

DISCIPLESHIP LESSON 29

1	PRAYER
----------	--------

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 THE PROTECTOR
----------	---

Meditation

Worship is adoring and praising God.

Theme: The God of the Bible is the Protector.

Read Isaiah 37:14-20,33-38; Psalm 34:7; Psalm 91:1-16; 2 Kings 6:8-23.

Read the explanation or explain it in your own words.

1. How the LORD protected his people in the past history.

Explain shortly how the LORD protected the prophet Elisha and his servant.

Emphasise three things.

- The LORD knows the very words the enemy speaks in his bedroom and tells it to his prophet.
- The LORD and his army of angels are MORE than those who are with the enemy.
- The LORD can open the eyes of his people to see his horses and chariots of fire surrounding and protecting them.

2. How the LORD protects today.

Let people share shortly one event how the LORD had protected them in the past.

Worship

Take turns to worship God in his characteristic of being the Protector. Worship in small groups of three people each.

3	SHARING (20 minutes) <i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> GENESIS 20:1 – 23:20
----------	---

Take turns and **share (or read)** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Genesis 20:1 – 23:20).

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

4	TEACHING (70 minutes) <i>[BIBLE]</i> EXPLAINING THE BIBLE CORRECTLY
----------	--

It is the responsibility of every Christian to explain the Bible correctly. He may not distort (twist) the truth. "We do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2). The Bible spurs every Christian on to guide the word of truth along a straight path through the jungle of lies and half-truths in the world, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be shamed and who correctly handles the word of truth (literally: who guides the word of truth along a straight path)" (2 Timothy 2:15). The prophet Jeremiah, the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul warn against false teachers (Jeremiah 23:16-29; Matthew 24:10-11; 1 Timothy 4:1-2). Only the truth with regard to the teachings of Jesus Christ will set people really free (John 8:31-32).

We use traffic rules in order to travel safely, health rules in order to live healthy and government rules in order to live harmoniously together. Likewise we need rules for understanding the Bible correctly. Here are ten rules we must apply in order to explain and understand the Bible correctly.

RULE 1. THE BIBLE IS GOD'S AUTHORITATIVE WORD IN THE LANGUAGE OF PEOPLE

- The Bible is supernatural, because God is the Author of the Bible. Therefore the Bible is the absolute authority for human thought and behaviour. And therefore the Bible is absolutely trustworthy. No Bible passage has two different meanings.

- The Bible is also natural, because God revealed his words through people and in the language of people. Therefore, the Bible in your language is God's Word when it is correctly translated from the original languages.

1. The Bible is supernatural in character – therefore authoritative.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16 (2 Peter 1:20-21; Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2).

(1) Authoritative.

The author of the Bible is God the Holy Spirit. "All Scripture is God-breathed." The Bible contains the very words of God. Therefore the Bible is the final authority for the doctrine (teachings) and life (behaviour) of Christians and also the absolute authority for all human thought and behaviour, regardless whether people believe this or not.

(2) Trustworthy.

The Bible reflects the characteristics of God himself. The Bible as the Word of God is eternal, but has been revealed in time. The Bible is truthful, holy and just. Therefore the Bible is absolutely trustworthy. Because God is truthful and intends to reveal his thoughts, will (purpose) and plan clearly, no passage in the Bible has two different meanings. Therefore, a Christian must be eager to understand what God intended to say in each passage of the Bible. And therefore a Christian must never quote a Bible verse outside its context.

2. The Bible is natural in character – therefore understandable.

Read John 14:26; Isaiah 30:8 (Jeremiah 36:1-4).

(1) The original languages of the Bible.

The Bible is God's Word through people to people. God spoke to people and people recorded God's Word. The Bible is written in the spoken languages of the time in which God revealed his words. The Old Testament is written in the language of God's people during the period of the prophets: Hebrew (and a small part in Aramaic). The New Testament is written in the language of the world during the period of the apostles: Greek. For all translations of the Bible in other languages and for all explanations of the Bible the original manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament remain normative.

(2) Translations of the Bible.

The Old Testament was translated into Greek before 250 B.C. and the New Testament treats this translation as "the Word of God". Likewise, you must regard the authoritative translation of the Bible in your own language as God's Word, because it intends to be an accurate translation of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. It is a great help to explain the Bible correctly if you are able to read the Bible in another modern language, but it is best if you can read the Bible in the original languages Hebrew and Greek.

RULE 2. UNITY AND CLARITY

- The Bible is the one and only recorded revelation of the God of the Bible and his plan in the world.
- The Old Testament and the New Testament form a unity in the following sense: "In the Old Testament, the New Testament lies hidden. In the New Testament, the Old Testament stands revealed". Therefore, the Bible as a whole itself is the best explanation of any part of the Bible.

1. The Old Testament and the New Testament are a unity.

Read 1 Peter 1:10-12; Matthew 5:17 (Luke 24:44-45; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 10:1-4).

(1) Preparation and fulfilment.

The Old Testament and the New Testament never contradict each other. They are complementary: the Old Testament prepares the New Testament, and the New Testament fulfils the Old Testament.

(2) Progress in the revelation.

However, there is progress in God's revelation. The Bible calls the laws, types, prophecies and promises in the Old Testament "a shadow of the good things that were to come" and the New Testament "the body" (that casts the shadow), that is, "the reality" that is found in Christ" (Colossians 2:17), "the thing itself" (Hebrews 10:1). The New Testament teaches how Jesus Christ fulfilled the laws, types, prophecies and promises in the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17). Therefore, the Old Testament must always be explained in the light of the New Testament! The teachings of the New Testament are normative!

2. The New Testament explains the Old Testament.

Read Luke 10:25-28.

Jesus Christ answered people's questions concerning things written in the Bible with answers written in the Bible. He explained an obscure statement in one part of the Bible (Deuteronomy 24:1) with the clear teachings in another part of the Bible (Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-8). Thus, the Bible is its own interpreter. The whole Bible is the

best interpreter of every single Bible passage. No Bible passage intends to have two different meanings. Therefore, always try to understand God's intended meaning.

