

(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. We are two teachers and every day during the past week we had a quiet time from 7 selected chapters from PROVERBS in the Old Testament. Once a week we come together to share what we have learned from our quiet times. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM PROVERBS -pt1.

(S) **SHARING FROM SELECTED CHAPTERS FROM PROVERBS**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Proverbs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Now we will use our notes to share important truths and lessons from some of these chapters and discuss some difficult passages.

Sharing quiet times from Proverbs 1:1-7.

The purpose of Proverbs. A *proverb* is a deep saying that contains a comparison, parable or reference to ordinary life. King Solomon says that there are several purposes of listening to the proverbs in the book of Proverbs and especially of doing what proverbs teach.

The first purpose of Proverbs is for attaining wisdom, understanding and insight. The book of Proverbs can help me to acquire *wisdom*. There is a difference between knowledge and wisdom. While knowledge can be acquired by learning, wisdom can only be acquired by *practice*. Wisdom does not come to people by birth or by mere knowledge. Wisdom means *experience* after practising specific truths. Wisdom is to know the best means to reach the highest goal. Wisdom is to know what is the best thing to do in a particular situation, when is the best time to do it and how is the best way to do it. Therefore, wisdom is an art of living. *Understanding words of insight* means possessing the ability to *distinguish, to separate* right from wrong and good from evil. The book of Proverbs is teaching me the great difference between knowledge and wisdom and discernment. I want to become a wise person and a person who can distinguish good from evil.

(T) **The second purpose of Proverbs is for attaining a disciplined and prudent life.** Literally it says, proverbs are for attaining discipline that makes one prudent. The word *prudent* means *sensible and wise*. The book of Proverbs can help me to acquire discipline, which makes me sensible and wise. The word *discipline* means *correction*. It is the willingness and ability to correct myself, my words and conduct, whenever I am saying or doing things wrong. A person who lacks discipline is self-righteous and weak, because he cannot correct himself. Discipline also means self-discipline or self-control. A person who has self-control can control the words that come out of his mouth, can control his behaviour under all circumstances, especially when other people treat him with contempt or with injustice. The book of Proverbs is teaching me how to have self-control. I want to become a person who is self-controlled in my speaking and behaviour.

(S) **The third purpose of Proverbs is for doing what is right and just and fair.** The book of Proverbs can help me to acquire the ability to do what is right, just and fair. The meaning of the word *right*: Although people in the world set up their own standards of what is right and what is wrong, in the Bible, *right* means only whatever is in complete agreement with God's commandments in the Bible. Right and wrong are not relative or flexible norms, which people may choose for themselves or which are dependent on a particular situation or culture. Right and wrong are absolute norms, which are demanded by the living God. The meaning of the word *just*: Governments and departments of justice all over the world make their own laws and set up their own standards of what is just or unjust. However, in the Bible, *just* means only whatever is in complete agreement with God's regulations with respect to the administration of justice. For example, Deuteronomy 16:19 says, "Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous." The meaning of the word *fair*: In this context it means being upright in heart, doing things without any ulterior motive or deception.

(T) **The fourth purpose of Proverbs is to give prudence and discretion to the simple people.** The word *simple* means inexperienced or naïve. A simple person is a person who can be easily influenced. The simple people can be easily influenced by evil people, by evil places of recreation, by evil books or magazines, by evil television shows, etc. Simple people are people who do not have their own personal convictions, but go along with the crowd. Now, the book of Proverbs can give such simple people prudence and discretion. The word *prudence* means to be *smart, sharp and cunning* in the good sense of the word. God's wisdom contained in the book of Proverbs can make a person, who has a weak will and is easily influenced by others, smart and strong. A prudent or smart person does not do what other people expect him to do, but does what God wants him to do and what he himself wants to do. The word *discretion* means consideration or forethought. The wisdom in the book of Proverbs makes a person think and reflect about his situation and makes him consider or even reconsider what he should do. All young people in the world are inexperienced. It is not a shame to be inexperienced in the beginning, but it is a shame to remain inexperienced and become a fool in the

end! When a young person listens and obeys God's wisdom contained in the book of Proverbs, he will become cautious towards the influence of others and he will not open himself up to everyone's influence anymore. Thus, Proverbs help young and inexperienced people to become smart and wise.

(S) The fifth purpose of Proverbs is to increase the learning and guidance of the wise people. According to Proverbs 16:21, the wise in heart are called discerning. Thus the wise person and the discerning person is one and the same person. The word *learning* means knowledge gained. And the word *guidance* means having knowledge about the course of action. It means forethought, consideration and deliberation, which proceeds action. A real wise person never stops gaining more knowledge in order to gain more wisdom. A real wise person never stops thinking about the consequences of his action before he acts. He never stops asking advice from others before he acts. He never stops seeking God's guidance before he acts. A real wise person never thinks that he has already arrived at the peak of wisdom. Thus, a real wise person always has good considerations why he acts. The purpose of the book of Proverbs is not only to make the simple or inexperienced people wise, but also to make the wise people even wiser!

