

(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 COLOSSIANS 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 Colossians 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 Colossians chapter 1.

I want to share from Colossians 1:15-18. **Christ is supreme, far above all creatures.**

In the city of Colosse, there were false teachers who continuously emphasised angels and evil spirits and believed that Jesus Christ was not supreme in creation. Paul opposes this false teaching. In Colossians 1:15-17 he says, "Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

One. Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God (1:15a)

While man was created in the image of God and expresses certain characteristics of God, Jesus Christ was the Creator Himself and reveals the otherwise invisible God. Colossians 1:19 and 2:9 say, "In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." The One and Only God that exists, the God of the Bible, is the great divine Spirit. He is eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. But in order to reveal himself to people and to save people, God took on the human nature in Jesus Christ and entered his creation and our human history. In Jesus Christ, the God of the Bible becomes visible, dwells amongst us, gets involved in our history and identifies himself with our sufferings on earth.

Two. Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of every creature (1:15b).

The word 'firstborn' does not mean that Jesus Christ was the first to be created, but that he has the right and dignity of a *firstborn son* in relation to every other creature. He has the highest position in the created universe, far above for example angels and evil spirits.

Three. All things were created in Jesus Christ (G: en, 1:16a).

Jesus Christ is the *Point of reference* for all creatures, just like the cornerstone is the point of reference for a whole building. He is the *Focal point* of the created universe. Without Jesus Christ the created universe cannot be understood. With Jesus Christ the created universe is meaningful. All people, angels or spirits were originally created *to serve him* and nobody else.

Four. All things were created by Jesus Christ (G: dia, 1:16b).

Jesus Christ is *the Agent* in creation. There is nothing that he has not created. The people of the city of Colosse should realise that the angels and spirits, about which they talk so much, are only creatures. Jesus Christ Himself is the Creator.

Five. All things were created for Jesus Christ (G: eis, 1:16c).

Jesus Christ is *the Goal* of all existence. Nothing in the whole creation will ever fulfil its purpose of existence without Jesus Christ. Therefore there is absolutely no justification to worship angels or spirits of any kind. Because everything was created *for* Christ, people may not worship anything else but the living God, the God of the Bible, who revealed himself in Jesus Christ.

Six. Jesus Christ is before all things (1:17a).

Jesus Christ existed from all eternity, before the material universe and time began. The created universe consists of matter, three dimensions and time. The *priority of Jesus Christ with respect to time and thus human history* suggests his pre-eminence and majesty in relation to all creatures, because all creatures are confined to matter, three dimensions and time. Jesus Christ is the Alpha, the beginning, of this created universe and also has the highest position in the universe.

Seven. In Jesus Christ all things hold together (1:17b).

He not only created everything, but he also maintains everything he created. He upholds the creation. If he would withdraw his care for the creation, everything would immediately fall apart and be destroyed. Angels and evil spirits have no part in maintaining the universe. They do not control the planets and stars, they cannot create people and animals and they cannot for example send rain or protect people.

Eight. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church (1:18a).

Jesus Christ is both the organic Head and the Ruling Head of the Christian Church in the world throughout history. Therefore, the Christian Church is in no sense whatever dependent on any human government or angels for its growth, wellbeing and fruitfulness.

Nine. Jesus Christ is the Firstborn from among the dead (1:18b)

Jesus Christ is not only the very first in human history to be resurrected from the dead, never to die again, but also has the right and dignity of a firstborn son in relation to the inheritance, the kingdom of God in its final phase, the new earth. When we are resurrected we will share his inheritance with him.

Ten. Jesus Christ has the supremacy in everything (1:18c).

Thus, these *four verses* teach me that with regard to all creation, only Jesus Christ is their Creator and Sustainer, their Point of Reference and Goal, their Head and the First to be resurrected. Jesus Christ is my Creator and Sustainer, my Point of reference and Goal. He is pre-eminent in time and in position to me. The pre-eminence and majesty of Jesus Christ is incomparably higher than anything created in the universe! This fact should create in me a deep sense of awe towards Jesus Christ!

