

# Labour *Relations*

40-Day Prayer Focus



# *Stand up for Jesus*

1. Stand up, stand up for Jesus  
Redeemer of the land  
He's Lord of all creation  
Victorious He stands  
Let us all represent Him  
And be His hands and feet  
Let us fulfil our calling  
As farmers on His land
2. Stand up, stand up for Jesus  
All peoples of the land  
Let's live and farm for Jesus  
To glorify His Name  
Let's conquer all the evil  
And bring His Name great fame  
Let us fulfil our calling  
As farmers on His land
3. Stand up, stand up for Jesus  
It's time to make our stand:  
To live and farm for Jesus  
'cross Africa our land  
let's do work of high standard  
Rejoicing in God's way  
Let us fulfil our calling  
As farmers on His land

Pray this song for all the farmers in Africa!

Sing this song on the melody of the traditional Hallelujah song:  
Stand up, stand up for Jesus.

# Labour Relations

## *40 Day Prayer Focus on Agriculture 1 September – 10 October 2015*

Author: Hennie Viljoen  
Cover design: Fanie Serfontein  
Translation: Karen Botha  
Editor: Ingrid Crossley

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# How to make the most of the Prayer Focus

I want to encourage you to work through this Prayer Focus in your quiet time, even if it takes longer than forty days. View it as a course that will help you improve your relationships. Work through the daily portions with fellow-believers or in a small group. You will help each other a great deal. The series of DVDs by Dr Arnold Mol referred to on page 77 may be ordered from AMOS.

To make the most of this 40 Day Prayer Focus you should:

## 1. Plan and organise

Use existing opportunities for prayer. Create new opportunities for praying with others. Things will not happen by themselves. Take trouble and plan thoroughly. Consider the following:

- Your personal **quiet time**;
- Prayers at **meals** (this is the ideal opportunity to pray for agriculture);
- Spend time in prayer during **morning or evening devotions** or at **lunch time**;
- Use existing **small group meetings**;
- Ask a farmer, his wife, child or farm worker to intercede for agriculture during **Sunday church services**;
- Organise a **prayer and fasting weekend, special prayer meetings and half- or all-night prayer vigils**;
- Encourage the **elderly, children and prayer groups** to pray for agriculture;
- **Advertise the 40 Day Prayer Focus** in local newspapers and on the radio. Remember that these guidelines are available in English and Afrikaans on AMOS' website, [www.amosafrica.net](http://www.amosafrica.net) and may be duplicated in any format.

## 2. Read the Scriptures

Read as many of the Scriptures given! It is important to give the Spirit an opportunity to speak through the Word.



### 3. Confess sin

Although it is not specifically mentioned every day, it is important to keep the four important issues mentioned in **2 Chronicles 7:14** in mind at all times:

- Allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with remorse;
- Pray and confess all the sin the Spirit convicts you of;
- Ask the Lord to reveal His will to you and obey His will;
- Turn away from your evil ways. Turn your back on all that does not bear God's approval according to the Word.

### 4. Prayer Guidelines

The prayers and/or prayer guidelines are merely recommendations. Pray about everything the Holy Spirit lays on your heart.

### 5. Cultivate the discipline of fasting and obedience

There are various good books on prayer and fasting available. Please read them. The *40 Day Prayer Focus* is an ideal opportunity to improve your self-control and discipline. Like Esther, you may decide to eat and drink nothing for three days (Esther 4:16). Or you may decide to eat only vegetables and drink water like Daniel and his friends (Daniel 1:12).

Consider fasting from something you really like for 40 days: Stop drinking coffee or Coke; stop eating sweets or chocolates, meat, dairy products or bread. You could decide not to have a second helping of food or to stop taking tonics or other stimulants. Spend the time you usually spend watching a particular television programme in prayer. The possibilities are endless. It is important to ask the Lord what *you* should do.

We need to fast from more than food or the television. We must learn to **let go of our sin and disobedience**. We must fast from our evil deeds and put an end to bad habits. Use these 40 days to cultivate and practice the discipline of obedience.



## After 40 Days you will...

- ✓ Know what your faith in Christ and your labour relations have in common;
- ✓ Understand the importance of relationships in the vision, ***Living and Farming God's Way***.
- ✓ Know which *God's Way* principle forms the basis of good relationships;
- ✓ Be able to improve all your relationships by applying Biblical principles for relationships;
- ✓ Know what the Bible teaches about work;
- ✓ Know what the Word says about labourers;
- ✓ Be able to empower your staff as God empowers you;
- ✓ Be able to effectively motivate your staff and improve their productivity;
- ✓ Know how to discipline workers in *God's Way*;
- ✓ Be able to find win-win solutions for conflict;
- ✓ Have an improved prayer life in which your prayers are a blessing to agriculture;
- ✓ Commit yourself in writing to living *God's Way* principles in the workplace. Your written commitment will aid transformation in the rural and agricultural community.

**Blessed are those who by their good relationships make the Gospel of Jesus Christ attractive to others thereby hastening the coming of the Kingdom.**

Hennie Viljoen



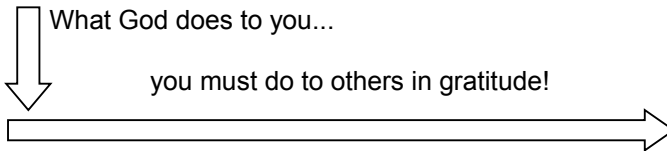


## More than a picture on the cover

God gives abundant rain  
The water flows away into rivers  
Bringing new life and blessing from farm to farm

Along the Orange River we are well aware of the blessing we enjoy  
the result of the rain that fell somewhere else.

May you be the river  
that allows the abundance you receive from God  
to flow to everyone around you.



There is enough power and energy in this simple truth to radically  
change labour relations in agriculture –  
to the glory of God and to the benefit of all people.

Let us do it!



## 10 October – Barefoot Day

AMOS annually celebrates 10 October as **Barefoot Day**. God often commands His prophets to do something out of the ordinary to bring a specific message home to people loudly and clearly. (For Example, Jeremiah 13:1-14; 16:1-4; 27:1-2; Hosea 3).

**The purpose of Barefoot Day is to keep reminding you that we live and farm in God's presence, on holy land - God's land.** God's presence in the burning bush sanctified the soil on which Moses stood. That is why he had to take off his shoes (Exodus 3). Since then, Christ came to earth and is called Immanuel, which means *God with us*. He also reconciled earth to God and sanctified it by His sacrifice and presence (Colossians 1:19-20). He is with us every day until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). **We are living and farming on holy land every day and everywhere in God's direct presence.** Being aware of that, all day, every day is life changing. My soft, sensitive bare feet make me think carefully where I tread. I don't rush through the day without thought. The same applies to my life in God's presence. It helps me to avoid sin (thorns and sharp stones), and comforts and encourages me. He is here with me to carry me, to help and protect me (Cf. Joshua 1:9; 2 Chronicles 16:9 and Matthew 28:20).

**It is also a special opportunity to testify.** People everywhere will ask you why you are barefoot. Testify using the above texts. **Barefoot day** is an opportunity to encourage people and to show them that they are in God's presence everywhere, not only in church.

Let us start a movement. Let us farm barefoot on **10 October** every year!



# PART 1

## THE BIGGER PICTURE

It is important to look at and understand the bigger picture of relationships. Challenges in this regard are all related to our faith in Christ.

### Day 1

### Relationships ... What a challenge!

**Read:** Titus 3:3 and Matthew 7:12

More tears have been shed about **broken relationships** than about anything else. Throughout centuries, **broken relationships** have caused more misery than natural disasters. **Broken relationships** make tempers flare and cause untold damage. **Broken relationships** have cost millions in legal fees and have caused many very expensive wars. **Broken relationships** have many roots that keep growing. Titus 3:3 helps us to understand this more clearly: *At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.* All these things cause **broken relationships**.

**Positive, healthy relationships were, are and always will be a challenge** because so many issues have a negative influence on them. Relationships are about **people**. People are spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). People usually interact with each other at the level of the soul. The soul may be defined as the **will, intellect and emotions**. Let us see how these three influence relationships.



Intellect (thinking/reasoning): The first and most important issue to influence relationships is ***what we think about people***. What do we really believe? If you believe people evolved from an ape, it will influence your behaviour. If you believe that some people are better and “more human” than others, it will influence your relationships. What you think about men, women, children, the disabled or the elderly, other races, employees, employers, the rich or the poor all have a sub-conscious but definite influence on your relationship with them. What do you really think about each of the above groups? Is what you believe in line with the message of the Bible?

Will: Relationships are influenced by your **will**. People are selfish, self-centred and headstrong. They are eager to take, but slow to give. They want to be served, but not to serve. They want to be praised, but not to praise. They want to be understood, but not to understand. Only when God changes people’s will to conform to His will do relationships improve.

Emotions: Relationships are also influenced by our **emotions**: painful experiences, bitterness about injustices we have suffered, fear, feelings of rejection and inferiority, guilt, mistrust and suspicion about other people’s motives and hidden agendas, etc. You are only able to give others that which you already have. It is easy for people to hurt one another because their own lives are filled with pain and suffering.

Besides all these things in us, many external issues influence and complicate our relationships. For instance, cultural differences, the gap between rich and poor, the different social and economic circumstances in which people grow up, political statements and interference, the rat race (good relations cannot be built at a run), the distance between where people live and where they work, economic realities that influence salaries and remuneration, upbringing, education and people’s capabilities, etc.

YET, The Lord’s command is clear: *Love your neighbour as yourself* (Matthew 22:39). *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, ...* (Matthew 7:12).



It is **not humanly possible** to obey this command every day, all day and in everything; especially not in this broken world full of broken, sinful people. **We must beg God to help us in this.** He makes it possible in answer to our prayers. Let us focus on restoring and building relationships for the next forty days.

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Weep before the Lord about the broken relationships in your home and in your farming- or other business. Pour out your heart to Him.
- † Ask the Lord to start with you; to change you. Ask Him to help you and to teach you to make it easy for others to love you.
- † Pray and ask the Lord to teach you to restore and build relationships during the next forty days - starting with your marriage, your family and your business.

## **Day 2**

### **Labour Relations**

#### **What does this have to do with my faith in Christ?**

**Read:** Hebrews 12:28

Although many people attend church on Sundays and call themselves Christians, most of them are probably Monday to Saturday or “week-atheists”. Many Christians separate their faith from the rest of their life. They divide their lives into compartments: politics, sport, church, work, relaxation, family and so on. These issues have nothing to do with each other and certainly not with faith. This makes people week atheists or Sunday Christians.

That is why many Christians cannot be recognised as followers of Jesus during the week. What happened to our commitment to live according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:27a)?



In Ephesians 4:1 Paul writes, *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

Not all Christians are as reckless about practising their faith. Many dedicated Christians sincerely desire to live according to the Gospel in everything. But, because they do not always know exactly what the Word says about things they are concerned with from Mondays to Saturdays, they battle to do so.

Let us look at the **basic message of the Bible**:

<b>SIN</b>	<b>SALVATION</b>	<b>GRATITUDE</b>
<p>All have sinned and cannot save themselves.</p> <p>(Romans 3:23; Romans 8:8; John 3:3)</p>	<p>By grace we are forgiven; by faith in Christ. As God's children we receive an eternal inheritance, for free!</p> <p>(John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 5:12-13)</p>	<p>Our life must be an expression of our gratitude for our undeserved salvation!</p> <p>(Psalm 103:1-5; Romans 6:13 Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Hebrews 12:28; 2 Peter 1:10)</p>

Two important questions:

1. Are you 100% sure that you have been saved by Jesus Christ and that you have eternal life (2 Corinthians 13:5 and 1 John 5:12-13)? [If not, speak to someone who is able to help you. Do so immediately. Do not procrastinate!]
2. How do people see you? As someone who gratefully *lives* according all you confess on Sundays? Or as a week atheist? Can you support your answers with practical examples?

**The Word teaches that new people have a new lifestyle!**



People can teach animals all kinds of wonderful things. For instance, a horse can be trained to walk on its hind legs like a human, but it can only do so with great effort and for a short while. When it gets tired or hungry, gets a fright or comes across a mare on heat, it immediately returns to its natural state on four legs! Why? The horse learned human behaviour but did not become human. It kept its old identity as a horse.

There is another, less popular creature, namely a worm! At a certain stage the worm dies and is born again as a moth or a butterfly. As a result of its rebirth, the worm's **identity changes permanently. Its behaviour changes too.** In contrast to the horse's acquired behaviour, the moth's behaviour is inbred. It can still move on the ground like a worm, but that is the exception. It usually flies.

What does this mean? It is no use trying to teach someone who has not been saved to live like someone who has. It is not only behaviour that must change but the entire being. People sometimes behave like Christians but revert to their old nature when problems arise. They lose control and swear and shout at their workers when someone bumps the bakkie or when it seems as though the fire is out of control. When they hear a juicy bit of gossip they pass it on with relish and it spreads like wildfire. The company they keep and the circumstances they find themselves in determine whether they behave like Christians or not. They resemble the people we read about in Psalm 50:16-20.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray that the rural and agricultural community throughout Africa will understand, accept and *live* the Good News. (Remember that SA is part of Africa.)
- † Talk to the Lord about Acts 26:20 in which Paul says, *First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.*
- † Pray that Christians will bear fruit befitting their conversion.



## Day 3

### New people live in a new way

**Read:** Ephesians 4:23-24

The following four statements are true for all Christians:

1. God has made you a **new being** in and through Christ (John 1:12-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17-18a; and Ephesians 4:24).
2. You must **live as a new being** in gratitude for your salvation from death (Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 6:13 and Ephesians 4:17-24).
3. **New people live to the glory of God** (1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17). This means that all you are and all you do should be a compliment to your Creator, Re-Creator and Saviour. When people see the way you live they should compliment and praise the One who made you a new being (Matthew 5:16 and Jeremiah 13:11).
4. You should be so grateful that you are able to say, *My religion is not limited to a particular time. All I do I do in **service** to God. My whole life is a **service of gratitude** for the salvation I have received from God in Christ.*

Your job, how you use and manage your land and your money, your relationship with your labourers and fellow farmers, have *everything* to do with the cross at Golgotha. They are a way of saying thank you for the cross. This is what the Lord teaches us in His Word.

In Ephesians 1:1 - 4:16 we read that God saved us and made us part of His family and His people. Then, in Ephesians 4:17-24, Paul writes that we must think anew and live anew because God has made us anew. Paul describes this new life in Ephesians 4:25 to 6:20. Notice that this new life is not limited to religion but literally covers your entire existence (Cf. Colossians 2:20 to 4:6):

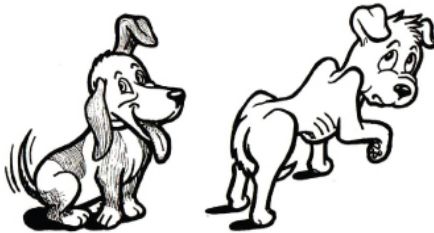
- † conversation and language;
- † temper and the way you handle anger;
- † work;
- † finance and livelihood;
- † relationship with people, including those who harm you;
- † humour and jokes;





- † sex, purity and licentiousness;
- † choice of friends;
- † relationship with yourself;
- † use of opportunities and time management;
- † drinking habits;
- † marriage and marital relationship;
- † raising children;
- † **LABOUR RELATIONS** (Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22 – 4:1);
- † spiritual warfare;
- † church life and responsibility.

