

FINANCIAL HEROES OF THE BIBLE

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INTRODUCTION

We are just going to talk a little about eight financial heroes. Why are they financial heroes? They were heroes because they had financial freedom. That meant they were free from the bondage of money. They were free from the power of money. They weren't worried all the time about what they should and shouldn't do. We want you to learn many financial principles. The more financial principles you will know and understand and begin to practice, the less financial problems you will have, and the more money God can give to you. That doesn't mean you will be rich, because that already shows that you have wrong motives. That shows that you want to have money; that shows you are not free from money. You desire it. If you are free from money, it's not important. Financial Freedom does mean that God can entrust to you great riches for His Kingdom's sake.

I. ABRAHAM

A. In Ur of the Chaldeans

Let's look at Abraham in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Abraham had victory over his financial situation. Of course, he already had given up his home country; he had given up his nice running water, his toilet, and his dishwasher. Abraham was a very rich man and he lived in the most developed city in the whole world. He patted Sarah on the shoulder and said "Sarah, I have a wonderful idea. Let's go live in a tent. Let's go be just like the gypsies." How do you think Sarah felt? "Oh, dear Abraham, what a wonderful idea!" So we see that Abraham had victory over his money a long time. Now in his tent he had nothing. He probably had a box on which Sarah sat to eat supper and that box was full of gold. That's where all his riches were and nothing else. In our house, you will see pictures hanging on the wall, but it's difficult to hang pictures on a tent wall. He probably had all his riches in one box. Not once do we read about Abraham and his family even desiring a nice home. Abraham was a financial hero and his family had financial freedom. What about the "tent" you live in? What kind of a financial hero are you and how financially free is your wife?

B. Lot

Then Lot comes along. Lot probably was a handicap to Abraham from the very beginning. But he began to grow and he wanted even more elbowroom. Abraham then says, "Take a look around. Be my guest. Take whatever you like. It's not important to me." Lot says: "But it's important to me! So give me the best." Abraham said, "You want the best? Fine!" Lot received the very best, probably one of the very best places in the whole world, because there was the end of the beautiful river Jordan that watered that whole valley like as if it was the Garden of Eden. Forty years later through the hands of Lot the best place in the world turned into the worst place. It has been the worst place in the whole world for the last 4 thousand years. Abraham was totally free, and because of that freedom he could be generous and he gave the privilege to Lot. A year later, Abraham had more than the year before. That's the way God works in our lives. I can't help it. It's a fact of Christian life. If you are free from money and you are generous, God gives you everything you need. Sometimes He gives us poverty, because He knows that is what we need. Sometimes He gives us riches, because He knows that is what we need, or we can use it for others. We know about Paul, that he was content in riches and poverty. Lot was a slave to money and material goods and lost everything. Abraham had financial freedom and he inherited the whole country plus the future. Brother, choose what you prefer.

C. Melchizedek

Next, we see Abraham and Melchizedek. We've seen Abraham already when (A) he was leaving Ur of the Chaldeans, and (B) when he was with Lot, and now (C) he is with Melchizedek.

A huge army came. Five kings were afraid of this huge army. So they made an agreement together and the five kings were going to fight this huge army but they lost the battle. Abraham said, "It's not a problem I have 300 young men and 300 camels." "Abraham, what are we going to do?" "Well, saddle the camels; we are going to go for a ride. We are going to have a race to Damascus during the night to see who can get there first." "Then what?" "Then we are just going to trust God and we are going to kill everybody and we are going to have a great victory. Then we come home." That's exactly what he did. Do you see the miracle? Five kings were not successful. Abraham didn't take all his servants. He only took three hundred of them! It says very specifically in the Bible that he did not take all his servants. Abraham was the boss, he was the Mayor of this whole village of servants and he had victory. He could have come back and said: "Boys, we earned that pretty easy. I'll tell you what I'll do. Let us split the loot, fifty percent for you guys and fifty percent for me. And we will just say that it has been a good night." But he didn't. He says, "I will take nothing. My men, they have eaten some things and I don't know exactly what so let that be. Here, make a line of all the things you collected, guys." These three hundred men made a line of all these clothes, sandals and everything that was there. One, two, three, clothing here, set the shoes there and lay the coats there. "Melchizedek, what is your kind and size? Oh, I think that will be a good pair for you. Let us take a look at these ten coats. That one is too big for you, that one is too small, that one is one too old, that one too fancy, here this one is for you." Then he said to the captive kings "I don't know whose is whose, so just walk along and take what you own. Okay? Goodbye, it was nice knowing you, have a good time."

