

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this meditation and memorisation series you may learn how to build up the Christian Church. Two teachers will meditate on the meaning of a Bible verse about one characteristic of a believer in Jesus Christ and then memorise it together. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme.

In this sixth series, the Bible teaches how Christians prepare themselves for marriage. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: FOR A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE BOTH MUST EXERCISE SELF-CONTROL.

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

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5. We will meditate the truths in the Bible together. Let me read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. 1 "Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that *you should avoid sexual immorality*; that each of you *should learn to control his own body* in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit."

The memorisation verse is: Self-control. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5. "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God". 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5.

(T) First. How to live especially in relationship to the area of sex.

The apostle Paul says in verse 1, "We instructed you how to live in order to please God." In the eyes of God people are not free to live as they like. Especially in the area of sex, no one may do as he likes. This Bible passage teaches us very clearly how we should live in relationship to the opposite sex in order to please God. The only thing that pleases God is our "sanctification" (3,7). And our sanctification in the area of the opposite sex is four things: First, verse 3 teaches that Christians should *avoid* sexual immorality. Second, verse 4-5 teaches that Christians should *learn to control* their bodies in the area of sex. Third, verse 4-5 also teaches that Christians should *win their life partner* in a way that is holy and honourable and not in the way of passionate lust. Fourth, verse 6-8 teaches that Christians should *not wrong the family members* of girls through sexual immorality.

(S) The difference between "adultery" and "sexual immorality".

Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." *Adultery* is every form of breaking of the marriage-bond. It includes every kind of unlawful sexual act with the spouse of another person. It is allowing unlawful interference into your own marriage as well as your unlawful interference in another person's marriage. It refers to being the guilty partner of a divorce, either through unlawful sex, violence or spiritual idolatry. Another form of adultery is "having a concubine or a mistress". *Sexual immorality* is every kind of unlawful sexual act with anybody besides the person to whom you are married! It refers to acts related to sex in your thoughts, in your desires and in your talk. For example, it refers to looking at pornography, masturbation, caressing the opposite sex in indecent ways, and pre-marital sex. The worst examples of sexual immorality are adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, incest and bestiality. God's law against these are recorded in Leviticus 17 and 20. (Lev 17:6,20,22-23; 20:10,13,15,17). The Bible therefore clearly teaches that the sexual act *before* your marriage or *beside* your own marriage is forbidden. It also teaches that all kinds of sexual immorality are forbidden.

(T) Second. How to control your own body.

Verse 3-4 says, "Avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body."

As a Christian you should learn to control your tongue.

Ephesians 5:3-4 teaches, "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving." The word "sexual immorality" is used in connection with the tongue. "Obscenity" is indecent speech like gossiping about the sex-life of people or using sex-words in swearing. "Coarse joking" is telling dirty jokes or jokes with a sexual connotation. Christians must give healthy sex education to their children and in a serious manner discuss how to develop the sexual relationship inside marriage.

However, gossiping or joking about sex is sexual immorality. Among Christians there must not be even a hint of gossip or joking about sex!

(S) As a Christian you should learn to control your eyes.

In Job 31:1, Job says, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl." All men in the world are particularly tempted by what their eyes see. If a man sees a woman who does not dress properly or does not cover her body in a decent way, then he can get tempted to think sexually immoral thoughts. If a man sees magazines with pictures of immoral women, then he can get tempted to think sexually immoral thoughts. Most of the time, sexual immorality begins with what you see. This triggers immoral thoughts in your mind. This leads to an immoral decision and finally to an immoral act. The battle against sexual immorality begins with what you see, with what you hear and with what you think. Therefore God wrote these words in the Bible: "Make a covenant with your eyes not to look lustfully at a woman." Make an agreement with God to avoid places that expose immoral women, to avoid looking at sexually immoral magazines or movies and to avoid reading immoral books. Make an agreement with God that when you encounter such people or such pictures, not to allow your looking to linger longer or to look at them a second time. Instead, Christian men should train their eyes to look into the face and eyes of women. And they should learn to choose good magazines and other materials to read and to look at.

(T) As a Christian you should learn to control your heart and mind.

Proverbs 6:25 teaches, "Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes." God has created most women beautiful. Some women, however, misuse their beauty to trap men into unlawful sexual immorality. With the way they dress or with the way they move their bodies or wink with their eyes, they want to seduce men to sin. Prostitutes all over the world know their own weakness as well as the weakness of men. The centre of control inside every human being is "the heart". The heart controls the thoughts of the mind, the desires of the heart and the choices and decisions of the will. Although sometimes you cannot help seeing such women, you can decide not to keep looking at them. The Bible says that you should not even consider their beauty or their efforts to capture you. Do not allow your heart to desire them. Allow the Holy Spirit living in you to control your mind and heart. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, the Bible says that we must "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ". Christian men should learn to think about the character, personality and influence of women, rather than about their bodies.