I think it was Martin Luther who said that **Christianity changes your life so radically** that even your dog will realise that you have been converted. According to the Word, Luther is quite right. Your labourers and even your small stock will know whether you are a Christian or not (Proverbs 12:10 and Proverbs 27:23-27, and Ephesians 6:5-9 and Colossians 3:22 – 4:1).



*Dog, is your master a christian?*

Therefore, what is God's answer to our question, *Labour relations – What does this have to do with my faith in Christ?* The answer is **everything!** The way I handle my labour relations is one of the ways in which I express my gratitude for my salvation.



**Labour relations are part of your life of gratitude!** You must compliment and glorify God for what He has done in your life through your labour relations. Do your labour relations compliment Him? **Do people, including your labourers, say good things about God because of your relationship with them?**

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray that agriculturalists will not merely mimic Christian behaviour, but will truly become new beings. Pray for their salvation.
- † Pray that Christian agriculturalists' gratitude for their salvation will be reflected in their labour relations. Pray that gratitude will encourage them to improve their relationships and not only to strive for greater productivity.
- † Pray that all Christians in the rural and agricultural community will come to realise that Christianity cannot be limited to religion but that it encompasses every aspect of life.



## PART 2

### THE VISION

The vision of Amos Agrimin is ***Living and Farming God's Way***. This section is about one of the ***God's Way***-principles that is directly linked to relationships.

***God's Way*** is unity and cooperation!

#### Day 4

### Relationships ... This is the vision!

**Read:** Habakkuk 2:2-3; Acts 20:22-24 & 26:18-19

When the Lord speaks and gives us a vision we must always keep it in mind. We must obey and resolutely strive towards fulfilling His vision.

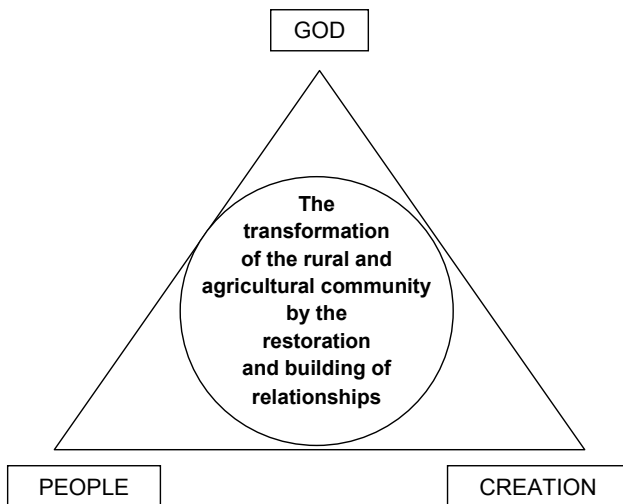
The Lord gave us the Amos vision on 13 August 1993 on the farm Swartwater near Memel in the North-Eastern Free State. The meaning and content of the vision has never changed. At first we expressed it as *Every Farm for Christ*. In 2005 the vision was reformulated and became *Living and Farming God's Way*. The content and meaning of the vision did not change. When has a farm been won for Christ? The answer has always been, *When everyone on the farm **believes in their hearts, confesses with their lips and proves by their deeds** 24/7 that Christ is their Lord and King*. In short, a farm has been won for Christ when *Living and Farming God's Way* is visible on the farm 24/7; when the Kingdom becomes visible.

Restored, healthy and positive **relationships reflect the Kingdom!** In John 13:35 Jesus says, *By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*. The absence of good relationships equals the absence of the Kingdom!



AMOS wants the **Kingdom of God** to be reflected in the rural and agricultural community. The main function of AMOS can be summarised as follows:

**Amos Agrimin's basic business is:**



- What?** Restoring and building **relationships** with God (Father, Son and Spirit), people and creation (natural resources, etc.)
- Who?** Rural and farming community
- Where?** Africa (South Africa is part of Africa)
- Duration?** Until relationships have been restored and the Kingdom is visible
- Why?** This is the vision God gave in 1993 and that He has confirmed ever since
- How?** By proclaiming and demonstrating the basic principles of *Living and Farming God's Way*
- Result?** **Shalom** (peace, justice, love and faith), because all basic relationships have been restored (cf. Micah 6:8)



It is clear that restoring and building relationships make up the core of AMOS' vision because relationships are the core of the Kingdom. Broken, bad relationships negate the Kingdom and the *Living and Farming God's Way* lifestyle. You and I cannot afford to have bad relationships.

I beg all agriculturalists not to underestimate the importance of and need for restoring and building relationships.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray for the salvation of agriculturalists and their families. Pray that they will grow in their relationship with God.
- † Pray for agriculturalists' marriage and family relationships and labour relations. Pray for race relations in agriculture.
- † Pray that agriculturalists will be good stewards of creation and all that the Lord has entrusted to them.

## **Day 5**

### **First prepare the soil**

**Read:** Luke 8:11-15

The Bible compares the Word and the Kingdom of God with **seed** (Mark 4:1-20 & 4:26-34). Seed contains life and growth! The quality of the seed is important, but so is the quality of the soil in which it is planted. Well-prepared, fertile, deep, moist soil will allow the seed to germinate and grow well. Similarly, our hearts must be prepared and receptive so that the message of the Word regarding relationships will germinate easily and bear much fruit.



Day 1 showed that relationships are a challenge. The vision of communities in which relationships have been restored is a big dream. What must we do to realise the *big dream* in spite of the *bad soil*?

**Firstly**, you need to get all the help and support that is available. *Help* with a *capital H*. Religion and some flowery motivational words do not provide enough support. **You need Jesus in your life.** You must be in Him and He in you (John 15:5). It is only when Christ lives in you by His Spirit that the impossible becomes possible, even though it may be difficult. Only when your relationship with God has been restored in and through Christ, will your relationships be permanently restored. The *vertical beam* (God/person) of the cross must be in place before you attach the *horizontal beam* (person/person) to it. If you have not accepted Jesus, I beg you in the words of Paul to do so now: *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God* (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

**Secondly**, you must be willing to do things **God's Way**. This will test your faith. Many **God's Way** principles are discussed in a different book.<sup>1)</sup> The first **God's Way** principle you must take note of now is this: **God's Way is so radically different that it seems nonsensical!** Many of the guidelines in God's Word do not make sense to unbelievers – just as the Gospel of salvation does not make sense to them either (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). They consider it foolish. They have hundreds of reasons why instructions such as those in Luke 6:27-36 will not work. You must **believe** that all God's instructions are feasible and that they deliver better results than all the knowledge of the world.

**Thirdly**, you must make peace with yourself. You must be healed. As long as your life is filled with old wounds, pain and bitterness, you will hurt those around you and mess up your relationships with them. I beg you to get help for your emotional pain. If you are filled with bitterness

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<sup>1</sup>The booklet *Living and Farming God's Way* – it's not a slogan, it's a lifestyle. *BASICS* discusses this principle in full. The book is available in English and Afrikaans and may be ordered by sending an e-mail to [secretary@amosafrica.net](mailto:secretary@amosafrica.net) or may be downloaded at [www.amosafrica.net](http://www.amosafrica.net) free of charge.



and unforgiveness, forgive, even if it is only one person. Get rid of your bitterness. Bitterness spoils all your relationships. Listen to your inner voice. If you are filled with repressed emotions, if you feel inferior and are filled with self-pity and if you are always in conflict with yourself, all your relationships will suffer. Please get help. You are ill. You will always battle to have meaningful relationships. The problem is in you.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray that everyone in the rural and agricultural community will believe in the Lord Jesus. Pray that they will live in Him and He in them. Pray that they will carry out His instructions.
- † Ask the Lord to help you believe that His guidelines for relationships are feasible. Believe that they always have good results, even when it seems impossible.
- † Pray for inner healing for yourself and for all with whom you have relationships. Pray that everyone in pain will choose to forgive. That will set them free and enable them to start building good relationships.

## **Day 6**

### **Unity and cooperation characterise *God's Way* (1)**

**Read:** Ephesians 1:1-14

There is complete unity and cooperation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They created everything together (Genesis 1:2 and John 1:1-2). Together they decided to create people (Genesis 1:26). The unity and cooperation between the **Father and the Son** is demonstrated in the Gospel of John (John 1:18; 5:23 & 30; 10:30 & 38; 14:9-11 & 26-31; 15:10; 16:15-24 and 17:21-23). Many portions of Scripture describe the



unity and cooperation between the **Father and the Spirit** (John 14:26 and Romans 8:15). The **Son and the Spirit** also work together closely (John 14:26 and Romans 8:9). The Father equips the Son with the Holy Spirit to carry out His command (Matthew 3:16-17). Our salvation is the result of the cooperation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:1-14).

**Unity and cooperation characterise the Being of God. It is what God is like and how He does everything. God's Way is unity and cooperation!**

Because we *are* His image and His representatives, unity and cooperation should characterise our lives too. Enmity, conflict, hate, jealousy, anger, quarrels, discord, strife and disputes do not suit people who are committed to *Living and Farming God's Way*. These are habits of our former nature. We must root them out of our lives (Galatians 5:19-21).

Is there unity and cooperation in your community and/or on your farm? What about your marriage and family? Is there unity and cooperation between churches? Is there unity and cooperation between employers and employees? Is there unity and cooperation between leaders and the community?

**Remember:** *God's Way* is unity and cooperation!

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Respond to God's Word in prayer.
- † Pray for unity and cooperation in the rural and agricultural community, especially between all who confess that they are Christians.





## Day 7

### Unity and cooperation characterise *God's Way* (2)

**Read:** Ephesians 2:13-16 and John 17:21-23

There is complete unity and cooperation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Unity and cooperation *is God's Way*. However, it does not end here. Jesus brought reconciliation and so this unity has a ripple effect:

- God made us one with Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21 and Ephesians 2:13).  
*Then* He commanded us to be one with Him and to remain in Him (John 15:4-10 and Colossians 2:6-7).
- God made all His children one by joining them together in one body, the Church of Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).  
*Then* He commanded His children to be one, even though they speak different languages and belong to different tribes and nations (Ephesians 2:13-16 and Galatians 3:28).

God always makes it possible for us to carry out His instructions. **He makes us one *before* commanding us to be one. He says we must keep becoming what we already are, namely one!** In other words, we can be one because He has already made us one (Ephesians 4:3)!

Restored relationships, reconciliation, unity and cooperation are all important aspects of *Living and Farming God's Way*. You and I cannot choose what we want. God commands and we *must* obey His command. Where do we start? At the cross.

The cross of Christ has two beams – a vertical (upright) beam and a horizontal beam. The vertical beam reminds us that Jesus reconciled people with God. The horizontal beam reminds us that Jesus reconciled people with each other. The horizontal beam is supported by the vertical beam. Real reconciliation between people is the fruit and result of the



reconciliation between God and people. Therefore, we must do all we can to win people for Christ. Like Paul, you and I should appeal to people: *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.* (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

Strive towards the restoration of the rural and agricultural community's relationship with God. Do all you can to win them for Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). Then teach those who have been won for Christ to strive towards unity and cooperation too (John 17:21-23). We will learn to do so in the next section.

What are you doing to win agriculturalists (employers, employees and their families) for Christ?

**Remember:** To win people for Christ is part of *Living and Farming God's Way*. People who do not know and love God cannot live and farm *God's Way*.

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Respond to God's Word in prayer.
- † Pray for the salvation of agriculturalists and agricultural leaders.
- † Pray that all Christians in the rural and agricultural community will spontaneously testify about Christ. Pray that they will win others for Him.



## Day 8

### Unity and cooperation characterise *God's Way* (3)

**Read:** John 16:13-15

The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the perfect example of unity and cooperation. What we see in Him teaches us what promotes unity and cooperation between people – what we must strive for in agriculture.

1. **Good communication:** There is an ongoing discussion between the Father, Son and Spirit. Consider the hours and nights Jesus spent in prayer to the Father (Luke 5:16). They talk as one (John 16:13-15).
  - \* *Therefore, pay attention to positive, uplifting communication. Unity and cooperation are always easier when people are informed and know what is going on.*
  
2. **Collective decisions:** The Triune God collectively decided to create people (Genesis 1:26). Jesus did not decide which twelve disciples to choose by Himself. He prayed all night, consulting His Father (Luke 6:12-13). There are many more examples.
  - \* *Therefore, it is important to include people when making decisions. People who decide together are more motivated to work together and to carry out the decisions they make.*
  
3. **The same goal:** The Father, Son and Spirit have the same goal, namely the salvation of people and all of creation (Ephesians 1:3-14 and Colossians 1:19-20).
  - \* *A shared vision in which everyone on the farm understands that their role and contribution are essential for unity and team work. It makes people feel part of the team. They will do what they can to benefit the entire team.*



4. **Glorify each other:** The Father, Son and Holy Spirit glorify each other. One of the things this means is that they give one another recognition (John 17:4-5).

\* *It is important for people to give each other recognition. Everyone flourishes on positive recognition and feedback. "Catching your people doing things right" is a good approach to labour management. Say thank you and regularly express your appreciation to everyone, no matter how small their contribution may be. Honour and complement each other. We, for example, always start our weekly management meetings by giving recognition; acknowledging things that were done. Positive feedback is given to anyone by anyone. This makes our meetings positive and uplifting.*

5. **Love is more than words:** Jesus demonstrated His love for the Father by His obedience (John 14:31).

\* *Just saying you love others is not enough. Be like Jesus and prove your love by providing for people's needs and taking an interest in them. Ask them about and listen to their dreams, ideals and wishes. If possible, help them to realise these dreams.*

How do you fare regarding the above issues? What are you doing to improve relationships?

**Remember:** Unity and cooperation are important aspects of *Living and Farming God's Way*. Building good relationships should be important to you.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Respond to God's Word in prayer.
- † Confess bad communication.
- † Confess your inclination to decide for others without consulting them.
- † Confess your selfish dreams and ideals.
- † Confess your failure to express gratitude and appreciation.



- † Confess love that remains words and is never expressed in deeds.
- † Ask the Father to help the rural and agricultural community with the above.

## Day 9

### What outcome do you want to achieve?

**Read:** Romans 12:1-2

You may start dreaming about how these forty days will change your workers and make them more responsible and productive; less inclined to cause trouble. Don't. I am afraid you may be disappointed if they do not change as much or as quickly as you would like them to.

Here is some good advice: Set realistic goals. Set goals of which you can determine the outcome. Let me explain: We often set goals of which we cannot control the outcome. This causes frustration, disappointment and despondency. It usually happens when you want to change and influence others. For example: **If I make it my goal to train fifty people** I will be very disappointed if only fifteen people pitch up for training. You see, I cannot control people, their programmes or circumstances, their financial ability, dedication, priorities or decisions. But, if my goal is to **be the best trainer I can**, the outcome no longer depends on other people or circumstances I have no control over. I can be successful even if only ten students pitch up.

My advice is: Do not make changing your staff your main focus. Do not allow your dream for better labour relations to depend on the cooperation of your labourers. **Change and grow yourself. Make it your goal to become the best employer possible.** This will make it more likely that your labourers will change too. They will follow your example.



Consider this: *Are the excellent, trustworthy, able, productive and responsible workers you are looking for, looking for an employer like you? Or are they looking for a better employer?* Perhaps you should set yourself a new goal: ***Becoming the person you are looking for, is looking for!*** (This is a challenge Andy Stanley sets young people who are looking for a marriage partner.) How must you change so that good workers will willingly choose to work for you instead of for someone else? I was touched by the dream of a young farmer in the Karoo: *I want to become the employer of choice in the district; the first choice of all who are looking for a job.*

The better you equip yourself to work with people, the greater the chance that you will get good workers. Your average workers will also keep improving!

