

DISCIPLESHIP LESSON 22

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	SHARING (20 minutes) <i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> ROMANS 5 - 8
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Take turns and **share** (or **read** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Romans 5 - 8). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

3	MEMORISATION (20 minutes) <i>[NEW LIFE IN CHRIST]</i> (5) MATTHEW 10:32
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A. MEDITATION (about a Bible passage)

(5)

Write the following memorisation verse on a white or blackboard as follows:

Witnessing Matthew 10:32
Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.
Matthew 10:32

Matthew 10:32

Jesus spoke these words to his twelve disciples when he gave them the command to go and preach the message about the kingdom of God (Matthew 10:5-10). In spite of the fact that the disciples of Jesus will have to face opposition to their message and to the way they live, they must proclaim the good news without fear. Jesus gives them four reasons to be his fearless witnesses.

1. You can be a fearless witness for Jesus Christ, because your enemies cannot prevent the fact that they will be shamed publicly and that you will be vindicated publicly.

Read Matthew 10:26-27. The enemies cannot prevent the fact that their own evil opposition, persecution and killing of the Christians will one day be publicly exposed! At the final judgement day, these enemies of Christ and of Christians will be shamed in front of all people that have ever lived on this earth. The Bible says that God will bring every deed including every hidden thing into judgement (Ecclesiastes 14:12).

And the enemies cannot prevent the fact that the disciples will one day be publicly vindicated. At the final judgement day, Christ and all his disciples will be honoured in front of all the people that have ever lived on this earth. The Bible says that Christ will reward each person according to what he has done (Matthew 16:27).

Therefore, the disciples of Jesus Christ must not be afraid to proclaim the message of the kingdom (the gospel) openly, frankly and courageously.

2. You can be a fearless witness for Jesus Christ, because your enemies cannot kill your soul (spirit), only your body.

Read Matthew 10:28. Whatever the enemies of Christ and of Christians may wish to do, there is one thing they can never do! They cannot kill your soul (spirit)! While your body is the material and visible part of your being, your soul (or spirit) is the immaterial and invisible part of your being.

3. You can be a fearless witness for Jesus Christ, because your enemies can neither undo God's will nor undo his loving care for you.

Read Matthew 10:29-31. It is true that just like a sparrow, you must one day die. But if God watches over every sparrow, even though they are worth next to nothing, how much more will God not watch over you, who are worth much more than many sparrows?

God promises that he will watch over your life and work in a very special way. All things that happen to you on earth happen under the constant watchful eye of God and only happen because he has either decided that it should happen or

has given his consent that it happens. “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

4. You can be a fearless witness for Jesus Christ, because Jesus will confess you if you confess him before people.

Read Matthew 10:32-33. “To confess” means to acknowledge openly that Jesus Christ is your Saviour and Lord. It means that you are never ashamed of Jesus Christ in the presence of the people in the world or even your enemies (Mark 8:34-38). At the final judgement day, Jesus will also openly acknowledge you before all the people that have ever lived on earth (Matthew 25:34-36).

B. MEMORISATION AND REVIEW

1. **Write.** Write the Bible verse on a blank card or on one page of your small notebook.
2. **Memorise.** Memorise the Bible verse in the right way. (5) Witnessing. Matthew 10:32.
3. **Review.** Divide into twos and check one another’s last memorised Bible verse.

4	BIBLE STUDY (70 minutes) [RELATIONSHIPS] (5) THE CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP TO PARENTS AND CHILDREN: EPHESIANS 6:1-4
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Make use of the five steps method of Bible study and study Ephesians 6:1-4 together.

STEP 1. READ. GOD’S WORD

Read. LET US READ Ephesians 6:1-4 together.

Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.

STEP 2. DISCOVER. OBSERVATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU?

Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART?

Record. Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share).

Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered.

