



#17 Yitro Exodus 18:1-20:26

Torah Teaching and Teaching, Be Connected to God **By Moshe Schwab**

Names

Kefa – Peter

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ
in the Greek means to be smudged

Moshe – Moses

Shaul – Paul

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)

Yitro – Jethro

Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets

Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible

Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the
Torah

Yitro – the 17th Torah portion

In this portion, Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, becomes a believer in the true God. He joins others who were part of a mixed group that accepted the true God when they left Egypt (Exodus 12:38). Yitro who is not Jewish is accepted among the believers based on his confession and even eats with the leadership.

I'd like to start by talking about how God's light sometimes does not take precedence over peoples' lives. When the Bible talks about God's light, it is talking about His commandments which give us wisdom and understanding (see Deuteronomy 4:6). God's light is right and good. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you." Notice it says we are to diligently do what is right and good.

What are some of the reasons that people do not pursue God and His light the way they should? Sometimes their beliefs are mixed with false doctrine. Some false doctrines teach that God's commandments either changed or are done away. Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change." Why would God change His mind and say what is right and good is done away with? Does this make any sense at all? If the land can vomit out a people group because they do not keep God's commandments, then evil is still wrong, see Leviticus 18:24-28. Man says God changed what is right, but God says He does not change.

Yeshua took issue in Matthew Chapter 15 with those who changed God's commandments that are in the Torah. Some of the religious people criticized Yeshua for not washing his hands. You see, they had made up a man-made law that said food was wrong to eat if it was touched with unwashed hands. It was a man-made commandment. Yeshua told them that their man-made commandments were taking away from the commands in the Torah, the Old Testament portion of the Bible. He criticized them for that and said in Matthew 15:9 NKJV, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

So, Yeshua says that those who are not keeping God's commandments in the Torah are worshipping God in vain. The Ten Commandments are in this portion, but there are also a few hundred more commandments in the Old Testament. Some complain about these few hundred commandments, but have no trouble learning the laws in order to get their driver's license. As we have mentioned before, there are some 400 motor vehicle laws in the United States.

Also, the Bible says that God's laws are not difficult to keep. Mitzvah means commandment. Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB says, "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach." Strong's says the word hard in this verse can also mean difficult. God's commandments are not difficult. It is a good idea to memorize God's commandments and learn how to apply them. Try memorizing the Ten Commandments for starters.

Sometimes people are unwilling to follow all of God's commandments. They are like these false spiritual leaders that Yeshua talked about that made up excuses not to keep God's commandments. Their worship of God is worthless, in vain it says.

Sometimes people do not keep God's commandments because of ignorance. People need to learn God's commandments and how to apply them. The great Jewish teacher Hillel said to the person wanting to become a believer to not do those things that we would not want done to us, and to also learn the Torah. In other words, we are to treat others as we want to be treated. Yeshua also taught us to love others. He said the greatest commandment was to love God. How do we love God? We keep His commandments it says in Deuteronomy 11:1.

Sometimes a person may sin in a time of weakness. In that case we must ask God for forgiveness and be determined not to do it again. In that way we return to our relationship with God. Malachi 3:7 NKJV says, "'You have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,' says the LORD of hosts."

Some people are very casual about keeping God's commandments and think their relationship with God is fine when it is not. In the case of Aaron's sons, they did something that God did not command and they lost their lives because of it. Leviticus 10:1-2 NKJV, "Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD." Do these people who contradict God and do not believe in His commandments think they will get away with being the god of their values and make up what they think is right? There was also the serious matter of Aaron's sons committing a profane act at the Tent of Meeting. But nevertheless, what happened should teach us that God expects us to keep His commandments no matter what.

Some of us have been taught God's commandments, and as true believers, we need to continue to be reminded of what they are and to be "diligent" to keep them as it says in Deuteronomy 6:17-18. Shaul also tells us to be diligent. 2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed." Will you be ashamed

when you stand before God because you did not make the effort to know God's commandments?

People need a concrete way of hearing truth. They can read the Bible, hear people talk about the truths of the Bible, learn from the example of others, or read teaching and commentaries. These are effective ways to learn about God. Read the Torah and know God's commandments. Shaul tells Timothy to teach the Old Testament commandments. The context of 2 Timothy 3:14 to 4:5 are about the scriptures Timothy learned when he was little. His mother was Jewish, so he learned the Old Testament commandments. Acts 16:1 NKJV says, "A certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman." 2 Timothy 4:2-3 NKJV says, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." People are supposed to be teaching the commandments of the Old Testament portion.

Yeshua, Shaul, and the other writers of the Bible tell us to keep the Old Testament commandments. Yeshua told us in Matthew 5:17 NKJV, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets." Then along comes the liars who contradict Yeshua. They say we believe in Yeshua and He did away with the law. God has not done away with His commandments of wisdom and light that are right and good.

