

KINGDOM.

LESSON 48

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God's kingdom to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) <i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> MICAHAH 5, HAGGAI 2, ZECHARIAH 14 and MALACHI 3
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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 with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Micah 5, Haggai 2, Zechariah 14 and Malachi 3). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) <i>[KEY VERSES IN ROMANS]</i> REVIEW KEY VERSES IN ROMANS
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Review two by two the last 5 memorised verses from Romans.

(16) Romans 12:16. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

(17) Romans 12:17. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

(18) Romans 13:8. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

(19) Romans 13:14. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

(20) Romans 16:17. I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

4	BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) <i>[THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS]</i> ROMANS 16:1-27
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Introduce. Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study Romans 16:1-27 together.

Romans 16 describes the fellow workers and acquaintances of the apostle Paul.

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
LET US READ Romans 16:1-27 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. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

16:1-2

Discovery 1. How Christians should view women with respect to occupying a church office.

The name Phoebe means "bright or radiant". Letters of commendation were a necessity when a Christian travelled from one Christian church to another in which he was unknown to the Christians. Because the apostle commends Phoebe as "a servant" of the church in Cenchrea, she was probably the bearer of Paul's letter to the Romans to Rome. Cenchrea was one of the ports of Corinth. There was a church there and Phoebe was "a servant" of this church.

(1) Phoebe was a servant rather than a deaconess.

Although the Greek word for "servant" is exactly the same as the Greek word "deacon" (Greek: diakonos) (cf. Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13), there is no ground or need to suppose that Phoebe occupied or exercised an office or position as "deaconess" in the church!

1 Peter 4:10 teaches that all Christians, men and women, are required to serve people in the local church with the spiritual gift they have received. The service which Phoebe performed was similar to those of the deacons: their ministry is one of mercy to the poor, the sick and the desolate, and Phoebe's ministry was one of mercy and hospitality to travellers. Paul calls her service as "giving assistance" (Greek: prostatis) to many, among them also Paul. The word means "protectress, patroness, helper or assistant". She assisted travellers between east and west that stopped over in the harbour of Corinth. She could also have been a well-to-do lady, with an alert mind and heart overflowing with kindness and helpfulness towards strangers. She must be compared to the women, mentioned in Mark 15:41, 1 Timothy 5:9-10 and Acts 16:15, who performed similar services.

But the fact that Phoebe performed a specific service does not mean that she occupied an office or position as deacon in the church. There is no biblical warrant that women occupied the office of an "elder" or "deacon". The elders in the Bible were all "men" (Exodus 18:231; Deuteronomy 1:13; Acts 20:17,28; 1 Timothy 2:11-12; 3:1-2,4; Titus 1:6-9). But some women had the gift of service (Romans 12:7) and in the Bible all women need to serve with their gift!

(2) The difference between servants and deacons.

Servants. The word in the original language of the New Testament literally means "servant" (Greek; diakonos). The Bible teaches that the Body of Christ has "many members", everyone with a function (Greek: praxis), everyone with "a different spiritual gift" (Greek: charismata diafora) (Romans 12:3-8. and everyone with a different service/ministry (Greek: diakonia) (1 Corinthians 12:5). The different spiritual gifts, which God gives to Christians, are for serving (1 Peter 4:10-11). And some spiritual gifts are for equipping Christians and for building up the Church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Romans 12:7 calls one particular spiritual gift the gift of "service" (Greek: diakonia) and this is related to the spiritual gift of "helpful deeds" (Greek: antilémpsis) (1 Corinthians 12:28). Both these spiritual gifts do not refer to a church office, but to the desire and ability to serve in some area.

Deacons. All Christians are "servants" (they have a particular function), but only some Christians may be appointed to be "deacons" (they have a specific office)¹. In the Christian Church, the church office of deacon is not compulsory and in most cases not even necessary! Between A.D. 30-32, a specific need arose in the local church of Jerusalem. In the Christian service of helping the poor widows, the Greek-speaking widows were for some unknown reason neglected. Therefore the church in Jerusalem officially chose and appointed seven men to give their attention to this specific problem and to meet this specific need. According to Acts 6:1-7, these men served until this need was apparently met.