(The following are examples of people sharing what they have discovered. Remember, in every small group, the group members will share different things, not necessarily these things)

6:1

Discovery 1. Christian children should obey their parents.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Someone thought that this meant that children only have to obey their parents, if the parents are “in the Lord”, that is, if their parents are Christians. But that is not correct. The commandment means that children should obey their parents, not because the parents are Christians, but because the children are Christians. While many non-Christian children disobey their parents, Christian children should obey their parents, because that is what Christ commands Christians to do. Christian children should obey their parents even when their parents are not Christians, not considerate or not fair.

6:4

Discovery 2. Christian fathers should not discourage their children.

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children.” While children have the duty to obey their parents, parents have the duty to *encourage* their children. This passage is also written in Colossians 3:21, “Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.” Children become exasperated or embittered when you always tell them what they do wrong and never tell them what they do right. Because I have children, it is important for me to continually encourage my children. Although they are not perfect, I should not deliberately upset them or break their spirit. So I have decided that I would like to be an encourager! “For you know that we dealt with each one of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory” (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

STEP 3. QUESTION. EXPLANATIONS

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Ephesians 6:1-4 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

6:1

Question 1. Until what age should children still obey their parents?

Notes. This is a very important question, because it touches the heart of all cultures in the world. The children in some cultures in the world are taught to obey their parents throughout their life and under all circumstances! Until the parents die, the parents have absolute authority over their children. In such cultures citizens must submit themselves to the absolute authority of the government; students must submit themselves to the absolute authority of their teachers; and children must submit themselves to the absolute authority of their parents! The demands of such cultures are not biblical!

Let us first consider the example of Jesus himself. When Jesus was still a child of twelve years old, he was obedient to his parents on earth (Luke 2:41-52). However, when Jesus had become an adult and busy with the task of his life, he no longer obeyed his parents or complied with their wishes (Mark 3:31-35). He was an adult with an independent task in life.

Therefore, the Bible does not teach that Christians should obey their parents throughout their lifetime or under all circumstances. Instead, the Bible teaches that Christians should obey their parents as long as they are still children, that is, under aged, immature and dependent on their parents. Adulthood starts:

- when Christians leave the home of their parents
- when they are no longer dependent on their parents
- or when they get married.

Thus, obedience to parents has a time limit! Children should obey their parents until they are adults.

6:2

Question 2. What are important practical ways of honouring parents?

Notes. Although children must obey their parents only as long as they are children, they must always honour their parents, also when they are adults! To “honour” means to regard highly, to show consideration and to love without reluctance, selfish motives or fear. The following five practical examples are intended for all people in the world in their relationship to their own parents, in relationship to their parents-in-law and in relationship to God their heavenly Father. There are five ways to dishonour or honour your parents, your parents-in-law and God your heavenly Father.

(1) Honour your parents by not arguing with them.

You dishonour your parents when you argue with them about things that have no real spiritual significance. For example, do not argue with them about which clothes are appropriate to wear, about which TV programme to watch or about who should do certain family chores. Arguing is a way to let your parents know that their point of view is ridiculous.

How can you honour your parents in a positive way? State your point of view in a gentle way and then allow God to work it out in the way that will please him most. In this way you show that you believe that God is in control of every situation and that God has the ability to accomplish what is best for you.

(2) Honour your parents by taking their suggestions and advice serious.

You dishonour your parents when you reject their advice without even considering it.

How can you honour your parents in a positive way? Whenever your parents make suggestions or give advice, learn from them. While you have the opportunity, learn from their years of experience and accumulated wisdom. Learn especially things in the areas of their strengths, from their talents, skills, knowledge and know-how.

(3) Honour your parents by including them in your real life.

You dishonour your parents when you don't let your parents know what you are thinking, feeling and actually doing. Some children respond to the question of their parents with the words: “Okay” or “Good” or “As always”. “And you dishonour your parents when you don't let your parents know what you are planning or when you don't give them any chance to influence your plans. You dishonour your parents when you exclude them from sharing in your fun or in your pain, in your joys and in your hurts, you dishonour them. Cutting your parents out of your real life and decisions is a way to let them know that they are not worth relating to!

