

(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 seventh series, the Bible teaches five decisions a Christian couple must make in order to build up their marriage. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: A CHRISTIAN COUPLE MUST LEAVE AND CLEAVE.

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

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is Genesis 2:24. We will meditate the truths in the Bible together. Let me read Genesis 2:18-24.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him." Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

(T) **First. The creation of male and female is God's idea and creation.**

One. God created the physical nature of the man and the woman.

When God planned to create the universe, he devised the way in which all species would continue to exist and multiply. Genesis 1:27 teaches, "God created man in his own image, ... male and female he created them". At the creation, God created both the man and the woman. But the creation of the man and woman was different than the creation of animals. Genesis 2:7 says that God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed the breath of life into man, and man became 'a living soul'. The human body, just like the bodies of animals, consists of the elements that are found in the earth. But in differentiation to animals that were formed by God's creative command, man was formed by God's own hands. The human, just like animals, was given the breath of life (Genesis 2:7, 7:22). But in differentiation to animals that were given life by God's creative command, man was given life directly by God's breathing into his nostrils. This means that God gave man respiration and thereby life.

God created the different sexes with a specific purpose. God created sex in order to make the husband and wife a strong unity, in order that they enjoy marriage and in order that the human race may continue to exist. Together in marriage they form the smallest family unit, the very foundation of every society. Together the man and the woman express the image of God.

Two. God created the spiritual nature of the man and the woman.

Genesis 1:26-27 reveals how special the creation of people is. The Triune God introduces their creation with the words, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." Then God made people in his own image or likeness. What does it mean to be created in *the image of God*? People were given a spiritual nature that corresponds to God's spiritual nature. They possessed the real and characteristic features of God. They were in another degree a copy of God's personality. In this respect, people are unique in creation. Nothing in creation besides people bears the image of God! People thus have a physical and a spiritual existence, or in short, they have *a body* and *a spirit*. The body of people is very special, because God formed it with his own hands. And the spirit of people is unique in creation, because only people bear the image of God. Because people were created in the image of God, God and people could communicate with one another and could co-operate with one another. Genesis 1:28-29 says that God spoke directly to the first people. This is the very first revelation of God to people! And God gave them the task to fill the earth, to subdue the earth, to rule over all living creatures and to utilise all plants and trees. God thus revealed that he created the earth for people and made people the stewards of his creation.

Three. God created the woman to be a suitable helper for man.

The words in Genesis 2:18-24 is a further revelation of God's plan of creation of the man and the woman. It serves to point out God's high esteem of the woman. And it serves as God's institution of the marriage relationship.

In Genesis 2:19-20 God awakened a deep need in man, which could only be fully satisfied by a woman. This need was awakened when man observed the animals and their social life. Man intuitively fathomed the nature of animals and gave them names in accordance with their nature. He did this in the language that God gave man together with his creation. The man knew that he was created so much different than animals, that they could never satisfy his social needs. God met the man's need for social, physical and spiritual relationship by creating the woman. In Genesis 2:18 God says, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. The word *suitable helper* means a person fully corresponding to him, a person who could meet his needs, a person who would be his complementary half. As a creature, the woman is completely equal with the man, because she also expresses the image of God. She has equal responsibility to communicate with God and to co-operate with God in the tasks on earth. But the woman was not created to have an independent existence apart from the man. According to 1 Corinthians 11:9 she was created *for man*, that is, *to be his helper*. Genesis 2:21 says that God took one of man's *side parts* ('rib' may be used) and made a woman. He brought her to the man. In Genesis 2:23, the man exclaims in wonderful appreciation that she is his equal in creation. She has the same physical and spiritual nature as he has!

(S) Second. Marriage is God's idea and institution.

No one less than God himself instituted the marriage relationship! In Genesis 2:24 God says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh". Not any society or culture, but God himself created the need for marriage and instituted the marriage relationship. Already *before* the man and the woman fell into sin, God established the marriage relationship as a relationship of leaving parents, a relationship of unity between *one* man and *one* woman, and a relationship of sex only inside this marriage relationship. God also maintained this institution *after* the man and woman fell into sin. Both the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:4-6 and the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:31 repeat that God's marriage institution must continue as the marriage institution for all nations and cultures on earth! Although through the years cultures in the world have changed God's original marriage institution, God still calls all people and all cultures on earth to return to his original marriage institution!

The Christian marriage ceremony is a public social and religious event. The Bible condemns living together without marrying. The Christian marriage ceremony officially and publicly ends the stage of being *single* and begins the stage of being *married*. The three indispensable elements of marriage are: to publicly leave your parents, to be united to one another and to become one flesh.

(T) Third. Marriage means leaving parents.

A couple prepares to leave their parents by announcing their plan to get married and by preparing for the marriage ceremony. This is usually called *the engagement*. At their marriage ceremony, they definitely leave their parents. Both the groom and the bride should leave their parents in several different ways:

One. The couple should *emotionally*. For example, the husband may no longer emotionally or traditionally favour his mother above his wife! From the marriage onwards the man and the woman should love one another and prefer one another *more* than their parents!

Two. The couple should *authority of their parents*. Ephesians 6:1-3 teaches that as long as people are children, they should obey and respect their parents. But Ephesians 5:31 teaches that when they marry, they should leave their parents. From their marriage onwards, they are no longer under the obligation to *obey* their parents, but they remain under the obligation to obey God in everything. Of course they should continue to *respect* their parents, but respecting parents is not the same as obeying parents. For example, parents and parents-in-law have no authority over their former children. And a mother-in-law has no authority over the wife of her son!

