

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will share from what they have learned from their quiet times. Every day during the past week we had a quiet time from a passage in the New Testament. Once a week we come together to share what we have learned. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. We will first explain how to have a quiet time. Then we will share the important truths and lessons from our quiet times and try to answer some difficult questions.

Today's topic is: A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 5-8.

(S) **POINT 1. HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME AND SHARE**

Have a time of fellowship with God or quiet time every day of the week from one of the seven assigned Bible passages. An easy quiet time method is called "The favourite truth" method. It has 5 steps.

Step 1. Pray and ask God to speak to you.

Step 2. Read one of the seven assigned passages.

Step 3. Choose your favourite truth. It is the truth, verse or passage through which God is speaking to you, stimulating your thinking or touching your heart.

Step 4. Meditate on your favourite truth. Meditate by doing the following four things. First. *Think* about the meaning of words. Second. *Ask* God what he intends to say to you. Third. *Relate* your favourite truth to your life by making a practical application. Fourth. *Write* the most important thoughts of your meditation in a notebook so that you may share them with others.

Step 5. Pray your favourite truth for yourself. Then pray your favourite truth for someone in your family. Then pray your favourite truth for someone nearby. And finally, pray your favourite truth for someone far away. When you meet together with one friend or with other Christians in a house fellowship or discipleship group, take turns to share the meditation of one of your quiet times. You may also try to answer some questions from the assigned passages.

(T) **POINT 2. SHARING FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 5-8**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from 1 Corinthians 5-8. Now we will use our quiet time notes to share truths and lessons from the assigned passages and discuss some questions.

Sharing quiet times from 1 Corinthians chapter 5.

I want to share from 1 Corinthians 5:13 about **church discipline**.

Here is the case of a brother who lived in gross sexual immorality. Paul rebuked the church for tolerating this situation and he urged the church to discipline this sinner. Because this sinner apparently refused to repent from his sin, it was the duty of the church to banish him and declare that he no longer belonged to the church. 1 Corinthians 5 (5:4-5) teaches that he should be handed over to Satan so that *his sinful nature* might be destroyed. This means, that within the sovereignty of God, Satan could do with him what he liked. For example, he could get a terrible sickness like aids or cancer, which hopefully would drive him to repentance and reformation of his life. Paul says that the first purpose of church discipline is not to destroy the sinner, but to lead him to repentance. The second purpose of church discipline is to serve as a warning for the other members of the church.

That should a church do when a member sins? The Bible teaches different kinds of discipline:

First. Self-discipline.

Every Christian should exercise self-discipline. Matthew 18 (7-9) teaches that Christians should remove all occasions for themselves or others to stumble into sin. Luke 6 (39-42) teaches that Christians should remove the plank out of their own eyes first, that is, correct their own mistakes first. Romans 16 (17-18) teaches that Christians should turn away from divisive persons and false teachers, who will lead them into sin. When every Christian exercises self-discipline, it will reduce many potential disciplinary actions. Thus exercising self-discipline is the responsibility of every Christian.

Second. Mutual discipline.

Every Christian is responsible to watch over his other brothers and sisters. Galatians 6 (1-2) teaches that Christians should gently restore other Christians who have been overtaken in any trespass. Matthew 18 (15) says that Christians should also privately rebuke those who sin against them. Thus, exercising mutual-discipline is the responsibility of every Christian.

Third. Church discipline of a sin that has a more private nature.

This regards some personal sin in a person's life or a sin against another person in the church. Matthew 18 (16-19) prescribes the order of exercising church discipline. Rebuke the person who sinned privately, that is, just between the two of you. If a sinner refuses to repent rebuke him in the presence of one or two witnesses. If he still refuses to repent, tell his sin to the whole church, who should try to persuade him to repent. If he still refuses to repent, excommunicate (cut off) him officially from the church. This means he is no more regarded as a Christian or a member of the church.

Fourth. Church discipline of a sin that has a more public nature.

