

DISCIPLESHIP. LESSON 41

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. Dedicate this lesson about disciple making to the Lord.

2	WORSHIP (20 minutes)	[ATTITUDE EXPRESSED] ADMIRING GOD
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Meditation

Worship is expressing your attitude towards God by listening to God’s voice.

Theme: Admiring God.

Read Revelation 4:1-11. Read or explain in your own words.

In a vision John sees a throne in heaven. It is so great and beautiful that he cannot find ordinary words to describe it. Therefore he uses *symbols* that mean much more than only the literal meaning of the symbol.

1. The throne.

John sees **the throne** of God in heaven (4:2). It is not the earth or the sun or a heavenly constellation that forms the centre of everything that exists, but God on his throne! Everything that happens in the universe and on the earth and during the history of this world is not controlled by the rulers or the powerful, or by the rich or the clever, or by the mass media or the manipulators on this earth. The God of the Bible on his throne controls everything! Nothing can be excluded from God’s sovereign rule (Isaiah 14:24,27)! God has created everything, because he wanted to create it (4:11). He created you, because he wanted you to exist (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16)!

2. The radiance.

(1) The radiance of colours.

John does not describe the image of God or the appearance of God, but his radiance (4:3). The One sitting on the throne had the appearance of jasper and carnelian and a rainbow resembling an emerald surrounded the throne.

Jasper is “clear as crystal” (Revelation 21:11). It is a kind of transparent diamond, symbolising the radiance of God’s glory and holiness. Carnelian is red, symbolising “blood” or the radiance of God’s character as it expresses itself in judgement. The rainbow resembling an emerald is sea-green, symbolising God’s beautiful character in salvation, the many-coloured wisdom of his plan of salvation (Ephesians 3:10) and his loving faithfulness towards those who believe in him and obey him (Genesis 9:12-17; Ezekiel 1:28).

The message of the book of Revelation is for believers in the New Testament period. Within God’s glorious and holy character (the clear, transparent colour) God’s holy indignation against all those who are evil (the red colour) on the one hand and his loving faithfulness unto salvation towards all those who trust in him (the green colour) on the other hand cannot be separated from each other! For believers during the Old Testament and New Testament periods the storm of God’s judgement is already over! “Therefore, there is now no damnation (condemnation) for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). The rainbow of God’s faithful promise of justification by faith in the completed salvation work of Jesus Christ shines forever (Romans 5:1). These three aspects of God’s character radiate from the throne of God. God rules from his throne in glorious holiness, with righteous judgement and with faithful salvation.

(2) The lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.

“From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings (literally: voices) and peals of thunder (4:5). These phenomena from nature cause fear and awe with people. They are expressions of God’s greatness, power and majesty whenever God reveals his will.

This happened when he revealed the Ten Commandments at Sinai (Exodus 19:16; 20:18) and when he revealed his grace to Job (Job 37:2-7,13b). Also when he revealed his sovereign rule over the universe to John (Revelation 4:5) and when he revealed his righteous judgements (Job 37:8-13a; Revelation 8:5; Revelation 11:19; Revelation 16:18).

3. The Divine Being.

John saw **7 burning lamps** before God’s throne. They represent the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Revelation 1:4:5). And he saw Jesus Christ standing in the centre of the throne, looking as a lamb that had been slaughtered (Revelation 5:6).

The One Divine Being revealed himself to people in his three inner distinctions or three ways of existence (see Revelation 1:4-5):

- He revealed himself as God the Father who makes the divine decrees

- He revealed himself as God the Son who took on the human nature besides his divine nature and entered his own creation and human history in order to carry out God's decrees with respect to revelation, salvation, judgement and re-creation.
- And he revealed himself as God the Spirit who dwells in the midst of God's people on earth to apply God's decrees in their lives.

This one Divine being is the God of the Bible and only he sits on the throne in heaven!

4. The 4 living creatures.

John saw **4 living creatures** standing around the throne (4:6-7). They are heavenly beings, which represent the created universe with all its living creatures. The created universe is the theatre of God's history of salvation. The task of the four living creatures is to promote God's glory in his work of creation (the wild animals, livestock, birds and human beings) and his rule over the creation and over history within creation (4:8).

