

(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. We are two teachers and every day during the past week we had a quiet time from 7 selected chapters from EXODUS in the Old Testament. Once a week we come together to share what we have learned from our quiet times. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM EXODUS.

(S) **SHARING FROM SELECTED CHAPTERS FROM EXODUS**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Exodus 1,2,3,18,20,32 and 33. Now we will use our notes to share important truths and lessons from some of these chapters and discuss some difficult passages.

(T) **Exodus chapter 18.**

I would like to share from Exodus 18:13-26 about Moses. This chapter relates how Moses accepted advice concerning leadership. After the Israelites had come out of Egypt, they regarded Moses as their leader and only judge. This probably happened, because while they were slaves in Egypt, there had not been any opportunity for the elders in Israel to exercise judgement. Every day the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, paid him a visit and saw how *Moses was trying to be the leader of Israel all by himself*. He observed that the work was too heavy for Moses. He told Moses that he could not handle the work alone. He warned that Moses and the people would wear themselves out and literally wither and fall just like leaves and flowers wither and fall from trees. The Bible teaches that *even the most distinguished leader has shortages and needs other men to help him lead*. Jethro's advice was very good. Leadership must be shared.

First advice: Moses should limit himself as a leader. Jethro advised that Moses must only be the people's representative before God by teaching the people the decrees and laws of God and by showing them the way to live (20). He said that Moses must limit his own task to prayer and to teaching. He must not try to make decisions for every individual Israelite, but must limit himself to teaching the general principles and laws of God. Other leaders must then use these general principles and laws and apply them to the many individual cases of the Israelites.

Second advice: Moses should choose others to help him lead. Jethro advised that Moses must select capable men from all the people. According to Deuteronomy 1:13, they should be representatives from every tribe and not just from one interest group. A man who becomes a leader must have some capabilities to do the task for which he is appointed. But a man who becomes a leader must also have a spiritually right character. A leader must be someone who fears God. He must revere God, fear God's holiness and justice and trust God in every situation. A leader must be trustworthy with respect to completing the task entrusted to him and with respect to doing his task honestly according to God's laws. A leader must hate dishonest gain. He must never accept bribes or give bribes. A person who accepts or gives bribes is disqualified to be a leader among God's people, because he reveres or fears people more than God. Deuteronomy 1:13 teaches that a leader must be wise, understanding and respected. And Numbers 11:16 teaches that he should already demonstrate his leadership in some area. Thus, *the selection criteria for leaders are concerned with both his capabilities as well as his personal character*. God commanded that leaders must be selected according to these criteria. The leaders were then selected or chosen by all the people of Israel and from each tribe in Israel.

Third advice: Moses should limit the tasks of each leader. Jethro advised that Moses appoint these men as leaders over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. The numbers must not be taken literal, but contains the good advice to make a man a leader only over the amount of people he can comfortably manage. A man must not be appointed a leader over more people than he can manage, because he would neglect justice for those people. He also advised Moses to give the leaders a clear job-description. A leader must know what his task is. And his task must also be limited. He must not be the leader in every area and then fall into the same mistake as Moses made. The limited task of these leaders were to serve as judges for the people. They should handle all the ordinary cases where people needed advice or judgement. God commanded their official appointment and the men were appointed and charged by Moses. According to Numbers 11:17, God himself endowed the leaders with the Holy Spirit so that they would be able to do their tasks.

I am a leader, and I have learned from Moses to select and appoint other men to help me to lead people. I have learned to limit my own and their tasks. In this way, both I myself and they will be able to stand the strain and all the people will go home satisfied.

(S) **Exodus chapter 20.**

I would like to share from Exodus 20:1-17 about the Ten Commandments. This chapter records the ten most important commandments in the world. The Old Testament Moral Law stipulated rules and regulations with regard to how people should live in order to please and glorify God. God's moral commandments are summarised in *the Ten Commandments*, which are written in Exodus 20 and in Deuteronomy 5. It is very important to notice that *the moral law has been given in the context of grace*. In Exodus 20:2 we read, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." The Ten Commandments only follow *after* God had saved the people from their sin and slavery. *God NEVER intended the Old Testament laws as a test of Israel's obedience or as a means by which they could be saved*. In the New Testament, God did not change the original intention he had for his laws in the Old Testament. God's intention with the Ten Commandments was and still is that *his saved people would know how they should live* in order to please and glorify him. Let us explain the meaning of the first four commandments. They regulate our relationship to God.