RULE 3. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE REQUIRES FAITH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Faith in Jesus Christ is always based on the words in the Bible. A person needs faith in Jesus Christ in order to understand the Bible and to correctly interpret it.
- The God of the Bible is the Subject of the Bible. The Spirit of God is the Author of the Bible. Only the Holy Spirit causes a person to understand the Bible and correctly interpret it.

1. People who believe in Jesus Christ are able to understand the Bible.

Read John 16:13-15; Romans 10:14-17 (1 Corinthians 2:7-15).

Faith in Jesus Christ comes by hearing "the Word (that is, the voice) of Christ", what he reveals about God and God's will in the Bible. The Holy Spirit (that is, the Spirit of Christ) enlightens the mind and heart of people to understand what God has revealed in the Bible. Only born-again believers are able to explain the Bible correctly.¹

2. People who do not believe in Christ cannot understand the Bible by themselves.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:14-17; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 (Matthew 21:29; 2 Peter 3:16).

Unbelievers and non-Christians (the followers of other religions) are "spiritually dead" and a veil covers their eyes, so that they are not able to understand the words in the Bible or interpret them correctly. Diligent Bible study (or theological study) without a personal faith in Jesus Christ and without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit is not only useless, but also dangerous! When such people make statements about the God of the Bible, Jesus Christ, Christians or the Bible, you must keep in mind that they are not born-again Christians!

When people abandon the faith in Jesus Christ "they follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. They are hypocritical liars" (1 Timothy 4:1-2). "If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching ... he understands nothing" (1 Timothy 6:3-4)! "If anyone is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted (from Jesus and his apostles in the Bible), let him be eternally condemned" (Galatians 1:9)!

RULE 4. DETERMINE THE INTENDED AUDIENCE

The Bible addresses different audiences. Determine which audience God intended to address in each passage of the Bible. This is a useful rule for the correct explanation of promises and threats, commands and prophecies in the Bible.

- Sometimes the truth in a particular Bible passage is intended for all people in the world or all Christians.
- Sometimes the truth is limited to a particular person, group, time or condition.

1. Sometimes the truth in a particular Bible passage is intended for everyone.

Read Luke 14:25-27.

(1) The following truths in the Bible are intended for all people of all nations in the world:

- To repent and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15)
- To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16)
- To take up your cross and follow Jesus (Mark 8:34-38)
- To develop your own biblical convictions (Luke 14:25-27)

(2) The following truths in the Bible are intended for all Christians.

- To prefer Jesus and the gospel above loyalty to your family (Mark 10:28-30)
- To love one another as Jesus loves you (John 13:34-35)
- To know that you have been chosen by God to obey Jesus Christ and to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:1-2)
- To know that you have received the most precious faith as a gracious gift from God (2 Peter 1:1).

2. Sometimes the truth in a particular Bible passage is intended for a limited audience.

Read Mark 10:17,21.

- The truth is limited to a particular group: Israel (Malachi 1:1 and Malachi 3:6-10; Isaiah 6:8-10).
- The truth is limited to a particular period of time (the physical circumcision of people of the male gender applies only during the Old Testament period (Genesis 17:9-14; Galatians 5:3-4; Galatians 6:12-15)
- The truth is limited to a specific person, e.g. David (1 Chronicles 17:7,11-14) the rich young man (Mark 10:21)

¹ Theologians and writers of Christian books and articles that claim to be "Christians", but are not born again, cannot explain the Bible correctly (cf. John 7:16-18)!

- The truth is limited to a particular requirement (condition): e.g. repentance (Jeremiah 18:6-10; Ezekiel 33:11-20) or listening and obeying what the Spirit says (Revelation 2:7).

RULE 5. DETERMINE THE LITERARY STYLE OF THE BIBLE PASSAGE

The Bible has not been written in just one literary style, but contains different kinds of literary styles: laws, history, poetry, wisdom, prophecies, revelations, teachings, parables, allegories, etc. Each style has its own rules of interpretation!

Ask yourself, “Which literary style does God use in this Bible passage?”

Laws? History? Poetry? Wisdom? Prophecy? Teaching? Parables? Apocalypse/revelation?

Explain the Bible passage with the help of the rules for interpreting this style. You will find the rules for the interpretation of laws, history, poetry, prophecy, teaching, parables and apocalypses in for example the following studies.² The rules for the interpretation of the parables of Jesus demand particular attention.³ We would expect literal facts in the historical books; figurative language in the poetic books; comparisons in wisdom literature; and symbols in the Apocalypses.

RULE 6. DETERMINE THE EMPHASIS IN THE BIBLE PASSAGE

Often the emphasis in a particular Bible passage is on something specific as a teaching, a command, relating an event in history, a prophecy or a promise. Determine the emphasis in the Bible passage.

Ask yourself, “Does the emphasis in the Bible passage lie on:

- teaching a doctrine (truth)?
- commanding (stimulating) an action?
- relating an event in history?
- or making a promise or a prophecy?

(1) Where is the emphasis in John 14:6?

Read John 14:6. When the emphasis in the Bible passage is on teaching a doctrine (and it is intended for you), you **must believe** it.

For example. In John 14:6 the emphasis is on teaching doctrine. Formulate the doctrine by especially noticing the nouns: “I (Jesus)”, “the way”, “the truth”, “the life”, “no one”, and “the Father”.

The doctrine is” “Jesus is the only way to the Father!” (This doctrine all people must believe).

(2) Where is the emphasis in John 13:34-35?

Read John 13:34-35. When the emphasis in the Bible passage is on commanding an action (and it is intended for you), you **must do/obey** it.

For example. In John 13:34-35 the emphasis is on commanding (stimulating) an action. Formulate the action by especially noticing the verbs: “love one another”, “as I loved”, “you must love”, “all men will know”, “you are my disciples”.

The command is, “Christians **must** love one another just as Jesus Christ loved them!” (All Christians must obey this command).

