations fulfilling the Great Commission. One thing what Paul did that always excites me is that he gave a lot of importance on making young disciples. And Timothy is one example of a young disciple of Christ, who heard about the savior during Paul's first missionary journey. Along with Timothy, his mother and his grandmother also came to the saving knowledge of truth through Paul's proclamation of the gospel. Young Timothy got transformed through the Gospel truth, so much so that during Paul's second missionary in Lystra, Timothy was found to have exceptional and exemplary reputation among the local Christians (Acts 16:1-2). Paul was really impressed by several holistic qualities in Timothy and he was immediately convinced that it would be worth his time and effort to mentor this young disciple. We all know how Timothy became the third entity in the missionary trio along with Paul and Silas.

It's great to see how the relationship between Paul and Timothy developed over a span of time. It started with 'Parenting' as he picked Timothy up from Lystra during his second missionary journey. He treated him as his true son of faith (1 Timothy 1:2). Then it further moved to 'Moulding' as Paul started to showcase to Timothy what a mature life in Jesus Christ looks like by setting his example. Timothy knew what Paul taught and how he lived, he knew Paul's purpose in life, he knew Paul's faith, patience, love and endurance inch by inch (2 Timothy 3:10-11). And finally it was 'Partnering' where Timothy grew from being a son to be a co-worker of Paul in fulfilling the Great Commission. In his letter to Romans, Paul refers to Timothy as his fellow worker (Romans 16:21). Paul invested his time in Timothy and we see him growing from being a son to a colleague who would partner with Paul in fulfilling the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations by teaching everything what Jesus taught.

Paul was a great disciple-maker and we can see his intent and passion through his relationship with Timothy. The one thing that really showcases the true purpose of discipleship is to pass the baton to the younger generation. And which Paul did so beautifully when he wrote his second letter to Timothy where he writes, "You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others." (2 Timothy 2:2). This verse can be slated as the "The Discipleship Commission", without any doubt. Discipleship is all about teaching the things that you receive and giving it unto reliable people who can pass the teachings to others. Discipleship is always multi-generational. Discipleship is all about transforming people to be like Jesus who is the source of all that we have received.

But the questions that stare at our face today are – Are we as a Church fulfilling the discipleship commission?, "Are we making disciples who in turn can make disciples?; Are we mentoring, parenting, moulding and partnering with young disciples?; Are we passing the truth and the teachings of Jesus to our next generation so that they could be disciples of Jesus?; Are we making converts termed as "believers who are lukewarm all the time or are we going an extra mile in making true disciples? The Church needs to rise up on its feet and take on these questions head on, because if the church gets it right in answering these questions, the strongholds of the devil are going to be shaken. Because it is the Truth that will defeat the lie of the devil.

But for the Gospel truth to take control, it needs to be taught, it needs to be learnt, it needs to be known from heart,

it needs to be passed on to the young reliable men who will carry the truth to the next generation. It is time that the Church starts viewing the Great Commission from the lens of true discipleship. It is time that the Youth of the Church rises on its feet like Timothy and carry the baton of discipleship to the next generation.

Discipleship is not just about having religious knowledge but it is to be more like Jesus by knowing Him better through His word and living a life based on His Word. Discipleship cannot be programmed but it needs to be pursued by taking the new disciples along your way of life and ministering to them on a daily basis through real life needs. Discipleship is not just about preaching but it is more about practicing what we preach on a daily basis which will get the lives of the people transformed. Discipleship is not something that can be pursued without effort by just attending Church weekly meetings and hoping that we will be like Jesus, but it requires effort and we need to work out our own salvation (Philippians 2:12). Discipleship is not just a strategy but it is all about executing the strategy and communicating it well. Discipleship is about the Great Commission and Great Commission is all about Discipleship. But before we start dreaming about getting it done, we need to GO. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Love of God our Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always now and forever more.

DOES FAITH SPEAK? – IT DEFINITELY DOES!

