

(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 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 1 CORINTHIANS 1-4.

(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 1 CORINTHIANS 1-4**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from 1 Corinthians 1-4. 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 1 Corinthians chapter 1.**

I want to share from 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 about **the divisions at Corinth**.

The divisions at Corinth were not serious yet, because they were not about truth or doctrines, but rather about opinions. The word *division* means *difference of opinion* and this could lead to *division* (1:10). Their differences of opinion led to quarrelling among one another (1:11). When they quarrelled, everyone held to his own opinion as the only right one and at the same time detested the views of the others. Everyone had a chosen position and condemned the position of the others. In Corinth they quarrelled about which person was the most important. The apostle Paul came to Corinth first, preached the gospel in Corinth and founded the church there. Therefore some held the opinion that Paul was the most important. Then Apollos, who was a great speaker, came to Corinth and vigorously refuted the Jews in public debates (Acts 18:28). Therefore others held the opinion that Apollos was the greatest. Then some Christians chose the apostle Peter as the greatest. For what reason, I do not know. And as the Corinthian church was striving for ever higher things and Christ was higher than Peter, another group named their party after Christ.

The sin of the Corinthian Christians was to literally boast in people. Jeremiah 17:5-8 warns, "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes..."

Paul then used *the example of baptism* to show them that Christians should strive for unity. When Christians are baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, they are brought into the most intimate relation with Christ and his revelation. All the Corinthian Christians were baptised into the name of Jesus Christ and therefore they all belong to Christ. They should call themselves after the name of Christ, not the name of their Christian leaders! It is wrong for me to boast

about the people who baptised me or did something else of importance in the church. Like all Christians, I should boast in the cross of Jesus!

(S) I want to share from 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 about **the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God.**

First. The wisdom of the world was the kind of wisdom, which the Jewish scholars and the Greek philosophers used in those days (1:20).

The Jewish scholars would examine and debate the Bible, its laws and human genealogies, but they would not believe or submit to Christ. In this way, the wisdom of the world was misusing the Bible to defend human wisdom. They also demanded miraculous signs. They demanded that God reveal himself in a way, which fitted their opinions concerning revelation.

The Greek philosophers would express views about the origin of the universe and the meaning of life. They would quote time honoured expressions of former philosophers, which were regarded as wisdom. They looked for wisdom and exalted human philosophy and rhetoric, which left no place for the revelation of God.

Moreover, this worldly wisdom of the Jews and the Greeks was brought in a persuasive manner, which tried to convince people with pure human arguments (2:4). The Corinthian Christians were very much influenced by the worldly kind of wisdom and even preached the gospel, making use of the above mentioned methods of human wisdom (1:17).

Second. The wisdom of God was to send Christ to die on the cross for the sins of the world. The crucified Messiah was contrary to everything people in the world expected. The Jews expected that the Messiah would be a great *political redeemer* and *military hero*. Thus, the idea that the Messiah would die on a cross was a great stumbling block for them. The Greeks regarded *philosophical concepts* as important. Thus, the fact that a historical person died on a cross was foolishness to them.

Sometimes I also long to see changes in human society and think that science, politics, economics or philosophy could make life easier for all people on earth. However, all the changes in society cannot and will not save me. Only the death of Jesus Christ can save me and you.

God precisely used the death of Jesus Christ to accomplish his salvation. This wisdom of God made all the wisdom of the world foolish, because all the wisdom of the world did not reckon with God or with God's plan of salvation. Therefore, the wisdom of the world cannot accomplish what God accomplished, namely the salvation of people. What is the wisdom of God? God's wisdom is Jesus Christ, who died as a punishment for sins and who was resurrected to save people. God's wisdom is made known by the preaching the gospel. God's wisdom calls Jews, Greeks and all other people to salvation from sin and to a changed life. God's wisdom led me to know God, to justification and to sanctification.

### **Sharing quiet times from 1 Corinthians chapter 2.**

(T) I want to share from 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 about **speaking in God's wisdom.**

First. God's wisdom is spoken and received by the mature Christian.

The mature are those Corinthian Christians who gave up worldly wisdom and recognised the teachings of the Bible and Paul's preaching as true. The immature are those Corinthian Christians who still valued the wisdom of the world and despised the teachings of the Bible and Paul's preaching.

Second. God's wisdom is spoken and received by those who have the Holy Spirit.

Verse 8 says that the rulers of this age did not understand God's wisdom. These rulers are not the devil and his demons, but all those people who were considered as important people among the Jews and Greeks, whether they were political or philosophical. Among them were people who were opposed to Christ and crucified him. They were the people and authorities who determined the character of this present world. By crucifying Jesus Christ, they showed that they did not believe God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

Verse 10-12 says that God revealed his wisdom through the Holy Spirit. All people who have the Holy Spirit know what God has freely given to them, namely, his salvation, sanctification and glorification. Through the Holy Spirit Christians know that all things come from God and are only given to them "in Christ". As a Christian I too have received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit teaches me that Christ has saved me, justified me and sanctified me.

