

(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 2 CORINTHIANS 8-11.

(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 2 CORINTHIANS 8-11**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from 2 Corinthians 8-11. 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 2 Corinthians chapter 8.

I want to share about **Christian giving**. 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 are very important to understand Christian giving. In chapter 8, Paul relates the wonderful example of the Macedonian churches with regard to giving. I want to share just one principle: *Christian giving should be a sharing with the needy Christians elsewhere*. 2 Corinthians 8:14-15 says, "At the present time, your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: 'He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little'." Christians should take care that those who enjoy a greater share of material benefits make certain that those who have a smaller share through no fault of their own are not in want. This applies not only to individual Christians. Christian churches that have more should share with Christian churches that have less. Not only individual Christians are members of one Body, but all the churches in the world are members of the one Body of Christ. There should be equal concern for one another.

Sharing quiet times from 2 Corinthians chapter 9.

(S) I want to share from 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 about **the principles of Christian giving**.

The first principle: "Christian giving is only giving what you have received."

2 Corinthians 9:10 says, "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness." God supplies the seed, which the Christian sows! Whatever the Christian sows, he first received from God. 2 Corinthians 5:18 says, "All is from God." And 1 Corinthians 4:7 says, "What do you have that you did not receive?" Christian giving is the result of God's grace, not the result of the Christian's goodness. Therefore, I want to regard my giving as *a stewardship that God has entrusted to me*. I do not give of *my* money or possessions to God, but give of *God's* money and possessions to the cause of God in the world!

The second principle: “Christian giving is sowing”.

2 Corinthians 9:6 says, “Remember this: Whoever *sows* sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously”. Christian giving is not throwing away. Whatever a Christian gives is not lost, but rather multiplies! Christian giving is just like sowing seed. Outwardly, the seed of the farmer looks very small and insignificant, but inwardly every seed has tremendous potential. Contrary to all appearances, seed possesses the potency of life and increase. In order to allow a seed to grow and bear fruit, a farmer must first scatter this seed into the soil. He must give the seed away, in order to see it grow and multiply! Just like the seed grows into a tree that bears fruit, in which there are many new seeds, so Christian giving multiplies the amount given many times!

God’s grace not only gives the seed that the Christian sows, but also has the ability to increase the Christian’s store of seed and enlarge the harvest of his righteousness. The potential of a small and insignificant seed is very great. The seed that God supplies must be scattered, sown beneath the ground. Before it can produce a harvest, it seems as if all the seeds have been lost. Jesus Christ demonstrated this principle of giving in John 6 by his miracle of feeding the five thousand from the insignificant offering of an unknown boy. Only after the five loaves of bread and two fish had been broken and given away, could it feed so many people! Therefore, I want to give much of my money or possessions to the cause of God in the world with this conviction that God will multiply its effect many times!

The third principle: “Christian giving leads to reaping what is sown.” (Gal 6:7).

2 Corinthians 9:6 says, “Whoever sows *sparingly* will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows *generously* will also reap generously.” A Christian will reap according to the manner of his sowing. This rule is true in the agricultural world, but also in the moral world. Whoever sows little, will reap little and whoever sows abundantly, will reap abundantly. Also the Old Testament teaches this principle. In Proverbs 11:24-25 is written, “One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.” Therefore, I sow generously when I give and expect to reap generously!

The fourth principle: “The true measure of Christian giving is not the size of the gift, but the attitude of the heart.”