BEJINI SAJAN

When we think of this word called “Faith”, usually all of us think that it has to do with “believing”. Is believing enough? Does the Bible also have the same meaning for Faith? Do you think beliefs would alone bring the results we need? James 2:26 says, “Faith without work is dead”. Work, here could involve “to say”, “to speak”, or “to do”. Jesus didn’t say, “For whosoever believes.” He said, “For whosoever shall SAY”. If you want to remove or disqualify yourself from receiving, then just “say” nothing because faith only works for those who are willing to speak... “Say unto this mountain.”

When we define Faith as “to say”, we do not speak just anything. We need to say “the Word of God”. Every time Jesus replied to the Satan in the wilderness, he said, “It is written... it is written... it is written.” If Lord Jesus needed to use the Word to defeat the enemy, wouldn’t it only seem logical we would need the same weapon? God’s Word is a weapon against any situation. It is supposed to be in our mouths, all the time.

One such incident from the Bible which proves that faith speaks is when the children of Israel came out of Egypt. They went through many hardships in the desert. One of these hardships was that they ran out of water. The first time this happened, Moses went to God for help. The Lord instructed him to strike the rock, and water would flow from it. Moses did as he was commanded, and water flowed from rock- not just a little, but enough water to fill the millions of thirsty people and all the animals, so they could continue their journey.

The second time they ran out of water, God didn’t tell Moses to strike the rock again. Instead, He told Moses to speak to the rock, and water would come out. When Moses went to the rock, the people were complaining and murmuring so much that he became angry and struck the rock. In spite of disobedience, water flowed from the rock again.

The point God was trying to make was neither that water flowed from rock, nor that Moses disobeyed God in his anger. The point was the rock was Christ as stated in the New Testament. God had instructed Moses to speak to the rock. Speak, here means to command in faith for the rock to deliver water. Had Moses spoken to the rock he would have still got water. Jesus is that Rock. All we need to do is speak- you just speak and living water flows to you.

Noted Pastor E. W. Kenyon said, “The reason the majority of Christians are weak, though they are earnest, is because they never dare to make a confession of who they are in Christ.” As children of God, we need to speak, speak the Word of God to others, and say it to comfort yourself and the others. We need to confess our FAITH in Him, and when we begin to speak from wherever we are, which ever position we are in, which ever state we are in, things begin to happen, move and shake. Even if you don’t see them moving immediately, it doesn’t mean things aren’t happening. Our God does not promise us a life full of comfort. There will be troubles and challenges around us, but when these problems and troubles attack us, we would be able to confront and defeat them with faith in our heart and the Word in our mouth!



NEIMA ABIAD IDRIS

Neima Abiad Idris (49) was a household name in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. The Nuba people knew her as the “Peace Singer.” Neima was a wife and a mother of six. Though her songs are not likely to be heard on the local Christian radio station, the music of a talented Christian woman is well known in Sudan’s Nuba Mountains. Her first Christian album was entitled; Faith is Essential to Achieve Our Goals. Her most recent and last album was a musical expression of her personal prayer and aspiration for the Nuba entitled, Building Peace, Forgiveness & Reconciliation. This album was Neima’s prayer and aspiration for the Nuba people, and it will remain a lasting testament to her courage and her life. Her songs were always of peace, forgiveness, faith and perseverance.

A wife and mother of four sons and two daughters, Neima was a committed Christian who lived out her faith with great courage under daily threat of

death by the official Islamic state. She led a choir of ladies singing songs in her native Koliib.

Sudan and the other African countries were always under the Islamic terrorist threat. Christians were brutally killed and persecuted. She lived in Dellami County with her family in an SPLM-N (Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North) administrated “rebel-controlled” area that continues to be attacked by the Islamic government with bombs. Neima never considered moving away to the “safety” of a government garrison town under sharia law. Christians in the Nuba mountains face poverty and violent assaults as Arab-Sudanese aim to eradicate the Black Sudanese population. She was a very brave woman who stood strong in faith through the end.

Since she did not move to safety offered by the then government because she wanted to stay right where she was to spread the love of Jesus, her life was cut short by bomb shrapnel on Nov. 6, 2014 when an Antonov bomb struck her home village of Kadir, in the Nuba Mountains.

The Nuba people grieve for Neima’s family, but take comfort that she is experiencing the real peace of heaven. Neima could sing about peace while living in a war zone because she knew the Prince of Peace.

