

(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 fourth series God teaches that there are 5 important traits in the Christian character: Christlikeness, purity, love, faith and humility. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: A DISCIPLE DEVELOPS THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER OF HUMILITY.

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

The new Bible that verse we will meditate and memorise is Philippians 2:3-4. We will ask one another questions in order to help us to meditate on the truths written in the Bible. Let me read Philippians 2:3-4 in its context, Philippians 2:1-8,19-21. "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! ... I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."

The memorisation verse is: Humility. Philippians 2:3-4. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Philippians 2:3-4.

(T) **First. Humility is the opposite of selfish ambition and vain conceit.**

(S) What is the meaning of selfish ambition?

(T) The word *selfish ambition* means, "splitting into rival parties, each with its own selfish ambition". This attitude is characterised by unholy rivalry like that of the disciples when they quarrelled about who was the most important among them (Luke 22:24). It is characterised by selfish motives like that of the lost son when he demanded his share of the estate (Luke 15:12). And it is characterised by craving honour and prestige for self, like Herod did when he accepted the claim that he spoke like a god (Acts 12:21-23). In Rome itself there were certain gospel workers who preached Christ out of envy, rivalry and selfish ambition (Philippians 1:17). Whenever there are parties in any church, then they have selfish motives and crave honour for themselves and power to control. In Galatians 5:20 Paul warns people who split the church into parties, that those who live in selfish ambition, dissensions and factions will not inherit the kingdom of God!

(S) What is the meaning of vain conceit?

(T) The word *vain conceit* literally means "empty glory". *Conceit* is the excessive appreciation of one's own abilities, one's possessions or one's life-style. Conceit is to have an inflated ego and an exaggerated opinion of one's own abilities. Conceit is to have an over-emphasis on one's body, like in unnatural make-up and in theatrical behaviour. Conceit is to make a show of one's possessions like clothes, house and car. Conceit is to have an exclusive, fanciful and far-fetched life-style, like that of some film stars, music groups or sub-culture groups. Conceit in all these forms of expression look down on people who are different than their own party. The root of all conceit is pride!

(S) What then is humility?

(T) The word *humility* literally means "a low-lying mind". A person who is humble has a modest self-appraisal before God and other people. He does not have too high an estimate of himself. He is realistic about what he can do. He does not advertise his own strengths, but he also does not hide his own weaknesses. He is not puffed up with his own importance, abilities, possessions or accomplishments. He does not arrogantly assert himself. He does not domineer others. He does not belittle other people. Instead, he counts other people better than himself.

Non-Christians used this word in an evil sense as "cowardliness". But when the Holy Spirit changes a person's heart, then "submission out of fear" is changed into "submission out of love". That is humility.

(S) **Second. Humility is expressed in considering others better than yourself.**

(T) **How does a person consider others better than himself?**

(S) **One. Considering others better than yourself has to do with *genuine appreciation of others.*** It does not mean that a Christian must consider every other person to be in every respect wiser, abler, and nobler than he himself is. Rather, it is to regard other people “better in certain respects” of their personality and in certain aspects of their accomplishments. For example, every person in the world has different talents, strengths and experiences. Every Christian has different spiritual gifts and must have something that is valuable to God’s kingdom that he can do better than somebody else. A person who is humble will appreciate these abilities in other people. Thus, humility leads to a spirit of mutual regard and appreciation among all the members of the church. Paul spoke of others in very high terms. Here in Philippians 2, he said that he had no one else like Timothy, who took a genuine interest in other people’s welfare. He also said that Epaphroditus almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to help Paul (Philippians 2:20,30).