I have told you that some of the New Testament has been modified by heretics. For example, the Hebrew manuscript of the Epistle of James 1:25 tells us to keep the Torah of the Examiner and the Greek says in that verse, law of liberty. The Greek manuscripts were changed by the heretics of the Roman Empire in order to take over Christianity and make it into their own version of Christianity. The Roman Empire even killed the true believers and burned the Hebrew scriptures of the New Testament to make sure that their false version of Christianity succeeded. We need to get back to the true roots of Christianity and to the real Jesus. Much of Christianity continues to reject the teachings of their Messiah and they have made up a man-made theology to support their false doctrine.

So, I have told you to be careful with your understanding of the New Testament portion. If it is saying to not to keep the law, it manuscript may have been modified or you may be misunderstanding the issue. I would like to explain more to you. Kefa says in 2 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV, "Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures."

What scriptures is he talking about? There was no New Testament portion at the time. So, some people were twisting the Old Testament scriptures and misunderstanding Shaul to their own destruction. There are many who will not make it into the future kingdom of God because they are not keeping God's commandments. Remember, Shaul himself says the Old Testament laws have not been done away. Romans 3:31 NKJV says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." He says the Old Testament laws are established.

So, you must read the New Testament with the idea that the Old Testament laws are not done away with and if you do not understand what is written, it is best to leave that for a future time when you are able to understand the meaning. Some of Shaul's explanations were about Yeshua being the Messiah, the problems of man-made laws, doing works without faith, and how to use the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Shaul's constructed many arguments to get people to believe in the Messiah Yeshua.

For example, in Roman 10, below is the order of his thought so the Jews would believe in their Messiah. In Romans 10:4 we should understand that Shaul is trying to get people to believe in their Messiah. The people that Shaul was writing to would have had nothing to do with Shaul if he was telling them not to keep the Torah. Yochanan tells us in 1 John that not keeping the law is sin and that sin is of the devil. We know that the law refers to the Torah. So, not keeping the Torah is of the devil. 1 John 3:4 and 8 NKJV says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ... He who sins is of the devil."

In Romans 10:4, Christ refers to Messiah, end is the Greek word *telos* and is translated goal elsewhere, law can mean the Torah, and the word to is the Greek word *eis* and means toward. Therefore, Romans 10:4 can more properly mean, "For Messiah is the goal for Torah toward righteousness to everyone that believes." Note that righteousness means to live right.

Romans Chapter 10 Context:

Verse 1, Shaul (Paul) expresses a deep desire for Israel.

Verse 2, Israel has zeal, but needs to know more.

Verse 3, God has a way to help Israel to be righteous (righteous means to live right).

Verse 4, the Messiah will help us to live right – a better understanding of the verse.

Verses 5-8, uses a Jewish comparison with Deuteronomy 30:11-16; namely, the Messiah is here, believe in Him.

Verses 9-10, the Messiah is Yeshua; He is both God and Messiah who was raised from the dead.

Verses 11, says they will not be humiliated for believing in the Messiah.

Verse 13, all who call on Him will be delivered; a reference to Joel 3:5

Verse 14, trust in the Messiah.

Verse 15, you've now heard about the Messiah, so believe.

Verse 16, this is the announcement to you about the Messiah, so believe.

Verse 17, again they have heard, so they should trust in the Messiah

Verses 18-21; 11:5, not all have believed, but as in the past, some have endured and believed; all have the choice to believe; that has always been God's way.

Verse 11:1, God has not cast away Israel; so believe in your Messiah

Do you see how this is an appeal to the Jews to believe in their Messiah? No Jew would consider this an appeal to believe in the Messiah if Shaul was saying to not keep the Torah in Romans 10:4. Those who oppose understanding the Bible correctly will say things like, "I do not see what is wrong with it saying end in Romans 10:4." They may even say things like keeping God's commandments in the Old Testament portion is of the devil. Not keeping God's commandments is sin and not keeping God's commandments is of the devil.

Shaul constructed arguments about the problem of the many man-made commandments in his time.

The context of Colossians 2:8-22 is about man-made laws and not God's commandments.

Colossians 2:8 NKJV says, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men."

Colossians 2:22 NKJV says, "Which all concern things which perish with the using according to the commandments and doctrines of men."

So, in Colossians 2:16, we are not to judge others on the man-made commandments involving food, drink, feasts, or Sabbaths. God's commandments are not done away with. The man-made commandments are not commandments of God and we are not to judge others on man-made commandments.

Shaul also addresses the problem with only doing laws and not having faith in God.

Jews often think that they are okay with God simply because they are Jewish and keep their man-made traditions. It is the same for many Christians. They think they are saved, okay with God, simply because they accepted Yeshua as their Messiah and have received the Holy Spirit. We are also to have faith and act accordingly.

James 2:18-24 NKJV says,

But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Shaul uses the same scripture reference about Abraham to show that we also need faith

Romans 4:1-3 NKJV says, "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'"

Some say that Abraham did not keep God's commandments because they were not written down, but that is not true. Believers passed down God's commandments. Notice that Israel already believed in the true God before they left Egypt. The commandments were written down later at Mount Sinai so future generations could have them.