(T) The sixth purpose of Proverbs is to understand proverbs, parables, riddles and the sayings of the wise people. Wisdom or the sayings of the wise people are often expressed in proverbs, parables and riddles. The word *riddle* means a saying of the wise in which the meaning is hidden or a secret. Therefore the riddle needs to be interpreted. By reading the book of Proverbs and practising its wisdom, a person gains understanding of riddles. The book of Proverbs interprets the hidden meaning of the sayings of the wise.

(S) The seventh purpose of Proverbs is to show that all knowledge and wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." This verse is the motto of the whole book of Proverbs. The book of Proverbs is not just another book of wisdom in the world. *The book of Proverbs is a book of wisdom that shows the only two ways for man in this world: the right way and the wrong way.* It shows the value of fearing the Lord and it shows what happens to fools. The purpose of the book of Proverbs is to recommend fearing the Lord and to strongly advise against despising wisdom and rejecting discipline. Even if many proverbs look like the wisdom found among other nations in the world, they may not be disconnected from the God of the Bible. All these proverbs, which often show similarity with the proverbs of other nations, must be read against the background of the Ten Commandments of God. The purpose of the book of Proverbs is to help people to keep the Ten Commandments of God. The word *fear of the Lord* means to have a deep respect for God, which is expressed in standing in awe of God, in trusting God and in honouring God. The word *beginning of wisdom* means both the basis of wisdom as well as the best part of wisdom. The book of Proverbs teaches that all real wisdom begins by reckoning with the living God and by standing in the right relationship with the God of the Bible. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline. The word *fools* means people who disregard or treat with contempt the wisdom of God and their responsibility to live a life of self-control.

In summary, I want to become a wise person, who can distinguish between good and evil. I want to become a person who is self-controlled in my speaking and behaviour. I want to do what is right and just in God's eyes, without any ulterior motive. I want to become cautious, smart and experienced so that I will no longer open myself up to everyone else's influence anymore.

(T) Sharing quiet times from Proverbs 1:8-19.

An exhortation to learn wisdom. In this passage, the purpose is to exhort people to obey the fifth, sixth and eighth commandments of the Lord.

The fifth commandment. Proverbs 1:8 says, "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching." This is another way of saying, "Honour your father and your mother." The word *instruction* literally means discipline in the sense of correction and the word *teaching* means instruction. A father usually takes stronger action than a mother. A father often teaches wisdom by correcting the wrong way. A mother often teaches wisdom by pointing out the right way. The book of Proverbs teaches that the practical way to honour your parents is to listen to their correction and their instruction. Their corrections and instructions will make you a much better person and will make your personality and way of life attractive for other people!

(S) **The sixth commandment:** "You shall not kill." Proverbs 1:10-18 urges the listener or reader to avoid the way of people who murder people. Especially young men are exhorted to avoid joining gangs, terrorist organisations or unjust wars. "My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them" (10). "My son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths" (15). Young men should not join these groups, because such people always rush to kill people (1:16). They do not think about the consequences of their moral evil. They do not realise that they follow Satan as the murderer from the beginning (Jn 8:44) or that they are destroying themselves. Proverbs 1:17-18 says, "How useless to spread a net in full view of all the birds! Birds do not wait when they see that a net is spread for them, but quickly fly away. But people who join gangs or terrorist groups members see how other people are murdered, but do not realise that one day they too will get murdered!"

(T) **The eighth commandment.** Proverbs 1:19 says, “Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it.” The word *ill-gotten gain* means unjust gain. It refers to greedy rich people, who live quietly in their houses, while they are engaged in all kinds of evil practices in their business-life. They think that it is justifiable to manoeuvre between the laws of their country as long as they do not get caught. But they do not realise that God sees everything they do and that they will be judged in the end, not by the laws of their country, but by the laws of the living God! In the eyes of God, people who rob others by ill-gotten gains are equal to people who rob others by murder.

