

(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 HUSBAND MUST LOVE AND LEAD.

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

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is Ephesians 5:23,25. We will meditate the truths in the Bible together. Let me read Ephesians 5:22-33.

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church - for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

(T) God created the man and the woman. God instituted the marriage relationship. Therefore, God also has the right to determine *the responsibilities of the husband and the wife towards one another*. He knows how his creatures function the best. Only when a husband and wife obey these God-given responsibilities can they have a wonderful marriage!

**The first responsibility of the Christian husband. His marriage should be a living testimony of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church.**

The Bible commands the husbands to be the head of their wives just as Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and to love their wives *just as Christ* loves the Christians in the Church. The Bible also commands the wives to submit to their husbands *just as the Church* should submit to Jesus Christ and to respect their husbands.

In Ephesians 5:32, Paul calls this comparison of the Christian marriage to the union of Jesus Christ and the Christian Church *a mystery*. A mystery is a secret that would have remained hidden if it had not been revealed.

On the one hand, the mystery is that Jesus Christ came from heaven to suffer and die for his rebellious people, to gather them from among all the nations, to dwell in them through his Holy Spirit and at last to present them as his own bride that is completely sanctified!

On the other hand, the mystery is that this wonderful relationship between Jesus Christ and his Christian Church is actually reflected on earth in the Christian marriage relationship of a Christian husband and his Christian wife! By the strength of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Christian Church, the relationship between the Christian husband and the Christian wife is able to function most gloriously. Their relationship will bring supreme happiness to both marriage-partners, bless their children, build their society and above all glorify God! The Christian marriage is therefore a visible demonstration of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Christian Church.

In this way the Christian marriage becomes a proclamation about Jesus Christ and his Church to the world! The Christian marriage is a very important way of proclaiming the gospel every day within the normal human activities! By observing a good Christian marriage, the people of the world learn more and more about Jesus Christ and the people of Christ. They not only *hear* about God's love for them, they *see* it illustrated in the marriage relationship. They not only hear of the joy of a growing relationship with the Living God, they see an example of such joy in the marriage relationship, etc. The Christian marriage relationship is a powerful witness to the reality and attraction of a relationship with Jesus Christ! Every Christian marriage can become a missionary endeavour, especially when the Christian home is open and people can "come and see" (Jn 1:39) how that Christian family functions.

**(S) The second responsibility of the Christian husband. He should love his wife.**

This is a responsibility that God gives to all husbands. *To love* is to show unselfish interest in his wife, to wholeheartedly accept her and to help her to become her best. *To love* is to be spontaneous and self-sacrificial in his relationship to her. Christ loves his Church by “giving himself up for her”, that is, by working for her, suffering for her and even dying for her. This way is the most excellent love conceivable (Jn 10:11-15; 15:13; 1 Jn 3:16)! When a Christian husband loves his wife in this way, it will be easy for her to submit to him.

*Love* is beautifully expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. *Patience* is the love that can wait. It is the love that does not enforce kindness on her, but can wait to show kindness. *Kindness* is the love that helps and that does not let a chance go by to do her good. *Not being jealous* is the love that generously gives her appreciation, credit and honour where she deserves it. *Not boasting* is the love that is modest about his own merits and accomplishments and does not try to impress her. *Not proud* is the love that is humble about his own strengths and weaknesses in the relationship to her. *Not behave rudely* is the love that shows good manners and tact towards her. *Not self-seeking* is the love that unselfishly seeks her interests above his own. *Not easily angered* is the love that meekly submits to the injury and hurts she sometimes causes. *Not keeping a record of wrongs* is the love that forgives her and does not recall her old wrongs. *Not delighting in evil, but rejoicing with the truth* is the love that is sincere amidst her weaknesses and failings. It never looks with triumphant satisfaction at her failures, but rather rejoices in the progress she makes. *Protective love* is the love that keeps every form of threat away from her and never gossips about her. *Trustful love* is the love that is never distrustful or suspicious of her intentions or actions without any good reason. *Hopeful love* is the love that never gives her up as incorrigible, but instead expects God to accomplish his best plan for her through her difficulties. *Persevering love* is the love that never stops doing good to her.

**(T) The third responsibility of the Christian husband. He should sanctify his wife.**

Ephesians 5:26-30 elaborates the love of Jesus Christ Himself for his Church. Love does not break people, but build people up. Love does not make people filthy, but makes them holy. Jesus Christ makes his Church holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word, in order to present her to himself as a radiant Church, completely holy and blameless. *The washing with water* refers to Christian baptism, which is a visible sign of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Baptism with the Spirit is the same as rebirth and this is always connected to the preaching and teaching of the Word. The words that are spoken from the Bible cause people to believe (Rom 10:17) and also cause people to change, to be cleansed, forgiven and sanctified. The responsibility of the husband is to read and speak the words of the Bible to his wife and children. When he does this, his wife and children will change: they will grow in faith and will be sanctified.