5. The 24 elders.

John saw **24 elders**, sitting on 24 thrones around God's throne (4:4; cf. Revelation 21:12-14). In the Old Testament worship service king David appointed 24 divisions of priests to serve in God's *earthly sanctuary* (1 Chronicles 24:1-19).

In the New Testament worship service there are 24 elders who serve in God's *heavenly sanctuary*. These elders are one of the highest orders of angels who represent God's people during the Old Testament period (symbolised by the 12 tribes) and God's people during the New Testament period (symbolised by the 12 apostles)(Revelation 21:12-14). The task of the twenty-four elders is to promote God's glory within his creation (4:11) and within his work of salvation in his people within creation (Hebrews 1:14).

6. The sea of glass.

(1) Symbolic significance of the brazen sea (Revelation 4:6).

John saw a sea of glass, clear as crystal, that stretched out before God's throne.

In the Old Testament the brazen sea was a large basin of water that stood between the altar of burnt offering and the door of the temple. The priests washed their hands and feet in it before they approached the altar or before they entered the temple (Exodus 30:18-21; 1 Kings 7:23-26).

In the New Testament (Revelation 4:6) the sea of glass clear as crystal is a symbol of God's present salvation that through the blood of the Lamb is completely righteous and transparent. Symbolically Christians have washed their clothes in it and make them white. "I answered, Sir, you know. And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14). God's reign from heaven leads to salvation of Christians in all the nations on the earth so that they may live in perfect peace and harmony with God (Romans 5:1).

(2) Symbolic significance of the glass sea (Revelation 15:2-3).

"I saw what looked like a sea of glass, mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: 'Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages (one manuscript says: nations) (Revelation 15:2-3).

In the Old Testament Moses and the Israelites stood by the Red Sea after God had drowned Pharaoh and his war chariots in the Red Sea (Exodus 13:21-22; Exodus 14:19,24). God had brought confusion to the Egyptian army and then destroyed them. The water of the Red Sea fell on their enemies like a tsunami. No one survived!

In Revelation 15:2-3 we must think of the Red Sea where Pharaoh and his soldiers were drowned (Exodus 15:1b). "The glass sea" is a symbol of God's definite and final judgement (Revelation 16) that will be perfectly righteous and transparent. "The fire" symbolise God's holy and righteous indignation whereby he carries out his last judgement over sin. The enemies of Christians will be destroyed in it.

"The glass" symbolise:

- that God's holy and righteous wrath and punishment will be perfectly transparent
- that God sees through everyone and everything (Hebrews 4:13)
- that after the last Judgement nothing that is sinful or reprehensible will remain standing before God (Revelation 21:8,27).

After God has carried out his Last Judgement over the godless and wicked people on earth, his holiness and righteousness in judgement will remain untarnished and everyone will be able to see that God has judged everyone completely fair and just. None of God's motives, words or deeds will be suspect or doubtful! Nothing will remain hidden! Everyone will say, "Just and true are your ways (of governing and judging) Your righteous acts have been revealed" (Revelation 15:3-4)!

7. **Universal worship.**

John saw their worship and heard their admiration and praise (4:8-11). God's purpose in his eternal decrees is that everyone and everything in the created universe would constantly admire, praise and worship him (cf. Romans 11:36)!

Worship. As part of the multitudes around God's throne (Revelation 5:13), let us praise and admire the Living God on his throne.

3	SHARING (20 minutes)	[QUIET TIMES] 2 SAMUEL 15, 17, 18 and 22
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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 (2 Samuel 15, 17, 18 and 22).

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

4	TEACHING (70 minutes)	[RELATIONSHIPS] PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS
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This study explains how you can be a parent or child as God purposed it to be.

The practical applications are only suggestions that you may prayerfully consider within your own culture.

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN

1. The responsibilities of parents in marriage.

Read Ephesians 5:22-33; (Colossians 3:18-19; John 13:34-35).

Discover and discuss. What are the responsibilities God gives to husbands and to wives?

Notes. The husband and wife should specifically *be examples of the way they relate to each other*. The husband must be an example of serving his wife by loving her as Christ loves the Church and by making her a radiant woman. The wife must be an example of serving her husband by inviting her husband into a personal and intimate relationship and to help her husband to be his best for Christ. Of course, they should also be examples of how they relate to others, including their children.

