

שמע ישראל יהוה אל הינו

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD
And thou shalt love the LORD thy God

It's Not What You Think
It's What You Do

Sh'ma! Chazak! Bible Studies

It's Not What You Think It's What You Do

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Scripture portions from
New King James Version
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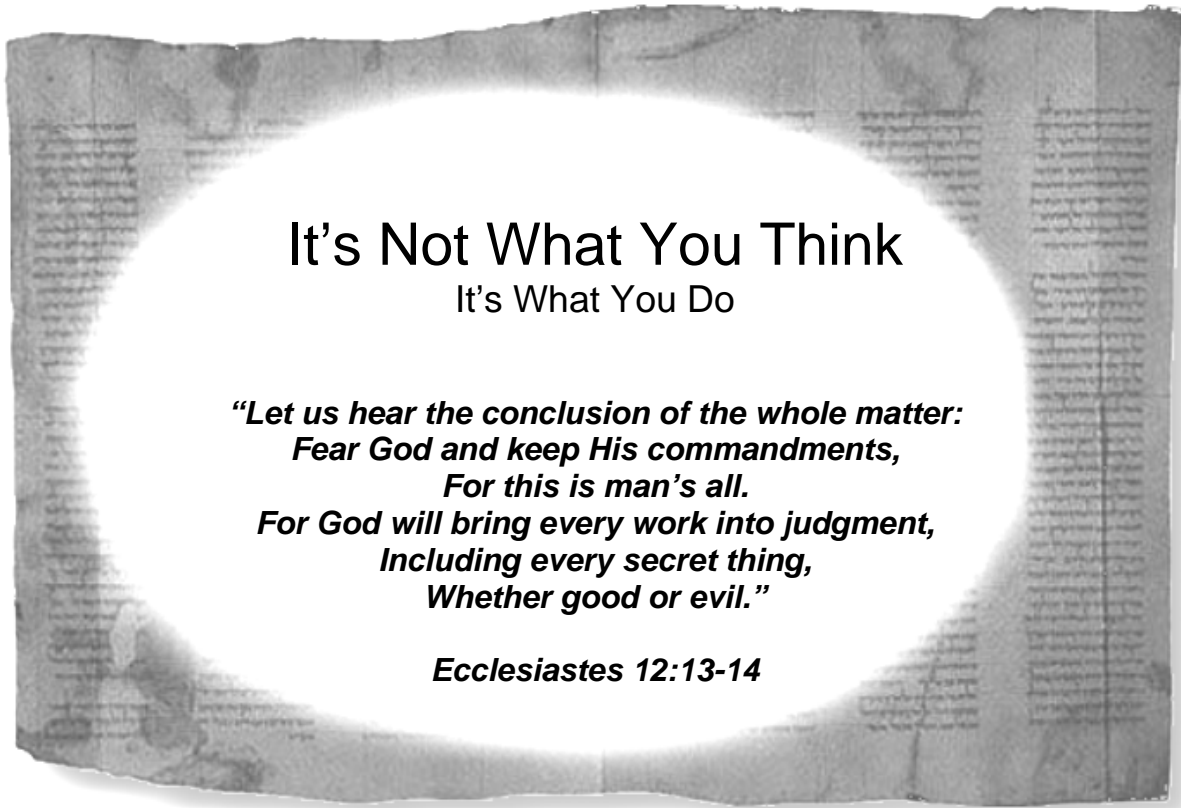
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Introduction

Many have embraced the word “Faith” and its synonyms as foundations to their relationship with God. The word “Believe” is the foremost verb in doctrinal statements in most conservative denominations. “Faith” and “Believe” are words that are so powerful, they appear to make the Epistle of James oddly out of place in the “New Testament Gospel.” Pious men and women have struggled with the apparent contradiction of the “Salvation by Grace” with James’ statement, “Faith without works is dead.”¹

Beloved, we have a problem. Some have equated believing with thinking. They have assumed that if they agree with the right “doctrine” then all is well. Because of the confusion between thinking and believing, many hold to a teaching of easy-believe-ism. Many are confused why some who have “walked an aisle” or “raised a hand” have not exhibited a changed life. Are there only some who become “radically saved”? Is believing the same as thinking? Are “doing” and “believing” the same thing – or are they opposites? Does an emphasis on “doing” equate to legalism?

¹ James 2:16

The English word “Faith” is a noun. What becomes evident as we examine Scripture is that maybe we should treat it like a verb...

“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light”
Genesis 1:3

The Bible begins with God speaking... to nothingness... and in that nothingness there was suddenly light. God did not “think” light into existence – He spoke. Scripture begins thus, with a command, a verb, and it ends with the same focus – His commands and a blessing on those who **do** them.

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.”
Revelation 22:14

Then, in the middle of our Bibles we find Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 which summarizes the duty of man toward God: ***“Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all.”***

Our problem with the “doing” vs. “believing” issue, is that we approach the Bible from a Western mindset, established from long traditions of Greek philosophy. The Bible does not come from that perspective; rather it comes from God’s perspective to us – and it is all about verbs.

The Bible, in original form, is written in Hebrew and Greek with some Aramaic. In the TaNaKh, the Hebrew text sets the stage and establishes the framework and standards for understanding the Apostolic Scriptures. Even most of the Apostolic Scriptures were scribed by men whose first language was Hebrew. The Hebrew of the TaNaKh² establishes the way we should view the Greek in the Apostolic Scriptures – and hence the English.

Most Hebrew words come from a root verb. Even proper names and nouns have verbs as their root. That tells us is that Hebrew is a language of action. It is not a language of concepts, thoughts, and ideas. It is all about **doing**.

Many, when they read in the TaNaKh about God’s commands, simply chalk it up to something like “the old way, before grace.” This is a sad commentary on people’s biblical knowledge, because if one studies the TaNaKh it becomes quite clear that the God of the TaNaKh is the same gracious God as the One revealed in the Apostolic Scriptures. Many people may be surprised to learn that although tradition says the TaNaKh has six hundred and thirteen commands to God’s people, the Apostolic Scriptures contains more than a thousand commands. Grace is not the opposite of God’s commandments, it is what **motivates** and gives life to those commandments.

² TaNaKh = “Torah, Nevi’im, Ketuvim” or “Torah, Prophets, and Writings” – what some call the “Old Testament”

***“And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.”
Deuteronomy 6:24***

The purpose of this study is to help us begin to realize that if we are God's people, we need to be more active in our “faith.” We will accomplish this purpose by going through some of those action words – those verbs in Scripture. We will in all cases attempt to examine Scripture from the Hebraic mindset. We will be challenging ourselves to quit thinking in a Western way.

Remember, we are studying action words – so simply agreeing with what your read means very little. **It is what you do**... So, let's begin...

Lesson One - Fear

“Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments.”

Psalm 112:1

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

John 14:21

“Then a voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!’”

Revelation 19:5

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”

1 John 5:23

Modern believers are sometimes troubled by the biblical phrase “fear God.” They are sometimes concerned about what (incorrectly) appears to be a TaNaKh teaching of “salvation by works” in the emphasis on the commandments of God. If one spends time reading the references about fearing God, we can begin to see a relationship between fearing God, and His commandments. There is not a change in the emphasis in the Apostolic Scriptures.

Maybe we don't quite understand this word “fear.” Is it describing simply an emotion, or something else?

Fear is the most powerful motivating force in our lives. It can strike us and cause us to be frozen in terror, or it can instantly cause us to flee in response to a physical threat. In all regards, it is something that motivates – or makes us **act** in certain ways.

On the next page, list some earthly things or circumstances that you have caused fear in your life in the past, or that you currently fear. Be honest.

Earthly Things That Cause Me To Fear

The Hebrew used most often for “fear” is *yare* (pronounced: *yaw-ray*). *Yare* is spelled *yod-resh-alef*. *Yare* can be used to describe an emotional response to something, but often in Scripture it is used in relation to God, and describes a motivation for certain actions.

Hebrew letters were originally pictures. The pictographic mural of a Hebrew word can sometimes give us further insight into its meaning¹.

The pictograph of the letter *Yod* is that of the hand of God. The letter *Resh* pictures a head or chief. The letter *Alef*, the first letter, represents God Almighty. The pictograph of *yare* then shows the hand of God upon man’s head, bringing him under God’s authority. No wonder Scripture tells us not to *yare* man. Let’s look at some of the usages of *yare* in the TaNaKh.

Read the following passages and note the relationship between fear of God and His commands, or His requirements.

Genesis 3:9-11 (this is the first usage of the word *yare* in Scripture):

Exodus 1:15-17:

¹ Although Hebrew pictographs can help us gain insights into a word, we should never use them in a way that contradicts the meaning of a word in context. In reading and understanding Scripture, context remains our strongest guard against error.

Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 17-20:

Psalm 86:11:

Psalm 112:1:

Proverbs 9:10:

Ecclesiastes 12:13:

The Theological Wordbook² says,

“It is plausible that this usage of “to fear” [*yare*] as a virtual synonym for righteous living or piety grew out of viewing “fear” [*yare*]... as the motivation which produced righteous living.

Be careful that you do not treat this “motivation” toward obeying God in a negative way. Read Psalm 130:1-4 and comment on why God forgives.

In the Apostolic Scriptures the word “fear” is often used to describe people who behave in certain ways. The Greek word used most for “fear” is *phobeo*. It is used in the Greek Septuagint³ for translating the Hebrew word *yare*. The first usage of the verb *phobeo* [fear] is found in Matthew 1:20.

²*The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*. 1980 (p. 400). Chicago: Moody Press.

³The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Hebrew TaNaKh. Translated into Greek in about 280 BCE, its main purpose today is to validate Hebrew and Greek meanings through cross referencing. It is the version quoted in the Apostolic Scriptures.

Read Matthew 1:18-20. Here God tells Joseph not to fear. Joseph was afraid to do something. What was it? What reason could Joseph have for fear in taking Miriam to be his wife? What motivated that fear? How did God calm his fears – or more importantly, change his intentions? Was Joseph's fear a fear of God? If so, did he stop fearing God in the subsequent verses?

Miriam also understood Who she should fear. Read Luke 1:46-55. What does Miriam describe as some benefits to those who fear God?

Read Yeshua's words in Luke 12:4-12 and what Yeshua says His friends should fear, and not fear. Fill out the chart that follows.

What Yeshua's Friends Should Fear	What Not to Fear

Read Acts 10:1-5 and comment on how Cornelius is described and based upon that description, can you see a relationship between fearing God and God's commands?

Revelation 19:5:

Now take some of the fears that you listed at the beginning of this lesson, and bring them to the space that follows – then from some of the Scriptures you have looked up, can you see any relationship between those fears, and God's commands?

My Fears	Relationship to God's Commands

It is clear that fear is treated in Scripture as an emotion. Sometimes it is shown as a negative emotion. The passages that you examined however describe something different when it is described as the “fear of God.” Although some might see that to fear God is something that the wicked do, instead we have seen the opposite – that God's people are described as those who fear Him. Fearing God is the motivating force for obedience; not a fear of retribution or punishment, but a fear that understands that God is the King of the Universe and as such we rightly and voluntarily should come under His authority. As such, the fear of God motivates us toward all these other action words that we will examine in the following lessons.

Beloved, fear God. Fear Him because His is the King. Fear Him because He loves you and knows what is best for you. Fear Him because you are His. Fear Him if He has forgiven you. Remember, Fear is a verb – it is something you do...

Now then, what will you **do** with regard to the word “fear”?

Lesson Two – Hear, Obey

“You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey [hear] His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.”

Deuteronomy 13:4

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”

Deuteronomy 6:4

“So Samuel said: ‘Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying [hearing] the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [to hear] is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams...’”

1 Samuel 15:22

To “hear” seems like such a passive activity, if it can be called an activity at all. In fact, in English, if we want someone to pay attention, we use the imperative, “listen to me” as opposed to “hear me.” Even the biological facts of hearing seem quite passive to us. Sound waves travel through the air and strike our ear drums and eventually are translated into electrical signals to our brain. In no way can we imagine our brains or hearing organs going out and actively **recruiting** sounds to be “heard.” So what does the Bible mean when it talks so highly of the verb “hear”?

The Hebrew word for “hear” is *sh’ma* (pronounced: *sh-maw*). It is spelled *shin-mem-ayin*. It means much more than simply to passively “hear.” Here is what the Theological Wordbook¹ says about the word *sh’ma*:

“shama [sh’ma] has the basic meaning ‘to hear.’ This is extended in various ways, generally involving effective hearing or listening: 1) ‘listen to,’ ‘pay attention,’ 2) ‘obey’ (with words such as ‘commandment’ etc.)...”

So, *sh’ma* means to *hear*, *obey*, or *understand*. Pictographically, the Hebrew letters show that to “hear” or “obey” God is to **see** or understand His Name (i.e. His true nature). Read the following Scriptures and comment on what makes the “hearing” **effective** (in other words, what does it **do**):

Genesis 3:8 (this is the first usage of the word “sh’ma” – what did Adam and Eve **do** because of what they heard?):

¹The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament. 1980 (p. 938). Chicago: Moody Press.

