

(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 fifth series God teaches that there are 5 important things a Christian disciple does: he makes Christ his Lord, he denies himself, he serves, he gives and he makes other people Christ's disciples. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: A DISCIPLE GIVES.

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

The new Bible that verse we will meditate and memorise is 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. We will ask one another questions in order to help us to meditate on the truths written in the Bible. Let me read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 in its context, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: 'He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

The memorisation verse is: Giving. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.

(T) **First. The New Testament principle of giving.**

There are 5 principles in the New Testament about giving. Let us take turns to share these principles.

One. Christian giving is like sowing and multiplying seed. 2 Corinthians 9:6 says, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously". Christian giving is not throwing away. Whatever a Christian gives is not lost, but is rather multiplied! Christian giving is just like sowing seed. Outwardly, the seed of the farmer looks very small and insignificant, but inwardly every seed has tremendous potential. Contrary to all appearances, the seed possesses the potency of life and increase. In order to allow the seed to grow and bear fruit, the farmer must scatter this seed into the soil. He must give the seed away, before he can see it grow and multiply! One seed can grow into a tree with many fruits and with even many more seeds in the fruits! Likewise, the amount that a Christian gives multiplies many times!

(S) Two. Christian giving is sharing what you have received. 2 Corinthians 9:10 says, "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness." The Christian can only give what he possesses. What he possesses, he has first received from God. 2 Corinthians 5:18 says, "All is from God." And 1 Corinthians 4:7 says, "What do you have that you did not receive?" Therefore, Christian giving is the result of God's grace and not the result of the Christian's goodness. God's grace not only gives the seed that the Christian sows, but also increases the Christian's store of seed and enlarges the harvest of his righteousness. To put it in other words: the more the Christian gives away, the more God entrusts him with things to give away. These things may be money, but is more often blessings in their personal life and fruitfulness in their ministry.

(T) Three. Christian giving results in reaping what you sow (Gal 6:7). 2 Corinthians 9:6 says, "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." A Christian will reap according to the manner he sows. This rule is true in the agricultural world. It is true in the moral world. And it is true in Christian giving. Whoever sows little, will reap little. Whoever sows abundantly, will reap abundantly. Proverbs 11:24-25 says, "One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." Proverbs 19:17 says, "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done." Jesus taught that even so slight a deed as giving "a cup of cold water" to someone would be rewarded (Mat 10:42). He even taught that when you give food to the hungry, or drink to the thirsty, or shelter to the stranger, or clothing to

the naked, or attention to the sick and the prisoner, then you actually give these things to Jesus Christ himself (Mat 25:35-40)! Therefore, sow generously and you will reap generously!

(S) Four. The true measure of Christian giving is not the size of the gift, but the attitude of the heart.

2 Corinthians 9:7 says, "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." The Old Testament law fixed the amount the Israelites had to give. They had to "tithing", that is, give one tenth of their harvest and in some cases two tenths and even three tenths. But in the New Testament there is no fixed amount. In contrast to Old Testament giving, there is real freedom in Christian giving. Each Christian should decide in his own heart how much God wants him to give. No quota or percentage is imposed on him. When a Christian gives reluctantly, that is, when he gives and then grieves over what he has lost, then God does not consider that as giving. And when a Christian gives under compulsion of a higher authority or under pressure of public opinion, then God does not consider that as giving either. Pastors or members of a church may not require that Christians give one tenth of their income to the church! The requirement of "tithing" belongs to the Old Testament ceremonial law and according to Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:15, this law has been cancelled and abolished from the church. Moreover, the requirement of "tithing" would force Christians to give under compulsion. As a result many would give reluctantly and not cheerfully. The Bible teaches that each Christian should decide in his own heart what he ought to give and what he can give willingly and cheerfully!

(T) Five. Christian giving should be regular and systematic. 1 Corinthians 16:2 says, "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." The Christians at Corinth were exhorted to set aside a certain amount of income on Sundays and then to save it up until it was collected. The reference is not to a collection during the church service, but to a personal responsibility of each church member. Paul trusted the Christians and treated them as responsible members of the church. Therefore, each Christian should decide how much of his income he ought to set aside and then give it to those who need it when they need it.

(S) Second. What are some blessings of giving?

Let us take turns to share the blessings of giving.

