

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series, you will have an opportunity to learn about the practical life of the Christian community. Two teachers will teach from the Bible about Church building ministries. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: TRAINING CHRISTIANS THROUGH PERSONAL HELP. We will teach about the way older Christians may help younger Christians to grow.

(S) **POINT 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL HELP.**

First. What is personal help?

Personal help is help given by an older and more mature Christian to a younger Christian. It is helping him to grow and become a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is giving him *help that is tailored to his needs and personality*. It is giving him help by using the Bible and through a caring relationship with him.

(T) **Second. Biblical examples concerning areas of personal help.**

Jesus gave personal time to Mary. In Luke 10:38-42 we read how Jesus visited Lazarus and his two sisters. Martha opened her house to him and was very busy to be a perfect host. She was distracted by all the preparations for the guest. But Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to his teaching. Martha was doing things *for* Jesus, but Mary was doing things *with* Jesus. Martha asked Jesus to tell her sister to help her, but Jesus answered: "Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but *only one thing is needed*. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." Mary needed help and she chose to sit at the feet of Jesus Christ and learn. We do not know what Jesus taught her, but we do know that Jesus gave her a very high priority. Jesus teaches that *helping a person in his specific need is a very important aspect of personal help*.

(S) Jesus gave personal help to Zacchaeus, the tax collector. In Luke 19:1-10 we read that Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. He was very wealthy, because he had cheated and had asked too high taxes from people. When Jesus came to his town, he also wanted to meet Jesus, maybe because he had a bad conscience about his cheating. Nevertheless, Jesus knew what his real need was and took the initiative to meet Zacchaeus in his own house. During their conversation, Zacchaeus confessed his sin to Jesus and said, "Lord, here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Then Jesus helped him to receive salvation and said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house. ... The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."

Jesus teaches us that *helping a person to receive salvation is a very important aspect of personal help*.

(T) Jesus gave personal help to Peter. Let me explain John 21:15-19. Before Jesus was crucified, Peter had boasted that he would follow Jesus even if Jesus would be persecuted and killed. He had said, "I will lay down my life for you" (Jn 13:37). But when Jesus was arrested, Peter fled together with the other disciples of Jesus. After Jesus was resurrected from the dead, Jesus spoke personally to Peter and said, "Peter, do you truly love me?" Three times Jesus confronted Peter with the same question and three times he gave Peter a new task, "Feed and take care of my sheep." Jesus knew what Peter's big need was. Peter had denied the Lord Jesus three times before his death. Peter needed forgiveness and restoration of his relationship with Jesus. Jesus took the initiative to help Peter in his personal need. Jesus forgave Peter and restored him as one of his disciples and co-workers.

Jesus teaches that *helping a person to confess sin and receive forgiveness and restoration is a very important aspect of personal help*.

(S) The one another responsibilities. Many times in the New Testament we read that Christians have personal responsibilities towards one another. For example: "Urge one another to love and to do good deeds" (Hebr 10:24). "Carry one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2). "Encourage one another" and "build each other up" (1 Thes 5:11). *All these personal responsibilities towards one another are the things mature Christians should do to the young Christians during personal help*.

(T) **Second. Admonishing and teaching in personal help.**

The aim and method of personal help is teaching and admonishing. In *teaching* you impart knowledge of biblical truths and in *admonishing* you stimulate obedience to the biblical truths. Colossians 1:28-29 says, "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." Personal help consists of proclaiming Christ, admonishing conduct, teaching truth, imparting wisdom and stimulating maturity.

To proclaim means to solemnly declare that only Jesus Christ is the Saviour and the Lord. As Saviour, he does the greatest possible things for you! As Lord, he gives you the greatest mission or task in the world!

To teach wisdom is to teach how a person can use the best means to reach the highest goal; and how he can apply the truth in the right time and in the right way to the right person.

To admonish literally means to imprint into the mind by means of teaching, warning, stimulating and encouragement with a view to obedience. For example: In 2 Corinthians 5:20, he *pleads* with people to be reconciled to God. In Acts 20:31, he says that he never stopped *warning* each of the Christian leaders in Ephesus night and day with tears. And in 1 Thessalonians 2:7,11-12 he says, “We were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, *encouraging, comforting and urging* you to live lives worthy of God.”

