

DISCIPLESHIP. LESSON 5

1	PRAYER
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Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Dedicate this lesson about disciple making to the Lord.

2	WORSHIP (20 minutes)	<i>[CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD]</i> GOD IS A LIVING PERSON
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Definition.

What is "worship"? Worship is:

- *an attitude* of awe, adoration, submission and dedication to God,
- *expressed* in various kinds of prayer and the way we live every day (lifestyle).

In order to worship God, we need to get to know "the God of the Bible".

During every worship time we will learn one characteristic (attribute) of God for which we worship him.

Meditation.

Worship is to adore God.

Theme: God is a Living Person.

Read the Bible passages and the explanation or explain it in your own words.

1. The nature of idols.

Read Psalm 115:2-8.

(1) The nature of idols.

Some people make idols that are similar to people. However, although the idols have eyes, they cannot see and although they have ears, they cannot hear. These dead stone or wooden idols cannot speak or act.

Other people with either their philosophical or religious minds create their own idea of what the one and only God should be like. However, every "god" created by the human mind, whether polytheistic or monotheistic, does not really exist.

(2) The influence of idols.

The worship of a man-made idol or a man-invented god is absolutely in vain. Such an idol or such a god never responds. Worse: the Bible warns that people who make such an idol or invent such a god with his mind, feelings, creative art and ambitions, will become like their man-made idol or their man-invented god (Psalm 115:8)! People who worship such a man-made idol or man-invented god will become like their idol or god. Those who worship the money-god, Mammon, become materialistic. Those who worship the sex-goddess, Venus, become sexually immoral.

And likewise, every person's character and behaviour reflects the god he worships! A revengeful terrorist worships a revengeful god. A person who persecutes other people worships a god that continually persecutes. And an unforgiving, bitter person worships a god that does not and cannot forgive.

(3) A biblical principle.

In contrast to the worship of a man-made idol or a man-invented god, people that worship the Living God of the Bible will become more and more like this Living God! Worship changes us in the areas of who we are and what we are like!

Thus, when we worship a holy and righteous God, we will become more and more holy and righteous! And when we worship a loving and merciful God, we will become more and more loving and merciful!

2. The nature of the Living God.

Read Exodus 3:1-12.

(1) God is a Living Person with personal functions.

God is not an impersonal power, but a Living Person. He lives and speaks like a person!

God reveals himself visibly in flames of fire and in the Angel of the Lord. And in the New Testament in Jesus Christ (John 14:9-10).

God speaks clearly and understandably to us. Therefore, we can know what God says. We can understand God's thoughts, feelings, desires and will to the extent that he chooses to reveal them to us.

God sees everything. He not only sees what we do, the visible things, but also the invisible things. He sees our misery and pain and inward life.

God hears everything. God hears our conversations, our whispering, and also our cries for help and our prayers.

God has a heart of feelings. He is concerned about our suffering and our welfare. The Bible says that God loves his people and shows his holy wrath to those who oppose him. God grieves and he rejoices.

God acts as a Person on our behalf by coming down to earth to rescue us. Moreover, God involves us by giving us a meaningful task to do, just like he gave to Moses. And God does not send us out alone to do that task, but goes with us in fulfilling that task, just like he accompanied Moses in the fulfilment of his task.

(2) God is a Living Person who created human persons in his image.

The one and only God who has revealed himself in the Bible is not a creation of the human mind. God has personal functions of speaking, seeing, hearing, feeling, reasoning, willing and acting, not because we humans have those functions. God is not a projection of the human mind. He is not a god created according to the ideas of people. Rather, God is a Living Person by nature. His whole being is personal.

It is not humans who created God in *their* image, but rather God who created humans in *his* image! God created human beings in his own likeness. As a Person, God created persons. Human beings are ‘persons’ because they have been created in God’s likeness. We human beings can speak, because God speaks. We see, because God sees. We think rationally, because God thinks rationally. We make choices and decisions, because God makes choices and decisions, etc. Because God is alive, we human beings have similar personal functions. Nevertheless, our personal functions are much more limited than his are.

