

(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.

Today's topic is: A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM 2 CORINTHIANS 5-7.

(S) **POINT 2. SHARING FROM 2 CORINTHIANS 5-7.**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from 2 Corinthians 5-7. 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 2 Corinthians chapter 4.

I want to share from 2 Corinthians 4:6-9 about **how Christians overcome suffering.**

First. Christians have a wonderful treasure in their bodies.

In verse 6-7 Paul uses the picture of the triumphal processions of Roman soldiers, in which men walk behind chariots and carry earthen vessels filled with the captured treasures of their enemies. Paul says that Christians also walk in the triumphal procession of Jesus Christ. While the bodies of Christians are as vulnerable as clay jars (Jer 18:6), they carry within their bodies the extraordinary treasure consisting of nothing less than the Holy Spirit of God himself (1 Cor 3:16). While the bodies of Christians are very fragile, the absolute sovereign God of the Bible has put his divine treasure inside their bodies! Although Christians often face oppression, persecution and suffering, God's Spirit gives to Christians divine power to bear up under suffering, divine love to forgive the people who cause their suffering and divine grace to continue to be a blessing for the people among whom they are suffering! God manifests his glory through the vulnerability of Christians! God's grace is sufficient for Christians, because God's power is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 12:9) God's super-human power, love and grace makes Christians "more than conquerors" (Rom 8:37) especially when they are oppressed and persecuted by their enemies. And this baffles their non-Christian oppressors and persecutors, because their enemies can only think in terms of human ability alone.

Second. Christians suffer, but are not destroyed.

In verse 8-9 Paul describes some ways he as a Christian suffers. There were times he was *hard-pressed* by his *opponents* from all sides. They threatened and tortured him in order to immobilise him. However, God's all-surpassing grace and power brought him safely through these difficulties. There were times when he was *perplexed* by his *problems*, not knowing which way to turn. But the end of his own resources was not the end of God's resources! Therefore he was never in despair. There were times he was *hunted down like an animal*, but God never left him as a prey for his enemies. God never abandoned him. He experienced God's promise in Hebrews 13:5-6, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" There were times when he was *struck down* and it looked as if he would be destroyed. In Acts 14, he was stoned by a mob and after dragging his apparent lifeless body out of the city, he was left for dead. However, *the reality was different than the appearance*. He was miraculously raised and restored to power. He was not destroyed! God's glory, power, love and grace were made manifest in his sufferings. He continued to carry God's treasure within his vulnerable clay body.

Sharing quiet times from 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

(T) I want to share from 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 about **how Christians experience death.**

First. The resurrection of bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:50-54 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 teach that there are two categories of Christians. Many Christians will die before the second coming of Christ and will have to wait before receiving new resurrected bodies. Other Christians will still be alive when Christ returns and will immediately be transformed and receive resurrected bodies. Both will receive their new bodies at the same time.

Second. The state of Christians between death and resurrection.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 describes what happens in the time between a Christian's death and his resurrection. Paul speaks of an *earthly tent* and a *heavenly building*. "The earthly tent we live in" is a picture of our present mortal body, which is very unstable. This picture is derived from John 1:14, where the incarnation of Jesus is called "a pitching of his tent" among us. "The building from God" or "the eternal house in heaven" is a picture of the resurrected body, which will be completely strong and stable! This picture is derived from John 2:19, where the resurrection of Jesus is called "a raising of his temple". At death, a Christian's earthly body returns to the dust of the earth and his soul or spirit is immediately brought into the presence of God. However, the resurrection of his body must wait until the second coming of Jesus

Christ. Until that event, he is found “naked”, that is, his mortal body has been dismantled, yet he is not directly clothed with his new resurrected body. Romans 8:18-25 says, Christians *groan*, because they wait eagerly for the redemption of their bodies. The whole creation *groans*, because it also waits for its liberation from the bondage of decay. Naturally, this knowledge causes Christians to groan and feel burdened. They wish that Christ would return before they die, so that their mortal bodies would be “clothed over” immediately with the resurrected bodies. The word “clothed over” in verse 2 refers to the heavenly body that is put on like additional clothing over the earthly body, so that it not only covers it, but absorbs and transforms it!

Third. Christians are confident before they die.

Although Christians will die physically, they do not despair. Already at the creation God purposed that Christians would have eternal life within immortal bodies. At their re-creation in Christ, God begins to fulfil his purpose by giving to Christians the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that they will be resurrected. Christians are confident that their mortal bodies will be swallowed up by their immortal resurrected bodies.