Noah taught the people God's commandments; he taught righteousness which is to do what is right. 2 Peter 2:4-5 NKJV says, "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly." Shem, the son of Noah, had moved to Salem which later became Jerusalem. That is the area that Abraham moved to. The Jewish writings

say that Abraham had associated with the family of Noah before he came to Canaan and that both Abraham and Isaac learned more about God from Shem in Canaan.

Abraham believed in God, and because he believed, he acted accordingly and kept God's commandments. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Shaul addresses the problem of those who only keep laws without faith and Ya'akov in James addresses the problem of those who say they believe, but do not act accordingly. James compares those who do not keep God's commandments of the Old Testament portion to devil spirits who also only believe. It is the same message that we see in the 1st epistle of John.

Yochanan tells us in 1 John that not keeping the law is sin and that sin is of the devil. Law refers to the Torah. So, not keeping the Torah is of the devil. 1 John 3:4 and 8 NKJV says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ... He who sins is of the devil."

Some of the teachings on what they call dispensations or eras add confusion to the Bible. Denominations have statements of faith that are founded on someone's idea of what the Bible says. These theologies may be good doctrine or are a false idea. Some denominations teach that there is an evolution of man's belief in God which is false doctrine. They will say that Abraham did not know God's commandments and when they were written down, that began a new era. Of course, Abraham kept God's commandments. The reason they were written down is so we would have them in the future. False theologies have been applied to the understanding of the New Testament portion so when people read their Bibles, they read their preconceived idea into what they are reading.

There were differences in the eras, but we are to keep God's commandments no matter what era we live in. Those who live in sin are of the devil the Bible says, and the devil and those who follow him are going to the lake of fire. Do not mess with God; be an overcomer and do not live in sin. Those who live in sin will be removed from the book of life says the Messiah Yeshua.

Revelation 20:10 NKJV says, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." Revelation 20:15 NKJV says, "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Yeshua said about believers in Revelation 3:5 NKJV, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life."

The teachings of Shaul may sound a little bit deep for some of you and confusing, and that is what Kefa is saying about Shaul's epistles in the 2nd epistle of Peter. Add onto that teachings that misinterpret the Bible. If you have trouble understanding Shaul, there are plenty of verses that are clear. If you do share scriptures that are questionable, you must be able to qualify them, explain them properly. Do not make up wrong doctrine from the scriptures. Most importantly, keep God's commandments.

Also, there was the issue of new Gentile believers entering Christianity.

For example, in Galatians Chapter 2, some got up from eating with the Gentile believers when those who taught the extra laws came and joined them. The people who taught the extra laws

were Torah breakers. They said believers could not eat with Gentile believers. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." They made up a commandment to not to eat with any Gentiles. They got that from Exodus where it says not to eat with Gentile idolators.

Exodus 34:14-16 NKJV says,

For you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

The Gentiles they were eating with in Galatians Chapter 2 were not idolators; they were believers. They should have never gotten up from eating with them. Judaizers are those who break the Torah with wrongly applied man-made laws. Much of Christianity today breaks the Torah and keeps its own man-made laws. Shaul was defending the Torah in Galatians Chapter 2. Some say that Judaizers are those who keep Gods commandments. They have it wrong. Judaizers are those who made up commandments that negated the Torah or added to the Torah.

Read Galatians Chapter 2 with keeping in mind that we are to keep God's commandments in the Torah and try to understand what it going on. It says they did not live like the Jews. That is because they kept the Torah and not the extra laws that much of Judaism kept. It goes on to say they did not want to build another system of extra laws. In Chapter 3, it is implied that the Holy Spirit is supposed to help us so we do not have to make up lots of extra laws. You cannot understand the New Testament portion of the Bible unless you know how Shaul uses arguments to deal with some of the problematic beliefs of his time. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NKJV says, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil."

Most importantly, learn God's commandments in the Torah and keep them. Sometimes a New Testament scripture can give us insight in how to apply a commandment in the Old Testament portion. For example, Leviticus 19:18-19 NKJV says, "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. You shall keep My statutes." Shaul says in Ephesian 4:32 NKJV, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another." Ephesians 4:32 is an application of Leviticus 19:18-19. Perhaps you can think of other issues that Shaul was addressing in his letters.

Prayer brings fruit. I pray with faith and in hope. God hears our prayers and will sometimes answer them. Daniel 10:12 NKJV says, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard." It goes on to say that his prayers could not be done yet.

Sometimes God will do something immediately, sometimes the prayer will be answered in the future sometime, or sometimes the answer is no. But keep praying. Yeshua likens prayer to someone who keeps going before a judge and asking for justice. The idea is we are to keep

praying in faith. Yeshua said in Luke 18:1 NKJV, "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart."

Some believe in special places like portals or church buildings, but God does not need a special place in order to hear our prayers. Having a special place for prayer can be enjoyable, but that is not necessary. Praying in front of an object or to what God created is sin.