But all the ceremonial laws in the Old Testament: the laws with regard to priests, the temple, the festivals (Leviticus 23) and the sacrifices, etc. were only intended for Israel before the first coming of Jesus Christ and may not be re-introduced into the New Testament Church! The ceremonial (ritual) laws of Israel have been *fulfilled* (Matthew 5:17), *cancelled* (Colossians 2:14) and *abrogated*. The “the dividing wall of hostility has been destroyed and abolished from the Church” (Ephesians 2:14-15)!

(3) Where is the emphasis in Acts 17:11?

Read Acts 17:10-12. If the emphasis of a particular Bible passage is on relating a historic event, you must first determine whether it is a good or bad example. You **may do (may follow)** a good example, but you **must not do (must avoid)** a bad example!

Only when a good example is supported by a clear teaching or command in another Bible passage you may treat the example as a teaching or a command. For example. In Acts 17:11 the emphasis is on relating a historical event during the first century A.D. The example is good. Therefore Christians **may** (note: not: “must”) follow the good example of the people in Berea and study the Bible. But they **may not** teach (demand) that other Christians study the Bible *every day*! Christians **may** test the proclamations of preachers to see whether their preaching is in accordance with what the Bible teaches (see 1 Corinthians 14:29).

² Cf. www.deltacourse.org lesson 9 (God’s law and grace), lesson 10 (The historical books), lesson 12 (The poetical books), lesson 13 (The prophetic books), lesson 15 (The Apocalypse Daniel) and lesson 19 (The Apocalypse Revelation of John).

³ Cf. www.dota.net manual 9 to 12.

Another example. The historical example in 1 Corinthians 10:6-11 is bad, but the historical example in 1 Corinthians 10:23 – 11:1 is good. The bad example is forbidden: Christians **may not** behave like idolaters by involvement in non-Christian festivals and sexual immorality. But they **may** follow the good example: Christians **may** eat everything sold on the market that the host puts before them without raising questions of conscience. But Christians **may not** force other Christians to behave as they themselves do, especially in issues as eating meat, drinking wine and keeping certain holidays (Romans 14:1 – 15:14).

Yet another example. The historical example in 3 John 9-11 is bad and **may not** be followed. The leader of the church, Diotrephes, rejected the apostle John and his team. He spread false rumours against the apostle John and his team, refused to receive them and put Christians who wanted to do that out of the church. Christians (inclusive the leaders) may never lord it over other Christians (Matthew 20:25-28; 1 Peter 5:1-4)!

(4) When the emphasis is on a promise or prophecy.

If the emphasis of a particular Bible passage is on making a promise or uttering a prophecy, then you must first determine to whom it is addressed, whether there is a condition involved and whether it has already been fulfilled.

(1) Is the promise directed to a specific person or a specific group of people?

If so, to whom? For example. In Genesis 22:15-18 God made a promise to Abraham and his descendants. His descendants is here not the Jews (Israel)(Romans 9:6), but first of all Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16) and after that all people who during the Old Testament period believed in the coming Messiah (Jesus Christ) and all people who during the New Testament period believed in Jesus Christ who had already come (Galatians 3:6-9; Romans 4:9-17).

(2) Are there conditions attached to the promise or prophecy?

If so, which? For example, in Jeremiah 18:5-17 and in Ezekiel chapter 18 the condition was genuine remorse and repentance.

(3) Has the promise or prophecy already been fulfilled?

If so, how? For example. The promise regarding the land of Israel (Genesis 15:18) and the number of the people of Israel “as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore” (Genesis 22:17) has already been fulfilled during the Old Testament period (1 Kings 4:20–5:1) (cf. Joshua 23:14-16).

(4) What does the New Testament teach regarding this promise or prophecy?

For example. What the prophet said in Isaiah 7:14-16 about “a young woman” receives in Matthew 1:23 a second and deeper explanation in “the virgin Mary”.

And the prophecy in Amos 9:11-12 regarding “the rebuilding of Israel” is applied in Acts 15:14-19 to “the rebuilding of God’s people that consist of the remnant of believers in Israel and the believers from among the Gentiles”. Therefore prophecies in the Old Testament must always be explained in the light of what the New Testament teaches about these subjects!

For example. At the first coming of Jesus Christ “God’s people” Israel is not terminated or replaced (by the Church), but is continued on a higher level (the “shadows” become the “realities”) (Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 10:1) and extended (enlarged) to include the believers in Christ among the Gentile nations. Therefore after the first coming of Jesus Christ “there is no difference between (a Christian) Jew and (a Christian) Gentile” (Romans 10:12-13) and all genuine believers in Jesus Christ (whether Jews or Gentiles) belong to “God’s people” (Matthew 8:11-12; Matthew 21:42-44; Romans 9:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-29; Galatians 6:14-16; Ephesians 2:11-22; Ephesians 3:2-6; Colossians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:9-10)!

RULE 7. DETERMINE WHETHER THE TEACHINGS (DOCTRINES) ARE BASED ON CHURCH TRADITIONS OR ON THE BIBLE

The teachings, commands and prohibitions in the Bible and not a church tradition that contradicts it must determine the Christian teachings (doctrines).

- The traditions of congregations (churches), traditional confessional statements, theological seminaries, theological books, religious activities, visions, dreams and prophetic utterances are never normative and must always be tested with what the Bible teaches. The Church does not determine what the Bible teaches, but the Bible determines what the Church (and its educational institutions) must teach!
- The doctrinal creeds and confessional statements of every congregation (church) must always be evaluated and tested by the clear teachings of the Bible. If necessary, they must be changed!

1. Church traditions, religious activities, visions, dreams and prophetic utterances must always be tested by the teachings of the Bible, correctly interpreted.

(1) Religious rituals and activities must always be tested with the Bible.

Read Isaiah 1:8-18.

God revealed to the prophet Isaiah that the traditional temple worship with its offerings, incense and religious festivals had become meaningless and even detestable in God’s eyes, because the people did not stop to do what is wrong and

did not obey God. The God of the Bible rejects all religious rituals of people who do not repent (turn to the God of the Bible).

