

(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 ninth series, the Bible teaches five truths about the kingdom of God. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: WELCOME CHILDREN INTO THE KINGDOM. We will meditate a new Bible passage, memorise a new Bible verse and then review the previously memorised verses together.

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

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is Luke 18:16-17. We will meditate the truths in the Bible together. Let me read Luke 18:15-17. "People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

The memorisation verse is: Welcome children into the kingdom. Luke 18:16-17. Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. Luke 18:16-17.

(T) **First. There are children everywhere in the world.**

Children everywhere in the world are beginning to believe in Jesus Christ. They do that in different ways. Some children learn about Jesus Christ in from their parents; others learn about Jesus Christ in their school. Some children learn about Jesus Christ from some family member; others learn about Jesus Christ from their friends.

Because many people talk about Jesus Christ, children hear about Jesus Christ and they begin to believe in him. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes from hearing the message".

(S) **Second. Parents bring children to Jesus so that Jesus may bless them.**

During the time of Jesus Christ some parents brought their children to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to touch their children. All people think that it is a great privilege when a famous poet or singer gives a hand to them. How much greater would the privilege be when Jesus Christ, the King of all kings on earth, touches you with his hand? Could you close your eyes and imagine Jesus Christ touching you?

What did this touching signify? The parents probably wanted Jesus Christ to bless their children.

(T) **Third. Some adults try to hinder children from coming close to Jesus Christ.**

The disciples of Jesus were adults. Jesus had chosen them and called them to follow him. He chose them to be with him so that they may learn from him while they follow him. The disciples had to learn to serve people, but they began to lord it over people. They prevented the parents from bringing their children to Jesus. Maybe they thought that Jesus was too busy to occupy himself with children. Maybe they thought that Jesus Christ only had a message for adults. They wanted to prevent these parents and children from bothering Jesus. So they chased them away from Jesus.

This still happens all over the world. In some countries the government has made a law that prohibits children to come to Jesus Christ! In some countries the religious leaders and teachers try to keep children away from Jesus Christ. And in all countries there are parents who keep their children away from Jesus Christ. Why? Because they know that especially children have the right attitude to listen and to accept what Jesus Christ teaches. They know that children are upright and are attracted to the righteousness and love of Jesus Christ. These governments and religious leaders and parents do not want their children to come to Jesus Christ and become like Jesus Christ. These adults do not want the children to become righteous and good while they themselves remain corrupt and evil. These governments and these religious leaders want their children to become just like they themselves are: corrupt and evil. Jesus exposed the religious teachers of his time when he said in Matthew 23:15, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are."

(S) **Fourth. Jesus warns governments, religious leaders and parents that keep children away from him.**

In Matthew 18:6-9 Jesus says, "If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! If

your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”

Jesus Christ warns governments, religious leaders and parents that keep children away from Jesus Christ that they are on their way to hell! They are on their way to hell because they keep children away from Jesus. They are on their way to hell because they teach their children to become evil as they themselves are. They are on their way to hell because they cause their children to sin by watching violent and pornographic television. And they are on their way to hell because they cause their children to sin by becoming terrorists and fight holy wars. They are on their way to hell because they persecute parents who bring their children to Jesus Christ.

(T) Fifth. Jesus says that angels watch over children and adults who belong to Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 18:10 Jesus says, “See to it that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”

The Bible does not teach that each of God’s children has his own ‘guardian angel’ who remains with him for life, protecting him from harm and helping him in various ways. The angel that helped Hagar and Ishmael in the desert was not their guardian angel, but the Angel of the Lord, which was the Lord himself (Gen 16:7). The angel that delivered Jacob from all harm was not his guardian angel, but also the Lord himself (Gen 48:16). Psalm 34:7 says, “The Angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.” This Psalm is speaking of the Lord himself and means the same as Psalm 139:5, which says that the Lord is all around his people and hems them in behind and before and above. The angel that was with Daniel in the lion’s den was not Daniel’s guardian angel that remained with him and took care of him at all times. He was rather an angel sent by God to protect Daniel in the lion’s den.

A Christian child or a Christian adult do not have a particular guardian angel that remains with him all the time and protects and helps him in all his circumstances. They do not have ONE, but ALL the angels of God that come to them and go away again at various times of their life. The Bible in Hebrews 1:14 teaches that angels exist and that their special task is to promote the salvation of Christians and to serve them in the world. For example, in Genesis 28:10-15 Jacob had a dream and he saw a stairway between heaven and earth. The angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord himself was standing above it. This was a true picture of the real situation: God sends his angels time and again to protect and help Christians. Jesus teaches the same truth when he said in John 1:51, “You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man”.

