



# SAMUEL

## **SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH**

# SENIOR SCHOLAR SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY

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## SENIOR SCHOLAR SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY

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## THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

## THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

## THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

*AME Discipline*

# OVERVIEW

## SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH

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OBLIGATIONS TO  
NEIGHBORS

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# Recognizing Our Debt to Others

**LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Nehemiah 4:15-23; Mark 12:28-34; Romans 15:1-7; Philippians 2:1-8; Colossians 3:12; 4:1; James 2:14-17

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE:** Mark 12:28-34; James 2:14-17

**KEY VERSE:** [The scribe said to Jesus,] “. . . ‘to love [God] with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Mark 12:33

## WORDS TO KNOW

**SCRIBES** – *they interpreted and taught the law but also added oral traditions that sometimes made it difficult to understand its original meaning (Matthew 23)*

**COMMANDMENT** – *it is a divine directive that expresses God’s will and moral expectations for humanity. They are expressions of the covenant between God and God’s people, guiding how to live in harmony with God and with others.*

**LOVE** – *expressions of the covenant between God and God’s people, guiding how to live in harmony with God and with others*

**FAITH** – *to believe in God and express it through works of love and obedience*

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE: MARK 12:28-34; JAMES 2:14-17**

**MARK 12:28-34**

- 28** One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?”
- 29** Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;
- 30** you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’
- 31** The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”
- 32** Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’;
- 33** and ‘to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”
- 34** When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

**JAMES 2:14-17**

- 14** What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Surely that faith cannot save, can it?
- 15** If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food
- 16** and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?
- 17** So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

## INTRODUCTION

The spring quarter examines the social issues that faithful Christians faced in the early church and provides opportunities to reflect on how the church applies Christ's teachings to these issues today. The five lessons of Unit I challenge us to work together toward common goals in the home, community, and relationships, both local and global, based on mutual love and respect. Our responsibility to and for one another includes caring for our own physical health, serving one another as we serve Christ, understanding the God-given diversity among the world's people, and encouraging one another in love toward lasting peace.

Social media heavily influences our relationships. Some relationships are sincere and positive; they can lead to long-term bonds, all while navigating constant messages on social media that seek to distract us from maintaining our closest relationships. Our focus must be loving God and all others.

In today's lesson, we are exploring the importance of having faith in God and demonstrating our love by serving others.

*Why is it vital that we treat others with love and respect? What can destroy relationships within our families? Is it possible to restore the relationships? How can we fix those relationships?*

## BIBLE STORY

The Gospel of Mark was the first of the four Gospels written. Mark wrote to prove beyond a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah. He presented the person, work, and teachings of Jesus to the Roman Christians to encourage them in their faith. Mark presents a rapid succession of pictures that show Jesus in action. He believed that Jesus' true identity is revealed by what he does, not by what he says (18 miracles are described, and four parables are told).

In our scripture, Mark records a conversation between a religious leader and Jesus. The scribe questioned Jesus about the greatest commandment (12:28). His response could have

caused controversy with the religious leaders, but Jesus' answer summarized all of God's laws. God is to be first in our affection, our neighbor second (12:29–31). If we love God completely and love others as we love ourselves, we will fulfill all the commandments (Deut. 6:4; Lev. 19:18).

The scribe fully understood the intent of God's law. Faithful obedience comes from the heart. Love of God and love of others are more important than sacrifices at the temple, from which the scribe derived his living. Moreover, our faith should propel us to do good works for God and others.

James, Jesus' brother and a leader in the Jerusalem church, wrote about proper Christian behavior. He draws attention to faith, resulting in good works (2:14–17). True faith transforms our conduct and thoughts. Our lives should reflect to the world that we are Christians. If we remain unchanged after professing faith in Christ, we do not honestly believe in the truth of God's Word and the resurrection of Jesus. Our works cannot save us. However, serving and obeying God through good works demonstrates our genuine humility and commitment to imitating Christ (Phil. 2:1–8).