That was Abraham, I wish I could be like Abraham. My whole life, I always wished I could be like Abraham. I think maybe I have faith like Abraham, but I certainly don't have patience like Abraham. Abraham was a financial hero and had Financial Freedom. Is your giving far more than a meager 10%? Are you a financial hero? Are you Financially Free?

II. MOSES

A. He gave up his reputation.

He grew up in the richest country and in the richest house. He grew up playing with the king's children. He was the nephew of the king's children. He got the same education. The very best university education there was: with guest professors from Babylon, from Greece and from other places. He was a smart baby. He got all of that. His mother was always saying, "Well, have you looked the girls over? Look at her, how beautiful she is. Look at her, how rich her parents are." Ha, ha, ha! Then he began to feel, maybe this is all nice, but maybe I could do something more worthwhile with my life. He began to feel bad about the other millions of people, who were being mistreated and misused. "I've got to do something." "You-rotter!" He stopped this guy and he gave him a knock with his fist in his face. The guy dropped dead right there, but that wasn't God's plan. Sometimes our anger gets the best of us. Now, of course, in the New Testament we read that he gave up these riches of his own free will. He simply wanted to be identified with his poor people and help them. Moses gave up his reputation. It did not work out exactly as he had planned, but he gave up not only his money but also his whole luxurious lifestyle. That's financial freedom. He gave up his reputation. Moses was a financial hero. Are you protective of your reputation? Is your reputation bringing in more "dough" than last year? Just how financially free are you? Should we classify you as a hero?

B. Moses gave up his life of ease.

First, he gave up his reputation and he thought that he was going to do something really great. But he was in a hurry and anger got the best of him. He didn't understand God. God is never in hurry. It is really too bad that God is not in a hurry, but He's never too late either! God does everything in perfect time. The time Moses was angry was not God's perfect time. So, Moses left the riches, he thought, "Well, I won't mind that, I was ready to give it up anyway."

He came to point "B" in his life, "a life of ease." What he didn't know was that one day he would have to give that up also. He thought, "It actually is not all that bad giving up all those riches. Man I had so many responsibilities. I had to be exactly what Pharaoh wanted. I had to be what my mother wanted. I had to be what my cousins wanted. I had to be obedient to my teachers. I had to study a lot. I had to work together with these generals from the army. It was rich, but it was tough. Thank you, Jesus. This is a good meadow for these sheep and I think I'll have another nap. This is a good life. Is supper ready?" Then God says "Moses, give up this life of ease! You've been lazy for forty years now. You thought you'd go to heaven just like that? No. Get busy. Work hard. Suffer a lot. Do something for real. Be a missionary. Leave this country and go to Egypt. Get a bunch of lost gypsies and bring them up. Make a nation of them here." That's what Moses did by Mount Sinai. They were there and they built the Tabernacle and they got the Ten Commandments. That's when the group of slaves became the nation of Israel, the Jewish people. That's when babies began to be born that never knew Egypt. That's when everything changed.

So "A" was that Moses gave up his reputation. "B" is that Moses gave up his life of ease. Later when he was old, he told God one time, "I've never even asked for a donkey from anybody." He never asked anything. He rendered spiritual service for forty years without getting anything. When Jesus died, the soldiers drew lots for his clothing. "I want his sandals", "I want his coat," "I want his pocket money." When Moses died, nobody wanted anything. Nothing! According to the Bible he had absolutely nothing. We don't even know what his sons got. Moses just had nothing. He ascended into heaven just like Enoch did, or like Jesus did. He was gone and that was it. Moses was not in bondage to money, money wasn't important to him. It did not play any role in his life. Moses was financially free. What a financial example! What a hero! How about your life? What role does money play in your daily affairs, in your daily thinking? On what level are you? To what level are you financially free?

III. THE JEWS

The building of the Tabernacle.