One. Christian giving results in having sufficient for your own needs. 2 Corinthians 9:8 says, "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that ... you will have all that you need." Giving away money or time to God's work seems to be a foolish and bad investment to the people in the world. But the people in the world do not know God's ability to multiply even the little a Christian gives. God's grace always leads to increase and never to decrease, even when Christians give very much away. After the Christian has given, he discovers that he still has sufficient for his own needs.

(T) Two. Christian giving makes you abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 also says, "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times ... you will abound in every good work." The Bible does not suggest that a Christian will become rich when he gives money to the church. The Christian who gives, discovers that God makes him rich *in good works*. 2 Corinthians 9:9 says, "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." The Bible does not suggest that a person can be justified by giving gifts to the poor. A person can only be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. However, when a Christian begins to give, God makes him rich in righteousness, that is, rich *in good deeds*!

(S) Three. Christian giving makes you rich in generosity. 2 Corinthians 9:11 says, "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." Some people have interpreted this as worldly riches, but the context rather refers to spiritual or inward riches. The Christian who gives, will not necessarily become rich materially, but will always have sufficient for his own material needs, just as verse 8 teaches. However, the Christian who gives, will become richer in his heart. He will become rich in generosity, just as verse 8 also teaches. The Christian who gives, learns to give more and more, because he experiences the grace of God.

(T) Four. Christian giving causes people to pray. 2 Corinthians 9:11-14 says that the people who receive the gifts will thank God, praise God and also pray for those who give. In 1 Corinthians 12:24-26 is written, "God has combined the members of the body, ... so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it." Whatever happens to a part of the body, affects the whole body. Not only the Christians of one local church are members of one body, but also all the local churches in the world are members of the one Body of Christ! That is why Christians in the whole world should be concerned with what happens to Christians who live in other parts of the world.

(S) Five. Christian giving expresses appreciation of God's indescribable gift. 2 Corinthians 9:15 says, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" God has given his only Son, Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice of atonement for sins. And with Christ, God gave everything. God's giving infinitely transcends all Christian giving! He gave himself in Christ to us. He gave all the heavenly blessings in Christ to us. God's gift brought salvation to all Christians. That is why God's gift is unspeakable. Human language cannot describe it. But the

human heart can experience it as a glorious and transforming reality! Christian giving, therefore, is done out of gratitude for God's indescribable gift to Christians. God's gift inspires all Christians to give!

(T) Third. To whom should Christians give?

One. Christians should give to other Christians that feed them spiritually. According to 1 Corinthians 9:7-14 and Galatians 6:6, Christians should give support to those who preach the gospel and teach the Bible to them, even if those preachers and teachers do not belong to their own local church.

(S) Two. Christians should give to other Christians that lead them spiritually. According to 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Christians should give support to those elders of their own local church that do their work well. The church leaders may not demand support. But the members may also not neglect support. Both must trust and obey God.

(T) Three. Christians should give to other Christians that do God's work. According to Philippians 4:14-18 and 3 John 5-8, Christians should give support to missionaries and itinerant evangelists, even if they do not belong to their own local church.

(S) Four. Christians should give to other Christians that need you. According to James 2:15-17, 1 John 3:17-18 and 2 Corinthians 8:7-15, Christians should give support to the needy members of their own church, like widows, orphans, the disabled, poor and struggling. They should also give support to the needy churches in other parts of the world.

(T) Five. Christians should give to the needy people in general. According to Proverbs 19:17 and Matthew 6:1-4, Christians should also give to the needy non-Christians in the world.

(S) Fourth. How much should Christians give?

One. Christians should give in proportion to their income. In 2 Corinthians 8:12 we read, "If the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have." And in 1 Corinthians 16:2 we read, "Each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income." Christians should give according to how much they possess and according to their income. For example, the rich can give much more than one tenth and the poor are not obliged to give one tenth.

Two. Christians should give generously according their own decision. In 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 we read that Christians should decide themselves how much they ought to give. The amount is a personal matter between each Christian and God and may not be determined or enforced by anybody else. But Christians are encouraged to give generously.

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

Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. The topic today is "Giving" and the reference is 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Let us memorise the Bible verse together.

(T+S) Giving. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.

(S) 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.

Series "The gospel", verses 4-5, and series "Discipleship", verses 1-3.

(T) Salvation is a gift. Ephesians 2:8-9. "For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast". Ephesians 2:8-9.

(S) Salvation by faith. John 1:12. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12.

(T) Lordship. Romans 12:1-2. Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2.

(S) Denial. Luke 9:23. Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Luke 9:23.

(T) Serving. Mark 10:45. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45.

(S) 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".