There was never a wide gulf between Paul’s teaching and admonishing; between his doctrine and his ethics; between teaching the truths of the Bible and urging to obey the truths of the Bible. Paul’s teaching was done with a view to admonish and his admonishing was rooted in his teaching. For example: Paul not only proclaimed Christ as the Saviour of sin, but also as the Lord to obey and the Example to follow. As a matter of fact, Jesus Christ can only be the Example to people who embrace Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. The following are examples of how Paul links his admonishing together with his teaching about the person and work of Jesus Christ. In Romans 15:2-3, he admonishes: “Each of us should please his neighbour”, and teaches: “Christ did not please himself”. In Ephesians 5:2, he admonishes: “Live a life of love (walk in love)”, and teaches: “Just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us”. In Colossians 3:13, he admonishes: “Forgive one another”, and teaches: “As the Lord forgave you”.

(S) Third. The aim of personal help is maturity.

The aim of personal help is to present every Christian mature or perfect in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not only the Source of salvation, but also the Source of spiritual maturity. In Colossians 1:28-29 Paul says that he proclaims Christ and admonishes and teaches every Christian with all wisdom in order to present every Christian perfect in Christ. The word ‘perfect’ literally refers to time and to degree. With reference to time, the word ‘perfect’ means “to the end”. In 1 Corinthians 1:8, Paul says, “God will confirm (keep you strong) to the end”. *God’s work in a Christian will continue to the end!* And with reference to degree, the word ‘perfect’ means: blameless, unproved, complete, mature or perfect. *God’s work in a Christian will lead the Christian to become completely mature and perfectly unproved.* He will be what God wants him to be and no one will be able to reprove him. Although helping young Christians to grow often takes a lot of time, energy and struggle, God promises that he himself will make it succeed. This is a wonderful assurance to Christians! Sometimes it seems as if some Christians will never grow up to maturity and become blameless. But God promised that in the end, every Christian will be completely mature and perfectly unproved! The Christian worker has the same goal as God. In 1 Corinthians 3:6 Paul says, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.” *God uses mature Christian workers to help new Christians to grow. But it is always God himself who is the cause of growth and in control of growth.* In the picture of 1 Corinthians 3, Paul evangelised the Corinthians, but God gave them rebirth. Apollos made disciples of them, but God gave them spiritual maturity. And God will continue this good work he began in them until the end when they will be completely perfect!

(T) POINT 2. THE METHOD OF PERSONAL HELP

The following five steps is a practical and useful method to give personal help to another Christian. When an older and more mature Christian helps a new or younger Christian to grow, he could use the following five steps during their personal time together.

(S) Step one. Pray for the young Christian.

Pray for the young Christian in his presence. Thank God for drawing him to Christ and saving him (Jn 6:44). Thank God for the progress he is making in his Christian growth. Thank God for his faith, love and hope (Col 1:2-4). Pray to God for his growth, his life and his service in the church. You could use Paul’s prayer in Colossians 1:9-12 and pray that his knowledge will increase, that his behaviour will be worthy of Christ, that his service will be fruitful service and that his growth will be strong. Like Jesus in Luke 22:31-32, you could pray for his personal needs. Pray that God will fulfil his purpose in the Christian’s life.

When you pray for the young Christian, ask yourself, “What does God want me to pray for him so that it will encourage him?”

(T) Step two. Share progress with one another.

Share with one another about your progress in growth and about your struggles in life. Encourage one another. The older Christian should also share how he is growing, so that he can be an example for the younger Christian. 1 Timothy

4:15 teaches, “Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress”. *Share with one another about the things you are doing to grow.* For example: share what you have learned from your Bible reading or quiet time during the last week. Review one another’s Bible verse that you memorised. Talk about what is happening in your family, marriage and work. Discuss your service in the church and in society. Romans 1:12 teaches, “Be mutually encouraged by one another’s faith”. Encourage one another by sharing about your faith to one another. For example: share a promise from the Bible or discuss something God has done to stimulate your faith. Share with one another about your vision and plans for the future and how you depend on God for the future.

When you share and talk together, ask yourself, “How can I stimulate his progress and encourage his faith?”

(S) Step three. Teach God’s Word.