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray and ask the Lord to help you to change first. Ask Him to teach you by His Word and His Spirit, to become the best employer (or employee) possible. If you are unwilling to change, you cannot grow and improve.
- † Ask the Lord to show you what you must see, teach you what you must know and tell you what you must hear about labour relations.
- † Pray that employers and employees will want to keep learning more about relationships. Pray that they will not blame each other for bad relationships.

Postscript: Beware of the temptation of thanking God that you are a better person than your workers! Read Luke 18:9-14.



## PART 3

### BROAD PRINCIPLES FOR RELATIONSHIPS

It is impossible to provide a complete list of rules for relationships that applies to all circumstances. There will always be circumstances for which there are no rules. Life is so complicated that one cannot always behave according to certain definite rules (*Compare Proverbs 26:4-5*). Christians should not live strictly according to rules. They must be led by the Spirit to correctly apply the broad principles of the Word to every situation (*Romans 7:6 and 8:9 & 14*). Therefore, we will first look at a few principles God give us in His Word. **God's Word, God's Will and God's Way** – this is the guideline according to which we live.

### Day 10

#### A standard higher than that of unbelievers

**Read:** Matthew 5:43-48 and Galatians 5:25

Have you ever asked yourself what distinguishes your behaviour as a Christian from that of unbelievers? Will people be able to see that I am a Christian by looking at my behaviour?

There are only two ways in which you can behave towards people. The **first** way is: **You can do to them what they do to you.** You will repay good with good and bad with bad. The latter especially ends badly.

*John and Jane sit at a table colouring in. John accidentally bumps Jane and she draws a line through the picture. She responds by pushing John and he draws an even worse line through his picture. He gets angry and decides to pay her back*



*with interest. He bumps her so hard that she almost falls off the chair and scratches another ghastly line through her picture. How will this end if they keep getting back at each other? Two ruined colouring-in books!*

You and I often behave this way. You greet those who greet you. You help those who help you. You say nice things about those who say nice things about you. But, you send someone who treats you badly, to hell. You insult someone you think is making a mess of things. You shout at someone who dares hoot at you or cut in front of you.

The shocking truth of the Word is this: If you treat others (good or bad) as they treat you, you are no better than the heathen, the tax collector and sinner (Matthew 5:46-47). There is no difference between your behaviour and theirs. So, stop treating others as they treat you.

The most important rule of behaviour for God's children is: My behaviour or attitude as a Christian should not be determined by the way others treat me. My behaviour must be determined by God's behaviour towards me. ***The Spirit IN me and not the person IN FRONT OF me must determine my behaviour*** (Galatians 5:25)! Christ expects you and me to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us and to bless those who harm us (Luke 6:27-36). He commands us to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). That is what Jesus did (Luke 23:34 and 1 Peter 2:18-25).

Behaving this way is **God's Way!** I will not be surprised to hear you shout, *Impossible! It will never work.* Your response is understandable. But remember, **God's Way** is so radically different to the way we think and do things that it seems nonsensical. But, it isn't. God's wisdom is radically different to the way we think. His instructions for relationships work even though they do not make sense to you! Just start applying them and you will see that they work.





## Prayer Focus:

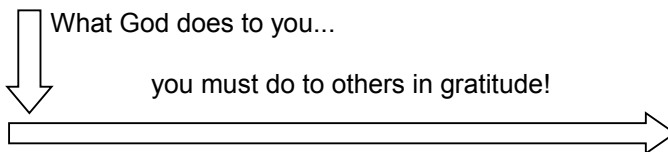
- † Pray Galatians 5:25 - *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*
- † Pray that Christians will behave and live radically different lives. Pray that they will be identified as children of the Father.
- † Pray against the evil cycle of conflict, revenge and violence that occurs when people try to get back at one another. Pray against the temptation of asking evil forces for help (such as we read about in Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

## Day 11

### What God did to you you must do to others!

**Read:** 1 John 4:11 & 19

You know that God wants the way you treat people to be determined by His Spirit **IN** you and not by the behaviour of the people **IN FRONT OF** you. Let us build on this important behaviour.



This principle often occurs in the Bible:

- ✓ Because God **loves you**, you must love others!  
*Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another, ... We love because He first loved us.* (1 John 4:11&19).
- ✓ Because God treats you with **compassion**, you must treat others with compassion!  
*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful* (Luke 6:36).
- ✓ Because God **forgave** you, you must forgive!  
*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.* (Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13. Also read Matthew 18:21-35).
- ✓ Because God the Father always **comforts** you, you must comfort others!  
*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.* (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
- ✓ Because Jesus was not selfish and did not put Himself first, but did what was important to and benefited you, you must also put others first.  
*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ... Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ...* (Philippians 2:3-5 et seq.; Romans 15:1b-3a).
- ✓ Because Jesus came to **serve** us and laid down His life for us, we must serve one another and be willing to sacrifice everything for each other.  
*... whoever wants to become great among you, must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man (that is Jesus) did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as ransom for many* (Mark 10:43-35, and John 13:14-15 and 1 John 3:16-18).



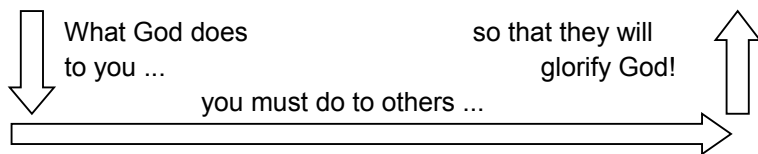
- ✓ Because Jesus **accepted** you, you must accept others!  
*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God (Romans 15:7).*

This is **“God’s Way!”** The principle is clear: **What God did to you, you must do to others!** Living this principle, distinguishes you and me from the heathen. Read Matthew 5:43-48 once more. Applying this principle is the only solution to the evil cycle that occurs when evil is repaid by evil. The Lord clearly states that you may not do so (compare Romans 12:21; Exodus 23:4-5; Proverbs 25:21-22). He forbids us from being happy about the destruction of our enemies (Proverbs 24:17-18 and Job 31:29-30).

**What God has done to you, you must do to others!** I can hear you say: *“Applying this principle will cause chaos. It will put a stop to discipline. The workers will take chances if they realise that you are quick to forgive and slow to take revenge.”*

Do not question God’s wisdom. **“God’s Way is the best way!”** Applying this principle does not mean never being able to act firmly or take disciplinary steps. **Like love and forgiveness, discipline is also a Christian principle that must be upheld.** But, do not swear and shout or be unfair when you reprimand someone. You must reprimand someone the way God reprimands and disciplines you, His child – in love and to your benefit (Hebrews 12:4-12).

When you do to others as God does to you, you bring light into a dark world. This is entirely different to what people are used to. It is so beautiful that they will glorify God in heaven. They see and feel something of the Father-heart of God.



When this happens, you are living to the glory of God and your life and relationships are a testimony, a piece of mission work!



## Prayer Focus:

- † Pray that God's children will start applying this principle to their marriage, family, community and workplace. Pray that this principle will be put into practice and lived out on your farm.
- † Pray that the rural and agricultural community you are part of will treat people in a way that will glorify the Father. People must be excited by and full of praise for the Father of us Christians.
- † Pray for the realisation of Amos Agrimin's vision, *Living and Farming God's Way*.

## Day 12 Love others!

**Read:** Matthew 22:39 and 1 John 4:19

Love others **because** God loves you. This principle is directly linked to the first, broader principle.

The command to love includes everyone. You must love *all* your **fellow believers**. They are your brothers and sisters in the Lord, even if they belong to different races and tribes and nations, speak a different language or belong to a different church. If you think someone is not a believer, the Word says that you must love your **fellow human being**. If you won't accept someone as such, the Word says you must love your **enemies**. There is no getting away from it: **fellow believers, fellow human beings and enemies** – you must love them all!

The command to love applies to labour relations too. Love must be shown to everyone no matter their social position (employers or employees; literate or illiterate, rich or poor, important or not), tribe, culture or faith. You and I must love because God loved us first. You must not only love someone for being wonderful or for doing something for you.



In Leviticus 19:17-18 and verses 33-34 we read about **unlimited** love!  
*Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbour frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord. ... When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.*

You may not love as you see fit or according to human considerations. The motive for your love may be wrong. Your love may be motivated by selfishness and self-interest, by what you may gain. Your love must not be like this. You and I must love as Jesus loves. He sets the example of real self-denying, sacrificial, serving love (1 John 3:16-18 and Mark 10:45).

We are so used to the command to love in Matthew 22:37-40 that we never think about what it really means. Let us do so now:

Matthew 7:12 says: *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, ...*

How would you like your staff or your employer to treat you? Write down three things.

.....

.....

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Do you always treat others this way? Do not be blind to your own mistakes. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you when and where you fail to treat others the way you expect them to treat you. Write it down and confess your mistake:

.....

What will your reply be if the Lord asks you to name two ways in which you demonstrate that you love your employees or employer as yourself (Matthew 22:39)?

.....

.....

Does the way you treat your employer or employees prove your love for them? Think about things such as form of address, remuneration, compassionate leave, spiritual ministry, intercession, et cetera. Does the way you refer to your labourers reflect love? Do you really love your labourers if you never speak their names before the Lord's throne? Can you say you love them if you see they are without God and without hope (Ephesians 2:12) but don't even try to introduce them to Christ? Is love laughing about racist jokes? Why curse people when you don't want them to curse you?

John 3:16 is well known. It is about God's love for us! But 1 John 3:16 is less familiar. It is about the responsibility God's love lays on us. We must love others, not merely in words, but in deeds and sincerity (1 John 3:16-18).

I once visited a friend in the Zonderwater Prison. He used to be a farmer but is serving a life sentence. He is serving the Lord now, but things went very wrong in His life a couple of years ago. We spoke about what he had learned. I asked him if there was something he would like to tell his fellow farmers. He immediately answered, "*Relationships! Farmers must work at their relationships. They must start with their marriage and family. That is where it is worst. I know. I lived and farmed among*



them. *Get your own house in order and your labour relations will improve.*" This is so true! Most violent crimes occur at home.

**Prayer Focus:**

- † If you have become so used to the command to love that you have forgotten that you are supposed to actually do it, confess it to the Lord. Confess your lack of practical, unselfish love.
- † Ask the Lord to pour out His love into the hearts of agriculturalists - the love He had for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:5-10). Then we will be able to love one another despite our sin.
- † Pray for unlimited love; love despite barriers; love that can be seen in our daily lives.

## **Day 13**

### **Put yourself in someone else's shoes**

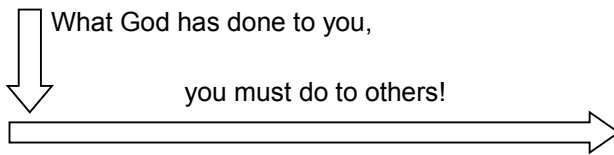
**Read:** Hebrews 2:14-18 and 4:15, and Philippians 2:2-8

I once heard this story: *Criticism, prejudice, condemnation, slander and an absence of understanding were the order of the day in a small town. Everyone was sick of it. An old man had a good idea: The inhabitants had to exchange shoes for one day every year, figuratively speaking. They had to exchange roles, do each other's work and accept one another's responsibilities. The healthy rugby player had to spend time in the disabled person's wheelchair. The mayor had to sweep the streets and the one who had a lot to say about the minister's sermon, had to preach. The community had to learn how it would feel to wear someone else's shoes. They soon had more insight and understanding for one another. It worked!*



The old man's idea was more than a good idea. It was a Biblical principle for good relationships.

*Jesus changed places with us.* He not only came to wear our shoes, but our flesh, our weakness and our sin. Why? So that He could be compassionate, understanding and sympathise with our weaknesses. Now He expects us to do the same (Hebrews 2:14-18 and 4:5, and Philippians 2:2-8). This is linked to the principle you know:



Christ put Himself in your shoes, therefore you must put yourself in the shoes of your fellow human beings. You will gain more understanding and more compassion for your fellow man.

*My brother, Albert, was murdered on a farm in Strausburg near Upington in September 1984. It was a terrible blow. His eldest child was 18 months old and his wife was six months pregnant with their second child. I visited the four suspects (some were underage) while they were in prison. Their eyes were lifeless, dark, dead! When I noticed that, the Spirit reminded me of Hebrews 2 and instead of just condemning them, I tried to understand. **That was a miracle from God!** The following questions came to mind: If **my parents** were drunk from Thursday evening to Tuesday each week; if they were unemployed; if I had to live in a one-roomed corrugated iron hovel in Upington's scorching summers and freezing winters with eight other people; if I had been molested as a child; if I had often gone to bed hungry; if I never went to school and my friends were all street children up to no good; if I was never given recognition, love, security and acceptance by my parents; if I did not have the Lord Jesus in my life and had no hope in life, what would have stopped me from doing what they had done? I am not saying that this applied to all four of them. I am also not trying to justify what they did. On the contrary! I am just trying to tell you what happened to me when I visited them and during the court case later.*





*The Spirit and the Word made me realise how important it is for me to put myself in someone else's shoes. It is essential. It enables me to be sympathetic, the way Jesus is sympathetic.*

I recall something that happened years ago in the Eastern Cape. Henry (a brown man) told me that their land was expropriated early in the seventies under the apartheid government. His parents refused to leave the land and within three weeks they were bundled into a police truck and forcibly removed. With tears in his eyes he asked me why it was taking them years to get back their piece of land. Forget about all the technical problems and challenges regarding land reform in South Africa for a while. Try to hear what Henry is saying. Try to put yourself in his shoes. If everyone could just be more understanding relationships would benefit so much!

As with the previous principles, this one does not come easily either. You and I must keep asking the Father to help us, to teach and show us how to put ourselves in someone else's shoes.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Thank the Lord Jesus for becoming human so that He can understand us and be patient with our weaknesses.
- † Pray that this principle will be applied to every situation in agriculture in which there is tension and conflict.
- † Pray specifically that this principle be applied to labour relations.



## Day 14

### Try to understand before being understood

**Read:** James 1:19

One way of putting the instruction to put yourself in someone else's shoes into practice is by cultivating the habit Stephen Covey explains in his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. It is: **Seek first to understand, then to be understood!**

James 1:19 puts it well: Everyone should be **quick to listen, slow to speak** and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. This principle and this verse is really saying: **You have two ears and one mouth. Use them in the same proportion.** Listen two times more than you speak.

People often have a greater desire to be **understood** than to be helped. Therefore, keep listening until the other person feels that you really understand. We often start to think about what we want to say or what to answer while someone is still talking. We should rather just listen and really try to understand what they are saying. We often interrupt each other and the message the other person gets is: *What you are saying is more important than what I am trying to say.*

**"Listening in order to understand"** is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced. It does not come naturally to most of us. But, it is a rather dangerous skill to learn. When you learn to **listen in order to understand** you run the risk of changing the way you think. Then you need to change too. Someone who does not *want* to change or who is scared of change does not listen attentively.

A feeling of being understood is a sound foundation for a good relationship. You have succeeded in putting yourself in someone else's shoes when you really understand that person. Do you understand why someone is afraid of magic? Do you understand the peer pressure or family pressure your child is under? Do you understand the way



someone who is poor thinks? Do you know what people find offensive in your life?

Communication in the workplace is usually factual. Instructions are given, work is discussed and that is it! Communication at an emotional level rarely occurs. People can work together for years without really knowing or understanding each other.