2 Corinthians 9:7 says, “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” In contrast to Old Testament giving, where the amount was fixed by the law, there is real freedom in Christian giving. Each Christian should decide in his own heart how much he ought to give. No quota or percentage is imposed on Christians. When you give reluctantly and grieve over the loss or when you give under compulsion of a church leader or under pressure of public opinion, you don’t give but grudge! Giving a certain percentage reluctantly or under compulsion is not Christian giving. Therefore, pastors or members of a church *may not require* that Christians give one tenth of their income to the church! The requirement of tithing forces Christians to give under compulsion. As a result many Christians give reluctantly and not cheerfully. Moreover, according to Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:15, the Old Testament requirement of tithing belongs to the Old Testament ceremonial law that has been *cancelled* and *abolished* by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! The Bible teaches that each Christian should decide in his own heart how much he ought to give, how much he can give and how much he is willing to give with his whole heart. Christian giving must always remain cheerful giving! Genuine Christian giving must be done freely, willingly and cheerfully. God does not require a certain amount, but God does require the right attitude of the heart! Therefore, every time I will make my own decision how much I want to give to God’s cause in the world. What is important is not the quota or percentage that is imposed on me, but the attitude of my heart!

Sharing quiet times from 2 Corinthians chapter 10.

(T) I want to share from 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 about spiritual warfare.

Christians do not wage war as the world does. The world always fights against one another. Several religions in the world fight holy wars. But Christians do not fight wars with guns and other weapons against other people. Christians fight *spiritual wars* with *spiritual weapons* against *spiritual and moral evil* within themselves and within society. Christians fight against false religious and moral teachings among humans and they fight against the devil and his demons. They fight against all the powers of darkness who try to overthrow the truth and oppose the kingdom of God.

The weapons with which Christians fight have divine power to demolish strongholds. Spiritual warfare can only be fought effectively and successfully with spiritual weapons. In Ephesians 6:10-18, Paul says that these weapons are truth, righteousness, evangelism, faith, salvation, the Word of God and prayer. All these weapons have divine power to overcome the strongholds of evil in yourself and in other people.

The strongholds that must be captured are arguments and pretensions that are set up against the knowledge of the God of the Bible. These strongholds are in the realm of the human mind and the human will, that is, in the spirits of people that are separated from the Spirit of God. The spirit of a human being that does not yet believe in Jesus Christ will determine what he thinks, believes and how he behaves. The person who does not believe in Jesus Christ will invent his own *arguments and pretensions*.

Arguments of the unbelieving mind seek to fortify itself against the truth of the Bible, especially against the truth that the nature of his spirit and body is depraved, against the truth that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour and against the truth that he cannot be saved by his own effort in keeping the law.

Pretensions of the unbeliever are every kind of proud or arrogant opposition to seek the God of the Bible, to get to know him, to obey him or to glorify him. The root of sin is independence from the God of the Bible and defiance against the God of the Bible. Some religious teachers deliberately spread lies about the God of the Bible, because they do not want people to know the truth! Sin deliberately exchanges the truth about the God of the Bible and deliberately twists the truths in the Bible.

The prisoners that are taken captive in Christian warfare are not people, but all these arguments and pretensions in the minds of unbelievers. It is the purpose of the God of the Bible to capture all the convictions and beliefs, all the thoughts and actions of people and lead them to obey Jesus Christ! These are the spiritual strongholds I want to capture with the spiritual weapons that God gives to me. This is for me the positive side of spiritual warfare.

Sharing quiet times from 2 Corinthians chapter 11.

(S) I want to share from 2 Corinthians 11:4-20 about **the false apostles**. Paul gives clear characteristics of false apostles.

First. In 2 Corinthians 11:4 Paul implies that certain people came to the Corinthians and preached a different message. The Corinthians did not distinguish between these false apostles and the true apostles! The false apostles were *not sent by Christ, but came by themselves*. While the disciples of Jesus Christ and Paul were historically and personally called and sent by Jesus Christ himself, these false apostles had never been given any divine authority. They simply came to the Corinthians and posed as apostles of Christ! Therefore, I should distinguish between the apostles of Christ in the Bible and all other people who claim to be sent by God.

Second. In 2 Corinthians 11:4 Paul also says that these false apostles or false prophets preached another Jesus and a different gospel than what Paul had preached to them. From the other letters of Paul, we know that these false teachers probably relied on human philosophies and worldly wisdom instead of God's Word and God's wisdom (1 Cor 2:12). They demanded that people should again become the slaves of the Jewish law instead of enjoy the grace of God in Jesus Christ (Gal 2:4). They preached a spirit of fear instead of a spirit of love, joy and peace (Rom.14:17).