A little later, one of them called Philip was no longer serving as a deacon in Jerusalem, but was serving as an evangelist in Samaria. In A.D. 60-61, there is mention of the church office of deacons in only two other local churches in the whole Bible, namely, at Philippi and Ephesus (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

The deacons are clearly distinguished from the church office of elders. In order to be chosen as a deacon, they had to meet certain specific biblical qualifications (Acts 6:3). Although the specific tasks of deacons are not delineated, they certainly were not the leaders of the local church and did not perform the tasks of the elders (Acts 6:4). A "board of deacons" may therefore never replace "a board of elders"!

(3) Were there any deaconesses in the Christian Church?

Romans 16:1 uses the male form "diakonos" and not the female form: "diakonés". Some Christians want to translate this word with (the office of) "deaconess". But nowhere does the Bible speak of a woman in any church office. Women were not appointed as "elders" in the church and also not as "deacons."

In 1 Timothy 3:11, the term "women like these" (Greek: gunaikas hósautós) cannot refer to the office of deacons, which would have required the term "the deaconesses" (Greek: tas de diakonous). The term is also not the same as "wives of deacons", which would also have required another term in Greek (Greek: gunaikas autón / echontes). Therefore, we must conclude that the women mentioned in 1 Timothy chapter 3 are most probably a separate group of women who exercised, not an office, but rather a particular service in the church at Ephesus, as 1 Timothy 5:3-16 clearly suggests.

(4) Conclusion concerning women in the Christian church.

Although Galatians 3:28 teaches that both male and female are equally "children of God" through Jesus Christ. Genesis chapter 1 to 3, 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, 1 Timothy 2, 3 and 5, Titus 2 and 1 Peter 3 teach that God's plan and regulation for men and women in creation (from the beginning in the Bible) to the recreation in (until the end of the Bible) are certainly different. Although men and women are equally precious in God's eyes, God has assigned to men and women different functions in the marriage relationship as well as in the church relationships.

¹ **An office.** By appointing leaders they are given an office. An office is a public task or ministry to which Christ and the elders of the church call someone and appoint (induct, ordain) him. Examples of offices in the church are: elder (priest), missionary (one sent out), preacher, pastor/shepherd, evangelist, teacher, deacon, group leader, youth leader, etc. Besides the office of elder these offices are NOT the leaders of the church, but must function in their tasks under the leadership of the body of elders! In the Bible all elders are male.

Christians must avoid two extremes:

- They must avoid the extreme of ordaining women to a church office when there is no warrant for doing so in the Bible!
- And they must avoid the extreme of ignoring the very important and valuable services that able, devout and alert women are able to render to the church!

16:5

Discovery 2. How the Christian church in Rome met together.

All evidence in Romans chapter 16 points in the direction of “house churches” (“house fellowships”). The Christian church in Rome met together in several house churches. According to Romans 16:5, Prisca and Aquilla had a church in their house (1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2). This house church (Greek: *ekklésia*) may not be restricted to the people of their own household (Acts 10:2; 11:14; 16:15,31; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:16; 1 Timothy 3:4; 5:13; 2 Timothy 1:16), but must have consisted of several different families or households that met together for various church activities. There were also other house churches in Rome: “Greet ... the brothers with them” (Romans 16:14). “Greet ... the saints with them” (Romans 16:15). These house churches were connected to people mentioned by name. Hence the Church at Rome must have consisted of several house churches.

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 Romans 16:1-27 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.)

16:7

Question 1. Were Andronicus and Junias apostles or not?

Notes.

(1) They were fellow-countrymen.

Andronicus and Junias could have been Paul’s relatives (Luke 1:36; John 18:26), but were rather his fellow-countrymen (Romans 9:3; 16:7,11,21). There is no reason to think that the ending of the name Junias must denote a woman, because Patrobas and Hermas are called “brothers” (Romans 16:14) and also the prophets Elijah and Jeremiah (Greek: *Elias* and *Jeremias*) were men (Matthew 16:14). Andronicus and Junias were also Paul’s fellow-prisoners in another prison. Julia however was a woman (Julius is masculine) (Romans 16:15).

(2) They were outstanding among the apostles.