You need to ask many questions to find out how people think and feel. Questions like: *How do you feel when someone comes to the farm and shakes my hand but ignores you? What happened yesterday to put you in such a foul mood today? Is there something you want to tell me? How do you feel about your home? What is your dream for your family? Tell me more about your childhood. Where did you grow up? What causes you pain and what makes you unhappy?*

People often have a greater need to be understood than to be helped.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray that we will all learn to listen and will not merely delight in airing our own opinion like fools (Proverbs 18:2).
- † Pray for good communication in agriculture. Especially pray for communication between agriculturalists and government. Pray that they will really understand one another and have one another's best interests at heart.
- † Pray that employers and employees will take trouble to understand each other.



## Day 15

### Behave like Jesus

**Read:** 1 John 2:6

I read the following story in a book on mission in the Transkei: *One day a Xhosa man and woman were walking down the road. They were dressed smartly and on their way to a special event. As they walked past a group of street children, one of them spat a ball of green slime at the Xhosa man. The man immediately lost his temper and wanted to grab hold of the child. His wife put her hand on his shoulder and said, **They spat at Jesus too** (Matthew 26:67-68 and 1 Peter 2:21-23). The man immediately prayed out loud, **Put me in your fridge, Lord. Put me in your fridge.***

The Holy Spirit fires us up for Christ. But, He often needs to cool us down when our tempers flare.

Being a Christian is being a disciple of Jesus. Being a disciple is much more than merely knowing certain things, saying grace and going to church. Disciples must follow the example set by their Master (John 13:15 and 1 Peter 2:21). In difficult circumstances be still and ask yourself: **What would Jesus do?** (Many Christians wear *What Would Jesus Do* [WWJD] bracelets to remind them of this question.) Sometimes knowing what Jesus would not have done is easier than knowing what He would do. Do not do what He would not do.

Christians have a clear instruction to live the way Jesus lived. 1 John 2:6 says: ***Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.*** The Holy Spirit is faithful. If you sincerely ask what Jesus would have done in a situation, the Spirit will give you the right answer.

You must walk as Jesus did. Encourage others to do the same. That is what Paul did. In 1 Corinthians 11:1 he writes, *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.* (Also read Philipians 4:9)



Jesus came and demonstrated Proverbs 17:9 and 19:11 to us. *If you want people to like you, forgive them when they wrong you. Remembering wrongs can break up a friendship. And: If you are sensible, you will control your temper. When someone wrongs you, it is a great virtue to ignore it.* (Good News Bible)

You and I should be slow to anger and slow to take offence when others cause us harm. We must always be first to ask for forgiveness when we have wronged someone. This brings us to the next principle for good relationships.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Lord Jesus, by Your Spirit You live in me and by faith I live in You. Grant me your mind (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:16b). Please teach me to think the way You do so that I can walk as You did. Come and live Your life through me.
- † Pray that Christians will always behave impeccably. Pray that they will obey the Word in 1 Peter: *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.*



## Day 16

### Admit that you are wrong

**Read:** 1 Peter 5:5

Only fools believe that they are always right. There are always two sides to everything (Proverbs 18:17).

It is difficult to admit that you are wrong. You sometimes feel forced to do so to someone you consider your superior. However, it is very difficult to admit that you are wrong to those you consider inferior - labourers, children or women. You may feel that it will undermine your authority. You may be afraid that apologising will have a negative effect on your image. You are afraid of being thought weak.

The Lord's pronouncement against pride is damning (James 4:6; Luke 18:9-14; Proverbs 6:16-17; 15:25; 16:18; 17:19; 18:12; 29:23; Zephaniah 3:12). Pride always causes conflict and destroys good relationships (Proverbs 13:10)! Christ expects us to be honest. We may not pretend to always be perfectly right and everyone else wrong (Exodus 20:16 and Ephesians 4:25, and 1 John 1:8-10). Admit that you are wrong and fix it – even if the other person is a worker, a child or a stranger. *...clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, ...* (1 Peter 5:5).

It takes guts to allow and accept criticism and reprimand from a labourer. Saying that you are sorry when you are wrong will compel respect from your staff, children, marriage partner and friends. Mutual recognition and saying you are sorry works wonders. An old man once said,  $10 + 10 = 100$ . When asked what he meant, he said: *I learnt that whenever my wife and I argue and we are both willing to take 10% of the blame the problem is 100% solved.*

You are never 100% innocent (1 John 1:8-10; Proverbs 16:2 and 18:17). Be the first to admit your share of the blame (no matter how small; perhaps something you neglected to do). It is a sign of humility and sincere



repentance. It brings about openness and creates a platform for restored relationships.

When a labourer feels that everything that goes wrong is always his fault and the “boss” is always right he is filled with a lot of pent-up emotions which will erupt sooner or later. This is also true of children who feel that they are always wrong and their parents always right. They feel aggrieved. People who feel aggrieved or victimised, build a wall around themselves to protect themselves from injustice. They isolate themselves and become inapproachable (Proverbs 18:19a). This destroys relationships.

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray for humility in the agricultural community. This will prevent strife and conflict (Proverbs 13:12).
- † Ask the Lord to make you humble enough to be the first to say you are sorry and ask for forgiveness.
- † *If you are sensible, you will control your temper. When someone wrongs you, it is a great virtue to ignore it* (Proverbs 19:11 in the Good News Bible). Pray that this attitude will prevail in the rural and agricultural community.



## PART 4 LABOUR

Although this Prayer Focus is not primarily about labour and work ethics I cannot write about labour relations without saying something about **labour**. If your idea of **work** (labour) does not correspond to God's idea as He teaches us in the Bible, you will have a negative idea of labourers as well. Let us take a brief look at what the Word says about work.

There is a full discussion on **work** in Part 5 of the booklet *Living and Farming God's Way* – it's not a slogan, it's a lifestyle. *BASICS*. It is available in English or Afrikaans. Obtain it by sending an e-mail to [secretary@amosafrica.net](mailto:secretary@amosafrica.net) or download it free of charge from [www.amosafrica.net](http://www.amosafrica.net)

### Day 17 Work is Worship

**Read:** Genesis 1:28 and 1 Corinthians 10:31

**In His Word God says that work (our labour) is not the result of the fall.** Work is not something bad or negative. Work became difficult and hard because of the fall (Genesis 3:17-19). We would still need to work even if Adam and Eve did not sin. The Lord commanded people to live on the earth, to subdue it and rule over it (Genesis 1:28). People had to take care of the earth (Genesis 2:15). To *live, subdue and rule* are all things that must be done – work. By working we are obeying God's command.

The purpose of our labour is firstly to **glorify God** by doing the work He gave us to do. In Genesis the same word is used for *work* and *worship*. It is also the word Paul uses to describe the various offices of the church. (Johan Carstens – *Revolusie in die werkplek* page. xi). That is why we in AMOS confess that **work is part of our worship** of the living God. **Work is Worship!** Therefore, work is a privilege and not a curse!





The Lord commands us to work throughout the Bible:

**before** the fall in Genesis 1,

**after** the fall in the Old Testament,

and in the New Testament **after** Christ reconciled everything in heaven and earth with God on the **cross**

(Colossians 1:20).

It has always been God's will and command that we work.

The fourth commandment (Exodus 20:9) says that we must rest regularly. But, the Lord also clearly states that we must work for six days of the week the way He did. (This does not mean that God only worked for six days and then stopped – Read John 5:17).

2 Thessalonians 3:7-15 tells us just how important work is.

- First of all Paul speaks to the congregation about work in the **Name and by the authority of the Lord**. He is not busy saying what he thinks about work. When he says that we must work he is speaking on God's behalf.
- Secondly, Paul points out to the congregation that he has set the **example**. He worked hard day and night and expects them to follow the example he set. He too obeyed the Lord's command.
- Thirdly, Paul, by the authority of Jesus, **commands** the Christians to focus on their work and to earn their daily living. The Lord wants us to work.
- Fourthly, Paul says that **loafing and laziness must be punished** because they are unacceptable to God. The sluggard is as irritating as smoke in the eyes and vinegar to the teeth (Proverbs 10:26). Laziness is disobedience to God and therefore a **sin**. Christians must stay away from fellow believers who refuse to work. They must pray that the loafers will be ashamed and will start to work. But, the lazy will be punished more severely - they must go hungry. *"If a man will not work, he shall not eat."* (2 Thessalonians 3:10) Because laziness is a sin it leads to poverty and causes pain and suffering. [Read the following Scriptures: Proverbs 6:9-11; Proverbs 14:23; Proverbs 18:9; Proverbs 20:13; Proverbs 24:30-34 and Proverbs 26:13-16.]



Like Paul and the woman in Proverbs 31:10-31, we as Christians must work hard and in doing so, set a good example (Acts 20:35 and Ephesians 4:28).

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Thank the Lord for the privilege of work. Pray against the false idea that work is the result of sin and therefore a curse.
- † Thank the Lord for farm workers and the hard work they do. Ask the Lord to bless them.
- † ***Work is Worship!*** Pray that this conviction will grow among Christians. Pray that agriculturalists (employers and employees, men and women) will therefore always deliver a high standard of work. Pray that they will be proud of their work, no matter how menial it may appear to others.
- † Pray that Africa will do something about the poverty and famine on the continent by hard work. (I know that this is a complex problem. The general idea in Africa is that work is a curse and contributes greatly to the problem of poverty.)

## **Day 18**

### **Work makes love visible**

**Read:** Genesis 29:16-30 and Daniel 6:5-6.

Jacob was willing to work for seven years to marry Rachel. Because he was **motivated by love**, the seven years seemed like only a few days to him (Genesis 29:20). It is still the same today. You are eager to do something for someone you love. Nothing is too much trouble or too difficult.

I believe that Jacob did excellent work for his father-in-law. When Rachel looked at Jacob's work she could see that he truly loved her.



**Work is love made visible!** The teacher, policeman, engineer and agriculturalist prove their love for the community by delivering work of a high standard. The quality of their work proves that they are not seeking their own interest but are working to benefit others.

Our work makes our love for people visible. It makes our love for God visible.

Farming for the One you love is a great privilege. Therefore, do your best. Daniel is a good example (Daniel 6:5-6). He worked for a pagan king who had caused his people much harm. Yet he worked so well that no one could fault it. Daniel's work was of a very high standard because he understood that the heathen king was not his real employer. He was actually working for the Lord whom he loved dearly.

Many people believe the Lord's work is only spiritual. That is a lie. Paul told the slaves who did manual labour that they were in the Lord's service. They had to do their work wholeheartedly and with joy. They had to do it for the Lord (Colossians 3:22-4:1 and Ephesians 6:5-9)! **Farmers, farm workers, factory workers, mine workers, artisans – remember that you are also doing the Lord's work!**

Agriculturalists (employers and employees), remember that we are farming for the Lord. Farming is God's work. We are eradicating intruder plants for the Lord. Because He instructs us to do so, we see to it that we know what our livestock needs. We prune the vineyard for the Lord. We garden for the Lord. We carefully jot down our income and expenditure for the Lord. We do our paperwork for the Lord. We export apples on His behalf. We work our fields and prune our trees for the Lord. We water our plants for the Lord!

It does not matter what you are doing as long as you are doing it well because you are doing it for the Lord; because you love Him and your fellow human beings; and because you want to achieve His high standard.

Farm work is not a disgrace. Farm workers are not inferior even though some of them cannot read and write. No one may look down on them. Like their employers, they are also working for the Lord! Remember that



everyone is equal before the Lord – He favours no one (Ephesians 6:9 and Colossians 3:25 – 4:1).

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Thank the Lord for the privilege you have of working for Him, no matter what your job is.
- † Pray that Christians will work with the same attitude as Jacob and Daniel had.
- † ***Work is Love made Visible!*** Pray that the Lord will teach you, me and all agriculturalists to deliver work of superior quality so that our love for Him and all people will be reflected in our work.

## Day 19

### Work for the right reasons

**Read:** 1 Timothy 5:3-8 and Titus 2:9-10

People often do the right thing for the wrong reason. One of the members of my staff recently wrote his learner's licence examination. He studied hard so that he would *pass the test*. It was the right thing to do but for the wrong reason. The real reason he had to study hard was to become a good road user and a safe driver. The same applies to wearing your safety belt. When I see a traffic officer I quickly fasten my seatbelt *so that I will not be caught without it*. Fastening my seatbelt is the right thing to do but I do it for the wrong reason. I must always wear my safety belt so that I will be safe and not because I don't want to pay a fine.

This lesson may be applied to work. Work is the right thing to do. But why do we work?



Some people work just to get rich and to be able to buy more (1 Timothy 6:6-10 and Proverbs 23:4-5). Other people only work until they have enough to retire (Luke 12:19). For them it is not about the work but about the money. Some people work to be seen and praised and to gain people's favour (Colossians 3:22). Other people only work when hunger forces them to work (Proverbs 16:26).

The Bible gives a few important reasons why we must work. Work is a means to an end.

- **HONOUR:** We must work because God says so. We honour Him by carrying out His instruction. *Work is Worship.*
- **EAT:** We must work so that we can eat and provide for our families (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 and 1 Timothy 5:4 & 8). Eating here refers to the basic requirements of life.
- **GIVE:** We must work to have something to give to the poor (Ephesians 4:28). Giving makes one happier than receiving (Acts 20:35).
- **SERVE:** We serve others by our work. They benefit from what we are doing (1 Timothy 6:2). *Living and Farming God's Way* demands that we farm in a way that will benefit the country (and Africa). *Work is love made visible!*
- **WITNESS:** Christian workers give credibility to the Gospel. By being submissive, honest and reliable, they make the Gospel appealing to the community. Because of the good work we do, the Gospel gains value in the eyes of people. Please read Titus 2:9-10!
- **OUR WORK FOLLOWS US:** In Revelation 14:13 we read that our work has eternal value. If we as **agriculturalists** serve God here and do all we can for Him, we will not come before Him with empty hands one day. He will reward us for our work as He promises in Colossians 3:24. Our work shows whether we are merely being religious or whether we are serving Him for 24 hours of every day.

Work like this and you will be blessed. You will feel fulfilled because you are ruling as God commanded. You will feel proud, worthy and happy. Doing nothing and being of no use to anyone is bad. Living off charity destroys your sense of self-worth and leaves you feeling inferior and worthless.



I want to end this section on **work** with the short story of John. One day I walked into the bathroom at OR Tambo airport. A man greeted me friendly saying, *I am John, your restroom manager. I take pleasure in serving you with nice clean toilets. Enjoy your stay!* I was flabbergasted and so impressed that I almost forgot what I had gone there for! John's few words are a beautiful summary of a great deal of what the Bible teaches about work. May you perform your job with the same attitude no matter what your job may be. May you never look down on someone doing a simple job to the glory of God.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray that Christians will work hard for the right reasons. Pray that they will not make work their idol. Pray that self-interest and self-enrichment will never be the goal of our work.
- † Specifically pray that all Christians (employers and employees) will perform their work in a way that will make the Gospel of Jesus Christ credible, attractive and valuable to the unsaved (cf. Titus 2:9-10).
- † *Work is Love made Visible!* Pray that the Lord will teach you, me and all agriculturalists to always provide work of a very high standard so that our love for Him and all people will be clearly reflected in it.



## PART 5 THE LABOURER

Labour relationships are primarily about **people**. It is all about the relationship between an employer and an employee. Thus, it is essential that we spend time discussing the labourer, the PERSON doing the work. This section is mainly for employers/farmers, but it is important to remember that everything said here about employees also applies to employers. Employers are people albeit people who have more responsibility and different roles to play and things to do than their employees.