In Galatians 1:9 Paul warns, "If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!" Therefore, I believe the only true gospel is as Jesus Christ and his apostles preached in the Bible. All the other religious messages in the world are *not* the gospel! All the other religious books in the world are completely different than the Bible.

Third. In 2 Corinthians 11:13 Paul says that these false apostles masqueraded as apostles of Christ, while in reality they were deceitful workers. These false prophets and false teachers disguised themselves, pretended that they were holy and tried to make people believe that they were prophets or apostles. But in reality their true nature remained unaltered. Paul says that these false prophets and teachers really followed the example of their master, Satan. Already in Paradise, Satan denied the words of God and said to Adam and Eve, "God did not say that you should not eat from the forbidden fruit". In Corinth Satan and his followers also denied the words of the gospel and tried to turn people away from Jesus Christ back to the Jewish law. Today there are other false prophets and false teachers who deny the words of the Bible and say that Christians have recently changed the contents of the Bible. These false prophets and false teachers forget that all the 66 books in the Bible have been historically documented between two and three thousand years ago! Thus, Satan masquerades as an angel of light, while in reality he is darkness. Satan and his servants pretend to be 'light' by lying and deceiving people.

In 2 Corinthians 11:14 Paul says that these false apostles masquerade as servants of righteousness. They were probably telling people that if they kept the law, they would be justified in God's eyes. However, the Bible teaches that no one will be justified by keeping the law. If you really want to be justified by God, then you must believe in Jesus Christ and his righteousness!

Therefore, I should be on my guard against all the tricks of the devil and his false apostles or false prophets.

Fourth. In 2 Corinthians 11:20 Paul says that these false apostles and false prophets treated Christians as slaves. They exploited them, took advantage of them, pushed themselves forward and even slapped them in the face! They put a heavy yoke of hundreds of rules of the Jewish law on the backs of the people, saying that people must keep all these laws in order to be saved. They lived on the Corinthian Christians like parasites live on trees. They grew fat at the expense of the Corinthian Christians. Paul says that such false apostles do not serve Jesus Christ, but their own appetites (bellies)(Rom 16:18). They exalted themselves to a position of authority to which they had no title. Like many earthly

rulers, they only sought to control people and make people feel their power and importance. They not only abused the Corinthian Christians with their words, but actually struck them in their faces. Acts 23:2 shows that slapping people in the face was a common practice with people in authority in those days. Leadership in the Bible is very different than leadership in the world. In the world, leaders are often authoritarian. In the Bible a leader must be the humble servant of the people he leads. Paul's warning helps me to keep watch against all kinds of false teachers and false apostles, who come in their own authority, and are characterised by trying to enslave people, exploit people and control people and by being cruel to people.

(T) I want to share from 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 about **the sufferings of a real apostle**.

The false apostles boasted about *their birth* as true descendants of Israel as the mark of their apostleship. However, Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians that the real mark of a true apostle is *suffering*! He enumerates some of his sufferings as an apostle of Christ. He was often imprisoned and flogged, in which he received 39 lashes from a whip. The whip had pieces of metal and bone at its end, so that it would rip open the back and breast. It was a very cruel method of beating another person. He was beaten with rods and even stoned with rocks. Several times he was shipwrecked and even spent a whole day drifting around on the sea. He constantly faced dangers from the difficulties of his travels, but also from evil people. He often went without sleep, was hungry, thirsty and even had no clothes. Besides all his sufferings, he worked harder than any other apostle and faced the daily pressure of his concern for all the churches. Suffering is not only the mark of a true apostle. It is also the mark of true Christians. Ordinary Christians must not be surprised if people persecute them too. In 2 Timothy 3:12, Paul says, "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

(S) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Divide Ephesians 1-3 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".