They are called “outstanding among the apostles” (Greek: *episémos*) (Romans 16:7) (or “notorious” in Matthew 27:16). The word “apostle” (Greek: *apostolos*) means “a person sent out on a mission (task) (Greek: *apostelló*)” and refers to the apostles of Christ (Mark 3:14-15; 1 Corinthians 9:1) or to the apostles of the churches (Acts 14:14; Philippians 2:25).

Maybe they belonged to the group of 72 that were sent out (Greek: *apostelló*) (aorist active) (Luke 10:1) or to the group of apostles of the churches as Barnabas, Epaphroditus, Apollos, Silvanus and Timothy. All of them proclaimed the gospel and may be described as people sent out by the churches. Today such people are called “church planters” or “church builders”.

16:10

Question 2. What does it mean to be tested and approved by God?

Notes.

(1) Approved in the area of difficulties.

A Christian needs to be tested and approved in the area of the difficulties in life. In Romans 16:10, Apelles is described as “tested and approved in Christ”. When is a Christian tested and approved? God especially uses difficulties, trials, temptations and sufferings to test Christians and develop their Christian character (cf. Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-4). When a Christian amidst such “testing of faith” (Greek: *dokimion tés pisteós*) (James 1:3) remains faithful to Christ and the Christian Faith, he has as it were been thoroughly examined by God, has passed the examination and is approved (Greek: *dokimos*) by God. Such a Christian may have the satisfaction of knowing that God is pleased with him and commends him. A Christian should remain faithful to God amidst all the difficulties in his life. Only then does he receive God’s approval!

(2) Approved in the area of behaviour.

A Christian needs to be tested and approved by God in the area of behaviour in the Christian meetings. In 1 Corinthians 11:19-22, Paul says, “No doubt there has to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval. When you come together, is it not the Lord’s Supper you eat?” The Lord’s Supper was celebrated in conjunction with the love meal (Greek: *agapé*), that is, a meal in which Christians of the church ate together. Some Christians were selfish, brought their own food and ate it without waiting for the others or without sharing with those who brought no food. Others misbehaved and even got drunk. God tests Christians through their behaviour in the Christian meetings and their behaviour in ordinary life. A Christian should behave as a Christian under all circumstances. Only then does he receive God’s approval!

(3) Approved in the area of spiritual training and discipline.

A Christian needs to be tested and approved by God in the area of spiritual training and discipline. In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Paul uses pictures from sports to exhort Christians to put themselves under strict training, not to run aimlessly and in boxing not to beat the air. He says, “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training” (Greek: *egkrateuomai*, literally: inner self-control, especially sexual continence). “I beat my body (Greek: *upópiázó*, literally: “beat myself under the eyes”, an expression for self-imposed discipline) and make it my slave (Greek: *doulagógeó*, literally: “bring it into submission”), so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize (Greek: *adokimos*) (1 Corinthians 9:25,27).” To be tested and approved by God is the opposite of being disqualified by God. In order not to be disqualified by God, every Christian must put himself under strict spiritual training and run towards a clear goal. Only then does he receive the prize - God’s approval!

(4) Approved in the area of interpreting the Bible.

A Christian also needs to be tested and approved by God in the area of correctly interpreting the Bible. In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul exhorts Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved (Greek: *dokimos*), a workman who does not need to be ashamed (Greek: *anepaischuntos*) and who correctly handles the word of truth (Greek: *orthotomeó*, literally: to cut the word of truth straight)”. A person teaching the Bible must interpret the Bible correctly (Titus 1:9)! He may not distort the Word of God (2 Corinthians 4:2). Therefore church leaders and teachers of the Bible must be trained well in the hermeneutic rules of the Bible². Only when a Christian interprets the Bible correctly, does he receive God’s approval!

(5) Approved in the area of Christian ministry.

A Christian needs to be tested and approved by God in the area of his ministry. In 2 Corinthians 10:12-18, Paul says, “We do not dare to ... compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. ... We will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us. ... We do not go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. ... It is not the one who commends himself who is approved (Greek: *dokimos*), but the one whom the Lord commends.” Paul had first preached the gospel in Corinth and had founded the Christian church in Corinth.

