

(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 PROVERBS 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 PROVERBS -pt2.

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

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Proverbs 15, 16, 17, 27, 28, 29 and 31. We will use our notes to share important truths and lessons from some of these chapters and discuss some difficult passages.

Sharing quiet times from Proverbs 15.

The art of speaking. Speaking or communication demands certain disciplines.

First. Proverbs 15:1 says, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." The first discipline of speaking is that you should control the volume and tone of your voice. By stating two facts, the writer gives good counsel. A gentle answer is a *tender* and *loving* answer. Such an answer turns away anger and brings calmness in a conversation. But a harsh word is an *offending* or *insulting* word, a word which causes sorrow. Such a word stirs up wrath. In conversations, it is not only important *what* you say, but also *how* you say it. In this verse the emphasis is on how you say something. The *volume and tone* of your voice may communicate anger or love.

Second. Proverbs 15:4 says, "The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit." The second discipline of speaking is that you should speak the whole truth. In this verse the emphasis is on both how you say something as well as what you say. Literally, a soft tongue has a *calm* and *soothing* effect. But a deceitful tongue is *crafty*, *false* and *untrustworthy*. It crushes the spirit, that is, it *wounds* and *tears down* a person's inner personality. This verse explains the ninth commandment, "You shall not give false testimony."

Third. Proverbs 15:23 says, "A man finds joy in giving an apt reply - and how good is a timely word." The third discipline of speaking is that you should speak only at the right time. In this verse an apt reply is the same as a timely word. To say the right thing at the right time is a part of the art of speaking. When a person gives a reply too soon, he not only rudely interrupts the person who is speaking, but also gives that person the feeling that what he has to say is not important to listen to.

Fourth. Proverbs 15:28 says, "The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil." The fourth discipline of speaking is that you should first consider the consequences of what you want to say. This proverb also emphasises the importance of what you say. While wicked people do not think before they speak, but just say whatever is on their mind, righteous people first think what they want to say and think about the consequences of what they say before they speak.

As a summary, these four proverbs teach me the importance of learning the art of speaking, the art of communication. *The first principle concerns manner:* I must be aware of the volume and tone of my voice. *The second principle concerns content:* I must always speak truthful and trustworthy words, which will not tear another person down, but will build him up. *The third principle concerns timing:* I must know when to be silent and when to speak. And I must know to speak just when it is necessary to speak. *The fourth principle concerns consideration:* I must think carefully what I want to say and what the consequences might be of what I say before I speak.

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Proverbs 15 and 16.**

The art of planning. Planning is not only necessary for businessmen, but for all Christians.

First. Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." The first principle of planning is that you should ask advice before you finalise a plan. The word *plans* is derived from the word to *think out*, to *devise* and to *calculate*. Plans are activities that a person has thought out and decided to do in the future. But a person must not think that he knows everything or does not need the input of others. Plans fail for lack of counsel. The word *counsel* means *confidential discussions or consultations*. A person who makes his plans without having confidential discussions with a few other wise people, asking them for their advice, will soon discover that his plans fail. Only with many advisers will his plans succeed.

Second. Proverbs 16:1 says, “To man belongs the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the reply of the tongue.” The second principle of planning is that you should remain completely dependent on the sovereignty of God. The word *plans* here is derived from the word to *arrange* or to *order* and is used of arranging the wood and the offering on the altar (Lev 1:7-8). While people may make plans, the reply is from the Lord. In the book of Proverbs, the name of God is often *LORD*, which is *his covenant name*. It means that God is completely true to his revealed attributes and he will certainly do what he has promised in the Bible. No matter how much people plan or have intentions about what they want to do, it is a fact that the Lord always determines what will really happen. The God of the Bible is the Sovereign God, also with respect to every man’s planning. While people may have the ability to arrange their thoughts and intentions in a neat order, it is the God of the Bible who ultimately determines what is going to happen! Therefore, the best way to make plans is to plan together with the God of the Bible, to plan according to God’s teachings and commandments in the Bible, and to stay completely dependent on the God of the Bible through prayer. Expect from God that he will sovereignly give the best possible reply to you.