Exodus 19:5 (note: the word “obey” in the King James Version is the word “*sh’ma*” or “hear”):

Exodus 19:9:

Deuteronomy 4:30-31 (note: the word “obey” in the King James Version is the word “*sh’ma*” or “hear”)

Joshua 24:24 (note: the word “obey” in the King James Version is the word “*sh’ma*” or “hear”):

Proverbs 23:19:

Isaiah 55:3:

In the Scriptures you read, what was the relationship between “hearing” and “obeying”?

In the Apostolic Scriptures Greek, the word used for “hear” is *akouo*. In Mark 12:29, Deuteronomy 6:4 is quoted and the Hebrew word *sh'ma* is translated into Greek using the word *akouo*. The Septuagint² also uses this Greek word for the Hebrew *sh'ma*. Similarly to *sh'ma*, the Greek word *akouo* used in the Apostolic Scriptures often goes beyond the simple passive “to hear” – but includes the idea of **effective** hearing (i.e. doing something because of hearing).

Luke 9:35 gives a command. What is it?

Read John 10:27 and comment on what happens when Yeshua’s sheep hear His voice. Are you His one of His sheep?

Read John 14:24 and comment on where the “word which you hear” comes from.

Read Romans 10:13-18 and comment on the progressive steps listed for faith.

In Romans 10:17, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Based upon that, what would you tell someone who says they want “more faith”? What have we seen as a synonym with the verb “to hear” [Hebrew = *sh'ma*, Greek = *akouo*]?

Read Revelation 22:17-18 and comment on the importance and benefits to those who hear.

Beloved, as we have seen, “to hear” is more than simply a passive activity. We are commanded to hear [*sh'ma*] God and His Word. We have also learned that when we

² The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Hebrew TaNaKh. Translated into Greek in about 280 BCE, its main purpose today is to validate Hebrew and Greek meanings through cross referencing. It is the version quoted in the Apostolic Scriptures.

sh'ma [hear, obey] Yeshua's voice, we will follow Him – doing what He does. We have also learned that faith comes to us by hearing. To *sh'ma* is to grow in faith.

As we work through other action words, we will likely return to *sh'ma* because it is so important to our faith and the other things we do.

Will you hear – will you obey? Will you *sh'ma*? Remember, agreement is not enough... what will you **do**?

***“And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.”
Exodus 19:9***

Beloved, *sh'ma*... and believe...

Lesson Three – Love

***“Yeshua said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment.”
Matthew 22:37-38***

***“...in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.”
Deuteronomy 30:16***

One would think that the Western culture would have a good idea what “love” is, considering the fact that it is a subject that is so often used in our books, magazines, and movies. If one looks at how our culture defines “love” you will be very confused when you read about the Scriptural use of the word “love.” Consider the theme of the 1970s movie, “Love Story” which proclaimed, “Love means never having to say you are sorry.” Or the sick euphemism that equates the word “love” with all sorts of sexual deviancy. No, beloved, love is not how our culture defines it. Love is not something you can “fall” into, or worse “out of.” Love, you see, is **not** an emotion.

In the space that follows, list the things you love, in descending order. Use your own usage to define love in this case. Do you say that you “love chocolate,” “love your job,” or “love your dog”? Then list those types of things as well.

The Things I Love

The Hebrew word for “love” is *ahav*. It is spelled *alef-hay-bet*. Unfortunately, the simple Hebrew definition for *ahav* does little to separate true love, from the counterfeits. The

Hebrew usage itself is similar to the English uses – it can be anything from noble to profane. Instead, the context of the word *ahav* tells us much more. The first usage of the word *ahav* is found in Genesis 22:2.

Read Genesis 22:1-2, 11-12 and list the things mentioned and implied that Abraham loved. How did Abraham “prove” his love?

Ahav presents an interesting Hebrew pictograph because if one starts with the Hebrew word *av* [father] and add the letter *hay* in the middle you can see the word *ahav* (remember, the Hebrew alphabet has only consonants). The adding of the letter *hay*, which points to the Spirit of God, or the heart of a matter, shows that love is the focus of the Father. In other words, the **Heart of the Father is Love**.

Read Genesis 27:1-5 and comment on what Isaac loved in verse 4.

Exodus 20:5-6 is the first usage of the word *ahav* in the context of loving God. What does God link to loving Him?

Read Deuteronomy 11:1 and list the things that are linked with the command to love God:

Read Proverbs 3:12 and Hebrews 12:6 and note the connection to love and reproof:

In the chart that follows, read these passages and list what God loves:

Reference:	God Loves
Psalm 11:7	
Psalm 33:5	
Psalm 37:28	
Psalm 87:2	

The Greek word used in the Septuagint¹ for this word in Genesis 22:2 comes from the word *agapao*. This is the same word used for “love” in John 3:16.

Read John 3:14-17 and comment on the relationship to Genesis 22:2:

Much has been made in the past over the different Greek words used in the Apostolic Scriptures for “love.” We need to be careful not to use definitions that are not supported by their usage in Scripture. Many have said that *agapao* is “God’s unconditional love for man.” The usage in the Greek Apostolic Scriptures does not necessarily support that view. For instance, Matthew 22:37 is where Yeshua quotes from Deuteronomy 6:5. The word *agapao* is used – but it is used as a command for us to love God, not the other way around. Read the following passages which use derivatives of the Greek word *agapao*. Note the relationship (if any) to obedience or to commands.

Luke 7:41-43:

John 10:17:

John 14:21:

John 15:12:

¹ The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Hebrew TaNaKh. Translated into Greek in about 280 BCE, its main purpose today is to validate Hebrew and Greek meanings through cross referencing. It is the version quoted in the Apostolic Scriptures.

1 John 4:21:

In the chart that follows, read these passages and list what we are to love:

Reference:	God's People are Supposed to Love:
Deuteronomy 6:5	
Psalms 119:47	
Psalms 119:97	
Psalms 119:159	
Matthew 5:44	
Matthew 22:37-39	
John 13:34	
John 14:23-24	
John 15:9-11	
Ephesians 5:25	
1 John 4:7-8	

In 1 John 2:15 we are told of something we are not to love:

In 1 John 4:16 we are told that God is love. This well-known verse is often misused to teach a different Gospel. It is used by some to water down the fact that God is holy and expects His people to obey. It is used by some to draw some strange line between “the God of the TaNaKh” and the “God of the Apostolic Scriptures.” God has not changed. An interesting, and yet false, teaching is drawn from a misunderstanding of Matthew 22:37-39 (and the parallel passages in Mark 12 and Luke 10). Some have used this to create a false doctrine that Yeshua instituted a new “Law” – the “Law of Love” which supercedes and replaces God’s holy commandments to His people. No, instead, what Yeshua does is point to the fact that there is a connection between God’s commandments and loving Him. The “Law of Love” has always been the summation of God’s commands. If we do not want to obey Him, we do not love Him. To love God is the greatest command. As you have seen this is a quote from Deuteronomy 6:5. The

second greatest command is to “love your neighbor as yourself.” This is a quote from Leviticus 19:18. You see, love is the summation of all that God has commanded. It motivates our desire to obey. It validates that we are God’s children.

Now beloved, if you love God, what will you **do**? If you *sh’ma* [obey] Him, what does it show? Do you want more faith? *Sh’ma* Him. Do you want more love for Him? *Sh’ma* Him.

Lesson Four – Treasure, Keep

***“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.”
Genesis 2:15***

***“For I have known him [Abraham], in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”
Genesis 18:19***

***“When a strong man, fully armed, guards [keeps] his own palace, his goods are in peace.”
Luke 11:21***

***“O Timothy! Guard [Keep] what was committed to your trust...”
1 Timothy 20a***

***“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.”
Exodus 19:5***

Many, when they read the word “keep” in passages like Exodus 19:5, view it in a cold and harsh way such as the word “obey.”¹ Likewise, many view the commandments of God to be something lacking in “grace.” This perspective has no understanding of the nature of God, or of His gracious character. This same misconception leads people into grave error when they consider what they think are the “differences between the God of the TaNaKh and the Apostolic Scriptures.” The danger of such a perspective is very real, and it is something we should guard against. We have seen already in our study that the words “obey” and “hear” in the Hebrew Bible are interchangeable. Obedience is our loving response to the loving God of the Universe. Likewise, the word “keep” in relation to God’s commandments is our valuation response to a God that has said that He will treasure His people. Exodus 19:5 shows the relationship between how God’s people should keep His covenant, and how God will treasure His people. Let’s explore this relationship further.

In the chart that follows, list some things of value to you, and how you protect or guard that thing of value.

¹ See Lesson Two – “Hear, Obey”

Person or Thing I Value	Steps I Take to Guard

The Hebrew word for “keep” is *shamar* (pronounced: *shaw-mar*). It is spelled *shin-mem-resh*. The first derivative of this verb is used in Genesis 2:15. There we are told that the man (Adam) was placed in the Garden of Eden in order to tend and *shamar* [keep] it. *Shamar* means far more than the English equivalent “keep.” It is often translated as “guard,” “observe,” “preserve,” etc. Possibly the best single English word to use in describing the usage of the word *shamar*, is **to treasure**, or hold dear and precious. Reason tells us that which we prize or treasure most is that which we will **guard** best. In Exodus 19:5, the Israelites were told that if they kept [treasured, guarded, held dear] God’s covenant, then they would be God’s *S’gulah* – His special treasure. The word *shamar* or its derivatives are used over 500 times in the TaNaKh.

Read the following passages and note the usage of the words “keep” and “guard” – they all are the Hebrew word *shamar*. Comment on what is to be kept or treasured – and the benefit for doing so.

Genesis 3:24 (NKJV “guard”):

Genesis 26:1-5:

Exodus 20:5-6 (note the connection to “mercy” and “keep”):

Deuteronomy 6:24-25 (“observe” in verse 25 is *shamar*)

Deuteronomy 30:15-16:

Psalm 19:11:

Psalm 119:17 (note the relationship to “bountiful” and “keep”):

Daniel 9:4:

Hosea 12:11:

God *shamar*-s us as well. To *shamar* is a love response. Read Psalm 145:20. Here the word *shamar* is translated “preserves.”

The Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word *shamar* is *phulasso* (pronounced *foo-las-so*). In Luke 11:28 Yeshua says, “**More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!**” The Hebrew (or Aramaic equivalent) words that Yeshua would have used would have been like this: “...blessed are those who hear [*sh'ma*] the word of God and keep [*shamar*] it.” Here, Yeshua gives us the important correlation between *sh'ma* [hear, obey] and *shamar* [keep, treasure]. The English version of this verse does not capture the essence of what Yeshua says is the source of the blessing here. It is not enough to “hear” God’s commandments. It is not enough to “obey” God’s commandments. We must instead effectively hear (hear with obedient actions that follow) – to *sh'ma*. Added to that we must not merely “keep” His commandment – but rather *shamar* them – to treasure and hold them dear. We must guard God’s commandments as something precious to us.

Read 2 Peter 2:5 and comment on what God did for Noah. The word “saved” is the Greek word *phulasso*. God found Noah precious in His sight, so He treasured Him and preserved Him.

Let’s make what you have learned more practical. We all may be able to agree that we should treasure, keep, and guard God’s words; but remember, what we **think** is not what we are focusing on. We are not merely thinking of God’s commands in endearing

terms. We are attempting to go from Western thinking which places more value on **symbolism** (thinking), to Hebraic **substance** which focuses on **doing**. From the verses you looked up (or any other thing that God has brought to mind), glean some things about God that we should and will *shamar* [keep, treasure, guard]. Then in the space next to it, comment on how you will **do** it.

What I Will <i>Shamar</i>	How I Will Do It

Beloved, to *shamar* is not simply having endearing thoughts about something. In the same way that when we have things that we value we take steps to protect and guard them, so when we *shamar* God's commandments, we should exhibit behavior that reflects the high value we have for the things of God.

What steps are you taking to *shamar* God's Word in your life? What will you **do** about the word *shamar* [treasure, keep]?

Lesson Five – Teach

***“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”
Deuteronomy 6:6-7***

***“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.’”
Exodus 24:12***

***“Correct [teach, chastise] your son, and he will give you rest;
Yes, he will give delight to your soul.”
Proverbs 29:17***

***“...Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom.”
Job 33:33b***

***“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you.”
Deuteronomy 4:1***

Some believers might be shocked to know that there is a commandment in Scripture for all of God's people to teach. Many assume that teaching is something that “teachers” are told to do, or for “those who have a gift of teaching.” Many operate in religious communities where adults and children are separated in order to better “teach” them by “experts” using the latest teaching techniques. What many fail to see is that teaching is not only commanded for all believers – it is something that everyone actually does do in some way, for better or worse. The question then becomes **what** and **how** should we teach?

There are five major Hebrew words that are used for the English word “teach.” By examining these words we can get a good grasp on **how** we should teach. By examining the usages of these words we can also see **what** we should teach. The teaching principles from these words are carried over into the Apostolic Scriptures and also show up in the Greek words used.

Before we look into the Hebrew words and context, write your **thoughts** in the space that follows about who needs to be taught in the community of believers, and then who should do that teaching.