(3) God is a Living Person who relates with human persons.

Because both God and we human beings are “living persons”, God and human beings can relate to one another and can fellowship with one another! As “persons”, God and we can talk to one another, we can know one another, and we can understand one another, feel with one another, fellowship with one another and work together. If God were only an impersonal power, a personal relationship and intimate fellowship between God and us would not be possible. However, because God is a Living Person, such a personal relationship and intimate fellowship is not only possible, but is actually happening!

Worship.

Take turns to worship God (in one or two sentences) in his characteristic as being a Living Person whom you can know and relate to.

3	SHARING (20 minutes) <i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> MATTHEW 15:1 – 18:20
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Take turns and **share (or read)** from the notes of your personal time with God) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Matthew 15:1 – 18:20).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

4	TEACHING (70 minutes) <i>[BIBLE]</i> SEVEN WAYS TO USE THE BIBLE
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A. MOTIVATION. WHY USE THE BIBLE?

1. The example of the Lord Jesus.

(1) The convictions of Jesus about the Bible.

Jesus regarded the Bible as the inspired Word of God. The authors wrote the books under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 22:43). He regarded the Bible as the authoritative Word of God. He quoted it as God’s final word in every situation (Matthew 4:1-10). He regarded people who heard and obeyed the Bible as blessed (Luke 11:28; Revelation 1:3).

(2) Jesus Christ himself is the One who inspired the Bible and he himself is the Content of the Bible.

Read 1 Peter 1:10-12; Revelation 19:10.

Notes. The apostle Peter said that the Spirit of Jesus Christ had inspired the prophets of the Old Testament period to write the Old Testament. Jesus says, “The testimony of Jesus (what Jesus said and did and is now recorded in the Bible) is the spirit (the intention and content) of prophecy (Christian preaching)” (Revelation 19:10). The intention and content of “prophecy” is everything the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ taught in the Old Testament (1 Peter 1:10-12) and in the New Testament (Matthew 5:17; John 3:11-13; 5:39; 8:18-19,24,31-32,51,58)! To put this in another way: to proclaim what Jesus revealed about himself, his words and works in the Bible is the spiritual gift of prophecy (Revelation

19:10)¹. Biblical prophecy is therefore not making arbitrary predictions about other people and events, but proclaiming Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2; cf. 4:6)!

(3) How did Jesus use the Bible (God's Word)?

Read Luke 2:46-47.

Notes. In his human nature Jesus started at an early age to study God's Word. He learned by listening, by asking questions and by discussing God's Word with other people.

The Bible at that time was written on scrolls, made of papyrus or leather. Jesus used God's Word very much. He applied God's Word to his own personal life (Luke 4:21, 24:25-27,44-45). He quoted God's Word against his enemy, the Devil (Matthew 4:4,7,10). He used God's Word to teach the truth (Matthew 5:21-22,27,31-34,38-39,43-44), to answer questions (Matthew 19:3-6), to refute false teaching (Matthew 22:41-46), to expose the hypocritical life of people (Mark 7:5-9) and to prophesy (Matthew 26:31).

(4) What did people and Jesus himself say about his education?

Read John 7:14-18.

Notes. Although Jesus had no theological training at one of the rabbinical schools, he knew God's Word very well. The learning and teaching of Jesus Christ came from the One and Only True and Living God, who sent him. Jesus claimed that he spoke the truth without a single falsehood.

(5) How did Jesus develop the personal convictions of people?

Read Luke 10:25-28.

Notes. Jesus would answer questions with another question – the “ping-pong principle”. In this way people had to discover the truth in the Bible themselves. The truth in the Bible, which people discover for themselves, becomes their personal convictions.

Thus, instead of answering a question, give people a Bible reference and let them read it and discover the truth in the Bible for themselves.

2. The example of the apostle Paul.

(1) His conviction about the Bible.

