

DISCIPLESHIP LESSON 14

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] JOHN 18:28 – 21:25
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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 (John 18:28 – 21:25).

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

3	MEMORISATION (20 minutes)	[NEW LIFE IN CHRIST] (1) 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17
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The second **series (B)** of memory verses is about **“New life in Christ”**. The titles of the five memory verses are:

- (1) Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17
- (2) Word. Matthew 4:4
- (3) Prayer. John 15:7
- (4) Fellowship. 1 John 1:7
- (5) Witnessing. Matthew 10:32.

A. MEDITATION

(1)

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

Christ 2 Corinthians 5:17
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”
2 Corinthians 5:17

2 Corinthians 5:17

1. How did Paul’s relationship to Christ change?

Before Paul’s conversion, he was a fanatic Pharisee¹. His knowledge of Jesus Christ was purely “according to the flesh”. That is, he regarded Jesus Christ “from a worldly point of view” (verse 16), in accordance with the external standards of the world. The world judges people according to their outward appearance, not according to what they really are in their inward heart. Because Jesus was a carpenter, they rejected him as a teacher. Because Jesus was not educated in one of the rabbinical schools, they rejected his wisdom. Because Jesus was a friend of sinners and tax collectors (Luke 7:34), they regarded him as “a sinner” too. That is exactly what Jesus Christ said to the Pharisees, “You have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards” (John 8:14-15). Today, other religions in the world still judge Jesus Christ “by human standards”. However, at his conversion, Paul met Jesus Christ face to face (Acts 26:12-18). From then on he no longer regarded Jesus Christ in the old way.

2. What does it mean to be “in Christ”?

From a heavenly point of view there are only two kinds of people. People are either “in Christ” or they are “in the world”. The big question is, “In whom are you?” This means, “Are you born again” (John 3:7)? “Do you realise whether Christ Jesus is in you” (2 Corinthians 13:5)? “Are you a new creation?” “Have the old things passed away?” “Have the new things come?” This is what 2 Corinthians 5:17 is speaking about!

The way to come “in Christ” is to believe in Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection for you! Through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a person becomes united to Jesus Christ. From the moment a person believes in Jesus Christ, he is “in Christ”.

¹ A Pharisee was a member of a Jewish sect, distinguished by strict observance of traditional and written law, held to have pretensions to superior sanctity. A Pharisee was a self-righteous person, a formalist and usually a hypocrite.

The expression “in Christ” is the shortest description of Christian salvation. It is a short summary of the inexhaustible richness of Christian salvation. Whoever Jesus Christ is and whatever Jesus Christ has done have the greatest consequences for who you are as a believer in Christ and what you become.

Examples.

- Because Jesus Christ died, you also died to sin (Romans 6:2). Because Jesus Christ took the punishment for your sins on himself, you are completely forgiven, declared perfectly righteous and will never be condemned (1 John 1:9; Micah 7:18-19; Hebrews 8:12)!
- Because Jesus Christ has been resurrected, your human spirit has also been resurrected from spiritual death. You have been made spiritually alive (are born-again, recreated) and also your human body will be resurrected from physical death at the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- Because Jesus Christ is the only one in whom God is well pleased, God has now also accepted you and is very pleased with you.
- Because Jesus Christ has bound the devil, you are able to resist the devil and together with Jesus Christ snatch people out of Satan’s kingdom of darkness and bring them into Christ’s kingdom of light.
- Because Jesus Christ is the Truth, you now know the truth about God, the truth about yourself, the truth about the world and the truth about the future.
- Because Jesus Christ is the Heir, you will share in the inheritance of Jesus Christ, the new heaven and new earth.
- Because Jesus Christ is the King of God’s kingdom, you will reign with him on the new earth.

Any person in the world (an unbeliever or a non-Christian) can come “in Christ” if he wants to. All he or she needs to do is believe in Jesus Christ or submit his or her heart and life to him. Jesus Christ died so that your sins may be forgiven and he was resurrected so that you may live the new life!

3. Which old things have gone?

The new creation is characterised by the old things that *have once for all at a definite point of time* (Greek: aorist tense), namely at your regeneration, passed away. The old things that passed away are the old prejudices, discriminations, misconceptions and enslavements of a person that has not been born-again. Jesus Christ died for the sins of every believer (1 Peter 2:24; John 10:11). Therefore every genuine Christian already is “a new creation”.