Who Needs to Be Taught	Who Should Do It

In Matthew 22:37-38, Yeshua names the principle commandment from which all the others emanate. We have looked at this commandment in Lesson Two (“Hear, Obey”) and in Lesson Three (“Love”). In Matthew chapter twenty-two as well as the companion passages in Luke and Mark, Yeshua is using the beginning of what is called, “The Sh’ma.” The central tenet of Judaism is not new. It is as old as Deuteronomy chapter six, from where Yeshua draws them. Contained within the Deuteronomy chapter six passage, we find a command to teach. **“You shall teach them (these words) diligently to your children...”** The Hebrew word for teach here is the word *shanan* (pronounced: *shaw-nawn*). It is spelled *shin-nun-nun sofit*. It means to sharpen or to use a whet stone. Most parents do not think of their child rearing responsibilities in such war-like terms but we all know that a dull knife or sword will not cut. Children need to be sharpened [*shanan*] like arrows or swords. This shows a teaching method that sharpens in preparation for conflict, or to teach by sharpening. Read the passage below and note the usage of the word *shanan* [sharpen], and how it might relate to its usage in Deuteronomy 6:7 with regard to teaching children.

Deuteronomy 32:41 (NKJV and KJV use the word “whet” for *shanan*):

Now is it any wonder that God refers to children in terms of being arrows in Psalm 127:3-5?

The next Hebrew word used for “teach” is the word *yarah* (pronounced: *yaw-raw*). It is spelled *yod-resh-hay*. This is the root verb for the Hebrew word *torah*, which is translated most often as “law” although it is better translated “instruction.” *Yarah* means to shoot or throw. It means to teach by pointing to the way.

Read Exodus 4:10-15 (“teach” in verse 12 and 15 are the word *yarah*) and answer the following questions:

Who is going to do the teaching?

What is being taught?

How does the use of the word “teach” [*yarah*] here, relate to being “thrown” or “shot.”

Read and comment on Proverbs 4:11:

Another Hebrew word for “teach” is the word *lamad* (pronounced: *law-mad*). It is spelled *lamed-mem-dalet*. The Hebraic pictograph of this word shows a shepherd’s staff prodding in a flow through a door. It reveals a method to teach by showing the way.

Read Deuteronomy 4:1-9 and comment on what was being taught [*lamad*] and why it was taught:

Read Psalm 51:10-13 and comment on what motivated David to teach [*lamad*]:

The Hebrew word *alaf* (pronounced: aw-**lawf**) is another word for “teach.” It is spelled *alef-lamed-fay*. It means to be yoked together as a pair of oxen. Often a young ox was yoked with an experienced ox in order to show by example. *Alaf* means to teach by example. The following passages use *alaf* for the word “teach.”

Job 33:33:

Job 35:11:

Proverbs 22:25 (note the negative effect – this is being “unequally yoked”):

Lastly, we have the Hebrew word *yasar* (pronounced: *yaw-sar*). It is spelled *yod-samech-resh*. The Hebraic word picture shows a hand encircling a head. It literally means “to turn the head.” This Hebrew word is often translated into English as the words “chastise,” “punish,” or “correct.” This method of teaching is to teach by discipline. Comment on the following passages and how they “teach.”

Deuteronomy 8:5 (NKJV and KJV use the word “chasten” here for *yasar*):

Proverbs 19:18:

Psalms 94:12 (instruct or chasten):

Yasar is a very common word in the Bible. We all need to have a correct view of this word. As with Psalm 94:12, we should read the English words “chasten” and “discipline” and not arch our backs in opposition to what they imply for all of us. God’s chastening hand is a loving and graceful one. We need to accept *yasar* from the Lord as a gift. Considering that the word *yasar* literally means “to turn the head,” can you see why being “stiff-necked” is such a picture of rebellion?

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-16 and note the two possible responses to God's *yasar*. Don't be stiff-necked, beloved.

For review, here are the Hebrew words for "teach":

Hebrew Word	Teaching Method	Focus
<i>alaf</i>	to teach by yoking	association / relational
<i>lamad</i>	to teach by goading	instruction / guidance
<i>yarah</i>	to teach by pointing	direction / destiny
<i>shanan</i>	to teach by sharpening	skills / preparation for battle
<i>yasar</i>	to teach by chastisement	discipline / correction

In the Apostolic Scriptures, the word most often used for "teach" is the Greek word *didasko* (pronounced: *did-as-ko*). It is the word used in Matthew 5:19. We get the English word "didactic" (for the purpose of teaching) from this word.

Read Matthew 5:17-20 and then fill out the chart that follows. For context, this is Yeshua speaking in this passage.

Do or Don't Do What?	Teach or Don't Teach What?	Result?

Matthew 28:18-20 is known by some as the “Great Commission.” Here, Yeshua lists a set of commands for His followers. The English verbs are:

- Go
- Make disciples (“teach” in KJV)
- Immerse
- Teach

The usage of this passage for various reasons in some believing communities sometimes belies what it really says. Even if it can be used to promote a denominational “mission statement” one must ask how well this is being done in light of the fact that there are four verbs (commands) listed in this passage. For instance, “going” is a priority, “immersing” is a priority – but is “teaching”? What is interesting for us in this study is to note that two of the verbs in the Greek refer to teaching. The Greek word used for the English phrase “make disciples” is *matheteuo* (pronounced: *math-ay-yoo-o*). It means to teach or instruct someone to follow a set of precepts or instructions. In Matthew 22:20, the word for teach is the Greek word *didasko*. This word focuses on speaking as a teaching method.

Now, read Matthew 22:18-20 again, and then compare it to Matthew 5:17-20. Is there any relationship between these passages? What?

Read Colossians 1:27-28 and comment on what Paul is doing here – and the purpose for which he is doing it (the word for “teaching” here is *didasko*):

Read Hebrews 5:12 and comment on the relationship to spiritual maturity and teaching:

In Ezekiel 44:23, we are reminded what Levitical priests were to teach the people. As intermediaries, they were called to teach the difference.

“And they shall teach [yarah = shoof] My people the difference between the holy [k’desh] and the unholy [cho], and cause them to discern between the unclean [tamei] and the clean [t’hor].”
Ezekiel 44:23

The English words used here do not quite tell the story. Many think of “holy” as sinless, and “unclean” as a ritual issue having to do with “odd Old Testament laws.” What we are

reading about in this passage are divisions on two distinct planes. First, the division between “holy” and “unholy” is the division between *k'desh* [set apart for God] and *chol* [that which is not set apart for God – those things that are man-initiated, man-centered, and man-pleasing].

Also, the priests were to teach the people to learn to divide the *t'hor* [that which is whole and brings unity] from *tamei* [that which is fragmented and causes fragmenting]. These words are usually translated “clean” and “unclean.”

By having the priests teach the people to separate the “holy” from the “unholy,” God was preparing a way for the people to divide and determine God-centered from man-centered. This prepared the people to act in ways that were consistent with the character that God was enabling in them. When God commanded that His people should “be holy for I am holy,”¹ He was commanding them to act upon knowledge that they were supposed to be taught – namely the difference between what was God-centered and what was man-centered.

When the people were taught to separate the “clean” from the “unclean,” God was preparing them to identify and separate out those things which hurt them in their relationship to God (i.e. fellowship) and those things which fragmented and hindered their relationship with God. When God's people have been taught the difference between “clean” and “unclean” they can choose to interact with things that bring wholeness to them spiritually instead of that which will fragment them and cause their relationship with God to be less whole.

Read 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1 and comment whether “clean” vs. “unclean” has any bearing on a modern believer.

Now read 1 Peter 2:9-10 and cross reference it back to Ezekiel 44:23. Answer these questions:

What does Peter call those who follow Yeshua?

What is the responsibility of those so named?

¹ Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:16

Do you know the difference between *k'desh* and *chol*? Can you separate *t'hor* from *tamei*? Will you teach others those distinctions?

Beloved, as we have seen, the command to teach is undervalued in our believing communities today. We need to reexamine what we are teaching, why we are teaching, and how we are teaching it. As we have discussed, we are teaching something... is it the right thing? Use the chart that follows to show your intended response to the Scripture that you have read regarding the command to teach.

Who I Should Teach	What I Should Teach	How I Should Teach

Are you being challenged to stop merely thinking correctly, and to **do**? Has the Spirit of the Living God spoken to you through His Word about your responsibilities to teach? Now then, what will you **do** about the word “teach”?

Lesson Six – Repent

“And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. They said, ‘Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers forever and ever.’”
Jeremiah 25:4-5

“If My people, which are called by My Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn [repent] from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”
2 Chronicles 7:14

“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”
Job 42:5-6

The noun “repentance” is one often used to describe part of the “conversion process.” In fact, most people who use the word “repent,” use it in the past tense, as something that is done and over in their lives. Occasionally, believers may refer to the verb “repent” as something they have done at various times after “conversion” when they were involved in gross sin. Even a common use of the word “revival” (eg a “revival meeting”) implies that repentance is an occasional occurrence. Is there a Scriptural instruction for God’s people to repent? One can easily see that the wicked are told to repent – but God’s people? Reading 1 Chronicles 7:14, we can see to whom the instruction to repent is given: “...**My people, which are called by My Name...**” To “repent” is not a one time, past tense kind of thing. We are going to see that it is much more involved than that.

To “repent” involves turning “from” something and turning “to” something else. Read 2 Chronicles 7:14 and comment in the chart that follows:

Things to Turn “To”	Things to Turn “From”

There are two primary Hebrew words that are used for “repent.” The main Hebrew root verb for “repent” is *shuv* (pronounced: *shoov*). It is spelled *shin-vav-bet*. It literally means *to turn*. It is used more than 1,000 times in the TaNaKh.

The Theological Wordbook¹ says that the verb *shuv*,

“...better than any other verb combines in itself the two requirements of repentance: to turn from evil and to turn to the good.”

The Hebraic word picture shown in *shuv* shows the flaming presence of God fastened to a house. The “flaming sword” which God placed outside the Garden of Eden to “guard [shamar] the way to the Tree of Life”² is an example of something which God has ordained to protect and preserve, and yet can also consume if need be. For people who have been bound to God in covenant, His presence guards them and also if need be burns them. It is interesting that the *mezuzah* that we put on our doorposts reflect the picture of *t’shuvah* [repentance], since the *mezuzah* box has the letter *shin* [V] on the outside and it is literally fastened to the doorpost of the house.³

The Hebrew root verb *shuv* is often translated as “return” or “turn” in our English Bible. Read the following passages comment on how they relate to the English word “repent.”

Deuteronomy 30:10-14 (note: the word “obey” is *sh’ma*, the word “keep” is *shamar*, the word “turn” is *shuv*):

Psalm 23:1-3 (the word “restores” is *shuv*):

Psalm 51:12-13 (the word “restore” and “converted” are both the word *shuv*. Note the where David in verse 12 asks for God to *shuv* [restore, return] salvation to him – and what his response will be with others in verse 13):

Joel 2:13 (the word “return” is *shuv*):

¹ *The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*. 1980 (p. 909). Chicago: Moody Press.

² Genesis 3:24

³ This practice comes from the literal reading of Deuteronomy 6:9. The word *mezuzah* means “doorpost.”

When you have an automobile that has a front-end that is out of alignment, the vehicle wants to pull in one direction. This pulling requires you to continually steer in the opposite direction, varying the amount of force on the steering wheel as you maneuver and also change your speed. The use of the word *shuv* is like this. We are constantly having to adjust our steering – constantly in a turning state. As we saw in the previous lesson⁴ we need to be able to determine and separate the *t'hor* [clean – that which brings spiritual wholeness] from the *tamei* [unclean – that which brings spiritual fragmentation]. As well, we are to determine the *k'desh* [God-made, God-centered] from the *chol* [man-made, man-centered]. This constant dividing and choosing in our lives is a persistent presence of *t'shuvah* [repentance] in our lives.

Another Hebrew word is also translated “repent” in English. It is the Hebrew word *nacham* (pronounced: *naw-kham*). It is the word used in Job 42:5-6 where Job speaking says, “***I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent [nacham] in dust and ashes.***”

The Hebrew verb *nacham* is the root verb which means “to comfort.” This word makes an important point about true repentance; and that when we repent, we will receive comfort from God. Likewise a lifestyle of repentance will lead to persistent comfort. The word *nacham* is used in Isaiah 61:2 and is rendered “comfort” in English. Read Isaiah 61:1-3 and then read Matthew 5:4.

As the word *nacham* relates to “repentance,” what is the outcome for those who mourn? How is mourning related to repentance, and which comes first?

The Greek word used in the Apostolic Scriptures is *metanoeo* (pronounced: *met-an-oh-eh-o*). Similar to Hebrew, it means to turn around. Interestingly, since Greek represents more Western philosophical thinking, the Greek used the word *metanoeo* to reflect a change of mind. As we have seen, Hebraically, what one thinks only matters when it is backed up with action. We know that biblical repentance is not simply a change of mind, but actions that reflect a heartfelt turning toward God. Read Matthew 3:8 and comment on how true repentance is identified.

Paul also connects repentance to **ongoing** action, not simply a “conversion” process in Acts 26:20. What was the ongoing effect of true repentance in this passage?

⁴ Lesson Five - Teach

Read Revelation 2:4-5 and comment on this message that is given to believers:

Beloved, every day we know that we make decisions, and in those decisions we are being commanded by God to choose the good and reject the evil. In every one of those decisions we are exercising *t'shuvah* [repentance]. Each time we choose wrongly, God begins to “turn our heads” (remember the Hebrew word *yasar*⁵ which is a teaching method which means to “turn the head,” but is often translated as “chastise”?). God is in the process of continually turning us from evil to His good. God implores us to *shuv* [repent] on our own accord – but if we are His, rest assured that if we do not repent He will use His “turning the head” teaching method [*yasar*, or chastisement] to turn us. How much better it will be for us if we choose to continually remain in a state of repentance! We should not merely be seeking the occasional moments of sorrow over sin and those subsequent behavior changes, we should be seeking a lifestyle of repentance that maintains a humble attitude and chooses daily to guard against sin.