Two. Considering others better than yourself also has to do with *humble appraisal of yourself.* As a Christian grows, he is more able to see his own mixed motives and weaknesses within God’s light. For example, the tax collector prayed, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner!” (Luke 18:13). Paul exclaimed, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me of this body of death?” (Romans 7:24). The older Paul grew, the more he expressed a very humble opinion of himself. During his third missionary journey, he said, “I am the least of the apostles” (1 Corinthians 15:9). During his first Roman imprisonment, he said, “I am less than the least of all God’s people” (Ephesians 3:8). And one year before his death, he said, “I am the worst of all sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). The man, who has learned to view himself as a great sinner before God, really appreciates God’s saving grace and thanks God even in the midst of his tears. While a humble person acknowledges his own weaknesses, he is not allowed to talk about other people’s weaknesses. Unless a consistently wicked pattern is clearly evident in the life of another person, that individual’s outwardly good deeds must be ascribed to good and never to evil motives.

Thus genuine appreciation of others and humble appraisal of yourself is what is meant in Romans 12:10, “Honour one another above yourselves”

(T) **Third. Humility is also expressed in helpfulness.** Verse 4 says, “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

(S) **How do you look to the interests of others?**

(T) **One.** The other person’s interests are not the same as his personal wishes. His interests are the things that contribute to his welfare. And those things are also the interests of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:20-21). The real interests of other people are first of all their salvation, growth, sanctification and fruitfulness. It is all the things that will help them to become their best for God and God’s kingdom.

Two. But his interests are also any good you can do to him. Galatians 6:10 says, “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” Maybe it is to help them with their work in their homes or farms. Maybe it is to help them when they are sick or in trouble. Galatians 6:9 says, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Thus humility is expressed in loving your neighbour as yourself.

(S) **Fourth. Humility is expressed in giving yourself self-sacrificially, as Jesus Christ did.**

Verse 5 says, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”.

(T) **In which area is Jesus Christ our example?**

(S) There is an area in which Christ Jesus cannot be our example: We cannot copy his work of salvation through his vicarious suffering. Only Jesus Christ made atonement for sins. However, the area in which Jesus Christ should become our example is in *the spirit* in which he did his work of salvation. We should copy *the attitude* in which Jesus Christ became a man and died for our sins. Jesus Christ is God. He is the visible image of the invisible God. He possesses the divine nature from all eternity. Yet he humbled himself and also took on the human nature. He even took on the weak human nature of fallen man. Then he humbled himself even more and took on the position of a servant. Finally he humbled himself to the point of dying on a cross, which was the death that was exclusively reserved for criminals. We cannot copy Christ’s work of salvation, but we can copy Christ’s humiliation. Christians should copy Christ’s humility, that is, *his attitude of self-renunciation with a view to help others.*

(T) **What example of humility does Jesus Christ give to us?**

(S) Humility is this spirit of emptying yourself of your glory. Humility is voluntarily giving up your rights in order to serve. Humility is willingly giving up your riches in order to make other people spiritually rich. Humility is to give up your high position in order to live among people in misery. Humility is giving up your independence in order to work together with others to spread the kingdom of God. Humility is the willingness to serve in situations where nobody else is able or willing to serve.

Because Jesus Christ humbled himself so deeply, we who are Christians should be constantly willing to humble ourselves in our behaviour. For example, we should do everything without complaining or arguing, as is written in Philippians 2:14.

(T) 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 “Humility”. Beneath that, write the Bible reference of the verse. The Bible reference today is Philippians 2:3-4. 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.

Let us memorise the Bible verse together. Then let us take turns to say that part of the verse alone without looking at the Bible or notebook.

(T+S) Humility. Philippians 2:3-4. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

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(T) Humility. Philippians 2:3-4. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

(T+S) Humility. Philippians 2:3-4. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests.

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(T+S) Humility. Philippians 2:3-4. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:3-4.

(T) Humility. Philippians 2:3-4. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:3-4.

(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 “Discipleship”, verse 4, and series “Christian character”, verses 1-4.

(T) 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) Christlikeness. 2 Corinthians 3:18. “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

(T) Purity. 1 Thessalonians 4:3. “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.” 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

(S) Love. Mark 12:30-31. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these. Mark 12:30-31.

(T) Faith. Romans 4:20-21. “Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.” Romans 4:20-21.

(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”.