

DISCIPLESHIP. 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. Dedicate this lesson about disciple making to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] ECCLESIASTES 5, 6, 7 and 8
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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 (Ecclesiastes 5, 6, 7 and 8). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

3	MEMORISATION (20 minutes) [DISCIPLESHIP] REVIEW OF SERIES D
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A. METHOD OF REVIEWING MEMORISED BIBLE VERSES

Reviewing previously memorised Bible verses has the following parts:

1. Review the new memorised Bible verses.

Review means to repeat the last 5 Bible verses you have memorised once every day. Repetition is the best method to remember Bible verses and to quote them accurately. Therefore, review the last 5 Bible verses you have memorised at a minimum of once a day for the duration of 5 weeks. Thus, you review every new Bible verse about 35 times before it comes into the “back-review” system.

2. Review the old memorised Bible verses.

“Back-review” means to review all your previously memorised Bible verses once every 3 weeks. Back-review is the best method to remember all the Bible verses you have previously memorised. Therefore, for every 100 previously memorised Bible verses, back-review 5 of them every day. Thus you back-review all these previously memorised Bible verses once every 3 weeks.

3. Keep cardholder at hand.

Every day place the last 5 memorise Bible verses and 5 out of every 100 previously memorised Bible verses in your memorisation cardholder and keep it all day at hand. Use travelling time and spare moments during the day for review, meditation and prayer.

4. Check accuracy.

Check one another to see whether you still know the Bible verses that you have memorised accurately. During every group meeting check two by two one another’s last memorised Bible verse. Once in a while check two by two one series of 5 Bible verses that you have previously memorised. Check one another to see whether you still know the topic or title, the Bible reference as well as the whole Bible verse *without one mistake*. As a cue, sometimes give the topic or title, sometimes the Bible reference and at other times only the first few words of the Bible verse.

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B. REVIEW TWO BY TWO THE BIBLE VERSES ABOUT “DISCIPLESHIP”

1. Lordship. Romans 12:1-2. Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2. Denial. Luke 9:23. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

3. Service. Mark 10:45. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

4. Giving. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

5. Making disciples. Matthew 28:19-20. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

4	BIBLE STUDY (70 minutes) <i>[LIVING IN THE WORLD]</i> (6) PASSING ON THE LEADERSHIP IN THE WORLD: ACTS 20:17-38
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Make use of the five steps method of Bible study and study Acts 20:17-38 together: Passing on the leadership of the congregation in the world.

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
<i>Read.</i> LET US READ Acts 20:17-38 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. There always comes a time to pass on the leadership.

There always comes a time when new Christian leaders must be chosen and appointed to take the place of other leaders that leave for a new assignment. The apostle Paul had founded the congregation in Ephesus (Acts 19) and had built up the congregation over a period of two years (Acts 19:10). Paul thought that he might soon die due to the persecution of the Jews (Acts 20:3,19,22-23; 21:10-13) and that this might be his last visit to Ephesus (Acts 20:25,38). Acts 20 teaches several very important principles with regard to the requirements for new Christian leaders. When you look for new potential Christian leaders, look at the characteristics in Acts 20.

Discovery 2. The old leaders should set an example for the new leaders.

New leaders should not simply be chosen and appointed. They should be prayerfully selected, if necessary trained and finally appointed. Jesus took about two to three and a half years to select, train and appoint the leaders that would continue his ministry on earth. But one of the most important truths is that the old leaders should train the new leaders by their example, by their godly character and their skilful leadership (cf. David as a leader, Psalm 78:72).

STEP 3. QUESTION.	EXPLANATIONS
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP? Let us try to understand all the truths in Acts 20:17-38 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand. <i>Record.</i> Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.) <i>Discuss.</i> (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.)	

20:17

Question 1. What should the qualifications of the elders be?

Notes. The Holy Spirit appointed certain men to be the elders of the church.
The qualifications are the following:

- The candidates must be born-again. Rebirth is always the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8).
- The candidates may not be young converts, but must be disciples of Christ, that is, mature, functioning and persevering Christians (1 Timothy 3:6).
- The men who are already active in the church and prove that God is already working through them, are the best candidates for becoming elders (Luke 16:10; 2 Corinthians 10:18; Acts 6:3,5).
- The members who propose names of possible candidates must also be born-again Christians (Acts 1:21-22; Acts 6:3).
- Non-Christians may not participate in choosing or appointing elders.