Considering the continual, flowing nature of repentance, we can choose to repent in daily decisions, not only before we sin, but to keep us from sin. In the chart that follows, there is space for you to write out a commitment to repent.

Areas in Which I Commit to Repent Continually:

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Remember beloved, the blessing does not go to the one who merely thinks correctly, it goes to the one who **acts correctly**. We are not encouraging one another to simply think fondly of our past repentance, but to commit ourselves, and encourage one another, to act out a lifestyle that reflects **persistent** repentance.

⁵ *Yasar* is often translated “chastise” or “discipline.” It is a teaching method introduced in Lesson 5 – Teach.

Lesson Seven – Give

“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’ And he gave him a tithe of all.”

Genesis 14:18-20

“And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, ‘This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying: ‘Take from among you an offering to the LORD. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the LORD: gold, silver, and bronze...’”

Exodus 35:4-5

“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:7-8

There is likely no teaching more universally accepted and consistently taught in congregations today than that of “giving.” On the other hand, there is likely no topic more cynically viewed by those outside of the believing community. For those outside, the perception is that religious organizations simply exist to raise money. Those inside those religious organizations would strongly disagree. Clearly, both sides can’t be right – but the tendency on the part of many believers is to deal with the question as a settled issue. Is there an institutional reason why the teaching on giving is so universal, when so many other doctrinal issues are not? Remember, our purpose is not to rest on what we know or think, but to discover the Scriptural truths... and then to **do** them.

One word often used today with regard to giving is “tithe.” Many say, “We should give... at least a tithe.” Yet many of those same people cannot tell you where Scripture commands this. Many people, who would consider the commands of the “TaNaKh” passé, might be shocked to learn that there is no command to tithe in the Apostolic Scriptures. This is not to imply that there is no command to tithe – only that often those most likely to deny the authority of the “TaNaKh” still cling to some commands that serve their purposes.

“‘Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.’”

Malachi 3:10

Malachi 3:10, is likely the most quoted passage in pulpits during various “pledging” drives. So where does this command to “tithe” in Malachi come from?

The Hebrew word for “tithe” is *ma’aser* (pronounced: *mah-as-ayr*). It is spelled *mem-ayin-shin-resh*. It comes from the root *asar* which means to make a grouping of ten. *Ma’aser* is literally “a tenth.” Tithe was mentioned before the Book of Leviticus. Abram paid a tithe to Melchizedek and Jacob promised to pay a tithe at Bethel, but nowhere was it commanded until Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Read Deuteronomy 12:4-6. Then read Deuteronomy 14:22-27 and answer the follow questions:

Where was the tithe to be brought (specifically, what does it **say**)?

What was to be done with the tithe?

Who was to eat the tithe (note who is added in Deuteronomy 14:27)?

Now read Deuteronomy 14:28-29 and Deuteronomy 26:12. How often was this tithe to be brought, and who was to eat it?

A careful reading of the commands for tithe will reveal that there is not one tithe, but three. The first tithe was 10% of a landowner’s crops etc. This was to be given to the Levites (they were landless). The second tithe was 10% of a landowner’s crops (or exchanged for money) etc. to be taken to the Tabernacle (or later Temple) to be consumed by the landowner’s family during the three yearly visits¹ to “where God caused His Name to dwell” (Tabernacle/Temple). The third tithe was collected and distributed by a landowner to the alien and the poor every third year out of the seven year cycle. No tithe at all was collected in the seventh (*sh’mittah*) year.

How does this all relate to us today in a time where there is no Temple to go to three times each year and **consume** the second tithe in what must be characterized as a community celebratory meal? Of course, there is absolutely no correlation between the modern synagogue/church building or property and the biblical Tabernacle or Temple. To suggest such a thing is an abomination.

¹ The three “Jerusalem” feasts were Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Pentecost), and Sukkot (Tabernacles)

How are we to treat the first tithe which was collected to give to the Levites? Certainly, the second tithe is virtually unknown in the evangelical world, and the first tithe is assumed to be collected for the “leadership” as if they were some modern-day Levitical priesthood. But is that what was commanded? Who were Levites? Were they seminary trained and ordained – or were they simply **born** into the Tribe of Levi?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:8-14 and answer the following questions:

Who should “eat of the things of the Temple” in verse thirteen?

Who should “live from the Gospel” in verse fourteen?

In both of these instances, what defines such men? Is it **position**, or based upon what they are **doing**? Comment on the phrase “preach the Gospel” in verse fourteen:

Ironically, the third tithe (the one every third year for the poor and alien), is the one easiest to apply today, and yet our benevolence is usually collected and distributed by a “tax deductible” entity instead of by the individual as is indicated in Scripture.

What is sadly missing today is a clear understanding of God’s intended purpose for our giving. Let’s get something clear: God does not need our money, our crops, or our flocks.

Read Exodus 25:1-9 and answer the questions, “who,” “what,” “why,” and “how.”

Read Exodus 12:33-36 and note where the materials in Exodus 25:1-9 came from:

This was not God's first "Build the [fill in the blank]" building project. Nothing could be further from the truth. What was God teaching the Israelites in this exercise?

Read Luke 18:18-23. Comment on Yeshua's rather radical suggestion regarding what to do with the earthly riches this man possessed:

How do James 1:27 and James 2:15-17 relate to the "third tithe" (for the poor and the alien)?

How does 2 Corinthians 8:8-14 relate to the "third tithe" (Note: there had been a famine in Jerusalem and Paul was going to take donations from believers in Greece to those in need):

Read 2 Corinthians 9:5-8. Paul's use of the word "generous" in 2 Corinthians 9:5 might be seen as an opposite to "obligation." Nothing could be further from the truth. By Paul appealing for these believers in Corinth to be generous and not to give out of "grudging obligation" he is not saying that they do not bear responsibility for giving to those who are poor. Rather, he is appealing to their motivation for giving. He wanted them to give for the right reasons! Note verse thirteen and the use of the word "obedience." Can you separate the right reasons, from the modern "fund-raising" variety?

Within every passage that encourages generosity and giving in the Bible, there is always a benefit to the giver. An over emphasis of the benefit to the receiver, on the other hand, will nearly always distort the truth. The benefit is best viewed as going to the giver.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:5-15 and complete the chart that follows:

Verse	Benefit to the Giver

Now go back to the chart and write out the complete verses that say where these “gifts” originate:

Beloved, it has been said that we can best know our spiritual condition by examining our checkbook ledgers. Sadly, although we may learn something about our giving habits this way, we still do not see our hearts. There are a great many believers who faithfully give, and yet do not see the benefit of that giving because their hearts do not reflect the thankfulness and cheerfulness that is the true mark of godly giving. Likewise, there are a great many believers who do not understand the purpose of giving for their spiritual lives. Because so many have couched biblical giving as a matter of provision to sustain God's work, it has become twisted in our minds. God does not need any of our wealth, or our works to complete and carry out His work. It is never a question of "if you don't give – it won't get done." If a work is of God, its source of provision is sure – and not dependent upon man.

In Esther 4:13-14 we read, ***“And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: ‘Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?’”***

God's plans are fully funded, and fully enabled. His work will be accomplished. Rather, Esther had an obligation to act and if she did act, she would be fulfilling her God-given destiny. Likewise, beloved, God wants our participation in His glorious giving. He desires us to share in His provision – not because if it isn't done by us, it won't be done – but rather because He wants us to live up to our God-given destiny: to be a reflection of His generous and graceful character.

Now where have you failed in the past to give? Start now to give, not as the pagan does, who gives to save his mind, to inflate his position, to earn respect, and to feel important. Rather, give as one who understands the character of God, and sees his or her obligation to respond to such a gracious God by giving to others – giving in such a way as to reflect His character instead of our own. Don't just agree – **do it.**

Lesson Eight – Worship

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 14:23-24

“He answered and said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men— the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.’ He said to them, ‘All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.’”

Mark 7:6-9

Worship is a popular word in our believing communities today. Many attend “worship services” in “worship centers” and sing “worship songs.” Often the format of the services is described as “contemporary worship” and is led by “worship leaders.” With all this talk of worship, surely we don’t need to study worship do we? If you read Mark 7:6-9, you will see that just because we think we are worshipping does not mean we are worshipping in “spirit of truth” as John 14:14 says we must. We need to be very careful on this point – false worship does not think it is false worship. Remember, we are focusing on actions, not just feelings or thoughts. Having good intentions in “worship” does not make that “worship” pleasing to God – or does it? Are we free to worship God in a way that makes us most comfortable?

In the following space, list in descending order the things you think are important for you to have a worship experience:

Important for My Worship Experience

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Following the rule of “first mention” can give us good insights into how God defines true worship. The first use of the Hebrew word for “worship” is found in Genesis 18:2:

Then the LORD appeared to him [Abraham] by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself [worshipped] to the ground...”
Genesis 18:1-2

The word for the phrase “bowed himself” is *shachah* (pronounced: *shaw-khaw*). It is spelled *shin-chet-hay*. It is often translated as “worship” in English. Pictographically, it shows the consuming presence of God which breathes spirit-life into those in covenant¹. It literally means, to be brought low, or bow down. It involves the elevating of another by abasing oneself. It is a physical act which reflects the mindset of the worshipper (e.g. “You are above me”).

The first use of this word in Scripture provides some wonderful insights into the act of worship. Read Genesis 18:1-8, and note that although Abraham is visited by three “men,” the passage begins and identifies Who it truly is that has appeared to Abraham – the LORD. Watch what Abraham did:

- ❖ Ran to meet – **zeal**
- ❖ Bowed down [*shachah*] – **correct view of God**
- ❖ Begged for acceptance – **knows own unworthiness**
- ❖ Asked for visitation – **knows fellowship is a gift**
- ❖ Identified Himself as the servant – **loyalty and fealty**
- ❖ Washed feet – **correct view of holy vs. common**
- ❖ Fed bread – **knows relationship is based upon covenant**
- ❖ Killed and fed a good calf – **offers all**
- ❖ Stood by – **sweet fellowship**

What a marvelous introduction to worship! As we move through Scripture we can see these elements being repeated. Before we move on though let’s make sure that we understand that Abraham did not merely have the right attitude – he acted upon it. In the same way, Abraham did not simply provide a worship experience that was centered upon himself – but the object of what he did was centered on the One being worshipped and what He desired. There was also sacrifice involved – first the abasing of Himself, and then seen in the giving of bread and a good calf. Lastly, Abraham ran to meet Him, and “stood by” afterward – enjoying the very presence of the Holy One.

¹ *Shin* is seen in the cherub’s flaming sword who guards the way to the Tree of Life – protecting and consuming; *chet* pictures the betrothal/wedding chuppah – a covenant sign; *hay* pictures spirit breathed life.

Abraham provides us with another excellent example of worship in Genesis 18:22. Read Genesis 22:1-18 and list the common worship elements seen in Genesis 18:1-8.

Exodus 32:8 gives us a glimpse at “worship” that has become polluted. Read the story of the “golden calf” in Exodus 32:1-8 and then answer this question:

In verse 5, who is it that Aaron tells the people that the “feast” is for?

In verse 6, list the things done as rituals to show their “worship” of the LORD:

In verses 7 and 8, list the things that God says that the people did wrong in their “worship”:

The Exodus 32 “calf episode” is a perfect example of “worship” gone awry. The people felt that they were worshipping the God that brought them up out of Egypt. They even called Him by His holy name in verse five [spelled *yod-hay-vav-hay*]. They had some of the common elements of true worship – they took an “offering” for the gold. They made sacrifices. They had fellowship – but not with God.

Another example of polluted worship is found in Leviticus 9 and 10. The Children of Israel had just finished assembling the Tabernacle according to the exact plans that God had shown Moses on Mt. Sinai. Moses had dedicated the Tabernacle as a place for worship and now had dedicated the first priests to act as intermediaries in the Tabernacle. Aaron

and his four sons were to be the first priests to serve. God revealed His presence in a mighty way.

Let's step into the account in Leviticus 9:23-24:

“And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.”

How is that for a worship experience! Sadly, however two of Aaron's sons in the ecstasy of the worship experience made up their own way to “worship” God:

“Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the LORD spoke, saying: ‘By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.’”
Leviticus 10:1-3a

Apparently, God is serious about worship – and when men act presumptuously, He is not pleased. Go back to the elements of worship given in Genesis 18:1-8 again. Can you spot where Nadab and Abihu went wrong?

If you will look at Exodus 24:1-2, you will see that Nabab and Abihu should have known better than to presume upon God.

Read 2 Chronicles 26:14-21 and comment on what King Uzziah's sin was. Do you think that Uzziah thought that he should be able to worship God as he wanted?

Read Matthew 15:8-9 and Mark 7:6-9, then comment on the contrast between true worship and vain “worship.” How is vain “worship” related to the accounts you read about Nadab, Abihu, and King Uzziah. What is the common thread in all of these?