2. The responsibilities of parents in parenthood.

Read Ephesians 6:4; (Colossians 3:21; 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and Titus 1:6; Titus 2:4-5).

Discover and discuss. What are the specific responsibilities God gives to parents?

Notes.

(1) Fathers.

Fathers are primarily responsible for the upbringing of the children. He may not exasperate or embitter his children. He must bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. He must manage his own family well. He must train his children to obey their father and their mother with proper respect.

(2) Mothers.

Mothers must love their children. They must be busy at home. And they must take care that their behaviour does not cause others to malign the Word of God.

B. FATHERS, DO NOT EXASPERATE YOUR CHILDREN

Teach. God speaks to the father as the head of the family.

Therefore the mother should help the father (Genesis 2:18) to accomplish this task.

(1) Not exasperate.

To exasperate means to discourage. By observing their reactions to you, you can know if you exasperate or discourage your children. For example, when children get irritated, angry or depressed, or when they withdraw or give up on their parents, they may be discouraged. These reactions are indications that you ought to change your approach in dealing with your children.

(2) Develop.

How can you transmit respect to your children? By allowing your children:

- the time they need to grow and to develop and to make mistakes
- to develop responsibility and accountability
- to develop their own convictions
- to develop good and mature relationships

1. Let your sons and daughters grow in responsibility and accountability.

(1) The goal of parents is to develop responsibility and accountability.

Our goal as parents is not simply to please the children, but to develop responsible and level-headed adults. If your goal is to always please your children, what will your children become like? They become spoiled, selfish and self-indulgent.

In order to become a responsible adult, children must learn to take responsibility for every area of their lives. Important areas to train responsibility are: their attitudes, words and behaviour, their studies or jobs, their chores in the family, their handling of money, travelling alone, making friends (including the opposite sex) and letting go of bad friends, coping with peer-pressure or the opinions of others and their relationship to God.

(2) Different stages in developing responsibility and accountability.

Your approach could have five stages from childhood to adulthood.

When they are babies. Do everything for them. Make all the decisions and choices for the children and execute these for them. As parent you are 100% responsible and accountable to God for what you do for the child and with the child.

When they are small children. Do things together with them. Provide lots of opportunities to do things together with the child. Make decisions and plans together and execute them together. Teach and train the child as many as possible truths, values, habits and skills. Be an example to the child in the way to do things, set standards of quality and maintain just, moral and spiritual values, which the child is able to follow. Show the child that you have submitted your life to God and God's Word and that you yourself are responsible and accountable to God.

When they are teenagers. Let them do more and more things alone but under supervision. Continue to do things together with the teenager, but delegate responsibility in all the areas in which the teenager is able to take responsibility and hold the teenager accountable to his responsibilities. More freedom for the teenager means that the teenager receives more responsibility and has a greater accountability. Freedom does not mean that the teenager may do what he likes or do things without being accountable to anyone (cf. Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 21:25). Provide lots of opportunities for the teenager to make decisions and plans, and to say and do things under your supervision. As a parent, you still have the final decision and therefore the final responsibility and accountability.

When they are young adults. Let them do everything by themselves. Delegate the final responsibilities and accountability to the young adult. Make sure that the young adult understands his responsibilities and that he is now 100% responsible and accountable for what he says and does, first to you as a parent while he is still in your house, and in the final analysis to God.

When they are adults. Let them have their complete independence. Children stop to be "children" when they have reached the age of adulthood, or have left the home of their parents to study or to work, or have gotten married. Then God commands the children that they must leave their parents. And their parents must let completely go of their children (Matthew 19:5).

Adult children receive their responsibility from God and are therefore also accountable to God! Of course, parents still have a responsibility towards their grown-up children, but they no longer have any authority over them. The continued responsibility of the parents is to love and help their grown-up children, to pray for them, to give advice to them only when they ask for it and to warn them when there is real danger.

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

(1) The goal of parents is that their children develop their own convictions.

"A personal conviction is

- a (biblical truth) which you personally believe
- and commit yourself to live it out.

Personal convictions are clearly something different than mere "knowledge" or "opinions"

The goal of parents is that their children will develop their own convictions, beliefs, values and priorities and not drift on the opinions of others.

Discuss. How can you help children to develop their own convictions?

Notes. When parents continually demand absolute obedience of the children to the parents' convictions, beliefs, values, priorities and ways of doing things, they cause their children never to grow up to become responsible adults who have their own convictions, beliefs, values, priorities and ways of doing things!