*Why do you think the scribe failed to trust in Christ? Why is it hard to love God and others? What do we need to sacrifice? How does sacrificial love for others reflect Christ's behavior?*

## SANKOFA

### *Charles Frederick McDew (1938 – 2018)*

Charles Frederick McDew was a civil rights and community activist, teacher, labor organizer, and one of the founding members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), where he worked towards increasing black voter registration and racial desegregation. McDew was born on June 23, 1938, in Massillon, Ohio, to Eva McDew, a nurse, and James McDew, a chemistry teacher turned steel mill worker. He had four siblings: Mark, Eric, Randy, and Brenda.

McDew expressed an interest in helping people from an early

age. In the eighth grade, he protested against the violation of the religious freedom of Amish students in his hometown. In 1959, McDew wanted to attend the University of Michigan, where he planned to play football, but was persuaded by his parents to attend South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, as his father had done before him. Things were going well in his first semester until he was on his way back to school after Thanksgiving. While driving back, he was stopped by a police officer. The two got into a fight, resulting in McDew's going to jail with a broken arm and jaw. When he was released, McDew attempted to board a train. He was told that the black car was full, and he would have to sit in the baggage car. He refused and was sent to jail again. Making his way back to Orangeburg after his release, he took a shortcut through a park that was designated "whites only" and was arrested for the third time in two days.

After these incidents, McDew planned to leave the South. It was around this time (1960) that student-led sit-ins began in neighboring North Carolina, and South Carolina State students started the Orangeburg Movement for Civic Improvement (OMCI). Word had gotten around about McDew's reluctance to conform to Jim Crow laws, and the group asked him to be its spokesperson.

In 1960, McDew and other student activists met at a Youth Leadership Conference at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. This meeting led to the formation of SNCC, after which McDew dropped out of school to work with the new group. He was chairman of SNCC from 1961 to 1964, and he championed black voter registration as a means to curb white supremacist influence in the government. In 1964, the group's work led to the Mississippi Freedom Summer, an effort to increase black voter registration in the state, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, a coalition of black and white individuals who challenged Mississippi's then-exclusively white Democratic Party.

After his time as SNCC chairman, McDew returned to college to earn his bachelor's degree from Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois. He then became a teacher, labor organizer, manager of anti-poverty programs, and community organizer. As late as

2017, McDew taught African American history and classes on the civil rights movement at Metropolitan State University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Charles McDew died on April 3, 2018, in West Newton, Massachusetts, at the age of 79. He is survived by his daughter, Eva, and his partner, Beryl Gilfix.

How did Charles McDew demonstrate love for others in his youth and later in life?

Sources: *Fragie*, T. 2018, November 01. Charles Frederick McDew (1938-2018). BlackPast.org. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/mcdew-charles-frederick-1938-2018/>  
 Sam Roberts, "Charles McDew, 79, Tactician for Student Civil Rights Group, Dies." *The New York Times*. April 13, 2018; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/obituaries/charles-mcdew-79-tactician-for-student-civil-rights-group-dies.html>  
 "CHUCK MCDEW" SNCC Digital Gateway. SNCC Legacy Project and Duke University, <https://snccdigital.org/people/chuck-mcdew/>; "Teacher, Organizer, Activist CHARLES 'Chuck' F. MCDEW." Charles McDew, <https://charlesmcdew.com/about/index.html>.

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

In the worship services of the AME Church, we recite the Decalogue. The Decalogue is the Ten Commandments. If the whole Decalogue is not recited, we do a Summary of the Decalogue, which comes from Mark 12:30–31a. Why is it essential to recite and internalize the meaning of the Decalogue?



View this YouTube Video:

*What It Means to "Love" God  
(With All Your Heart, Soul, and Strength)*

Reflect on the verse, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." It implies we are to love ourselves as well as others. Discuss: What does self-love look like versus self-hate? Why do some people

hate others without reason? Who are our neighbors?

## SUMMARY

God is calling us to surrender ourselves totally to him. God wants us to show our love for God by serving others. Our faith requires action. If we have faith but no works, it cancels out our confession of faith. Jesus loves us and showed that love by sacrificing his life for us. How can we love and serve others? Watch this short video that shows youth serving others. Then, create a plan to put your faith into action.

