

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this meditation and memorisation series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will meditate on the meaning of a Bible verse about one characteristic of a disciple of Jesus Christ and then memorise it together. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. In the first series God promises that all Christians may have 5 assurances. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: A DISCIPLE IS SURE OF FORGIVENESS.

POINT 1. MEDITATION OF THE NEW BIBLE VERSE

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is 1 John 1:9. We will ask one another questions to help us to meditate on the truths written in the Bible. Please read 1 John 1:9.

(S) 1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

(Question). The Bible verse begins with the words "If we confess our sins." What is sin?

(T) In the Bible, the word "sin" means "to miss God's goal for your life" and "to fall short of God's standard of righteousness". Many people try to live good and right lives. But all the good and right living in the world is NOT good enough, because it is measured against God's standard for human beings. God's standard for good and right living is nothing less than *absolute perfection!* It must be *a life like that of Jesus Christ!* Everything less than that fails to reach the required standard of the perfect God!

The Bible says that all people miss God's goal or purpose for their lives. "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). The way God wants us to choose is God's way. And God's way is explained in the Bible. However, all people in the world have chosen their own way. Nobody goes in the right direction! By nature, every person is on the wrong way!

The Bible says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The glory of God is nothing less than all God's perfect characteristics, like his perfect love and perfect righteousness. All people fall short of perfect love and perfect righteousness! No one qualifies as a good or righteous person before the absolute holy and righteous God!

(Question). What is the difference between "sin" and things like murder, theft, rape, lies and fighting?

(S) Sins like murder, theft, rape, lies and fighting are called *the fruits of sin*. But the fruits of sin are not the same as *the root of sin*. "Sin" is like a tree with roots and fruits. The Bible says that the root of sin is *independence from God!* The root of sin is *to miss God's goal and standard* for living. The root of sin is *to deliberately transgress God's commandments and prohibitions*. The root of sin is *to twist God's truth* in the Bible. The word "sin" in the Bible can only be understood in relationship to *God*. The root of sin is to have no relationship with God or to have the wrong relationship with God. From a pure human point of view, the root of sin is called *self-sufficiency* or *independence!* The root of sin is to be your own god, the captain of your own soul and the master of your own destiny.

But the fruits of sin are all the things that result from the root of sin. The fruits of sin result from a life that is self-sufficient and independent from God. The fruits of sin are doing the things, which God forbids, or neglecting to do the things, which God commands. Thus, the fruits of sin are not only doing bad things like murder, theft, rape, corruption and lies, but also *not* loving God, *not* loving your neighbour and *not* loving yourself. God's purpose for all people is that they love God, love their neighbour and love themselves. A very good person, who never commits a murder or never steals or never lies, but who does not love the God who revealed himself in the Bible, is a sinner! Sin is therefore much more than just doing the wrong things! The most common sin is NOT doing the right things! By the fruits of a tree you can see the root of the tree. A tree bearing rotten fruit must have rotten roots. Likewise, a person that loves God will bear good fruit like loving his neighbour and loving himself.

"Sin" therefore does not just describe any concept of wrongdoing, but describes *the relationship with God*. The root of sin is a broken relationship with the living God. And when you have a broken relationship with God, then you do what is wrong in God's eyes as well as neglect to do what is right in God's eyes. Thus, the root of sin is self-sufficiency or independence from the God of the Bible. And the fruits of sin are doing things that the God of the Bible forbids as well as neglecting to do things that the God of the Bible commands.

(Question) What does it mean to confess sin?

(T) To confess sin literally means *to agree with God* what he says about our sins. To confess is to acknowledge that God is right when he shows us our sins. To confess is to agree with the Bible what the Bible tells us about what sin is. To confess sin means to tell God about the sins that we have committed. To confess is

to tell God about the wrong relationship we have with him. To confess is to tell God about the wrong relationship we have with other people or even ourselves. To confess sins is to tell God about our self-sufficiency and independence from him. To confess sins is to tell God about the things, which we have done but which he had forbidden to do and it is to tell him about the things, which we have neglected to do but which he had commanded us to do.

(Question). Sometimes people claim that they have no sin. They say, "I have never killed anybody; I have never stolen things; I have never spoken lies; I always do good to other people. I am not a sinner!" Are all people in the world sinners?

(S) Although there are always people who say that they have not sinned, God says that they have all sinned. 1 John 1:8,10 says, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.... If we claim we have not sinned, we make God out to be a liar and God's word has no place in our lives."

The Bible says that a person, who says that he has no sin, does not know himself. He deceives himself. He also accuses God to be a liar, because God says that all people have sinned. Thus, a person who says that he has no sin is a liar himself.

Why is such a person a sinner? Although he might not have killed anybody or stolen anybody's possessions, he still has no relationship with the living God – the God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and in the Bible! And we have already seen that the root meaning of sin is to have no relationship with the living God of the Bible. The root of sin is independence from God. It is the arrogance of the creature when he says to his Creator, "I do not believe in your existence", "I do not believe in what you say" or "I do not need you". Romans 3:11-12 says, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

(Question). What is the meaning of forgiveness in the Bible?

