

Date: 7 Jan 2024 | **Speaker:** Elder Lee Ee Yang |

Topic: God First, People Next, Then the Earth | **Scripture:** [Genesis 1:26 – 2:3](#)

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Achieve a profound personal connection with God through practical steps inspired by the Bible – *Deeper Connection*.
2. Cultivate a spiritually aligned community applying 'God First, People Next, Then the Earth,' as a collective – *Unified Community*.

SERMON SUMMARY

The first sermon kicking off the New Year emphasises the importance of prioritising God, people, and the Earth in the context of a fast-paced and stressful society. Eld. Ee Yang reflects on the challenges faced in 2023, highlighting stress levels and the concept of "revenge bedtime procrastination." The key to thriving in such an environment, he suggests, is aligning priorities with the spiritual principle of "God First, People Next, Then the Earth."

Drawing from the creation account in [Genesis 1:26-2:3](#), he explores the divine order of creation, emphasising humanity's unique role as bearers of God's image. The order of importance, according to Eld. Ee Yang, is God, people (starting with the family), and then the Earth (encompassing work, ministry, and other aspects of life).

The practical application involves prioritising a relationship with God, listening to His guidance, and taking steps in faith, as seen in the examples of Abraham's journey and the corporate example of the Israelites camping around the Presence of God.

Furthermore, the message stresses the significance of family over work and ministry as Eld. Ee Yang shared a personal testimony of reprioritising family in his own life. The blessings of provision and rest, outlined in [Genesis 1:29](#) and [2:3](#), are presented as rewards for following God's order. Eld. Ee Yang encourages us to trust in God by providing examples from Scripture and emphasising the need to seek His guidance in uncertain times. The message concludes with an altar call, urging RiverLifers to commit to trust and follow God in the coming year and inviting families to prioritise God and receive His blessings.

SERMON RECAP

Eld. Ee Yang welcomes the congregation to 2024 with excitement, reflecting on a watch night service filled with the joy of being in the Lord's presence. Addressing the challenges of 2023, he compassionately acknowledges the overwhelming impact of COVID, travel, work, and school stresses. The sermon, titled "God first, people next, then the Earth," draws inspiration from [Genesis](#), presenting a spiritual principle for a fruitful and strife-free life.

Delving into the creation narrative, Eld. Ee Yang emphasizes a divine order, highlighting humans as the pinnacle of creation, recipients of God's clear intention. He deepens the exploration, establishing the divine order that places humans at the apex, profoundly loved and treasured by God. Eld. Ee Yang addresses the modern tendency to prioritize careers, children, and even pets over God, urging a return to the divine order of prioritizing God, people, and the Earth.

The message includes application points, drawing inspiration from Abraham's faith journey. Eld. Ee Yang shares personal stories, illustrating the consequences of misplaced priorities. He emphasizes the ongoing challenge of prioritizing God above all and shares a poignant personal story from 2012, encouraging faith in uncertain times. The metaphor of the Israelites camping around the Tabernacle underscores the importance of corporately following God's leading.

Reflecting on the church's recent journey, Eld. Ee Yang emphasizes the importance of following God's order. In 2022, the focus was on God's manifest presence, followed by a missional orientation in 2023 with impactful testimonies of revival and restoration. Looking ahead to 2024, Eld. Ee Yang desires the multiplication of blessings, urging the congregation to trust in God's current rather than personal strength.

He also shares a personal revelation in 2023: the priority of family over work and ministry, highlighting practical steps for reprioritization. The sermon concludes with a call to repentance and trust in God's strength, using [Isaiah 30:15](#). Eld. Ee Yang encourages the congregation to respond in worship, acknowledging Christ as their source of trust and strength, expressing hope for the church community in 2024.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Reflecting on the message's emphasis on priorities (God first, people next, then the Earth), how can individuals practically implement this principle in their daily lives, considering the various demands such as work, family, and personal commitments? Share specific examples or strategies that can help maintain this order in a hectic and demanding world. How do Bible verses such as **Matthew 6:33** ('But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.') resonate with this principle?
2. How can a community or church collectively apply the 'God First, People Next, Then the Earth' principle to fulfil their shared purpose? Discuss the impact on decision-making, goal-setting, and the overall atmosphere within the community or church. Consider **Proverbs 3:5-6** ('Trust in the Lord with all your heart...') as a foundation for collective trust in God.
3. Reflecting on the blessings mentioned in the sermon – provision (**Genesis 1:29**) and rest (**Genesis 2:3**) – how do these blessings seem lacking in today's society? Explore ways in which aligning with God's order and priorities can lead to experiencing these blessings individually and collectively. Consider verses like **Isaiah 30:15** ('In repentance and rest you will be saved, in quietness and trust is your strength.') and discuss their relevance in our pursuit of God's blessings in a fast-paced world.

Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- Thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness and constant love through the seasons
- Commit yourself to putting God and your family life above your work, friends and ministry.

2. RiverLife

- Pray for our church, that as we enter into 2024, we will determine to grow into Christlikeness.

3. World

- Continue to pray for the various nations that are at war:
 - a. Russia and Ukraine
 - b. Myanmar (Civil War)
 - c. Israel & Hamas
- Continue to pray for countries that have an escalated conflict situation:
 - a. China and the Philippines in the South China Sea
 - b. North & South Korea
- Continue to pray for countries recovering from recent natural disasters:
 - a. Japan (Earthquake)
 - b. Iceland (Volcanic Eruption)
- Pray for the situation at the Red Sea where militants from Yemen are attacking various ships
- Pray for Indonesia as it approaches its elections.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- € Ask the Lord to bless us as we step out to reach a pre-believer.
- € Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

1. RiverLife Filipino Service.

- Sundays | 11.30am Grace Chapel (Level 1)
- Our Filipino Ministry will resume weekly worship service in RiverLife's premises from this Sunday onwards (7 Jan).

2. Goal Setting for Our Lives. By Caleb Ministry for Seniors Aged 55 & Above.

- Sat, 13 Jan 2024 | 9am to 12.30pm Grace Chapel (Level 1).
- This session, led by Rev David Wong, will help seniors kickstart the new year with setting personal goals that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound). Join fellow senior RiverLifers to learn:
 - How to set realistic and attainable goals that aligns with God's purpose for your life
 - How to progress in reaching your goals through the year
- About Rev David Wong: Rev Wong was the Senior Pastor of Zion Bishan Bible-Presbyterian Church. He has been in pastoral ministry for over forty years, during which he also served with Haggai Institute and authored a dozen books, including *Finishing Well*. He is a sought-after Bible teacher and mentor.
- Register by Tue, 9 Jan 2024: rlc.sg/caleb-goals
- Note:
 - Participants have to be registered to attend this session. Due to limited seating capacity for 70 pax, registration will close when seats are filled.
 - There is no fee for this session. A freewill offering will be collected to defray costs.
 - For enquiries, please contact Christine Tan at christinetan@riverlife.org.sg.

3. Water Baptism Class.

- Sat, 27 Jan 2024 | 9am to 3.30pm Room 214/215 (Level 2)
- Water baptism is a public declaration of a believer's union and new identity in Christ and an outward expression of our commitment in receiving Christ as our personal Lord and Saviour. If you desire to take the step of faith to be water-baptised, do join our baptism class to understand the significance and importance of baptism.
- Register for this class at rlc.sg/baptism-class by Tue, 23 Jan.
- For enquiries, please contact Karen Koh at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg.
- Please note:
 - Participants will have a one-hour lunch break at own expense.
 - Our upcoming Water Baptism Service will be held on Sun, 17 Mar at 2pm.

4. The RiverLife Welcome Lunch

- Sun, 21 Jan 2024 | 11.30am-1pm, Faith Chapel (Level 2)
- Relationships matter to us because church is family. If you are new to RiverLife, come join us for this Welcome Lunch so that we can get to know one another better. You'll get to meet fellow RiverLifers as well as our staff team members too. This session is for those who have not attended a Welcome Lunch previously. Due to capacity constraints, each guest may be accompanied by up to two family members or friends (including their host).
- RSVP online: rlc.sg/welcomelunch

1. YA Gatherings (For Young Adults in their 20s). First Saturday Every Month, 5pm-8.30pm Victory Chapel (Level 1).

The YA Gathering is a space where young adults can get together to connect and build community. This gathering is made up of two components – Community Conversations & Communal Dinner – both with a focus on relationship building and life conversations. If you are interested in joining the gatherings and would like to find out more, connect with us on our Telegram Channel: [rlc.sg/ya](https://t.me/rlc.sg/ya).

Gathering Dates: 24 Feb, 6 Apr, 4 May, 1 Jun, 3 Aug, 7 Sep, 5 Oct, 2 Nov

YA Camp: 5-7 Jul

Christmas Outreach: 14 Dec

2. RiverLife Prayer Meetings.

- *RLC Prayer Room.* Tue, 8-9.30pm, Victory Chapel. (Livestream: [rlc.sg/rpr-watch](https://t.me/rlc.sg/rpr-watch))
- *Revive Nights.* Wed, 8pm – 9.30pm, Victory Chapel. (Livestream: [rlc.sg/revivenights](https://t.me/rlc.sg/revivenights))

We encourage you to set aside every Wednesday for a time of fasting.