Fourth. Christians live by faith and not by sight (5:7).

Christians are “away from the Lord” only by sight, but not by faith. In this present life it is faith that gives *reality* to all the things Christians hope for. It is faith that gives *certainty* to all the things Christians do not see (Heb 11:1). When Christians die, they will be “with the Lord” by sight. When Christians depart from their mortal bodies at death, they will immediately be at home with Christ (Phil 1:21-23). And at the resurrection their mortal bodies will immediately be clothed over and absorbed by their resurrection bodies.

Fifth. Christians make it their goal to please God (5:9-10).

Because Jesus Christ can return at any moment and because Christians will be judged by Jesus Christ for how they lived on earth, Christians make it their goal to please the Lord while they still live on earth. Although Christians will not be condemned to hell on the judgement day, they will certainly be judged for how they have lived on earth! If they have been faithful and their work lasts, they will be rewarded. However, if they have been unfaithful and their work is destroyed, then they will suffer loss. Luke 19:16-19 teaches that Christ will reward Christians in proportion to their faithfulness.

Sharing quiet times from 2 Corinthians chapter 6.

(S) I want to share from 2 Corinthians 6:14 about not being yoked together with unbelievers.

The yoke is a double-yoke under which two animals work side by side. It is an instrument that couples or binds two animals together, so that they will go in the same direction, make the same movements, walk at the same pace, stop at the same time and generally do everything in synchronisation. If one animal strays from a straight line, the other will be pulled in that direction. If one animal slows down and stops, he forces the other animal to also slow down and stop. If the two animals try to follow two different leaders, they will be tugging and pushing each other to go their separate ways and thus hinder every kind of progress. In the same way, a Christian who is yoked together with a non-Christian is going to experience how the non-Christian tries to pull him away from the right path of God, which may slow down his growth and even force him to stop believing altogether. Therefore a Christian may not compromise his Christian life by having any intimate binding relationships with non-Christians.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul gave several examples of such *compromising yoke-relationships*, which God forbids. I want to continue to avoid such compromising yoke-relationships.

First. A Christian may not pull in the same “social yoke” together with another Christian who behaves like a non-Christian.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 says, “I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.” The Bible commands Christians that they may not associate with “name Christians” who behave like non-Christians.

Second. A Christian may not pull in the same “legal yoke” together with a non-Christian.

1 Corinthians 6:5-6 says, “I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against another - and this in front of unbelievers!” The Bible commands Christians that they should not take their legal disputes before non-Christian judges. When a Christian has a legal dispute with another Christian, they should allow wise Christians in the church to judge their dispute. If the dispute cannot be resolved, it is better to accept suffering of loss and leave the final judgement in the hands of God.

Third. A Christian may not pull in the same “sex yoke” together with anybody other than his rightful marriage partner.

1 Corinthians 6:15-17 says, “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.” The Bible commands Christians that under no circumstances may they indulge in an

extra-marital affair. Sex is an invention and creation of God and God himself has commanded that sex is allowed only inside a legal marriage. Moreover, because a Christian has a spiritual unity with God himself, he may not defile this relationship by sexual immorality.

Fourth. A Christian may not pull in the same “marriage yoke” or “dating yoke” together with a non-Christian.

1 Corinthians 7:39 says, “A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.” The Bible commands Christians that they may only marry or remarry another Christian. A Christian is regarded as somebody who really “belongs to the Lord”, that is, the Lord lives in him through his Holy Spirit and actively guides his life.

2 Corinthians 6:14 clearly says that a believer may not be unequally yoked to an unbeliever. A Christian may only marry with another Christian. This conclusion also has consequences for “dating”. Actually becoming intimate friends with a non-Christian is a dangerous thing. When friends become close, they are sharing deeper thoughts and feelings that will stay in their minds for a very long time. They begin to depend on each other and influence each other deeply. However, an intimate friendship relationship between a Christian and a non-Christian will become like an “unequal yoke” relationship. The Christian cannot simply ignore the non-Christian’s desires, values and goals. He will be pulled down by the non-Christian to worldly desires, values and goals. Or he will be pulled away from Christ by non-Christian religious beliefs, values and culture. Whatever the non-Christian believes will influence the Christian’s faith and behaviour. Because “dating” is such an intimate relationship, a Christian may also not “date” a non-Christian.