Youth Serving Others:



## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

**Prayer:** *God, I love you. I surrender all of myself to you. May my service for others be done in a way that makes them feel loved. Amen.*

Hymn: "I Am Thine, O Lord"  
(AMEC Hymnal #283)

# Keeping Fit for the Sake of Others

**LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Daniel 1:8-20; 1 Corinthians 9:19-27; 1 Timothy 4:7-12; 2 Timothy 2:1-5

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE:** Daniel 1:8-17; 1 Timothy 4:7-8

**KEY VERSES:** Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7b-8

## WORDS TO KNOW

**RESOLVED** – *determined or firm in purpose*

**DEFILE** – *to pollute, make unclean*

**RATIONS** – *a controlled or limited amount of something, especially food*

**HANANIAH** – *pronounced: han-uh-NAI-uh*

**MISHAEL** – *pronounced: MEE-sha-el*

**AZARIAH** – *pronounced: AZ-uh-rye-uh*

**GODLINESS** – *a deep respect and awe for God's holiness, leading to a lifestyle that honors God through obedience, worship, and righteous living*

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: DANIEL 1:8-17; 1 TIMOTHY 4:7-8***DANIEL 1:8-17**

- 8** But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine, so he asked the palace master to allow him not to defile himself.
- 9** Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion from the palace master.
- 10** The palace master said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king; he has appointed your food and your drink. If he should see you in poorer condition than the other young men of your age, you would endanger my head with the king."
- 11** Then Daniel asked the guard whom the palace master had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:
- 12** "Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink.
- 13** You can then compare our appearance with the appearance of the young men who eat the royal rations and deal with your servants according to what you observe."
- 14** So he agreed to this proposal and tested them for ten days.
- 15** At the end of ten days it was observed that they appeared better and fatter than all the young men who had been eating the royal rations.
- 16** So the guard continued to withdraw their royal rations and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables.
- 17** To these four young men God gave knowledge and skill in every aspect of literature and wisdom; Daniel also had insight into all visions and dreams.

**1 TIMOTHY 4:7-8**

- 7** Have nothing to do with profane and foolish tales. Train yourself in godliness,
- 8** for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

## INTRODUCTION

Within the last 24 hours, what have you eaten? If possible, look up the calories for each item on your phone and record them. Add up the calories for your food. The average daily calorie intake for a person is approximately 2,000. However, some individuals may require additional support due to other factors. If you are eating unhealthy food, the calories will be high and offer little nutritional value. You are at risk for obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems, and more. God desires us to practice self-care through regular exercise and a balanced diet. We need healthy bodies to do the work God has called us to do.

In today's lesson, we will explore the interconnection between physical and spiritual health.

*Why do we often feel low energy during the day? How can we fix this issue?*

## BIBLE STORY

God often warns us about our sin. If we continue to disobey God, the wrath of God shall come upon us. The Israelites can confirm this fact. The Israelites rejected every message God sent through the prophets. They continued to violate God's commands and practice idolatry. Therefore, God allowed them to be taken captive when the Babylonians conquered Judah. Daniel and all of God's people were taken to live in a strange land called Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C.

Daniel remained faithful to God even in a strange land. In the first chapter, we discover that Daniel and his three friends were among those chosen to work for the king (1:3-7). He held a high position in the government of Babylon due to his ability to interpret the king's dreams, which foretold God's plans. He firmly decided not to take the food and wine given as daily rations. The food may have contained meat that was forbidden by Jewish law, like pork (Leviticus 11). Alternatively, Daniel did not want to take food from the king and become dependent on him.

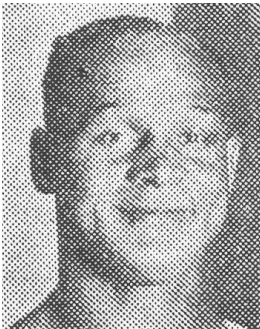
Daniel and his friends asked to be tested for ten days of eating vegetables and water (1:12). God gave him the favor to take this action. After ten days, Daniel and his three friends appeared healthier than the men who had eaten the food rations (1:15). Afterwards, the guard continued to serve them vegetables and water. God honored their faithfulness by giving them knowledge and wisdom. However, Daniel was also given the ability to interpret visions and dreams.

Healthy eating has benefits, but God also calls us to be spiritually healthy. In 1 Timothy, Paul urges Timothy as well as all believers to “train yourself in godliness” (4:7–8). We are called to discipline ourselves to read and study the Word, pray, worship, fast, and more. This enables us to grow spiritually. If we practice daily physical and spiritual discipline, God can use us to do great work for his kingdom.