Lessons from the life of Neima Abiad Idris

Persecution in the area Neima lived was a constant threat to their lives. With the little talent that she had Neima gave her all to Jesus. She brought in together the ladies and people of Nuba and sang songs and worshipped the creator with the little music knowledge they had. She had every opportunity to lead a safe life away from the IS threat, but she chose to stay. Stay for her people, stay for Jesus.

Today, she is being hailed as a hero and martyr for refusing to run from the genocidal terror that had targeted her family and community.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!” Rev.14:13



YOUR LOVE NEVER FAILS!

JOYANCE JAMES

“Nothing can separate even if I run away

Your love never fails

I know I still make mistakes

But you have new mercies for me everyday

Your love never fails”

“Your love never fails”, by Jesus Culture

When Abba had to find a parallel to illustrate His love for us he chose a mother's love. Mother's love is the best we humans can get as far as unconditional (agape) love is concerned. And He said that even if a mother's love fails, mine still won't. Truly it is unconditional with an unlimited warranty. Just as a baby doesn't have to strive to earn its mother's love or attention, neither do we have to strive to achieve our Father's love. He can't love us more that He already does because He's given His best-Jesus, His son to demonstrate His love.

If God loved the human race through the sacrifice of His Son, won't He love us through our failures? If He ever kept a standard to qualify for His love then no one ever would, so He passed out an open invitation for all the mankind through His son. Love finds the way when everyone else gives excuses; it sees the gold in the garbage. But being as imperfect as we are, will we be ever worthy of such love? That's the most fascinating part of His love: you don't have to change for God to love you, but rather allow His love to change you!

Accepting Jesus makes us worthy of the Father's love and The Message Bible puts it beautifully in Romans 8, "I'm absolutely convinced that nothing-nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable- absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.



BIBLE QUIZ

KEZIAH PAUL

**Quiz
time!**

1. Who sold his younger brother to merchants?
2. What is the other name of Bethlehem?
3. Peter knocked at the outer entrance and a servant girl came to answer the door. Name that girl.
4. Who was highly praised for his handsome appearance all over Israel?
5. Name the tribe of Baasha (son of Ahijah)
6. Who recaptured the towns Ben-Hadad had taken from his father Jehoahaz?
7. Who was the son of Asaph?
8. What can cause ruin and destruction according to Paul in 1st Timothy?
9. How is Paul being poured out?
10. What was Elymas' other name?

Answers to the Bible Quiz (Apr-Jun 2016):

1. A cedar in Lebanon, 2. Great Hailstones, Fire, Brimstone, 3. Among the captives by the river of Chebar, 4. Eat it, 5. They shall remember God among the nations where they shall be carried captives, 6. Men that sigh and cry for all the abominations, 7. Rebellious, 8. The whole house of Israel, 9. A reed, 10. The tribes of Israel.

Winner of Apr-Jun 2016 Bible Quiz:

Sis. Grace Roy

(Sharon Fellowship Church, Sabarmati)

Answers to Crossword (Apr – June 2016):

ACROSS – 1.GIBBETHON, 2. KENAZ, 5. WISDOM, 6. JERICHO, 9. NOAH, 10. CLEOPAS

DOWNWARDS – 3. KIR, 4. ELIJAH, 7. HUMILITY, 8. JOSEPH

J U M B L E

MERCY RIJO

Find the names of 11 rivers mentioned in the bible within the letter grid!
Words can be found horizontally, down or diagonally. Draw a line around the letters.

List of 11 rivers: 1. Nile, 2. Jordan 3. Pishon, 4. Gihon, 5. Tigris, 6. Euphrates, 7. kishon, 8. Habor, 9. Arnon, 10. kerith, 11. kebar

P	T	S	I	R	G	I	T	N
R	I	G	I	H	O	N	A	O
O	E	S	S	G	H	D	R	N
B	G	L	H	T	R	J	E	R
A	R	H	I	O	S	R	B	A
H	E	R	J	N	N	P	H	B
S	E	T	A	R	H	P	U	E
K	S	F	N	O	H	S	I	K

(Note: Please send in your answers for the BIBLE QUIZ to ablazeyof@gmail.com by November 30th, 2016)



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