Third. Proverbs 16:2 says, “All a man’s ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord.” Literally the proverb says, “The whole of a man’s ways are pure in his eyes, but the Lord tests the spirits.” The third principle of planning is to that you should have the right convictions and motives. Everything a man does is pure in his own eyes. The word *pure* means *sound* or *correct*. According to a person’s own judgement, everything he does is correct, that is, without mistakes. He believes that everything he does is the general accepted rule, otherwise he would not have done it. But this does not mean that everything a person does is necessarily pure or correct in God’s eyes! The Lord tests a man’s spirits, in order to establish what is really behind his words and actions. The word *to test* or *to weigh* means *to test according to an absolute pure standard*. And the word *spirits* or *motives* means the person’s inner disposition, his *convictions* and *motives*. According to the accepted standard among people, everyone regards his own thoughts, words and actions as correct. However, according to God’s absolute righteous and holy standard, God tests everyone’s thoughts, words and actions in order to establish what the real motives of his thoughts, words and actions are. God tests every plan people make in order to see on which convictions it is based and for which reasons it is carried out. Nothing is hidden from the eyes of the God of the Bible.

Fourth. Proverbs 16:3 says, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” Literally the proverb says, “Roll whatever you do onto the Lord, and your plans will be carried out.” The fourth principle of planning is that you should cast all your worries and adversities onto the Lord through prayer. *Whatever you do* includes not only *everything you do*, but also *all your worries and cares*. You should roll all your worries and cares about what you should do and about what is actually happening in your life in the direction of the Lord. It means that you should become completely dependent on the Lord and continually entrust every aspect of your life to him. Then your plans will *be carried out*. Plans that carry the approval of God will become a reality. The New Testament equivalent is 1 Peter 5:7, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (Ps 55:22).

(S) Sharing quiet times from Proverbs 16.

What is the meaning of Proverbs 16:4? Proverbs 16:4 says, The Lord works out everything for his own ends - even the wicked for a day of disaster.” Literally the proverb says, “The Lord made everything for its purpose, even the godless for the day of disaster.” Everything and everyone in God’s creation has a specific purpose. There is a correspondence between everything and its purpose. The *godless* or *wicked* are people who deny the existence of God or do not take the living God serious. They mock at the sovereignty and power of God, who set these purposes for everything. They do not believe the purpose that God has set for the ungodly or wicked, namely, a day of disaster. The *day of disaster* includes all the calamities that will strike the lives of the godless or wicked people, including the Final Day of Judgement. The God who revealed himself in the Bible made calamities and the Day of Judgement for the purpose of the godless and wicked people in the world. His purpose is first of all, not to destroy them, but to inspire fear in them so that they will repent and turn to the Lord. The New Testament equivalent is 2 Corinthians 5:10-11, “We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men.” When calamity strikes at wicked people, they must acknowledge that the God of the Bible really exists and that he is holy and righteous. God cannot and will not tolerate perversity or wickedness. He has made the day of disaster for the godless and wicked people. This proverb also teaches the absolute sovereignty of the God of the Bible. He is sovereign even over the people who do not acknowledge him and who do things that he has forbidden. They too will serve his purpose. If they do not repent and turn to God, they will suffer in the day of disaster.

(T) Sharing quiet times from Proverbs 17 and 27.

The art of friendship. Friendship between two people has certain responsibilities.

First. Proverbs 17:9 says, “He who covers an offence promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.” The first responsibility of friendship is that you should never repeat an old offence. Many people continue to suffer the hurts of past offences. They feel that a particular past offence was very wrong and unjust. The consequences

of that offence turned out to be most injurious for them. Often that past offence has never been properly solved. And so, every time they are reminded of that past offence, they hurt. At such times they feel the urge to talk about that past offence to others. They look for understanding from others and often seek to justify themselves. Although past offences can cause much hurt, the Bible says that you should never speak about a past offence to your neighbour or friend. If you do, your friend will think that you will also speak about his offences against you to others and he will begin to distrust you. Talking about past offences only separates friends.

Instead, true wisdom and true love is to cover a past offence. Never speak about any past offence to anyone else except the Lord. And remember this responsibility every time you pray, "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us" (Mt 6:12).