*Why did Daniel resolve not to eat the daily rations provided? How can vegetables and water be beneficial to our health? How can we ensure that we consistently practice spiritual discipline and godliness?*

## SANKOFA

*Samuel L. Robinson (1896-1964?)*



Samuel L. Robinson was born in Kansas in 1896. He arrived in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in his teens, where he attended the city’s integrated high school. He joined the school’s football team and became a close friend of the team captain and the future sports editor of the *Press-Union* newspaper, Lou Greenberg. After serving in World War I, Robinson returned home to Atlantic City and pursued a career as a professional boxer. He earned his nickname “Smiling Sammy” because of his seemingly perpetual good mood. He was deeply religious, preaching an ethos of hard work and faith in God to anyone who would listen.

In 1928, Robinson entered the first footrace across America, run from Los Angeles to New York City in eighty-four days. The press nicknamed the race a “bunion derby.” Sammy had no experience as a distance runner, but he was a superbly trained and gifted athlete. His old friend Lou Greenberg gave him a check for \$300 for training expenses and promised \$50 for each state he crossed. Robinson joined four African Americans who entered the race out of a field of 199 “bunioneers.”

The first 2,400 miles of the 3,400-mile course followed Route 66 across the Mojave Desert, the high country of Arizona and New Mexico, the Texas panhandle, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Illinois to its end in Chicago. In addition to the challenge of running daily ultramarathons, the black runners had the added burden of running across the Jim Crow South. Starting in Texas, the three remaining black runners (Edward Gardner, Toby Joseph Cotton, Jr., and Robinson) faced a daily barrage of death threats and racial slurs from whites outraged by the sight of blacks beating white competitors.

Despite the abuse, Robinson kept going. Along the way, he earned the thanks and support of thousands of blacks who saw him run across Route 66. In Chandler, Oklahoma, he spoke to a packed house of four hundred hero-worshiping students at the Douglass School. He told them: “Do not smoke, do not chew, and do not use strong drink . . . If you want to be at your best, lead clean, wholesome lives.” A reporter from the *Black Dispatch* said, “Sammy has a way that really gets over with a crowd.”

He finished forty-fifth out of fifty-five finishers. Despite his standing, the citizens of Atlantic City gave him a heartfelt welcome when he stepped off the train from New York City. A sea of people swept aside a security detail and surged onto the platform to greet him. One large man plucked him from the crowd and carried him to the waiting car of the city’s mayor, who paraded Sammy through the streets to a welcoming ceremony at the Ambassador Hotel.

Sammy Robinson apparently died in 1964. He should always be remembered for his historic run across America. He risked his

life to compete in the Bunion Derby and became a symbol of hope and pride for black America.

*How did Robinson's faith and athleticism enable him to achieve significant accomplishments?*

Sources: Kastner, C. 2007, October 10. Samuel L. Robinson (1896-1964?). BlackPast.org. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/robinson-samuel-l-1896-1964/>  
Charles B. Kastner, *Bunion Derby: The First Footrace Across America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007); "10,000 Roar Welcome to Smiling Sammy," *Afro-American*, 2 June 1928; "Bunion Runners Disrupt Lincoln County Track Meet," *Black Dispatch*, 19 Apr. 1928.

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

Discuss the steps to achieve both physical and spiritual health.

Reflect on the advantages of being physically healthy and jot down a few ideas. Then, consider the benefits of spiritual health and list a few ideas.

Benefits of Being Physically Healthy:	Benefits of Being Spiritually Healthy:

For an example of someone who balances spiritual and physical health, research information on Deion Sanders. The link for one article is posted:

*Deion Sanders Tried Everything, but Only Jesus Satisfied:*



## SUMMARY

Daniel and his friends honored God by following a strict diet of vegetables and water. They were healthier than those who ate the ordinary rations. There must be a balance between the physical and spiritual. This allows us to be used by God most effectively. It demonstrates love for God and others.