Most of the things that happened with the Jews in the wilderness were pretty bad. But there is one outstanding thing that happened that was wonderful: they were building the tabernacle. Two years before the Jews had received lots of riches from Egypt. As they were leaving Egypt they went to an Egyptian and said, "We need a

cart to load all our goods on.” “Please, take it, please take it. Don’t you want another cart too? Please take it.” The Egyptians gave more than what they asked. Now the Jews had all these riches. They couldn’t use these riches in the wilderness and they deliberately were giving those riches away. “God gave them to me, I don’t need them right now and I’m just willing to give them back to God.” We read that they gave with glad hearts, very generously and they gave much more than what was necessary, so that Moses had to say, “Oh, enough! Please, don’t bring any more stuff.” Those Jews were free of their possessions. Their possessions were not important to them. That is financial freedom. One thing you will not read about the Jews in the wilderness is that their possessions were very important. How important are possessions to you? A car maybe? Even if you don’t exactly need it, it is handy and a nice status symbol. Please discuss your financial freedom about your possessions with your dear wife. How financially free is she, and what about you? Any chance of you folks becoming financial heroes?

IV.DAVID

A. David poured the water out.

David was thirsty one time, and just tired from fleeing from Saul, and so forth. He said: “Ah, there is nothing so good as that mineral water from our well near Bethlehem.” A couple of the guys heard this, bumped elbows and said, “The boss is a little bit discouraged. Let’s go get some of that water. Let’s go get him some mineral water.” “Yeah, it’s only twenty kilometers. We can jump over there in three hours.” So they went to Bethlehem, there were a few soldiers there and so forth, but “Oh, that’s no problem. We’ll beat them up if need be. We’ll go get the water and come back.” Those men knew no fear. They knew no fear and brought back a bottle of that mineral water. They said, “David, guess what? Have a good supper. We are for you. We are with you. You can count on us.” David, looked at that bottle of mineral water. He said, “That’s Holy water.” He offered prayer of thanks, he said, “God, you’ve given me such loyal helpers; they are afraid of nothing. With these men You can do miracles. I’m not worthy to be their leader. This is your water, it came from the earth, it came from Your earth, and I’m going to pour it onto Your earth.” There was no selfishness. No self service. He didn’t say, “Wow, you are good guys, I’m really glad you did that. It tastes great and it’s just the way I remember it. Men, it’s the best water in all of Israel.” No, instead of using it for himself he returned it as a sacred trust to God. That shows a liberal heart, a heart that is totally free of needs for self. Saul was enslaved, but David had freedom, freedom from material needs to worship the King of Kings. What freedom do you have? On the scale of generosity, how do you rate your financial freedom? David was a financial hero.

B. He gave food to all that celebrated.

David brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. It had been in different places for hundreds of years. He had wanted to bring it earlier, but then he had used selfish methods, human methods, fleshly methods, not spiritual methods, and it had backfired on him. Now he tried again. He studied the Bible on how they should do that, then he did it and it was successful. He was so overcome with spiritual joy, he said, “God has made me the leader of the people,” he never said, “I’m the king.” He never said “I’m the general,” or “I’m the lieutenant.” He only said, “I’m the captain.” Captain is one of the lowest ranks in the army. “I’m the captain of God’s people. I can go anywhere in the land and pick an apple or eat a bunch of grapes and nobody is going to stop me. I just want to show my thankfulness to God and just bless everybody.” It was a big party. He gave everybody bread and not just bread but special food like raisins, and sent them home with that food (2 Samuel 6:19). Bread and meat for everybody. Just think what that must have cost! He hadn’t even invented tax yet. We don’t read of anybody paying a tax. He was generous. What God gave him, he just shared. What a spiritual stewardship concept that is. What a financial freedom concept David had. What is your concept of spiritual stewardship? What financial freedom concepts mark your life? David was extra generous when he did not need to be at all. He had financial freedom. That is my hero!