The etymology of English word “worship” does a pretty good job of describing the Hebraic model of worship that we saw in Genesis 18:1-8 in the account of Abraham bowing down before the LORD. It comes from an old English word that declares the “worth-ship” of one being worshipped. So maybe the way we began this lesson by noting our worship experience needs, was the wrong approach. It clearly does not matter what we think our “experience” is like, if the focus is about declaring the worthiness of God.

So far we have focused on what might be described as “ritual” acts of worship. These are what most people describe as their “worship experience” – and relate directly to what we have come to call “corporate worship,” or something we experience in a group setting. Does that definition fit either the Hebraic model we have seen in Abraham’s example in Genesis 18:1-8 or the actual meaning of the English word “worship”? It might, but is it exclusively that way? We have seen that worship may include ritual, but that it does not necessarily have to. Instead, in both the Hebrew word *shachah* and the English word “worship” we are talking about a focus upon our position relative to God’s. Or better, God’s position relative to ours.

The example of worship might be for us to move beyond the ritual picture and instead focus on the act of worship being constant. Beloved, our lives should be lived constantly in worship – in an attitude of humble submission, always knowing and declaring God’s greatness, and our humble state before Him. In the chart that follows, list ways that you can act out the truths that God is the marvelous God that He is. Start with the obvious places: Home, Work, etc.

Where I Should Worship	How I Should Worship

Now beloved, let's dedicate ourselves to not participating in the myth that our "worship experience" has anything to do with what true worship of God is. If we need a correct "mood" to "worship" we need to begin to wonder what it is we are actually worshipping. Let's endeavor to act as true worshippers, who as Yeshua said, "**will worship the Father in spirit and truth.**"². God is seeking for true worshippers who will worship Him every day, all day! Now what will you **do**?

² John 14:23

Lesson Nine – Pray

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Matthew 6:5-15

"Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."

Isaiah 56:7

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

Many people say, "I will pray for you." When someone offers to pray for us, it is often perceived by the recipient as a "nice" gesture. Even more important, with good intentions, the individual offering to pray does not follow through.

As a local body of believers, we gather together to "worship," teach and conduct programs of which without, many might question our meaning to exist. God is very clear in Matthew 6:5-15, 2 Chronicles 7:14, and Isaiah 56:7, His views about how, when, and why to pray. In the area that follows list how, when, and why you believe we should pray.

How	When	Why

Many believers think or will say that to pray is easy and that to do other works for God such as to evangelize, discipleship, teach, and even to study and read the Bible is the real work of God. In fact, one will find very quickly, that to pray can be hard and yet it is what God instructs us to do. Watchman Nee, a well respected Chinese believer in the mid 20th century said in his book, *The Prayer Ministry of the Church*, “To pray is the noblest work that the church can do and yet it is the least work done.” Ron Dunn, author of the book, *Don't just stand there, Pray Something*, was warned once by a deacon at a prayer conference that praying was “nice” but we need to be careful not make too much of it or we might not get anything else done. Ron Dunn goes on to say that unfortunately, he has never experienced or heard of a congregation having this problem.

As we look at the references specifically with regard to the verb pray, we see a connection between all kingdom work and a relationship with God in prayer. This same connection is seen in both the TaNaKh and Apostolic Scriptures.

Is it that we need to better understand this word “pray”? What is really happening when we pray? To pray in the authority of God is a very powerful force in our lives, the life of the community of Believers and God’s Kingdom.

In the following space, list those things that you have seen God do as a result of prayer.

Things I Have Seen God Do Through Prayer

The Hebrew word used most often for “pray” is *palal* (pronounced: *paw-leh-l*). *Palal* is spelled *pay-lamed-lamed*. *Palal* is used through out Scripture in relation to God, and describes Him speaking through us.

The pictograph for the letter *pay* is a “mouth.” The letter *lamed* pictures a staff, goad or tongue. The pictograph of *palal* then shows the mouth or tongue being directed by God. Let’s look at some of the usages of *palal* in the TaNaKh.

The first use of the *palal* for “pray” reveals the great and mighty power of God as He chooses to work when we pray. Read the following passage. What hinges on how the prophet (Abraham in this case) prays?

“Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he [Abraham] is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.”

Genesis 20:7

Read the following passages and note the source of what is prayed and what purpose and/or direction is given.

Job 42:8:

Isaiah 16:12:

Romans 8:26:

To pray in the spirit of God is to be aligned with God because you know Him and walk with Him. A good example of this is in a marriage. A husband or wife usually know what their spouse will want, say or think when approached about any given subject even before they ask. This is because they “know” each other well. They “walk” with each other.

Knowing God and praying His will comes by walking with Him when we read, study, memorize, meditate and pray His word.

Read John 15:4 and comment on what happens when we abide with Him. What can we do other wise?

In the Apostolic Scriptures the word “pray” is often used to describe people who beg, beseech or implore of God. The Greek word used most for “pray” is *proseuchomai* (pronounced: pros–yoo–khom–ahee). It is used in the Greek Septuagint for translating the Hebrew word *palal*.

The first usage of the verb *proseuchomai* [pray] is found in Matthew 5:44.

***“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”
Matthew 5:44***

If you have ever had an enemy, you know how hard it is to pray for him. However, if you have prayed for him, you also know how powerful God is to heal your heart from bitterness and unforgiveness because of what you pray.

There is great and mighty power of God in a relationship with him as we pray, or communicate with Him.

God has given us His word which shows us how to pray. In His word according to His will is the power to bring forth His Kingdom. Review the following scriptures and indicate the form of communication with God.

God's Word	Aspect of Communicating to God
Psalm 145	
Psalm 8:1	
Psalm 34:1-3	
Psalm 34:8-9	
Isaiah 53:5-6	
Joel 2:12-13	

God's Word	Aspect of Communicating to God
Psalm 34:18	
Psalm 51	
Psalm 32:1-5	
Deuteronomy 8:6; 13:4	
1 Chronicles 28:9	

God's Word	Aspect of Communicating to God
Luke 6:27-28, 31	
Hosea 12:6	
Matthew 5:3-10; 6:33; 13:46	
John 15:7-11	
1 Corinthians 13:4-8	
1 Thessalonians 3:12-13	

God's Word	Aspect of Communicating to God
Deuteronomy 6:6-7	
Colossians 4:2-4	
3 John 2	
Psalm 103:1-5	
Malachi 4:2	
1 Peter 1:3-5	

God very clearly outlines that we should pray, how we should pray and what happens when we pray.

Why don't you pray?

Pray that God would give you a heart to pray.

Beloved, now, what will you **do** about “pray”?

Lesson Ten – Fast

“Is it a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?”

Isaiah 58:5

“But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Matthew 6:17-18

The evangelical movement has provided very little in teaching or instruction on biblical fasting. For those who have come into an evangelical community from a liturgical one like Roman Catholicism etc, “fasting” may evoke some bad memories associated with the pagan season of Lent. On the other hand, for those coming from Judaism, there may be some confusion as to why there is not more emphasis on fasting among believers. Although it is possible that one reason is that early in Protestantism there was some reaction against Catholicism and Lent, it is likely that the primary reason that fasting is not emphasized is because it viewed as a “deed.” Since we are looking at things from the verb-perspective and from a position of action, this word is one that most certainly should be considered.

Fasting is most often associated with praying. An interesting English usage reveals why some of us may shy away from fasting. The English phrase used most is, “Prayer and Fasting.” In this usage, we can see that the noun “Prayer” is inactive and “Fasting” is active. “Prayer” is somewhat more appealing in saying you will do it (being “committed to prayer” is not the same as someone who “prays a lot,” is it?) – whereas “fasting” is almost always considered an action, or something you do. In other words, “fasting” is clearly something that you have to do – and hence because it isn’t spiritualized or inactive, we may have a tendency to ignore it all together! However, if we do that, we eliminated a powerful action from our lives.

There are two primary ways to refer to the verb “fast” in Hebrew. The first is the Hebrew word *tsum* (pronounced: *tsoom*). It is spelled, *tsadee-vav-mem*. One way of seeing this word pictographically would be *wait, be secured in the midst of flood*.¹

The first usage of *tsum* [fast] is found in Judges 20:26. It is in the midst of a sad and yet inspiring story. Earlier in the passage, there were a group of men who had raped and killed a woman. The tribe of Benjamin refused to deal with these men. The rest of the tribes of Israel understood the great wickedness that had been done, and that according

¹ The letter *tsadee* is the picture of a righteous man – who waits on what only God can do; the letter *vav* fastens, the letter *mem* is a picture of flowing, chaos, or a flooding.

to God's Word, the sin would need to be dealt with or the land would become polluted. The rest of Israel went to inquire of the Lord, to see if He would have them go up in battle against the tribe of Benjamin. Read Judges 20:18-35 and answer the following questions:

In these verses, how many times did the Children of Israel inquire of the Lord?

What was the result of the first two inquires? In the battles that followed, how many of Israel died in the first instance, and then in the second instance?

What was the result of the last inquiry?

After 40,000 killed among their ranks, the Children of Israel approached God in a different way. List the things they did this time.

Can you see that fasting was an expression of "hopelessness"? It does not mean that they were without faith – it means that they basically had tried and realized that they did not have "what it took" to do what had to be done. In this case, their "waiting" and "fasting" show that they understood that this was something that could not be done in their own strength.

The next usage of *tsum* [fast] is found in 1 Samuel 7:6. It is directly tied to godly repentance. Read 1 Samuel 7:1-12 and use the chart that follows to record the similarities and differences between this passage and the previous passage in Judges.

Judges 20:18-35	1 Samuel 7:1-12

In the following passages comment on the circumstances for the word *tsum* [fast]:

2 Samuel 12:13-16:

1 Kings 21:25-29

Nehemiah 1:3-9:

The other way to refer to fasting in Hebrew is the phrase *anah nefesh* (pronounced *aw-naw neh-fesh*). *Nefesh* is the word that is most often used to refer to the spirit of man. It comes from the “breathing” of God that man became a “living soul.” This is the same word. The word *anah* literally means *to humble oneself*. The word *anah* is used to refer to slaves being “afflicted.” It is a powerful and physical word. So to *anah nefesh* is *to physically humble one’s soul*. This phrase is first introduced in Leviticus 16:29 in regard to Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). Yom Kippur is the only “day of fasting” that was mandated.

Read Leviticus 16:29-31 and comment on how the phrase *anah nefesh* [afflict your soul] compares to what you have seen so far regarding fasting:

The Hebrew verb *tsum* is translated into Greek with the word *nesteuo* (pronounced: *nace-tyoo-o*). By the time of Yeshua's ministry on earth, the religious practice of *nesteuo* [fast] was fairly prevalent in some sects of Judaism. The first use of the word *nesteuo* [fast] is found in Matthew 4:2.

Read Matthew 4:1-11 and answer the following questions:

Based upon what you have already learned about the verb “fast,” do you think that Yeshua was fasting to weaken His position in the coming temptation – or to strengthen His position? What is the significance of fasting in this passage?

Read Matthew 6:16-18 and comment on some possible abuses of fasting (compare Luke 18:9-14):

Read Mark 2:18-20 and comment on the certainty of fasting when Yeshua is not physically with us. Why do you think that is?

Read Matthew 17:14-21 and relate this back to the time when Yeshua was preparing to face the Devil in Matthew 4. Also note the need for “intensity” as was seen when we looked at Judges 20:18-35 (the praying was not “enough” – fasting also was needed):

“Fasting” cannot be fully understood until one reads the exhortation in Isaiah 58 regarding fasting. Read Isaiah 58:1-12 and then fill out the charts that follow:

Characteristics of “Vain” Fasting	Characteristics of Righteous Fasting

Results of Righteous Fasting (Verses 8-12)

Beloved, we are in desperate need of the fruit of fasting in our lives. We often find ourselves praying, hearing what appears to be an answer – and yet like the Children of Israel do not see the victory. We need to approach our spiritual battles as Yeshua did – in preparatory praying and fasting.

Fasting when done in the correct manner prepares us so that our battles are not battles of the flesh, but rather we go forward armed with spiritual armor and with weeping. Where we are weak... He is strong!

Now, beloved, to your praying will you commit to fast? Remember though, it is enough to agree – what will you **do**?

Lesson Eleven – Serve

“And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’ Then Yeshua said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God’, and Him only you shall serve.’”
Matthew 4:9-10

““But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.””
Joshua 24:15b

The modern believing community has done an admirable job in making the word “serve” a part of the religious vocabulary – even to the extent of making the connection between devotion to God and service to Him. There has been such an emphasis in believing communities in task-sharing such as various volunteer work etc., that maybe we should take a closer look at this word in order to more finely tune our actions.

As we can see in Matthew 4:9-10, Yeshua points out the connection between “worship” and “service.” We can also see in Joshua chapter twenty-four that there is an issue of choosing involved in the use of the word “serve” – and that choice has extremely tangible results. In other words, “to serve” involves quite a bit more than having merely good thoughts.

The Hebrew word for “serve” is *avad* (pronounced: *aw-vad*). It is spelled *ayin-bet-dalet*. Pictographically, it shows us a concept that you can know a house by watching the door. Doors act as “service outlets and inlets” for a home. Observe who goes in, observe what is carried in, and you will know the house and the occupants.

The principle of “first mention” once again gives us some insight into the importance of this word in the life of the believer. Genesis 2:5 is the place that *avad* is first used. It is translated into English as “till” [*avad*] as in “till the ground.” It is used again in Genesis 2:15. There it is translated as “tend” [or “dress” in KJV], where God put man into the Garden of Eden to “tend” [*avad*] it and keep it. Read Genesis 2:1-15 in light of that information. Notice the focus of the use of the word *avad*.

