

DOTA 106 TEACHING 22
LORDSHIP: A DISCIPLE SHOWS THAT CHRIST IS HIS LORD
BY DISCOVERING AND DOING GOD'S WILL

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(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 DISCOVERING AND DOING GOD'S WILL**. We will discuss the guiding principles for discovering God's that will help you to make decisions and choices in life.

(S) **POINT 1. YOU MUST BELIEVE IN GOD'S CHARACTER AND GOD'S PLAN**

First. Only a part of God's sovereign will has been revealed to us. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our children forever, that we may follow all the words of the law." God has not revealed his whole plan with the universe and history to mankind. There are many things that God has not and will not reveal to us. In general God does not reveal to us what will happen in the future of our personal life. But there is no need to fear our unknown future, because God promised that he would work for good in all the things that happen in the lives of his people (Romans 8:28). God is not only sovereign in power, but also sovereign in his love for us! On the other hand, God has already revealed everything that he wants all people to know, to believe, to be and to do through the prophets of the Old Testament, through Jesus Christ and through the testimony of the apostles in the New Testament.

(T) Second. God has revealed certain specific teachings and certain general teachings. God's specific teachings consist of all the specific commands, prohibitions and teachings in the Bible. For example, "Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15). "Receive Christ as Lord". "Continue to live in Christ". "Get rooted and built up in Christ" (Colossians 2:6-7). "You shall not have any other gods". "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20). "Forgive people when they sin against you" (Matthew 6:14). "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you" (Luke 6:27-28). These specific teachings are also called *God's moral will*. God commands all people to obey all these specific teachings, no matter what their traditional culture teaches or what their personal preferences and feelings are.

(S) There are many issues in our lives about which God has not given any direct or specific command or teaching. How can we discover God's will in questions like, "Which education should I follow?" "Whom should I marry?" "Should I buy this thing or not?" "What kind of life style should I choose?"

(T) God's general teachings consist of the general commands, prohibitions and teachings in the Bible. These principles help us to understand God's will and make right decisions. For example, "Find out what *pleases the Lord*" (Ephesians 5:10). "Be very careful how you live - not as unwise but as *wise*". "Make *the most of every opportunity*" (Ephesians 5:15-16). "Make every effort to do *what leads to peace and to mutual edification*" (Romans 14:19). In many cases of our lives we do not know immediately what pleases the Lord most, what is wise within these circumstances, what is really an opportunity, or what course of action would lead to peace and mutual edification. Then God commands all people to make a responsible decision or choice that is based on these general commands, prohibitions and teachings.

(S) **POINT 2. YOU MUST OBEY GOD'S GENERAL COMMANDS, PROHIBITIONS AND TEACHINGS**

There are seven principles that are based on God's general commands, prohibitions and teachings that will help you to discover God's will. When you are considering God's will concerning any specific subject, then ask yourself questions that will help you make wise decisions. Please read the Bible passages and I will explain the principles.

(T) Principle 1. Obey the clear commands, prohibitions and teachings in the Bible.

One. God has given the Bible as a map and a compass to show you the way you should go. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "What does God say specifically about the subject in the Bible?" What commands or prohibitions, teachings and principles from the Bible apply to this decision? Gather all the Bible says about the subject and obey God.

Two. God wants you to respond and act. In Proverbs 1:22-33 God warns, "If you had *responded* to my rebuke, ... I would have made known my thoughts to you. ... Since you *ignored* all my advice, ... I will laugh at your disaster." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "To what extent am I already doing God's will?" If you reject what God has already revealed to you in the past, you cannot expect God to continue to reveal to you his will.

(S) Principle 2. Consider your abilities and task.

One. God has created you with a distinctive personality and for a meaningful task in life. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 says, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of workings, but the same God works all of them in all men." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "Which natural abilities and spiritual gifts has God given to me and how does he want me to use them to accomplish his plan for my life?"

Two. God wants you to finish your task. In Acts 20:24 Paul says, "... If only I may complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me ...". Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "To what extent does the subject in question promote or hinder the development of my personality and the completion of my task in life?" Your *task* includes your ordinary daily work, your long-term and short-term life goals and your assignment or calling from God.

(T) Principle 3. Consider all the facts and the circumstances.

One. God holds you responsible to gather all the facts. Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "Have I gathered all the authentic and relevant information possible concerning the subject in question?" For example, when you have to choose a job, write to different companies and gather all the important information that would help you to make a good choice or decision.

Two. God has sovereignly placed you in life where you are. Acts 17:24 says, "God ... made every nation, ... determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live." In 1 Corinthians 16:8-9 Paul says, "I will stay on at Ephesus ..., because a great door for effective work has opened to me." And in Philippians 1:12 he says, "What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "To what extent has God providentially arranged the circumstances or events in my life to point clearly in one direction?" Which circumstances and events in your life lead you in the same direction as the other principles?

Three. God wants you to have a clear conscience. In Acts 24:16 Paul says, "I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "Do I have a clear conscience, that I have not tried to arrange or manipulate the circumstances in my life?"

(S) Principle 4. Consider the thoughts and feelings of all the people involved in the decision.

One. God has given you the command to love him with all your mind and with all your heart. 1 Chronicles 28:9 says, "Serve God with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "What are my personal motives, desires and feelings, and what does common sense tell me?" Make all your motives, desires and feelings known to God. God already knows them, but unless you openly acknowledge them, they cannot be discussed. Which of these desires and feelings seem to come from God? And which seem to be temptations to make a wrong decision or a second-best choice? Consider issues like pursuing a selfish ambition, desiring wealth, power or fame, or feeling bitter about some injustice done to you.

Two. God wants you to consider the thoughts and feelings of others. Philippians 2:3-4 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition ... Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "What are the motives, desires and feelings of people who will be affected by my decision?" For example, consider the thoughts and feelings of your wife.