(T) The first commandment says, "You shall have no other gods before me." *The first commandment forbids the worship of any god besides the God who revealed himself in the Bible!*

The God of the Bible is the only living God and believers must be completely dedicated to him alone. Through the prophet Isaiah, God says, "I am the Lord, I am the first and the last; apart from me there is no God" (44:6, 45:5). In Mark 12:29, Jesus says, "The Lord, our God, the Lord is one." And in 1 Corinthians 8:6 the apostle Paul says, "For us there is but one God." The gods of other religions are spirits, but they are not the Almighty God of the Bible. In other parts of the Old Testament, the civil or penal law of Israel was applied to those who disobeyed this commandment. Believers in the Old Testament may not invoke the names of other gods (Ex 23:13). Whoever sacrificed to another god, had to be destroyed (Ex 22:20). Any prophet who tried to seduce people to worship other gods, had to be put to death (Dt 13:1-5). Any family member who tried to secretly seduce believers to worship other gods, had to be stoned to death (Dt 13:6-11). Any town which had introduced other gods, had to be completely destroyed. All its people and animals had to be killed and the whole town had to be burned down and left uninhabited (Dt 13:12-18). A prophet who spoke in the name of other gods, had to be put to death (Dt 18:20).

The first commandment not only forbids the worship of another god, but also *polytheism, idolatry and occultism*. Occultism is the belief in spirits and using their powers to do things. In Deuteronomy 18:9-13, the Lord says, "Do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations. Let no one be found among you who ... practises divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or cast spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord." The sorcerers were not allowed to live (Ex. 22:18) and a man or woman who was a medium or spiritist among Israel had to be stoned to death (Lev 20:27). People who visit mediums and spiritists will be exterminated by God himself. In Leviticus 20:6 God says, "I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists ... and I will cut him off from his people." The first commandment has never changed.

Although the Ten Commandments still apply to God's people of the New Testament, Israel's civil or penal law no longer applies to the people of the New Testament. Christians may not punish idolaters with death, but should rather preach the gospel to them so that they may turn to the living God of the Bible.

(S) The second commandment says, "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything." *The second commandment forbids making any representation of God or any idol or image of any god.*

The Israelites came out of Egypt, where they saw how the Egyptians worshipped idols resembling birds in the air, bulls on earth and fish in the water. People may not worship anything that man has made and that can be seen, heard, touched or felt. God is Spirit and those who worship him, must worship him in truth and in Spirit (Jn 4:24).

With regard to idolatry, the believers in the Old Testament were commanded to "break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles, and burn their idols in the fire" (Dt 7:5). In 2 Kings 23, king Josiah pulled down the altars of the idols and smashed them to pieces, smashed and burned the idols, ground them to powder and scattered their dust over the graves, desecrated the idol places by covering them with human bones, tore down the shrines, slaughtered all the idol priests, and got rid of the prostitutes, mediums, spiritists, all the so-called 'household idols' as well as all other detestable things in the whole country.

In the New Testament in Acts 19:19 we read about people who turned to Christ. A number of them who practised sorcery brought their scrolls containing sorcery and astrology together and burned them publicly. Christians may not destroy other peoples' idols, but they should destroy all their own idols, altars, shrines, amulets and books on foreign religions.

(T) The third commandment says, “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.” *The third commandment forbids the wrongful use of the name of the God of the Bible.*

Other commandments in the Old Testament explain this. A prophet who presumed to speak in God’s name anything God has not commanded him to say, had to be put to death (Dt 18:20). People may not swear falsely by God’s name (Lev 19:12). Cursing God is forbidden. In Leviticus 24:10-16 God says, “If anyone curses his God, he will be held responsible; anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him.” The Jewish teachers have mistakenly translated the second verb “to blaspheme” as “to mention” and thus forbade people to even mention the name of the Lord at anytime. However the two verbs “to curse” and “to blaspheme” are parallel. God does not forbid the mentioning of his name, but only the cursing or blaspheming of his name. Believers in the Old Testament and New Testament may use the name of the Lord when they pray to God or speak about God in a respectable way.