- As “a new creation” a Christian no longer lives for himself, but for Christ who died for him (2 Corinthians 5:15). Thus his relationship to himself has changed.
- The Christian no longer regards Jesus Christ from merely a worldly point of view (2 Corinthians 5:16). Thus, his relationship to Jesus Christ has changed.
- The Christian no longer regards other people from a worldly point of view (2 Corinthians 5:16). Thus, his relationship to other people has changed.

4. Which new things have come?

The new creation is characterised as the old things that have become new and *remain new for ever* (Greek: perfect tense)! The newness of God’s new creation is not like new things we buy that grow old, disintegrate and get outmoded in the course of time. The new creation never fades, spoils or perishes (1 Peter 1:3-4). It is a newness that remains new forever! How wonderful is the new life in Jesus Christ!

- The Christian no longer tries to keep the law (Galatians 6:14-15), but instead lives by God’s grace (John 1:16-17).
- The Christian lives a righteous life in relationship to people and lives a holy life in relationship to God (Ephesians 4:24).
- The Christian lives his life according to God’s plan and executes God’s plan through the good works, which God has assigned to him (Ephesians 2:10).

B. MEMORISATION AND REVIEW

1. Write. Write the Bible verse on a blank card or on one page of your small notebook.

2. Memorise. Memorise the Bible verse in the right way. (1) Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

3. Review. Divide into twos and check one another’s last memorised Bible verse.

4	BIBLE STUDY (70 minutes) [RELATIONSHIPS] (1) THE CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION FOR ALL RELATIONSHIPS. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13
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In Dota manual 2 are 6 Bible studies about “relationships”.

- (1) The Christian foundation for all relationships.
- (2) The Christian relationship to friends.
- (3) The Christian relationship to the opposite sex.
- (4) The Christian relationship to his marriage partner
- (5) The Christian relationship to parents and children.

(6) Forbidden relationships.

Make use of the five steps method of Bible study and study 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 together.

STEP 1. READ.

GOD'S WORD

Read. LET US READ 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 together.

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

STEP 2. DISCOVER.

OBSERVATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

13:1-3

Discovery 1. Love contrasted with worldly aspiration.

Love is contrasted to seven things that are very highly regarded by all people in the world (including *worldly Christians*): (1) speaking in tongues, (2) making prophecies, (3) revealing mysteries, (4) displaying knowledge, (5) demonstrating faith, (6) giving possessions to the poor and (7) surrendering your life in martyrdom. But if I can do all these things and have not love, then I am *nothing*! I can accomplish nothing of eternal value! If I can speak eloquently and move the minds and hearts of people with speech, but have no love, my words sound hollow and will persuade no one. If I give all my possessions to the poor, but have no love, then I am just buying relief from a guilty conscience or from the sympathetic feelings aroused by their misery. If I become a Christian worker, make great sacrifices and even lose my life because of difficult circumstances or persecution, but have no love, then I gain nothing! It is not worthwhile to make all these sacrifices if I have no love!

13:8-13

Discovery 2. Love is the greatest possession.

Love is the greatest possession, because it lasts forever! Verse 8 says, "Love never fails". It never ceases! The other things, which people all over the world (including *worldly Christians*) regard as the most important possessions, are going to cease. When prophecies go into fulfilment, they will cease. Because they have completed their task, they have nothing more to say. Tongues or languages of men and angels will cease. Even the language in which 1 Corinthians 13 was written in, the common Greek, is no more spoken anywhere. Knowledge is so highly regarded, that people spend years in schools and universities to acquire it and spend much time everyday reading newspapers and watching TV to gain knowledge. Yet all knowledge ceases, because the newspapers of yesterday are burned and the science books of ten years ago are outdated and sold as scrap paper. All knowledge is soon outdated and ceases to function.

