

**(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 USES THE BIBLE TO PRAY**.

As in Acts 4:23-31, we should follow the example of the early Christians and use the words of the Bible in our prayers. There are two great advantages when we use the Bible in our prayers.

**One.** You will know what to pray for. Especially when you are still a young Christian, you often do not know what to pray for. But now you can open the Bible and find many passages you can use in your prayers to God. And you pray about the same things that the Bible is speaking about.

**Two.** You will pray with confidence according to God's will. When you use the Bible, you will more often pray things that are pleasing to God. God has revealed his will in the Bible and when you use the Bible to pray, you will more easily pray according to God's will and not your own will.

**(S)      POINT 1. HOW TO USE THE BIBLE IN YOUR PRAYERS**

**First. Use the Bible during your quiet time prayer.** You could read a Bible passage, choose a favourite truth or a favourite verse from this passage and meditate on it. Finally, use your favourite truth or the truths in this verse to pray to God. Pray the thoughts on which you meditated as a response back to God. Pray your favourite truth for yourself, for someone in your family, for someone nearby and for someone far away. When you pray together with a friend, then you could also pray your favourite truth for one another.

**(T)      Second. Use the Bible during your Bible Study prayer.** You could study a passage in the Bible. At the end, pray the important truths that God has taught you in the Bible that day as a response back to God. Pray especially about how God wants you to apply at least one truth in this Bible passage to your life. This is what we do every time we use the five steps method of Bible study.

**(S)      Third. Use the Bible during your personal prayer time.** When you pray alone, then you could read a Bible passage, try to understand the truths in the passage and finally pray the truths from each verse, verse by verse, as a response back to God. Use the thoughts, feelings and requests of the Bible writer to express your own thoughts, feelings and requests to God.

**(T)      Fourth. Use the Bible during your group prayer time.** When you pray together as a group of Christians, then you could read a Bible passage together, try to understand the truths in this passage together and finally pray the truths from each verse, verse by verse, as a response back to God. Or divide the group into twos and every group of two persons pray the truths of the Bible passage, verse by verse, as a response back to God. Take turns to pray about the truths of one verse at a time. For example, the first person prays shortly about the truths in verse 1. Then the second person prays shortly about the truths of verse 2. Etc. This method is good, because all the new Christians know what to pray for and everybody in the group gets several changes to pray. Usually it is easier to pray with one other person than to pray in a large group.

**(S)      POINT 2. PRAYERS IN THE PSALMS FOR YOURSELF**

The writers of the Bible were ordinary people like you and me. Sometimes they felt very far away from God and at other times they felt close to God. Sometimes they mourned about their sins and at other times they suffered under the evil of other people. Sometimes they prayed for guidance and at other times they prayed for change in their lives. Let us consider some of these prayers you could pray for yourself. When you pray these prayers in the Bible, use the thoughts and feelings of the writers to express your own thoughts and feelings. Use the requests of the writers to make your own requests to God.

**(T)      One. A prayer of the forsaken.** Let us read Psalm 13:1-3. "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, O Lord my God." When you feel forsaken by God, then pray a prayer of the forsaken. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your own anguish at being forsaken and your own feeling of rejection. In the right time God will again come very close to you.

**(S)      Two. A prayer of suffering.** Let us read Psalm 31:2-4 and 9-17. "Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue. ... Free me from the trap that is set before me. ... Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. My life is consumed with anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbours. For I hear the slander of many; there is terror on every side; they

conspire against me and plot to take my life... My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me. Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. Let me not be put to shame." When you face enemies who persecute you or difficult situations in which you suffer, then pray a prayer of suffering. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your thoughts of fear and feelings of pain. Remember, also that your times are in the hands of God. Also you will later say with the writer, "How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow ... on those who take refuge in you. In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues" (verse 19-20).

**(T) Three. A prayer of examination.** Let us read Psalm 139:1-7, 23-24. "O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. ... Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ... Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." When you know or feel that your life is not right, then pray a prayer of examination. Use this prayer in the Bible to ask God to search your hidden motives and to test your deepest feelings. Ask God to uncover your fears, your hurts and your offensive behaviour. God already knows what is hidden in your mind and heart, but he wants you to ask him to show it to you. Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Even the truth about the darkest side of your nature can set you free!

### **(S) POINT 3. PRAYERS IN THE PSALMS FOR YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

The writers in the Bible are also people who grow in their relationship to God and who sometimes struggle in their relationship to God. Sometimes they feel dirty because of sin in their lives and they need to confess their sins to God. Sometimes they do not experience the reality of God or the presence and nearness of God. Then they need to ardently seek God's face. At other times they want to thank God for what he has done, praise God for who he is or dedicate themselves to God. Let us consider some of these prayers in the Bible that you could use when you develop your relationship with God.