This regards sin against the church as a whole. For example. A member lives openly in disobedience to God's teachings, causes divisions in the church, or brings false teachings into the church. Other examples. One of the church leaders commits sexual immorality or adultery; or is involved in corruption; or becomes violently angry. 1 Timothy 5 (19-20) teaches that leaders of the church who sin should be disciplined *publicly*.

The Bible teaches that public discipline involves the following steps: According to Titus 3 (9-10) warn the sinner in the presence of those he sinned. If necessary, warn him at least twice. According to 3 John (9-10) call the attention of the church to his harmful conduct and according to 2 Thessalonians 3 (6-15) withdraw association on intimate terms with him. According to 1 Corinthians 5 (4-5) drive him out of the church, that is, excommunicate him from membership.

Fifth. Restoration of a repentant sinner.

Whenever a sinner repents, he should be restored. 2 Corinthians 2 (5-11) and Luke 17 (3) teach that a member who repents and reforms his conduct, should be restored to fellowship and membership in the church. He should be forgiven, comforted and reaffirmed.

Sharing quiet times from 1 Corinthians chapter 6.

(S) I want to share from 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 about **lawsuits among Christians.**

The Corinthian Christians were worldly in the sense that they took one another to court before non-Christian judges. They were fighting for their personal *rights*. They did this in both criminal and non-criminal cases. The apostle Paul does not condemn the right of the civil authorities to try criminal cases. In Romans 13, he teaches that the civil authorities have the duty to keep the order and to try criminal cases. However, the apostle Paul condemns the right of Christians to take other Christians to court before a non-Christian judge in order to fight for their personal rights. These unbelieving judges cannot judge righteously, because they do not know or keep the law of God. Paul does not condemn legal proceedings before a Christian judge. However, he teaches that it is far better that Christians should bring their lawsuits before Christian brothers in the church.

Then the apostle Paul gives Christians even a second possibility. He says, "Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?" He encourages the Christians not to stand on their so-called *rights*, but rather to suffer injustice caused by brothers. This attitude of not seeking your personal rights is *love*. As a matter of fact, love does not do any kind of injustice. Taking a brother to court is selfish and sinful, because the purpose is to seek your rights or to seek revenge. Taking a brother to court is doing him wrong in return for the wrong he did to you. A Christian should instead forgive the offender and be willing to suffer loss or injustice. In Conclusion. I want to help my church to help its members to resolve their disputes and encourage them to love one another.

(T) I want to share from 1 Corinthians 6:9-20 about **sexual immoral people.**

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 says, "Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." The sexual revolution of our modern time does not realise that God has already thousands of years before warned the people in the world that he will punish sexual immorality. Because God created every human being, he owns every human body. Only *he* has the right to decide how that human being should live. God wants to live in the body of human beings through his Holy Spirit. Because God is holy, he cannot and will not live in people who misuse their bodies for sexual immorality. People, who continue to live in sexual immorality, will be excluded from the kingdom of God. This is a powerful stimulus for me not even to consider doing any of these things.

However, if such people turn to Christ and believe in his atoning sacrifice on the cross, then the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse them from their former sinful life. Every person, no matter how sinful he has lived before, if he believes in Jesus Christ, he will be justified and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore Paul says to the Corinthian Christians in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body."

Sharing quiet times from 1 Corinthians chapter 7.

(S) I want to share from 1 Corinthians 7 about **Christian marriage**.

First. Paul is not against marriage.

He was probably married at one time, because a member of the Sanhedrin had to be married. Paul wrote some of the most beautiful and wise passages in the Bible about marriage. In Ephesians 5:22-33 he teaches that the relationship of a Christian husband and a Christian wife should visibly reflect the relationship between Christ and his Church. Here in 1 Corinthians 7 Paul answers certain questions that the Corinthian Christians asked him about marriage.

Second. The advantages of remaining single and of marrying.

