

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will share from what they have learned from their quiet times. Every day during the past week we had a quiet time from a passage in the New Testament. Once a week we come together to share with one another what we have learned. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. We will first explain how to have a quiet time. Then we will share the important truths and lessons from our quiet times and try to answer some difficult questions. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM ACTS 18:1 to 21:40.

(S) **POINT 1. HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME AND SHARE**

Have a time of fellowship with God or quiet time every day of the week from one of the seven assigned Bible passages. An easy quiet time method is called "The favourite truth" method. It has 5 steps. Step 1. Pray and ask God to speak to you. Step 2. Read one of the seven assigned passages. Step 3. Choose your favourite truth. It is the truth, verse or passage through which God is speaking to you, stimulating your thinking or touching your heart. Step 4. Meditate on your favourite truth. Meditate by doing the following four things. First. *Think* about the meaning of words. Second. *Ask* God what he intends to say to you. Third. *Relate* your favourite truth to your life by making a practical application. Fourth. *Write* the most important thoughts of your meditation in a notebook so that you may share them with others. Step 5. Pray your favourite truth for yourself. Then pray your favourite truth for someone in your family. Then pray your favourite truth for someone nearby. And finally, pray your favourite truth for someone far away. When you meet together with one friend or with other Christians in a house fellowship or discipleship group, take turns to share the meditation of one of your quiet times. You may also try to answer some questions from the assigned passages.

(T) **POINT 2. SHARING FROM ACTS 18:1 to 21:40.**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Acts 18:1 – 21:40. Now we will use our quiet time notes to share truths and lessons from the assigned passages and discuss some questions.

Sharing quiet times from Acts chapter 18.

I want to share from Acts 18:3-4 about God's workers working for a living. We read, "Because Paul was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks." I have learned the following principles about financial support of God's workers. First. The Bible teaches that *Christian workers may not demand financial support from Christians*. They must be content with what the Lord provides. In Philippians 4:11-12 we read, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." Second. On the other hand, the Bible teaches that *Christians should support Christian workers, who help to extend God's kingdom*. In 1 Corinthians 9:14 we read, "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel." And in Galatians 6:6 we read, "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor." And in 1 Timothy 5:17-18 we read, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ... "The worker deserves his wages." Third. However, *if a Christian worker receives no support, the Bible teaches that he should work for his own support*. He should not think it is his right to depend on the goodness of other Christian brothers and sisters. In 2 Thessalonians 3:10 we read, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." Whenever Paul received support, he thankfully accepted it and worked full-time for the Lord. However, whenever Paul did not receive support, he worked for his own support. Paul made tents. And that was what he was doing here in Corinth. He joined two other tentmakers, Aquila and Priscilla. While Paul supported his own needs, he did not stop working in God's kingdom. During the weekend, he had Bible discussions with people, trying to persuade them to believe in Jesus Christ.

Sharing quiet times from Acts chapter 19.

(S) I want to share about baptising people for the second time. When Paul came to Ephesus, he found a small group of people who had not received the Holy Spirit when they believed. Some people think that this group of people were Christians, because they are called "disciples". However, the Pharisees had "disciples" and these were not Christians. The word "disciple" just means "follower". This group of people clearly said that they never even heard that there was a Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9-10 very clearly says that if someone does not have the Holy Spirit, he or she is not a Christian! This group also clearly says that they were baptised with "the baptism of

John” and not with “the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ”. The conclusion is that these people were not Christians. They were disciples or followers of John the Baptist. They had not yet heard or understood the gospel and therefore had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Paul therefore explained the gospel to them as well as the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. They believed and were baptised in water and also received the Holy Spirit like other Christians. *Therefore, this passage in Acts chapter 19 may not be used to baptise Christians a second time!* True Christians are only baptised once!

(T) I want to share from Acts 19:9-10, about the importance of regular training. We read “Paul had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” It seems that Paul preached the gospel every day and every day people came to hear what he said. In this way, all the people in that province heard about Jesus Christ. I think that Paul also taught the other truths in the Bible to the people, as was his custom. The most important truth for me in this passage is that Christians don’t have to meet only once every week, but that they *may meet together regularly during the week to discuss the Bible*. During these regularly meetings, Christians may also invite their non-Christian friends and relatives to come and hear the word of God.

(S) I want to share from Acts 19:18-20, about true conversion. We read, “Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practised sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way, the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” Conversion is not simply receiving the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart and life and then continue to live in sin as you did before! True conversion in the Bible always includes *repentance* from the sinful life and a *reform* to the righteous life of Christ. Here in Ephesus, we see one example of true conversion. Many of the people who believed the gospel, were practitioners of magic or sorcery. They were people who claimed to know secret spells that had lots of power. According to magical theory, the potency of a spell is bound up with its secrecy. As long as you don’t reveal the magical spell to anybody, then it has power. However, if you reveal the magical spell to anybody, then it loses its power and becomes totally ineffective. That is just what these people did. They came to Paul and his co-workers and openly confessed and *revealed to them their magical spells. Then they gathered all their magical books and burned them publicly* for all people to see. They broke completely with their evil past. When I preach the gospel, I want to explain to people what is true conversion. *True conversion is to break with your evil deeds of the past* and to reform every aspect of your life.