- ❖ God is at work in His creation
- ❖ God has plans and a purpose in His creation
- ❖ God has power to provide for His creation
- ❖ God created servants to serve [*avad*] His purposes

This account should establish the principle, which is born out through Scripture, that although God has man serve Him and His purposes, God does not need man’s service. What we find especially true in this first use of *avad*, is that there is a definite connection

between the word “serve” and man’s purpose. It is interesting that the first five times the word *avad* is used in Scripture, it is used in a way that reflects God’s purpose in placing man in the Garden of Eden – that is to till or tend it. This presents a wonderful picture of expectancy of harvest. It should be noted that the word *avad* in regard to “tilling” the earth is used twice before man sinned and was driven from the Garden. In Genesis 3:23, we see that God sends man from the Garden, to till ground as well – but this time it was ground that would also yield thorns and the service would be service that produced “sweat”¹. Also notice that in these first instances of this word, the connection that is made between what man was made of and what he was supposed to do. We see a connection between *avad* [serve, till, tend] the ground and the very substance of what man was made – the very ground He tended².

In seeing the connection between the use of the word *avad* and God’s mission for man, it takes us to another important usage of the word. Seven times in the Exodus account the phrase “let My people go, that they may serve [*avad*] Me”³ is used to give the reason why they should be set free from bondage. The Hebrew word *avad* is used in especially powerful way to describe the mission of the tribe of Levi in their service to God in the Tabernacle, etc. – and yet God uses this word to describe what all His chosen people were to do before they were set free. To *avad* [serve] is not only for a select few.

In the chart that follows, outline some of the things that you see in the believing community where you live in regard to serving:

People I See Who Serve	How I See Them Serve

¹ Genesis 3:17-19

² Genesis 3:19

³ Exodus 7:17; 8:1; 8:20; 9:1; 9:13; 10:3; 10:7

Read the following passages and comment on *avad* [serve]:

Exodus 23:24-25:

Deuteronomy 6:13 (this is what Yeshua quoted from in Matthew 4:9-10):

Joshua 24:14-31 (*avad* is used 15 times in this passage):

1 Samuel 12:19-21 (contrast the phrases “go after empty things” and “serve the LORD with all your heart”):

Psalms 100:2 (How?):

Throughout Scripture there is a direct connection between *avad* [serve] and God's commandments to man. To claim to serve God and yet to disregard His instructions is hypocrisy.

“You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the LORD of hosts?’”
Malachi 3:14

What profit is there in serving God? Does Malachi 3:14 have an answer for that?

Does Matthew 5:4 have an answer for that?

Based upon Malachi 3:14 and Matthew 5:4, what connection is there to “serving God” and obeying His ordinances – and what is the profit in them?

Possibly, the greatest picture of the word *avad* is found in a noun that comes from this verb. It is the word *eved*. It means, “servant.” Beloved, *eved* [servant] describes a person who *avad*-s [serves] God, not the other way around. To be known as a “servant [eved] of the Living God,” comes from the fact that one actually serves [avad] God. Let’s look at some people to whom God gives the name, “My servant” [eved]. In the chart that follows, note what these people did (or will do) in relationship to Him calling them His servant.

“My Servant”	Reference	Description
Abraham	Genesis 26:24	
Moses	Numbers 12:7	
Caleb	Numbers 14:24	
David	1 Kings 14:8	
Job	Job 1:8	
Messiah - Yeshua	Isaiah 42:1-4 (cross-reference Matthew 12:18-21)	
Messiah - Yeshua	Isaiah 52:13-15	

Yeshua is the perfect example of the servant. That is to say that His actions and ministry describe for us what *avad* [serve] means. Read Isaiah 52:13 through Isaiah 53:12 and make note of what the Perfect Servant has done and ask yourself if indeed He has called you to follow in His footsteps...

The Greek word used in place of the Hebrew word *avad*, is *latreuo* (Pronounced: lat-ryoo-o). It means a “hired menial.”

Read Luke 2:36-37. The word *latreuo* [serve] is used to describe what Anna did – can you list what she did that is regarded as *latreuo* [serving]?

Hebrews 12:28-29 talks of *latreuo* [serve] – how is it described?

Another word used is *daikoneo* (Pronounced: dee-ak-on-eh-o) – from where we get the word “deacon.” Read Luke 17:7-10 and list what Yeshua’s servants should **do**:

Beloved, serving God is one purpose for which His has made us. We serve Him in a variety of ways, but not the least of which is obeying His commands to us. To serve God is an act of worship.

It is our responsibility to serve God, but beloved it is our great honor as well. One day, those who love God will serve Him forever. Until that day, what will you **do**, to serve God?

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.
Revelation 22:1-4

Are you a servant of God?

Lesson Twelve – Build

“And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’ But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, ‘Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.’ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.” Genesis 11:4-8

***“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...”
Psalm 127:1a***

***“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”
Matthew 7:24***

The word “build” has become very common some believing communities. As an outgrowth of the “church growth” movement of the 1970s and 1980s, “building” has become synonymous with “doing things right.” The current logic follows the business logic which says, “if you build it, they will come.” What can we, as individual believers, learn about our personal responsibilities by studying this word “build”? Certainly, some might think that this word goes with the word “give” which we studied previously.

The Hebrew word for “build” is *banah* (pronounced: *baw-naw*). It is spelled *bet-nun-hay*. The first usage for this word is Genesis 2:22.

***“Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made [*bahah* = build] into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’”
Genesis 2:22-23***

This gives us some insight into God’s view of correct building. Here are some principles that we learn from this introduction to the word *banah* [build].

- ❖ It is God’s work
- ❖ God uses man, His creation, as “building material”
- ❖ What is built comes from inside – it an external representation of what is inside
- ❖ The first “building” was a person – Eve

Beloved, we may need to challenge the idea of “brick and mortar” buildings. Let’s look further into this. Certainly, some might argue that the ancient Hebrews had a Tabernacle and Temple – didn’t God command them to “build” those?

“Go and tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’””
2 Samuel 7:5-7

David’s reasoning was that he was living in a nice cedar house, and yet the place reserved for the Presence of God was a tent, the Tabernacle – this was not a good sign of his love for God, he reasoned. Some people in congregations that participate in the “growth” movement have heard similar logic, “You live in your nice houses and yet we need a nice place for “God’s house.” Yet, God did not command man to build Him a Temple – He commanded a Tabernacle (a temporary tent). Read Exodus 25:8-9 and answer these questions:

What were the people to “make” [*asah* = do]?

What was the purpose for this?

Where did the plans (pattern) come from?

The Hebrew word for “Tabernacle” here is *mish’kan* (pronounced: *mee-sheh-kawn*). It is spelled *mem-shin-kaf-nun sofit*. It is an intriguing word for God to use to name this object that He used as a meeting place. The root verb for *mish’kan* is *sh’kan*. It means *to settle, to abide, to dwell*. The verb *sh’kan* is first used in Genesis 2:4. Here we are told that God caused a cherub with a flaming sword to *sh’kan* to the east of the Garden of Eden to keep [*shamar* = treasure, guard] the way to the Tree of Life. The Hebrew word *sh’kinah* (pronounced: *sheh-kee-naw*) is adapted from the word *sh’kan*. The word *sh’kinah* (as in “shekinah glory”) is not a word used in the Bible, but it is a word used to describe the manifold and dwelling presence of God. It is often used when speaking of Pillar of Cloud and Pillar of Fire that visibly guided the Children of Israel in the Wilderness. The Hebrew pictograph for the word *sh’kan* can further reveal its application to the Tabernacle. Spelled *shin-kaf-nun sofit*, it pictures the consuming fire

of God descending as a dove on Messiah¹. In the word *sh'kan* [settle, abide, dwell], we see the manifestation of God in the Person of Yeshua the Messiah. Now, add the letter *mem* to the word *sh'kan* and you get *mish'kan* [Tabernacle] here. *Mem* represents flowing water. Adding the prefix letter *mem* (the “m” sound) makes a word become animated – to be in a continual flowing state.

In explaining all of this, we could say that the Tabernacle that God commanded them to make [*asah*], would be a **special realm on which the *sh'kinah* glory would constantly rest and point always to Messiah.**

Beloved, the Tabernacle was not a mere “place” of worship – or a meeting “place” It was where Heaven and Earth touched. It was where God manifested His Divine Presence to His people – where they could **see** the Cloud and Pillar above the Holy of Holies.

Let's look at where the pattern for this Tabernacle came from. According to Exodus 25:9; Exodus 25:40; and Exodus 26:30, God showed Moses the pattern on the Mountain (Mt. Sinai). The Tabernacle was to be a scale model of what existed in the Heavenly realm – it was an earthly picture of a heaven reality. The word used for pattern is *tavnit*. Guess what the root verb for *tavnit* [pattern] is – it is our word *banah* [build]! In other words, God “built” the *Mish'kan* [Tabernacle] and commanded the people to do [*asah*] it according to what He had done. And again, what did that Tabernacle represent? The work and person of Yeshua, the Messiah.

Based upon what you have learned about the Tabernacle, comment on John 1:14 (note: the word “dwelt” is “tabernacled” in the KJV):

Now, let's look at some man-initiated building projects. Read Genesis 4:16-18 and answer these questions:

What apparently prompted Cain to build a city?

What did he name the city?

¹ *Shin* pictures the consuming/protecting fire of God; *kaf* pictures an open hand or a descending bird; *nun* pictures “son” and the final form of *nun* (*nun sofit*) pictures the “ultimate Son” – Messiah.

Isn't ironic that the first "building" by God was a person. The first time a man "builds" it is named after a son? It is as if Cain was counterfeiting God's creative work.

Now read Genesis 11:4. What was the purpose for man to desire to build the city and tower at Babel?

Taking the Babel incident, and the account where Cain named his city for his son; it appears there is something to the idea that man-inspired "building" is about "making a name" – about counterfeiting what God did in creating man. How often have we seen that in our modern times?

What are we to do with the word "build" then? Is there an instruction to build in Scripture, and if so what? Let's look into that question.

Read Matthew 7:24-27. Yeshua uses the "built his house upon a rock" analogy for something – what is it?

Read Matthew 16:13-20 and answer these questions:

Who would build **His** *ekklesia* [assembly of called-out ones, congregation]

What would it be built upon (hint: compare Matthew 7:24 with Matthew 16:16):

Read Luke 20:17, Ephesians 2:19-22, and 1 Peter 2:7 and comment on what a God-made building looks like – is it brick and mortar?

Revelation chapter twenty-one describes the “New Jerusalem” – the city of God. It also says in verse twenty-two, **“But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”** Going back to what you learned about the *Mish’kan* [Tabernacle] what do you think that means?

Read Romans 15:20 and comment on what Paul was using as a “building material” – how does that relate back to Matthew 7:4 and Matthew 16:6?

Fill out the chart that follows what you have learned from your discoveries as to what building material we should use:

Reference	Building Material To Be Used
Matthew 7:24-27	
Matthew 16:13-20	
Romans 15:20	
1 Corinthians 3:9-16	

Beloved, we have seen that although many today like to refer to this or that building as “God’s House,” there are serious theological problems with that line of thinking. God does indeed have a dwelling place, but it is not something made with human hands. To

imply that a building that is used for believers to gather is a “dwelling place” for God Almighty is abhorrent.

Beloved, a building is not a congregation [*ekklesia* = assembly of called-out ones], for that matter neither can a man-made, man-ordained, man-organized organization. Only God's people, assembled by Him for His purposes can ever be called *ekklesia* [assembly of called-out ones].

For a correct view of “build” we must remember that it is used as something that **God** does. It is something He does using people as His “bricks and mortar.” As obedient children we should be seen trying to emulate His creative process – but unlike Cain and the people of Babel, we should not seek to counterfeit His work. We should be using God's way to build – the proclamation of the Gospel – to declare the Yeshua is the Messiah – to hear His words... and to **do** them!

When you think of the word “build” how are you now going to move that from the realm of intentions to the realm of reality – and to **do** it?

Here is a reminder:

Building:

- ❖ It is God's work
- ❖ God uses man, His creation, as “building material”
- ❖ What is built comes from inside – it an external representation of what is inside
- ❖ The first “building” was a person
- ❖ The last “building” will be a Person (Revelation 21:22)

Lesson Thirteen – Work

“And God made [worked] the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.”

Genesis 1:7

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work [workmanship] which he had made [worked]; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work [workmanship] which he had made [worked]. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work [workmanship] which God created and made [worked].”

Genesis 2:1-3

Many times the word “works” is treated as a dirty word in believing communities. Normally industrious people are taken aback when the “s” is added to the end of the word “work.” “Works” of course is a plural noun – and we are focusing on verbs – action words. It is interesting that we may have negative feelings about a word in a noun form, and yet in the verb form we may not. The reverse is actually more common. Everyone has good feelings about the word “gift,” and yet the verb “give” has some negative connotations because it implies personal sacrifice. So how does one arrive at the things we call “works” if the actions of “work” are not undertaken? How can the action of “work” be good – and the noun describing those actions be bad (i.e. “works”).