C. He bought the place to worship.

David had sinned. He made mistakes. He wanted to worship God. He just wanted to have a special place to be with God. I hope you have a special place. I know of one pastor in Chicago who early every Friday morning goes to a lonely piece of beach along the river. Early in the morning he just walks up and down on that beach. He claps his hands, he praises God, sings songs, he falls down and weeps and he reads his

Bible. It's his 'holy' place. He takes off his shoes because it is his 'holy' place. David wanted to have a 'holy' place. When he went to buy it the owner Araunah said, "Now David, listen. What's the difference? You are a godly brother and I love Jesus. You are rich and I'm rich. Everything belongs to God. So it's mine and it is yours, so what's the difference? Take the place!" David said, "No, I couldn't worship Jesus if it didn't cost me anything. I couldn't be happy and shout Hallelujah! If it didn't cost me anything, I can't weep here and cry my heart out if it doesn't cost me anything. I know it is worth about so much and I tell you what, I'll give you that money and I'll give a bunch of extra money. You can do with it what you want. If you don't want it, there are lots of poor people out there; you can always share it with them."

Many times already in my life I've done that. Maybe for some reason I just had to give a gift; had to give something to somebody. Sometimes it was because I wanted to correct an offence or relationship. Perhaps the people said, "No, I don't want a gift. No, it's not necessary, please don't." I told them, "I need to give it and if you don't want it just put it into the offering on Sunday morning or give it to other people." Last year I felt I needed to give a gift to one brother. He had helped me very much and it was very expensive. He was a dentist, and he was doing his work for free and he also helps other missionaries without payment. He was doing it for God, but he had already helped my family several times. I began to feel like a parasite — sob! I talked to Diane and said that it was not right. Then we paid him a lot of money. I wrote, "If you don't want it, do with it what you want. Put it in your business or in your family, or use it for others, whatever." He wrote a beautiful letter back. "Thank you for this gift. It gave us lots of joy to do some special things for other people, which we could never do before. We gave some money to a mission; we gave some money to a spiritual brother." Hallelujah! That is great because it is all God's money. I could have been cheap. I could say, "Oh, we don't have to pay anything, thank you Jesus." But God put it in my heart to be generous. God put it in the dentist's heart to be generous. Now people in different places of the world have been blessed. That's what David did. He was extra generous and willing to pay extra. That is financial freedom. That is financial heroism. Have you paid extra sometimes? Have you been generous to your enemies? Do you have that financial freedom before God?

D. He collected for temple building.

How significant this is! He wanted to do something nice for God. "Oh, God I want to do something beautiful for you." He went to the pastor. He said "Pastor, I just feel in my heart I really want to do something special for God." "The pastor said, "Oh David, you are such a wonderful brother! It's a beautiful idea. You just go ahead and do that for God!" Then the pastor went home and he said to his wife, "You know, I'm tired, let's go to bed early. Let's have a good night sleep." He slept for about an hour and a half and there was a knock. "My prophet, my prophet! What were you telling David? That is not my will; I don't want him to do that." "Well, God, I've already told him." "I know you've already told him. It's a stupid idea. It's your problem. I can't help it. I didn't tell him and I didn't tell you. So, do you have a tail? Put your tail between legs and go to David and say 'Dave, I'm very sorry. It's a beautiful idea and all, but God doesn't want that beautiful idea. He doesn't want you to build the temple.'" "He will be angry. He will probably want to chop my head off! But if that's the way you feel God, okay."

Now someone else may have said, "Let's just have a party and let's all get drunk. Let's throw this money away since God doesn't want it anyway." David didn't do that. God said, "I don't want you to do this." David says, "Okay, You are the boss. I'm just a servant and I will be happy just to prepare everything I can, so the next man can do this nice project. So, the whole world will know that the other man has the glory. The other man has the success. The other man will get the credit. The whole world will come and shake his hand." "Oh, Solomon, what a wonderful brother you are." David didn't become angry. He didn't kill the pastor. He didn't throw the money away. He didn't say "Solomon, tough bananas, gather the materials yourself. God said He wants you to build him a temple. So, it'll be tough job. It will cost a lot of money and everything else. Well, I'm glad I don't have to do that. I'm going to die in peace. Then you do what you want." No, he stepped down and he said, "I'll serve my son. I'm going to prepare everything I can so it will be the most beautiful thing that was ever built. So, we see David did have financial freedom! What a financial hero! Are you a similar financial hero? Can you even stand in the shadow of David?"

V. ELISHA

He refused gifts.