The Bible says, "When perfection (Greek: to teleion in the sense of "the end" or "the perfect") comes", or "When maturity (Greek: to teleion in the sense of "full-grown" or "maturity") comes", "the imperfect disappears" (1 Corinthians 13:10). The apostle Paul speaks especially about the three spiritual gifts of speaking in languages (tongues), of prophecy and knowledge gained through revelation. These spiritual gifts will *cease in the far future, when Christ returns to establish absolute perfection (1 Corinthians 13:8-10)(teleion in the first sense). Or they will cease in the near future, when Christians grow up to spiritual maturity (1 Corinthians 13:11) (teleion in the second sense)*². He could have given more examples. He did not mention money or success or power or position or fame. He did not say that all these things are wrong in themselves, but that they will cease. The immortal soul must give itself to things that are immortal. Only three things are immortal and will last: faith, hope and love. Love is the greatest, because "God is love" (1 John 4:8)!

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 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 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.)

² 1 Corinthians 13:11, "When I become a man (mature Christian), I put childish ways behind me" (Greek: katargeó, perfect tense, "I have *abolished, have wiped out, have set aside*" such childish ways and *they remain abolished, wiped out and set aside!*" These childish ways of speaking, thinking and reasoning are no longer practised! Verse 11 favours the second sense of "teleion" (maturity).

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.)

13:4

Question 1. What is the meaning of “love is patient”?

Notes. Patience is the love that can wait. Patience is the love that can wait to act. Patience is listed as the first characteristic of love, because love usually begins with patience. Love does not enforce kindness. Love does not rush in to act, but can wait for God’s prompting to be helpful (Song of Songs 2:7; 3:5). Thus patience is the reins that God uses to control the expression of love in all its forms. Patience waits for God to work things out in people’s lives as well as in circumstances. While patience waits, it expresses itself in the beautiful ornament of a meek and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:4). Patience endures difficulties, like provocation, pain and people’s weaknesses, without getting irritated, discouraged or angry. Cf. “We put up with (endure) anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ” (1 Corinthians 9:12).

13:4

Question 2. What is the meaning of “love is kind”?

Notes. Kindness is the love that acts. Kindness is the love that takes initiative to act. Kindness looks for a way to be helpful and do good works. The Bible tells us how Jesus went around doing good (Acts 10:38). He healed the sick, he set demon-possessed people free and he preached the good news to the poor (Matthew 11:4-5). Kindness is friendly and gentle instead of critical and repulsive. You cannot be a friend to everyone, but you can show gentleness to everyone (Philippians 4:5). Kindness does not let a chance go by to please others (1 Corinthians 10:33). Someone wrote, “I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

13:4

Question 3. What is the meaning of “love does not envy (is not jealous)”?

Notes. Love that does not envy is generous. Generosity is the love that does not compete with others. Whenever you attempt some good work, you will discover that there are other people who can do the same thing better than you. Do not envy them. Envy is a feeling of ill will to those who are in the same line of business as yourself. Envy is a spirit of grabbing what belongs to another, for example, recognition (credit) and honour which he deserves. Generosity is content and thankful with what itself is, has and can do. Generosity does not resent, but rather appreciates what others are, have and can do.

13:4

Question 4. What is the meaning of “love does not boast”?

Notes. Love that does not boast is modest. Modesty is the love after you have acted. It is the love needed after you have shown patience, kindness and generosity. Modesty puts a seal on its lips and forgets what it has done. Modesty has a moderate estimate of its own merits and accomplishments. Modesty does not exaggerate. It does not give excessive knowledge to others. Modesty does not deliberately try to impress others, brag or show off. Modesty deliberately draws no attention to itself.

13:4

Question 5. What is the meaning of “love is not proud”?

Notes. Love that is not proud is humble. Humility is the love before you act. Humility does not advertise its own strengths (as knowledge and abilities) and it does not hide its own weaknesses. Humility remains honest. Humility is realistic about what it can and cannot do. Humility is not puffed up with its own importance, abilities, possessions or accomplishments. Humility does not arrogantly assert itself. Humility does not domineer or belittle others. Humility does not try to impress others. Humility does not put on airs. Humility does not brag about her importance, abilities, possessions or accomplishments.

13:5

Question 6. What is the meaning of “love is not rude”?