Three. The couple should leave their parents *financially*. The married couple should manage their own finances.

Four. The couple should leave their parents *spiritually*. If their parents are not Christians, the married couple should no longer tolerate the religious symbols and religious ceremonies of their parents in their own home and life. The Christian couple should clearly serve only the Lord Jesus Christ in their home.

Five. The couple should leave their parents *intellectually*. The Christian married couple are responsible to develop their own Christian convictions and Christian beliefs, Christian values and Christian standards. God holds them responsible for what they believe and how they live.

Six. The couple should leave their parents *socially*. The Christian couple should find their own home or room to live separate from their parents, if possible. If this is not possible, may be they could exchange rooms with another married couple who want to leave their parents. All these aspects of leaving parents are a visible sign to parents and to everybody else that married people are no longer dependent on their parents, but have begun their own family.

(S) Fourth. Marriage means being united to one another.

The word *to be united* literally means *to cleave, to be glued together*. When a man and a woman marry, God glues them together so that they become inseparable. Just like two pieces of paper glued together cannot be separated without destroying both pieces, so a marriage cannot be separated without considerable damage to both partners. The marriage ceremony is a public social and religious ceremony during which a man and a woman are glued together, and are thus united to one another for their whole life. They make a covenant with one another before God and before God's people that they will be faithful and committed to one another for their whole life until death separates them. In Malachi 2:13-16 God says, "The Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth" that you will not break the marriage covenant with her. During the marriage ceremony, the Lord himself makes the man and woman into *one* and warns them not to break faith with one another in a divorce. At the marriage ceremony, the families of both sides as well as all the Christian brothers and sisters and other friends witness that these two people make a promise to God to be married to one another for their whole life, to love one another, to be faithful to one another and to help one another through all the circumstances of life.

(T) Fifth. Marriage means becoming one.

The marriage ceremony marks the beginning point where the husband and the wife may become one in every aspect. They should become *one* in a spiritual, social and physical sense. The marriage ceremony is God's acknowledgement that the man and woman may begin their sexual unity. The sexual unity is pleasing to God only within the boundaries of the marriage covenant. That is why God forbids every form of sex *before* marriage or *outside* marriage.

(S) Sixth. Marriage is a public social and religious festival.

In the Bible, marriage was never a secret affair. A man and a woman who wanted to be together never simply started to live together. In the Bible, marriage was a public social and religious festival, which was blessed and witnessed and celebrated by the parents, relatives and friends. In ancient times, the pledge to be married included the careful choice of a marriage partner, the agreement and blessing of the parents of the bride (Gen 24), sometimes the giving of a compensation gift to the family of the bride (Gen 29:18, 34:12) and the giving of gifts to the bride and the groom (Gen 24:59,61, 1 Ki 9:16). The wedding ceremony was a public affair. It included some of the following elements. The bride and groom wore wedding garments (Ps 45:13-14; Isa 61:10), but especially the bride would be beautifully adorned (Jer 2:32; Ezek 16:11-12; Rev 21:2). The bride and groom were accompanied by bridesmaids and friends of the groom (Ps 45:14, Jn 3:29). The groom and his friends would come to the house of the bride to take her to the wedding ceremony. The bridesmaids would go out to meet them. The journeys by foot would sometimes be long. Therefore they would only begin the festivities in the evening and lamps or torches would be needed to travel in the dark (Mt 25:1-13). Before the bride leaves the house, which had been her home, she would receive the blessing of her relatives (Gen 24:60). The groom and the bride, together with their family and friends went in a grand marriage procession all the way from the bride's home to the groom's home for the wedding festivities to take place there. The invited guests were allowed to join the procession if they carried lamps or torches, due to the dark roads at night (Mt 25:1-13). At the wedding of a very important and rich person, the guests were required to wear special wedding garments, which were handed out to them at the door (Mt 22:12). There was a marriage feast, sometimes for a whole week long (Mt 22:1-14, Jn 2:1-10, Judg 14:17). The most solemn part of the wedding ceremony was establishing *a marriage covenant* in the presence of the family and the invited guests. God himself was the most important witness of this marriage covenant (Mal 2:14, Prov 2:17, Ezek 16:8)! Also relatives and friends would speak and give their blessings (Ruth 4:11). Only after the wedding ceremony, the marriage was consummated (Gen 29:21-23, Deut 22:13-21). Sex before marriage is called *promiscuity* and is an evil in the eyes of God (Dt 22:21). Therefore God commanded a man and a woman to become one in a physical sense only *after* their marriage.

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

Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. The topic today is "Leave and cleave" and the reference is Genesis 2:24. Let us memorise the Bible verse together.

(T+S) To leave and to cleave: Genesis 2:24. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife.

(S) To leave and to cleave: Genesis 2:24. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife.

(T+S) To leave and to cleave: Genesis 2:24. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Genesis 2:24.

(T) To leave and to cleave: Genesis 2:24. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Genesis 2:24.

(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 "Christian preparation for marriage" verses 1-5.

- (T) Both believers: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. 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.
- (S) Same life-goals: Amos 3:3. Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? Amos 3:3.
- (T) 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.
- (S) Proper timing: Ecclesiastes 8:5-6. The wise heart will know the proper time and procedure. For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter. Ecclesiastes 8:5-6.
- (T) Right priorities: Matthew 6:33. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33.

(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".