

DISCIPLESHIP. LESSON 8

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

2	SHARING (20 minutes)	[QUIET TIMES] MATTHEW 25:14 – 28:20
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Take turns and *share* (or *read* from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Matthew 25:14 – 28:20). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

3	MEMORISATION (20 minutes)	[ASSURANCES] (4) 1 JOHN 1:9
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A. MOTIVATION

Read Matthew 22:23-33,41-46.

Discover and discuss. Why is it important to memorise Bible verses (passages or chapters)?

Notes. Memorised Bible verses will enable you to expose and refute false teachings.

B. MEDITATION

(4)

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

Assurance of forgiveness 1 John 1:9
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

1 John 1:9

1. My responsibility is to confess sin.

To confess sin means “to say the same thing” (Greek: homologeó) or “to agree with God” when he shows us our sins. It is to agree with the Bible about what sin is. It is to tell God the wrong things we have done. It is also to tell God the right things we have neglected to do.

2. God’s responsibility is to forgive and to purify.

(1) When God forgives our sins, he removes the guilt and shame of sin from us.

Jesus died as a sacrifice of atonement for sins, that is, he took God’s righteous anger against our sins away (Romans 3:25; Psalm 32:5). We are no longer guilty in his eyes and we no longer need to feel ashamed of our past sinful life. God will never again bring our sins into remembrance (Micah 7:18-19; Hebrews 8:12) and he will never condemn us for our past sins (John 5:24). He gives us a complete righteous status. He welcomes us into his family (Luke 15:20-24).

(2) When God forgives our sins, he removes the consequences of our sins from us.

This means that he purifies us. He cleanses our conscience (Hebrews 9:14) and renews our thinking and actions. He gives us a righteous life-style.

(3) When God forgives our sins, he removes the power (reign) of sin from us.

He sets us free from our slavery to sinful habits, so that we are able to offer the parts of our body as instruments of righteousness that leads to holiness (Romans 6:6,13,19).

3. God is faithful and just.

(1) God is just (righteous and holy)

and therefore he can make atonement for sins and consequently can forgive all sins.

(2) God is faithful

and therefore he has made atonement for sins and consequently has forgiven all our sins! He made the promise in 1 John 1:9 and he is no liar (Numbers 23:19). You may be 100% sure that he will do what he promised!

Thus, every time you commit a sin, confess it immediately and sincerely to God and he will forgive you and purify you.

C. MEMORISATION AND REVIEW

1. **Write** the Bible verse on a blank card or on one page of your small notebook.
2. **Memorise** the Bible verse in the right way. (4) Assurance of forgiveness: 1 John 1:9.
3. **Review.** Divide into twos and review the first three memorised Bible verses.

4	BIBLE STUDY (70 minutes) [QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE] (4) WHY AM I HERE? EPHESIANS 4:17 – 5:17
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Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study Ephesians 4:17 - 5:17 together.

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
<i>Read.</i> LET US READ Ephesians 4:17 - 5:17 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

STEP 2. DISCOVER.	OBSERVATIONS
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (The following are examples of people sharing what they have discovered. Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things, not necessarily these things)	

Discovery 1. The importance of knowing God's will.

Ephesians 4:30 says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." Ephesians 5:10 says, "Find out what pleases the Lord." And Ephesians 5:17 says, "Understand what the Lord's will is." The truth is that the Lord is very interested in *how I live every day*. The way I live every day can grieve him or displease him. If I speak lies, do not control my anger, steal, fight or slander, then the Lord's Spirit is very sad. Then the Lord is not pleased with how I live.

But the opposite must then also be true. Whenever I speak the truth, control my temper, work and share, forgive people and build them up, then the Lord's Spirit is happy. Then the Lord is very pleased with how I live. That is why the Bible says, "Understand what the Lord's will is." The better I understand the Lord's will for my life, the better I can live a life that pleases the Lord! Therefore I think that the answer to the question, "Why am I here?" is "I am here to know God's will and to please God in how I live."