(2) Different phases in the development of convictions.

Your approach to help them develop a specific conviction could have three steps.

Discover the truth from the Bible together with them. The biblical principles form the boundaries for any decision, which believers make.

Let them choose an appropriate application. While the biblical truth never changes, there are many possible applications of this one truth.

Discuss the consequences of their decision together with them. For example, the Bible teaches two principles with regard to the clothes that teenagers wear: clothing should always be *morally acceptable* (Ephesians 5:5) and *culturally appropriate* for every occasion (1 Corinthians 10:31-33). Within these moral and cultural boundaries, the teenagers have a free choice. They make their own choice or decision. The parents discuss the consequences of their choice and the effect or influence their choice may have on others as well as on themselves.

3. Let your sons and daughters build mature emotions and relationships.

(1) The goal of parents is to develop mature emotions and relationships.

The goal of parents should not be to have a *smooth relationship* with their children, but to have a *mature relationship*. They do not simply want to teach them *independence*, but to develop a *healthy inter-dependence*! In a healthy mutual dependence you submit to the good initiatives of the other and take healthy (constructive) initiatives to the other. A healthy mutual dependence is another way of showing love and of accepting the love of the other. While Western culture teaches *individualism*, the Bible teaches *mutual love*! A mature relationship is characterised by:

- each person taking full responsibility for his own motives, attitudes, words and actions
- each person expressing his personal convictions and living according to his convictions
- each person expressing his emotions sincerely while taking the feelings of others into account
- each person developing a healthy mutual dependence (love in action)

(2) Developing mature emotions.

Discuss. How can you help teenagers to express their emotions in a sincere and mature way?

Notes. Teenagers have strong emotions and they also express them!

- Parents often don't like expressions of strong emotions, like anger, irritation, shouting, fighting, crying, etc. and try to suppress them in their children. The teenagers are really trying to say, "This is me!" "This is how I really feel!" "Accept me as I really am!" Parents want *smooth* relationships! But teenagers usually want *honest* relationships!
- However, if the emotions of teenagers are continually suppressed, then they may express their suppressed emotions in all kinds of asocial behaviour, like telling lies, committing crime, getting involved with drugs, sex and violence, or in all kinds of emotional problems, like depression, withdrawal, hidden anger, bitterness and bad attitudes. Therefore, allow your children to express their emotions, but help them to express these in a sincere and loving way with self-control.

(3) Developing mature relationships.

Discuss. How can you help young people to develop healthy inter-dependent relationships?

Notes. The Bible places every believer in a specific family, a specific congregation, and in a specific society. The world-view of the Bible does not consist of *only individuals*, each one going his own way, but of *individuals within a family, members within a congregation, colleagues within a profession/job and citizens within a society*. The world-view of the Bible is that we all need one another and also that we have a unique contribution to make to one another. For example: parents and children should encourage one another to do things together, to be open towards one another, to learn from one another and to serve one another.

(4) Examples of unhealthy (co-dependent) relationships.

- Certain mothers always try to keep their children dependent on themselves. These mothers want to feel needed.
- Certain adult children are unable to leave the domination and control of their parents.
- Certain men look for a substitute mother in their wife.
- Certain women try to be a merciful nurse to their weak husband.
- The Bible condemns homosexual and lesbian expressions in relationships. The Bible does not condemn the sexual orientation of people, but the expression (practising) of forbidden sexual deeds: incest (Leviticus 18:6), adultery (Leviticus 18:20), homosexual relationships (Leviticus 18:22), bestiality (Leviticus 18:23) and sex before Christian marriage and sex outside Christian marriage (Hebrews 13:4).

C. FATHERS, BRING YOUR CHILDREN UP IN THE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD

Teach. The two main responsibilities of every father is loving the child's mother and bringing up the child!

- "To bring him up in the instruction of the Lord," means, to *teach* your child the truths of the Bible.
- "To bring him up in the training of the Lord" means to *exercise* your child in obeying the truths of the Bible. The mother should also help the father accomplish this task (Genesis 2:18).

1. Train your child to be a good citizen in this world.

Read Proverbs 22:6; Proverbs 13:24; Proverbs 17:21 and 23:24; Luke 2:52; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Discover and discuss. Which are the most important areas in which parents must train their children?