The apostles have written letters in which they clearly taught the qualifications of elders of the congregation. An elder may never be chosen on the basis of his position, power or wealth, which he may have in the society. He must always be chosen on the basis of his personal life, his family life and his ministry for Jesus Christ.

(1) Requirements with regard to personal life and behaviour.

Some of these requirements are enumerated: He must be above reproach, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, not conceited, and have a good reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:1-7). He must be blameless, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain, but hospitable, one who loves what is good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined (Titus 1:5-9). He must be an example in his behaviour and in his faith (Hebrews 13:7). He must be willing to lead, not lord it over those entrusted to him, be an example to the flock and humble. In short, with regard to his desires and temper, he must be self-controlled. With regard to money, he must be trustworthy and not greedy to make money. With regard to relationships, he must be humble and not lord it over others. And with regard to his influence, he must set an example for others (1 Peter 5:1-5).

(2) Requirements with regard to his family.

The requirement is not that he must be married, but that he must not be a flirt. If he is married, he should be an example of faithfulness to his wife. If he is unmarried, he must be an example of purity towards all women. If he has children, he must lead them in the way of faith in Christ and obedience to Christ and teach them to respect their parents.

(3) Requirements with regard to his spiritual abilities.

With regard to maturity, he may not be a recent convert or an immature believer, but must be a mature Christian (a disciple). With regard to the Bible, he must hold firmly to the sound Christian doctrine and be able to use the Bible in the various aspects of his ministry.

20:18-19

Question 2. What are the personal leadership characteristics of the apostle Paul?

Notes.

(1) The Christian leader has a heart for lost people and a vision to reach them in other places.

Paul was not simply a Christian leader or a pastor of a congregation, but an apostle of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ used his eleven apostles and the apostle Paul to establish the worldwide Christian Church on earth. The apostle Peter was the first to found a congregation among the Jews (Acts 2), among the Samaritans (half-Jews)(Acts 8) and among the Gentiles (non-Jews)(Acts 10). Note the words of Jesus to Peter in Matthew 16:18.

But the apostle Paul spread the congregations all over the Western Roman Empire and founded the first congregations in Asia Minor (Turkey) and Syria (Acts 9:30; Galatians 1:21-23; Acts 13-14), Cyprus (Acts 13), Macedonia (Acts 16), Greece (Acts 17-19), Illyricum (Albania)(Romans 15:19), Crete (Titus 1), Italy (Romans 15:23; Acts 19:21) and probably Spain (Romans 15:24,28).

(2) The Christian leader sets an example how he lives and serves.

The behaviour and actions of the Christian leader speaks louder than his teaching and preaching. Jesus taught that he must be a light in darkness; salt in a tasteless society and a servant to those he leads (Matthew 5:14-16; Matthew 20:25-28).

20:20-27

Question 3. What are the personal leadership tasks of the apostle Paul?

Notes.

(1) A Christian leader preaches the whole will and plan of God in the Bible (Acts 20:27).

The minimum that Christians should know is the whole will of God. The new believers should not only know the gospel and certain selected parts of the Bible, but also learn the whole will of God in the Bible. The message of the Bible is a unity.

The Old Testament. Christian leaders should teach believers the following topics in the Old Testament: the nature of the Bible, the creation, the fall of man into sin, God's salvation of believers (an exodus out of slavery), the messianic line throughout the Bible, the covenant of God, the faith of man, forgiveness, law and grace, the historical books of the Bible, the reign of God in the theocracy, the poetical books in the Bible, the prophetic books in the Bible, Israel in the Bible and the kingdoms in the world according to the book of Daniel.

The New Testament. Christian leaders should teach believers the following topics in the New Testament: the life of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the lordship of Christ, the kingdom of God, the Christian community or Church (world-wide and individual/local), Christian growth, making disciples, training labourers, equipping leaders, Christian men-women relationships, spiritual warfare, the person and functions of the Holy Spirit, using spiritual gifts within the tasks in the congregation and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Practical Christian life. Christian leaders should teach believers not only to know and to believe, but also to be and to do. They should teach them to make practical applications of God's Word and train them in Christian character.

(2) The Christian leader preaches anything that would be helpful to Christians (Acts 20:20).

The maximum that Christians should know is anything that would be helpful. The believers should not have to listen to fanciful genealogies and prophecies, man-made philosophies, political theories and programmes, the sowing of hatred against other people, the false teachings of false prophets or the personal views of people about spiritual matters. Christian leaders and teachers should prepare themselves well, explain the Bible thoroughly and teach people whatever is helpful and whatever builds them up (Ephesians 4:29).