The apostle Paul regarded the Bible as the *inspired* Word of God. Every word of the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16-17). He regarded the Bible as the *authoritative* Word of God. He quoted it as God's final word in every situation (Acts 13:34-35). The apostle Peter said that God gave his wisdom to the apostle Paul to write his thirteen letters (2 Peter 3:15-16).

(2) How did Paul study the Bible in a small group?

Read Acts 17:2-4.

Notes. Paul's habit was to find a group of people who wanted to study God's Word, the Bible. Every week the group would meet together. Paul would reason with them from the Bible. The words mean the following:

- The word “to reason” (Greek: *dialogomai*) (aorist tense) literally means “to ponder over” the truths of the Bible in one's mind and then “to discuss” (to dialogue about) them with other people in the group. It does not mean “to argue about or debate the Bible”, but to discuss.
- During these periods of discussion from the Bible, Paul as group leader of the group also explained and proved certain truths from the Bible. The word “to explain” (Greek: *dianoigó*) (present participle) literally means “to open up completely” the Bible, that is, to explain the meaning of the difficult passages in the Bible.
- The word “to prove” (Greek: *paratithémi*) (present participle) means to present evidence, to show that what you teach is clearly written in the Bible.
- Paul's goal for studying the Bible in a small group was “to persuade” (Greek: *peithó*) (aorist tense) the people to believe the truths written in the Bible. Those that were persuaded joined (Greek: *proskléroó*) (aorist tense) his movement. In Ephesus, Paul had such discussions from the Bible every day for two years (Acts 19:8-10)!

(3) What was Paul's goal in teaching and preaching?

Read Acts 20:20,27,30-31.

Notes. Paul's goal was to teach people the whole will of God as well as anything helpful. On the one hand, he taught them every important teaching and practice in the Bible. On the other hand, he did not teach them anything that would not help them. Paul *warned* the Christians that they should not occupy themselves with stupid arguments or with false teachings (1 Timothy 1:3-7). It is important that Christians do not limit themselves to the specific teachings of their church denomination, but that they teach people the whole will of God!

(4) What was Paul's rule in all his preaching and teaching?

Read 1 Corinthians 4:6.

Notes. Paul's rule in all his preaching and teaching was never to go beyond what is written in the Bible! It is therefore important that Christians do not add all kinds of theological (doctrinal) arguments of their particular denomination to the Bible!

¹ Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, (p.730)

Note the warning of Jesus Christ in Revelation 22:18-19: “If anyone adds anything to them (the words of Christ in the book of Revelation), God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

3. The example of the Bereans.

How did the Bereans use God’s Word, the Bible?

Read Acts 17:10-12.

Notes. The Bereans listened and received the teaching of the Bible with the right attitude and with eagerness. They examined the Bible every day in order to discover the truth for themselves and to check whether the preachers or teachers of the Bible spoke or taught the truth. They wanted to develop their own convictions about what God’s Word, the Bible, said. The word “to examine” (Greek: anakrinó) literally means to investigate the truth by searching, by asking questions, by discerning the truth and by appraising the truth. It means to make careful and exact research as in legal processes. Thus, the way to develop and formulate personal convictions about spiritual matters is to examine the truth in the Bible yourself. The best way is to do this together with a small group of other Christians.

4. The example of Ezra.

How did Ezra use God’s Word, the Bible?

Read Ezra 7:10.

Notes. Ezra was a great teacher of the Bible. He devoted himself to three things: first, to study the Bible; second, to practise the teachings of the Bible; third, to teach the truths of the Bible to others. This is a good example for all students and group leaders (teachers) of the Bible. Before you teach a truth from the Bible to others, you must first study this truth in the Bible and practise it in your own life (cf. Matthew 23:2)!

5. The example of the military leader Joshua and king David.

What did God promise and what did his people experience?

Read Joshua 1:7-9; Psalm 1:1-3.

Notes. God commanded the military leader, Joshua, to meditate continually on God’s words in the Bible, so that he may be careful to do everything written in it. God promised that he would experience what is really successful or profitable in God’s eyes.

