

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will do Bible study together about one important aspect of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. We will use a very easy Bible study method called the five steps method. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. The first series of 6 Bible studies is about 6 fundamental questions in life: “How do I respond to God’s Word?” “Where do I come from?” “Who am I?” “Why am I here?” “Where am I going?” And “How do I bear fruit?” Today’s Bible study is: A DISCIPLE KNOWS WHY HE IS HERE. The fundamental question is “WHY AM I HERE?”

(S) **STEP 1. READ**

Let us read Ephesians 4:17 - 5:17. Let us take turns to read one verse each.

Ephesians 4:17 - 5:17. “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. (T) They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. (S) Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. (T) You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. (S) Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. (T) You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; (S) to be made new in the attitude of your minds; (T) and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (S) Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. (T) In your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, (S) and do not give the devil a foothold. (T) He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with those in need. (S) 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. (T) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (S) Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. (T) Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (S) Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children (T) and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (S) But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. (T) Nor should there be any obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. (S) For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person - such a man is an idolater - has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (T) Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. (S) Therefore do not be partners with them. (T) For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (S) (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) (T) and find out what pleases the Lord. (S) Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. (T) For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. (S) But everything exposed by the light become visible, (T) for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (S) Be careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, (T) making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. (S) Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.”

(T) **STEP 2. DISCOVER**

Let us discover and discuss some important truths in this Bible passage. “Which truth in this passage is important for you?” or “Which truth in this passage touches your mind or heart?” Think and write your answer in your

(S) An important truth for me is in Ephesians 4:30, 5:10 and 5:17. Verse 30 says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.” Verse 10 says, “Find out *what pleases the Lord*.” And verse 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 and 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! The question is, “Why am I here?” My answer is, “I am here to know God’s will and to please God in how I live.”

(T) An important truth for me is in Ephesians 4:17 and 5:2, 8,15. In the original, every one of these verses contains the word “walk”, which is translated with “live”. These verses teach me how God wants me to live my life here on earth. Ephesians 2:10 and 4:1 also contain this word “walk” or “live”. Ephesians 2:10 says that I

must live in good works that God has prepared in advance for me to do. Ephesians 4:1 says that I must live a life worthy of the calling that I have received. Ephesians 4:17 says that I must no longer live as the Gentiles do in the futility of their thinking. Ephesians 5:2 says that I must live a life of love, just as Christ loved me. Ephesians 5:8 says that I must live as a child of light. And Ephesians 5:15 says that I must be careful how I live, not as an unwise person, but as a wise person. Thus, God tells me very clearly how I should live or walk or behave in my daily life. The question is, "Why am I here?" My answer to that question is, "I am here to live the life that God tells me to live." God tells me clearly how I should not live and also clearly how I should live. I agree with what you said just now. The reason why I live on earth is to please God. The writer, Paul, in another letter to the Corinthians says, "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 is happy. But when people choose to live in their own way, God is sad and will punish them by excluding them from his kingdom.

(S) STEP 3. QUESTION

Let us try to understand all the truths in this passage and ask our questions about the things we still do not understand. "Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask?" Think and write your question in your notebook. Then discuss the questions and try to find answers.

1st Question is from verse 17. What does it mean that the Gentiles are living in the futility of their thinking?

(T) The "Gentiles" here are the people who do not yet believe in Jesus Christ. They are the people outside the kingdom of God. The Bible says that all the efforts the Gentiles make to attain happiness, end in disappointment. Their life is one long series of expectations that are never fulfilled. They pursue, but do not achieve. They blossom, but do not bear fruit. 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, 2:10-11). People without God are people whose thinking produces nothing that can satisfy.

2nd Question from verse 18. Why are the Gentiles ignorant?

(S) At the time of the creation, all the people on earth had knowledge of the Living God. But gradually people began to live their own lives and lives that were separate from the life of God. When God spoke, they hardened their hearts and continued to live their own lives. God hardens those who harden themselves against God. By their own deliberate action the Gentiles became hardened. Whenever people persist to do evil, God gives the sinner up to suffer the full consequences of his sin. 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 God. They are "ignorant" of God. They know nothing about the Living God.

3rd Question from verse 22-24. How do you put off your old self and put on your new self?

(T) My "old self" consisted of my ignorance about God and my old life-style, like telling lies and stealing. But when I believed in Jesus, I took my old dirty clothes off and nailed them onto the cross where Jesus Christ died for my sins. This is a symbol of saying that when I believed I confessed my sins to God. Some specific sins that I must get rid of are for example, lying, anger, stealing, fighting, slandering, committing sexual immorality, greed and every form of malice.