Ephesians 2:9 says, “(saved)... **not of works, lest anyone should boast.**” And then in the next verse says, “... **we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works...**”

James 2:20 says, “...**faith without works is dead...**”

So clearly, we need to understand the relationship between the verb “to work” and the noun “works” – maybe then we can better clarify what James and Ephesians are saying.

As you can see in Genesis 2:1-3 above, the noun “work” can sometimes be confused with the verb “to work.” English does this as well. It really tells much about our perceptions of what “work” is. We use the word as a verb and a noun almost interchangeably, and sometimes in ways even we cannot readily distinguish. When you say you are “going to go to work,” do you mean you are going to go to a **place to do** “work,” or are you going to a **place called** “work”? This presents us with a snapshot of the Western mind – the confusion between **symbolism** versus **substance**, between **thinking** versus **doing**.

For clarity, the Genesis 2:1-3 passage at the beginning of this lesson has the nouns identified with the word “workmanship” (i.e. some **thing** that God made). The verbs (e.g. “made”) are identified with the past tense verb “worked.” Go back and read Genesis 2:1-3 again. It is found at the beginning of this lesson.

The primary Hebrew word used for the verb “to work” in Hebrew is *asah* (pronounced: *aw-saw*). *Asah* is one of the most frequently¹ used verbs in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is often rendered “do” or “made” in English. It is a word that carries some of the same cut-and-dried approach as the English phrase, “just do it!” All the niceties are set aside in the usage of the word *asah*.

The first usage of *asah* [work, do] is found in Genesis 1:7. This first mention of the word tells us much about how we should approach the word, and our responsibility to **doing** it.

verse 6 ***“Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’***^{verse 7} ***And God made [worked] the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.”***

Genesis 1:6-7

God’s creative acts are found in verb form in verses one through six, so why use this “to work” verb here in verse seven? Why didn’t God simply continue to use the previous verbs used to describe His creative actions? Surely there is significance to each of the verbs used to describe what God did in the act of creation². In verse four God “divided” [*bada*] the light from the darkness. In that verse, there is no apparent “divider” between light and darkness. In verse seven, God divided [*bada*] the “firmament” (expanse). Like verse four, this is a creative act that is worthy of a study in itself, but we learn that the action of “dividing” in verse seven is preceded by the “making” of the object that would be used in the dividing later in that verse – namely God “made” [*asah*] the “firmament” (expanse). Our focus here is on the use of the word *asah*. This object that God worked or made here apparently had a **purpose** – that is to serve as a division or separator between “the waters above” and the “waters below.” The creative act of “making” the firmament is the word *asah*. Notice that in verse six He “said” for this “to be” – and then follows it in verse seven with **doing it**.

What are we to make (pun intended) of this account? Even without discovering what this “firmament” was and what the dividing of it means, we can learn some important lessons about “to work” [*asah*] from this account. Let’s go back to our discussion in Lesson Five³ - remember the principles of *tamei* [unclean] and *t’hor* [clean] – of *chol* [profane] and *k’desh* [holy]? Remember, as we discussed, God identified ways for

¹ Used 2633 times in the Hebrew TaNaK (also known as the “Old Testament”)

² In Genesis 1:1-6, the verbs “created”, “hovering/moved”, “said”, “saw”, and “divided” are all creative action words, worthy of a study in themselves – saved for another time!

³ Lesson Five - Teach

determining and hence choosing between things. He gave two particular realms to see distinction:

- ❖ *tamei* vs. *t'hor* [unclean vs. clean]
- ❖ *chol* vs. *k'desh* [profane or common vs. holy or sanctified]

A primary purpose for giving a way to make distinction in these areas was to teach how to **divide** or **separate**⁴. In the realm of *tamei* vs. *t'hor* [unclean vs. clean] we can see specific instructions for God's people to make daily choices in quite common things (e.g. what to eat, what to wear, etc.). Although the word *tamei* is not specifically used in relation to the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the realm is the same (i.e. in something quite common) – what Adam and Eve were to **not eat** as opposed to what they **could eat**. God gave a choice to them in this – and a way to divide (choose) between what would give wholeness (the Tree of Life) and what would bring fragmentation and brokenness (the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil).

God uses the principles of *tamei* vs *t'hor* and also of *chol* vs. *k'desh* to teach us to exercise our “chooser” and to learn to divide and separate between what He desires for us and what we desire for ourselves. That takes us back to Genesis 1:7 – and the use of the word *asah* [make, work, do]. God made [*asah*] something to serve a purpose of separating two things He was dividing. So the word *asah* also serves that purpose for us. When we “work” (or do) we are making something that serves as a divider – a separator between things.

In the following passages, comment on what things *asah* [worked, made, done etc.] divided or distinguished between.

Genesis 3:7 (“made [*asah*] themselves coverings”):

Genesis 3:21 (“God made [*asah*] tunics of skin”):

Genesis 6:14 (“Make [*asah*] yourself an ark”) – specifically what two groups of people were separated or divided by this action?

⁴ One synonym of the word “separate” is to “sanctify” – that is, to set apart (for God's purposes).

Exodus 20:9-10 (“Six days you shall labor and do [*asah*] all your work (workmanship)):

Deuteronomy 4:5-8 (“statutes and judgments... that you should act [*asah*] according to them”; “Therefore be careful [*shamar*=treasure] to observe [*asah*] them”):

Deuteronomy 11:22: (“keep [*shamar*=treasure] all these commandments which I command you to do [*asah*]”):

In the Septuagint⁵, *asah* is translated into Greek as *poieo* (pronounced: *poy-eh-o*). *Poieo* is first used in the Greek Apostolic Scriptures in Matthew 1:24:

“Then Joseph being raised from sleep did [*poieo*] as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.”

You can see that Joseph had a choice – obey, or disobey. His choice constituted a “division” or separation between the two. He was able to distinguish which was the right path and take it.

Can you spot the division that “work” [*poieo*] does in the following passages?

Matthew 7:21 (“...but he who does [*poieo*] the will of My Father in heaven”):

Luke 17:7-10 (“...when you have done [*poieo*] all those things which you are commanded...”):

⁵ The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Hebrew TaNaKh. Translated into Greek in about 280 BCE, its main purpose today is to validate Hebrew and Greek meanings through cross referencing. It is the version quoted in the Apostolic Scriptures.

John 15:14 (“...You are My friends if you do [*poieo*] whatever I command you...”):

Hebrews 13:20-21 (“... complete in every good work to do [*poieo*] His will, working [*poieo*] in you what is well pleasing...”):

There is an important correlation between the words “work” [*asah*, *poieo*] and clothing. As clothing serves not only as a “covering” but also as a “separator” – separating and dividing what is private (or shameful to be displayed) and what is public. Let’s look at some usages of *asah* again in light of that. Make a note on who makes the “clothing” in the following passages – and why the clothing is made:

Genesis 3:7 (“made [*asah*] themselves coverings”):

Genesis 3:21 (“God made [*asah*] tunics of skin”):

Read Zechariah 3:1-7. Joshua named here is the High Priest after the return from the Babylonian Captivity. Joshua, from his perspective was clothed in the “clean” clothing of the High Priest. We are given a spiritual glimpse of the reality. Make note of the truly clean garments. The word for “clean” used here is *t’hor*. Where did they come from, and why were they given to him? (hint: was he acting obediently?)

Now read Revelation 3:4-5, 3:18, and 19:8 and comment on the connection between clothing/garments and the verb “work” [*asah*, or *poieo*]:

Beloved, the action words keep challenging our passive practices. We continue to be challenged to **do** – and not simply **think**.

“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done [poieo], but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Messiah Yeshua our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Titus 3:4-7

What we have been uncovering (pun intended) in these action words is not a method for **achieving** “righteousness” – but rather the responsibility of those who have been **declared** righteous by grace. Righteous works are what the righteous do, because they obey the Righteous One, God Himself. We continue to see that the “works” we work [asah, poieo] are given to us – as a responsibility – and a gift.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Ephesians 2:10

Now beloved, what will you **do** about God's call upon you to work? What distinctions, what choices, what divisions will your actions make?

Lesson Fourteen – Rest

“And on the seventh day God ended His work [workmanship] which He had done [asah], and He rested [shabbat] on the seventh day from all His work [workmanship] which He had done [asah]. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested [shabbat] from all His work [workmanship] which God had created and made [asah].”

Genesis 2:2-3

“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.”

Hebrews 4:9-11

The Western mind knows very little of “rest.” We do “leisure” well – just not rest. Think about the common American vacation – a time to get away from “work.” We understand instinctively that we have a need for a time of refreshment but unfortunately we still have found inadequate substitutes for rest. The average American spends Monday through Friday either “at work,” driving to “work,” or passively sitting in front of a television or computer in the evenings. When Saturday rolls around, they get up and start their weekend projects or yard “work.” If they attend church on Sunday, they get up early and then spend all morning passively listening to someone else “work,” because Sunday is a work day for “the clergy.” Then the average American, once or twice a year, packs up the kids and heads to an area of amusements for a time of vacation, to get away from “work” – rising early and playing all day. Where is the rest in all of that? If there is rest, is it regular? Who needs rest? More importantly, who **must** rest? Very few in the believing community believe that rest is a **duty**, much less a **privilege**.

The fact that God rested can tell us much about rest. Unlike what we have been taught, rest is not simply a cessation of “work.” In Lesson Thirteen, we learned that “work” is not simply busy -ness, and so it stands to reason that rest is not simply a cessation of activity.

The English word “rest” is translated from the Hebrew word *shabbat* (pronounced: *shaw-bawf*). It is spelled *shin-bet-tav*. Pictographically, *shabbat* gives us a picture of the consuming presence of God placed upon a house as a covenant sign.

Shabbat is first used in Genesis 2:2. From it we see some important points:

- ❖ Most importantly, we can see that God rested – but clearly not because He was tired.
- ❖ God rested the seventh day – following six days of “working.”
- ❖ The reason He blessed the seventh day was because He rested on that day.
- ❖ The meaning for *shabbat* is “rest,” or “cease” – and what He ceased from was “work.”

So from those we can begin to understand rest:

- ❖ It is not resultant – “work” does not necessarily result in a need for rest.
- ❖ It is not earned.
- ❖ It announces the completion of “work” – and thus the cessation of “work.”
- ❖ Rest is so important, that God set aside one seventh of time for it – and bestowed a blessing on the seventh day because it commemorated His resting on the seventh day following six days of creation.

The last point cannot be overestimated. What other day in that first week was set aside and “sanctified”? When one considers the entire work of creation and all that God made, Genesis 2:2-3 indicates that the most important “day of creation” was the day in which God rested. Read that again, because it is the foundation for understanding rest in all of Scripture. There are mysteries (being revealed) bound up in the word “rest.”

Read Exodus 16:15-31 and answer the following questions:

How was the manna made available? Who provided it, and who gathered it?

How long did the manna last on most days?

What happened to the manna when it was kept too long?

How long did the manna last when it was gathered on the sixth day?

Where did the manna for eating on the seventh day come from?

What did the people “rest” from on the seventh day?

Every time you read the word “sabbath” in your English Bible you are reading the word *shabbat*, or “rest.” Now you can understand why it would be almost redundant for an Israelite living in ancient times to say, “the Sabbath is a day of rest” - e.g. “*shabbat* is a day of *shabbat*.” Note the interchangeableness of the noun “*Shabbat*” [Sabbath day] and the verb *shabbat* [rest].

Now read Exodus 31:12-17 and answer the following questions:

In verse thirteen, what is the purpose for the *Shabbat* [Sabbath day]?

What is it a sign for – in other words, what does it symbolize or point to?

How long was this sign to be in effect?

Can you see a connection between the Hebraic pictograph for *shabbat* (*shin-bet-tav*, or the consuming presence of God placed upon a house for a covenant sign) and this passage?

In verse seventeen, God connects the *Shabbat* day with the fact that He rested [*shabbat*] on the seventh day of creation – but now we are told what apparent “benefit” He had on that particular *Shabbat* day – what was it?

The Hebrew word for “refreshed” (e.g. God *shabbat*-ed and was refreshed) is *nafash*. It is the root verb for *nefesh* which is often translated “living soul.” We see this when God breathed into Adam and he became a *nefesh* [living soul]. From this we can see an outcome of true rest [*shabbat*] is to be refreshed, or “God-breathed” – or the inhaling of what God “exhales.”

Read Leviticus 23:3 and comment on the place the Sabbath day [*Shabbat*] was to be taken:

In the space that follows, list areas where you need rest. They can be physical, emotional, or spiritual areas. Be honest.

Areas In Which I Need Rest

Beloved, we have been examining the verb *shabbat* [rest], but because there is so much misinformation regarding the noun form of this word, we need to discuss its use for a moment. The noun *Shabbat* [Sabbath day] of course refers to the seventh day on which God *shabbat*-ed [rested]. For various reasons which have little to do with truth, many have been taught that Yeshua “broke the “Sabbath laws” and criticized the Pharisees for “keeping the Sabbath”. Nothing could be further from the truth, and anyone who espouses such a position needs to reexamine exactly Who Yeshua was and is. Yeshua, as the perfect sacrifice, was to be without spot – as determined by the Law of God – given at Mt. Sinai. To be “without spot” meant that He had to be blameless in all counts. It is clear that Yeshua did indeed take some of the Pharisees to task over what they were doing – but with regard to the Sabbath laws, He criticized them for some their traditions which had annulled God’s Law. Yeshua never “broke” the Sabbath. No, instead Yeshua says in Matthew 5:18-19:

“For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Surely, Yeshua is the Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, so He is clearly not One who taught men to break the commandments!