Exodus 20:4-6 NKJV says,

You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Notice how it says that God gives mercy to those who keep His commandments. You can make all the excuses you want, but you will only get mercy by keeping God's commandments and Yeshua the Messiah supported keeping the Torah.

Find ways to protect your mind. We need to cover what we talked about today because of the false doctrines that have been passed down to us that started with the Roman Empire. Most of Christianity remains locked into this doctrine and they have formed a defensive posture towards the actual truths of the Bible. Psalms 78:7-8 NKJV says, "That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; And may not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not set its heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful to God." Wouldn't it be wonderful if people began valuing God's commandments instead of diminishing their value. People need to start setting their hearts aright.

We need to be unflinching in our observance of God's commandments. Isaiah 50:7 NKJV says, "For the Lord GOD will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed." Flint is a hard stone that can be used for cutting. It retains its shape. We are to retain our beliefs in God and His commandments no matter what others say. We need to hold onto the truth. Titus 1:9 NKJV says, "Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict." In our time there seems to be a lot of people who contradict God's word and they are like a flint against God and His commandments. 2 Timothy 2:2 NKJV tells us, "The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Pass on the teachings of truth to others who will be faithful.

More to Consider

Keep functional and active. God intended people to be functional working beings; it is good for us because that is how God designed us. God gave mankind purpose in life. Adam and Eve were to take care of what God gave them. "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it;" Genesis 2:15 NKJV.

We are to take care of ourselves and provide for ourselves. We are not supposed to just sit around and live on handouts. Sometimes we need the support of others, but that is not how we are to live on a continual basis. Those that don't work, don't eat it says in 2 Thessalonians 3:10. Even if we've earned retirement benefits, it doesn't mean we do nothing. God created us to be useful according Genesis 2:15. We have family, friends, and spiritual family that we need and that need us. We interact, help, and provide for those we are in relationship with.

On an individual basis, we don't need much. In fact, I heard a story once about a man who lived very modestly and gave most of the money he made to help others. I think he had given away a quarter of a million dollars. His story amazed me. That's just goes to show you one way how we can unselfishly use our lives to help others.

We all can use our lives in different ways. We can help others, visit with others, provide support for others in various ways, do things for the community; the things we can do are endless. There are many people with talents that can be used to help others. My uncle used to do odd jobs for the elderly when he was in his 70s.

One of the most important things we can do is take time to get together and talk about God and encourage each other. Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV says, "Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." One of the best ways to learn and grow is through small groups; that was the model for the early believers; they attended house churches.

It makes sense. They couldn't get around like we do today, so nearby meetings were the way early believers met. Especially for an agricultural society; that's where most people lived years ago. So when it says in Acts that they fellowshipped from house to house, it was on Shabbat, the day of rest. That is the day the Bible says we are to rest. Life could be hard in that era and people worked 6 days a week. When Shabbat came, that was their opportunity to get together with others and also talk about Yehovah. Acts 2:46 NKJV says, "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, **and breaking bread from house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people."

Remember that no 1st century believer in Yeshua would have kept the day of the pagan god Mithras which is Sunday. God is disgusted with bringing in pagan elements in to our faith. Deuteronomy 12:31-32 NKJV says, "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it." The people who believed in the pagan god Mithras also performed child sacrifice.

Breaking bread for Jews is not just eating, but involves doing a ceremony on Shabbat where they pray and break bread and drink some wine (kiddush). Acts 2:42 NKJV says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Whenever possible, we must put the scriptures within their proper context. There were synagogues in that era, but the norm was meeting in the home. That is why Shaul (Paul) says in Acts 20:20 NKJV, "I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from **house to house**."

Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and goes through Saturday until sundown. It was customary to celebrate the day of rest with family and friends. They were instructed in God's commandments from the time they were little. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 NKJV says, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." So, when 3,000 people believed in the Messiah Yeshua on Shavuot (Pentecost) in Acts 2:41, they were qualified small group leaders. People who put their hour in at a building are often not educated in God's commandments. The modern church model has in many cases produced lazy believers and 1 hour a week believers, and not fully functioning involved believers.

The word for church in the Bible simply means an assembly. It is actually used for a group of unbelievers in Acts 19:32 NKJV, "Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the **assembly** was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together." The word assembly is translated as church in other places in the Bible. The word means a group of people. It has nothing to do with buildings or denominations as some think.

Let's look at some scriptures and see where believers met. Philemon 1:2 NKJV says, "To the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the **church in your house.**" 1 Corinthians 16:19 NKJV, "The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the **church that is in their house.**" Romans 16:5 NKJV, "Likewise greet the **church that is in their house.**" Colossians 4:15 NKJV, "Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the **church that is in his house.**"

Leaders would go from house church (assembly) to house church and teach the people. Acts 5:42 NKJV says, "And daily in the temple, and **in every house**, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ." Acts 20:20 NKJV, "I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from **house to house.**"

Matthew 18:20 refers to agreements but can also be applied to getting together. We hear encouraging teachings and we also teach each other before God. We enter into agreement with God and accept His truths. Matthew 18:20 NKJV says, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." You just need more than one person for an assembly.