### Day 20 What do you think of labourers?

**Read:** Romans 12:1-2 and Proverbs 4:23

Labour and labourers cannot be separated. The labourer labours. What an employer (e.g. a farmer) **THINKS** about his workers will determine how he will **BEHAVE TOWARDS OR TREAT** them. It determines his labour relations and management. When God wants to change our behaviour He always begins by changing and renewing our thoughts because our behaviour is determined by our thoughts. A new lifestyle and improved labour relations start with new thought patterns.

It is important that we make sure that what we think about our labourers is in line with the message of the Bible.

**In general**, what do you think and feel about your farm workers and/or workers in the agricultural sector? Sum it up here in four words:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....



There is a danger that your thinking about your labourers (or about your employer if you are an employee) is determined by your experience, by things that happen daily, things outside you, bad stories others tell (the good stories are never told). Because of what you see, hear and experience you may come to a **conclusion** and then apply it to all farm workers. This picture may become very dark and negative. You may fall into the trap of thinking that farm workers are unable to think for themselves, that they are irresponsible and inferior, that they cannot be trained, are useless, lazy, immoral, superstitious, and alcoholics.

The opposite may also happen. You may feel sorry for farm workers and feel sorry that they are being victimised. Your pity and guilt may blind you to their sin and weaknesses.

You may also compare farm workers' circumstances with the terrible circumstances in large squatter camps and cities. You may decide that farm workers are privileged to live on a farm where housing is provided and they have sufficient food and no daily transport to pay.

What you **think** about your labourers determines your **behaviour** towards them. What employees think about their employers influence their behaviour.

**Christians may not allow their thoughts about their labourers to be determined by the outward only. You must ask: Who is the labourer? Who is the person behind the labour? What does the Word of the Lord have to say about him or her?**

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you in the next few days if what you think about your labourers is in line with the Lord's Word. Pray that the Spirit will show you how your thoughts should be changed and renewed.
- † Pray against the inclination to generalise about people because of a negative experience. [This is called stereotyping. It is the conviction that because one person has done something bad everyone in that group is also bad. This is not true.]





## Day 21

# Labourers: People created in the image of God

**Read:** Genesis 1:27-28

Genesis 1 clearly shows that people are the crown of God's creation. People are referred to as *the image of God*. Employers and employees were created in the image of God. Both are God's representatives on earth. Workers must also live, work and conserve the earth on behalf of God. They must also rule over the animals. Labourers are equally human.

All people were created in the image of God and are therefore equal (Ephesians 6:9b and Colossians 3:25) in spite of the social and labour structures in which we live and work. The fact that all people *are* the image of God gives them special worth. Therefore, everyone must honour and respect everyone else (1 Peter 2:17).

Years ago I drove over a motor grid to a farm. To say that it was a rather simple motor grid is an understatement. "*What a silly motor grid!*", I said when I arrived on the farm. The farmer did not respond. I realised later that he had built the motor gate himself and my comment was a personal insult to him.

Proverbs 14:31 teaches that people's attitude and behaviour either honour or insult their Maker (cf. Proverbs 17:5). People are God's handiwork. People are the pinnacle of God's creation. They represent God. Therefore, you must respect all people: rich and poor, black and white, employers and employees, the saved and the unsaved. People are still the image of God, even after the fall and even though this image has been spoiled by sin (Genesis 9:6 and James 3:9).

It is not necessary to provide more examples of contemptuous and humiliating names labourers are sometimes called. Your labourers, good or bad, literate or not, able or not, all represent God on earth. Therefore, God expects you to treat them with respect.



Does the way you address your workers and the names you call them reflect honour and respect?

***“Tribalism is a deadly disease in Africa!”*** Racism (the belief that one tribe, race or nation is better than another) does not only occur between white, brown and black. Racism also exists between tribes and races with the same skin colour. It occurs throughout Africa. Racism causes conflict and injustice. Hear this loudly and clearly: **Racism is sin! There is no justification for racism in Scripture. Woe to those who twist and distort Scripture to justify their ideologies; ideologies born out of conceit, superiority and racism.** They must be careful. The same lot may befall them as befell the people we read about in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11.

Be careful what you think about your workers, how you speak to them and what you say behind their backs. We will all have to account for all the frivolous and slanderous words we utter (Matthew 12:34-37 and Matthew 5:21-22).

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray that employers and employees will honour and respect one another and consider one another bearers of the image of God.
- † Confess feelings of superiority and insulting comments you are inclined to make to or about your workers.
- † Pray against racism (and tribalism) and the negative influence it has on labour relations. Talk to the Lord about the bad fruit racism bears. Confess what needs to be confessed!



## Day 22

### Labourers:

### People with potential and limitations

**Read:** Genesis 1:27-28

Unlike animals, people created in the image of God are able to have relationships with God and other people. People can think and reason, make choices and decisions, have emotions and love, can make tools that they can use to make things.

As human beings, people are filled with potential, skill and promise. There are many reasons why they may remain unused and undeveloped in many people, but they are still there.

Look at the next image: Parents start encouraging their child to walk from the age of about ten months. They do not say that the child cannot walk. They say that the child **cannot walk yet**. They believe in the child's potential to start walking soon. If they push the child down and warn him not to try to walk (because he may fall and get hurt) every time he tries, the child will never learn to walk.

If an employer does not believe in the potential of his workers he will behave accordingly and their skill and potential will never develop. Keep expressing your belief in the God-given potential of your labourers. Encourage them to learn and to keep developing their skill. Do not keep deciding or doing everything for your workers. Rather teach them to solve problems and to make responsible decisions. Expose them to new things. Systematically give them more responsibility to enable them to become responsible, mature and independent. An adult, responsible worker is worth his weight in gold.



Use the many courses available and train your staff. You may not notice the fruit and results immediately, but I can testify to the astonishing growth of workers who have been exposed to training for a period of ten years. Every farming business should budget time and money for the training of their staff.

People have a lot of potential but remain creatures with limitations. They are not the *Creator*. When you think of all the wonderful things people have achieved in the field of science and technology it is easy to over-estimate people. But, when you see how people battle to control their tongues you realise how weak and limited they are. [Someone once said, *My tongue often slips, because it is always in a wet place.*] The danger exists that you expect too much from your workers too soon. Your workers, like you, have limitations. You must be very patient.

Africa has a population of about one billion people aged nineteen. I see a continent of untold potential just waiting to be unlocked and developed. What do you see? Darkest Africa?

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Ask the Lord to help you to believe in the potential of your staff and not to be blinded by their present limitations.
- † Ask the Lord to grant employers the ability to treat their staff according to what they can become and not according to what they are like now.
- † Pray that ongoing training will become a priority in every farming and agricultural business.



# Day 23

## Labourers: People with normal needs

**Read:** 1 Thessalonians 5:23

People were created in the image of the Triune God. People did not develop out of an animal or other living organism over a period of time. People are spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

<b>spirit = pneuma</b>	<b>soul = psuche</b>	<b>Body = soma</b>
<p>The part of me by which I am linked to God and the spiritual world.</p>	<p>The part of me in which I think, reason, make decisions, feel (emotions) and have relationships with people.</p> <p>[W = my <u>w</u>ill I = my <u>i</u>ntellect E = my <u>e</u>motions]</p>	<p>The part of me by which I express what is happening in my spirit and soul and through which I live.</p>

The practical implication of this is that labourers (like employers) have needs at the level of the spirit, soul and body. Keep this in mind when you pray for your staff.

Your staff members have a *religious need*, a need for God. If no one tells them about God they will try to satisfy their need by worshipping mute idols, their ancestors and demons. If they do not know God they will literally grab hold of anything else – alcohol, money or sex – to try to satisfy this need. This puts pressure on labour relations. However, seeing and experiencing God’s Fatherly love through you will go a long way to convincing them that the Gospel is a Good Message (Titus 2:10).

Your staff members also have *emotional needs*. They want to be happy, feel safe and worthy. I recall something that happened in about 1990, during the last years of apartheid in South Africa. Political emotions were running high in the town where I lived.



One day, a *politically far right farmer* came across and tried to attack someone who worked for a *far left farmer*. The worker ran away through the veld. The farmer vented his anger on the worker's bicycle and flattened it with his bakkie. The farm worker's employer did not know how to handle the situation and brought the man to me. I cannot remember what I told the worker, but I greeted him, received him in my study and offered him coffee. A month or so later, the farmer asked his worker whether the problem had been solved. To his amazement, the worker replied, *Auk, the Moruti greeted me by hand*. It was the handshake that restored his sense of self-worth and not the new bicycle his employer had given him.

Labourers have intellectual needs too. They want to experiment, make independent decisions and be trained. They also think and reason about things, even if not about the same issues as their employers. They want their employer to ask them for advice too. They want to be empowered and to feel empowered whether it is by being able to write their name, get their driver's license or do an advanced computer course. Like other skills, intellectual empowerment develops people's self-esteem and self-image. Workers with a positive self-image are worth their weight in gold to any business.

Labour relations will improve if employers remember that their workers have social needs. Apart from annual leave, workers sometimes want time off to visit others, receive visitors or do something at home. They want to be part of a group. They want to be *in*. Farm schools and soccer teams can contribute to developing a communal identity and pride. Clear but simple farm rules provide security to everyone on the farm.<sup>2</sup> Labour relations will improve if everyone knows what is expected of them and what they can expect from others. A farm "braai" and get together where work is not discussed can have a wonderful effect on relationships.

There are also many physical needs: food, shoes, warm clothes, clean water and toilet facilities, recreational facilities even just a TV. The fact that many farm workers never own a house is a problem, especially after

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<sup>2</sup> Amos has a Farm Devotions booklet entitled *Farm Rules*. It is short and clear but wide-ranging.



retirement. They need something that is their own and that cannot be taken away from them overnight if the farm is sold.

What is the conclusion? To have good labour relations, you must see the labourer as a human being and understand his or her normal needs. A labourer is much more than a tool doing a particular job. Talk to your staff about more than just their job. Ask questions so that you will be able to get to know the person inside. Ignore their humanity and you will soon be confronted by complicated labour problems.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Talk to the Lord about your labourers' needs. (Perhaps you should start by asking them what their needs are.)
- † Pray that labourers in the rural and agricultural community will be treated humanely.
- † Pray for positive communication between employers and employees. Pray that communication will not be limited to instructions about work.

## **Day 24**

### **Labourers:**

### **People for whom a price has been paid**

**Read:** Luke 19:10

Like everyone else, farm workers are also born in sin (Psalm 51:7 and Romans 3:23). They are also inclined to hate God and their neighbour (Romans 5:10 and Titus 3:3). Unsaved farm workers are far from God, without hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12).

*The acts of the sinful nature (of employers and employees) are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies and the like (Galatians 5:19-21a).*



Employers must always keep these sins and the tragic result thereof in their workers' lives in mind. Farm workers are not angels. Discipline, admonishment and punishment are often necessary. See Part 8 on page 83

But, God sent His Son for all sinners. God's grace and love are for farm workers too (John 3:16; Romans 5:8-10). He wants to reconcile them to Him in Christ too (Titus 3:4). He wants to give them His Holy Spirit, too (Acts 10:44-47). He wants to recreate them into the Image of His Son (2 Corinthians 3:18). He wants them to call Him *ABBA FATHER* through the Spirit (Romans 8:15-16). He wants them to live lives of obedience to Him (Romans 15:18).

Someone's value is not determined by what they can do for you but by the price God in His love was willing to pay for that person. Remember that God paid exactly the same price for everyone: **His Son on the cross** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 1 Peter 1:18-19). Therefore, all people are equal in value. Think about it like this: A brand new R100 note has exactly the same value as a R100 note that has been spoiled and crumpled by life. You get exactly the same in exchange for both. No matter how dirty and messy sin has made someone's life, they are just as valuable to God as you are.

If you call yourself a Christian you must be available to pass God's grace and love on to your labourers. You must be God's fellow-worker. God's will and desire must be your will and desire. He wants to save everyone (Matthew 18:14; 1 Timothy 2:3-6 and 2 Peter 3:9) and you must help Him do so (Acts 26:16-20).

Your labourers have a right to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ!

Your labourers who have been saved are your brothers and sisters in Christ. Philemon 15-16 says, *Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a while was that you might have him back for good - no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.* One of the things this means is that you may





celebrate Communion together – a tangible testimony that you are one with Christ and with each other (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). It also has radical and far-reaching implications for your working relationship. Things will change spontaneously when you start thinking of your worker as your brother or sister. The first change will be to the content of your conversations and when communication changes, everything else changes.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † *Lord, help me to remember that you paid the same price for my workers as for me. Help me to remember this before I judge them according to something that gives offence.*
- † Pray for greater unity between Christian workers and Christian employers.
- † Pray for the wisdom of knowing how to restore and rebuild labour relations in spite of negative influences.

## **Day 25**

### **Labourers will also be called to account**

**Read:** Romans 14:10-12

God speaks to people in and through God (Hebrews 1:1-2). People are called to believe and to accept the reconciliation He has brought about through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20-21). All people were created in the image of God. They are also commanded to *be* the image of God (Ephesians 4:23-24). This means that people, employers and employees, must live as Jesus lived because He is the true image of the Father (1 John 2:6 and Hebrews 1:3).

This means people are **responsible beings**. They will one day be called to account for what they have done (Hebrews 2:2-3; Romans 14:10-12 and Matthew 12:36 and 25:31-46). Therefore, every Christian, employer and employee, should consider their relationship as an opportunity to share



the Good News: "... to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18). You may not leave your fellow sinful human being to his fate.

I once visited a farmer in KwaZulu-Natal shortly after Christmas. He was very negative about his workers. *"They were all drunk again at Christmas – like they have been every Christmas for the last 25 years!"* he said. I asked him what he had done in the last 25 years to try to solve the problem. His answer was abrupt, *"It's their problem! They must just get off the farm at Christmas."* As a Christian you cannot turn a blind eye to the sin of your workers. In love, you must do more than judge and complain.

**Productivity in agriculture is essential. But, a Christian farmer may never be so concerned with work and profit that he does not see his workers as human beings.**

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray that workers will always be seen and treated as human beings and not merely as machines, equipment or a means of production.
- † Pray that the rural and agricultural community will remember that they will have to account to God for what they did with Christ (John 3:16-18 and Hebrews 10:28-29) and about their relationship with one another and all people (1 John 3:23).
- † Read Ezekiel 3:18-19 and pray about it.



## PART 6

### EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment! That is the buzzword today. It is usually politically charged and viewed negatively by many – those who are being *forced* to empower others and those who must be empowered. Empowerment is often *slimmed down* to apply only to economic empowerment. I beg that we will look at empowerment in a new way.

The process of empowerment (*equipping, enabling*) starts with God. **Because God has empowered me and is still empowering me every day, I can and must empower others.** You and I are empowered to empower others. How does God empower us? **God's Way!** Let us empower others **God's Way!**

Working with people who have been **disempowered** is a nightmare! Empowerment is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

## Day 26

### Empowerment starts with God

**Read:** 2 Peter 1:2-4

One of the God's Way principles the Word is clear about is ***open hands!*** God shares everything He is and everything He has with us. In Genesis 1 we read that He shares His image, His breath, His creativity and His reign over earth with people. In the New Testament we read that Christ gave Himself to us when he hung on the cross with open hands. A flood of gifts and blessings pours down over us from His open hands – too many and too much to name.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [The booklet, *Living and Farming God's Way* – it's not a slogan, it's a lifestyle. *BAS/CS*, discusses the ***open hands*** principle in full. It is available in English and Afrikaans and may be ordered from [secretary@amosafrica.net](mailto:secretary@amosafrica.net). Or download it free of charge from [www.amosafrica.net](http://www.amosafrica.net) ]



By sharing everything He is and has with us God empowers us to carry out the calling and job that He has given us.