Some have in the past tried to redefine Sunday as the “Christian Sabbath.” There is absolutely no Scriptural authority for this. Regardless of how you feel about the applicability the Fourth Commandment¹, there is no justification for “moving” the *Shabbat* to the first day of the week. Even for the first hundred years following Yeshua’s resurrection, believers did not move the day of *Shabbat* to Sunday. It was not until 364 CE that the council at Laodicea formally declared that the seventh day should no longer be a day of “rest.” We might imagine God’s response to that might be (to paraphrase), “Oh, really?! Who said you could do that?”

In the Septuagint², the verb *shabbat* [rest] is translated into the Greek word *katapauo* (pronounced: *kat-ap-ow-o*). It is used most often in the Book of Hebrews.

At the end of Hebrews chapter three a discussion of rest is introduced. The prophetic nature of the word “rest” is revealed in the text. Let us spend some time examining this passage.

Hebrews chapter three and four connect rest with believing. In the next lesson we will be looking at the word “believe,” so we will try keep our focus on the word “rest” in this passage. In this passage, the noun form of *katapauo* [rest] is used in a way that is similar to the way the Hebrew uses the word *shabbat* as a verb and a noun. To help you connect the relationship between the verb and noun, whenever *katapauo* is used in verb or noun form, the word *shabbat* has been substituted.

This passage uses the example of the Israelites in the wilderness as an example and exhortation for us to *shabbat* [rest]:

“While it is said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.’ For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His shabbat [rest], but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”
Hebrews 3:15-19

Because you have begun to think and do Hebraically, you can probably see some Hebraic things in this passage even though it was written originally in Greek. The connection is seen between hearing, obeying, and believing. Introduced into this progression is a destination – a place, described as “His *shabbat* [rest].” Who could and who could not enter this place, “God’s *shabbat* [rest]”?

¹ Genesis 20:8-10: “Remember the Sabbath [*Shabbat*] day [*yom*], to keep it holy [sanctified]. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath [*Shabbat*] of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.”

² The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Hebrew TaNaKh. Translated into Greek in about 280 BCE, its main purpose today is to validate Hebrew and Greek meanings through cross referencing. It is the version quoted in the Apostolic Scriptures.

Read Hebrews 4:8: Was the “Promised Land” truly rest?

“There remains therefore a shabbat [rest] for the people of God. For he who has entered His shabbat [rest] has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that shabbat [rest], lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.”
Hebrews 4:9-11

From this we can see the correlation between *shabbat*, and the ceasing from our own work. As well, an interesting dichotomy – the encouragement to “be diligent” to enter “*shabbat*.” Does all of this begin to lead you to an understanding that *shabbat* is maybe not best described as a time (noun), or state (noun) but something we **do** to enter a **place**? Could we call *shabbat* [rest] a place?

In the Book of Ezekiel, God gave the prophet Ezekiel a vision of a Temple that is yet to be built in Jerusalem. Many scholars agree that this “Fourth Temple” is something that will be built in the Millennial reign of Yeshua as King and Messiah. Regardless, a very interesting aspect of this Temple is found in the Book of Ezekiel. Understanding that the word “Sabbath” [*Shabbat*] used here is a noun identifying the seventh day of *Shabbat* [rest], read Ezekiel 46:1-3 and answer the following questions:

When was the door to the inner court closed, and was anyone allowed to enter during those times?

When was the door to the inner court opened – and for what purpose?

It is with great irony that the Western mind contemplates “doing” rest [*shabbat*]. Isn't “rest” the opposite of “doing”? The answer, beloved, is found in all of these pictures we have been looking at. What we have seen so far:

- ❖ The first mention of *shabbat* [rest] in verb form is when God rested on the seventh day

- ❖ *Shabbat* in noun form refers to a time – namely the seventh day of the week
- ❖ *Shabbat* in noun form refers to a place or state where we cease our own work
- ❖ *Shabbat* in noun form refers to a time – namely on the seventh day of the week when the “Fourth Temple” has a door open (*shabbat* and new moon)

So, from these we can see, *shabbat* is something to be done, a place to enter into, and a state where we cease from our own work. This is where we come in... how do we do it? We know it is something that can be yet future for us. We saw the correlation to the “Promised Land” and can thereby know that it is something yet promised to us when we will cease from our own work and enjoy Yeshua forever. Yet are we then called to rest now as a memorial to that yet future experience? This explains what we have seen as the prophetic nature of *shabbat* [rest] – when we *shabbat* [rest] we are proclaiming (prophesying) as to the yet future state and place of *shabbat* [rest] when we spend eternity with Yeshua our Messiah. When we *shabbat* [rest] we find ourselves in a place, a realm where this world and the next touch as the Tabernacle and Temple served as place where heaven and earth touched. It is a place and a time where the dimensions of this world are blurred and where time and distance are indistinguishable.

Beloved, remember when God gave the *Shabbat* [rest day], He said that it would serve as a sign that He was the One Who “sanctified” us. In other words, it is a prophetic picture of the fact that although we “do” what He commands – it is He Who truly works all of this out for us, and it is He Who cloaks us with His righteousness.

Shabbat is a gift from a loving Father, given to us to delight in His work and not our own – to delight ourselves in His presence. Remember, do not simply agree - let us all do *shabbat*!

“If you turn away your foot from the Shabbat, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Shabbat a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Isaiah 58:13-14

Lesson Fifteen – Believe

**“And he (Abram) *believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness*”
Genesis 15:6**

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 have now come full circle. We are back to the issue introduced at the beginning of this study – namely, what does “faith” have to do with “works,” or **doing**? As you have seen through our study of action words, there are elements of “faith” associated with them, but we have not yet connected the verb “believe” with the noun “faith.” Like the word “rest,” there is a dichotomy in the Western mindset between the verb and noun usage of “believe.” Faith, after all is the opposite of doing, isn’t it? Or is it? Some have rightly taught that “salvation” is not about “our doing” – but about God’s doing. Therein lies the problem, beloved – we are not talking about “salvation” so much in these action words – rather, we are talking about the visible outgrowth of those who have “passed from death unto life.”

It is our Western minds that embrace the noun “faith” and yet tend to de-emphasize the verb “believe.” Some, have encouraged doubters to “have more faith” – which is much like telling a drowning man to “have a life preserver.” Why not tell a doubter to “believe”? Better yet, why not throw them a “life preserver”?

Beloved, we need to understand this word “believe” – as God has revealed in Scripture – and we need to understand that it is a verb. It is something we **do!**

The Hebrew word “believe” is *aman* (pronounced: *aw-mawn*). It is where we get our English word “amen.” It is spelled *alef-mem-nun sofit*. The Hebrew word *aman* means *verify, establish, confirm, or to cause to be nourished*. It carries with it a definite certainty – or 100% “probability.” This is not merely a mental exercise! Let us pursue the “*to cause to be nourished*” definition¹. In the same vein it can mean **to be carried by a nurse**. God appeared to Abram in Genesis 17:1 as “God Almighty” – which in Hebrew is *El Shaddai*. The word *Shaddai* comes from the word *shad* which typifies **a nursing mother** – protecting ferociously, and nurturing lovingly.

This understanding makes the first mention of the word *aman* quite profound, because it is before where God reveals Himself as *El Shaddai* in Genesis chapter seventeen. The first mention of *aman* is found in Genesis 15:6. This verse is one of the foundations of

¹ The “hiphil” form of a Hebrew verb usually expresses “causative” action – thus the hiphil form of *aman* showing a relationship between the one who is being nourished or nurtured (Abram) and the One who is nourishing and nurturing (God Almighty) – similar to a baby’s cry being causative for the mother to feed it.

biblical soterology². To get a fuller grasp of what this verse is teaching about *aman* [believe], read Genesis 15:1-5 and answer the following questions:

What was Abram's response to God's declaration of finding favor with Abram?

Why did Abram want something to show for the fact that God said He was Abram's shield and exceeding great reward? Was He saying God was not enough?

What did God offer as "proof" of His favor toward Abram?

Was Abram promised something he could accomplish himself?

The best commentary on Scripture is Scripture itself. To best understand what Genesis 15:6 is saying let's see what Romans 4:1-5 says about this passage.

Read Romans 4:1-5. Does the use of the word "believe" here sound like a mental exercise?

Now read Galatians 3:5-9. Note that this account in Genesis is described as preaching the "gospel" to Abraham. Abraham is called "believing Abraham" – could you be called "believing [your name]"?

² System, doctrine, or teaching of salvation

Now think how a suckling child “believes” [*aman*] in his mother. Can that child provide for itself? Can it sustain itself? Can it protect itself? Does it **do** something in finding nourishment? Does the suckling action **earn** it nourishment and preservation? Does not the breast of the mother promise sustenance – providing what is needed for the child? What we see in Genesis 15:6, is Abram, in effect “rooting” as a newborn instinctively searches for what it needs for sustenance. Can you hear Yeshua’s words in Mark 10:15, “**whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it**” – now beloved, you are thinking Hebraically!

A key verse in Scripture on this is Habakkuk 2:4, where it says, “**Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.**” Here the noun form of *aman* [believe] is used – *emunah* [faith].

The Greek word used for *aman* [believe] is *pisteuo* (pronounced: *pist-yoo-o*). As you may well know, this word is used many times in the Book of Hebrews in chapter eleven. Many have said the definition for “faith” is found in Hebrews 11:1, “**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.,**” but maybe a better definition is found later in the passage – because it uses the verb **believe**:

“But without faith [*pistis*] it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe [*pisteuo*] that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”
Hebrews 11:6

Now, read this again:

“After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”
Genesis 15:1

“And he (Abram) believed [*aman*] in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness”
Genesis 15:6

Comment on the relationship between Hebrews 11:6 and Genesis 15:1, 6):

It is true that the noun form of believe [*pisteuo*] is used quite often in Hebrews chapter eleven, however do not let that fool you into thinking that “faith” or “believing” is passive.

Let's look through this "Hall of Believers" – in the chart that follows, make note of the actions that **follow** the "by faith" phrase (Abel is already done for you):

Hebrews Chapter Eleven Hall of Believers		
By Faith...	Did...	Reward...
Abel	Offered a more excellent sacrifice	A witness of righteousness – God testified to his gifts
Enoch		
Noah		
Abraham		
Sarah		
Isaac		
Jacob		
Joseph		
Moses		

Can you begin to see that to “believe” is not a passive thing, but something that motivates actions that surely follow?

In Ephesians 2:8-10, we see an odd relationship between “faith” and “works” – at least it is odd to our Western mindset. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and answer these questions:

How are we saved? Specifically note the progression:

What was the purpose of faith?

What was a purpose for salvation?

Now read James 2:14-26 and comment on how you think Ephesians 2:8-10 correlates to James 2:14-26:

Think about what you have seen so far with regard to the word “believe.” You have seen the Hebraic picture of a nursing child, and the principle that deeds follow true belief? Now comment on the following Scripture passages:

“Then Yeshua said to those Jews who believed [pisteuo] Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed’” John 8:31:

But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, In your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Yeshua and believe [pisteuo] in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes [pisteuo] unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:8-11:

The phrase “***The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart***” in Roman 10:8 comes from Deuteronomy. Here is the phrase in full context:

“For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do [asah] it.”

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Remembering the context of Deuteronomy 30:11-14, go back and read Romans 10:8-11 again. Now, do you think it is possible to “believe in your heart” that Yeshua was raised from the dead and yet not have actions and deeds that would follow as a result of that belief?

Beloved, we have seen throughout these weeks the results of “believing in” the Lord Yeshua. Some might arrive at a conclusion that all our discussions are about “works” as if those action words have redemptive value in and of themselves. That would be a shame – because nothing could be further from the truth. We need to reaffirm that our relationship with God compels us to act as servants, in constant and active service to our God. He expects active participation – indeed, He has ordained it and created us for it. The verbs were created for us by God – for us to **do**.

One way to look at “believing” is this: Imagine a man who sets up a tight rope to walk across Niagara Falls. A crowd gathers to watch and he crosses over to the other side and then back again, while pushing a wheel barrow. He then asks those who have watched in amazement, “Do you believe that I can cross the Falls?” To which the crowd, to a person, shouts back, “We believe!” The man then asks, “Who then will get into the wheel barrow and experience it?”

“Believing” is not thinking or agreeing with facts. “Believing” places one completely in the care of the One “believed in”... and that takes more than nice thoughts, or correct “doctrine.”

In reality, within the one verb “believe” [*aman*] we have summed up all the other action words. They flow from *aman* – we act in “**believing**” and the supernatural result is a harvest of these things we **do**. The beauty of God’s work in our lives is that, as we act out these things, He rewards us with more faith to be exercised. Faith and the exercise of it in “believing” is increased by *sh’ma*-ing [hearing/obeying].

We have seen that all this “doing” is tied up in a relationship – the relationship between God and ourselves. We have seen that “**doing**” does not establish that relationship, but it permits us to enjoy the relationship. We have also seen that our actions in fact prove out whether a relationship between God and ourselves even exists.

Now, what will you **do** about what you have learned? You know that thinking is not the same as believing.

You know that it is not about what you think – it is about what you believe...

You know that it is not about what you think – it is about what you do...

What will you **do**?