Somebody came to Elisha for help. His name was Naaman. And after he followed Elisha's good instructions, he wanted to say thank you. Oh, how we love gifts. Do you love gifts? We love gifts. It's beautiful to receive gifts,

small, large, whatever. But Elisha said, "He is an unbeliever. You never know with unbelievers. Maybe he is 99% thankful, but maybe there is 1% feeling that he'd better pay a little bit for it. We want this man saved; we want this man to become a Christian. I want to show to him you don't need to pay anything to God. I want to show to him that God is love. I want to show to him that God wants to give abundantly over and above of what we even think and imagine. I just want him to be impressed with my God. I want him to know that to me it's not important whether I have one suit or three suits, or no money whatever. I have so many angels, I can just click my fingers and say, 'God, better send me a couple more angels!' God will take care of me. If I need a new suit tomorrow, God will deliver it to my door." Elisha simply didn't think about himself. To him it was simply a transaction between a heathen and a Holy God. Elisha was nothing. In his mind "Elisha" didn't even exist.

Naaman came and knocked at the door. "I'm sick" "What shall I do about it? I can smell that you've been smoking. I can smell that you've been drinking. I can smell that you've been travelling a long way. Just go take a bath and everything will be okay." That was the end of that, anything else? If that guy will be obedient, God will bless him and that will be it. That man was obedient, but that man also did come back, that man wanted to pay God. When He couldn't pay God he said, "I want to be like you are, I want to be a Christian. Can I take some dirt home so I can have a Holy place? Soil from the Holy Land so I can take my shoes off and I can have a place Holy to God. And please do forgive me when I have to go with the king to this heathen temple." Elisha had no problems with Financial Freedom. He was the humble financial hero prophet. He was not going to take a bunch of stuff from unbelievers that would ruin his reputation and diminish his God in their eyes. Elisha probably thought, "God has never been late yet. If I need a new shirt He will bring me one tomorrow." Often God's Financial Freedom time is not the same as our greedy time. Gehezai missed it. Do you know just how to discern the Financial Freedom times for God's provision in your life? What did you say your name was? Gehezai ... or ... Elisha?

VI. NEHEMIAH

Worked without income.

He never received anything. He didn't ask for money; he gave up his salary from the king. Before this Christian service project, he had been a rich man with a very responsible job. He had one of the most responsible jobs in the country because the life of the king depended on him. Many people wanted to get rid of the king. He had to protect him so that no poison could ever kill the king. It was a great responsibility with a high salary. What do you think the king said when he hired that man? "Nehemiah, you make sure that I never get poisoned and then I will give you a very minimum salary." That wouldn't be smart would it? So the king paid him a very big salary. Then he went away for a year and a half, or whatever. He gave up that salary. He received nothing. He worked without income. Very likely he even gave up his wife and children, everything. It is unlikely that they traveled with him. He worked without income. He simply wanted to serve God. "Jesus, if you want me to do that I am sure you are going to keep me alive. If I don't have enough food to eat and I die I don't think I'll be very successful. So, that's not my problem that's Your problem. It's kind of cold here, so maybe you should give me a coat." Nehemiah just went and trusted God. God provided everything he needed and he didn't die! It turned out just the other way around, he was successful! That is being a financial hero. That is true Financial Freedom, trusting God! No support from Babylon for Nehemiah, and no support from the West for you! Just build the walls with your local people. If you have arrived at this financial place in your life, get yourself a new name. Begin calling yourself Nehemiah.

VII. ZACCHEUS

Gave 4-fold to follow Jesus.

It's just the idea about what he did. He must have been a good businessman. He took one hundred dollars from these people and he gave four hundred dollars back. How do you do that? You have to have pretty good mathematics. He did it. He, of course, was a total unbeliever. He wasn't even interested in spiritual things for a long time in his life. He had probably gotten disappointed with things and that's when he began to think, "There must be something else, there must be something better. I'm going try to see this Jesus for myself. See who he is and hear what he has to say." Jesus did come, "Zaccheus, you know, I just had a fantastic idea. In about 30 minutes it will be tea time. I would like to have tea in your house. I'm tired. I know you have a very nice soft couch. I want to sit in your house to have some tea." Zaccheus said, "Oh!" It changed his whole life. So, Jesus sat on his couch and then He got up and left. Zaccheus laid his hand on the couch. The place where Jesus had

sat was still warm. He looked at his wife and said, "Honey, I can't sit on this couch any longer, let's sell it. We want to be like He is." He wanted to share with people. Here we have an example of a man who was greedy, who was a thief. Thieves don't care about how much hurt and pain it causes other people as long as they get it. He just took everything he could and then Jesus came. The old things passed away, now we have a brand new Zaccheus, a heavenly Zaccheus who has discovered Financial Freedom. The big burden of financial bondage had rolled away and Financial Freedom arrived. By God's divine principle he could give away four times more than what greed had gotten him. Has Financial Freedom come to you? Has your burden been rolled away? Can you begin to give away four times more than what you have gotten? Are you ready to be a financial hero and an example of Financial Freedom? Zaccheus was one. He is good example to follow.