Sharing quiet times from Acts chapter 20.

(T) I would like to share from Acts 20 about Paul’s job description as a leader.

First. Concerning his personal example, Paul said that all Christians know *how he lives*, how he serves and how he faces persecution.

Second. Concerning his personal calling, Paul said that he dedicates himself to complete the task, which the Lord Jesus had given to him.

Third. Concerning his ministry of the word, Paul said that he preaches the kingdom of God, that is, that God should be the sovereign ruler in the heart and life of every person in the world. He preaches that people must turn to God in repentance, that is, be sorry for their past sinful life and determine to reform their future life. He preaches that people must have faith in Jesus Christ, who died for sins and was resurrected. He preaches the whole will of God, that is, every important truth in the Bible. And he preaches anything that would be helpful to people, that is, anything that builds them up or meets their needs at that time. He also warns them day and night to be watchful against false teachers and false brothers, who come to destroy the church. And he teaches them the importance of helping the weak and giving to the needy.

Fourth. Concerning training others. Paul instructs the elders of the church in their responsibilities.

Fifth. Concerning where he worked, Paul said that he preaches and teaches the word of God publicly, like in synagogues and market places, and he also preaches and teaches the word of God from house to house.

Sixth. Concerning spiritual work and warfare. Paul *prayed for and prayed with* his people.

(S) I want to share from Acts 20:17 and 28 about the job description of the leaders of the local church. The leaders of the local church are called “elders”. This term refers to the fact that they are mature Christians and respected by the people. *Their tasks are described as “overseeing” and “shepherding”*. As “overseers”, the elders must watch over one another’s life as well as watch over the lives of all the Christians in their care. They must feel responsible that everyone is walking close to the Lord. Moreover, they must watch out for false teachers and false brothers who come to destroy the church of God. As “shepherds”, the elders must care for the well being of every member, feed them with the proper words of God by preaching and teaching the Bible, pray for them and protect them from dangers.

Sharing quiet times from Acts chapter 21.

(T) I want to share from Acts 21:26, about Paul following a Jewish ceremonial rite. We read, “The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date

when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.” This is rather strange that Paul submits himself to a Jewish purification rite. And some people have felt that Paul compromised his own gospel principles.

However, the situation was like this. It was freely rumoured among the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem that Paul not only refused to impose the requirements of the Jewish ceremonial law on his *non-Jewish (Gentile)* converts, but that he actually dissuaded Jewish converts from continuing to practise their ancient customs, which were handed down from the prophet Moses. James and the elders in Jerusalem did not believe this, but knew that it would take more than a verbal assurance to convince the Jewish zealots in Jerusalem that they had been misinformed. Therefore, James and the elders proposed to Paul that he participate in a Jewish ceremonial rite. There were four Jewish Christians who had undertaken a temporary Nazarite vow. They had apparently contracted some ceremonial defilement and had to undergo a purification rite in the temple. After seven days of purification, they would shave their heads and bring an offering to the temple. Because the Jewish Christian leaders wanted to prove to the people in Jerusalem that Paul did not require of Jewish converts to renounce their Jewish customs, they proposed that Paul join these four men and pay for their offerings. Paul followed their advice.

Whether Paul was wise in doing so may be doubted. There is no evidence that his action gave the Jewish zealots any assurance. However, Paul cannot be charged with a compromise of his own gospel principles. On the contrary, he was *acting in strict accordance with his own stated policy in 1 Corinthians 9:20, “To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law, though I myself am not under the law, so as to win those under the law.”* On an earlier occasion in Acts 18:18, Paul had undertaken a similar Nazarite vow for himself. Although Paul clearly taught that the ceremonial law has been cancelled and should not be introduced into the lives of the non-Jewish (Gentile) Christians, he also taught that certain customary aspects of the ceremonial law, which were practised by the Jewish Christians, need not be given up. In 1 Corinthians 7:18 he laid down the following rule for all the Christian churches, “If a man was uncircumcised when he was called to become a Christian, then he should not be circumcised. However, if a man was already circumcised when he was called to become a Christian, then he should not become uncircumcised.” The implication of this rule is that *Jewish Christians need not give up their national customs*, like circumcision, the eating of only clean food, keeping certain religious festivals and fasting days, and purification rites.

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Divide Romans 1:1 to 3:31 into seven passages. Every day have a quiet time from one passage. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share from your quiet times.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www. Etc

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