

(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 this third series God teaches that 5 things are important in order to understand the gospel message and to explain the gospel to other people: understanding the nature of sin, knowing that judgement is a punishment for sin, believing that sin must be atoned, realising that salvation is God's gift and personally receiving Jesus into one's life. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: A DISCIPLE UNDERSTANDS THE NATURE OF SIN.

(S) **POINT 1. MEDITATION OF THE NEW BIBLE VERSE**

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is Romans 3:23. We will ask one another questions in order to help us to meditate on the truths written in the Bible. Let me read Romans 3:21-24.

Romans 3:21-24. "But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

The memorisation verse is: Nature of sin. Romans 3:23. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23.

(T) **The meaning of the word 'sin' in the Bible.**

In Psalm 51:1-4 David prays, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my *transgressions*. Wash away all my *iniquity* and cleanse me from my *sin*. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proven right when you speak and justified when you judge." Three words are often used in the Bible to describe 'sin': the word 'sin' itself, the word 'transgression' and the word 'iniquity'. First. The word 'sin' means, "to miss the goal or target". In the Bible it *refers to our relationship to God*. Sin means *to miss God's goal* for your life. God's goal for people is to have the right relationships and do the right things in life. But, because people do not have the right relationship to God or to other people and not even to themselves, they are called 'sinners' in the Bible. Because people do not do what is right in God's eyes, they are called 'sinners'.

Second. The word 'sin' also means, "to fall short of the standard". In the Bible it refers to our relationship to God. Sin means to fall short of God's standard for human life. The word 'sin' does not necessarily mean 'evil' or 'bad' or 'criminal'. It simply describes the lack of something. A sinner is a person who does not necessarily do evil things, but simply misses God's goal for his life or falls short of God's standard for his life. That is why all people in the world are 'sinners'. Even the very 'good' people in the world are 'sinners', because their good deeds are not good enough in God's eyes! Their good deeds miss God's goal of 100% perfection and falls short of God's standard, which natural people cannot attain! Thus, whatever the people in the world regard as "right living" is measured against God's perfect goal for living. Whatever the people in the world regard as "good works" is measured against God's perfect standard for good works. God's goal and standard is nothing less than Jesus Christ himself and his likeness. Thus, even people who live very exemplary lives and do many good works are 'sinners' in God's eyes. There is not one human being in the world that lives good enough in God's eyes! There are no human good works that are good enough in God's eyes! Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." All people in the world miss God's perfect goal and fall short of God's unattainable high standard.

(S) **The meaning of the word 'transgression' in the Bible.**

First. The word 'transgression' means, "to cross over the set limits or boundaries." In the Bible it *refers to our relationship to God*. 'Transgression' means, "to cross over the limits or boundaries, which God has established." God's limits or boundaries for human living and human behaviour are revealed in the commandments and prohibitions of the Bible. For example, the Bible prohibits the following: "You shall not murder", "You shall not commit adultery", "You shall not steal", and "You shall not give false testimony." (Exodus 20:13-16). And the Bible commands, "You shall love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength", "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). Because all people at some times do what is prohibited and at some times neglect to do what is commanded, they are called 'transgressors' in the Bible.

Second. The word 'transgression' also means, "to rebel". In the Bible it *refers to our relationship to God.*

'Transgression' means, "to deliberately rebel against God and disobey his Word." Transgression is an open and visible manner of wrongdoing. It is stubborn resistance against God and defiant rejection of God's set limits and boundaries for human behaviour. It is living as you like and doing what is 'good' in your own eyes.

Transgression rejects the boundaries set by parents, the government and God. Transgression rejects moral values, spurns wisdom and mocks at character. Transgression stirs up rebellion, promotes perversion and hardens itself against God. Transgression is especially transgression of God's laws and boundaries.

**(T) The meaning of the word 'iniquity' in the Bible.**

First. The word 'iniquity' means, "to change the reality". In the Bible it *refers to our relationship to God.*

'Iniquity' means, "to subtly change the reality as God views it". All people in the world have a world-view. People's world-view is expressed in their view of existence and reality, their beliefs and values, as well as their culture and their institutions. God has revealed to us the correct world-view in Christ and the Bible. He has revealed all the truths he wants people to know, to believe and to do. However, because all people in the world make up their own world-view and create their own beliefs and values, they have changed the reality as God views it.

Second. The word 'iniquity' also means, "to twist or distort the truth". In the Bible it *refers to our relationship to God.* 'Iniquity' means, "to twist or distort God's truth" as he has revealed it in the Bible. Although God speaks clearly through the Bible, people still misinterpret the truth of the Bible. As a consequence, there are many false teachers and many people who are misled by these false teachers. 'Iniquity' is often a more subtle and sneaky way of wrongdoing. It is concealed or camouflaged wrongdoing.