**(T) One. A prayer of confession.** Let us read Psalm 51:1-4 and 7-12. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. ... Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. ... Hide your face from my sins ... Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." When you know that you have sinned against God or against other people or even against yourself and your sins overwhelm you, then pray a prayer of confession. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your guilt, to ask for forgiveness and to plead for cleansing and renewal. Nothing can cause you to feel so dirty than sin. Nothing can make you feel so hopelessly forsaken by God than sin. Nothing can destroy you more than sin. Therefore, don't delay, but pray this prayer of confession. Then you too will experience the truth of verse 17, "God will not despise a broken and contrite heart."

**(S) Two. A prayer of practising the presence of God.** Let us read some parts of Psalm 16. "... O God, in you I take refuge. I said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.' ...The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. ... I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure. ... You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." When you do not experience the reality of God, or do not sense the presence of God, or do not feel the nearness of God, then pray a prayer of practising the presence of God. Use this prayer in the Bible to meditate on the truth that apart from God you have no good thing, to practise to set the Lord before you in every thing you do and to deliberately enter into the presence of God. Because we human beings are so earthly and unspiritual, we need to practise the presence of God again and again. Memorise Psalm 16:2 and 8 and pray it every time you feel you have lost contact with God. Then you too will experience the truth of verse 11. God will make known to you the path that leads to life and he will fill you with joy in his presence!

**(T) Three. A prayer of praise.** Let us read Psalm 103:2-5 and 8-14. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's, ... The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens is above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has

compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.” When you remember all the good things God has done for you and think about all the characteristics of God, then pray a prayer of praise. Use this prayer in the Bible to praise God’s character and God’s wonderful deeds for you. Express your adoration for God in prayer or in song. Proclaim to other people who God is and extol all God’s benefits to those who fear him. The more you read your Bible, the better you will know God. The better you know God, the more you will pray and the more you will praise him!

**(S)     POINT 4. PRAYERS IN THE PSALMS FOR OTHERS**

The writers of the Bible sometimes prayed a blessing for other people and sometimes they called down judgement on their enemies. The New Testament also has wonderful prayers you could use to intercede for others. Let us consider some prayers you could use when you pray for others.

**(T)     One. A prayer of blessing.** Let us read Psalm 20:1-5. “May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may God ... protect you. May he send you help ... and grant you support ... May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. ... May the Lord grant all your requests.” When you want to bless somebody else, you could pray a prayer of blessing. Use the prayers in the Bible to bless others. These blessings, of course, are rooted in your trust in God and in the fact that the other person also knows and trusts God. In verse 7 we read, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.” The implication is that not only the person, who blesses, but also the receiver of these blessings is a believer in God. Because believers know and trust God, they expect God to answer their requests and give success to their plans.

**(S)     Two. A prayer of calling down judgement.** Let us read Psalm 55:9. “Confuse the wicked, O Lord, confound their speech, for I see violence and strife in the city.” When you see the gross injustice done to the weak and oppressed, then you could use the prayers in the Bible to express your indignation at the injustice of the wicked people, the immorality of the perverse people and the oppression of people in authority. When you see how wicked people use violence and strife to further their plans, then you could pray, “Lord, confuse the wicked.” When you hear the liars misuse the radio, TV and newspapers for their own ends, you could pray, “Lord, confound their speech.” Christians believe that God is the sovereign and moral ruler of the world. ‘Right’ and ‘wrong’ are very meaningful to God and therefore, besides grace, also judgement must operate in the moral world. However, Christians may not call down a curse on their enemies and may not take revenge. Christians should pray for evil people that they may turn from their evil to God and receive God’s grace. However, if they refuse to repent and continue with their evil, then Christians may pray that God would intervene and stop them with his judgements. Because judgement belongs only to God, only God may decide which kind of judgement to bring upon those people.

**(T)     Conclusion.** Use the prayers in the Book of the Psalms as well as the prayers in the New Testament to express your own thoughts and feelings. Use the requests of these Bible writers to make your own requests to God. Likewise, use all the teachings in the Bible in your prayers. Of course, you must interpret the Bible correctly, not only in your teaching, but also in your prayers.

**(S)     POINT 5. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Read Romans 12:9-21. Understand this passage and then pray this passage in groups of two. Take turns to pray one verse each. For the coming week, use some of the Bible passages we discussed in your prayers.

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”.