

(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 MAKES PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS**.

Why did God give the Bible as the most important Book to the people in the world? First. God gave the Bible to us so that we may learn to know the living and true God personally. That is why we read the Bible every day and meditate on the truths in the Bible. Second. God has given the Bible to us so that we may change, be transformed and become our very best for God. That is why we make practical applications from the truths in the Bible and keep on practising these truths. God wants us to become more and more like him. What is the holy, righteous, merciful, gracious and loving God like? Look at Jesus Christ and get to know Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15)! Jesus Christ is the visible revelation of God and God's holiness, God's righteousness, God's mercy, God's grace and God's love. When any person gets to know Jesus Christ, he or she gets to know God. When any person receives Jesus Christ into his or her heart and life, he or she receives God into his or her heart and life.

(S) **POINT 1. WHAT IS A PRACTICAL APPLICATION?**

A *practical application* is a response, which God desires. A practical application is obeying God's Word. A practical application is using God's Word to grow and change yourself. A practical application could also be using God's Word to help other people to grow and to change.

Reading and studying your Bible can become a life-changing experience when you trust and obey God! When you believe that the truth you have discovered will change your life and you commit yourself to be and do what God says, you will change! You will be transformed and become a different person! Without faith, no Bible reading or Bible study can please God. Without application, no Bible reading or Bible study is complete. After you have finished reading or studying the Bible, you must ask yourself the following question, "What response does God desire?" "What response pleases God?" "What does God want me *to know*?" "What does God want me *to believe*?" "What does God want me *to be*?" "What does God want me *to do*?"

(T) **POINT 2. WHY IS MAKING AN APPLICATION IMPORTANT?**

The Bible often speaks about the importance of obedience. It is so important that you cannot be a real Christian without obedience! Why not? Discover how important is *obedience* in relationship to some of the most important areas of the Christian life.

(S) **One. Obedience is important for salvation.** Matthew 7:21 says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Obedience is important for salvation. Only when I obey the gospel, can I enter into God's kingdom. "Entering the kingdom" in the Bible always means the same as "being born again" (John 3:3-8) or "being saved" (Mark 10:24-27).

(S) **Two. Obedience is important for building a firm foundation for my Christian life and ministry.**

Luke 6:46-49 says, "I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete." *Obedience is important for building a firm foundation for my Christian life and ministry.* Only when I put the words of Jesus Christ into practice, can my Christian life grow strong, can I endure the hardships of life and be victorious over sin.

(T) Likewise, James 2:17,22 teaches that *obedience is important for "faith"*. John 14:21,23 teaches that *obedience is important for "love"* and for *"experiencing God's love and presence"*. Hebrews 10:35-36 teaches that *obedience is important for "receiving God's promises and rewards"*. 1 John 3:22 teaches that *obedience is important for "prayer"*. Matthew 28:18-20 teaches that *obedience is important for "becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ"*. Summary. Obedience to God's Word is important for every other important area of Christian life. God has given the Bible to us not only to know the truth, but also to change our lives! The purpose of making applications is to become more Christlike!

(S) **POINT 3. HOW TO MAKE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS**

First. Before you make any personal application from the Bible, you should interpret the Bible passage correctly. When you read or study a passage in the Bible, you should always first try to understand it correctly. The Bible is God's Word. God's chosen people wrote down these words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When you read or study the Bible, you should remember the following important rules for understanding the Bible:

One. The Bible has only one meaning. God is truthful and intends to reveal his purpose clearly. Therefore any passage in the Bible does not have a double meaning. The words in the Bible have only one meaning, namely, the meaning that God himself intended it to have. When you read and study the Bible, you must desire to grasp this one meaning of the Bible.

Two. The Bible does not contradict itself. It is a unity; one revelation. The Old Testament and the New Testament compliment one another. The Old Testament prepares for the New Testament and the New Testament fulfils the Old Testament. There is progress in God's revelation. Therefore interpret every passage in the Bible in the context of the whole Bible.

Three. The Bible is its own interpreter. Figurative speech, parables, poetry and prophecy must be interpreted according to their rules. Plain statements help to explain obscure statements. Literal statements illumine figurative statements. And New Testament teaching and history unveil Old Testament prophecy.

(T) **Second. Before you make any personal application from the Bible, you should consider various possible applications.** Remember, an application is a response, which God desires. Although the truth in the Bible passage is only one, the application of that truth may be a variety of possibilities. For example. The Bible says, "You shall not steal". The single truth in this statement is very clear. However, this truth can have various possible applications. In a shopping centre, you may not steal goods that are for sale. At your working place, you may not embezzle money from the company. At home, the children may not steal cookies out of the cupboard. In the area of mass media, you may not steal music or printed matters that have copyright. You see, one truth in the Bible can have several possible applications. Therefore, consider various possible applications of a Bible truth and write the list down. Questions that will help you to consider *possible applications* are:

Question one. "What does God intend me to know?" These applications are in the area of *knowledge*. You could consider the following: "Is there a new fact to know?" "Is there a consequence to realise?" "Is there a teaching to grasp?" "Is there an insight to gain?" "Is there a truth to memorise?"

Question two. "What does God intend me to believe?" These applications are in the area of *faith*. You could consider the following: "Is there a truth to believe?" "Is there a conviction to develop?" "Is there a promise to claim?" "Is there an area in which God wants me to trust him?"