Discovery 2. The importance of how I live (how I behave).

The letter to the Ephesians in the original language contains the word "walk" (Greek: peripateó) in the sense of "behave" or "live our daily lives" seven times.

(1) **Ephesians 2:2** says that before we became Christians we were spiritually dead because we lived (walked) in the sins, in the ways of the godless world and in obedience to Satan.

(2) **Ephesians 2:10** says that after we became Christians we must live (walk) in good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do.

(3) **Ephesians 4:1** says, "Live a life (walk) worthy of the calling you have received."

(4) **Ephesians 4:17** says, "You must no longer live (walk) as the Gentiles (the non-Christians) do in the futility of their thinking."

(5) **Ephesians 5:2** says, "Live a life of (walk in) love, just as Christ loved us."

(6) **Ephesians 5:8** says, "Live (walk) as children of light."

(7) **Ephesians 5:15** says, "Be careful how you live (walk), not as unwise but as wise."

The truth is that God tells me very clearly how I should live. He literally tells me how I should "walk" in my daily life. No wonder the book of Acts speaks about Christians as "the people who belong to the Way" (Acts 9:2).

The answer to the question, "Why am I here?" is "I am here to live the life God tells me to live." God tells me clearly how I should not live and also clearly how I should live. The reason why I live on earth is to please God. The writer, Paul says in another letter, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31). People are created by God and put on earth to please God and to glorify God. When people choose to live in a way that pleases God, God rejoices. But when people choose to live in their own way, God is sad and will punish them by excluding them from his kingdom (Matthew 13:41-42). Slogans in the world as "Everything goes" and "Just do it!" are very big lies!

STEP 3. QUESTION.**EXPLANATIONS**

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

Let us try to understand all the truths in Ephesians 4:17 – 5:17 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.)

4:17**Question 1. What does it mean that “the Gentiles are living in the futility of their thinking”?**

Notes. The “Gentiles” here are the people who do not yet believe in Jesus Christ. The Bible says that all the efforts the Gentiles make to attain happiness, end in disappointment. Their life is one long series of expectations, which are never fulfilled. They pursue, but do not achieve. They blossom, but do not bear fruit. They live without any lasting results. They experience what the Preacher experienced in his life: “All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. ... The eye has never enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing. ... My heart took delight in all my work. ... Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained” (Ecclesiastes 1:7-8) “I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labour. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless. a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11). People without the God of the Bible are people whose thinking produces nothing that can satisfy.

4:18**Question 2. Why does the Bible say that “the Gentiles are ignorant due to the hardening of their hearts”?**

Notes. At the time of the creation, all the people had knowledge of the Living God. Because of the fall into sin people gradually began to forget God and live lives that were separate from the life of God. When God spoke to the people through Enoch and Noah, they hardened their hearts.

Whenever people persist to do evil, God gives them up to suffer the full consequences of their sin. Because the Gentiles did not glorify God nor gave him thanks, their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Because they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images of idols, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. Because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, God gave them over to shameful lusts and sexual impurity. Because they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done (Romans 1:24,26,28). The Gentiles hardened their hearts against God and so God allowed them to become hardened. God hardens those who harden themselves against God. By their own deliberate action the Gentiles became hardened. The Gentiles did not want to think about God. Therefore God blinded their understanding about the Living God. They were even blind to the fact that they were blind (John 9:40-41)! People, who persist to live without God, do not even realise that they are living without the Living God. They are “ignorant” of God. They live in darkness.

4:22-24**Question 3. How do you put off your old self and put on your new self?**

Notes. The two verbs: “put off” and “put on” do not indicate a process, but a once-for-all-time act that happened at my conversion (rebirth). When I believed in Jesus Christ the first time, I once-for-all-time put off the old self and once-for-all-time put on the new self. My old self was my ignorance about God and my old life-style. My new self is my knowledge of the will of God and living a life that pleases God. My new self is now my identity: “I am in Jesus Christ and never alone any more”. “My life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3).