Notes. Train them in the way God wants them to go. Healthy families are the building blocks of a healthy nation!

(1) Means of training. *Training* above all means:

- to put the truth they learn into practise
- to exhort them continually; to encourage them; to praise their progress; to commend their initiatives
- to discipline or to punish them when it is necessary.

(2) Areas of training.

- Train them to intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual and social maturity
- Train them to be wise
- Train them to love. “Love” means to learn patience, kindness, modesty, humility, good manners, selfless service, self-control and forgiveness.

2. Train your child to be a good citizen of God's kingdom.

Read Proverbs 14:26 and 20:7; Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

Discover and discuss.

What is the importance of the example which parents set?

What is the importance of the Bible in training?

D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN TOWARDS THEIR PARENTS

What are the responsibilities of children toward their parents? Children should know that their parents are very precious, although they are not perfect. Parents love their children and need the co-operation of their children to be good parents!

Read Ephesians 6:1-3; (Romans 13:1-2; Colossians 3:20; Proverbs 23:22-25).

Discover and discuss. What are the specific responsibilities God gives to children?

Notes. These two responsibilities are the two greatest gifts a child can give to his parents:

- to obey them (their God-given authority) when he is still under age
- to honour them when he is an adult.

E. CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN THE LORD

Teach the following three truths concerning obedience to parents:

1. Obey your parents as long as you are a child (under age).

Read Luke 2:51 and Mark 3:20-21,31-35.

Discover and discuss. Until when did Jesus obey his parents?

Notes. The Bible does not teach that you should obey your parents throughout life, but only when you are still a child (under age) and until adulthood! Adulthood starts when you leave your parental home, or when you are no longer dependent on your parents or when you get married. When you have become an adult, you still need to honour your parents. Honouring your parents is NOT the same as obeying your parents!

A child is mature (an adult) when:

- he is no longer dependent on his parents
- he has left his parents house to study or to work
- he marries

God's command to children to obey their parents has a time limit. But God's command to children to honour their parents has no time limit!

2. Obey your parents in whatever is not against the Bible.

Read Matthew 10:37; (Mark 7:1-13; Act 4:19-20; 5:29; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

Discuss. In which circumstances must you love the Lord Jesus Christ more than your parents?

And in which circumstances may you please your parents?

Notes. A Christian must gently, but firmly refuse to obey his parents when:

- they ask you to do what is wrong in God's eyes
- they persecute you when you have become a Christian
- they demand that you put family above Jesus Christ
- they try to force you to marry a non-Christian
- they demand that you follow family traditions, customs or house rules that are unbiblical. Only when traditions customs and rules are not against the Bible, you may honour your parents by following them.

3. Obey your parents because you are a Christian.

“Obey your parents in the Lord” does not mean that children under age should obey their parents only when their parents are Christians, but that they should obey them because the children are Christians!

F. CHILDREN, HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER

What are practical ways to honour your parents (parents-in-law and your heavenly Father)?

Teach. Although children must obey their parents only as long as they are under age, they must honour them also when they are adults! To *honour* means: to regard highly, to show consideration, and to love without reluctance, selfish motives or fear.

Here follow five practical examples of how you can honour:

- your parents
- your parents-in-law
- and in a higher sense, your heavenly Father.

1. Honour your parents by not contradicting them or arguing with them.

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

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

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

You dishonour your parents when you reject their suggestions and advice without even considering it. You dishonour them when you always defend your own position and make them feel that their views are not even worth considering.

How can you honour your parents in a positive way? Whenever your parents make suggestions or give advice, learn from them. While you have the opportunity, learn from their years of experience and accumulated wisdom. Learn especially things in the areas of their strengths, from their talents, skills, knowledge and know-how. Some parents have abilities in the areas of planning and organising, doing business and saving money, cooking food and farming. Other parents have abilities in the areas of leading, teaching, counselling and serving. You honour your parents by asking their advice and learning from them.

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

You dishonour your parents when you don't let your parents know what you are thinking, feeling and actually doing. And you dishonour your parents when you don't let your parents know what you are planning or when you don't give them any chance to influence your plans. When you exclude your parents from sharing in your fun or in your pain, in your joys and in your hurts, you dishonour them. Cutting your parents out of your real life and decisions is a way to let them know that they are not worth relating to!

