

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will teach from the Bible what is a disciple of Jesus Christ. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: **A DISCIPLE SHOWS THAT CHRIST IS HIS LORD BY HIS PRIORITIES**.

Christians often spend too much time on urgent things and too little time on the really important things in life. They neglect to do what they must do and do what they should not do. We will consider the important things in life and then discover which things in life ought to have the priority.

(S) **POINT 1. WHAT IS A PRIORITY AND WHICH PRIORITIES SHOULD CHRISTIANS HAVE?**

A 'priority' is that interest or area of life that has the claim of first consideration and that comes before the other interests or areas in time, order or importance. Many Christians believe that there exists a definite set of Christian priorities, but they differ with one another about the order of those priorities. Some Christians believe the priorities are first God, second family, third ministry, fourth job and fifth personal development. These Christians will always put their families above God's ministry in the world. Other Christians believe that the priorities are first God, second ministry, third job, fourth family, fifth personal development. These Christians will always put God's ministry in the world above all other activities. Christians do not differ about which areas in life should get a high priority. The Bible teaches clearly which areas are the most important areas in life. However, the Bible also teaches that only GOD is the highest priority and that God determines which area in life should get the highest priority in a specific situation or time of the Christian's life. In certain situations God determines that family is more important than ministry. And in other situations God determines that ministry is more important than family. Christians should make sure that they give the proper time and attention to each of the 5 most important areas of life.

(T) **POINT 2. THE 5 MOST IMPORTANT AREAS IN THE LIFE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN.**

The first important area. Your relationship to your work.

How important is your job (profession)? 2 Thessalonians 3:10 says that you must work in order to maintain your wife, your children and yourself. And 1 Timothy 6:8 teaches that you must be content when you earn the real necessities of life, namely, food and clothing.

Although your job or profession is important, God nevertheless set boundaries or a limit to work. God does not want you to spend all your time and energy on your work or career. There are also other important areas in life, which must receive some of your time and energy! Nevertheless, God wants you to give a high priority to the following within your work or profession.

First. You must have a conviction that God has set boundaries within your work.

Mark 8:36 teaches that you must not lose your soul by spending your whole life on your work or career! Proverbs 23:4-5 counsels that you should not wear yourself out to get rich, but that you should have the wisdom to show restraint in how much time and energy you spend on your work. You must reserve some of your time and energy for the other important areas of your life. The other important areas in life may not suffer loss.

Second. Your personal relationship to God within your work is a high priority.

Luke 10:38-42 shows that you must make time for personal fellowship with Jesus Christ before you start your work. Exodus 23:12, Leviticus 23:3 and Mark 3:4 teach that you should take at least one day out of every seven days to rest from your work, to get refreshed, to meet God together with other believers and to do the good works that God has prepared for you to do. Psalm 127:1-2 teaches that you should be dependent on God for wisdom, strength, influence and results in your work. And Acts 5:29 teaches that you should give to God the highest loyalty within your work, even if you have to resist the evil demands of your boss.

Third. Your ministry or service to God within your work is a high priority.

Colossians 3:22 – 4:1 teaches that you should do every possible honourable service within your work as if you do it for the Lord and that you should respect the authority relationships within your work. 1 Timothy 3:7 teaches that you should produce quality within your work and that you should gain a good reputation with the people at your work. Matthew 6:31-33 exhorts that you should exert yourself to advance God's kingdom (kingship) and righteousness by means of your work and at your working place.

(S) **The second important area. Your relationship to your family.**

How important is your family (spouse and children)? Colossians 3:18-21 teaches that you must obey the God-given rules for every family.

Although your spouse and children are important, God nevertheless set boundaries or a limit to family relationships. God does not want you to spend all your time and energy on your family relationships. There are also other important areas in life, which must receive some of your time and energy! Nevertheless, God wants you to give a high priority to the following within your family relationships.