My "new self" consists of the righteousness of Jesus, my knowledge of God's will and living a life that pleases God. Receiving my new clean clothes of righteousness is a symbol of believing in Jesus Christ. Putting on my new self is a symbol of obeying Jesus Christ. Some specific righteous things that I must put on are for example telling the truth, controlling my anger, working and sharing, being kind, being compassion, having a forgiving spirit, love, thanksgiving, knowledge of God's will and wisdom how to live.

4th Question from verse 26. Is a Christian allowed to get angry?

(S) Some people think that a Christian may never get angry, because they regard all anger as sin. However, God gets angry, but he never sins! Jesus got angry and also never committed sin. This is because the anger of God and the anger of Jesus Christ is a holy and righteous indignation against injustice, mercilessness and every kind of evil. Likewise, Christians may also display holy and righteous indignation against injustice, mercilessness and every kind of evil. This kind of anger is called "righteous anger". However, because Christians are not yet perfect they often sin when they get angry. "Sinful anger" is expressed in hatred or resentment against the wrongdoer. Sinful anger is expressed in abusive language or violence. Only the grace of God will enable a Christian on the one hand to hate sin, injustice, mercilessness and evil, while on the other hand he loves the sinner.

5th Question from verse 26. What does it mean to not let the sun go down while you are still angry?

(T) In the Bible “sunset” usually means “the end of the day”. Many people are angry with somebody for years and years. They are very bitter people. They keep a long list of wrongs that other people have done against them. They criticise others and especially slander these people. The Bible says that a Christian should never be angry for longer than the end of the day. Before the next day, the Christian should again be compassionate and forgive the wrongdoer.

6th Question from verse 27. When do you give the devil a foothold?

(S) The Bible connects verse 26 and 27. Verse 26 speaks about anger and verse 27 says, “and do not give the devil a foothold”. I should not give the devil any opportunity to turn my anger into a grudge, hatred or an unforgiving spirit. The devil will use any scheme and every trick to cause me to sin. The devil can grasp hold of my anger and turn it into abusive language and violent behaviour. He can take hold of my greed and turn it into cheating and theft. He can take hold of my fear and cause me to tell lies. That is why James 4:7 says, “Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Only when I first submit to God can I thereafter resist the devil. And that is why Ephesians 6:11 says, “Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” Only with God’s armour can I remain standing against the devil’s schemes.

7th Question from verse 29. How do you speak helpful words that build other people up?

(T) The book of Proverbs teaches me how to speak in a way that will help others. It says that I should think before I give an answer. I should give my answer in the right time. I should give a gentle answer (Proverbs 15:28,23,1). Also Ephesians 4:15 and 29 say, “Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ.” “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.” There are three important questions I should ask myself whenever I speak:

First. Is what I want to say the truth or not?

Second. If it is the truth, will it build the other person up or tear him down?

Third. If it will build him up, can I say it in love or not?

8th Question. What is the importance of Ephesians 4:17 - 5:17 for your life?

(S) Ephesians 4:17 - 5:17 teaches me why I am here on earth. I am on earth to live the life God intends me to live. God wants me to live a life that pleases him, a life that glorifies him and a life that is in accordance with his will. God wants me to put off the old sins and to put on the new righteousness. God especially wants me to live a life of truth, love, light and wisdom. Ephesians 4:17 – 5:17 teaches me how my life can be meaningful and have a purpose in this world.

(T) **STEP 4. APPLY**

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

(S) I should learn to control my anger.

(T) I should be watchful that the devil does not get a foothold in my life.

(S) Afterwards consider which possible application does God want you to turn into a **personal application**.

(T) My personal application is the following. I want to live my life to please God. Practically, every morning before I go to work, I want to do two things: First. Pray and ask God what he wants me to do that day. Second. Read the Bible and find out what God is saying to me.

(S) In order to live the life that pleases God, I must live in the light. Therefore, for one month every evening I want to consider my way of life. Whenever I discover darkness in my life, I want to confess it to God and start doing what is right in God’s eyes.

STEP 5. PRAY

Let us take turns to pray about one truth that God has taught us in Ephesians 4:17 – 5:17.

(T) Dear Father in heaven, thank you for showing us the meaning and purpose of the Christian life. Help me to pray and read the Bible before I go to work, so that I may discover what will please you that day.

(S) Dear Father in heaven, I want to please you in everything. Therefore I do want to walk in the light. Show me every day if there is any darkness in me and give me the humility to confess my sins to you.

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Meditate on the following question. “Why are you here on earth?” “What is the meaning and purpose of your life?”

Second. Prepare next week’s Bible study from Revelation 21:1 –22:6. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www. etc

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.