This scripture in Corinthians suggests a smaller group and not a large group. 1 Corinthians 14:26 NKJV, "Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." This is difficult to do in a large assembly. Everyone having a function also suggests a smaller group where everyone can participate.

Romans 12:4-8 NKJV:

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our

faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

How can people operate their spiritual gifts in a large congregation? 1 Corinthians 14:37 NKJV says that having God's gifts present is a commandment of God: "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord."

I'm not saying we can't have larger churches, but the one hour and done model isn't the true way God wants us to meet. When I was in the jungle, they met in the home or the back yard if the meeting was large. The pagan system of meetings was for everyone to go to a pagan place of worship and make homage to their idol. That is the typical model for many churches today.

As you can see, the biblical model calls for people to keep the Torah, receive the Messiah Yeshua and the Holy Spirit, and meet in homes. For many in Christianity, it resembles a more pagan practice with people going to a building as inactive participants. They pay homage to their denomination and their building. Shaul talked about works of wood or stone in 1 Corinthians 3:12 NKJV, "Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is."

Their buildings that they think are so important are made of wood and stone. These congregations many times give a weak message in order to keep people coming. They may entertain you, but instead of bringing people to the truth, they sometimes conform to lies and half-truths. There is a lake of fire (sometimes called hell); Revelation 21:8.¹ Not all churches have a pagan model of ministry.

Also, Galatians 6:10 NKJV says, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." How can a person do this if all they are doing is going to church for an hour or two? People in small groups or those who are involved in various ways can use their spiritual gifts and help each other personally, so fulfilling these commandments. Helping one another and encouraging one another spiritually is a very important part of life.

Someone recently asked me why the Messiah came. Why did the Messiah come?

* Yeshua gave Himself as the final sacrifice for our sin (Isaiah 53).

* To help us follow the Torah — God's commandments. "If you love Me, **keep My commandments**. John 14:15 NKJV. Yeshua is God so He gave us His commandments on Mt. Sinai.

* To help us live right – be righteous.

2 Peter 1:2-4 NKJV

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that

¹ "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part **in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone**," Revelation 21:8 NKJV.

through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

* To give us the Holy Spirit to lead us and help us. The Holy Spirit replaces the need for extra laws. John 14:26 NKJV, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you."

What are you most interested in? Do we take time for God? The physical side of life is important. Take care of yourself and your family. But do not just be consumed with physical things. Have a regular and ongoing relationship with God? Genesis 3:8 NKJV suggests that Adam and Eve had a frequent relationship with God: "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God."

Keep God fresh in your heart and life. We can get a lot on our mind, we can get busy, and we can get preoccupied with life.

Proverbs 3:1-10 NKJV says,

Do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; **for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.** Let not **mercy and truth** forsake you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart and so **find favor and high esteem** in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and **He shall direct your paths.** Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will **be health** to your flesh, And **strength to your bones.** Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be **filled with plenty**, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

Some say the Old Testament is not loving. What is wrong with a long life of peace, mercy and truth, favor and esteem, having direction for life, having health, and being filled with plenty. Someone has been lying to you if you think the Old Testament God is not loving. Exodus 34:6-7 NKJV says, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Protect your spiritual life and relationship with God first and foremost. 1 Kings 8:61 NKJV says, "Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day." Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV says, "**Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.**" How do we love God? We keep His commandments. If you don't really care about God, make up your own way to live.

Yeshua said we are to love God first and foremost.

Matthew 22:36-40 NKJV

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it:

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Yeshua knew what it said in Deuteronomy 11:1. If you believe in Yeshua, believe in what He said.

Finally

In this portion, Yitro becomes a believer in the true God. Just like others who were part of a mixed group that accepted the true God when they left Egypt (Exodus 12:38). Yitro who is not Jewish is accepted among the believers based on his confession. God begins giving the people laws in this portion with the giving of the 10 Commandments. There are more commandments than just the 10 Commandments. God's laws are not archaic as some say; when God gives us something that is good for us, why would that change? Isn't He an all-knowing God?

God's laws are still good for us. Deuteronomy 4:6-8 NKJV says, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a **wise and understanding people.**' For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has **such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before** you this day?"

People are being misguided by those who want to make sin okay. In some cases, they may not believe that is what they are doing, but nonetheless, that is what some doctrines are doing. They may say God's commandments are legalism. They use this as a negative term. Without law, we would have chaos. God gave us laws that were good for all of time; some are only meant for the priests. It is not true what some are teaching. God is not a liar; God said His laws were good. "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" Numbers 23:19 NKJV. God's commandments are still right and good.