*What steps can you take this week to enhance your physical and spiritual well-being? How can you encourage others to do the same?*

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

**Prayer:** *God, help me make changes so my body and spirit are fit for kingdom work. Amen.*

Hymn: "Take Up Thy Cross"  
(AMEC Hymnal #294)

# Helping Neighbors in Need

**LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Deuteronomy 15:1-11; Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 10:25-37; James 1:27; 2:14-17  
**Focus Scripture:** Deuteronomy 15:4-11; Matthew 25:42-45

**KEY VERSE:** “Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, ‘Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.’” Deuteronomy 15:11

## WORDS TO KNOW

**REMISSION** – to pardon, forgive debts

**HOSTILITY** – aggressive behavior or unfriendly attitudes; opposition or resistance

**UNGRUDGING** – given or done freely without reluctance or resentment

**LIBERALLY** – in a generous or open-handed manner; without strict limitation

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: DEUTERONOMY 15:4-11; MATTHEW 25:42-45*

### DEUTERONOMY 15:4-11

- 4 “There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the Lord is sure to bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession to occupy,
- 5 if only you will obey the Lord your God by diligently observing this entire commandment that I command you today.
- 6 When the Lord your God has blessed you, as he promised you, you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.
- 7 If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor.
- 8 You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be.
- 9 Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, ‘The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,’ and therefore view your needy neighbor with hostility and give nothing; your neighbor might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt.
- 10 Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake.
- 11 Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, ‘Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.’”

### MATTHEW 25:42-45

- 42 “...for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,
- 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’
- 44 Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?’
- 45 Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”

## INTRODUCTION

Every day, we encounter people who are in need. We all have that friend who constantly needs to borrow money and expects us to financially support them. Family members want to borrow our clothes. In school, someone always needs paper, pens, or to see our class notes. Some people are homeless and beg for money. Junk mail comes that shows a sick child, an abandoned animal, or hungry people, all to influence us to send money to support their foundation.

How can we know who really needs help? It can be very overwhelming. In today's lesson, we learn of God's command to help those in need.

*What factors do you use to determine who needs help?*

## BIBLE STORY

Moses wrote Deuteronomy for the Israelites, who were about to enter the promised land (Canaan). Moses desired to remind the people of what God had done and encourage them to rededicate their lives to God. He concretely stated the principles for godly living. Most importantly, loving God and obeying his commands. Moses warned the people about the consequences of disobeying God's laws. The laws and commandments were a part of the Sinai Covenant.

God considered the concept of love to be both an emotion and a decision. If we love God, we will naturally love others as well. This means we will decide to meet others' needs. While doing so, we must have a pleasant attitude and a humble spirit. If we act nastily towards others who are in need, God is not pleased. God will punish those who mistreat others, especially the poor and needy.

"How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help" (1 John 3:17)? This behavior is a clear indication that the flesh is still ruling us and not the spirit. Evidence of our love for God is a

natural willingness to give to those we know are suffering. Their suffering may not be a consequence of their own actions. The economic systems of the world are unjust. The only remedy is for those who can help to do so.

Our sense of compassion for others should not be just empty thoughts and prayers. God sees us when we ignore others. God commands us to take action when we know about those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, in prison, and to be welcoming to strangers (Matt. 25:45). How will you respond to Jesus at the final judgment? Our actions will lead to eternal punishment or eternal life.

*When was the last time you helped someone? How was your attitude? Did you do it for show or unto God?*

## SANKOFA

**Operation Breadbasket**, a program begun in 1962 by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) that aimed at improving the economic status of African Americans through a boycott of white-owned and white-operated businesses that refused to employ African Americans or to buy products sold by African American-owned businesses. After initial successes, the program gradually increased in scope until the early 1970s.

Leon Sullivan, pastor of Zion Baptist Church in Philadelphia, is often credited with developing the strategy at the center of Operation Breadbasket. After witnessing a boycott Sullivan led in Philadelphia in 1958, the SCLC asked him to organize a similar campaign in Atlanta. The campaign there, which began in 1962 and represented the start of Operation Breadbasket, won promises of 5,000 jobs at local companies. In the wake of that success, the SCLC established similar campaigns in other Southern cities. It also targeted Chicago, placing the civil rights activist Jesse Jackson in charge of its efforts in that city in 1966. Jackson led a campaign that focused on white-owned grocery, soft drink, and dairy companies that made enormous profits in African American neighborhoods. Jackson also advocated for

the support of African American banks as a route to economic development for black communities. At those banks, he argued, African American business owners would be less likely to face discrimination when applying for loans.