(S) The fourth commandment says, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” *The fourth commandment forbids the wrongful use of time.* The fourth commandment teaches the wisdom of using one day a week for refreshment and constructive service of God.

In the Old Testament, the Sabbath had two functions. In Exodus 23:12 we read, “Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may *rest* and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may *be refreshed*.” Here the purpose of resting one day out of every seven working days is *to rest and get refreshed*. In Leviticus 23:3 we read, “There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of *sacred assembly*.” Here the purpose of resting one day out of every seven working days is *to have the opportunity to meet together with other believers in a sacred assembly*.

In the New Testament, the Jewish teachers had buried this commandment under a catalogue of 39 forbidden works on the Sabbath, including “reaping”. They had set aside the commands of God in order to observe their own foolish man-made traditions (Mk 7:9). Jesus views the Sabbath differently, as having two main purposes.

The first purpose of the Sabbath is recorded in Mark 2:18-27. Jesus emphasises that those who are living in his very presence should be feasting instead of fasting, rejoicing rather than mourning. By his coming, Jesus Christ ushered in a new order. The fasting days and Sabbath days of the Old Testament period belong to the old order. And in Mark 2:23-27 Jesus says, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” The Sabbath was created *after* the creation of man and was instituted to be a blessing for man. Thus, the first purpose of the Sabbath is to keep man healthy, to make him helpful and thus happy, to render him holy, so that he might delight himself in the Lord (Isa 58:13-14) and look forward with joyful anticipation to the eternal rest that remains for the people of God (Heb 4:9-10).

The second purpose of the Sabbath is recorded in Mark 2:28 and 3:1-5. Jesus says, “The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” He has authority over everything and thus possesses authority to lay down principles that govern the Sabbath day. When there was a genuine need, like in the case of David and in the present case, then the divinely ordained ceremonial provision of the Sabbath may be ignored. And in Mark 3:1-5 he says, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” Thus, the second purpose of the Sabbath is to do good, both with respect to God, by loving, serving and worshipping him (Isa 56:6) as well as with respect to man, by delivering people from bondage and feeding and clothing them (Isa 58:6-12). This shows that the ceremonial aspect in this commandment has been replaced by wise principles. The Christians later applied these principles to the Sunday, the day which commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2).

(T) Exodus chapter 32 and 33.

I would like to share from Exodus 32:32 to 33:17 about Moses. This chapter records the prayers of the statesman Moses for his people.

First. Moses prayed with boldness and persistence. Moses was a very humble man (Num 12:3) and yet he prayed with shameless boldness and persistence. In Exodus 32, we read that after Israel had made a golden calf idol, Moses fasted for forty days and forty nights (Dt 9:18-19) and prayed, “What a great sin these people have committed. Please forgive their sin - but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (32:31-32). Praying so long was *shameless persistence!* To make such a bold request was *shameless boldness!* Moses would rather die than not have his people forgiven and given back to him.

Second. Moses prayed for the presence of God. In Exodus 33 we read that, because Israel had made that golden calf idol, God did not want to go along with Israel on their journey through the desert. God said to Moses that he would send an angel with the Israelites as they journeyed through the desert, but that he would not go with them himself. However, Moses would not settle for anything less than that God himself would go with them. So Moses prayed to the Lord and said, “If *your presence* does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other

people on the face of the earth?" (33:15-16). Moses knew that there was nothing special in himself or in the Israelites. Only with *the presence of God* could he be the statesman of God and leader of God's people. Without the presence of God he would be like any non-believer. Moses knew that only with the presence of God would Israel be God's people. Without the presence of God in Israel, Israel would be just like any other nation in the world. The presence of God is also the distinguishing mark of the worker of God and of the people of God! Then God answered Moses and said, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name. My presence will go with you!" (Ex 33:17,14).

Like the statesman Moses, Christian leaders should persistently pray for their subjects and especially pray that God may be present among his people! I too want to follow Moses' example and pray for the people of my country and especially for the people in the Christian churches. I want to pray that they may experience the presence of God in their midst!

(S) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Every day have a quiet time from one chapter from Deuteronomy. The selected chapters are Deuteronomy 4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10. 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 your discoveries, lessons and blessings.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's kingdom" and Internet on www.dota.net

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