(2) Visions, dreams and prophetic utterances must always be tested by the Bible.

Read Jeremiah 23:16,21-22,25-32,36.

“This is what the LORD Almighty says: Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you. They fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. ... I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds. ... I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name.”

God revealed to his prophet Jeremiah that there would always be people who claim that they are a prophet (preacher) of God, but that the God of the Bible did not send them! False prophets invent visions and dreams and all kinds of false teachings. What they claim does not come from the God of the Bible. They are liars!

Christians must differentiate between the words of God in the Bible and the words which people claim come from God! Today there are people who claim to be “popes”, “bishops”, “priests”, “prophets”, “apostles”, “pastors” and “teachers”, but have appointed themselves to these positions!

- True prophets do not “speak visions from their own minds” (Jeremiah 23:16)!
- True prophets speak “God’s Word faithfully” (Jeremiah 23:28-29)!
- True prophets “turn people from their evil ways and evil deeds” (Jeremiah 23:22)!
- True prophets “never go beyond what is written” (in the Bible) (1 Corinthians 4:6)!
- True prophets proclaim “the testimony of Jesus”, that is, the words of Jesus Christ. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit (the essence and contents of) biblical prophecy” (Revelation 19:10)! Genuine prophecy consists of everything Jesus Christ is, everything Jesus Christ taught through the prophets in the Old Testament (1 Peter 21:10-12) and through the apostles in the New Testament (John 16:13-15) and everything Jesus Christ did and is doing! The real essence and content of false prophecy is the visions and dreams which people devise with their own minds!

(3) Church traditions must always be tested with the Bible.

Read Mark 7:1-9; Luke 11:44-46.

Jesus Christ accused the teachers of the law (the Jewish theologians) and the Pharisees (the Jewish pious) of setting aside the commands of God in the Bible in order to observe their own traditions, which they have handed down from generation to generation!

He accused these religious leaders of replacing the commands and teachings of the Bible with their religious traditions (Matthew 15:3). He said that such religious traditions and teachings are but “rules taught by men” and following them is a useless way of worshipping God (Mark 7:6-7)! People who regard their religious traditions as more important than the words of God in the Bible are “blind guides”. Serious Christians should avoid them so that they would not be contaminated and polluted by people who are like “unmarked graves” (Matthew 15:13-14; Luke 11:44-46)!

2. Christian teachings, doctrinal creeds and church confessions must be based on the clear teachings of the Bible, correctly interpreted.

Read 1 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Timothy 3:14-15 (Matthew 7:24,26; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

(1) Christian doctrine must be completely based on the Bible.

Christian doctrine must be completely based on the teachings, commands and prohibitions in the Bible, correctly interpreted. The teachings, commands and prohibitions in the Bible always have a higher authority than the teachings, commands, prohibitions and traditions of any denomination, congregation, leader or teacher of a church. They have a higher authority than the statements of science and philosophy. Jesus Christ and the apostles quote what is written in the Bible (Luke 10:25-26; Acts 2:16; Acts 13:40-41) and not what some famous rabbi, church father, theologian, writer of a Christian book, scientist or philosopher wrote. The creeds and confessions of every denomination or congregation, however useful they may be with respect to summarising the Christian faith, must always be evaluated in the light of the clear teachings of the Bible that are correctly explained.

- Christians may “not go beyond what is written” in the Bible!
- Christians may not add anything to or take away anything from the Bible (Revelation 22:18-19)!
- Christians must follow the written instructions in the letters of Paul (Philippians 4:9; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; cf. 2 Peter 3:1-2,16).

(2) The teachings of Jesus Christ must be put into practice.

Jesus taught that people should believe his words and put them into practice (John 8:24; Matthew 7:24,26). The apostle John commanded that anyone who does not continue in the teaching of Christ or who does not bring the teaching of Christ must not be taken into your house or welcomed (2 John 9-11)! And the apostle Paul taught that Christians “must put into practice what they have learned or received or heard from him” (Philippians 4:9). He taught how men and women ought to behave in the Church and how elders and deacons are to be chosen (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

RULE 8. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS RESPONSIBLE TO MAINTAIN THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE AND TO REJECT FALSE TEACHERS

The purpose of the Bible is to reveal God and his truth and to change people.

- Every Christian has the right and responsibility to study, understand and apply the truth in the Bible for himself. However, he must explain and apply the truth in the Bible correctly.
- Every Christian has the right and responsibility to teach the truths of the Bible to others. He must refute false teachers.

1. A Christian is responsible to know, understand and obey the truth.

Read Matthew 13:23; John 14:21,23; 1 Peter 1;14-16 (John 8:31-32; 17:17; Matthew 7:24; Philippians 4:9)

(1) Knowledge.

Jesus Christ himself and his teachings are the truth. He commands Christians to know, understand and obey the truth. That truth will truly set Christians free.

(2) Obedience.

The Bible frequently exhorts believers to put God's Word into practice. Note Ezra. "Ezra had devoted himself to the *study* and *observance* of the Law (Word) of the LORD and to *teaching* its decrees and laws in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

(3) Character.

The prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles all exhorted the readers of the Bible to "be holy, because God is holy". The way to holiness is to obey the teachings of the Bible, not just to know these teachings.

2. A Christian is responsibility not to welcome false teachers into his house.

Read 2 John 9-11 (2 Timothy 2:23-26; Titus 1:9; 1 John 2:20-23).

Christians must not have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments. They must refute those who oppose the trustworthy message. Christians may not welcome false teachers into their homes.

RULE 9. DETERMINE WHETHER THE HISTORY IN THIS BIBLE PASSAGE IS NORMATIVE OR NOT

The historical context of the Bible consists of the description of historical events and of human behaviour without explanation or evaluation.

- Historical events that are not explained or evaluated are generally not normative.
- Only when a historical event is an illustration of a clear teaching or command in the Bible or is explained or evaluated, it may be regarded as normative.