Second. Proverbs 27:5-6 and 9b says, "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. The pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel." The second responsibility of friendship is that you should rebuke and correct your friend. *Hidden love* is that kind of love that never expresses itself either in words or deeds. It never expresses itself in a word of correction or in a friendly word of encouragement. Who can profit anything from such hidden love? Nobody! Hidden love is not really love at all. An *open rebuke* has much more value than hidden love, because it wants to bring some correction to a person. Even an open rebuke from an enemy has more value than hidden love from a friend. A true friend will always express his love by giving earnest counsel. Therefore friends should not hesitate to rebuke and correct one another in a loving way. The silent acceptance of something that is wrong and the multiplication of kisses and hugs are not really true friendship. True friendship expresses itself in rebuke, correction and earnest counsel.

Third. Proverbs 27:10 says, "Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you - better a neighbour nearby than a brother far away." The third responsibility of friendship is that you should cultivate friendship with family friends and neighbours. The Bible warns that you should not forget an old friend of the family, because in times of adversity, a friend or neighbour living nearby is a much greater help than a family member living far away.

Fourth. Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." The fourth responsibility of friendship is that you should realise that every relationship develops your personality. Just as you need an iron to sharpen another iron, so people develop one another's personality by relating to one another and interacting with one another. They develop one another especially by constructive criticism, rebuke, correction and counsel. But they also develop one another by putting up with one another's weaknesses and shortcomings. Especially the criticism and shortcomings of young and inexperienced people can be very hard. But friendship is not simply hanging around with one another, expressing boredom and engaging in meaningless talk. True friendship is influencing one another with what is true and good and right and helping one another to become better persons.

(S) Sharing quiet times from Proverbs 28.

The art of governing. Emperors, kings and government officials should learn how to govern their country well.

First. Proverbs 28:2 says, "When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a man of understanding and knowledge maintains order." The first principle of governing is to maintain order by appointing good officials. The reason why some countries are in disarray and the people are rebellious is because there is no continuity of good leaders. Every time a leader makes a mistake, he is replaced by another. A wicked emperor or king will appoint wicked officials who will make many mistakes and will need to be replaced again and again. However, a good emperor or king will appoint good officials who will have proper knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. They will maintain order in the country, not by force, but by their good example and good government!

Second. Proverbs 28:4 says, "Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law resist them." The second principle of governing is to keep the law by acting against the wicked. *The law* is here *the instruction* of the wise people, which is *based on the Law of God* in the Bible. When the leaders of a country do not care to listen to the instruction of the wise people or listen to the Law of God, they will agree with the wicked people and praise the actions of the wicked people. Every ruler who does not keep the law himself will be against his own countrymen who do keep the law. History is full of examples where the leaders of a country were the greatest enemies of the citizens of their own country. However, leaders of a country who keep the law themselves will resist the wicked people. *To resist* means to *be extremely annoyed and indignant*. Leaders who keep the law themselves will not support any kind of wicked action in their country and will not tolerate wicked people in their country. They will maintain the law by acting against the wicked.

Third. Proverbs 28:5 says, "Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully." The third principle of governing is to understand what is just in God's eyes and maintain that justice. Evil people have chosen to ignore law and order and therefore they cannot understand justice at all. In their eyes, "right" is whatever

gives them more money, power or fame. Everything that hinders their quest for money, power and fame is regarded as “wrong”. Therefore, evil government leaders cannot understand what is really right or wrong in God’s eyes. Whoever rejects the law of God rejects the only possible law that can teach them what is right or wrong. Without the absolute standard of God’s law in the Bible, every other law becomes completely relative, arbitrary and based only on a changing human being or a changing situation or a changing religion. However, every government leader who seeks the God who revealed himself in the Bible through the prophets of the Old Testament and through Jesus Christ in the New Testament and who seeks to know his laws revealed in the Bible will have a complete understanding of what is right and what is just! In Proverbs chapter 28, there are several proverbs concerning what is really just and what is unjust: Proverbs 28:8 says that *increasing one’s wealth by exorbitant interest*, as loan-sharks do, is unjust! Proverbs 28:10 says that *deliberately misleading innocent and upright people* is unjust! Setting traps for the upright and righteous people in one’s country is very wicked in God’s eyes and he will punish these wicked people by letting them fall into their own traps. For example, forcing the upright and righteous Christians to do things that are forbidden by God will be punished by God. Proverbs 28:16 says that *enriching oneself with ill-gotten gains* through smuggling, gambling, betting, selling fake receipts or stealing cars, etc. is unjust!

(T) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Every day have a quiet time from one chapter from Isaiah. The selected chapters are Isaiah 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8. 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”.