King David experienced that continual meditation on God’s words in the Bible kept him away from evil people and made his life fruitful. Thus, meditation and application of the Bible will have great influence on your life and will bring a great reward. You will make your way prosperous, you will have success (that is, you will understand life and act wisely) and your life will be attractive and fruitful.

6. The 5 principles of Bible study.

The above passages from the Bible teach us a few good principles of Bible study.

(1) Small group.

Form a small group of people who would like to study the Bible together, preferably every week.

(2) Observe facts.

Search the truth by investigating the facts, especially the whole will of God and anything helpful.

(3) Interpret truths.

Ask questions and listen to one another’s point of view. Discuss the truths in the passage.

Explain the difficult words and thoughts. Prove every point you make from the Bible. Explain the Bible correctly, preferably in the light of other passages from the Bible.

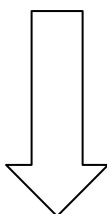
(4) Apply truths.

Meditate on what God intends you to know, to believe, to be and to do.

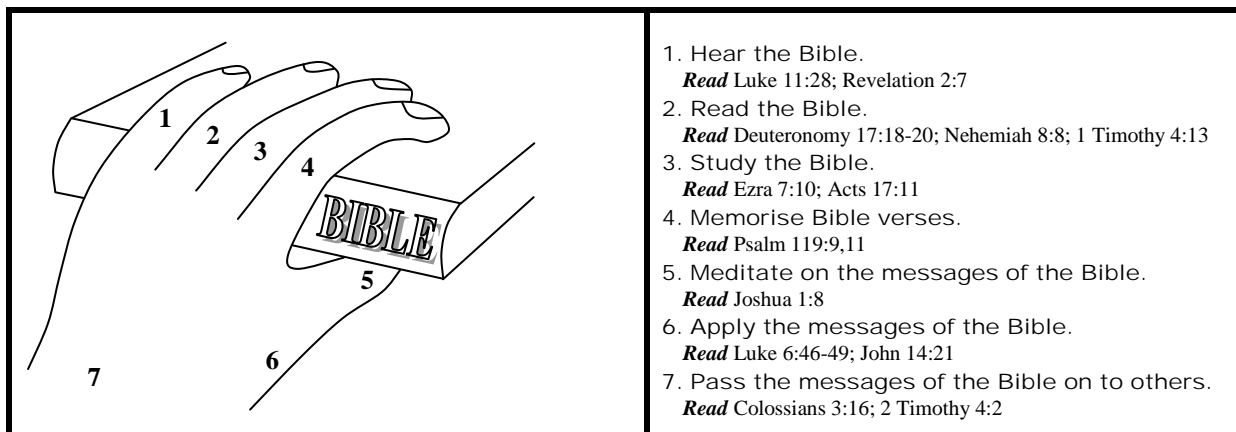
Then practise the truth God wants you to practise.

(5) Formulate truths.

Formulate the main truths as your own convictions, conclusions and applications.



B. ILLUSTRATION. THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY WITH REGARD TO THE BIBLE



The more you use the Bible in these 7 practical ways, the better spiritual understanding you will have of God's Word.

C. PRACTICAL. SEVEN PRACTICAL WAYS TO USE THE BIBLE

During this DOTA training course, we will learn to use the Bible in a practical way. We will learn to listen to the Bible, read the Bible, study the Bible, memorise Bible verses, meditate on Bible truths, apply the messages of the Bible to our personal life and pass the messages of the Bible on to other people.

Teach the following seven practical methods.

1. Hear the Bible.

Learn to listen to the Word of God (Romans 10:17), that is, not just to hear what is read, but to actually hear what God is saying to you! Expect God to say something specific to you!

2. Read the Bible every day.

(1) Read through the Bible.

Use one, two or three years to read through the whole Bible. The Bible has 1187 chapters. You can read through the Bible in one year by reading 3 chapters every day and 5 chapters on your free day.