1. The history of God's actions (salvation history) and the history of human reactions to God.

The historical narratives in the Bible have two distinct purposes:

(1) Throughout history the God of the Bible speaks and acts.

It is God's purpose to reveal himself, his plan, his will and his involvement in creation and in history to us by means of his authoritative words and mighty deeds in history. This history of God's creation (Genesis 1:1-2:4), salvation (Exodus 13:21-22; 14:19-22,29-31; 20:1-2) and judgement (Exodus 14:23-28) is revealed and recorded in the Bible. It is important, because the contents of the Bible is the means whereby people can grasp the reality and presence of the Living God (his holiness, righteousness, love and mercy) within creation and within history and also understand his plan of salvation for mankind.

(2) Throughout history man responds to God's words and deeds.

It is also God's purpose to reveal to us the response of various individuals, groups of people and nations in history to God's words and deeds. These responses were sometimes pleasing (Genesis 6:9) and sometimes displeasing (Genesis 6:2; Deuteronomy 7:3-4) to God. This history of man's behaviour and responses to God's words and deeds is also recorded in the Bible so that people may understand how deep the fall of man into sin has been and what people are like in God's eyes (they are unholly, unrighteous, they hate and are cruel)(Genesis 6:5).

2. Human behaviour in the history of the Bible that is not explained or evaluated, is never normative, except when it expresses a normative teaching or command in another Bible passage.

(1) The word "normative".

"Normative" means that something functions as a rule for the Christian Faith (the teachings or dogmatics) or the Christian Behaviour (ethics). It means that there are rules which all Christians must obey.

(2) Human behaviour in the history of the Bible without explanation or evaluation is never normative. Human behaviour and examples of historical events in the Bible show how people responded to God's prohibitions, commands and teachings – what they believed and how they behaved in history – sometimes in accordance with God's will and sometimes against God's will!

Because human behaviour and historical events in the Bible are most often related in the Bible without explanation or evaluation, they are not normative for the Christian Faith or Christian Behaviour, except when another Bible passage teaches, commands or prohibits this behaviour or event!

- When a particular human behaviour or a particular event in the history of the Bible only relates how people behaved (the historical context), it is not normative.
- But when it teaches, commands or prohibits how people ought to (must) behave (the cultural context), it is always normative!

It is normative in the following cases.

- When this human behaviour or event is an expression of sinful human culture, **it may not be followed.**
- When this human behaviour or event is an expression of acceptable human culture in the Bible, **it may be followed.**
- When this human behaviour or event is an expression of the culture of God's Kingdom, **it must be followed.**

(3) Examples of human behaviour or human events in history which are not normative.

Historical examples in the Bible do not determine what the Bible teaches with respect to faith and life, but can be illustrations of what the Bible teaches. The following are therefore not rules for Christians:

- “To get up early in the morning to pray” as Jesus did is not normative (Mark 1:35). This is not a teaching, but an historical event that is not explained or evaluated. Of course, because this is a good example, Christians **may** follow his example, but **may not** make this example compulsory for others!
- “To fast” (even for 40 days as in Matthew 4:2 or twice a week as in Luke 18:12) is not normative. A Christian **may** fast (Matthew 6:16-18) but **may not** make this compulsory for other Christians (the words “and fasting” in Matthew 17:21 do not belong to the original Greek text of the Bible). True biblical fasting is not to refrain from eating food, but to refrain from godlessness and wickedness (Isaiah 58:6-12)!
- “To preach the gospel only in places where Christ is still unknown”, is not normative (Romans 15:20). In Mark 16:15 Jesus Christ commands that the gospel **must** be proclaimed to the whole creation. This command is normative for the whole Christian Church. But in Romans 15:20 Paul writes that it is his ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was still unknown, so that he would not be building on someone else's foundation. This intention of Paul is not explained or evaluated anywhere in the Bible and is therefore not normative. Of course, Christians **may** follow the example of Paul, but they **may not** make his example compulsory for others.
- “To marry more than one wife” (Lamech in Genesis 4:19; Abraham in Genesis 25:6; David in 1 Chronicles 3:1-9; 14:3) is not normative (Matthew 19:5-6). Normative is the command to leave your parents, to cling to your *one wife* and to become one body with her (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6).
- “To kneel during prayer” is not normative (Ephesians 3:14-15).
- “To conduct mission journeys” to preach the gospel are not normative (Mark 1:39).
- “To touch a leper” is not normative (Mark 1:41).
- “To command a paralytic to get up and walk!” is not normative (Mark 2:9-12).
- “To appoint twelve apostles (in leadership)” is not normative (Mark 3:13-15).
- “To teach by means of parables” is not normative (Mark 4:2,34).
- “To command the wind to be still” is not normative (Mark 4:39).
- “To walk on water” is not normative (Matthew 14:25-31).
- “To pick up poisonous snakes and to drink deadly poison” is not normative. Because it is not supported by any other passage in the Bible these actions should not be regarded as ‘Scripture’ (part of the Bible), but rather as ‘apocryphal material’ (material of doubtful authenticity, invented by uninspired people to resemble the words in the Bible) (Mark 16:18).⁴
- “To be baptised with water *on behalf of* or *in the place of* (Greek: *huper*) people who have already died” is not normative, because it is not explained (1 Corinthians 15:29). It is not even clear what is meant or whether Paul approved the practice.

3. Human behaviour or human events in history of the Bible that are examples of clear teaching or a command in the Bible may be regarded as normative.

Examples of human behaviour or human events in the history of the Bible that are normative and therefore must be followed:

- “To walk with God” (Enoch in Genesis 5:21) is normative, because it is taught in the Bible (Psalm 27:4)
- “To refrain from revenge” is normative. Joseph took no revenge against his brothers (Genesis 45:5; Genesis 50:20-21). This is a good example of human behaviour and **may** be followed. But because the Bible in other parts

⁴ “The Gospel of Judas” (2nd century A.D.) and “the Gospel of Barnabas” (14th century A.D.) are false Gospels.

clearly teach and command people not to revenge themselves (Romans 12:17-21; Matthew 6:14-15), Christians **must** follow the example of Joseph.