How can you honour your parents in a positive way? Talk with your parents. This is sometimes difficult, but is still one of the best ways to honour your parents. Take the initiative to talk to them. Talk to them about your activities: what you do at school and at work, what you do together with your friends and what you do at your congregation. Talk to them about what you believe: about God, people and the world. Talk to them about your Christian convictions. Talk to them about what you think, feel and plan to do. And you also honour your parents by involving them in your plans and decisions. Respect the experience and wisdom of your parents and seek their counsel. Even if your final decision goes against their desires, you give them a feeling that you have listened to them and have taken their views serious.

By involving your parents at an early stage, you have the opportunity to bring them up to date week by week on how your thinking is progressing. Then, if necessary, they can slowly adjust to your final decision and it will not come to them as a shock.

4. Honour your parents by serving them and others.

You dishonour your parents when you only serve your parents when they ask you to do something and also when you serve them reluctantly. You expect them to take the initiative. If they don't ask you, you simply do nothing. You never look for things to do that are purely voluntary. You refuse to use your youth and strength to help lift the load on your parents.

How can you honour your parents in a positive way? Train yourself to see where you can serve, where anybody needs your help and if you can do something nobody else is willing or able to do. Take initiative to serve and help and don't wait till your parents ask you. For example, at home, develop good relationships with your brothers and sisters. Do your

share of the household chores without them having to ask you. Outside your home, be conscientious and responsible. Work hard at your studies or job. Be diligent. The kind of friends you relate to, the kind of places you go to and the kind of things you do or neglect to do, have a tremendous effect on how your parents feel about themselves as parents!

5. Honour your parents by loving them.

You dishonour your parents when you only love them in the culturally required *filial piety*, like visiting them, giving them gifts and doing their wishes. You dishonour them also when you do this culturally required *filial piety* with a bad attitude or with an impersonal air of indifference. You dishonour your parents when you never tell them that you appreciate them or never show that you are grateful. You dishonour your parents when you are impatient with their shortcomings, make untactful remarks about their mistakes, never forgive their wrongs, and stay angry with them. These are ways to tell your parents that you do not love them! And when your parents are non-Christians, you say to them: "Because you are non-Christians, we Christians do not love you and regard your opinions as worthless!" When a son or daughter becomes a Christian, many non-Christian parents are afraid that their child will no longer love them and will not care for them when they are old. Every loveless word or deed will only strengthen such thoughts and feelings of the parents. Although such reactions of parents may be unreasonable, a son or daughter can do much to avoid them.

When you become a Christian, your non-Christian parents will be afraid that it will have a very negative effect on them. They are afraid that you will do worse at your studies, that you will not get a job, that you will not make a success of your life and that you will not earn enough money to support them in their old day. They are afraid that you will lose your culture, anger their gods and religious leaders and bring shame on the whole family. That is why they react so negatively and in some cases begin to persecute you or even try to kill you.

How do you honour your parents in a positive way? Genuine Christian love goes much further than the piety which culture demands of children! Genuine Christian love is patient with the shortcomings of parents, and forgives the wrongs they have done against you. Try to understand your parents. Understand the way they have been raised by their parents, the difficulties and crises they have experienced in their lives and the relationship they have with their parents and other family members. Understand their values, especially concerning money and life-style, education and status, speaking the truth or lies and honesty or dishonesty, etc. Understand the rules, customs and religious beliefs they particularly hold on to and how these affect their thinking, feelings and behaviour. Understand the way they react in various situations, like marriage conflicts, discipline of children, pressure at work, grief at the loss of somebody or something, injustice done by others, etc. and why they react in that way. Particularly understand their misconceptions and fears, especially about you after you have become a Christian. Explain to your parents in a tactful way what the Christian Faith is and prove to them that on the contrary because of what Christ has done for you, you have become a more responsible and loving person.

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[REACTIONS] PRAYER IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD
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Take turns in the group to pray short 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.

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.** Be committed to make disciples.
Preach, teach or study the teaching of "Parent-child relationships" together with another person or group of people.
2. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Nehemiah 4, 8, 9 and 10** each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. **Bible study.** Prepare the next Bible study at home. (3) **Ephesians 6:10-20.** Theme: Spiritual warfare in the world.
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.