(T) Principle 5. Consider the time you need to act and your faith to act.

One. God has given you just enough time to do everything you really need to do. In Ecclesiastes 8:5-6 is written, "The wise heart will know the proper time and procedure. For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter." Proverbs 19:2 says, "It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "Are my personal desires and emotions pressing me to move forward too fast?" Issues like selfish ambition, unholy zeal, lack of self-control, overconfidence, pride, anger, revenge and impatience can cause you to act without thinking. Consequently, you will make big mistakes!

Two. God wants you to use your opportunities. Ephesians 5:15-16 says, "Be very careful how you live - not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "Are my personal desires, emotions or feelings causing me to hold back too long before acting?" When you wait too long for too conclusive evidence, your selfish motives, self-protection, lack of faith and fear can cause you to miss a good opportunity.

Three. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Therefore, ask yourself the following question: "Does God want me to act by faith or to refrain from acting also by faith?" You are never sanctified completely on this earth and your understanding of things will always be limited. Therefore, when you sincerely understand something to be God's will, you should act by faith on it. If it later turns out to have been the wrong choice or decision, then you should trust God to overrule and to take care of all the consequences. God is sovereign and he can even use your sincere mistake to accomplish his goal. Romans 8:28 says that at all times and in all things the sovereign God of the Bible works for the good of those who love him!

(S) Principle 6. Consider the counsel of mature Christians and your parents.

One. God has given you Christian brothers and sisters in order to love and care for you. Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." Therefore, ask yourself the following

question: “What is the counsel of other godly and mature Christians?” The more counsellors you have, the more facts you will be able to consider. However, in all spiritual and moral matters, your counsellors should be born-again Christians, because unbelievers do not have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12-16). Your counsellors should be mature, because the immature cannot distinguish good from evil (Hebrews 5:14). And your counsellors should be godly, because God does not listen to those who do evil (1 Peter 3:12). In matters that are not spiritual or moral, your counsellors may be well-informed non-Christians. The better your counsellors know you and your situation, the better their advice will be (Proverbs 27:23).

Two. God has given parents to children. Proverbs 1:8 says, “Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.” Therefore, if you are still a teenager, ask yourself the following question: “What is the counsel of my parents?” As long as you are not yet an adult, God uses your parents to shape you and prepare you for adult life. Only when the advice of your parents is against the clear commands of God in the Bible, then you must gently resist your parents (Matthew 10:37; Acts 5:29).

(T) Principle 7. Pray and listen to the Holy Spirit.

One. God has given you direct access to himself by prayer! In Ephesians 3:12 is written, “In Christ and through faith ... we may approach God with freedom and confidence.” Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”. And Philippians 4:6 says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer ... present your requests to God.” Therefore, ask yourself the following question: “Have I prayed adequately about the information from all the above mentioned principles?” Make all your requests known to God. Open up your heart and tell God all your motives, desires and feelings. Persevere in prayer until you know what you should do. Also ask yourself the following question: “As I pray for something specific, do I experience continued freedom or lack of freedom to pray about the subject?” This will help you to know when you should stop praying for something.

Two. God also has direct access to you through his Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit represents Jesus Christ in your personal life. He is your Counsellor and desires to guide you into all the truth. Sometimes we read in the Bible, “The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them” (Acts 11:12). But sometimes we read in the Bible, “They tried to enter ..., but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to” (Acts 16:7). Therefore, ask yourself the following question: “Does the Holy Spirit motivate me towards or away from a particular course of action?” The Holy Spirit will either move you in a particular direction or move you away from it.

(S) POINT 3. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE TO MAKE WISE DECISIONS

These seven biblical principles are God’s usual way of communicating his will. In order to use this list of principles effectively, write down the thoughts God gives you as you consider the principles one by one. Arrange your thoughts under three columns. One. Positive factors and advantages. Two. Negative factors and disadvantages. Three. Alternatives. If the evidence is still inconclusive, you need to wait and gather more information. If the evidence clearly points in one direction, make a responsible decision and act by faith. If later on the going gets rough or tough, then “do not doubt in the dark what God has told you in the light.”

(T) The Bible teaches that God uses wisdom to guide Christians. Sometimes any one of several choices would be equally pleasing to God. For example, according to the Bible you are free to choose the food you eat and the days you celebrate (Romans 14:1-5). You are free to choose to remain single or to marry (1 Corinthians 7:8-9). You are free to choose whom you want to marry as long as the person is a Christian (1 Corinthians 7:39). And you are free to decide how much money you want to give to God (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). Therefore, always use God’s wisdom to make responsible decisions. God gives his wisdom through the Bible (Psalm 119:97-100), through prayer (James 1:5), through counsellors (Proverbs 11:14) and through research (Nehemiah 2). Loving God with all your mind is expressed in weighing the evidence. Determine which things are beneficial and constructive (1 Corinthians 10:23), which things are good and which things are better (1 Corinthians 7:1,9), what causes troubles or happiness (1 Corinthians 7:28,40) and what is simply advisable or what is absolutely necessary (1 Corinthians 16:4, 2 Corinthians 9:5). Godly wisdom often narrows the options down to one. When it does, then only one choice is pleasing to God. When more than one option is equally wise, each option is equally acceptable to God. His sovereignty will sort out the rest (Proverbs 16:33, Ruth 2). Thus, where there is a command, prohibition or specific teaching, you must obey. Where there is no specific command, prohibition or teaching you must make a wise decision that is based on the general principles of the Bible. Everything else you must trust into God’s sovereign hands.

(S) POINT 4. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Summarise the seven principles for guidance in God’s will. Use these principles to make an important decision in your life.

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”.