Sharing quiet times from Colossians chapter 2.

(S) I want to share from Colossians 2:15. **Christ has triumphed over all spirits and demons.**

First. Who are the demons?

When God created the universe, he also created different kinds of angels, called 'powers and authorities'. According to Colossians 1:16, these powers and authorities were created *by* Christ and *for* Christ as their Goal. However, together with the fall of the archangel Satan, many other angels fell. The *fallen angels* are called *evil spirits* or *demons*. The goal of these fallen angels or evil spirits or demons is to oppose God and Jesus Christ. They fill many prophets and teachers of religions in the world with lies, thereby trying to pull them away from the God of the Bible and the truth of the Bible. Prophets and teachers of false religions are constantly referring to these angelic beings or spirits and worship them as *gods*. These evil spirits appear as shrine or temple spirits, desert or village spirits, house spirits or spirits of certain holy locations. Sometimes they appear as holy war spirits, religious magic spirits or territorial spirits.

Paul does not deny the existence of good angels and their ability to exert influence for good. He also does not deny the existence of evil angels and their ability to exert influence for evil. But Paul emphasises that both good angels and evil spirits have no power apart from Jesus Christ. Hebrews 1:14 teaches that the good angels cannot add anything to what Christians already have in Jesus Christ. Romans 8:38-39 teaches that the evil spirits cannot separate Christians from the love that God has for Christians! The evil spirits are approaching the day when even their ability to do harm in God's universe and in the hearts and lives of people will be ended once and for all!

Second. Demons are disarmed.

Colossians 2:14-15 speaks of cancelling the impersonal accuser and disarming the personal accuser.

One. Cancelling the impersonal accuser.

During the Old Testament period, the Law functioned as *the impersonal accuser* of believers. The Law accused believers of being transgressors and sinners and demanded that they should be punished with everlasting death. However, Matthew 5:17 and Romans 10:4 teach that Jesus Christ *fulfilled* all the demands of the Law in the place of people who believe in Jesus Christ. Colossians 2:14 teaches that by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, God *cancelled* the Law. By the sacrifice of atonement on the cross, God's holy and righteous indignation against sin has been satisfied and removed. All the accusations of the Law against us have been taken away from us and nailed to the cross. The Law can no longer accuse those who believe in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:15 teaches that by his death on the cross Jesus Christ *abolished* the Law. The ceremonial laws have been removed from the Christian Church.

Two. Disarming the personal accuser.

Ephesians 6:16 reveals that the devil and his demons shoot flaming arrows of suspicions, false accusations and condemnations at the minds and hearts of Christians. And Romans 8:33 reveals that they function as *the personal accusers* of Christians. However, Colossians 2:15 teaches that by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, God *triumphed* over these evil powers and authorities, *disarmed* them and *made a public spectacle* of them! After a military triumph, a Roman general would enter Rome on his chariot and many of his captives would be chained to his chariot as a public spectacle. Likewise, God publicly exposed these evil powers to disgrace, leading them captive in triumph, chained, as it were, to his triumphal chariot! Revelation 12:10-11 teaches that the accusations of evil spirits, demons or so-called gods of the religions are no longer valid and that they are all hurled out of the presence of the God of the Bible! Colossians 2:10 says that Jesus Christ is now the Head over every power and authority, whether good or evil! Matthew 28:18 teaches that all authority or power in heaven and on earth now belongs to Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:13 says that God rescues Christians from the dominion of darkness and brings them into the kingdom of the Son he loves. Christians never have to fear evil spirits or the gods of the other religions anymore! God has disarmed them and triumphed over all of them!

Sharing quiet times from Colossians chapter 3.