The strategy pursued in each Operation Breadbasket campaign followed a similar pattern. SCLC leaders began by sending letters to companies to gather information about employment categories and numbers, as well as the number of African Americans employed. They usually found that African Americans were either excluded from employment entirely or relegated to the lowest-paying jobs. Leaders then attempted to educate companies about the effects of employment discrimination and low wages on African American families, such as poverty and inadequate housing. Companies that refused to change their hiring practices were targeted for a boycott.

Operation Breadbasket also included Black Christmas and Black Easter campaigns, which encouraged African Americans to do their holiday shopping at stores owned by African Americans. Those campaigns drew substantial attention to the program's overall goals. In addition, leaders called for middle-class and wealthy African Americans to invite lower-income individuals into their holiday celebrations, and they organized parades celebrating African American heritage. Operation Breadbasket expanded further in scope in 1967 when Martin Luther King, Jr., leader of the SCLC, appointed Jackson to be the program's national director. It subsequently incorporated efforts such as the 1968 Poor People's Campaign in Washington, D.C., and organized support for political candidates.

After King was assassinated in 1968, however, tensions escalated between Jackson and the new SCLC president, Ralph Abernathy. Abernathy argued about control of the SCLC and power in the civil rights movement and tried unsuccessfully to move Jackson and the Operation Breadbasket staff from Chicago to Atlanta, the headquarters for the SCLC. Finally, in 1971, Jackson left the SCLC to found Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity). The SCLC retained the Operation

Breadbasket program, but it became far less active than it had been in previous years.

*How did Operation Breadbasket get started? Who were the key people involved? What changes did Operation Breadbasket make in the lives of African Americans? Did it fulfill its mission?*

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/event/American-civil-rights-movement>

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

What feelings arise when you have a need?

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Read the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37. Describe a time when you helped someone in need. Were there any risks involved? What did you learn from the experience? How does it feel to serve and assist others?

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God has given each of us the power to impact the world positively. We may not have an enormous amount of money, but we can use the gifts and abilities God has given us. The unjust economic perils of the world are causing the needy to suffer while the rich prosper. Yes, Jesus said the poor will always be with us. Nevertheless, God has commanded us to demonstrate love for others by meeting their needs to the best of our ability.

Where you live, some unjust laws and policies affect the most vulnerable members of society. What rules and guidelines do you feel are causing the most harm? Brainstorm ways to take a stance that benefits all. There is power when we stand together against the forces of this world, so work together with your family, friends, neighbors, church, and government representatives to effect change. Furthermore, it all starts with one person, you!

View this YouTube video on the boycott of Target stores and the effect it had on the corporation:

**Pastor Leading Target Boycott on Its Impact and Retailer's Response.**



## SUMMARY

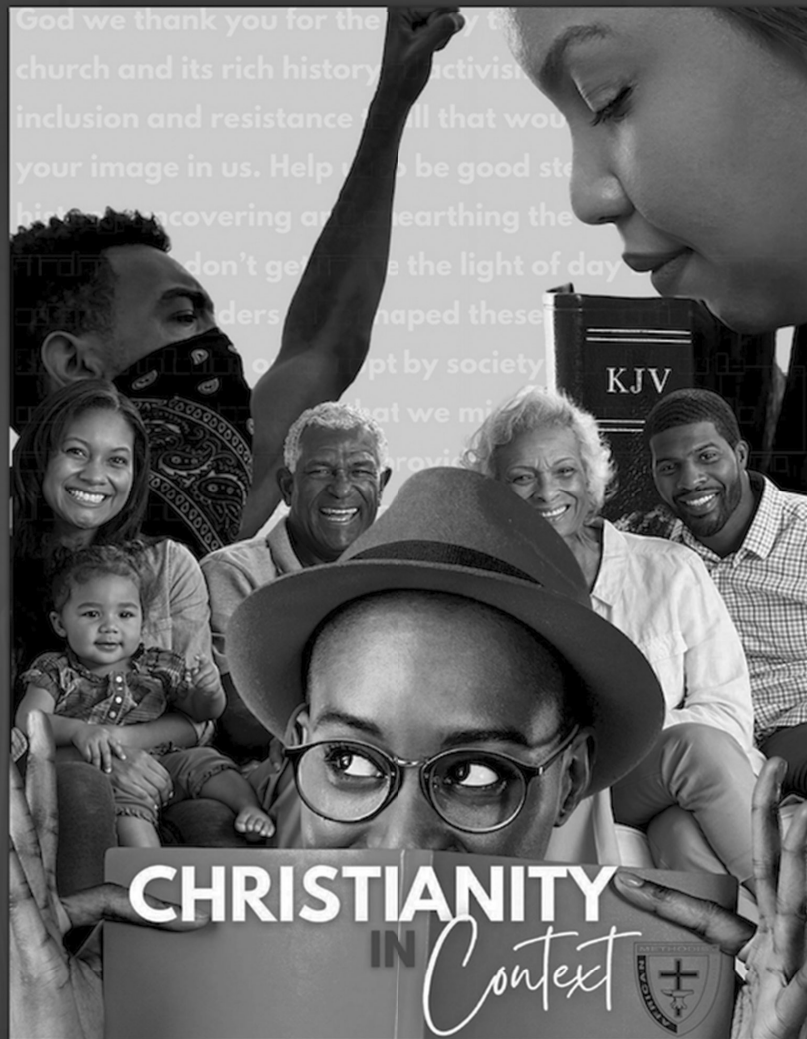
James 1:27 states, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” This verse does not limit our outreach to orphans and widows but calls us to open our hearts to everyone in need. God commands us to help the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the strangers, the sick, and the imprisoned. We can be instruments of God if we surrender ourselves and live according to his standards. What are you willing to do so God can use you?

