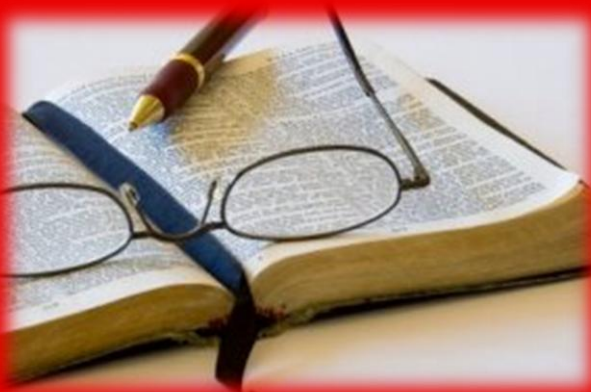


# “Make It Plain” Newsletter



*"For Christians, conduct is the standard of personal behavior based on the Word of God."*

## Welcome!

Welcome to our Living Word Church Newsletter entitled "Make It Plain". The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge and insight for God's people. It also promotes spiritual growth by addressing a wide variety of Christian topics. We hope and pray that this newsletter will bless you spiritually.

## Conduct

What is conduct? Conduct is simply the manner in which a person behaves. For Christians, conduct is the standard of personal behavior based on the Word of God. The Bible provides several examples of how we are to behave and respond when faced with different circumstances. Titus 2:7 says, "In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility [incapable of being bribed or morally corrupted]." Colossians 3: 12-13 says, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." As followers of Jesus, our conduct should represent the One we follow, a witness to others of a transformed life.

How is conduct manifested? Our Conduct is manifested or made visible through our lifestyle, in everything we say and do. This is why it is imperative that we show proper conduct at **ALL** times. 1 Timothy 4:11b says, "...but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." As believers, our conduct is manifest through our example. Because we are Christians, our conduct should

be consistent with that of Jesus Christ. 2 Timothy 2:3-4 says, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Our conduct should remain the same, allowing our conduct and character to show forth during difficult times. Our conduct should remain the same, allowing our conduct and character to show forth during difficult times.

Why is our conduct so important? As Christians, we should live for the glory of God and the well-being of our fellowmen. Our conduct helps non-believers gain an understanding as to what a Godly lifestyle is supposed to look like. Matt. 5:16 says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Our conduct is a visual testimony of Jesus Christ. Lastly our conduct helps keep us in right standing with God. 1 Peter 1:15-16 says, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." We should live our lives with the mindset that a non-believer can look upon us and see the character and conduct of Jesus Christ.

## Upcoming special events for Living Word

- We will be moving into a new location soon! Remain prayerful!
- More information about the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Women's Retreat is forthcoming.
- **Early Notice: Our Church-wide conference will be held in June. More details will be in the next issue of the newsletter.**

***"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."***

***~Matthew 5:16***





## Forgiveness: A Condition of the Heart

FORGIVENESS



***"When we allow our past sins to hinder our relationship with God, we are essentially saying that the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ's death was not enough."***

A Christian lifestyle is comprised of many components; one of which is forgiveness. Forgiveness is an essential aspect of our beliefs, because it is by forgiveness, that we are engrafted into the Body of Christ. God forgave the sin of man's past, present and future because of the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ. As Christians we understand and accept God's mercy and forgiveness, but we do not show the same mercy and forgiveness to our brothers and sisters. Matthew 6:14-15 says, *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* In essence, we must forgive others because God forgives us

What makes forgiveness a heart condition?

Too often, we consider forgiveness as a physical and mental act. A person transgresses against us, and we show forgiveness by verbally accepting the apology and moving forward. But, is this really forgiveness? Because when another situation arises, the past transgressions resurface. This occurs when we forgive by our actions and words, but not from our hearts. God requires that we forgive from our hearts. Matthew 18:33-35 says, *"Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So*

*Likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses."* This scripture lets us know that we must show compassion toward our brothers and sisters and forgive them from our hearts because we expect God to forgive us.

Finally yet importantly, we must forgive ourselves from the heart. We often ask God for forgiveness without forgiving ourselves. We hold on to things we did in the past, which create a hindrance or a blockage in our relationship with God. Those things we did leave us with the idea that we cannot receive forgiveness from God because we believe what we did was unforgivable or the act was too harsh. However, we must remember Hebrew 8:12, *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."* God forgives us for our sins and remembers them no more; therefore, we should do the same. When we allow our past sins to hinder our relationship with God, we are essentially saying that the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ's death was not enough. For it is by our faith and belief in Jesus' sacrifice that we even have fellowship with God. Romans 8:1 says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."* Remember that forgiveness should occur in our actions words and **from our heart.**