Torah Teaching

The name of this portion is Yitro. Yitro means, "Jethro." This portion begins by saying that Yitro, the father-in-law of Moshe (Moses), heard about what God had done and He brings Moshe's sons and wife to him. Yitro confesses that the God of Israel is over all. He becomes a believer. Moshe, the leaders of Israel, and Yitro make a sacrifice to God and eat together. Yitro sees Moshe administering all the judgments and he tells Moshe that he needs to set up a justice system and hear only the difficult cases. Moshe listened to Yitro and then Yitro goes back home. Moshe then goes up to the mountain and God calls to him and God tells him what he is to say to Israel. If they keep His commandments, they will be a kingdom of priests for God. "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation;" Exodus 19:5-6 NKJV. God did not give them a caste system where only some were to be the privileged.

Moshe tells the people, and the people agree to obey God. Kefa refers to this verse from Exodus in 1 Peter 2:9 NKJV, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy

nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." God has not changed; His people can still be God's holy people. Isn't that great! If you want to be close to God, believe in Him and the Messiah Yeshua.

God tells Moshe that God will speak to him and the people. The people were not to touch the mountain until the shofar sounds and they were to prepare for their meeting with God by washing their clothes. God then give them the 10 commandments. The people prepared to meet with God. As believers in Yeshua, we can meet with God every day because we have the Holy Spirit.

Some people are very lax about their relationship with God and do not keep God's commandments. The Bible says we are to take God's commandments seriously. Hebrews 10:29-30 NKJV says, "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The LORD will judge His people.'"

Decide you will honor God and keep His commandments; it is not hard. Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB says, "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach." Those that say it is too hard are not telling the truth. The Bible says it is not hard. The thousands of extra man-made laws that we **do not** have to keep are too hard to keep. Some of these man-made laws are against God's commandments.

On the third day Moshe brought the people to the mountain and there was thunder and lighting, a thick smoke, and a shofar kept blasting louder and louder. God called Moshe up the mountain and God also told Moshe to tell the people that no one was to go up the mountain after Moshe and Aharon.

Then God, Yĕhōvâh, gives the people the ten words (Ten Commandments). Yĕhōvâh is God's name as seen pointed in 2,363 different manuscripts. Yĕhōvâh is used over 6,000 times in the Bible. Exodus 3:15 NKJV says, "The **LORD** God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. **This is My name forever**, and this is My memorial to all generations." **LORD** in all caps is the Hebrew word Yĕhōvâh. If someone gave you their name, would you purposely never use their name?

Let's take the time to read Exodus 20:3-17 NKJV; the Ten Commandments:

1st Commandment

Verse 3, "You shall have no other gods before Me."

2nd Commandment

Verses 4-6, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image —any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

3rd Commandment

Verse 7, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

4th Commandment

Verses 8-11, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

5th Commandment

Verse 12, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you."

6th Commandment

Verse 13, "You shall not murder."

7th Commandment

Verse 14, "You shall not commit adultery."

8th Commandment

Verse 15, "You shall not steal."

9th Commandment

Verse 16, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

10th Commandment

Verse 17, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Perhaps take some time to think about how you could apply these commandments. For example, the 2nd commandment tells us not to bow down to anything made. Some people actually set up statues or pictures and kneel before them. It says we are not to make anything and bow down to it. Some people tell me that they are praying to God when they do this. God says not to do it. Some denominations change this commandment to reflect their wrong beliefs.

How do you honor your parents? I would listen to them and respect them even as an adult. You can always weigh what they have to say. When I was in Jewish neighborhoods, sometimes an elderly man would walk up to me and give me advice. I would respectfully listen to them. That is something that Jewish people do for their young generation. They were someone's parent. I gave them honor and respect. Even though these laws seem self-explanatory, in Jewish thought, there are many valid ways that we can apply God's commandments.

Not using God's name in vain has to do with not using God's name inappropriately. *Hashem* means, "the name;" that is how some people address God. Would you call someone you respect, "the name?" That is inappropriate. Saying God's name, *Yĕhōvâh*, honors Him. The Bible says no to steal; I will not even take a pen that is not mine. Didn't Yeshua say that those who are faithful in the little things are also faithful in much (Luke 16:10)? Look for ways you can be

faithful. Notice how the commandment to keep the Sabbath quotes Genesis 2:2-3 so people who say God's commandments are just for Israel are wrong. They are God's commandments. Why would something that God gave us not be good for us in our time. Those who say God's commandments are done away with are deluded. I would not want to stand before God and tell God I did not agree with Him. I do not think you will win that debate.

The people experienced all that was going on at the foot of Mt. Sinai and they were afraid, so they asked Moshe to speak to God for them. Moshe approaches the thick darkness while the people stood back. God tells Moshe that the people are not to make any idols and that they are to make an altar of earth or of uncut stone and also not build steps up to the altar so no one will be indecent. They are to make their offerings at the place where God chooses.

This portion begins with Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, coming to see Moshe. He was a gentile priest of Midian where they practiced idolatry and some despicable practices associated with idolatry. Yitro believes in the God of Israel and is fully accepted among the Israeli leadership. We should remember that it was always God's intention that the nations should believe in the true God through Israel. Israel was unable to accomplish that until the coming of the Jewish Messiah Yeshua who has spread the message of the true God around the world.