- “To bear with suffering” is normative. Jesus Christ not only gave a good example through the way he bore suffering without threatening his oppressors, but calls Christians to follow in his footsteps (1 Peter 2:21-23). Thus the historical examples of Joseph and Jesus are normative.

4. Human behaviour or events and examples in the history of the Bible that are explained or evaluated may be regarded as normative. They belong to general teachings.

(1) Examples of bad human behaviour in the history of the Bible that may not be followed:

- **Events in history of the Bible that serve as warnings.**

The Bible relates the bad behaviour of the Israelites: they served idols (Exodus 32:6), committed adultery (Numbers 25:1-5), opposed God (Numbers 21:5-6) and rebelled against God (Numbers 14:36-37). The result was that God let them be killed in the desert.

The evaluation. Because these bad historical events were evaluated (“God was not pleased with most of them”, 1 Corinthians 10:5, and “they tested the Lord”, 1 Corinthians 10:9), Paul derived a general principle or teaching from these historical events: “These things (this kind of human behaviour in biblical history) occurred as examples and were written down as warnings for us, to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.” (1 Corinthians 10:6,11).

The general teaching. Christians **must** avoid every form of evil behaviour that is recorded in the Bible and they **must** draw lessons from God’s punishments of evil. These events in the history of the Bible that are evaluated are normative for all people, whether Christian or non-Christian. On the basis of this Bible passage Christians know that the historical parts of the Bible (mostly bad examples) have been recorded in the Bible to warn people that they **must** avoid evil.

(2) Examples of good human behaviour in the history of the Bible that must be followed.

- **An event in the history of the Bible as an exhortation.**

The Bible relates that Paul tried to please people in every way in order to win as many as possible for salvation.

The evaluation. Paul followed the example of Christ and dedicated himself to save people. From this Paul derived a general teaching for Christian behaviour: Give no offence (in matters that are allowed, as eating and drinking) to Jews, Gentiles or the Church of God (Christians). Do not cause other people to stumble, but try to please people in a way that they may be saved (1 Corinthians 10:23-33).

The general teaching: Christians **must** behave themselves in a way that causes other people to be saved. This example is normative for all Christians. On the basis of this Bible passage we learn that Christians **must** follow the good example of righteous people when their behaviour reflects the will of God and they follow the example of Jesus.

Then Paul says, “You **must** continually follow (command, present tense) my example as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). This is not a command to follow Paul in everything! Christians **may** conduct mission trips, make disciples in every city and choose to earn their own keep (by being a tentmaker), because these matters are recommended in the Bible. But Christians **may not** follow Paul in splitting a synagogue in order to start a congregation (Acts 19:8-10), because this historical event is not explained or evaluated in the Bible.

- **An event in the history of the Bible as teaching.**

Another historical example that is evaluated in the Bible is that the churches in Macedonia and Achaia held a collection for the poor in Jerusalem (Romans 15:26-27).

The evaluation. Paul evaluated this event and derived a general teaching from it: “If the (Christian) Gentiles have shared in the spiritual blessings of the (Christian) Jews, they ought to share their material blessings with the (Christian) Jews” (Romans 15:27).

The general teaching. Christians ought to share their spiritual and material blessings with each other (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:13-14; 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9; Galatians 6:6).

5. The divine history of salvation in the Bible is always normative. People must believe it and must submit themselves to it.

(1) The events in God’s history of salvation are normative.

All people must believe it and submit themselves to it.

God speaks and acts in the creation and in human history in order to save his people and judge others. Every word and every deed in the Bible is a part of God’s eternal plan and has been revealed in time in the history of salvation. The God of the Bible wants everyone to know him and submit himself to God and his plan.

God completed the creation of the universe and the earth. God completed the specific revelation. God is still acting (doing miracles), teaching, saving and judging. God's speaking and acting within the history of salvation are unique and cannot be imitated by people⁵. People can only submit themselves to God, his words and his acts.

(2) Examples of events in God's history of salvation which are normative:

God created the universe (matter, energy, space and time out of nothing observable), the earth and man. Only God can create something out of what is not observable (Hebrews 11:3)!

God has revealed himself and his plan. Only the God of the Bible has revealed himself and his plan of salvation and judgment. God's revelation of himself and his plan are unique and cannot be copied by the so-called "gods" of the other religions in the world. God revealed himself in creation (Romans 1:19-20; 2:15), through the prophets in the Old Testament (Hebrews 1:1-2), through Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15,19) and through the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles in the New Testament (John 16:13-15).

God saves and judges people in an absolute sense. Only the God of the Bible can save people from their sins and the consequences of their sins. And only the God of the Bible can judge people who do not submit themselves to him and his plan. The God of the Bible saves people only through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). And the God of the Bible executes his judgments only through Jesus Christ (John 5:22). All people must subject themselves to Jesus Christ (cf. Isaiah 45:21-23; Philippians 2:9-11)!

RULE 10. DETERMINE WHETHER THE CULTURE IN THE BIBLE PASSAGE IS NORMATIVE

The cultural context in the Bible consists of the teachings, commands and prohibitions with regard to human behaviour. These must be believed and obeyed amidst the depravity of human culture (the historical context). While the historical context in the Bible only describes how people conduct themselves (good or bad), the cultural context in the Bible teaches how people must conduct themselves. The teachings, commands and prohibitions in the Bible are generally normative.

- The human cultures in the world have been smitten by sin, transgression and iniquity: they are not what God intended human culture to be. That is why human cultures also contain evil elements and cannot be normative for human behaviour.
- But the culture of the Kingdom of God that is taught in the Bible, is what God intends every human culture in the world eventually to become. The culture of the kingdom of God is always and everywhere normative!

1. The description of human culture in every period of the history in the Bible is never normative or authoritative. If it is acceptable to God, it may be followed. But if it is detestable and reprehensible to God, it must be rejected!

(1) What is culture?