Afterwards, some false teachers and even false so-called apostles came and tried to influence the Christians away from Paul to themselves. They boasted about the church of Corinth as if it were their ministry and commended themselves to the Christians in Corinth as being more important apostles than Paul. Paul simply answered that God would test the ministry of those false apostles and consequently not approve of them. Even if these false apostles commended themselves, it does not mean that God commends them! It is “not the one who commends himself who is approved (Greek: *dokimos*), but the one whom the Lord commends!” Christian leaders must realise that God will certainly test their ministry and either disqualify them or approve of them. Christian leaders must do their ministries not in accordance with their own ideas, but in accordance with the whole Bible, not independently but in complete dependence of God. Only then do they receive God’s approval!

16:16

Question 3. How should we interpret the holy kiss of Christians?

Notes. Romans 16:16 says, “Greet one another with a holy kiss”: (Greek: *filémati hagió*). The New Testament shows that the Christians had the custom to greet one another with a kiss.

(1) The Christian kiss was an appropriate expression of affection.

According to Luke 7:36-50 (45), when Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to have dinner, he did not give Jesus a kiss, as was the custom in those days. But the sinful woman came to where they were eating and did not stop kissing the feet of Jesus! This passage shows that affection should be expressed, for example, by some token of affection. During the time of Jesus, the kiss was a token of affection. In our day, Christians in different countries of the world should decide how they could express their affection in an appropriate way within their culture. For example in some cultures, Christian men give one another a bear hug. In other cultures, men and women may not touch one another or speak to one another when alone.

² The hermeneutic rules for:

- teaching the Bible (manual 3, lesson 29)
- the Book of Revelation (manual 1, lesson 10)
- the parables (manual 9, supplement 1)

(2) The Christian kiss is a sincere expression of affection.

According to Luke 22:47-48, Judas betrayed Jesus to his enemies with a kiss. The kiss of Judas was insincere and a kiss of betrayal. This passage shows that the kiss or any other way of expressing Christian affection should be real and sincere.

(3) The Christian kiss is a holy expression of affection.

According to Romans 16:16 and 2 Corinthians 13:12, the apostle Paul urged Christians to greet one another with a holy kiss. The word “holy” means separated from evil and reserved for God. Therefore, a holy kiss always implies that three parties are involved: - the two people kissing one another and God who sees and knows everything and for whose sake the kiss is given! On the one hand the kiss may not come from a wrong desire or motive. On the other hand the kiss may not be cold, and indifferent and without meaning. The Christian kiss must have meaning: an expression of God’s love and commitment.

(4) The Christian kiss was a common expression of affection.

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:26, the holy kiss is for all the members of the Christian family. Christians may not defer showing affection to those members they for some reason do not like! The holy kiss should be given to every Christian without partiality. This passage shows that the kiss maintains the harmony and peace among the Christian brothers and sisters.

(5) The Christian kiss was a loving expression of affection.

According to 1 Peter 5:14, Christians should greet one another with a kiss of love. The Christian kiss is a sign of commitment to love one another as Christ loves us (John 13:34-35) and to love as 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 teaches.

(6) The history of the Christian kiss.

There is evidence that the holy kiss passed into common Christian usage until the 13th century in the Western church. Today it is still continued in the Coptic Christian church! In some cultures the contact between the different sexes is more strictly regulated than in other cultures. The correct application of the Christian kiss would be that Christians in every country of the world should decide what would be an appropriate way to express their Christian affection to one another.

16:17-18

Question 4. How should Christians relate to false teachers?

Notes. Romans 16:17-18 says, “Watch out for those who cause divisions (Greek: dichostasia) and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites (literally: be a slave to their own stomachs). By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive (innocent, unsuspecting) (Greek: akakos) people.”

(1) The false teachers and their methods.

It is nowhere implied that these people were members of the church at Rome, because Paul commends the obedience of the Christians in Rome to Christ (Romans 16:19). Instead, they were probably outsiders, travelling false teachers and propagandists. Some may have been *free thinkers (liberal)*, who reject God’s law completely and taught that people may sin as much as they like (Romans 6:1). Others may have been *legalists* who teach that people had to be circumcised and keep the ceremonial law of Moses in order to be saved (Acts 15:1). They make propaganda for their religion, are bribed to do this and receive approval of their religious leaders. They are experienced in talking people into believing their false teachings.³ They are characterised by twisting the teachings of the Bible and their opposition to Jesus Christ. They are not “obedient to the form of teaching to which Christ had entrusted them” (Romans 6:17).