How can you honour your parents in a positive way? Talk to your parents. This is sometimes difficult, but is still one of the best ways to honour your parents. Take the initiative to talk to them. Talk to them about your activities: what you do at school and at work, what you do together with your friends and what you do at your congregation. Talk to them about what you believe: about God, people and the world. Talk to them about your Christian convictions. Talk to them about what you think, feel and plan to do. And you also honour your parents by involving them in your plans and decisions.

Respect the experience and wisdom of your parents and seek their counsel. Even if your final decision goes against their desires, you give them a feeling that you have listened to them and have taken their views serious.

(4) Honour your parents by serving them.

You dishonour your parents when you only serve your parents when they ask you to do something. You expect them to take the initiative. If they don't ask you, you simply do nothing.

How can you honour your parents in a positive way? Train yourself to see where you can serve, where anybody needs your help and if you can do something nobody else is willing or able to do. Take initiative to serve and help and don't wait till your parents ask you.

(5) Honour your parents by loving them.

You dishonour your parents when you only show love to them in the culturally required ways, like visiting them, giving them gifts and doing their wishes.

How can you honour your parents in a positive way? Genuine Christian love goes far beyond the culturally required filial piety! Genuine Christian love is patient with their shortcomings and forgives the wrongs they have done to you. When you become a Christian, parents generally fear that your submission to Jesus Christ will affect you negatively. They fear that you will do worse in your studies, you will not be able to get a good job, you will not be successful in life and you will earn less money and will not be able to support your parents financially. They fear that you will lose your culture and shame their religion. Explain your Christian faith to them tactfully and prove to them that you have become a more responsible and more loving person through what Jesus Christ has done for you.

6:4

Question 3. How can fathers encourage their children?

Notes. Some fathers exasperate their children. To exasperate means to discourage. There are many ways in which fathers can discourage their children. By observing the reactions of children to their parents, you can learn which things discourage children. For example the children get irritated, angry, depressed, withdraw or give up on their parents. These reactions are indications that the father ought to change his approach in dealing with his children.

How can a father transmit respect to his children? I think by allowing his children to develop three things: to develop responsibility, to develop their own convictions and to develop mature relationships.

(1) Let your sons and daughters grow in responsibility.

If your goal were to please your children, then your children would probably grow up to become spoilt, selfish and self-indulgent. However, if you train them to take increasing responsibility for more and more areas of their life, then they will grow up to become responsible adults!

There are four stages for developing responsibility:

- During the first stage parents make all the decisions for your children. A child must learn to obey! If the child refuses a particular choice, which you have made for it, give the child an alternative choice. But the child must learn to choose! You do this when your children are still very young. The children learn what is right and wrong from your decisions and choices. But as children grow older, you should give them more and more responsibility.
- During the second stage parents and children make decisions and choices together and also execute them together. You especially do this when your children are in Primary School. Set a good example for them and also set the standards of quality and family rules. Consider different ways to reward them.
- During the third stage children make their own decisions and choices, but they still need to receive the approval and supervision of their parents. You especially do this when your children are in High School. Their greater freedom demands greater responsibility and accountability to you. Some important areas to train responsibility are: their schoolwork or job, family relationships, self-control, handling money, travelling alone, making friends and developing their own relationship with God.
- During the final stage the children do everything by themselves. This stage is when the children develop into young adults. An adult is responsible and accountable to God and to other bearers of authority (the government, the police, the doctors, their employers and the elders of their church). As a parent, you still give advice and help when they ask you. Your responsibility to love them, pray for them and help them when needed never stops!

(2) Let your sons and daughters develop their own convictions.

As long as you demand that your children drift on *your* personal convictions and opinions, they will never grow in developing their own convictions and opinions. Therefore don't demand that your children absolutely obey your convictions, beliefs, values and priorities, but rather encourage them and help them to develop their own convictions, beliefs, values and healthy opinions and help them to base it on the Bible! In this way they will become responsible adults.

There are three steps for developing convictions:

- The first step. Let your child discover the truths from the Bible for himself (Luke 10:25-26).