Notes. Love that never behaves rudely is courteous. Courtesy is the love in social interaction. Courtesy is love in little things. Courtesy has good manners in all circumstances and never behaves rudely or impolite. Courtesy is tactful, polite, kind, considerate and sympathetic in manner or approach. Courtesy is sensitive to other people’s culture, values and habits. It is attentive and takes other people’s needs and feelings into consideration. Courtesy is the passport that allows you to mingle with people in every society.

13:5

Question 7. What is the meaning of “love is not self-seeking”?

Notes. Love that is not self-seeking is unselfish. Unselfishness is the love in the exercise of rights. Unselfishness does not seek its own rights, but is well aware of its privileges. Unselfishness does not seek great things for itself, because there is no greatness in things, only in God. Unselfishness seeks to advance God’s cause and God’s kingdom in other people. Unselfishness does not pursue selfish ambitions, like position, status, power, fame, possessions and pleasures. Unselfishness neither seeks its own advantage, nor misuses another person for whatever reason. The people of the world pursue happiness and think that happiness consists of winning a lottery, possessing material wealth and getting what one desires. There is no happiness in having and getting, but only in giving and serving! Jesus said, “Whosoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be your slave” (Matthew 20:26).

13:5

Question 8. What is the meaning of “love is not easily angered”?

Notes. Love that is not easily angered is meek. Meekness is the love in one’s temperament (inner nature). Nothing is so destructive in the human nature than *an evil temper*. An evil temper breaks up relationships, families, churches and even communities. It withers marriages, friendships and neighbourliness. It is the greatest misery-producing power within the human being. An evil temper consists of touchiness, irritation, anger, cruelty; hatred, pride, self-righteousness, obstinacy; resentment, unforgiving spirit (bitterness) and melancholy. An evil temper is a symptom of a deeper lying evil or of an unsolved problem. It betrays some rottenness underneath and usually flashes out in an unguarded moment. It reveals an unchanged or unyielding heart. Only by yielding all the parts of your life to be occupied by Christ, will Christ change your temperament. Love will flow into your inner nature. Meekness tamely submits to the injury and hurts caused by others or by circumstances. Meekness is not easily provoked and does not quickly take things others say and do as personal attacks. Meekness does not allow itself to react negatively.

13:5

Question 9. What is the meaning of “love does not keep a record of wrongs”?

Notes. Love that does not keep a record of wrongs is forgiving. Forgiving love is the love in difficult or broken relationships. Some people keep a long list of all the wrongs another person has done to them. They will unceasingly vent their resentment, vehemently defend their self-righteousness and continually try to enlist you to take their side against the offender. Such people are bitter people. Hebrews 12:15 warns that bitter people cause trouble and defile many. They sow suspicion against any person, cause the break-up of relationships and pollute the atmosphere with gossip, false rumours and slander. Only God’s love can bring healing to such a sick situation. Only when a person realises that God can forgive all his sins and will remember those sins no more (Hebrews 8:12), he too can forgive and forget. Forgiving love is quick to forgive and to forget an offence. Forgiving love is not bitter or resentful. Forgiving love is not revengeful and it does not recall old wrongs. God will not forgive the sins of a person who does not forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15)!

13:6

Question 10. What is the meaning of “love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth”?

Notes. Love that does not rejoice in evil, but rejoices with the truth is sincere. Sincerity is the love amidst weaknesses and failings. Sincerity acknowledges that everybody has weaknesses and everybody fails sometimes. Sincerity never gloats or looks with triumphant satisfaction over another person’s wrongs or failures. Instead, sincerity rejoices when the other person makes progress in truth and in righteousness.

13:7

Question 11. What is the meaning of “love always protects” (or: bears, endures)?³

Notes. Love that protects is the love for careless people. Protective love keeps every form of evil away from others. It is tolerant and throws a cloak of silence over whatever is displeasing in others. It protects other people’s reputation and does not gossip about others.

13:7

Question 12. What is the meaning of “love always trusts”?