(2) How Christians should treat false teachers and propagandists.

Paul does not say that Christians must *oppose* these false teachers, because they might have been too strong for the ordinary members of the Christian church. Instead he says *watch out for* (Greek: skopeó) them all the time, that is, notice who these men and women are so that they may be avoided! The apostle Paul commands Christians to “keep away from” these false teachers (prophets and apostles) (Romans 16:17)!

Also the apostle John commands Christians not to take false teachers into their house and not to welcome them, because anyone who welcomes a false teacher into his house shares in the wicked work of the false teacher” (2 John 10-11). Finally, the apostle Paul says about people who throw Christians into confusion by perverting the gospel, “Even if an angel from heaven⁴ should preach another gospel (other than the gospel preached by the apostles in the Bible), let him be eternally condemned (accursed)” (Galatians 1:6-9)!

³ Think of cults as the Jehovah’s witnesses, the Mormons and the non-Christian religions

⁴ Note for example the role “the angel Jibril (Gabriël)” has in Islam.

16:25-26

Question 5. What was the mystery?

Notes.

(1) The mystery hidden.

“A mystery” is a truth that remains unknown as long as it is not revealed.

The mystery was first a Person who would have remained unknown if God had not revealed him. During the whole Old Testament period it was a secret (a mystery) that the real “Israel” was not Jacob (Genesis 32:28) and also not the Jewish nation (Exodus 4:22), but “the Servant of the LORD”, namely, Jesus Christ. “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendour” (Isaiah 49:3)! Through this Servant “the LORD would bring back those of Israel he has kept” (the remnant), make him a Light for the (Gentile) nations and bring God’s salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6)

The mystery is then God in his people, “The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to Christians is: Christ in (Greek: en) you” (plural, the Christian Church) (Colossians 1:25-27). After his ascension into heaven Jesus Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would be “with” and “in” the disciples (Christians). The Holy Spirit is no-one less than Jesus Christ himself who did not leave the disciples behind as orphans, but came to them (John 14:16-18; cf. Romans 8:9-10; 2 Corinthians 3:17)!

The mystery is finally the one people. During the whole Old Testament period it was a mystery that believing non-Jews (Gentiles) through the gospel would be heirs together with Israel, members together of one Body (the Church) and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:2-6; cf. 2 Corinthians 1:20)! God’s Old Testament people “Israel” (the believers within Israel) has thus not been terminated or replaced, but is continued (on the higher plane of realities in stead of shadows) (Colossians 2:17) and extended to include Christians from all the nations on the earth!

The believing non-Jews would one day enter the kingdom of God in great numbers. From the days of John the Baptist the kingdom of God is pressing forward vigorously and vigorous men are eagerly taking possession of it (Matthew 11:12). From the first coming to the second coming of Christ (the end of the world) the gospel of the kingdom (kingship) of God will be proclaimed in the whole world as a testimony to all nations (Matthew 24:14).

The believing non-Jews will be heirs together with the believing Jews of all God’s promises to the Jews (2 Corinthians 1:20) and they will be members of the same Body (the Church) on a complete equal footing with Jewish believers (Ephesians 2:14-22; 3:2-6)! The believing Jews are no longer only God’s chosen people (the elect) (Deuteronomy 7:6-10), but the believers in Jesus Christ from all nations form together God’s elect people. The apostle Peter says this as follows, “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Peter 2:9-10; cf. Romans 10:12 and Galatians 3:28).

(2) The mystery has now been revealed.

Although this mystery had been promised beforehand “in the prophetic books” of the Old Testament (Romans 1:2; 16:26), it remained “hidden for long ages past” (Romans 16:25). Although God’s eternal plan of salvation included large numbers of people from every nation in the world (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Isaiah 42:6; 49:6), this promise began to be fulfilled at the first coming of Jesus Christ. Only after Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected from the dead and thus atonement for sins was made, the New Testament period began. People from every tribe, language, people and nation on earth are now believing in Jesus Christ, are obeying him (Romans 16:26) and are streaming into God’s kingdom (Matthew 8:12).