Human culture consists of:

- the worldview, truths, faith (religious convictions), superstitions, norms and values
- which people express in their customs and traditions, conduct and habits, and in their relationships and institutions (political, economical, justice, education, social institutions and religion) in a particular period within their history.

The Bible contains historical descriptions of aspects of human culture in the period the Bible was written. These descriptions of human culture may be good and therefore acceptable to God or evil and therefore detestable to God.

Thus, while the Bible describes the sinful culture of the world (the false teachings and godless behaviour of people in the history of the world and in the other religions), the Bible relates, teaches and commands the righteous culture of the kingdom (kingship) of God!

Almost all human behaviour in the Bible is explained or evaluated, forbidden, commanded or taught. The historical descriptions of human culture (that is, what people believed and how they conducted themselves) in the time the Bible was written are never normative, unless they are clearly taught or commanded in another Bible passage. But the culture of the kingdom of God (that is, what the God of the Bible commands, prohibits and teaches) is always normative!

(2) Examples of good (acceptable) human culture that may be followed.

- Composing new Christian songs, singing them, making music with all kinds of musical instruments and even dancing that expresses joy in the Lord, were expressions of good human culture. God's people **may** follow these examples and are even urged to follow these examples (Psalm 149:1-5; Psalm 150:2-6).
- Eating with hands (Mark 7:2), chopsticks or knife and fork are not forbidden in the Bible and **may** be followed.
- Teaching children in Sunday schools (cf. Mark 10:13-16) or organizing youth clubs are not forbidden and **may** be followed. They are even **commanded** (Colossians 3:16)!

⁵ Things false prophets, false apostles, false teachers and imposters pretend to do.

- Washing feet of guests (John 13:4-5) was not just a good cultural custom, but even a **command** in the Bible (John 13:14-15). But the command does not mean that one must literally wash the feet of guests, but that Christians must be willing to serve where other people are not willing or able to serve.

2. The prohibitions of evil (detestable) human culture in the Bible is always normative and authoritative! These prohibitions must be obeyed! The sinful human culture described in the Bible must definitely be prohibited!

Examples of evil (detestable) human culture that may not be followed.

- “Committing all kinds of sexual immoral deeds” is detestable: for example, incest, adultery, homosexual and lesbian practices, sex with animals, etc. (Leviticus 18:6,20,22,23; cf. Romans 1:24-27).
- “Learning to imitate the evil ways of the nations of the world” is detestable: for example, sacrificing human beings, practicing divination or sorcery, interpreting omens, engaging in witchcraft, casting spells or being a medium or spiritist, etc. (Deuteronomy 18:9-13).
- “Having more than one wife” at the same time is prohibited in the Bible (Matthew 19:3-6). The fact that king David had more than one wife (2 Samuel 5:13; cf. Genesis 2:24) is an example of detestable human culture.
- “Taking revenge, including revenging honour”, is forbidden. The fact that Absalom killed his brother Amnon because he had raped his sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13:22,32; cf. Romans 12:19) is an example of detestable human culture. The death penalty may not be applied by individuals, tribes or religions, but only by the government of a country (Romans 13:4).
- “The preaching of false teachings” is detestable (Jeremiah chapter 23).
- “Divorce without one Biblical reason (e.g. for sexual immorality, spiritual immorality, violence and an incompatible marriage)” is detestable (Malachi 2:14-16; cf. Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-15).
- “Studying the teachings of the religions of the world with the intention to believe them (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Anthroposophy, New Age, Scientology and other cults)” is detestable. Their religion, philosophy, psychology, sociology and spirituality are detestable (Colossians 2:8).
- “Envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossiping, slandering, hating the God of the Bible, insolence, arrogance, boasting, inventing evil and disobedience to parents” are detestable (Romans 1:29-30).
- “Being senseless, faithless, heartless and ruthless” is detestable. Continuing to do these things and approving of those who practice them is detestable (Romans 1:31-31).

The Bible does not hesitate to describe and record the detestable deeds and twisted aspects of human cultures in the world (Romans 1:18-32): murder (Genesis 4:8), mixed marriages between believers and unbelievers (Genesis 6:2,5), independence from God (Genesis 11:4), homosexuality (Genesis 19:4-5), rape and sex before marriage (Genesis 34:2-7,31), idolatry (Exodus 32:1-8), laziness (Proverbs 6:6-11); materialism and greed (Isaiah 5:8), secularization (Isaiah 5:12), relativism (Isaiah 5:20), injustice (Isaiah 5:23), corruption (Acts 4:32 - 5:4), sinful ambition (Acts 8:18-23), authoritarian leadership in the church (3 John 9-10) and tolerating false teaching and sinful behaviour in the church (Revelation 2:14-16,20-23), etc. Every aspect of sinful human culture must be avoided or changed!

Examples as that of David and Absalom were recorded in the Bible as warnings (1 Corinthians 10:6,11), but are definitely not normative, because they are implicitly forbidden in other Bible passages! All the above mentioned examples **may not** be followed!

3. The culture of the kingdom of God consists of the teachings, commands and prohibitions in the Bible with regard to human culture and is always normative and authoritative! God wants all people to let go of all sinful aspects of human cultures and adopt the righteous and holy culture of the kingdom of God!

(1) The Bible explains and evaluates human culture.

The Bible teaches that human cultures in every period of human history **must** change. All teachings, commands and prohibitions in the Bible provide cultural explanation or evaluation, that is, they teach that God demands what human cultures in every place on earth and in every period of history should be.

The Bible teaches what the worldview of people **must** be (1 John 2:15-17), which truths people **must** believe (John 8:31-32; John 14:6; John 17:17), which moral values and norms people **must** have (1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11), how people **must** conduct themselves and how they **must** relate to one another (Matthew 5 to 7), and which human customs and institutions are pleasing to God (Malachi 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).

(2) The Bible teaches the culture of the kingdom of God.