VIII. THE APOSTLE PAUL

Refused salary.

Paul was willing to work himself. Late at night; early in the morning; with his hands. People would come and wanted to hear him preach. They came into this little room where he was working, "It's so smelly, oh, ugh!" He made tents so he sewed skins and other things like that. That is a smelly job. "Paul, would you preach the Gospel to us?" "I'd love to, get my glasses, and get my Bible!" "No, Paul, please take a bath first and then preach to us. You stink." That's Paul. Probably one of the very highest educated people in the world. Probably one of the very smartest people in the world in his time. According to the Bible, spiritual people that minister for God should receive financial help from other people. We know that even Jesus received financial help from different people. Sometimes Paul did receive help. He did not work all the time. But he was willing to work and many times he did work. If he thought that it would be helpful to his testimony he wouldn't accept a penny. He worked for his own living and for the living of his team. People could see: here is the pastor, earning a living for his elders so they don't have to go and work. Here is the director working so that his administrators and his key course coaches don't have to work. He refused a salary. Talk about Financial Freedom! Can you even imagine Paul not having it? Paul had it. *"In whatsoever state I am I have learned to be content."* Do you even know what real contentment is? At what stage are you getting it or losing it? Praise God that throughout history He has provided for hundreds of His saints without them ever having to worry about a single penny. The history of the church is filled with financial heroes who had Financial Freedom. Will you be one of them?

CONCLUSION

We've heard this lecture. I think they are truly heroes, financial heroes. They had financial freedom. What a wonderful life style: to be free from the bondage of money. Let's not to ignore it. These people, Nehemiah and other people, counted their money very accurately. They handled it correctly. They were wise. But the value just wasn't important to them. I've tried in my life never to build my spiritual ministry on money. Anytime there is a conflict in priorities between what I want to do or money, I always purposefully try to put money secondly. Not long ago I received a letter about money. "Abraham, write us back immediately, and maybe we can get this money to you before the New Year." I looked at that letter and I said "God I'm busy with other things, I don't want this financial pressure. If you want to do it, do it before New Year. If you want to do it after the New Year it's fine with me too. I will not immediately write back. I will continue to work on my spiritual task."

Maybe you don't agree with me. Maybe you don't think it's wise of me, but I don't want to have the bondage of money. I want to serve Jesus and he can supply whatever we need. When and how, and if he doesn't want to supply, I just have to be humble enough to say "Dear brothers and sisters, I'm sorry we don't have any more money. I'm taking a train, and I'm leaving and going home. It would be very humbling for me to have to do, but in my heart I try to be ready for this. I don't want to build my ministry on money. If you want to be free from the power of money, you need to learn to sacrifice because you need to learn to have self-control. Only through sacrifice and self-control can you be like Paul, "I've learned to be content whether I'm rich or poor, whether I have many things or few things, whether I'm full or hungry. It's not important to me." Then you will have financial freedom—financial freedom that will let you focus on what God wants to do in and through you, not on money. I hope that these heroes will be a help and an example to you and an encouragement. May God bless you so that if I come back about 30 years from now, I'll see that you have become a financial hero. I will look to see is this brother a financial hero? Is that preacher-boy a financial hero? Is that elder a financial hero? Is the pastor a financial hero? It will be fantastic! Praise God! Amen.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege upon completion of your practical assignment to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

- Write down the names of two of the financial heroes that you want to emulate. Develop a written plan about how you are going to do this and put it into practice. Bring the plan and be prepared to share at the next conference ☐
- Based on the suggestions in the lecture begin to work with your children to develop them into godly examples for other young people. Remember to be positive and patient with them. Write a brief weekly report of you experiences ☐