When Jesus says, “*Their* angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven”, he is not referring to specific guardian angels of children, but to his angels, including even the highest ranking angels to keep watch over them. God’s angels not only keep watch over the children of Christians, but also keep watch over adult Christians who have become like children, who have the attitude of children and come to Jesus Christ.

Jesus warns governments and religious leaders and adults not to despise or hinder Christian children and Christian adults, because they have God’s angels for their companions and friends. Governments and religious leaders have to guard themselves from hindering the children’s salvation, which even the angels of God are commissioned to promote. God has committed the care of the entire Christian Church in every country of the world to his angels and these angels assist each Christian as his needs require.

Matthew 18:10 does not emphasize that the angels are mediators that speak to God on our behalf, but rather that God takes care of Christians through the service of his angels. Luke 15:10 says that the angels rejoice when even one sinner repents and becomes a Christian. And Luke 16:22 says that the angels immediately carry the soul or spirit of a Christian that has died into the presence of God. Thus, the angels of God carry the needs of Christians on their hearts, are deeply interested in Christians and love Christians.

(S) Sixth. Jesus commands all people to let the children come to him.

Jesus was not happy when he saw how adults were keeping the children away from him. He said, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

The kingdom of God is the kingship or rule of God through Jesus Christ in the hearts and lives of his people, both children and adults. Every kingdom has a king. And in the kingdom of God Jesus Christ is the King. He is even the King of all the kings on earth, even when these earthly kings and earthly political leaders do not know that or do not acknowledge that. Jesus is the King! And Jesus wants to be the King in your heart and in your life! Every place where Jesus Christ is the King, there is the kingdom of God. And where King Jesus is, there is salvation and there is a Christian church with children and adults doing all kinds of good and righteous and holy things for the other people in the world. And when Jesus Christ returns to this earth at his second coming, he is going to make this whole earth new and he is going to live in the midst of his people on this new earth. Then everything will become his kingdom!

Why is the kingdom first for children? Because children *listen* gladly to the teachings of Jesus Christ! Why is the kingdom first for children? Because children *accept* what Jesus says without doubting what he says and without questions. Why is the kingdom first for children? Because children *want to do* what Jesus teaches. Why is the kingdom first for children? Because children gladly *tell* Jesus what is in their hearts when they pray. That is why children may belong to Jesus Christ and his kingdom! That is why Jesus Christ is so eager to receive children and bless children!

How does Jesus bless the children? He lets the children come to him. He puts his arms around them and lays his hands on their heads and speaks a blessing over them. What is a blessing? A blessing is *a wish and a promise* at the same time, because Jesus always does what he says! What did Jesus say in his blessing? We do not know. His blessing was something just between Jesus and the child. His blessing was about Jesus being the King in their hearts and lives. Maybe he said, "I like children very much! I wish that all children would come to me and belong to me! I promise that I will work in your heart and in your life. I want to live in your heart and in your life! I want to go with you wherever you go!"

(T) Seventh. Jesus promises his kingdom also for adults.

Jesus says that if any adult receives the kingdom of God like a child, he will also enter the kingdom! When teenagers and young adults and adults and old people *listen* to what Jesus Christ says and *receive* what he teaches, then they will also belong to Jesus Christ and his kingdom. Then Jesus Christ will also bless them!

But Jesus Christ also warns adults that if they do not receive him, they will never enter the kingdom of God. If people do not receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour, they will never enter Paradise. If adults do not listen to the teachings of Jesus Christ, they will never live on the new earth. Jesus says that unless a person is born again, he will never see or enter the kingdom of God. And Jesus says that when a person receives him into his heart and life, he will receive the right to be a child of God (Jn 1:12).

(S) 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 "Welcome children into the kingdom". Beneath that, write the Bible reference of the verse. The Bible reference today is Luke 18:16-17. 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.

(T) 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) Welcome children into the kingdom. Luke 18:16-17. Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

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(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 parents", verses 2-5 and series "The kingdom of God", verse 1.

(T) To develop all areas of life: Proverbs 22:6. Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. Proverbs 22:6.

(S) To teach God's Word: Deuteronomy 6:6-7. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

(T) To bring up in the Lord: Ephesians 6:4: Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4.

(S) To love through discipline: Proverbs 13:24. He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him. Proverbs 13:24.

(T) Enter into the kingdom: John 3:3,5. “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.” John 3:3,5.

(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”.