First. Your ministry or special tasks for Christ within your family is a high priority.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 teaches that you should study and discuss the Bible within your family and apply its truths. Ephesians 5:22-33 teaches that you should develop your marriage relationship and make it an example. Ephesians 6:4 teaches that you should bring your children up in the training and instruction of the Lord, that is, in the knowledge and application of the truths in the Bible. Luke 2:52 suggests that you should develop all the important areas of life in your children. And Proverbs 23:22-25 exhorts that you teach your children obedience and respect, truth, wisdom and righteousness.

Second. Your ministry or special tasks for Christ outside your family is a high priority.

Mark 10:29-30 teaches that you should obey Jesus Christ whenever he calls you to serve him for a shorter or longer period of time. But 1 Timothy 3:4-5,12 teaches that the proper management of your family is more important than a management or leadership task within your church.

Third. Your work in order to provide for your family is a high priority.

2 Corinthians 12:14 and 1 Timothy 5:4,8 teach that you should take care of all the genuine needs of your family members. But it does not teach that you should provide for all kinds of luxuries for them.

Fourth. Your personal relationship to God within your family is a high priority.

Matthew 10:37 teaches that you should give to God the highest loyalty within your family, even above your dearest family members. They may never demand of you something that is against the clear will of Jesus Christ!

(T) The third important area. Your relationship to your ministry.

How important is your ministry for the Lord? Mark 10:45 teaches that the real meaning of life is serving other people for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Although serving in your Christian ministry is important, God nevertheless set boundaries or a limit to your Christian ministry. God does not want you to spend all your time and energy on your ministry or special activities for Christ in and outside the local church. There are also other important areas in life, which must receive some of your time and energy! Nevertheless, God wants you to give a high priority to the following within your Christian ministry.

First. Your ministry or special tasks for God within the church is a high priority.

John 4:23-24 teaches that you should worship God in truth and in Spirit. John 13:14-15 teaches that you should serve God by serving people, especially in tasks that no one else is willing or able to do. John 13:34-35 teaches that the development of relationships is more important than executing activities and programmes in the church. And Ephesians 4:12-16 teaches that two ministries within the church are indispensable. You must be involved in helping all the Christians in your congregation to become disciples of Jesus Christ. And you must be involved in helping them to get equipped or trained for different kinds of service or ministry that would build up the Body of Christ.

Second. Your ministry or special tasks for God outside the church is a high priority.

2 Corinthians 2:14-16 and 3:2-3 teach that you should become a person that continually has good influence on the people around you. Matthew 10:32-33 exhorts that you should at least be a witness for Jesus Christ to others. Colossians 3:16 teaches that you should be involved in teaching the truths of the Bible to others. And James 1:27 and 2:15-17 commands that you should take part in a ministry of mercy to the poor and oppressed people in the world.

Third. Your ministry and your personal relationship with Jesus Christ is a high priority.

John 15:5 teaches that you should develop your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This has a higher priority than your ministry activities, because without a personal relationship with Christ, there will be no genuine or lasting fruit within your ministry.

(S) The fourth important area. Your relationship to your yourself.

How important is your personal development? Mark 12:31 teaches that you should also love yourself as Jesus Christ loves you.

Although your personal development is important, God nevertheless set boundaries or a limit to your personal development. God does not want you to spend all your time and energy on your personal development. There are also other important areas in life, which must receive some of your time and energy! Nevertheless, God wants you to give a high priority to the following within your personal development.

Psalm 16:2 and 73:25 teach that you should take care of your spiritual welfare. You should desire nothing besides God. Ephesians 5:2 teaches that you should take care of your emotional welfare. You should walk in love.

Ephesians 5:10,17 teaches that you should take care of your intellectual welfare. You should find out what pleases the Lord. And you should understand what the Lord's will is.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 teaches that you should take care of your physical welfare. You should honour God with your body, that is, with your health, fitness and appearance.

1 Corinthians 15:33 teaches that you should take care of your social welfare. You should avoid bad company, because it corrupts your good character.

1 Peter 2:11 teaches that you should take care of your moral welfare. You should abstain from sinful desires, because they war against your soul.