Third. God's wisdom is spoken and received by those who are taught by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 13 says that the Christian message is *spiritual*, because it is revealed and taught by the Holy Spirit and does not originate in worldly political or philosophical wisdom. Verse 14 says that the Christian message is *spiritual*, because it

can only be understood by those who have the Holy Spirit. People, who are not born-again, cannot understand the gospel and do not accept it. Therefore, all genuine Christians are *spiritual*.

Verse 15 says that the spiritual things can only be searched and judged spiritually, that is, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. *To judge* is to discern truth from error. All genuine Christians have the ability to discern the truth from error. They have the privilege to study the Bible, to search, compare and know the spiritual truths. And the Holy Spirit helps them to see things as God sees them. This does not imply that all spiritual things can be known, because only what God has revealed can be known. The things that God did not reveal cannot be known, like for example “the deep things of God” in verse 10. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may follow all the words of this law”.

### **Sharing quiet times from 1 Corinthians chapter 3.**

(S) I want to share from 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 about **Christians who are worldly.**

The Corinthian Christians were genuine Christians, because they are called “infants in Christ”. However, they were not really *mature* Christians and they were also not really *spiritual*, because they behaved like the people of the world. The characteristics of *immature* Christians or *worldly* Christians were the following:

First. They still tried to understand the gospel in terms of Jewish wisdom and Greek philosophy.

They did not know much of the Bible. The apostle Paul says that they could not yet eat *solid food*, that is, they could not yet read and study the Bible for themselves. They could not yet search and judge the spiritual truths for themselves. They still needed Paul and Apollos to give spiritual milk to them.

Second. They behaved like the Jewish religious parties and Greek philosophical schools.

They were divided and quarrelled about opinions. Instead of agreeing with one another and having the same convictions and confessions, each one held to his personal opinions and rejected the others.

This passage teaches me the importance of growing spiritually to maturity. Spiritual maturity is expressed by reading and studying the Bible on my own and by loving other Christians.

(T) I want to share from 1 Corinthians 3:5-15 about **Christian workers.**

First. Christ assigns to each worker his specific task.

Every Christian in the world receives his own task. In Mark 13:34, Jesus tells a parable and says, “It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house in charge of his servants, *each with his assigned task.*” It is Christ himself, who assigns a specific task to each Christian. Some will be assigned to teach children, others will be assigned to show mercy to the helpless in their midst. Some will be assigned to lead a church, while others will be assigned to go out and plant a new church. Some will be assigned to give shelter to travelling Christians and others will be assigned to cook for the Christians. Verse 5 also says that “the Lord has assigned to each his task”. The Lord assigned to Paul the task of planting the seed, that is, to preach the gospel everywhere. And he has assigned to Apollos the task of watering the seeds, that is, to care for the young Christians by teaching them. It is not the pastors or leaders of a church, but the Lord who may assign what each Christian should do. The leaders may request believers to do things, but not command them.

Second. Christians work, but God gives the results.

Verse 6 says that although Christians do their assigned tasks, it is God who makes the seed and plants grow. Christians cannot manipulate new believers to grow by all kinds of methods. Spiritual growth is the task of God himself. This truth helps me to be humble and realise that it is not my preaching and teaching, but God’s grace that transforms people and makes them grow. This truth helps me on the one hand to be diligent, and on the other hand to be at ease and surrender the results of my ministry to God. I am only God’s fellow-worker. God works through me. But it is still God’s work. All the glory belongs to him.

Third. Christians will be rewarded for their work.

Verse 8 says that each Christian will be rewarded according to his labour. However, verse 10 urges Christians to be careful how they work. Those who preach the gospel and lay the spiritual foundation must preach Christ crucified. Those who teach the Christians and build on the foundation must teach the truths that would last for eternity. Verse 12-15 say that if a Christian builds with gold, silver or costly stones and what he has built survives, then he will be rewarded. However, if he builds with wood, hay or straw and what he has built is destroyed, then he will suffer loss. Therefore, whatever I preach, or teach or in whatever way I do any other ministry is very important. I will have to give an account of my work to God. The fire of the Last Judgement Day will reveal everything. Christian workers, who do not do their preaching, teaching or other ministry according to God’s truth, will narrowly be saved. It will be as if they escape from passing through a fire. If their preaching and teaching was wrong, then the loss will be that their work will have no remaining value or effect. However, if my preaching and teaching was right, my main reward will be that my work will remain! Also that is only by God’s grace.

(S)     **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Divide 1 Corinthians 5-8 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 build Christ’s Church” and Internet on [www.dota.net](http://www.dota.net)

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to “Discipleship training on the air”.