(3) The Christian leader teaches people publicly and from house to house (Acts 20:20).

An elder should be able to teach the Bible (1 Timothy 3:2). Some Christian leaders will teach the Bible publicly in the congregation (1 Timothy 5:17), while others will teach the Bible to smaller groups in the houses of believers (Acts 5:42; 17:1-4).

(4) The Christian leader declares to all people without distinction that they should turn and believe (Acts 20:21).

Christian leaders do not simply give lectures to interested people, but challenge them to respond to the message. They invite non-believers to turn to the one and only God and to do this with an attitude of repentance. This means that the non-believers acknowledge that they are sinners, lost and need a Saviour. They invite the people to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died in their place for their sins and who was resurrected from the dead so that they can live a renewed life.

(5) The Christian leader is prepared to suffer imprisonment and hardship (Acts 20:22-23).

In itself, this is a difficult calling for Christian leaders. But suffering for the sake of Christ and his kingdom also has a great reward. The Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous Judge, will award them with the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8) and they will share in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of the Lord Jesus Christ here refers to the new heaven and the new earth in which only righteousness and righteous people will live! The old Paradise was a beautiful garden in which, however, people could still sin and actually sinned (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6)! But the new earth far exceeds the old Paradise! It will cover the whole renewed earth (Revelation 21:1-2), only the believers in Jesus Christ will live in it (Revelation 21:8,27) and never again will people be able to sin again or die (Revelation 21:4-5; cf. John 11:25-26)!

(6) The genuine Christian leader is a finisher (Acts 20:24).

True Christian leaders never give up. They persevere until they have completed the assignment, which God has entrusted to them (John 17:4; John 19:30; Colossians 4:17). They run the race that lie before them with their eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of their faith (Hebrews 12:1-2).

20:28-31

Question 4. What is the job-description of Christian leaders?

Notes. Modern Christian leaders like popes, archbishops, bishops and even reverends (ministers, priests, pastors) are appointments of human organisations AFTER the closing of the New Testament Canon. Their appointment and assumed authority has no basis in the Bible. The only leaders instituted by the apostles of Christ are the "elders" and a church ought to be led by "a council of elders" (2 Timothy 4:14), that consists of more than two elders and not of just one church leader (priest or pastor). The elders have the following tasks:

(1) To shepherd the people.

The elders ought to be the shepherds (pastors) of believers and the overseers of the activities and possessions of the church. As shepherds they must feed, lead by example and protect the sheep.

(2) To oversee one another and the members.

The elders must keep watch over one another. They are not only responsible for the spiritual and moral wellbeing of the church members, but also for the spiritual and moral wellbeing of the other elders! That is why there always ought to be more than just one elder in the church! Every elder is responsible and accountable for his own life and ministry to the other elders (Acts 20:28).

(3) To protect against false teachers.

The elders ought to protect the church members against false prophets and false teachers.

(4) To warn against dangers.

The elders ought to warn the church members against dangers.

20:32-35

Question 5. How should Christian leaders be supported?

Notes.

(1) The congregation trusts that God takes care of his people (Acts 20:32).

Now that the apostle Paul was leaving the people he cared for, he did not abandon them. He committed them to God and God's undeserved grace that would certainly take as good care of them as God did when his apostle was among them. He committed them to God's words in the Bible, which would build them up and give them an inheritance among all those who are believers. From now on, the congregation in Ephesus must stand on its own feet and no longer be dependent on an apostle (or: a missionary or church planter from one or another so-called "mother church"). They have the living God, who will never leave them (Hebrews 13:5-6; Matthew 28:20)! They have the Spirit of Christ in their midst (Ephesians 2:21-22), the words of God in the Bible to build them up and a council of elders to lead them.

(2) The right of a leader to be supported.

Although Paul seldom received support from other congregations (1 Corinthians 9:6; Philippians 4:15-19), he taught that the elders, who direct the affairs of a congregation well, are worthy to receive "double honour", that is, both honour and payment. This is especially true for those elders who preach and teach the Bible. The worker deserves his wages (1 Timothy 5:17-18). The Lord Jesus Christ had commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:7-14). Although a Christian leader has the right to be supported, he never has the right to demand any support from any congregation!

(3) The freedom of a leader to serve without support (Acts 20:33-34).