In this portion, God promises that He will make Israel a holy nation and the people respond that they will do what God tells them to do. We could liken the account to a marriage ceremony between God and Israel where God enters into a relationship with them as their husband (see Isaiah 54:5). Mount Sinai acted as the chuppah (canopy) and the Ten Commands as the ketuvah (marriage contract). The Jewish writings say that it had rained so that the desert was in bloom and Israel was surrounded by flowers. The giving of the Ten Commandments occurred on Shavuot and the giving of the Holy Spirit also occurred on Shavuot.

There is thunder and lightning, a thick smoke, and a shofar that kept getting louder and louder. Perhaps Yeshua was blowing the shofar. The people were afraid and so God allows Moshe to speak for the people. Moshe becomes an advocate who speaks on behalf of the people just like the Messiah Yeshua is our advocate that speaks on our behalf (see 1 John 2:10). Although the Ten Commandments are important, it should be remembered there are other commandments that are also important that we should keep.

The Haftarah for Yitro is Isaiah 6:1 to 7:6, 9:5-6. Isaiah had just written a prophetic song about Israel's demise. Then, this portion begins with Yĕhōvâh Tsava'ot (the "Lord of Hosts" which is implying warfare) sitting on His throne with seraphs worshipping God and saying, "holy, holy, holy," that is "kadosh, kadosh, kadosh." It says that the door posts shook, and the House (referring to the heavenly Temple) kept filling with smoke. The heavenly vision reminds us of Israel's encounter with God at Mt. Sinai. In this portion, God is sitting which is an attribute of a man and so Isaiah probably sees God in the shape of a man just like Ezekiel did in one of his visions. Isaiah is sent to Israel even though they will not hear and will not repent. Isaiah is told by God to say to Ahaz to not be afraid; the invaders this time will not succeed against Judah.

Also, Isaiah 9:5-6 is part of this portion which prophetically talks about the coming of God as King. **The attributes in these scriptures can only be attributed to God.** Israel's mission

was to bring the true God to the entire world. That has been accomplished in part through God coming as a man in the person of the Jewish Messiah Yeshua. Someday Yeshua will return and complete His mission and establish peace and His kingdom forever. In the present, Yeshua gives those who believe in Him personal peace through the Holy Spirit. All the millions of those who have the Holy Spirit can have the peace Yeshua gives.

Isaiah 9:5-6 CJB is about the Messiah:

"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; dominion will rest on his shoulders, and he will be given the name Pele-Yo'etz El Gibbor Avi-'Ad Sar-Shalom [Wonder of a Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace], in order to extend the dominion and perpetuate the peace of the throne and kingdom of David, to secure it and sustain it through justice and righteousness henceforth and forever. The zeal of ADONAI-Tzva'ot (Yĕhōvâh of Hosts) will accomplish this." ADONAI in all caps is Yĕhōvâh, God's real name.

Our ancestors experienced the awesome power of God at Mount Sinai so that they trembled. Through our Messiah Yeshua we have been made part of a heavenly community and as we talked about earlier, we need to take that seriously. Hebrews 12:22-25 CJB says:

"You have come to Mount Tziyon, that is, the city of the living God, heavenly Yerushalayim; to myriads of angels in festive assembly; to a community of the firstborn whose names have been recorded in heaven; to a Judge who is God of everyone; to spirits of righteous people who have been brought to the goal; to the mediator of a new covenant, Yeshua; and to the sprinkled blood that speaks better things than that of Hevel (Abel). See that you don't reject the One speaking! For if those did not escape who rejected him when he gave divine warning on earth, think how much less we will escape if we turn away from him when he warns from heaven."

**Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts.
(We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)**

Remember, the word LORD in all capital letter is God's name Yĕhōvâh; that is His name forever according to Exodus 3:15.

The Ten Commandments from Exodus 20:1-18 NKJV,

And God spoke all these words, saying:

2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

13 "You shall not murder.

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

15 "You shall not steal.

16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Be Connected to God (Teaching to accompany the Torah portion Yitro)

There is a standard way to understand how God is at work in our lives in these Messianic times. It should be understood that the very first thing we need to do as believers is to do what God tells us. In this portion, God gives Israel the 10 Commandments, but that is not all the commandments that God gives us. We are to keep all of God's commands. Remember, Yeshua is God so He gave us the commandments in both in the Old Testament and the New Testament portions of the Bible. Many of the commandments in the New Testament portion are interpretations of the Old Testament portion. Yeshua said, "If you love me, you will keep my commands;" John 14:15 NKJV.

Yeshua was referring to the commandments at Mount Sinai because He is God. Jeremiah 23:5-6 says that Yēhōvāh will come from the line of David; the Messiah Yeshua is God. "Behold, the days are coming, 'says the LORD,' that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:5-6 NKJV. The Bible says Yeshua will come again some day and fulfill this scripture. Do not wait until it is too late for you.

Kefa (Peter) addresses the problem with those who think it is okay to dismiss God's commandments. He says in 2 Peter 2:4-5 NKJV:

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly."