The letter to the Romans was addressed to a church that consisted of both believing Jews and believing Gentiles, who worshipped and served the God of the Bible together. In this way the only wise God of the Bible is glorified through Jesus Christ forever (Romans 16:27)!

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 Romans 16:1-27.

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 Romans 16:1-27.

- 16:1. Send a letter of recommendation together with a person representing your congregation.
- 16:2. Give any help a travelling Christians may need of you.
- 16:3. Be a fellow worker with other Christians instead of being independent and separate.

- 16:5. Make your home available for a house church.
- 16:7. Remember those Christians who are in prison (Hebrews 13:3) and pray for them (Acts 12:5).
- 16:10. Welcome the fact that God tests you through difficulties in order to approve of you.
- 16:16. Find ways to show your Christian affection that are appropriate in your culture.
- 16:17. Notice the people that are false teachers and do not welcome them in your homes.
- 16:19. Be innocent about what is evil. Therefore do not watch evil television programmes or films, do not read bad books and magazines and keep your eyes, ears and mind away from everything that will take away your innocence with regard to evil.
- 16:20. Although Satan has been defeated (Matthew 12:28-29; John 12:31), he still has much power to cause evil (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). Therefore constantly resists him (1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7). At the second coming of Christ, Satan will be finally overthrown and cast into hell (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 20:10).

2. Examples of personal applications from Romans 16:1-27.

I want to make my house available for Christians to meet.

I want to learn to show appropriate affection to my other brothers and sisters.

STEP 5. PRAY. **RESPONSE**
 LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Romans 16:1-27. (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)	<i>[INTERCESSION]</i> PRAY FOR OTHERS
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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)	<i>[ASSIGNMENT]</i> FOR THE NEXT YEAR
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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. Be committed to make disciples, build the Church and preach the kingdom.
2. Preach, teach or study Romans 16:1-27 with another person or group of people.
3. Update your notebook on preaching God's kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.

CONTINUE TO GROW

1. Quiet time.

Continue to have a regular time of personal fellowship with Jesus Christ (quiet time). Make use of the favourite truth method (see manual 1, supplement 1). A good way is to make use of the Bible reading programme (see manual 1, supplement 2). Continue to make notes of your quiet times.

2. Memorisation.

Continue to select your own new Bible verses for memorisation from your Bible reading and Bible study. Memorise important Bible verses on a regular basis (see manual 1, supplement 5). And continue to review the last 5 memorised Bible verses every day.

3. Bible study.

Continue to do Bible study (cf. manual 1, supplement 4). Select your own Bible book and make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study the book. It is advisable to first study the most important books in the New Testament before you study some books in the Old Testament, because the Old Testament must be interpreted in the light of the New Testament revelation (cf. Luke 24:25-27,44-45).

4. Prayer.

Continue to pray for someone or something specific every week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).

5. Christian fellowship.

Continue to meet together with other believers in a congregation (either in a house church group or larger church meeting).

6. Fruit bearing.

Continue to bear much fruit and lasting fruit (John 15:5,8,16). Witness for Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 10:32; 1 Peter 3:15-16). Spread the gospel in various ways. Be determined to influence people around you to come closer to Jesus Christ. Make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

7. Discipleship.

Continue to follow Jesus Christ, learn from him and obey his words (cf. Matthew 7:24-27).

START NEW GROUPS

Whenever you have completed the training of a group of believers, do two things:

1. Spur your students on to start a new Dota group (house fellowship/church)

Challenge this group of believers, which you have trained, to start their own small group of new believers, who want to grow spiritually. Let them make use of this complete course or a part of this course to train them.

Continue to train and encourage the new discipleship group leaders on a regular basis.

2. Start a new Dota group yourself.

Motivate, invite and prayerfully select a number of people to form a new Dota group yourself. Make use of this complete course or a part of this course to train them. The DOTA course consists of the following three parts:

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES.	48 lessons in disciple manuals 1 to 4.
GO AND BUILD CHRIST'S CHURCH.	48 lessons in church manuals 5 to 8.
GO AND PREACH GOD'S KINGDOM.	48 lessons in kingdom manuals 9 to 12.