3. Quarterly Calendar for Key English Adult Congregation Events

**Some dates are tentative and subjected to change. Stay updated via our digital bulletin and our social media channels for the latest information.*

Quarter 1	Quarter 2
<p><u>January</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 06 Jan – YA Gathering • 13 Jan – Caleb Ministry Gathering • 21 Jan – EA Welcome Lunch • 27 Jan – Water Baptism Class #1 <p><u>February</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 Feb – YA Gathering, Caleb Ministry • 25 Feb – Q1 Leaders Huddle <p><u>March</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3, 17, 24 Mar – Marriage Preparation Course #1 • 17 Mar – Water Baptism Service #1 • 23 Mar – Parents Gathering #1 • 29 to 31 Mar – Good Friday / Easter Weekend 	<p><u>April</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 06 Apr to 22 Jun – YA Gathering, Alpha #1 • 07 Apr – Dating Couples Briefing #1 • 13 Apr – Caleb Ministry Gathering • 20 Apr – RTF (Hope, Healing, Freedom) <p><u>May</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 04 May – YA Gathering • 10 to 11 May – Leaders Advance • 24 to 31 May – Equipping #1 • 30 May to 01 Jun – SuperLife Camp <p><u>June</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2, 23, 30 Jun – Marriage Preparation Course #2 • 08 Jun – Caleb Ministry Gathering, Water Baptism Class #2 • 09 Jun – RiverLife AGM • 13 to 16 Jun – Youth Camp • 29 Jun – Parents Gathering #2

Calendar

Quarter 3	Quarter 4
<p><u>July</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 to 7 Jul – YA Camp • 13 Jul – Caleb Ministry • 14 Jul – Dating Couples Briefing #2 • 20 to 21 Jul – RTF 1B • 21 Jul – EA Welcome Lunch • 28 Jul – Baptism Service #2 <p><u>August</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 03 Aug – YA Gathering • 03 Aug to 3 Oct – Alpha Run #2 • 04 Aug – Q3 Leaders Huddle • 17 Aug – Parents Gathering #3 • 24 to 25 Aug – RTF (Round Robin) <p><u>September</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 07 Sep – YA Gathering • 01 to 15 Sep – Marriage Preparation Course #3 • 01 to 29 Sep – SPYces • 06 to 15 Sep – Equipping #2 • 14 Sep – Caleb Ministry Gathering • 22 Sep – EA Mid-Autumn Lunch Outreach 	<p><u>October</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 05 Oct – YA Gathering, Water Baptism Class #3 • 06 to 20 – Marriage Preparation Course #3 • 12 Oct – Caleb Ministry Gathering • 27 Oct – RTF (Essential Teachings) <p><u>November</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 02 Nov – YA Gathering • 10 Nov – Water Baptism Service #3 • 15-24 Nov – Equipping #4 • 23-25 Nov – Marriage Retreat <p><u>December</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 Dec – YA Christmas Outreach, Caleb Ministry Gathering • 21-22 Dec – Christmas Outreach Weekend • 28 Dec – Parents Gathering #4

Ministry & Opportunities



1. The 9M Ministry.

This ministry provides prayer support for expectant mothers on their 9-month journey of pregnancy. Sisters-in-Christ who are fellow RiverLifers are assigned as Prayer Buddies to walk alongside mums who sign up to receive prayer support.

- Receive Prayer Support: rlc.sg/9m
- Provide Prayer Support: rlc.sg/serve

2. Missions Microsite.

Discover how you can go, give and pray for the nations. Let's make a difference in the nations together! For more information, visit rlc.sg/missions.

3. RiverLife Cares Opportunities.

Enquiries/Registration: rlc.sg/serve-rlcar

4. Prayer Ministry.

If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. fear, worry, etc), you can sign up for RiverLife's RTF ministry: bit.ly/rlcrtf

1. Bible Reading Plan.

The church has provided 3 undated Bible Reading plans that will serve as a resource for those who wish to follow a Bible Reading plan. Link: rlc.sg/brp

- 2 Year Chronological Bible Reading Plan.
- 3 Year Bible Reading Schedule (Alternating readings between Old and New Testament passages)
- Redemptive Historical Bible Reading Plan (At your own pace, focusing on the redemption story)

2. RiverLife Podcast.

The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search 'The RiverLife Podcast' on Spotify.

3. Spiritual Growth Resources.

We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.

4. Testimony.

If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.

5. Stay Connected with RLC.

Follow us to stay updated on latest church news and happenings.

WhatsApp Broadcast: rlc.sg/wachannelinvite

Telegram Channel: t.me/RiverLifeChurch

Facebook & Instagram: [@riverlifechurchsg](https://www.instagram.com/riverlifechurchsg)

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