Question three. "What does God intend me to be?" These applications are in the area of *character*. You could consider the following: "Is there a virtue to develop?" "Is there an attitude to change?" "Is there a feeling to control?" "Is there an encouragement to accept?" "Is there a habit to practise?"

Question four. "What does God intend me to do?" These applications are in the area of *behaviour*. You could consider the following: "Is there a command to obey?" "Is there a teaching to apply?" "Is there a warning to heed?" "Is there a decision or choice to make?" "Is there a bad habit to stop?" "Is there a good habit to start?" "Is there a relationship to restore?" "Is there an example to follow?" "Is there a sin to avoid?" "Is there news to share?" "Is there a reason to praise and thank God?"

Thus, applications or responses to God may affect your mind, will, heart or behaviour. Some applications *stop* a particular action. For example, you stop reading bad books. Other applications *start* a particular action. For example, you begin to read your Bible every day. And again other applications *increase or diminish* a particular action. For example, you spend more time with your wife and children or spend less money on buying luxury goods. Some applications are *part of a long process of change*. For example, you want to change a particular habit, like coming late to meetings, or you want to change a particular character trait in your life, like getting angry.

(S) **Third. An exercise in writing possible applications.** Read a Bible passage and then make possible applications from it. For example, Proverbs 3:5-8, which says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones". Verse 5 says that I should not lean on my own understanding. A possible application is to stop being obstinate and independent and instead listen to wise and expert counsel. Verse 6 says that I should acknowledge the Lord in all my ways. A possible application is to pray every time before I make a decision or before I act. Verse 7 teaches to shun evil. A possible application is to avoid going to a bad place, like a disco. Another possible application is to shun a particular bad person, who tries to have bad influence on me. Another possible application is to give up a particular bad habit, like smoking or swearing or eating too much or driving too fast in my car. Although the truth of the Bible does not change, there may be several possible applications to one truth.

(T) **POINT 4. HOW TO MAKE A PERSONAL APPLICATION**

First. Choose an application. You make a *personal application* by asking the question, “What response does God want ME to make from this Bible passage?” Prayerfully choose one of the possible applications from your list and make this your *personal application*.

(S) **Second. Write your personal application down in 5 steps.** For example, a personal application from Proverbs 3:5-6:

Step 1. Bible reference. “What is the biblical source of my application?” Write down the Bible reference. Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Step 2. Bible truth. “What does this biblical passage say?” Write down the correct interpretation of this passage. The truth in Proverbs 3:5-6 is that instead of only thinking before you act, Christians should *think* and *pray* to God before they *act*!

Step 3. My need. “What is my present need in the light of this truth?” How am I living differently from this truth? How does this truth stimulate me to change? Or how does this truth stimulate me to make further progress in a particular area of need? Write down how God wants you to change.

My personal need in the light of Proverbs 3:5-6 is that I am impulsive and mostly do things in my own way. I often do not pray and ask God for wisdom or power or love before I act. I really live too independent from God.

Step 4. My application. “What does God want me to know, believe, be or do specifically?” Write down the specific plan of action that God wants you to take. Always keep your application simple, that is, realistic and able to accomplish. If your application is in the area of training an attitude, habit or character, then plan for how long you consciously and deliberately want to work on this aspect. Based on Proverbs 3:5-6, my plan of action is to pray for every important activity or responsibility before I actually do them. I want to practise this for two weeks.

Step 5. My prayer. “What do I ask God to do for me?” Write down shortly your prayer response to God. Based on Proverbs 3:5-6 my prayer to God is, “Dear Father in heaven, help me to give up my independence and pray to you before I make a decision or before I talk to people or before I travel somewhere. Help me to acknowledge you in all my ways. In Jesus’ name. Amen!”

(T) Let me choose another possible application from the list above and write down another personal application.

Step 1. Bible reference. “What is the biblical source of my application?”

Answer. Proverbs 3:7. “Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.”

Step 2. Bible truth. “What does this biblical passage say?”

Answer. If I avoid evil, then it will result in more healing of my body.

Step 3. My need. “What is my present need in the light of this truth?”

Answer. I have been watching a particular TV programme that gives me fear and bad dreams. I sometimes cannot sleep. Also my conscience is bothering me that I did something that was bad for me.

Step 4. My application. “What does God want me to know, believe, be or do specifically?”

Answer. My plan of action is that I will stop looking at this programme from now on. I will also not watch other TV programmes that Christians should not watch.

Step 5. My prayer. “What do I ask God to do for me?”

Answer. “Dear Father in heaven, I have sinned against you by watching a bad TV programme. I repent. Forgive my sin. Take the evil pictures out of my mind and take the fear out of my heart. Help me to stop watching any TV programmes that are bad for Christians to watch. In Jesus’ name. Amen!”

(S) **Third. Check your previous personal applications.** If possible, find a way to make sure that you carry out your personal application. For example, you can keep a reminder of your application pasted on your mirror. Or you can share your application with a friend, who could check and encourage you until you have accomplished it. Or you can write your applications on your prayer-list and pray over them regularly. Once in a while do some self-examination. One of the areas of self-examination should be how your personal applications have helped you and changed you.

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

First. Read Leviticus 19:11-18. Make a list of possible applications from Leviticus 19:11-18. Choose one possible application from this list and write down your personal application in the 5 steps: Bible reference, Bible truth, my need, my application or plan of action, and my prayer.

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”.