Notes. Love that trusts is the love for suspicious people. The people who influence you are the people who believe in you. In an atmosphere of suspicion people shrivel up, but people blossom in an atmosphere of trust. Without really knowing, people sometimes think that the motives or intentions of others are evil. However, trustful love thinks high

³ Greek: *stegó*, “to pass over in silence”, “to keep confidential”, “to put a roof (Greek: *stegé*) over someone”. Or possibly: “to bear”, “to endure” (1 Corinthians 9:12; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)

and positively about other people. It is not suspicious or distrustful of other's intentions, words or actions without any good reason. Trustful love also makes itself vulnerable by entrusting others with your innermost thoughts and feelings (if necessary: your problems and weaknesses). Of course, other people can misuse this knowledge, but without trust, love becomes impossible.

13:7

Question 13. What is the meaning of "love always hopes"?

Notes. Love that hopes is the love for self-righteous people. The self-righteous person thinks that he is always right and the other person is always wrong. Very easily everybody else is wrong and never can be right. Self-righteous people do not expect other people to change. Worse: they do not want them to change, so that they can always think that they are right. However, hopeful love does not give up another person as incorrigible, but instead expects God to work in him and change him. Hopeful love also does not give situations up as hopeless, but instead expects God to accomplish his best plan through the difficult situation.

13:7

Question 14. What is the meaning of "love always perseveres"?

Notes. Love that perseveres is the love measured in time. Persevering love persistently continues to do what is good and right in God's eyes. It does not give up running the race of faith, love and hope, no matter what trial or temptation it faces. It continues to bear fruit in God's kingdom. Persevering love simply has no 'time-out'. Love is not a whim of the moment, but the essential power of the Christian for every day of his life.

13:8

Question 15. What is the meaning of "love never fails"?

Notes. Love that never fails is the summary of love. Unfailing love is always available and always lasts. It always continues to greatly influence all others and completely satisfy all who possess it. Love never passes away, because God is love (1 John 4:8)! God is patient, kind, etc.!

13:9-13

Question 16. What is the meaning of "prophecy" and the gift of "speaking in tongues"?

1 Corinthians 13:9-13 is explained in Delta Plus study 29: "The spiritual gifts, especially of prophecy and the speaking in tongues" (www.deltacourse.org).

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 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

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 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

- 13:1. Focus on love instead of on spiritual gifts.
- 13:1-3. Let love reign in your speaking, giving and making sacrifices.
- 13:4. Be patient with your marriage partner and children. Endure difficulties and pain without getting irritated or resentful.
- 13:4. Be kind. Be friendly towards everyone you meet and look for ways to help them.
- 13:4. Be generous. Appreciate the possessions, abilities and accomplishments of other people.
- 13:4. Be modest about your own merits and accomplishments.
- 13:4. Be humble. Do not arrogantly assert yourself and do not domineer or belittle others.
- 13:5. Be courteous. Develop good manners and tact in every situation.
- 13:5. Be unselfish. Do not pursue selfish ambitions, but seek to advance God's kingdom (kingship) in other people.
- 13:5. Be meek. Get rid of a bad temper and do not quickly take things others say and do as personal attacks.
- 13:5. Be forgiving towards those who wrong you as God has forgiven you.
- 13:6. Be sincere. Do not gloat over other people's failures, but rejoice when they make progress.
- 13:7. Protect other people's reputation by not gossiping about them.
- 13:7. Be trustful. Never be distrustful or suspicious about other people's motives or intentions without good reason.
- 13:7. Be hopeful. Never give up anyone as hopeless, but expect God to work in him and change him.
- 13:7. Be persevering. Never give up doing what is good in God's eyes.
- 13:8-13. Make love for God, for other people and for yourself the most important goal in your life.

2. Examples of personal applications from 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

I get irritated when my children do not immediately do what I ask them to do. So I want to practise to be more patient and kind with them.

I have noticed that sometimes I am suspicious about another person's motives. Because love is trustful, I want to practise to think positively of him and regard his words and deeds as done with good intentions.

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. (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.)

PRAYER (8 minutes)

**[INTERCESSION]
PRAY FOR OTHERS**

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

6

PREPARATION (2 minutes)

**[ASSIGNMENT]
FOR NEXT LESSON**

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

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples. Preach, teach or study the Bible study of 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 together with another person or group of people.
2. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Acts 1:1 – 4: 22** each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. Memorisation. (1) Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:17**. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
4. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
5. Update your notebook on making disciples. Include the notes on your personal time with God, memorisation notes, Bible study notes and this preparation.