Psalm 34:18 exhorts that you should let God take care of your brokenness. that is, of your emotional hurts, your weaknesses, your failures and the losses in your life.

Exodus 31:3-5 teaches that you should develop your God-given abilities. You should develop your talents and be creative.

Ephesians 5:15-16 teaches that you should make good use of your God-given opportunities.

And 1 Thessalonians 5:11 teaches that you should encourage other people and accept encouragement from other people.

(T) The fifth important area. Your relationship to God.

How important is your personal relationship to God? John 15:5-8 teaches that you should remain in Christ, in Christ's words and in Christ's love. Without Jesus Christ you can do nothing that has eternal value!

God set no boundaries or no limit to your personal relationship to him. Nevertheless, God does not want you to spend all your time and energy on developing your *personal* relationship with him. There are also other important areas in life, which must receive some of your time and energy! God wants you to give a high priority to the following within your personal relationship to him. Within your personal relationship to God, the following tasks are very important.

Revelation 2:4-5 teaches that you should put Jesus Christ in the first place in your whole life. Never forsake your first love for Jesus Christ!

Colossians 2:6-7 teaches that you should live as a Christian and grow as a Christian every day of your life. You should get strongly rooted in Christ and make visible progress in your Christian life.

Colossians 3:16 teaches that you should let the words of Jesus Christ dwell richly in your heart and life.

Matthew 7:24-27 teaches that you should put the teachings of Jesus Christ into practice and pass them on to other people.

Matthew 7:7-8 teaches that you should never stop to pray. Never stop to act in the area of your prayer. Never stop to persevere in the area of your prayer.

Hebrews 10:24-25 exhorts that you should regularly meet with other Christians for fellowship and learning. You should spur one another on to love in relationships and good works in ministry.

Finally, John 15:16 teaches that Jesus Christ has called you to take the initiative to bear fruit in the lives of other people.

(S) POINT 3. GOD IS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IN EVERY AREA OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

In Matthew 4:10, Jesus says, "Worship God and serve him only". All the above-mentioned Bible passages show that God wants you to keep him in the centre of every area of your life! GOD is the only permanent priority in every area of your life! Therefore, no priority list should determine what you give your life, time and energy to. It is rather GOD himself who should determine in any particular situation what you give your life, time and energy to. God longs to reign over your life through the Holy Spirit in your heart and through the Bible in your hand.

(T) POINT 4. THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

How do you maintain the right balance between these five priority areas and the other urgent things in your life?

First. There is a time for every activity.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 teaches that there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven. For example, there is a time to plant and a time to uproot. There is a time to weep and a time to laugh. There is a time to embrace and there is a time to refrain from embracing. There is a time to keep and there is a time to throw away. And there is a time to be silent and a time to speak. Ecclesiastes 8:5-6 says, "The wise heart will know the proper time and procedure. For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter."

Therefore you should make sure that you give the proper time and attention to all the important areas in your life!

Second. Complete the task that God has assigned to you.

In Acts 22:10, 20:24 and 2 Timothy 4:7 the apostle Paul says that he completed the task that the Lord Jesus gave him to do.

Mark 13:34, 1 Corinthians 3:5, Ephesians 6:13 and Colossians 4:17 teach that God has assigned to each Christian a task. He has also given to Christians 24 hours each day to finish his God-given task. How can this be done?

Mark 1:35 and John 17:4 show that although Jesus did not heal every sick person in the world and did not preach the gospel to the whole world, he completed the work that God gave him to do. How did Jesus do this?

Jesus did not have a set list of activities to finish every day. As he was used to do, Jesus prayed and waited for God's instructions and power to accomplish those instructions. In his daily fellowship with God, Jesus learned to discern God's will and also to differentiate between matters that thrust themselves upon him as urgent and matters that were really important. In this way he warded off *the urgent* and accomplished *the important*.

(S) POINT 5. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Every morning prayerfully plan the activities of that day with God. Make time for developing your relationship with God and your family members. Consider how you can further God's kingdom today through your job, at your working place, in your family and in your neighbourhood.

Second. 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".