In essence the Christian Church is even now *the bride* of Christ, but the wedding will only take place at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ! In order to understand this passage, we must understand the marriage customs implied in the Bible.

One. Marriage in the Bible began with *the betrothal*, that is, the man and the woman entered into a binding relationship by promising to marry one another. The betrothal was a more binding relationship than modern *engagement*. The two families agreed on the terms of the marriage in the presence of witnesses and God’s blessing was pronounced upon the relationship. From that day, the groom and the bride were viewed as *legally* husband and wife (2 Cor 11:1-2)! This was the case with Mary, who was betrothed to Joseph when she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:18-19).

Two. Next came *the interval between the betrothal and the wedding-feast*. This could take up to a year, during which the groom had opportunity to pay the price for the bride (dowry) to the father of the bride. He had to pay this dowry in order to compensate for the loss of her work-potential when she joined the clan of her future husband (Gen 34:12).

Three. Next came *the preparation and procession* with a view to the wedding-feast. The groom put on his best clothes and the bride was adorned in a beautiful wedding dress and jewellery. The groom was accompanied by his friends, who sang and bore torches. They proceeded to the home of the betrothed bride. He received the bride and took her in a grand procession to the place where the wedding-feast was held.

Four. Finally came *the wedding-feast*, which included a solemn ceremony establishing the marriage covenant and the wedding-banquet. The festivities lasted one or two weeks.

Again and again the Bible compares the love-relationship between the God of the Bible and his people in the Old Testament or between Jesus Christ and his Church in the New Testament to a bridegroom and his bride (Ps 45; Jn 3:29; 2 Cor 11:2; Rev 19:7; 21:2,9). At his first coming to this world, the Church is betrothed to Jesus Christ and he paid with his own life the dowry for her. The interval is the entire long period between the first coming and the second coming of Jesus Christ. During this whole period, the Church prepares herself for the wedding-feast after Jesus Christ returns. But Paul looks at this preparation for the wedding-feast from God’s point of view. It is Jesus Christ himself who prepares the Christian Church for himself. The Christian Church owes all her beauty and attraction to Jesus Christ and his

continued work of sanctification through his Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ will continue with his work of sanctification until the Christian Church is without stain or wrinkle. He will persevere to cleanse the Church until she is without blemish and completely holy!

Now just like Jesus Christ continually sanctifies his Church, so every Christian husband should continually sanctify his wife! The Christian husband should also use the words of God in the Bible to sanctify her. Nothing else will cleanse her. The purpose of the Christian husband is that his wife has no moral or spiritual stain whatsoever!

He should love his wife as his own body. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, which is called the Body of Christ. In the same way the Christian husband is the head of his wife and the wife is his body! The Christian husband and Christian wife are so intimately united as a head and a body! Jesus Christ continually feeds and cares for his Body, which is the Church. Likewise the Christian husband should continually feed and care for his body, which is his wife! *To feed* means to provide her with physical, mental and spiritual food. *To care* means to keep her warm, sympathise with her, comfort her and hold her dear with emotional and spiritual means.

**(S) The fourth responsibility of the Christian husband, He should lead his wife.**

This is a responsibility that God gives to all husbands. *To lead* his wife is to lead her like Christ leads the Church. The husband should *lead her like a shepherd*. He should feed her, care for her, protect her and carry her through difficulties. He should *lead her like a steward*. He should guide her in God's ways and take good care of her possessions and activities. He should *lead her like a servant*. He should not rule over her; he should not dominate her; and he should not be authoritarian towards her. Instead, he should serve her, especially in the areas where she needs him most.

**(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 "Love and lead".

Beneath that, write the Bible reference of the verse. The Bible reference today is Ephesians 5:23,25. 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.

**(S)** 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)** To love and to lead: Ephesians 5:23,25. For the husband is the head of the wife.

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**(T+S)** To love and to lead: Ephesians 5:23,25. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Husbands, love your wives.

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**(T+S)** To love and to lead: Ephesians 5:23,25. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5:23,25.

**(S)** To love and to lead: Ephesians 5:23,25. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5:23,25.

**(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.

Series "Christian preparation for marriage", verses 2-5 and series "Christian marriage", verse 1.

**(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) 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) **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](http://www.dota.net)

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