(T) First. When Jesus forgives you your sins, then *he removes the punishment of sin*. When Jesus died on the cross, he did not die, because other people wanted to kill him, but he died as a punishment for our sins. Jesus died in our place. Because the God of the Bible is a holy and righteous God, he must punish sins. Otherwise he will no longer be a holy and righteous God.

Because all people in the world have sinned, no one is righteous in God's eyes and everyone needs God's righteousness. When Jesus was nailed to the cross, he took the believer's sins onto his own body and nailed them to the cross. The death of Jesus was *a sacrifice of atonement*. His sacrifice turned the holy and righteous anger of God against our sins away. A person, who believes in Jesus Christ, believes that Jesus Christ died for all his sins. Therefore, God declares every believer in Jesus Christ 100% righteous. And therefore God regards and treats every believer in Jesus Christ as 100% righteous for the rest of his life on earth. When Jesus forgives sins, those sins will never again count against him.

In Hebrews 8:12 God says, "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no longer."

(S) Second. When Jesus forgives sins, *he also removes the guilt and shame of sin*. In Psalm 38:3-4 King David says, "Because of your wrath there is no health in my body.... My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear."

When you sin, you lose your peace. The Bible says, "There is no peace for the wicked." (Isaiah 57:21). When you sin, two things happen.

On the one hand, you feel very guilty before God of what you have done. Guilt stands between you and God. God is disappointed and sad about what you have done. And God's holiness and righteousness must punish you, unless God forgives you.

On the other hand, you feel very ashamed before people of what you have done. Shame stands between you and other people. Other people may be disappointed in you or even mock you. You feel that the wrong that you have done has spoiled your good name and reputation. You may even become angry with yourself and revengeful unless God takes away your shame.

Guilt and shame can cause a person to fall sick, to have sleepless nights or to become very depressed.

But when you confess your sins to God, two important things happen. On the one hand, your relationship to God changes. God forgives you your sins (Psalm 32:5). On the other hand, your relationship to other people changes. They can no longer accuse you and thus shame you (Romans 8: 34). They can no longer shame your good name and reputation. When God forgives you, he cleanses your conscience and restores your self-esteem so that you may serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14).

(T) Third. When Jesus forgives sins, *he also removes the power of sin*. Colossians 1:13-14 says, "For God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

When God saved you the first time, he brought you out of the domain where the devil has control and brought you into the domain where Christ has control. In this kingdom of Christ, you are saved and you receive forgiveness. Together with salvation and forgiveness comes freedom from the power of the devil, freedom from the powers of darkness and freedom from the power of sin. Sin will not be able to enslave you anymore, if you do not want it to.

A person, who still feels shame and believes that he must revenge the honour of his family or country, is still under the power of sin. Not only the devil makes you a slave of sin; also your own sinful nature makes you a slave of sin. Your feelings of shame cause you to revenge yourself and kill others. But when Jesus forgives you, he removes the power of sin and the power of shame from you. Then you become free to love instead of to hate!

(S) Fourth. When Jesus forgives sins, he *accepts the sinner*. The parable in Luke 15:20-24 tells about a young man, who took his inheritance, went to a foreign country and spent everything he possessed with bad friends in an irresponsible life-style. Then he returned home, without any possessions, with rags for clothes and no friends. The Bible continues the story. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate." When God forgives, he accepts you completely and with joy. He removes the sins that had caused separation between you and God. When God has forgiven you, he will never hold a grudge against you. His greatest joy is that you have returned to him!

(Question). The Bible says, "He will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness". What is the meaning of the words, "to purify from all unrighteousness"?

(T) When iron is melted in an oven, the purpose is to purify it. The fire burns away all impure elements in the metal. Likewise, when Jesus purifies us, he removes all the corrupt desires in our heart. He removes the defilement of sin as well as the corrupt influences of sin.

Let me summarise. When Jesus Christ forgives us, he justifies and sanctifies us. He removes the guilt and punishment of sin; and he also removes the defilement and corruption of sin.

(Question). Why can and will Jesus forgive sins?

(S) Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins. By his death, he paid the penalty for our sins. That is why he *can* forgive our sins. Jesus is faithful and just. That is his character. If Jesus were not just, he could not forgive us. If Jesus were not faithful, he would not forgive us. But now the Bible says that Jesus is faithful and just. He wants to forgive us and he can forgive us! Therefore, when we confess our sins, he will surely forgive us!

(T) **POINT 2. MEMORISATION OF THE NEW BIBLE VERSE**

(T+S) Assurance of forgiveness. 1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins.

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(T) Why is it important to memorise Bible verses without one mistake?

(S) Because it is very hard to unlearn mistakes that you have memorised. Moreover, it is much easier to memorise and review, to recall and use Bible verses when you have memorised them without one mistake.

(T) **POINT 3. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Daily review the last four memorised Bible verses once every day for 5 weeks.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on www etc.

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