I often say that Noah was righteous and did what was right and he saved himself and the world. Those who sinned were destroyed.

So, do not be fooled by those who say it is okay to sin. God did not spare the angels Kefa says. The Bible says the devils believe in God and they are destined for the lake of fire. James 2:19 NKJV says, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble!"

In this portion, we see how powerful and amazing God is. We need to remember how important it is to follow God's commandments. We are to follow God's commandments, but we are to also listen to the Holy Spirit in this Messianic age. Just as Israel experienced God every day in the desert, we can experience God through the Holy Spirit every day.

How do we experience the Holy Spirit?

- * Often the Holy Spirit will remind us to do what is right. The Holy Spirit is our helper (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit does not tell us to sin or do what is wrong.
- * The Holy Spirit can work in our minds to be kind, caring, patient. Shaul talks about the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.
- * The Holy Spirit may lead us to do something at times during the day.
- * The Holy Spirit may call us for a specific purpose like serving the poor or other acts of service.
- * The Holy Spirit gives us gifts. These are supernatural gifts. For example, a person who gives a prophetic word speaks words from God and not their own thoughts. It is wrong to say we speak from God when we are simply telling others what we have been thinking about. God can give believers many spiritual gifts. In the Old Testament, God even gave gifting for the building and making of the Tent of Meeting in the desert. There are lists of gifts in Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 4:11-13, and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. Jewish lists are short lists rather than listing everything. For example, Shaul (Paul) does not list all possible sins every time he talks about sins.
- * We can experience the peace of the Holy Spirit and God can work in many other ways. We may even feel a peace that seems to make 30 minutes like 5 minutes.

Our spiritual life is **not** just a calling by God for us to do something or for a just a thrilling experience.

There have been some movements where people go to church just to experience God. It is true that we can experience God, but that is not all that God wants us to do. This one person I know who was part of a prophetic movement at one time told me that everyone just went to church just to hear prophetic words or be thrilled by the presence of God. In 1 Corinthians 14:26, 40 NKJV says, "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." ... "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Our meetings need to be conducted so we are built up spiritually the Bible says. Some say we are controlling the Holy Spirit. That is not true. So, we also need good biblical exposition and order in our weekly meetings. Shaul told us to have orderly meetings and those who think they know better are wrong (see 1 Corinthians 14:40). If you want to experience the peace of God,

you can do that at any time, and not just when we get together. Some think their meetings need to be long and drawn out with a lot of singing.

I am not against experiencing the Holy Spirit. I will sit and pray at times and just welcome God's peace while at home. It is very uplifting! When we get together, it is not just to experience God's presence it says in 1 Corinthians 14:26; Shaul says these things were to be done decently and in order. Our spiritual life is about living out our lives every day with God and the Holy Spirit and His commandments. We need biblical encouragement for this so that we grow up spiritually. We can have other types of meetings for extended prayer or for an extended time to sing and experience God's presence. I think that is a great idea and I participate in those types of meetings as well.

Being connected to the power of God through the Holy Spirit is the best way to live.

Like I said, the Holy Spirit helps us to do what is right. We also receive the fruit (namely the result) of the Holy Spirit; we can receive special callings; and we can receive spiritual gifts. Also, the Holy Spirit was intended for our daily use and not just at congregation. The disconnect between our spiritual life and putting our 1 hour in a week bothered me years ago. I thought there has got to be something better than this. We are to be connected to God every day and not just for 1 hour a week!

Do not be trapped by only what you can see; do not be trapped by living a worldly life.

Just putting in your 1 hour a week is a worldly life. God never intended for His Messianic people to be holy for 1 hour a week and then live like hell. Doing that makes no sense at all. It says in 1 John 2:15-17 NKJV, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

It is not a bad idea to understand that worldly things are going to pass away. So, do not let anything come between you and God. I remember when Yugoslavia was a single nation and then war broke out between various factions and many lost their lives. Their country became divided and is still divided today. This must have come as a surprise to some. Perhaps we can put all our life into worldly things. We can get fooled into thinking that this is all there is, but that is not true. The opposite is true. This is a time of testing and when we believe in the Messiah Yeshua and live how God wants us to live by keeping His commandments and being led by the Holy Spirit, our future life with God will not pass away; we can have eternal life.

2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1 NKJV says,

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Be faithful in God's ways. That is the best way to live.

What an amazing God we have. He has told us how to live; He is a loving God who cares about us. He gave us the Holy Spirit in this Messianic age to help us live right. God continues to reach down to mankind through the ages to help us. Sometimes we think of God calling us to do something or an encounter with God as important spiritual moments, but that is not what life is all about. Keep God's commandments, but also be connected to God's power through the Holy Spirit every day. Do not be trapped into thinking that this life is all there is. This world is passing away. Believers can look forward to a wonderful eternal life someday. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;" Hebrews 10:23 NKJV.²

² The context of this verse includes: "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, " Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" Hebrews 10:29-31 NKJV. God is for us, but we must also honor Yēhōvāh.