(S) As a Christian you should learn to control your feet.

Proverbs 5:7-10 teaches, "Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say. Keep to a path far from her, do not go near to the door of her house, lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another man's house." Every city in the world has prostitutes and pimps. Every village has women and men of bad reputation. You usually know where they live and where they walk trying to catch people in their traps. *Avoid* all these places. The Bible says, "Keep to a path far from her, do not go near to the door of her house." Avoid the "red light district" and avoid the bars, massage parlours, discos and clubs where these people are waiting to trap you. Avoid friendship with girls or boys of bad reputation in your school. We must learn to control our feet and not walk close to any of these places. Christian men should rather get involved with healthy activities, like service in the church or sport.

(T) As a Christian you should learn to control your hands.

Proverbs 5:15-21 teaches, "Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer - may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths." Modern "dating" among non-Christian young people often does not acknowledge any *boundaries*. These young people think that they can do anything they like without having to fear the consequences. Therefore, many young people do not control their hands. When they are "dating", they will *caress* any part of the other person's body and even put their hands under the clothes of the other person. Women are generally more easily tempted by the touching of men and therefore men must learn to control their hands. Just like the laws of a country describe the boundaries of social life and traffic laws describe the boundaries of safe driving, likewise the Bible describes the boundaries in the area of sex. We must learn to control our hands and only touch one another in a holy and honourable way.

(S) Third. How to win your life partner.

The other possible and equally correct translation of verse 4 and 5 is, that "each of you should learn to acquire (win) a wife in a way that is holy and honourable and not in passionate lust". The Bible teaches that young men may "win a wife for themselves". However, they may not win a wife in passionate lust! "Dating" is the period and process of winning a wife. God commands that "dating" must happen in a way that is holy and honourable and not in the way of passionate lust. The "holy way" means "a way that is different and separated from the way of the sinful world." An "honourable way" means "a way that is respected by God and other people alike". God must not be able to condemn your way of dating and people must not be able to slander your way of dating. Before marriage, during the period of

“dating”, men and women must exercise self-control over their bodies. They must control their tongues, eyes, mind, feet and hands. God is the One who has established *the boundaries in “dating”*. God has commanded what men and women may *not* do during “winning one another”, or as it is called today, during “dating”. Men and women must avoid sexual immorality. However, inside God’s boundaries, God has given men and women freedom to develop their relationship with one another. When young men and young women design creative and honourable ways of relating to one another, they will experience very much joy and fun!

Therefore, *Christians must establish boundaries for “dating”*. Christian leaders must teach these boundaries to Christian men and women. And Christian men and women who start “to date” must agree with one another to stay within these boundaries. Practically, the man and the woman must make an agreement about the boundaries in their “dating”. Their agreement should include setting boundaries for time, place, activities and physical contact. With respect to “time”, they should decide how often and how long they meet. With respect to “place”, they should decide where they meet and especially the places where they will not go to. With respect to “activities”, they should decide what they do together and especially what they will not do. And with respect to “physical contact”, they should decide how they touch one another and especially not to caress one another’s body. *Christians must learn to “date” in a different way than the non-Christians.*

(T) Sexual immorality wrongs other people besides the person involved.

Verse 6 says that in the matter of sexual immorality, no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. Who is this “brother”? Because this sentence refers to verse 4 and 5, it means that everyone who does not control his body in the area of sex, wrongs not only the girl involved, but also wrongs her father and her future husband. Therefore, sexual immorality does not just concern the two people involved, but has an effect on both families! It is impossible to reverse the damage done, for example, it is impossible to give back to a girl her virginity. Therefore God himself will judge the person who indulged in sexual immorality. Ephesians 5:5 warns, “For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure ... person has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God!”

(S) Fourth. God will punish sexual immoral people.

Verse 6 says, “The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you”. And verse 8 warns, “He who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God”! Romans chapter 1 warns that God will punish sexual immorality by *giving those people over into more sexual immorality*. Indulging in sexual immorality only leads to becoming a complete slave of sexual immorality! Unless a person repents and turns away from sexual immorality, he will be excluded from the kingdom of God.

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

Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. The topic today is “Self-control” and the reference is 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5. Let us memorise the Bible verse together.

(T+S) Self-control: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5. It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

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

Let us review the last 2 Bible verses that we have memorised without looking at our notebooks.

Both believers. 2 Corinthians 6:14. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 2 Corinthians 6:14.

(T) Same life goals. Amos 3:3. ““Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?” Amos 3:3.

(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 build Christ’s Church” and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to “Discipleship training on the air”.