(S) **Sharing quiet times from Proverbs 1:20-33.**

A warning against rejection of wisdom. In this passage, wisdom is personified, that is, wisdom is spoken of as if she were a woman, a preacher on the streets. She stands everywhere where people gather together and calls people to turn away from foolishness and to learn wisdom. She directs her words of wisdom to the *simple* people, the young people, who are without experience, who are easily influenced by people who do evil and who naïvely open themselves up to all kinds of ideas and persuasions. She directs her words to the *mockers*, the people who are overly confident, arrogant and ungovernable (unrestrained). The mockers are the free-thinkers, who mock God and religion. In the Bible, the mockers stand on one line with the ungodly and wicked people (Ps 1:1; Prov 9:7) and with the proud and arrogant (Prov 21:24). And she directs her words of wisdom to the *foolish*, the people who disregard or treat with contempt the wisdom of God and their responsibility to live a life of self-control. Because fools hate knowledge, they end up with sinful thoughts, words and deeds. But in this picture, wisdom is rejected or ignored. Her *rebuke* or correction is rejected and her *advice* or counsel is ignored. People acted as if they had never been called, warned or advised. Because people reject her invitation *now*, she will reject them when they call on her for help *in the future*. Then the simple and foolish people will call and seek in vain. Proverbs 1:25-28 says, “Since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you ... Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me.” It is quite possible that wisdom puts herself here on one line with God himself, because in times of trouble and calamity, people always call on God for help and deliverance. But the people who hate the knowledge of God and do not choose the fear of the Lord will have to suffer the consequences of their own stupid decisions. They will come to realise that their rejection of wisdom is the cause of the calamities that overcome them. However, their realisation will come too late. They will call and seek God and God’s wisdom, but God and God’s wisdom will not respond, will not be found, will not help or deliver them! Proverbs 1:32 says, “The waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them.” The *waywardness of the simple* is the natural aversion of young and inexperienced people to accept advice from others and it is their turning away from the Lord in order to be independent. The book of Proverbs warns young people that their independence from the Lord and their aversion to accept advice from parents and teachers will kill them. The *complacency of fools* is the attitude of carelessness and unconcern of stupid people. They harbour a false kind of rest and assurance that expresses itself in an attitude of “I could not be bothered” or “I do not care”. The book of Proverbs warns foolish people that their attitude of carelessness and unconcern will destroy them. Attitudes as these constitute the greatest danger for their very own life.

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Proverbs 8.**

The nature of wisdom. The book of Proverbs is a part of Hebrew poetry. As in Proverbs 1:20-33, 3:13-20 and 4:8-9, wisdom is *personified* in this chapter. Wisdom is pictured as a preacher of her own great value. Because wisdom is so highly elevated, people must listen to her!

Verse 1-3 describes the place from where she calls to people.

Verse 4-5 says that she directs her calling to all mankind wherever they are, and especially to the simple or inexperienced people and the foolish people.

In verse 6-21 she gives the reasons why people ought to listen to her. The first reason to acquire wisdom is that *wisdom causes one to speak what is right, true and just*. Wisdom detests wickedness crookedness and perversion (6-9). The second reason to acquire wisdom is that *wisdom is of much greater value* than any material goods such as precious jewels. Nothing on earth you desire can compare with wisdom (10-11). The third reason to acquire wisdom is that *wisdom enables you to distinguish between right and wrong, to be able to give good counsel to people, to make sound judgements in court, to make just laws for a country and to rule well as a government official*. But wisdom is not simply wise and deep sayings, but wisdom is a practical way of life: Wisdom is to fear God and to hate evil, pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech (12-16).

Verse 22-31 describes *the nature of wisdom*. In Proverbs 8:22-23 wisdom literally says, “The Lord *formed* me as the beginning of his way, as the first of his works of old. I was *formed* from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.” In the book of Proverbs, wisdom derives its origin from the Lord. The fact that wisdom has its origin with the

Lord and not in the minds of famous wise people, distinguishes the wisdom in the Bible from all other wisdom found in the world. The wisdom in the book of Proverbs belongs to the special revelation of the Lord. And the book of Proverbs is completely inspired by the Holy Spirit and is a part of the Christian Canon. The word *formed* means *created* as it is used in Genesis 14:19,22 of “the Creator of heaven and earth” (Dt 32:6, *creation* of a people, Israel; Ps 139:13, *creation* of kidneys or inmost being). In poetic language, wisdom says that it was *created* as the first of God’s creative actions. From verse 23-31, it is clear that wisdom was created before the actual creation of the material universe began! When God created the material universe, the oceans and mountains, the heavens and clouds, wisdom was already present at God’s side. Verse 30 is poetic language, describing wisdom as a pet or playing child in the presence of God when he created the material universe.

Verse 32-36 is the application: Everyone who listens to wisdom must realise that the issue is between life and death. Everyone who finds wisdom finds life, but everyone who fails to find wisdom will harm himself and loves death.

(S) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Every day have a quiet time from one chapter from Proverbs. The selected chapters are Proverbs 15, 16, 17, 27, 28, 29 and 31. 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 your discoveries, lessons and blessings.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and preach God’s kingdom” and Internet on www.dota.net

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