Peter writes: *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness ...* (2 Peter 1:3). God has equipped and empowered us for the kind of life He wants us to live. He did so in various ways and He is still doing so today. *Thank you, Lord! You are an indescribably wonderful good God.*

Thus, empowerment is a **process** whereby one is equipped and enabled to perform a task successfully or to achieve a particular goal. Each new generation must be empowered for their task and calling in the world.

Because empowerment, like raising children, is a **process**, it does not happen overnight. It is a **compound process** and not *something* that can be done once. You must keep doing *various things* in order to successfully empower your children or your labourers.

For the next few days we are going to look at how God empowers us so that we can empower others in the same way.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Praise and worship the Lord for being a God with open hands. Thank Him for the way in which He empowers you to fulfil your calling.
- † Pray that every Christian parent and every Christian employer will have a growing desire to empower their children and their staff the way God empowers them.
- † Pray for a positive attitude and mindset regarding empowerment. Pray for patience and perseverance as this can be a long and often difficult process.



## Day 27

### Empower by blessing

**Read:** Genesis 1:27-28, Luke 24:50-51 and 1 Peter 3:9

God empowered Adam and Eve by blessing them. This was the **very first** thing He did. Thus He enabled them to be His representatives and to carry out His command (Genesis 1:27-28). The **very last** thing Jesus did as He ascended into heaven was to bless His disciples so that they could carry out His instruction (Luke 24:50-51).

**Empowerment is all about pronouncing blessing.** The Lord commands us to bless all people, not only the good (Luke 6:27-28 and 1 Peter 3:9). You must choose to obey. You must choose to bless. Decide to do so today.

When you leave your farm you may have one of the following two conversations. Choose the one you will have.

*“Being away from the farm is a risk. I can’t just leave it to itself. The workers are lazy and unreliable. I don’t know what they are going to get up to when they are drunk. They have already caused me so much trouble. I am more stressed when I am away from the farm than when I am there!”*

OR

*“Lord, thank you for the privilege of being able to get away and rest. In your Name I bless my people with reliability and responsibility. I bless them with wisdom to make the right decisions while I am away. I bless their homes and their marriages so that nothing will happen to hurt them so that they will not be negative at work. I ask You to bless every one of them, Lord.”*

It is your choice. Decide what the consequences will be of each discussion. I have made my choice. Why should I make my workers worse by always saying bad things about them? The tongue has the power of life and death (Proverbs 18:21).



I use my tongue to plant the seed of that which I want to reap. I am blessed by the Father and so I choose to bless my staff with the good qualities I would like to see in their lives. The last thing we usually do on our farm before we leave is to join hands with our staff to pray and to bless one another. That is the last thing Jesus did before He ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50-51). You need not wait until someone leaves before blessing them. Empower your staff to do their work by blessing them in the Name of the Lord every day. Read Ruth 2:4 to see how Boaz and his workers greeted each other in the morning.

Throughout the Bible, blessing plays an important part in equipping people (including children) to be what they must be and to do what they must do.

It is a privilege to empower workers by blessing them in the Name of the Lord! You and I have an *unfair advantage* over non-believing employers. We can empower our staff by calling down the Lord's blessing over them and knowing that He *will* bless them (Numbers 6:27). Unbelievers do not have this privilege. They have to try to do everything themselves. (I truly feel sorry for them!)

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † You must be blessed to bless others. Ask the Lord to open your eyes so that you will see how blessed you are in Christ Jesus and how blessed you are in your circumstances.
- † Pray that every Christian agriculturalist will empower his children and workers by continually proclaiming the Lord's blessing over them.
- † Pray **Ephesians 4:27**. *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*
- † ***Bless your labourers!***



## Day 28

### Empower with responsibility

**Read:** Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:15

One of our students did not drive again for four years after getting her driver's licence. Her parents were afraid that she would bump the car. She had acquired the skill in vain because she lost the ability to drive. There are many similar stories. People are trained, equipped and empowered, but often don't get an opportunity or the responsibility to use their skill.

God blessed Adam and Eve to enable them to carry out His command. He did even more. He appointed them over the earth to live, work and preserve it. He appointed them to a particular position. People had to rule over God's handiwork (Psalm 8:7-9). People had to make certain decisions for themselves.

God entrusted the earth to Adam so completely that he could do as he pleased with it. God put what would become of the earth and its inhabitants, good or bad, in Adam's hands and the hands of his descendents. **God finally decided** not to take responsibility for earth back from **humans**. **Therefore, He had to become human Himself to fix what Adam had messed up.** God became human in Christ. Christ became the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). Only as a **human being** could God change the fate and the destination of that which he entrusted to people.

When you want to empower your workforce, you must give them a specific task and responsibility. You must put them in a position to do their work. You must give them the right to make certain decisions, especially decisions about their work.

You cannot empower someone to be a team leader by merely letting them attend a course. You empower someone by appointing them as team leaders and giving them the responsibility that goes with the position. I have seen an ordinary, illiterate farm worker grow and develop over a period of 10 years to rise above all the others. It only



happened because he was put in the position to do so and given the responsibility for it. **He was continuously empowered for the position in which he was appointed. But, the position also empowered him continuously.**

Just like Adam, there is always a risk when you give someone responsibility and the right to make certain decisions. It may sometimes cost you dearly, but there is no other way to empower people. You must put them in a position where they can use their knowledge and skills. If mistakes happen, you must be willing to accept some of the responsibility for solving the problem.

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray for the empowerment of the rural and agricultural community.
- † Pray for the appointment of young people who have studied agriculture. Pray that they will get an opportunity to supplement their theoretical knowledge with practical skills.

## **Day 29**

### **Empower by your presence**

**Read:** Exodus 3:12 and 4:12-15, and Joshua 1:5 & 9

Do you want to change your workers without letting them get close enough to you to influence them? Sorry, it doesn't work that way. Empowerment is all about your personal and ongoing involvement in people's lives. That is how you empower your children. It is also how you empower others.

Every time God gave someone an instruction, He assured them that He would be with them personally. He was with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:8). He said to Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Jeremiah and the disciples,





*I am with you* (Exodus 3:12 & 4:12-15; Joshua 1:5 7 9; Judges 6:16; Jeremiah 1:8 & 19; Matthew 28:20). His presence freed them from the paralysing fear of failure. His presence gave them the boldness to take the risk and to try. They knew that He was always there to help them when they were weak, when they made mistakes and needed advice. His presence provided them with a safe environment in which to learn, work, develop and grow.

Empowerment demands mentorship. Mentorship demands that you go the distance with those you are empowering. You must be accessible. Empowerment is *personal*. It takes place in a close relationship. It occurs *one-on-one* when chatting to each other on your way somewhere. It also happens in small groups while reading the Word together or chatting at a *braai*. It is a lengthy process. You need to deposit sufficient time, money and energy in someone to make a real difference.

Where empowerment is concerned, you must remember: “*Less is more and slow is fast!*” You cannot empower many people simultaneously. You will be more successful by slowly and purposefully empowering one person (or a few people) than by trying to do something big once in a while.

I often hear employers say, *Keep the workers in their place – at arm’s length. Don’t be too friendly – they will become too familiar.* But, if they are believers, they are family (Ephesians 2:19). Spiritual family ties do not undermine authority. Close relationships will not undermine your authority or that of anyone else you appoint. Keeping people at arm’s length will not give you more authority.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Thank the Lord for His ongoing involvement in your life.
- † Talk to the Lord about your personal involvement in the lives of your staff. Ask Him to tell you what to do.



## Day 30

### Empower with skills

**Read:** Exodus 31:1-6 and 35:30 to 36:1

By His Spirit, God has always equipped His children to do their work. Read how the Spirit gave David (1 Samuel 16:13 and Psalm 78:72) and the artisans making the temple equipment the skills they needed (Exodus 35:30 to 36:1). Consider the gifts of the Spirit which enable God's children to make disciples and to serve one another (1 Corinthians 12 and 14).

I remember spending time with my grandfather Jan in his workshop on the farm when I was a child. I watched what he was doing and with small, clumsy hands, I started hammering pieces of wood together. I saw the beautiful trays he made from scrap wood and as time went by, I started doing it, too. We are still using the first tray I made. My father taught me to put up fences, lay bricks and to weld when I was a child. What a privilege! Manual skills are things you learn over a long period of time. But, you need patient, loving teachers to show and help you and to encourage you to learn from your mistakes.

My parents and grandparents transferred more than manual skills to me. They taught me to dream about the future, to have ideals, to solve problems, handle conflict, to persevere, to spend my time well and to be self-motivated. They taught me the principles of business and how to use money. They taught me to work hard and to take pride in my work. My father-in-law always said, *My child, no one asks how long it took you to do something. All they ask is: Who did this?*

I once addressed a group of farmers about empowering their workers. I spoke about the issues in the previous paragraph that I call *root skills*. One of the big stud farmers said to me afterwards: *Today I was shocked to realise that I don't even take the trouble to teach my children these skills, never mind my workers!*



Wake-up! Absent fathers are a big stumbling block in the effective transfer of skills. Skills, especially *root skills*, can be lost in a single generation. Similarly, knowledge of God can be lost in one generation (Judges 2:7-10). Transferring skills from one generation or group to the next is essential for progress. The next generation must be more skilful than the present generation. But, it won't happen by itself. Skills must be resolutely transferred and developed!

Boet Pretorius, a Zimbabwean farmer who lost all three his farms in 2001, asked a subsistence farmer in Zambia what his dream was. The ambitious young man answered, *I want to be the best farmer in Zambia*. Later the Zambian asked Boet: *Sir, do you have any dreams left since you lost everything?* Boet replied: *Yes. My dream is to make you the best farmer in Zambia.*

How successful are you really if you are a good farmer but do not succeed in empowering others to become good or even better farmers than you are?

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Thank the Lord for the skills He has given you.
- † Pray for the effective transfer of manual skills. Especially pray for the transfer of *root skills* to children, workers and the next generation of agriculturalists.
- † Talk to the Lord about the problem of absent fathers in agriculture. They hinder the transfer of skills. (Migrant labour and seasonal labour often take fathers away from their families for extended periods. Divorce and illegitimate children also contribute to the problem. Fathers may live at home but still be absent from their children's lives because they spend too much time working, sitting in front of the television or with friends.)



## Day 31

# Empower with knowledge

**Read:** Isaiah 28:23-29

The saying goes **Knowledge is power**. Knowledge helps you know how things work. It helps you to understand life. It enables you to make good informed decisions. Knowledge of something gives you the courage to discuss it with others. It boosts your self-image and sense of self-worth. Knowledge precedes prosperity (Proverbs 3:13-18 and 24:3-4).

God empowers His children with **knowledge** of Himself and His Word. This equips them to live (and farm) the way He wants them to (2 Timothy 3:15-17 and 1 Peter 1:3). In Psalm 119:98-100 David confesses that knowledge of God's Word and will gives him more insight than his enemies or the elders. The wisdom and knowledge God gives you enable you as a farmer to do the right thing the right way and at the right time (Isaiah 28:26 & 29). Hosea says that his people *are destroyed because of lack of knowledge* (Hosea 4:6). This is also true of individuals and farming businesses. A lack of knowledge, especially knowledge of God, is destructive. Without knowledge people lose restraint (Proverbs 29:18) and businesses collapse.

Wise agriculturalists always seek knowledge. They also use every possible opportunity to train their staff or to have them trained. **Training, like fuel and salaries, should be a fixed item on every farm's budget. You will never get time for training. You must make time for training – just because you consider it important.** You will probably not notice the difference after one training session or course. However, if you allow your staff to be trained regularly and keep making time to train them, you will realise you are ahead of other farming businesses in a few years' time.

Empower your staff with knowledge of God and His Word<sup>4</sup>. Empower them with knowledge of farming. Discuss issues with your staff. Explain

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<sup>4</sup> Amos Agrimin has a good course, **Basic Truths of the Word**. It is available in various languages.



your decisions to them. Take them with you when you go somewhere. Expose them to new experiences. Broaden their horizons. Whatever you do, focus on empowering your staff with knowledge.

The worst decision a farmer can make, is *not* to train his staff. He justifies his decision by saying: *It doesn't help to train them, because as soon as they have been trained, they go somewhere else to earn more money.* Your job and calling is to make sure that everyone exits your employment a better person, more equipped than when they came to you.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray that the rural and agricultural community will get to know God. Pray that they will desire to read and study His Word.
- † Pray that employers will be willing to keep training their employees.
- † Pray that training will always be part of every farm's budget.

## **Day 32**

### **Empower people by praying for them**

**Read:** John 17:20

I feel sorry for unbelievers. They muddle along through life. They do not have the privilege of spending time before the Throne.<sup>5</sup> They do not realise the value of prayer or the role it plays in the empowerment of their staff.

Jesus' life on earth was characterised by prayer. *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.* (Mark 1:35 and Luke 5:16).

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<sup>5</sup> Boer voor die Troon is available PDF free at [www.amosafrica.net](http://www.amosafrica.net) or can be ordered at [secretary@amosafrica.net](mailto:secretary@amosafrica.net).



Jesus did not pray in general. He prayed specifically for His disciples by name (Lukas 22:31-32). By His prayers, He empowered His disciples to carry out His instructions. Read His gripping prayer in John 17. He even prayed for us who would only be converted centuries later because of the testimony of His disciples (John 17:20). He is still interceding for us with the Father today (Hebrews 7:25).

Paul also kept praying for the people he served. He kept praying that they would grow spiritually and become mature Christians (2 Corinthians 13:9 and Colossians 1:9-11). In Galatians 4:19 he says: *"My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, ..."*

I want to encourage you to pray for your staff. Call out their names before the Throne of God. Pray for each individual. Be specific in your requests. Ask that the Lord will empower them by His Spirit and His Word and will enable them to become the people He wants them to be.

You need not do it all on your own. You have the privilege of being able to ask the Spirit to help you. You can come before the Throne with your workers' names on your lips at any time. Jesus is doing the same (Hebrews 7:25).

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Ask the Father to turn the rural and agricultural community into a praying community.
- † Pray for your staff - mention their names before the Throne of God.



## PART 7

### MOTIVATED TO BE PRODUCTIVE

You need to treat your staff members well, fairly and with respect. The Lord commands it. It is part of *Living and Farming God's Way*. **But, treating them well and with respect does not necessarily make them more productive.** It merely stops them from complaining and doing as little as possible.

To motivate your staff members to be productive demands more than treating them well. *By treating them well you are releasing the brake, but still not moving the car.*

Try to read the book by **Dr. Arnold Mol**, *Creating Winners in the Workplace (Motivating People Towards Excellence)*. You can also order a series of DVD's on this topic by Dr Mol from Amos Agrimin Northern Cape by sending an e-mail to [secretary@amosafrica.net](mailto:secretary@amosafrica.net).

## Day 33

### Productivity

**Read:** Proverbs 6:6-11

Productivity is very important. Three things have a direct influence on productivity:

- The **amount** of work that is done;
- The **quality** of the work that is done;
- The **time** spent on doing the work.

It is a fact that you get what you measure. If you merely measure how many trees each worker prunes, he/she will rush to prune as many trees as possible at the expense of good work. That is counterproductive. On the other hand, if you only measure how well they work they will work



thoroughly but slowly. That is also counterproductive. You need to measure **all three of the above together** in order to measure productivity. The worker who does the **most work** at a **high standard** in a **given time** is most productive. Workers must, where possible, be paid according to their productivity and not just per day or per task.