## Celebrating Black History Month

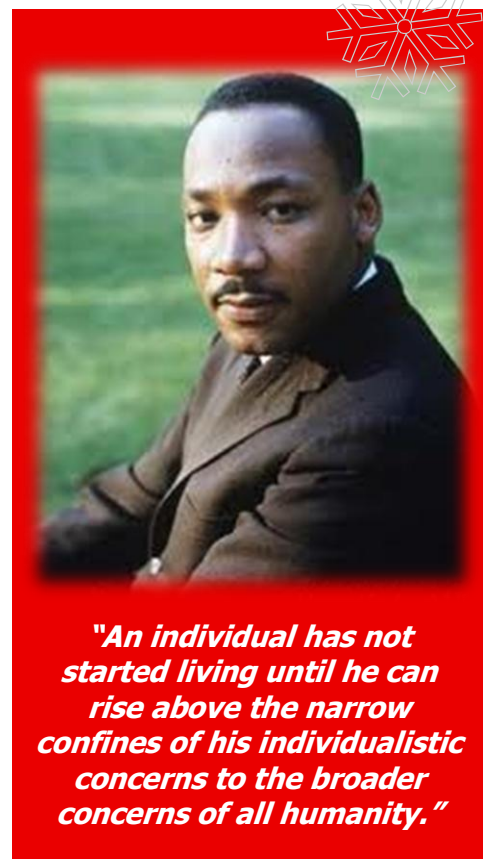
### Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. King was the middle child of two college-educated parents, Martin Luther King, Sr. and Alberta King. Dr. King's father had succeeded his father-in-law as pastor of the prestigious Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Dr. King was an exceptional student; he afforded the opportunity to skip the ninth and twelfth grade and entered Morehouse College at the age of fifteen without formally graduating high school. Dr. King was greatly influenced by Bayard Rustin, prominent civil rights leader and Mahatma Gandhi, non-violent activist. Rustin served as a mentor and advisor for Dr. King, Rustin also advised Dr. King to follow the ways of Gandhi, non-violent protests.

Dr. King is most noted for his involvement in the Montgomery Bus Boycott,

Southern Christian Leadership Conference, March on Washington, opposing the Vietnam War and many more causes. Dr. King also suffered many persecutions during his protest, but never fainted in the face of adversity. Dr. King survived multiple house bombings, death threats verbally, by letter, phone etc., FBI wire-tapping and allegations of infidelity.

Dr. King won many awards for his efforts in fighting for equality. He won the Nobel Peace Prize (youngest recipient), recipient of over fifty honorary degrees from different universities, given the American Liberties Medallion, awarded the Presidential Liberties Award and has many streets named after him all over the world. Dr. King will always be noted as one of the many greatest African Americans of all time.



***"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."***



***"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude."***

## Celebrating Women's History Month

### Dr. Maya Angelou

Dr. Maya Angelou was born April 4, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri. Dr. Angelou was raised in St. Louis and Stamps, Arkansas, where she faced racial and gender discrimination. It was while she was in Arkansas that she absorbed the unshakable faith and values of the traditional African-American family, community, and culture. Through her hardships and upbringing, Dr. Angelou gained inspiration for music, dance, performance and poetry. Dr. Angelou is most noted for her acting contributions in "The Blacks" and "Cabaret for Freedom". Dr. Angelou is also known for her dancing ability, and performances with Alvin Ailey on a variety of television shows in the late 1950's. She also recorded her 1st album entitled "Calypso Lady".

Dr. Angelou is celebrated for her timeless poetry: Phenomenal Woman, Still I Rise, Woman Work, A Conceit and many more. Dr. Angelou has served and still serves as a civil rights activist. She served on the Organization of African American Unity, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and two presidential committees. Dr. Angelou has received over 30 honorary degrees and is the Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. Dr. Maya Angelou's words and actions continue to motivate people to action and inspire people to change.



## Establishing a Godly Standard

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**"We Do What Is  
Right Because It Is  
Right."**

There is an old saying that says, "if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything." This saying holds true in life, indicating that you should have a standard or a set of rules that you live by. However, it is even more important to set a Godly standard. A standard is that which defines, represents and records who you are. A standard also establishes guidelines that help govern your life. With this in mind, we must develop a Godly standard to live more excellently before the eyes of God.

In developing a Godly standard, we must understand that although the standard of excellence is high, it is attainable through the power of the Holy Spirit and a determination to press. Philippians 3:13-14 says, "*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*" This scripture tells us that we must press towards the standard that God set through the life of Jesus Christ.

Once the Godly standard is set, how do we keep it and abide by the Godly standard?

The first step to keeping and abiding by our Godly standard is to seek God. We must seek God continually. In today's society, we are influenced continually by others, cell phone messages, the internet, billboards, advertisements, etc... Majority of these things oppose the Godly standard that we set for ourselves. Therefore, we must increase our communication with God, to have the strength and wisdom to withstand outside influences. We seek God through

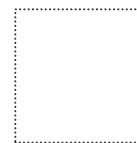
prayer and studying the Bible.

Secondly, we must have the power to keep our Godly standard. We must be born of God's spirit, filled with God's spirit and led by God's spirit. Acts 1:8 says, "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and all Judaea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*" We need the Holy Spirit to dwell on the inside of us to abide by our Godly standard. Although God gives us the power, it is up to us to put that power to use. Power is released on objects that are in motion.

Lastly, we must find others that have set a Godly standard and that are abiding (living) by that standard. These people are usually: 1. Steadfast, 2. Unmoveable and 3. Abounding in the work of the Lord. I Corinthians 15:58 says, "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*" Once we find those examples, we must watch and follow their lead as they follow Christ. This also leads to the importance of fellowshiping with the saints. That is why it is important to press your way to the house of God. When we followed our worldly standard, we had likeminded people who we fellowshiped with. Now that we are new creatures with a new standard, we must fellowship with likeminded people. The church is the place where you will find men and women who live and abide by a Godly standard.



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**Living Word Church of Open Heart's  
Foundational Scripture:**

**"But be ye doers of the word, and not  
hearers only, deceiving your own selves."**

**~ James 1:22**