In the Bible human culture is constantly explained and evaluated as either good or bad, commanded or forbidden. By means of the teachings, commands and prohibitions in the Bible it is God’s intention to change the culture of every person, family, community or nation in the world so that it becomes like the culture of the kingdom of God! God is about to build a very special people of God with a very special culture, called the culture of the kingdom of God. The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 to 7 is an example of the culture of the kingdom.

(3) The Bible teaches what every human culture should become.

It is wrong to think that the cultural context of the Bible is bound to a particular period of time in the past and is therefore no longer normative for Christians today! It is wrong to say that for example “marriage between one man and one woman”, “the prohibition of sex before marriage” and “the prohibition of homosexuality” are determined by a cultural context in the Bible that is no longer normative in today’s culture.

The books of the Bible are not mere history books that were written in specific human cultures in the past, but are books that reveal what God demands with regard to all human cultures in every place on earth and in every period of time in history!

The Bible exposes all sinful and twisted aspects of human culture in all places and in all periods of time it was written. The Bible also teaches what human culture in all places in the world and in all periods of time in history should become! Christians must regard the cultural context of the Bible (the teachings, commands and prohibitions) as normative for all people in the world and in every period of human history!

(4) What is the culture of the kingdom of God?

The culture of the kingdom of God consists of the teachings, the commands and the prohibitions in the Bible (correctly interpreted). It reveals the will of God with regard to what all people in the world in all cultures and during the whole human history **must** believe, how they **must** conduct themselves, which values and norms they **must** have, how they **must** change and how they **must** live!

It is God’s intention to create a very special people of God that lives in God’s world in accordance with the culture of the kingdom of God! It is God’s intention not only to change an individual person, but also his culture! Every sinful aspect of human culture on earth must be transformed into the culture of the kingdom of God! That is why human cultures are constantly evaluated in the Bible. God is now busy to bring all human cultures on earth into the light of the culture of the kingdom of God, so that all human cultures on earth would continually become more like the culture of the kingdom of God! And God is now busy to prepare all Christians on earth to inherit the kingdom of God in its final phase (Matthew 25:35; Revelation 11:15).

The culture of the kingdom of God is always (in every period of human history) and everywhere (in every country in the world) normative and authoritative, unless the Bible limits a particular command, prohibition or teaching in another Bible passage! The teachings, commands and prohibitions are not only normative for Christians, but also for non-Christians in the world and throughout history. This is so because the God of the Bible is not only the God of Christians, but also the God of non-Christians, whether they acknowledge this or not! It is God’s purpose “to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (Ephesians 1:10; cf. Philippians 2:9-11)! At his second coming Jesus Christ and his angels “will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all people who do evil” and assign them to hell, but gather the righteous (all those who believe in Jesus Christ) into the kingdom of God (Matthew 13:41-43)!

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 to 7 is the best known passage in the Bible about the culture of the kingdom of God. The culture of the kingdom of God demands (teaches, commands) that all sinful aspects in human cultures of individuals and groups of people in the world **must** change in order to become the culture of the kingdom of God!

Ask yourself, “Does this Bible passage describe an aspect of the sinful human culture in the world in a particular period (which therefore must be avoided)? Or does it teach an aspect of the always holy and righteous culture of the kingdom of God (which therefore must be adopted)?”

Note. The ceremonial laws in the Old Testament (with regard to priests, the temple, the festivals and the holy actions like circumcision, the sacrifices, the tithes and gifts, the ablutions, the eating of clean food and fasting) have all been *fulfilled* (Matthew 5:17) and have thus been *cancelled* (Colossians 2:14) and *abrogated* (Ephesians 2:14-15). They are no longer normative and may not be re-introduced into the New Testament Church.

(5) Examples of important normative and authoritative teachings in the Bible that constitute the culture of the kingdom of God. All people must obey them.

The following teachings about prayer, marriage, sex, family, church, government and law are normative because they clearly belong to the culture of the kingdom of God.

- The teaching of Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:5-8) about prayer is normative for all Christians. Christians “**must not** keep on babbling like pagans, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words”.
- The teaching of the prophet Malachi (Malachi 2:14-16), Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:3-9) and the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 7:1-16) with regard to “Christian marriage and divorce” is normative.
- The teaching of Moses, Paul and the writer to the Hebrews with regard to “sexual immorality” is normative (Leviticus 18:3-6,20,22-23; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
- The teaching of Paul and Peter with regard to “the responsibilities of men, women and children in the family” is normative (Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-21; Titus 2:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7).
- The teaching of Jesus, Paul and Peter with regard to “the Church and her leaders (the elders)” is normative (Matthew 20:25-28; Acts 20:17,28; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; 1 Timothy 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-7).

- The teaching of Paul with regard to “the responsibilities of men and women within the official meetings of the Church” is normative (1 Corinthians 14:26-40; 1 Timothy 2:8-15).
- The teaching of the apostle Paul with regard to “the length of hair and the covering of heads” is normative. “Long hair is a disgrace to a man. Long hair neatly made into a *hairdo* (Greek: komé) is to the glory of a woman and is given to her as a *covering* (Greek: peribolaton)” – it does not refer to the necessity for women to wear a hat or headscarf on their heads (1 Corinthians 11:14-15).
- The teaching of Jesus, Paul and Peter with regard to “the government of the land” is normative (Matthew 22:21; Acts 4:19-20; 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17).
- The teaching of Moses and Paul with regard to “the justice system” is normative (Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9 – 6:11).

Because the above mentioned teachings are not limited by other teachings in the Bible, they are normative for everyone, everywhere and always!

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[REACTIONS] PRAYER IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD
----------	--------------------	---

Take turns in the group **to pray short** (in one or two sentences) 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 (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.
Memorise the 10 rules for explaining the Bible correctly and apply them diligently whenever you read and study the Bible. Preach, teach or study the teaching of “Explaining the Bible correctly” together with another person or group of people.
2. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter of Exodus 4:1 – 7:13 each day.
Make use of the questions method of quiet time. Make notes.
3. **Bible study.** Prepare the next Bible study at home. (3) Matthew 28:18-20. Theme: The missionary task of the Church. 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 and teaching notes and this preparation.