In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul teaches that there are certain advantages of remaining single. Especially in times of crises (7:26), like perhaps the persecution of Christians, it is better not to marry. Unmarried people have a greater ability to serve the Lord with an undivided heart, attention and energy. But because there is so much sexual immorality in the world, Paul says that in general it is better for Christians to marry than to remain unmarried.

Third. Sex is permitted only inside one's own marriage.

Paul teaches that Christian marriage means that every man has *his own wife* and every woman has *her own husband*. Christians may not have another girlfriend or boyfriend. Christians may not have sex with anybody besides their own spouse. And Christians should remain married until death separates them. Christians should fulfil their sexual duties to their spouse. Christians are not allowed to punish their spouse by withholding sex from him or her. Finally, he says that when two young people find it difficult to control themselves sexually, then it is better that they get married than that they burn with lust and have pre-marital sex. The Bible commands total sexual abstinence before marriage and outside your own marriage!

Fourth. Divorce is permitted in the case of a mixed marriage.

When one person of a married couple became a Christian after they were married, the Christian may not divorce the non-Christian. However, if the non-Christian does not want to live together with the Christian, then a divorce is permitted. The reason that they may divorce, is that God has called the marriage partners to live in peace. If the unbeliever was forced to live together with the believer against his wishes, then there would be no peace. In such a circumstance, the believer *is not bound* to remain married to the unbeliever. The believer is also not bound to stay unmarried for the rest of his life (7:15).

Fifth. Marriage to a non-Christian is not permitted.

There were some Christians at Corinth who thought that it was permissible for a Christian to marry a non-Christian, because they thought that the Christian could lead the non-Christian to faith in Christ. However, Paul says in verse 16, "How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?" Salvation is something only God can do. Salvation is by God's grace, and not by our scheming or manipulation! Moreover in 2 Corinthians 6:14 God clearly commands, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers." And in verse 39 he says, that a Christian is free to marry anyone they want, but that person must belong to the Lord. Thus, a Christian may never marry a person who does not believe in Jesus Christ. A Christian may only marry another Christian.

Sharing quiet times from 1 Corinthians chapter 8.

(T) I want to share about **food sacrificed to idols**.

In Corinth there were many temples and many idols. All temples sacrificed animals to the idols and then the meat would be sold on the market to people. Therefore the Corinthian Christians were anxious to know whether Christians may eat food that was first sacrificed to the idols.

First. Paul stated very clearly that idols are nothing but man-made images.

There is only one living God in the universe and he has revealed himself in the Bible. According to 1 Corinthians 10:20, all idols and all so-called *gods* of the other religions are in reality *demons*. They are completely sub-ordinate to the Almighty God of the Bible!

Second. The food offered to idols can therefore not have any magic meaning or power.

The eating of food or the abstaining from food does not influence our relationship to the living God. Christians are therefore free to eat all kinds of food or free to abstain from eating certain foods.

Third. What really matters is not eating food, but loving our neighbour.

If a Christian brother's conscience tells him to abstain from food offered to idols, then the love of the other Christians for him will respect his conviction. In such a situation Christian love commands them never to eat food offered to idols in his presence. Strong Christians may voluntarily abstain from making use of their freedom, because they love the

weaker Christian and do not want the weaker Christian to stumble in his faith. Whenever strong Christians act against the conscience of their weaker brothers, they do not love him and therefore sin against Christ. Christian freedom must always submit to Christian love. Christian love must determine what Christians do or not do!

Fourth. In all normal circumstances, Christians may eat all kinds of food.

In Mark 7:19 Jesus Christ declared all foods “clean”. And in 1 Timothy 4:4-5 the apostle Paul teaches, “Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.” This is one reason why Christians pray before they eat! In our prayer, we ask God to bless the food and we thank God for what we receive.

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Divide 1 Corinthians 9-11 into seven passages. Every day have a quiet time from one passage. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share from your quiet times.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and build Christ’s Church” and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to “Discipleship training on the air”.