Teach one truth from the Bible to the young Christian. Remember, in Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commanded the older and more mature Christians “to teach the new Christians to obey all the things Jesus has commanded”. Practically you could do Bible Study together about a specific topic. Or you could use any part of this discipleship training course on the radio to teach and train him. The important thing is to *stimulate one another to apply the truths of the Bible to your personal lives!*

Another important thing to remember is that you should *rather build on the young Christian’s strengths than his weaknesses.* For example: if his strength is to do Bible study and his weakness is to memorise Bible verses, then concentrate on training him to do Bible study very well and give him compliments for whatever progress he makes in memorising Bible verses. Do not pick on his weaknesses, because he will grow insecure and be afraid to make mistakes or fail. Decide to be an encourager!

When you teach a young Christian to study the Bible, ask yourself, “What are his strengths and how can I build on them?”

(T) Step four. Discuss his questions.

Give the young Christian an opportunity to ask you questions about anything he likes to discuss. Listen carefully to his questions and even to his problems. Ask guiding questions to encourage him to share more and say everything that is on his mind or heart.

Do not answer his questions, but rather let him discover the answers from the Bible. Do not give him *your* answers or opinions, because your answers and opinions are your convictions and your applications of the truth, not *his*. Let him discover the answer to his questions for himself from the Bible. The only thing you should do is to suggest in which Bible passages God is teaching truth and principles that will help him to answer his own questions and problems. When a young Christian discovers the truth and answers for himself, it will become his own personal conviction and he will not forget what God has taught him.

When you give counsel to a young Christian, then ask yourself, “Which Bible passages will help him most to discover God’s answers for his questions and problems?”

(S) Step five. Pray together.

You have shared your progress together, you have studied the Bible together, and you have discovered answers in the Bible for questions and problems. Finally pray together. Let the young Christian pray first and respond to God about all the things God has taught him that day. He will pray about the things that were really meaningful to him during your time of personal help. His prayer will help you to know what God is doing in his life, so that you can continue to pray for him and give him personal help. As an older Christian you should also pray and respond to God about the things God has taught you that day. You could also pray together for other people, like his family, his friends and his colleagues, so that they too may know the truth and be saved.

(T) POINT 3. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL HELP

First. To who should you give personal help?

Every Christian worker has limited time and limited capacity. Nobody can give personal help or personal time on a regular basis to every person under his care.

One. Give personal help to those you observe need it most. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 teaches, “Warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone”.

Two. Give personal help to those who ask you to help. You should give personal help to those who struggle with a personal problem or have a personal question they want to discuss with you.

Three. Give personal help to those who stay away. Hebrews 10:25 teaches, “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching”. An older and more mature Christian should *give personal help to those who stay away from meetings or who lag behind*. Help those who need help to catch up a Bible study or a particular lesson from the discipleship training course.

Four. Give personal help to potential Christian workers. In 2 Timothy 2:1-7 Paul urges Timothy to entrust everything he has learned from Paul to people who have two characteristics. He should give personal help to people who are faithful and trustworthy. And he should give personal time to people who have the ability and availability to become a teacher for other people. An older and more mature Christian should *give personal help to those who are available and faithful; to those who are teachable and eager to receive more instruction and training; and to those who are open and willing to share their lives with other people*. .

(S) Second. When should personal help be given?

This depends very much on your own maturity, capacity, availability and willingness to teach and train others and on the calling God has given you. But it also depends on how much you are involved in the young Christian’s life. For example, if you are the only Christian meeting with him, then you should try to meet one another at least once every week, to share your progress together, to teach and train together, to discover answers for questions together and to pray together. However, if the young Christian is already meeting in your church service or discipleship group, then meet him whenever either he or you think it is really necessary.

(T) Third. How should personal help be given?

God does not permit an older and more mature Christian to *command* a young Christian what to do. In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus teaches his disciples how they should lead other Christians: He says, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you! Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many”. An older and more mature Christian may not rule over a younger Christian, because that is the way of the heathen. He may not command the young Christian, but he should admonish and teach the young Christian. He may not force the young Christian to do something, but he should urge and encourage him to love in all his relationships and to do good deeds in all his activities. Personal help should be given in the sphere of encouragement and building one another up!

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Teach people what the Bible teaches about training Christians through personal help. Encourage older and more mature Christians to give personal help to new and younger Christians.

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”.