Many factors contribute to unproductiveness:

- Generally slack culture on the farm;
- Absence of a Biblical work ethic;
- Ignorance (does not know or understand the job);
- Inexperience;
- Problems at home and emotional scars;
- Ill-health (that may be caused by tobacco, alcohol or immorality);
- Bad relationships between employer and employee;
- Fatigue due to bad diet or lack of sleep;
- Etc.

These things should be prevented and eliminated. However, this still does not mean workers will be productive. The handbrake has been released but the car is still not moving.

Learn about productivity from ants (Proverbs 6:6-11):

1. Be self-motivated;
2. Think ahead;
3. Do not procrastinate.

Only motivated workers are productive. Employers often try to motivate their workers by threatening to punish them or by bribery. It may make them move faster but it certainly does not motivate them. What will motivate them? What will make them *self*-motivated?

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray against everything that undermines productivity.
- † Pray for a willingness to be as self-motivated and productive as ants.





## Day 34

# Pride is the key to motivation

**Read:** Colossians 3:23; Ephesians 6:7 and Galatians 6:4

The Lord commands workers to work wholeheartedly, with enthusiasm (this applies to us all). Therefore, employers should present the work in a way that will make workers enjoy doing it and be proud of it.

Mol says, "To put it bluntly: If your subordinates do not go home at the end of the day (week/month) with a feeling of *'Wow! Look how good I am! Look what I have achieved!'*, you have failed to motivate them." (*Creating Winners in the Workplace* – p. 17)

Pride is the key to motivation. Thus the question is: **What makes workers proud?** What motivates workers?

### 1. Experiencing success

All people have a basic need to feel successful. Thus, it is important to focus on what must be achieved and not merely on what must be done. Clear, achievable goals are required. For instance, say, *Peter, you must see to it that at least four kinds of vegetables are available to the kitchen to feed 25 students throughout the year.* Do not just say, *Peter, you are responsible for the vegetable garden.* How will he ever know whether he is being successful or not?

Clear goals make it possible to measure achievement and to keep score. Keeping score encourages a desire to improve.

Goals must be achievable. Set goals that are too high and your workers probably will not achieve them. They will not feel successful. It will demotivate them. Lower goals that can be achieved will motivate them more than high goals that cannot be reached.



Involve your workers in the process of setting goals. When they set a goal and achieve it they will feel *“We were right”*. If you set a higher goal without their input and they reach it, it will merely mean that you were right and they were wrong. Nobody wants to be wrong and workers will not be motivated to reach your goals. When workers achieve a goal that they helped set they will probably set a higher goal next time.

## **2. Responsibility (including the right to make decisions)**

Workers are motivated by responsibility. Responsibility is not a personality trait. It is not true that some have it and others don't. Responsibility goes hand in hand with making decisions. The one who has the say bears the responsibility. Responsibility is not the responsibility of the one who does the job. Responsibility is the responsibility of the one who makes the decisions. If you expect your staff to be responsible, you must give them the right to make their own decisions about issues related to their jobs. Two people cannot be responsible for the same thing.

A farmer who is very involved in agriculture is often away from his farm. When he is away his foreman, Simon, who is illiterate, makes all the decisions. Simon takes full responsibility for the farm and everything carries on as usual. *“I don't have a problem with Simon when I am away, but he stops thinking as soon as I get home. Then he does nothing unless I tell him to do it.”* The reason is clear: As soon as he is home, the farmer makes all the decisions again. He takes the responsibility out of Simon's hands.

Dare to give your staff the right to make their own decisions about their work. You will be astonished by how responsible they become.



### 3. Acknowledgement of achievements

Everyone wants ALSA (**A**cknowledgement, **L**ove, **S**ecurity and **A**ceptance). The need for acknowledgement is one of the most basic needs everyone has. (Read Proverbs 27:5.) Acknowledgement for work well done is an excellent means of motivation but few employers give it often.

*I read a cartoon strip of a typical South African family, in which the house owner received a call from someone asking if he needed a gardener. He replied that he already had one. The caller then wanted to know if his gardener was good and whether he could be left to work on his own. Again the house owner assured the caller that he had an excellent gardener and that he did not need anybody else. The caller, however, persisted and asked whether his gardener kept the family car sparkling clean, and whether he could be used as a waiter when guests arrived at the house. The house owner very impatiently told the caller that his gardener was superb in every aspect, and then demanded to know who the caller was. It turned out to be his own gardener. 'I just wanted to know if you were still satisfied with my work.' (Arnold Mol: Creating Winners in the Workplace, page 44).*

Most people believe the lie that you can improve people by scolding them. The truth is that only recognition and positive feedback can motivate someone to do better. Your attitude should be **“Catching my people doing things right”**.

If you have worthless workers, it is probably because you have so belittled them by your criticism that that is how they feel! Unmotivated and irresponsible workers are usually a management problem. The problem does not lie in the workers themselves.



You can motivate your staff and make them more responsible by making them feel proud:

1. Set clear and **measurable goals** so that they can be successful.
2. Allow workers to make as many decisions possible by **themselves**. Accepting responsibility is directly linked to the right to make decisions.
3. Keep giving **recognition and positive feedback** for work well done.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Talk to the Lord about your style of management. Pray and ask Him to help you to motivate and manage your staff in a way that will allow them to work with enthusiasm.
- † Pray that the Lord will richly bless this prayer focus and the DVDs of Dr. Arnold Mol. Pray that they will help to improve relationships in the workplace.
- † Pray for your staff by name.



## PART 8

# WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Everything does not always go right in an imperfect world full of broken people. What must you do when workers do not do their job, do not fulfil their responsibility, do not fulfil their roles as they should, do not keep the farm rules? You cannot ignore these things because relationships and productivity suffer.

Swearing and shouting and resorting to violence are unacceptable to our Lord. It saddens His Spirit who lives in us (Ephesians 4:29-32). What must we do?

### Day 35

## Discipline

**Read:** Proverbs 3:11-12 and 13:24

People think forgivingness, patience, love and tolerance are the opposite of discipline. That is untrue. Like love, discipline is also a Biblical principle. The Word teaches that love and discipline go hand in hand (Hebrews 12:4-8 and Revelation 3:19).

The answer to the question of how Christian employers should apply discipline in the workplace is simple: ***Like the Lord!*** The general guideline for relationships discussed on Day 11 applies here.

The Old Testament clearly demonstrates how the Lord disciplined His people:

Deuteronomy uses the image of fatherly love to express God's love for His people. Fatherly love has two distinct qualities:

- care – Deuteronomy 1:31
- discipline – Deuteronomy 8:5



The people **knew exactly** what the Lord expected of them. Broad principles such as love and obedience were made clear. Similarly, there were specific rules and regulations for every aspect of life. (Read the first five books of the Bible and you will see that this is so.)

The rules were clearly spelled out. So were the  **blessing for obedience and the consequences of disobedience** (Deuteronomy 28).

Deuteronomy 27:9-26 states that those who do certain things will be cursed. The people had to reply “*Amen*”, thereby implying that they **understood**. They also confirmed that they **agreed** to the punishment for breaking the rules. They could not later claim that they did not know or understand.

Whenever the people disobeyed God and broke the rules, the Lord **warned** them through His prophets (Nehemiah 9:26-31; Jeremiah 11:7-8 and Revelation 2:4-5). He called them to account and pleaded with them to heed His warnings. He gave them ample opportunity for remorse and repentance. His patience is amazing!

The Lord never left His people in the dark about the **nature and scope of their transgressions** (Psalm 50:16-22 and Isaiah 59:3 et seq.). He spelled it out to them in detail. Similarly, workers must know exactly what the nature and consequences of their offences are. If not, they will never learn from their mistakes. Not knowing why they are being punished will result in rebellion and bitterness. Everyone is inclined to be blind to their own sin and mistakes (Proverbs 16:2 & 21:2; Psalm 19:13a, and Malachi 1:6-7 & 3:7-8). Therefore, you as the employer should not merely accept that your labourers know and understand what they did wrong.

The Lord **punished** His people whenever they were disobedient, for example by postponing the fulfilment of His promise. Israel could not enter the Promised Land immediately but had to wander around in the desert for forty years (Numbers 14:26-35). He also ignored the people when they called to Him for help (Isaiah 59:1-2 and Hosea 5:15). When they persevered in their disobedience and remained defiant they were eventually taken into exile (Jeremiah 52).

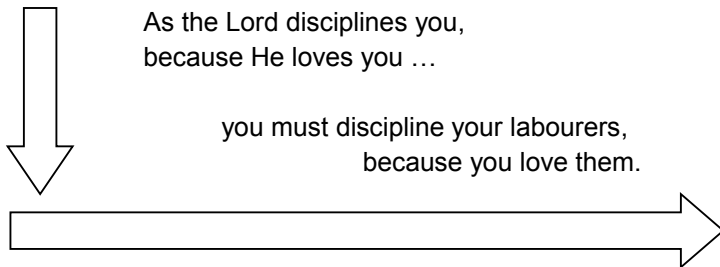


It was difficult for the Lord to punish His people. It really **pained Him!** Jeremiah 13:17 is gripping: *But if you do not listen, I will weep in secret because of your pride; My eyes will weep bitterly, overflowing with tears, because the Lord's flock will be taken captive.*

When the people returned to the Lord with remorse, He **forgave them completely.** He did not keep rehashing their past transgressions (Jeremiah 50:20). Forgiveness was always **followed by new blessings** (Jeremiah 32:37-41 and 33:7-9). Similarly, the Lord expects His children to follow up forgiveness with love (Ephesians 4:32 – 5:2 and Colossians 3:13-14). Once disciplinary steps have been taken, you must treat your workers well. This confirms your love for them and that you have forgiven them completely – like God has forgiven you!

In the New Testament, love and forgiveness are a command. When believers refuse to live according to the faith they confess, discipline is also a command (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, and 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and 3:13-15).

Conclusion:



You must discipline your workers with the same attitude that the Lord disciplines you.



### Prayer Focus:

- † Pray that the Lord will give you His heart and attitude when discipline is required.
- † Pray that agriculturalists will not view love and discipline as opposites. They are two sides of the same coin. Pray for the ability to demonstrate love whilst maintaining strict discipline. This makes people feel safe and secure.
- † Ask the Lord for the ability to discipline your staff (and your children) the way He disciplines you as His child.

## Day 36

### Scriptural principles and practical execution (1)

**Read:** James 3:13-18

Implement these Scriptural principles and you should never land in court due to a labour dispute. It is important to know the law in this regard. Preventing problems is always better than handling conflict later. It prevents a great deal of unnecessary stress and time and money being wasted.

1. **Settle issues one by one.** Do not overlook transgressions while working yourself up to breaking point. One day you might suddenly explode over something unimportant and reopen old wounds. (Read Ephesians 4:26.)
2. **Do not lose self-control.** You will make mistakes that may cost you dearly. Do not sin, even when you are angry. One of your workers may irritate you so much over a period of time that you may lose self-control. You may take disciplinary steps that are disproportionate to the nature and size of the particular misbehaviour. As a Christian, you should always be self-controlled. (Read Proverbs 25:28, and 29:20 & 22; Ephesians 4:26 and James 1:19-20.)





**3. Be careful – you cannot be the prosecutor and the judge.**

**Misbehaviour is often** aimed at you, the employer. Then you become the prosecutor and the judge. You may be biased and too subjective to give a fair finding. Establishing a disciplinary committee is essential. If necessary, ask another farmer or someone else from the outside to help you.

In Exodus 18 we read that Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, advised him to appoint impartial men to preside over disputes between people. They had to be men who loved the truth and were not focused on their gain. If these men were prejudiced or allowed themselves to be bribed, God's curse and judgement was upon them.

(Read Exodus 18:21-22 and 23:1-9; Isaiah 1:23 and 5:22-23; Amos 6:12.)

**4. Make sure that someone is really guilty.**

Keep the law and keep to the disciplinary procedures. Malicious stories are often spread. Questioning must be thorough. Remember, someone who is unfairly punished may take the matter further. He may take legal action or take his case to the union. He may take revenge personally by damaging your property deliberately. He may cause a great deal of damage by deliberately being *negligent*. In an extreme case, he may even leave the farm and return later to attack you. Someone who is guilty will not be as inclined to do these things. Be careful when someone denies guilt and there are no reliable witnesses.

(Read Deuteronomy 13:14 and 19:15, and Proverbs 18:17-19.)

An orchard on a farm was suddenly looted. The labourers were adamant that a single male baboon was responsible. The farmer considered this far-fetched. Where would a baboon suddenly come from? The farmer's wife was convinced that the labourers' children were responsible and she meted out punishment. Two days later she saw the baboon but it was too late to undo the punishment. The negative influence on attitudes and labour relations continued for quite some time.



**5. Punishment must always be fair and in proportion to the transgression.** Do not appoint someone too quickly (Proverbs 26:10), but also be slow to dismiss someone. When you dismiss someone who has lived and worked on the farm, he loses more than his job. He loses his home and fringe benefits. The whole family is affected and left without means. That is a very severe punishment. Certain legal procedures must be followed when someone is dismissed. You need to give them sufficient time to find new employment and a new home. When a labourer applies to the labour court, the court will investigate your actions carefully. (Read Matthew 7:1-5).

**Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray for labour relations in agriculture. Pray for the Lord's blessing.
- † Ask the Lord to teach and help agriculturalists to apply the five guidelines.
- † Pray for good communication between everyone in the agricultural sector.

## Day 37

### More Scriptural principles and execution (2)

**Read:** Ephesians 4:29-31

The following principles must also be kept in mind. They seem obvious, but ignoring them will be disastrous.

**6. Punish only the deliberate breaking of rules and deliberate negligence.** Human mistakes or mistakes made out of ignorance should be put right by good communication. Do not be hasty in applying the rule to the letter. Communication is usually the best way of solving problems for good. Punishment may follow if the required corrected behaviour is not achieved.

Remember that you gain more by maintaining good relationships.



**7. Authority is God's servant to punish evildoers.** Read

Romans 12:19 to 13:7. [Remember, the original text was not divided into chapters and verses.] Romans 12:19 says we must not take revenge ourselves. We must leave it to God to punish. Chapter 13:4 calls the authorities the servants of God that punish evildoers. Romans 12:19 therefore does not mean you should allow evildoers to do as they please. The issue should be handed over to God. This implies that the issue may, if necessary, be handed over to God's servants, the authorities (police). God punishes through the authorities. Call in the police when the matter warrants such action. Do not revenge yourself or take the law into your own hands.

Paul did exactly that when there was a conspiracy to kill him. He did not take revenge himself. Nor did he curse the conspirators. He handed the matter over to the authorities (Acts 23:12-22).

Be consistent. A foreman or very good worker may also be guilty of theft or smuggling dagga or alcohol. The employer must be consistent and treat this like any other case. Not doing so will cause stress and conflict. The worker may become arrogant because he believes the employer cannot do without him.

**8. Discipline is more about education than revenge.** Discipline is always about educating the offender. The offender must be shaped and saved from death. He must improve. What's done is done, but you want the offender to behave differently in future. You are not punishing him for what he has done wrong but are disciplining him in the hope that he will not do the same in future. You cannot change yesterday, but you can do something about tomorrow! (Read Hebrews 12:4-12.)

**9. Do not swear and shout and resort to violence.** All this does is reveal your inner weakness and sadden the Holy Spirit. Bad language does not impress anyone. Once people are used to your tantrums, they stop paying attention. I once witnessed someone shouting and swearing at his workers. The workers noticed how shocked I was when he walked away. One of them said, *Do not worry about it. It is just his way!* When you are angry, **express** your



feelings. **Say** that you are upset and angry but do not lose your temper. Unbridled anger and foul language just negate your testimony. Control your temper. Assault can cost you dearly. (Read Ephesians 4:29-31; James 1:19-20, and Proverbs 22:24-25 and 25:28.)