- **The second step.** Let your child choose his own application of that truth.
- **The third step.** Discuss the consequences of his application together.

For example, concerning the issue of wearing clothes, the Bible has two principles:

- clothing should be morally acceptable, that is, not tempting people into sin (Matthew 18:7);
- and clothing should be culturally appropriate for the occasion (1 Corinthians 10:23-24).

These two principles form the boundaries for a decision. Within these boundaries, your child has a free choice. Your child makes his own choice or decision. And you discuss the consequences of his choice as well as the effect or influence his choice has on others as well as on himself.

(3) Let your sons and daughters build mature relationships.

Your goal should not be to develop independence, but **healthy inter-dependence**. The Bible places every believer in a specific family, a specific society and a specific congregation. The world-view of the Bible does not consist of individuals, each one going his own way, but of individuals within families, individuals within congregations and individuals within societies. The world-view of the Bible is that we all need one another and have a unique contribution to make to one another. Therefore, help your children (teenagers and young adults) to make good friends, to relate to people from different kinds of societies and social backgrounds (the poor, the illiterate, the foreigner, the handicapped, etc.) and to develop healthy relationships with the opposite sex.

6:4

Question 4. How should Christian parents bring up their children?

Notes. The two main responsibilities of every father are to love the child's mother and to bring the child up!

- To bring up a child in the "instruction"¹ means instruction accompanied by exercise, correction and discipline.
- To bring up a child in the "admonition"² means imprint the truth by means of instruction, exhortation and warning.
- "In the Lord" means to teach them to know and obey the truths of the Bible.

Training includes continual encouragement and sometimes discipline or punishment.

There are two important areas in which to train your child.

(1) Train your children to be good citizens in this world.

You train your child to be a good citizen in this world by training the following areas of his personal life:

- Train your child to intellectual, physical, emotional, spiritual and social maturity (Luke 2:52).
- Train your child to be wise (Proverbs 23:22-25).
- Train your child to love (John 15:12).

Healthy families are the building blocks of a healthy nation!

(2) Train your children to be good citizens of God's kingdom.

- Train them to submit themselves completely to God as he has revealed himself in the Bible.
- Train them to trust God in all circumstances.
- Train them to obey God unconditionally.
- Train them to live a holy and righteous life.
- Above all, train them to love God, to love their neighbour and to accept themselves.

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Ephesians 6:1-4.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from Ephesians 6:1-4.

- 6:1. For under aged children. Obey your parents in everything except when they ask you to do things that are against God's commands and teachings in the Bible.
- 6:2. For all people. Honour your parents, your parents-in-law and God your heavenly Father under all circumstances. Choose one practical area to honour them and develop that area for a period of time.
- 6:4. For all fathers. Never exasperate or discourage your child, whether he is still under aged or already an adult.
- 6:4. For all fathers of under aged children. Bring your children up in the truths of the Bible and in putting those truths into practice.

¹ Greek: paideia

² Greek: nouthesia

2. Examples of personal applications from Ephesians 6:1-4.

I especially want to make it a habit of my life to ask advice of my parents and to learn from their wisdom in life. I will make my own decisions and choices, but I do want to honour my parents by taking their considerations seriously.

I especially want to be an encourager to my children and encourage them to develop responsibility, their own convictions, mature relationships with people and to express their emotions in a self-controlled way. I realise that this is one of the great tasks that God has entrusted to me as a parent.

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Ephesians 6:1-4.

(Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

5

PRAYER (8 minutes)

[INTERCESSION]
PRAY FOR OTHERS

Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6

PREPARATION (2 minutes)

[ASSIGNMENT]
FOR NEXT LESSON

(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples.
Preach, teach or study the Bible study of Ephesians 6:1-4 together with another person or group of people.
2. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of Romans 9 - 12 each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. Memorisation. (5) Witnessing. Matthew 10:32. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
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 notes on your personal time with God, memorisation notes, Bible study notes and this preparation.