Use a Bible reading plan (See manual 1, supplement 2).

Read the New Testament passages during your personal times with God (in the morning). And read one or both Old Testament passages in the evening before you go to sleep.

Also use a Bible marking system while you read (See manual 1, supplement 3).

It will help you to find important passages in the Bible and will help you to study certain topics in the Bible.

(2) Read the Bible to your family.

Read a passage from the Bible every day to your family (for example, after the main meal). Then talk about it and pray about it together (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

(3) Read the Bible to other people.

Look for opportunities to read the Bible aloud to non-Christians and to Christians (1 Timothy 4:13).

3. Study the Bible every week.

(1) Form a Bible study group or a discipleship group.

Find people who want to study the Bible together in a small group. Every member should prepare the Bible study before he comes to the Bible study group meeting. When you come together, everybody should participate in searching, discussing, sharing and applying the truth. It is the best if you meet once a week for Bible study and prayer.

(2) Learn different methods of doing Bible study.

There are methods to help you study a Bible verse, a Bible passage or chapter, a Bible book, a Bible character (person) and a Bible topic². In this course you will learn one very good method, namely "the five steps method", which can be used to study every passage in the Bible (See manual 1, supplement 4).

4. Memorise Bible verses regularly.

Meditate and memorise new Bible verses regularly. Also review and check old memorised Bible verses (See manual 1, supplement 5).

² See www.deltacourse.org, study 35, "Bible study".

5. Meditate on the truths of the Bible.

Learn and practise to meditate on the truths of the Bible. It takes more time and discipline.

Christian meditation is very different to meditation in other religions. In other religions, the person himself is in the centre of his meditation. In the Christian faith, God and his words are always in the centre of your meditation. Christian meditation is other-directed and is always a *dialogue* between you and God. Christian meditation is especially done during your quiet time, prayer, memorisation and Bible study. The four steps in Christian meditation are:

- (1) think about the meaning of words
- (2) pray to God about these words
- (3) relate these words to your life
- (4) write them down in a notebook (See manual 1, supplement 4).

6. Apply the truths of the Bible to your life.

Put the truths in the Bible into practice.

- (1) The purpose of applications.

God has given the Bible to you *to change your life*, not just to increase your knowledge.

- (2) Possible applications.

Think how the various truths in the Bible passage may be applied to your personal life and to life in the world. Any specific truth in the Bible may have more than one possible application. Ask yourself:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a truth to believe?• Is there a command to obey?• Is there a promise to claim?• Is there wisdom to apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there an attitude or behaviour to change?• Is there a sin to avoid?• Is there an example to follow?• Is there a good message to share?
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- (3) Personal application.

Ask God what he intends *you* to know, to believe, to be or to do. Try to be realistic and make a personal application, which *you* can practise specifically for at least one week. Write down what God wants *you* to apply.

- (4) Progress in application.

Every day in your prayer ask God to help you to do your personal application. Every week share with your small group or personal mentor the progress you are making in your personal application.

7. Pass the truths of the Bible on to others.

Witness by telling someone what you have read, studied or memorised in the Bible. Pass the truths of the Bible on to others by sharing, witnessing, teaching, preaching, encouraging, admonishing or even warning.

5	PRAYER (8 minutes) <i>[REACTIONS]</i> PRAYER IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD
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Take turns in the group **to pray short** to God in response to what you have learned today.

Or divide the group into two's or three's and pray to God in response to what you have learned today.

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes) <i>[ASSIGNMENT]</i> FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. **Commitment.** Make a commitment to use the Bible in different practical ways.
2. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter from Matthew 18:21 – 21:46 each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. **Bible study.** Prepare the next Bible study at home. (3) Ephesians 2:1-22. Theme: Who am I? Make use of the five steps method of Bible study. Make notes.
4. **Prayer.** Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
5. **Update your notebook** on making disciples. Include the worship notes, the notes on your personal time with God, the teaching notes and this preparation.