**(S) The root of sin and the fruits of sin.**

First. The 'root of sin' is "self-sufficiency or independence from God". The deepest meaning of the word 'sin' is a broken relationship with the living God of the Bible. It is living your life, even a life of good works or a religious life, apart from the God of the Bible. The root meaning of sin is "to set up your own goals and standards apart from the God of the Bible". It is "to live outside the boundaries set by the God of the Bible" or "to live without any boundaries at all". It is "to create and believe your own world-view and culture apart from the God of the Bible". The 'fruit of sin' grows out of the "root of sin".

Second. The 'fruit of sin' is "to do what God has forbidden and to neglect to do what God has commanded".

Lists of things that God has forbidden are found in Mark 7:20-23, Romans 1:28-32, Galatians 5:19-21, Titus 3:3 and Revelation 21:8. It includes things like unbelief, lying, stealing, murder, sexual immorality, practising magic arts, dishonesty, corruption and idolatry, 'Sin' therefore does not just describe any concept of wrongdoing, but describes "the broken relationship with the living God, who revealed himself in the Bible". When Christians preach the gospel, they must help people to understand 'sin' in both its 'root' meaning and 'fruit' meaning.

In summary. The root meaning of sin in the Bible is "self-sufficiency" or "independence from God". The fruit meaning of sin is "doing what God forbids" and "not doing what God commands". In short, sin describes "the broken relationship with God".

**(T) The meaning of the word 'glory' in the Bible.**

There are several uses of the word 'glory' in the Bible.

One. Giving glory to God. In 1 Corinthians 1:31 we read, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." But in Romans 1:21 we read, "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him." And in Romans 3:10-11 we read, "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." The meaning of the word 'glory' here is "to give the glory to God, which people owe him". It is to adore and praise God. This is not the meaning in Romans 3:23.

Two. Inheriting future glory. In Romans 8:18 we read, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." In 1 Corinthians 15:42-43 we read, "With the resurrection, the body that is sown ... in dishonour, will be raised in glory." And in 2 Timothy 2:10 we read, "The elect ... may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." In these verses, the word 'glory' refers to the future glory of heaven and the new earth, where believers will possess eternal salvation, have resurrected bodies and share in the glorious life of God. Also this is not the meaning in Romans 3:23.

Three. Possessing the glorious image of God. In Genesis 1:27 we read that God created man and woman in his own glorious image. But after the man and the woman had fallen into sin, they lost this glorious image of God. They lost the perfection, which is the reflection of God's glory. They lost their perfect holiness, perfect righteousness and perfect love, which they had before their fall into disobedience. As a result man cannot approach God directly anymore. Exodus 20:18 says, "When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance." The fall of man caused people to stand afar, trembling when they realise the reality and nearness of the majestic and almighty

God of the Bible. This is definitely the meaning of Romans 3:23. All people have sinned. As a result, they all have lost the perfection of God's glorious image. They lack God's holiness and righteousness. They lack God's love and faithfulness. Etc. They have also lost their earlier privileges and blessings. For example, they have lost God's *approval*, are *unworthy* of God's praise and deserve only God's condemnation instead. In summary, all people fall short of God's glory means that all people have lost their state of perfection, have lost God's glorious characteristics and consequently have lost God's approval.

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

The method of memorising a new Bible verse has four steps:

Step 1. Meditate and understand the Bible verse before you memorise it.

Step 2. Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. Write topic at the top. The topic today is "Nature of sin". Beneath that, write the Bible reference of the verse. The Bible reference today is Romans 3:23. And beneath that, write the whole verse.

Step 3. Memorise the verse in the right way. Always start with the name of the topic, the Bible reference and the first line of the verse. It is a good practice to learn the Bible reference twice, first at the beginning of the verse and then at the end of the verse.

Step 4. Review the new Bible verses every day for five weeks. And review the old Bible verses at least once every three weeks.

**(T)** Let us memorise the Bible verse together. Then let us take turns to say the verse alone without looking at the Bible or notebook.

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**(T) POINT 3. REVIEW OF THE LAST BIBLE VERSES YOU HAVE MEMORISED**

Let us review the last 5 Bible verses that we have memorised without looking at our notebooks.

The series "Christian assurances", verses 1-5.

**(S)** Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17.

**(T)** Word. Matthew 4:4. Jesus answered., "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4.

**(S)** Prayer. John 15:7. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. John 15:7.

**(T)** Fellowship. 1 John 1:7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1:7.

**(S)** Witnessing. Matthew 10:32. Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. Matthew 10:32.

**(T) POINT 4. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Daily review the last five 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".