But this once-for-all-time beginning must lead to a life-time process of putting off my sins by confessing them and by putting on the characteristics of Christ. What are specific sins that I must get rid of? The Bible says that I must specifically get rid of telling lies, of getting angry, of stealing, of fighting, of slander, of sexual immorality, of greed and of every form of malice. What are specific righteous things that I must keep putting on? The Bible says that I must specifically put on telling the truth, controlling my anger, working and sharing, kindness, compassion, forgiving spirit, love, thanksgiving, knowledge of God’s will and wisdom how to live.

4:26

Question 4. What does it mean to get angry, but not sin?

Notes. Some people think this means that Christians may never get angry. They say that all anger is sin. Other people think this means that you may get angry, because anger is not connected to sin. Both views are wrong.

The Bible says, “You may get angry, but when you are angry, do not sin.” Anger by itself is not sinful, because anger is also ascribed to God. God’s anger is a righteous indignation against all kinds of evil. Christians may also have righteous indignation against the evil things that people say and do. This kind of anger is called *righteous anger*. Righteous anger is limited to the person and issue in question and is expressed in the pleasing and controlled way we speak and behave. God (Romans 1:18; 2:5-6; Hebrews 12:6) and Jesus Christ (Matthew 21:12; John 2:15-16) express their righteous anger in temporary punishment or judgement.

But most of the times, when we humans get angry, we do not limit it to the person and issue in question, we cannot control it and speak in an unpleasant way. So we sin. When anger is expressed in hatred or resentment against the wrongdoer, or in abusive language or violence, then anger is “sinful anger”. Sinful anger does not rake up the past. Sinful anger does not show rejection in the facial expression, does not speak hateful words and does not do revengeful deeds. Sinful anger maintains an unforgiving spirit, is revengeful and employs abusive language and violent acts. To love the sinner while you hate his sin requires a lot of grace from God.

4:26

Question 5. What does it mean “not to let the sun go down while you are still angry”?

Notes. In the Bible “sunset” usually means “the end of the day”. Many people are angry with somebody for years and years. They cannot forgive and remain very bitter. They keep a long list of wrongs that other people have done against them throughout the years. They criticise them and especially slander them. They always want to prove that they are “right”. They remain embittered people and defile many people with their bitterness in their circle of their influence (Hebrews 12:15).

In the Bible “sundown” means the end of the day! The new day begins with the beginning of an evening. So before the next day, a Christian must forgive and get reconciled to the other party and never again talk about the offense! Mercy triumphs over judgement” (James 2:13)!

4:27

Question 6. How can you give the devil a foothold?

Notes. The Bible connects Ephesians 4:26 and 27. “To give the devil a foothold”, means to give him an opportunity to enter into some area in my life (note: not into my body) and to do damage. Especially when I get angry I must be very careful that I do not give the devil an opportunity to turn my anger into a grudge, hatred, an unforgiving spirit or even violence. That is why I must learn to forgive quickly. That is why Ephesians 4:32 says that a Christian must forgive the offender just as God has forgiven him through what Christ has done.

Ephesians 6:11 adds, “Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” The devil will use any trick of the trade to cause a Christian to sin. He can grasp hold of my anger and turn it into abusive language or violent behaviour. He can take hold of my greed and turn it into cheating or theft. He can take hold of my fear and cause me to tell lies. That is why James 4:7 says, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

4:29

Question 7. How do you speak helpful words that will build other people up?

Notes. The book of Proverbs teaches me how to speak in a way that will help others. I should think before I give an answer. I should give my answer in the right time. And I should give a gentle answer (Proverbs 15:28,23,1). Ephesians 4:15 says, “Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ.” Thus, two important principles for speaking are ‘truth’ and ‘love’. Ephesians 4:29 says, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” Thus, another principle for speaking is ‘building up’.