The apostle Paul served the Christian congregations without asking or receiving any support. He actually took a pride in working with his own hands to supply in his personal needs as well as in the needs of the co-workers in his team. It is possible that Paul chose to do this, because there were false apostles going around, who sold their services for money to the congregations (2 Corinthians 11:1-15; 1 Timothy 6:5). He wanted to set an example for the Christians that what he possessed, he had received free of charge from Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 4:7), and what he gave to others, he also passed on free of charge (Matthew 10:8). He definitely did not want to be a burden for any Christian congregation (2 Corinthians 11:9).

(4) The responsibility of a leader to share with the needy (Acts 20:35).

Whether Christians receive support or whether they work for their own wages, they have the responsibility to share with the needy believers in their midst (James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:16-18). The Christian leaders should certainly set an example in this area! The Lord Jesus Christ himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

20:36-38

Question 6. How did the apostle Paul and the Christians in Ephesus relate to one another?

Notes.

(1) The visible bond of prayer bound them together.

When Paul left, they all knelt down and Paul prayed for them.

(2) The visible bond of love bound them together.

Then they wept in their grief, embraced him and kissed him.

This is a very good way to pass on the leadership of a congregation to other leaders.

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 Acts 20:17-38.

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 Acts 20:17-38.

20:17. Gather the elders together, say once a month, for sharing, praying and training in their tasks.

20:18. As a leader, practise what you preach (or teach).

20:19. Always be humble as a leader.

20:20. Never preach on topics that are not helpful.

20:21. Close your preaching by inviting the listeners to respond to God's Word.

20:23. Accept the fact that Christian leaders often are the first to face persecution, hardship and imprisonment.

20:24. Be a finisher and finish the task, which the Lord Jesus Christ has assigned to you (cf. John 4:34; 17:4; 1 Corinthians 7:24-27; Colossians 4:17; 2 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 12:1-3).

20:25. Remember that "the gospel of grace" (Acts 20:24) is the same as "the gospel of the kingdom" (Acts 20:25; 8:12; 28:23,31).

20:27. Determine to preach the whole will of God to people.

20:28. As a leader, be a shepherd for the people, an overseer for the activities and keep watch on your fellow-elders.

- 20:29-31. Guard the flock of the Lord Jesus Christ against wolves (false teachers).
- 20:31. Warn the flock again and again against the false teachers.
- 20:32. When you pass on the leadership, commit the new leaders to God, his grace and his Word.
- 20:33-34. If possible, sometimes work to supply in your own needs and that of your team of co-workers.
- 20:35. Remember it is more blessed to give than to receive.
- 20:36. Sometimes when you pray, pray on your knees.
- 20:37. Sometimes show your affection and love for your brothers and sisters in a cultural appropriate way.

2. Examples of personal applications from Acts 20:17-38.

I want to keep all my preaching and teaching between these two boundaries. On the one hand, preach and teach the whole will of God from the Bible and not just a few popular passages. On the other hand, never preach or teach on topics that are not helpful for the listeners.

I want to practise what I preach. My life and all I say and do and am should be an example for the other believers. I realise that I always have influence. I either have a negative influence by setting the wrong example or by doing nothing. Or I have a positive influence by setting the right example and by doing those things that change people to become more like Jesus Christ. I want to be a change-maker. I want to be a disciple-maker.

STEP 5. PRAY.	RESPONSE
LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Acts 20:17-38. (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.)	

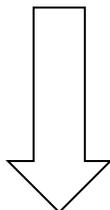
5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[INTERCESSION] PRAY FOR OTHERS
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Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray with one another for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

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. Be committed to make disciples.
Preach, teach or study the Bible study of Acts 20:17-38 together with another person or group of people.
2. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Mark 1:1 – 4:20** each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. Memorisation. **Review series D: "Discipleship"**. (1) Lordship. Romans 12:1-2, (2) Denial. Luke 9:23, (3) Service. Mark 10:45, (4) Giving. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, (5) Making disciples. Matthew 28:19-20. 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.



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). You will find a good Bible reading programme and a good Bible marking system in manual 1 supplement 2 and 3. 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. 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 some important books in the New Testament ¹ before you study some books in the Old Testament, because the Old Testament must be interpreted in the light of the New Testament revelation.

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 Christians 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.

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. Let people who completed the Dota discipleship course start their own Dota discipleship group.

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. Ask participants to make a new commitment every year to participate.

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

2. Start a new group yourself.

Prayerfully consider selecting a new group of young believers yourself. Make use of this complete course or a part of this course to train them. This course consists of the following three parts:

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES.	48 lessons in discipleship 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.

¹ For example the Gospel of John (see www.betacourse.org) and the Letter to the Romans