10. **Discipline in prayerful dependence.** Pray for the wisdom to handle conflict and problems properly. Ask the Lord to make your labourers honest, responsible and trustworthy by His Spirit. Pray that He will give you the skill to behave fairly and reasonably. Pray that you will all learn to handle conflict in a win-win manner. (Read Proverbs 15:1; James 1:5 and 3:17-18, and 1 Corinthians 6:1-6.)

#### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Ask the Lord to teach and help agriculturalists to apply the five above guidelines.
- † Pray that people in the rural and agricultural community will learn to communicate positively and constructively (Ephesians 4:29).
- † Pray that you will all learn to solve conflict in a win-win way.

## **Day 38**

### **Win-win solutions for conflict**

**Read:** Philippians 2:4-5

**Conflict is inevitable.** However, if you have learned to handle conflict properly, your relationships will be strengthened. When this happens, you have succeeded in turning your problem into an opportunity for growth. However, handle conflict badly and it will increase and your problems will become worse.



A **win-win approach** is the best way to handle conflict. Accept the following three principles for win-win solutions:

- ✓ We are both right;
- ✓ Us against the problem;
- ✓ Focus on the future.

## 1. We are both right

One party is never 100% right and the other party is never 100% wrong. Believe this and you have a win-win approach. To solve conflict successfully you **must admit that the other party is also right**. There will always be conflict if you are only interested in getting what you want, there will always be conflict. The Word says, *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus* (Philippians 2:4-5. Also read James 4:1-3).

## 2. Us against the problem

**The second important principle of the win-win approach is to attack the problem and not each other.** It is so easy for the problem to be pushed to the background. People spend all their energy and strength attacking each other. They accuse one another and then start to defend themselves against these attacks. It becomes a '**you against me**' situation and nothing is done to solve the problem.

In the '**you against me**' approach parties view one another as opponents. They fight with each other. The '**us against the problem**' approach means that the two parties are on the same side and tackle the problem together.

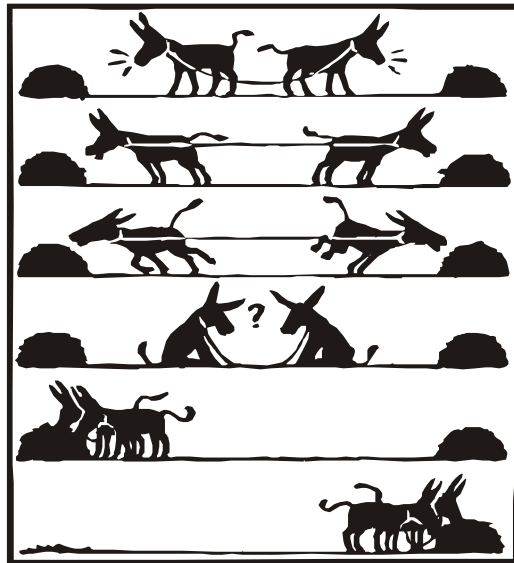


### 3. Focus on the future

To solve conflict successfully you need to **focus on what you would like to see happen in the future**. Stop reminding each other about the past. What's done is done. What has happened has happened. Rather learn how to stop yourself from making the same mistakes in future.

The picture of the two donkeys summarises these principles well:

- ✓ We are both right;
- ✓ Us against the problem;
- ✓ Focus on the future.



#### Prayer Focus:

- † Pray that employers and employees will seek win-win solutions for conflict.
- † Pray that employers and employees will employ conflict to improve relationships.
- † Pray against greed and self-interest that often cause conflict.



## Day 39

# Techniques of the win-win approach

**Read:** James 1:19

The rules of sport prevent games from turning into wars. So do the rules for conflict. When parties keep to the rules, both will benefit. However, ignoring the rules and handling conflict badly will cause more conflict and bigger problems. Keep to the following five rules:

### 1. Express your expectations without making demands

Conflict cannot be resolved if the parties involved are uninformed about one another's expectations. Remember that people cannot read your mind. When you start guessing what someone thinks or expects things go wrong.

Say how you feel. Use sentences that start with words such as:

I would like to see that ...

I would like ...

It would be nice for me if ...

I would prefer to ...

Express your feelings. Ask the other person how he or she feels. Ask what they would like to happen.

### 2. Avoid attack and defence

State the problem without attacking the other person or trying to justify yourself. *When you criticise someone, they start to defend and justify themselves.* That is why it is so important to use **I messages** instead of **you messages**. *You messages* put the other person on the defence. It complicates matters and makes it more difficult to solve problems. *I messages* emphasise the way I feel about someone or about an issue. I open myself up to be corrected if I am wrong. This approach takes the other person out of the dock and makes it easier to solve problems between people.



### 3. Listen to the other party

Listen to the other party carefully. One is naturally inclined to want to state your case first. You want the other person to understand how *you* feel and what *you* think. To handle conflict properly you must try to understand the other party before expecting them to understand you.

**James 1:19** ... Everyone should be quick to *listen*, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

The verse is really saying that you have two ears and one mouth. Listen twice as much as you speak. ***Listen with an ear for understanding.*** Learn to ask the right questions. This will help you to understand. It will also help the other person to reconsider and to reformulate his/her point of view, For example:

- What do you think the advantage would be for us to do what you want?
- What other plans have you considered?
- What do you think I should do under the circumstances?

### 4. Do not say “A-HA” too soon.

List all the possible solutions first. Once you have said A-HA you have already decided. You are no longer open to conviction. You stop listening. You feel compelled to fight for and defend your standpoint.

It is important to write down the advantages and disadvantages of every solution. The best solution may have so many disadvantages that it may be better to choose the second best solution that has no disadvantages.





## 5. Strive towards consensus

Consensus means that everyone accepts the solution even though it may not be exactly what they wanted. It is more important for everyone to accept the solution than for some to get exactly what they want and the rest to be unhappy. Consensus means the relationship is more important than having your own way. It demands a lot of time and good communication. Both parties must be willing to sacrifice something so that everyone will benefit by it. It is more important to be happy and satisfied tomorrow than it is to have your way today.

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Pray that employers and employees will seek win-win solutions to conflict.
- † Pray that employers and employees will use conflict positively to improve relationships.
- † Pray that conflicting parties in agriculture will reach consensus about their problems.



## CONCLUSION

To restore and improve labour relations, demands more than to take cognisance of Biblical principles. It demands a firm commitment to apply the principle.

### Day 40 Commitment

**Read:** Matthew 7:12; Nehemiah 9:38 and 10:28-29

I once read, ***“The Word of God was not given for our information, but for our transformation.”*** Just taking cognisance of Biblical guidelines for relationships is not enough. In gratitude to everything the Lord has done for you, you must implement and live these guidelines. Then the Kingdom will be visible in your farming business.

Spend time with God and talk to Him about the following commitment. Discuss it with your staff. Start with those who believe in Christ Jesus. Are you willing to make such a commitment to each other?

#### Commitment

We, the staff of ....., commit ourselves to treating one another the way we expect others to treat us. We will treat others the way we want them to treat us (Matthew 7:12).

#### I commit myself to ...

- *Do to others what God has done for me;*
- *Love others in a way that will be made visible by my behaviour;*
- *Put myself in other people’s shoes to understand them better;*
- *Do all I can to understand others before expecting them to understand me. I will listen to others until they feel that I understand them;*



- *Always be first to confess my share in a problem and to ask for forgiveness;*
- *Always ask what Jesus would do in a particular situation.*

### **I commit myself to ...**

- *Always treat others with sincerity and honesty;*
- *Honour and respect others as image bearers of God;*
- *Leave room for everyone's individuality;*
- *Appreciate everyone's role and function and to express it to them;*
- *Make it easy for others to love me;*
- *Give others ALSA (Acknowledgement, Love, Security and Acceptance);*
- *Be grateful for and appreciate all my privileges.*

**When I discuss a problem** I have with a colleague, with someone who is not part of the problem, I will be willing to discuss the problem with the colleague concerned within 48 hours. When someone else discusses the problem with someone outside the problem, I will try to get the parties involved together within 48 hours and help them to solve the problem.

**When someone does not do what we have agreed to do**, the following steps will be taken:

1. Investigate the situation. Talk to him/her alone. When we meet, we will do so as follows:
  - in love,
  - in humility (I may also be wrong),
  - in forgiveness,
  - in absolute truth.
2. If the situation remains unresolved, we will call two or three people to bear witness to the words spoken.
3. If the situation remains unresolved, we will take it to the leaders or the management team.
4. If no solution is found, some kind of separation will occur.

It is our desire that all issues be resolved in the first two steps, making further steps unnecessary.

**When I fail to keep my commitment**, I commit to apologise according to the following six steps:



1. I will admit what I have done wrong by calling my offence by the appropriate name (e.g.: *I lied to you.*);
2. I will admit that what I did was wrong;
3. I will say that I am sorry;
4. I will ask for forgiveness:  
*Will you please forgive me now or when you are able?*  
(Wait for an answer.)
5. I will ask others to call me to account:  
*Will you please talk to me immediately if I do this again? I give you permission to do so.*
6. I will make sure that everything is handled by asking:  
*Is there anything else you want to share with me or tell me about something I may have done?*

**I am willing to answer for my behaviour.** I want to work together to establish a culture and atmosphere that will encourage good relationships in our business; create a safe environment for personal growth and development; lead to professional behaviour; encourage productivity in the organisation and enhance the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

### **Prayer Focus:**

- † Ask the Lord to make you willing to be accountable for your behaviour and the way you treat others.
- † Pray that people will take cognisance of God's Word and that the Word will change their lives and relationships.
- † Pray that the Kingdom of God will become visible by the restoration and building of relationships in the rural and agricultural community.
- † Ask the Lord to bless marriage relationships, parent-children relationships, labour relations and race relationships.



## AMOS Publications

The following AMOS publications are available in English and Afrikaans. They may be downloaded free of charge from [www.amosafrica.net](http://www.amosafrica.net), or ordered at a price by sending an e-mail to [secretary@amosafrica.net](mailto:secretary@amosafrica.net)



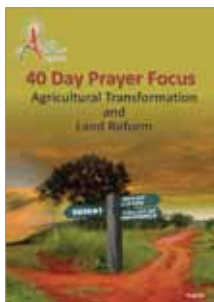
### Living and Farming God's Way – BASICS

*It's not a slogan, it's a lifestyle*

(Prayer Focus 2008)

#### Purpose:

- ✓ To help you understand what Living and Farming God's Way means;
- ✓ To challenge you to evaluate your life and farming business and to make the necessary changes;
- ✓ To enable you to explain Living and Farming God's Way to other farmers and to challenge them to commit themselves to it;
- ✓ To resolutely pray for yourself and other agriculturalists.



### Land Reform (Prayer Focus 2010)

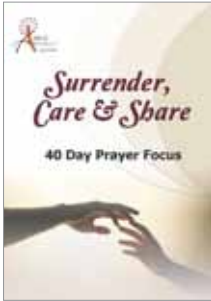
Forty short meditations on agricultural transformation and land reform. The presentation varies between teaching, stories, testimonies, examples, practical tips and faith declarations. These meditations provide clear Biblical guidelines. Besides purposeful prayer for these important issues, this prayer focus is aimed at influencing the land reform debate positively and at helping believers find win-win solutions.



### Dwell before the Throne (Prayer Focus 2011)

The purpose of this prayer focus is not to provide believers with more knowledge about prayer. The purpose is to inspire believers to use the privilege of prayer; to pray without ceasing. Prayer in the Name of Jesus is important if we want to transform agriculture to Living and Farming God's Way. It is the key to solving problems in agriculture. Pray without ceasing!





### **Surrender, Care and Share** (Prayer Focus 2012)

We have been called to be disciples and to disciple others. Only disciples can disciple others. Taking Jesus' life as an example, discipleship can be summarized in three words: Surrender, Care and Share. The Prayer Focus consists of 40 letters to a friend. The purpose of the letters is to disciple you and to enable you to disciple others.



### **The Kingdom is Coming in Agriculture** (Prayer Focus 2013)

Forty meditations help readers to understand the Kingdom. They are invited to share in the Kingdom and are equipped to daily live and farm as citizens of the Kingdom. Unbiblical views that undermine the Kingdom are pointed out. The difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Darkness is illustrated by means of practical examples. Readers are called to listen to the King and to pray for the coming of the Kingdom in agriculture.



### **Set Free to Stand Up** (Prayer Focus 2014)

Too many Christians have been saved but keep living in pain. They are God's children but are still entangled in sin. They are free but keep thinking like slaves. They survive, but do not live lives of victory. They believe in God but battle to believe Him. This publication addresses this problem. The focus firstly falls on the King who sets people free to stand up. Then the lies and the ways of the devil are revealed. Readers are helped to understand their restored relationship with God, their identity in Christ and their calling. Things that prevent Christians from standing up are discussed and followed by prayer for deliverance. The forty meditations will help you to **stand up and live victoriously!**





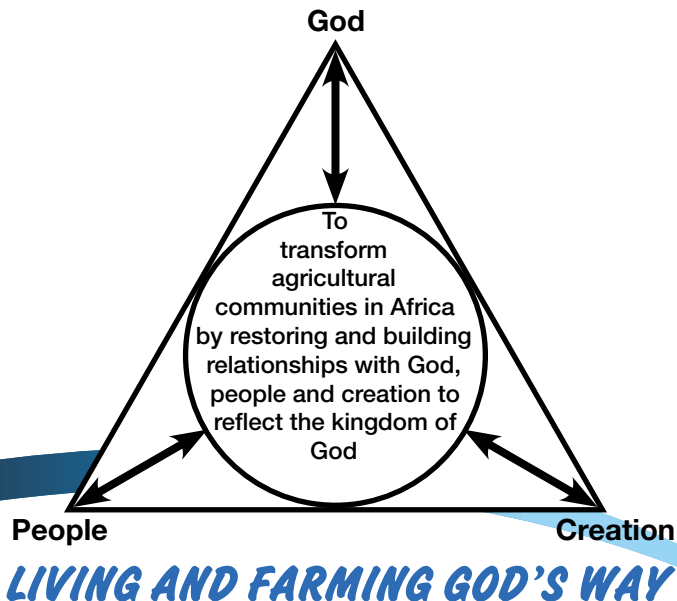
The name, **AMOS**, is derived from the Bible. Amos was a prophet and farmer of the Old Testament. As prophet, he warned against formalistic religiosity, and all kinds of exploitation and injustice of the day. Accordingly God's children are encouraged not to be merely religious, but to live according to His will 24 hours of every day(24/7). The word **Agrimin** is an abbreviation for *Agricultural Ministries*.

The **AMOS** logo is rich in symbolism. The name is prominently printed. The windmill symbolizes agriculture. The windmill provides water and brings life and prosperity to the farm. We at **AMOS** acknowledge Jesus Christ (red cross), as the source of Living Water (blue stream flowing from the cross). He is the One without whom an abundant life is impossible. With this logo, we also acknowledge our dependence on the mighty working of the Holy Spirit, just like the windmill depends on the wind.

## Core business of Amos Agrimin

We want to see the **Koningdom of God** manifested  
in the **agricultural community**.

Therefore Amos Agrimin's core business is:





## **Amos Agrimin**

secretary@amosafrica.net  
www.amosafrica.net

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