(T) I want to share from Colossians 3:5-12. **Christ is the new self that the Christian should put on every day.** Colossians 3:3 says, "You have died ... with Christ" and Colossians 3:5 says, "Put to death your members on earth". This is not a contradiction. The first expression describes *my position* and the second *my process* as a Christian. With regard to my *position* in Jesus Christ, *my old position and nature has died* with Jesus Christ and is buried. I am now justified and holy. However, with regard to my actual *condition*, *I still have to put to death* the fruits or results of my earthly members, namely, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

The list of vices in Colossians 3:5 describe my old sinful nature. *Sexual immorality* includes secret relationships and all kinds of unlawful imaginations, talk and behaviour in the sexual area. *Unlawful* particularly refers to outside one's own marriage. *Impurity* is the filthy thoughts in the mind and the evil intentions in the heart. *Lust* or *evil desires* is the inordinate passive and active craving for sexual satisfaction through illicit sexual relationships, or the craving for material possessions, fame, power and idolatry. It is the sin forbidden in the tenth commandment, "You shall not covet." *Greed* is selfishness or the worship of the self in one's own affections. It is overreaching, wanting more than its due or going beyond what is proper.

Verse 9 says that I must also rid myself of sins against others, like anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language. *Anger* is the fire roaring inside the heart, while *rage* is the tumultuous outbursts of anger, like shouting, screaming, accusing and cursing. *Malice* is the evil plans against my neighbour. *Slander* is the scornful insults and defamatory lies against my neighbour. *Filthy language* is all kinds of abusive language, like swearing, cursing and dirty jokes.

Verse 10 says, "Put on the new self", which is Christ, his knowledge, his righteousness, his holiness, in short his likeness.

Verse 12 says, "Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." This is a daily task. Every day I must spiritually put off the old dirty clothes and put on the new clean clothes. This daily process is called *sanctification*!

Sharing quiet times from Colossians chapter 4.

(S) I want to share from Colossians 4:2-6. **Christ has fellow workers who pray.** The Colossians are Paul's fellow workers especially in prayer. What should Christians pray for Christian workers?

First. Christians should pray for open doors of opportunity.

Let us read Colossians 4:2-3. The apostle Paul teaches, "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains." At the time Paul wrote these words, he was still sitting in prison. He did not pray for an open prison door

so that he may go out free! He prayed for open doors of opportunity to proclaim the gospel inside the prison! He asked for Christians to pray for opportunities to preach the gospel to the soldiers, to the judges and even to the emperor to whom he made his appeal. God can open a door of opportunity for me to witness for Christ no matter what my situation may be. The apostle Paul says that I should pray for Christian workers, that God give them open doors of opportunity to preach the gospel no matter what their circumstances may be.

Second. Christians should pray for clear and fearless preaching of the gospel.

Let us read Colossians 4:4-6. The apostle Paul continues to teach, "Pray that I may proclaim the gospel clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders. .. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." The Christian workers not only need *opportunities* to preach the gospel, they need *grace and wisdom* to preach and teach the gospel clearly, so that people may understand what they hear. The apostles preached the word, not only in their own countries, but also in other cities and countries, where the languages and customs were different. Therefore, they needed wisdom to use the right words to communicate. They needed grace to know how to answer every person's questions.

Because many people react to the gospel with indifference or with misunderstanding or even with hatred, Christian workers also need *courage* to speak the gospel fearlessly. When Jesus Christ preached the gospel, some people called him 'a Samaritan', that is, 'a foreigner'. Others called him 'raving mad' and even 'demon-possessed' (Jn 8:48; 10:20). The Pharisees, who were the religious leaders in the country, plotted together how they could kill Jesus (Jn 11:53). In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, the apostle Paul mentions some of the difficulties he faced when he preached the gospel. He was flogged with a whip, which had pieces of bone and metal at the tips of the thongs. He was beaten with rods and stoned. He faced danger from his own countrymen and danger from foreigners; danger in the open country or sea and danger from false brothers. Because Christian workers face similar difficulties and dangers, Christians should pray for them. They should pray that the Christian workers will be courageous and fearlessly proclaim the gospel everywhere.

I want to pray regularly for the Christian workers I know. I want to pray that God will give them opportunities even in their difficult circumstances. I want to pray that God will give them courage to teach the gospel boldly and grace to teach it clearly.

(T) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Divide 1 Thessalonians 1-4 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".