Fifth. A Christian may not pull in the same “wild party yoke” together with non-Christians.

1 Corinthians 10:7 says, “Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: ‘The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.’” The Bible commands Christians that they should not join non-Christians in pagan revelry. These *parties* were characterised by excessive indulgence and lack of self-discipline in relationship to men and women. People were eating too much and especially drinking too much alcohol. Often they were accompanied by wild dancing, loud music, shouting and coarse joking (1 Pet 4:3-5, Eph 5:3-5). The people committed acts of lust, idolatry or occultism.

Sharing quiet times from 2 Corinthians chapter 7.

(T) I want to share from 2 Corinthians 7:8-13 about **the difference between worldly sorrow and godly sorrow.** In his first letter to the Corinthian church (1 Cor 5), Paul rebuked the church for not taking disciplinary action against a certain brother who lived in gross immorality. The Corinthian Christians tolerated unacceptable sin in their midst. Although the Corinthian Christians felt hurt by Paul’s first letter, they responded and expelled that brother. Now in his second letter to them, Paul says that he wrote his first letter not to hurt them, but to bring them to repentance. He says, “For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death”. Paul regretted that his first letter hurt the Corinthians, but its result of producing godly sorrow and repentance was something he did not regret (7:8)!

First. Non-Christians respond with worldly sorrow.

In worldly sorrow people feel sorry for what they loose and react with self-centredness. If the Corinthian Christians had not really been Christians, they would have responded with *worldly sorrow*. They would have indulged in hypocritical self-vindication and even in embittered recrimination. They would have felt hurt by Paul’s rebuke and sorrow because of the painful and unwelcome consequences of their sin. They would have manifested self-pity rather than true contrition. They would have risen in opposition to God instead of turning to God. Esau is an example of worldly sorrow. In Hebrews 12:16-17 we read that he first sold his inheritance rights and, after he was rejected, he could not change Isaac’s mind, even though he sought this blessing with tears. “Worldly sorrow brings death” (7:10). At the Final Judgement, the unbelievers and disobedient people will all manifest worldly sorrow, which culminates in their weeping and gnashing of teeth in hell (Mat 13:42).

Second. Christians respond with godly sorrow.

In godly sorrow people feel sorry for what they did wrong in relationship to God and other people. The Corinthian Christians were genuine Christians and proved this in the way they responded with *godly sorrow* to Paul’s rebuke. They became genuinely sorrowful, just as God intended them to become. “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation” (7:10). This phrase is difficult to understand. Had the Corinthian Christians *not* repented of their tolerance to gross sexual immorality in their midst, then they would have suffered not a loss of their salvation, but a loss of their reward. Therefore, the meaning here cannot be that repentance is the ground of salvation or that salvation is the goal or result of repentance. The ground of salvation is never human repentance, but always God’s grace. The Corinthian Christians repented of their tolerance to sin in their church. This phrase means that their repentance had reference to their salvation. Their repentance proved that they were genuinely saved! This fact greatly encouraged Paul and Timothy (7:13). David is another example of “godly sorrow that brings repentance”. In Psalm 51, he says, “Cleanse me from my sin. I know my transgressions. Against you only have I sinned. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me.”

Third. Godly sorrow always leads to very good results.

In verse 11 we read about the worthy fruits of godly sorrow, “See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.” In contrast to their former carelessness and indifference to sin in their church, they were now very serious “to clear themselves” and eager to set matters right again. They were “indignant”, not with the offending brother, but with themselves, because they had permitted such a scandal to continue unchecked in their church. They had brought dishonour to God’s name. They were “alarmed” or fearful, not so much of God’s punishment, but of Paul’s apostolic authority to judge them (1 Cor 4:21). They were “longing” to be reunited with Paul in their former relationship of trust and affection. They were “concerned” with restoring Paul’s apostolic authority in their midst. They were “ready to see that justice was done” by disciplining sinners and by rejecting the false apostles, who had intruded into their church. By putting their own church in order, they proved that they were innocent with respect to the sexual immorality of that one brother and the false teachings of the false apostles. They had taken action and had shown “godly sorrow”. The past had been put right and they were pure so far as this matter was concerned. Like David in the Old Testament and the Corinthians in the New Testament, I always want to show my “godly sorrow” by the genuine repentance of my sins.

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Divide 2 Corinthians 8-11 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

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