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

**Prayer:** *God, we hear and see the needs of your people.  
Give us wisdom to know what to do. Amen.*

Hymn: “O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee”  
(AMEC Hymnal #299)

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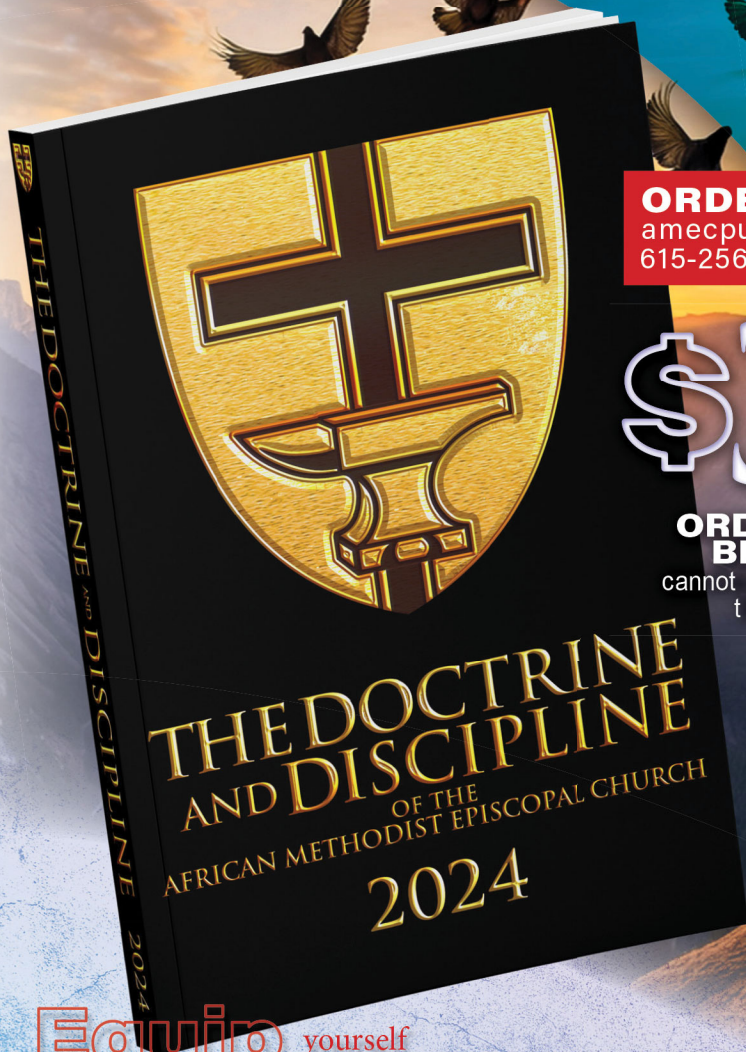
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