Summary of these three important principles. Before I speak, I should ask myself three important questions:

- (1) **“Is it true?”** If it is not the truth you should remain silent.
 - (2) **“Is it edifying?”** Even if it is the truth, but will not build the other person up, you should remain silent.
 - (3) **“Is it love?”** Even if it is the truth and edifying, but you cannot say it in love, you should remain silent.
- If you are impatient, unfriendly, arrogant, angry or obnoxious, you should remain silent.
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5:7

Question 8. With which kind of people should Christians not be partners?

Notes. Christians *live in* the sinful and broken world, but are not part of this sinful and broken world (John 17:11,16). Christians should not become partners with people of this world that are sexual immoral, greedy, or speak obscene and foolish things or tell coarse jokes. Christians must live as salt and light among the non-Christians (Matthew 5:13-16). Salt preserves against rot, heals wounds and gives taste to food. Light exposes what is wrong, reveals what is right and makes things beautiful and attractive. Christians may not participate in the fruitless deeds of darkness, but should expose it (Efeziërs 5:11). Christians should not associate with disobedient Christians (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)!

Question 9. What do you think is the importance of Ephesians chapter 4:17 to 5:17 for your life?

Notes. Ephesians 4:17 to 5:17 teaches me why I am here on earth. I am on earth to live the life that God intends me to live. The new life is a life in accordance with God's will, it pleases him and it glorifies him. The new life to which God calls me (Ephesians 4:1) is completely different than the life that the Gentiles live (Ephesians 4:17; 2:2). The new life is continually putting off the old sins and putting on the new righteousness. The new life is a life characterised by truth, righteousness, holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24), love (Ephesians 5:2), light (Ephesians 5:8) and wisdom (Ephesians 5:15). Ephesians 4:17 – 5:17 teaches me how my life can be very meaningful and have a purpose in this world.

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

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

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Ephesians 4:17 – 5:17.

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

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

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

1. Examples of possible applications from Ephesians 4:17 to 5:17.

4:17-19. Consider the way that the Gentiles around me live (walk). Start to live (walk) differently.

4:24. Consider how truth, righteousness and holiness can become more and more a reality in my life.

4:25. Give up every form of lies. Only speak the truth.

4:26. Learn to control my anger. Stop to be angry before I go to sleep.

4:27. Be very watchful that the devil does not get a foothold in my life.

4:28. Work and earn my own income.

4:28. Share with some people who are in need.

4:29. Build people up with the words I speak.

4:30. Become sensitive not to grieve the Holy Spirit.

4:31. Get rid of every form of evil and malice.

4:32. Be quick to forgive those who wrong me.

5:1. Get to know God better and imitate him.

5:2. Learn more and more how to love as a Christian.

5:3-7. Avoid people who speak dirty or foolish things. Avoid disobedient Christians.

5:8-14. Expose the darkness in my own life and in the lives of my brothers.

5:15-17. Learn to become wise by doing the Lord's will.

2. Examples of personal applications from Ephesians 4:17 to 5:17.

I want to live my life in a way that I am conscious of God's presence and in a way that pleases God. I especially want to learn to control my anger and reconcile myself with an offender before the day ends.

I also want to live my life in a way that pleases God. I especially want to put off a specific bad habit and put on a new habit. And then practise and practise until God has built this new habit into my life.

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Ephesians 4:17 – 5:17.

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

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[INTERCESSION] PRAY FOR OTHERS
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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)	[ASSIGNMENT] FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Make a commitment to one of the possible applications.
2. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter from **John 1:1 – 4:22** each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. Memorisation. Meditate and memorise the new Bible verse. (4) Assurance of forgiveness: **1 John 1:9**.
Daily review the last 3 memorised Bible verses.
4. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
5. Update your notebook on making disciples. Include the notes on your personal time with God, memorisation notes, Bible study notes and this preparation.