

(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 WIFE MUST LOVE AND SUBMIT.

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

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is Titus 2:4-5. We will meditate the truths in the Bible together. Let me read Titus 2:1-8.

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women *to love their husbands* and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and *to be subject to their husbands*, so that no-one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

(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 wife. She should be a living testimony of the relationship between Jesus Christ and his Church.

One. The relationship between Christ and the Church is a mystery.

The Bible commands Christian wives to submit to their husbands *just as the Christian Church* should submit to Jesus Christ. They should do this with respect to their husbands. This is not unreasonable or difficult if we remember that the Bible commands the Christian husbands to love their wives *just as Jesus Christ* loves the Christians in the Church! And that the Bible commands the Christian husbands to lead their wives *just as Jesus Christ* leads the Christian Church!

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.

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!

Two. The relationship between the Christian husband and Christian wife is a visible testimony.

The mystery is also 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 wife. She should love her husband.

Titus 2:4 teaches that young mothers should love their husbands and children, be self-controlled and pure, be busy at home, be kind, and be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Young women should be trained to love their husbands and children. No one, not even Titus, is better able to train young women than an experienced, older woman. *To train* means to bring them to their senses, to advise, encourage and urge the young women to love their husbands and children. For a woman, who has a husband and children, loving them should take a very prominent place in her life. Both her husband and her children need her love very much.

Her love should be characterised by patience, kindness and the other characteristics of love mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13. Here in Titus 2:4-5, the apostle Paul emphasises self-control. *Self-control* means to be prudent, thoughtful and have one's life under control. It refers especially to being chaste, decent, modest and to be workers at home. Christian wives should scrupulously avoid any immorality in thought, word and action. Any advances of other men should immediately be rejected. Moreover, Christian wives should concentrate on their work at home. They should avoid what is described in 1 Timothy 5:13, as getting into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. They should avoid becoming idlers, gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. Wrong conduct on the part of young married Christian women could easily lead outsiders to make slanderous remarks about Christians. Usually, the non-Christians judge the teachings of Christians by the practical effect these have on the daily life of the Christians.

(T) The third responsibility of the Christian wife. She should submit to her husband and respect him.

One. Submission is God's decree or creation ordinance.

No institution on earth is more important than the family. None is more basic. The moral and religious atmosphere in the family will determine the moral and religious atmosphere in the Church and in society. The Lord Jesus Christ fully realises that within most families, much of the care of children will rest on the wife. In his kindness toward wives he does not overburden them with their responsibilities. Therefore, he placed the ultimate responsibility of leadership in the family and the upbringing of the children upon the shoulders of her husband! But the Christian husband should *express this leadership*, not in the worldly way of lording it over her, but in the Christian way as *servicing* her! This was what God has decreed (decided) and determined with respect to the relationship between husbands and wives in Genesis 2:18 *before people fell into sin*. This is also what God has decreed and determined in Genesis 3:16 *after people fell into sin*. This is what God has decreed and determined with respect to the relationship between husbands and wives for all people on earth and throughout all the ages in history.

The Bible teaches that Christian women and men have an equal standing before God. But the Bible warns the Christian women to take care lest they should begin to think that their equality in spiritual standing before God and the great freedom that has now become their portion as Christians (Gal 3:28) entitles them to forget about God's decree or creation-ordinance with regard to their relationship to their husbands (Gen 3:16)! Therefore, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 5:22-24, "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."

The submission of the Christian wife to her husband should not simply be prompted by her personal convictions. It is an order of God established at the creation! This submission of the Christian wife to her husband is not an optional duty of the Christian wife. It is a command of God. *To submit* (G: hupotassomai) means to subordinate herself to his leadership in the family and the home in everything that agrees with what is written in the Bible. It means to subordinate herself to his ultimate decisions in the family and home.

Two. Submission is one way of expressing service.

The Lord Jesus Christ himself assigns to both the Christian husband and the Christian wife the duty *to serve one another*. However the way in which the Christian husband should *express his service to his wife is by taking the initiative again and again to lead her*. And the way in which the Christian wife should *express her service to her husband is by submitting again and again to his leadership and guidance*.

Three. Submission must always be voluntary.

The submission of the Christian wife to her husband may never be forced on her by her husband. It may also not be enforced upon her by the social or religious laws of her society! The only One that may command her to submit to her husband is the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, her submission to her husband must always be *a voluntary submission*.

The relationship of the Christian Church to Jesus Christ should be the pattern for the Christian wife in her relationship towards her husband. The submission of the Christian Church to Jesus Christ is also voluntary, wholehearted, sincere and enthusiastic. Likewise, the submission of the wife to her husband should be voluntary, wholehearted, sincere and enthusiastic.

The submission of the wife to her husband does not mean that she should submit to him like a slave. She should rather *submit to him like a helper*. It is to respect him as the leader and to follow him by being the best team member of his team. As a team member, she gives him all the input, suggestions, ideas, etc. she can, discuss issues and their consequences with him and then allow him to make the final decision. Ephesians 5:33 teaches, "The wife must respect her husband". *To respect* him, however, does not mean that she should keep quiet and never ask him a question, never make any suggestion to him, never have a serious discussion with him, or never even rebuke or correct him. On the contrary, to respect him means to state her point of view in a gentle way and then allow God to work it out in his own way. Respect is to involve him in the making of her plans. Respect is to carefully consider his teaching and advice to her. Respect is to communicate the progress she is making to him. Respect is to voluntarily take the initiative to serve him without waiting for him to ask her. Respect is to patiently listen to him and try to understand his problems and points of view. Respect is to ask him questions that will help him to understand his problem. Respect is to make suggestions that will help him to be honoured and respected by others. Respect is even to rebuke him and correct him, when it is necessary, because she wants him to be a better man for God and more highly respected and honoured by other people in society.

Four. Submission is not to other men in society.

Although God commands the Christian wife to submit to her husband, he does not command her to submit to each and every man or even boy in society! Her submission is not to every man in society, but only to her own husband!

Five. Submission to her husband is never a total submission.

Her submission to her husband is never a total submission, because her obedience to God is a higher priority than her obedience to her husband. For example, if her husband would demand her to do things that are contrary to the moral and spiritual principles established by God himself in the Bible, then it would be wrong for her to obey him. If that happens she should firmly, but gently, resist his demand (Act 5:29). Nevertheless, with this exception, her submission should be complete (1 Pet 3:1-7).

(S) The fourth responsibility of the wife. She should be her husband's helper.

God created the woman to be a *suitable helper* for her husband. 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. The woman is completely equal with man as a creature, as one bearing the image of God. The woman is completely equal with man as a Christian, as one equally responsible 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 her husband. 1 Corinthians 11:9 teaches that the woman was created *for man*, that is, to be the helper of her husband. Therefore, a Christian wife should make it her aim to be the best possible helper on the team of which her husband is the team leader.

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

Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. The topic today is "Love and submit" and the reference is Titus 2:4-5. 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 submit: Titus 2:4-5. Then they can train the younger women *to love their husbands* and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind.

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(T+S) To love and to submit: Titus 2:4-5. Then they can train the younger women *to love their husbands* and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and *to be subject to their husbands*, so that no-one will malign the word of God. Titus 2:4-5.

(T) To love and to submit: Titus 2:4-5. Then they can train the younger women *to love their husbands* and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and *to be subject to their husbands*, so that no-one will malign the word of God. Titus 2:4-5.

(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 3-5 and series "Christian marriage", verses 1-2.

(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) 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) **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”.