

(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 and then memorise it together. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme.

In this tenth series, the Bible teaches five truths about the Christian Church. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH. 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 Ephesians 4:12-13. We will meditate the truths in the Bible together. Let me read Ephesians 4:11-16. "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

The memorisation verse is: The ministries of the Christian Church. Ephesians 4:12-13. "To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:12-13. Ephesians 4:1-16 teach the goals of every Christian church. Its emphasis is on maintaining the unity of the Christian Church with a great diversity in the Christian Church.

(T) **The first goal of every Christian church is to live out the Christian life.**

Ephesians 4:1-3 says, "Live a life worthy of the calling you have received." The life which is worthy of God's calling is characterised by the following seven virtues: humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, love, unity and peace. The Christian church should help Christians to live out these seven virtues among their family, friends and society.

(S) **The second goal of every Christian church is to maintain the unity of the Church.**

The unity of the Church is described in Ephesians 4:4-6 through seven words of unity, which are arranged in three groups as follows.

One. There is "one body, one Spirit, one hope". The Christian Church should not be divided into denominations. The Christian Church is the one Body of Jesus Christ, indwelt by one Holy Spirit, who guarantees one wonderful future, which all Christians will share.

Two. There is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism". The Christian Church should acknowledge the active leadership of Jesus Christ in all church affairs. The Christian Church has only one Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, and no human being may take his position as Leader in the Christian Church. All Christians believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and should base their faith only on the Bible and never on human traditions. All Christians should be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is exactly the same as being baptised in the one name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19).

Three. There is "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all". The Christian Church does not have three gods as some enemies of the Christian Church allege. The Christian Church believes in one God, who is the only God that exists and who revealed himself through the prophets in the Old Testament and finally through Jesus Christ.

(T) Christians believe in the God of the Bible and in no other god. The God of the Bible is exalted above everyone and everything, sovereign and majestic. The God of the Bible is Spirit and as such omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent.

One. The God of the Bible is *unfathomable* and therefore no human being can know him or even grasp his divine being (Job 11:7-8). Yet the God of the Bible can be known to the extent that he reveals himself to us.

Two. The God of the Bible is Spirit and therefore *invisible* to the human eyes (Jn 4:24; 1:18). Yet, the God of the Bible can be seen in Jesus Christ. The God of the Bible took besides his divine nature also the human nature and entered his creation and human history in Jesus Christ (Jn 1:1,14,18). Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God (Col 1:15). Colossians 2:9 teaches that the fullness of the divine nature dwells in the body of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9).

Three. The God of the Bible lives in an *unapproachable* light and no human being can climb up to God by way of keeping the law or by way of a devote religious life. The God of the Bible is so highly exalted that no human being can approach him (1 Tim 6:16). Yet, the God of the Bible took on the human nature in Jesus Christ and approached us people on earth.

Thus, although the God of the Bible is unfathomable, people can know him to the extent that he has revealed himself in the Bible and in Jesus Christ. And although the God of the Bible is invisible, people can see who he is and what he is like in Jesus Christ. And although the God of the Bible cannot be approached by any human ladders or means, people can have a personal relationship with him, because he approached people on earth and in history through Jesus Christ.

(S) Four. The God of the Bible is the spiritual Father of Jesus Christ *in an ontological sense*: God the Father and God the Son have the same divine nature. God the Father is not the physical father of Jesus Christ as some enemies falsely allege. The God of the Bible is the spiritual Father of Jesus Christ in the sense that he himself took on the human nature in Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly calls the God of the Bible “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3). The God of the Bible is “the God and Father of Jesus Christ” in the sense that he took on the human nature in Jesus Christ and revealed himself to people in Jesus Christ. The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is never a physical relationship, as some enemies allege, but is always a spiritual relationship! Every god of every religion that is not the Father of Jesus Christ is not the God of the Bible! The Old Testament prophets called Jesus Christ “the Mighty God” and “the Everlasting Father” (Isa 9:6). And in the New Testament Jesus says that God the Father and God the Son are one (Jn 10:30). The Christian Church believes in ONE God, in one divine nature, who revealed himself to people within creation and within human history as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. As God the Father, the God of the Bible is the Eternal God and the Creator and Origin of everything. As God the Son, God took on the human nature and revealed himself visibly to people. And as God the Holy Spirit, God dwells in the hearts and lives of Christians to give them new life, wisdom and power.

Five. The God of the Bible is also the spiritual Father of Christians, *not in an ontological sense*, but only in a spiritual sense. Christians are never ‘God’ and never become “God”, but are always the creatures of God. Before people believe in Jesus Christ, they are the enemies of the God of the Bible (Rom 5:10). But after they believe in Jesus Christ, they become the spiritual sons and daughters of God or the spiritual children of God (Eph 1:5). And as the spiritual children of God they are transformed and more and more acquire the same spiritual characteristics as the God of the Bible, like love, holiness and righteousness (Eph 4:24; 2 Pet 1:4). This one God and Father of the Bible exercises control from heaven *over* all these Christians, works out his plan for all Christians *through* Jesus Christ and dwells *in* all Christians through the Holy Spirit (4:6). The unity of the Christian Church arises from the unity of the God of the Bible. The unity of the Christian Church is demonstrated by Christians all over the world, because they worship the same God of the Bible, they have the same Saviour of their sins, they have the same Holy Spirit, who dwells in them, and they have the same faith, the same love and the same hope!

(T) **The third goal of every Christian church is to give room in their midst to diversity.**

In Ephesians 4:7-11, the emphasis is on the diversity of the Church. Christ gave *grace to each Christian* (4:7)! This grace consists of grace that saves, grace that builds and grace that equips.

One. Christ gives to each Christian *grace that saves* so that they may belong to the Body of Christ. The grace that saves consists of rebirth and faith that believes the gospel (2:8).

Two. Christ gives to each Christian *grace that builds* so that they may grow and bear fruit. The grace that builds consists of the fruit of the Spirit and things like comfort, encouragement and strength.

Three. Christ also gives to very many Christians *grace that equips* so that they may serve in and outside the Body of Christ. The grace that equips consists of people with a great variety of spiritual gifts. Just as the human body consists of very many different parts, so the Body of Christ, the Christian Church, consists of many different Christians. The diversity in the Church consists of a diversity of spiritual gifts, a diversity of services and a diversity of ways in which God calls and uses his people (1 Cor 12:4-7). All this great diversity of Christ’s grace is needed to build up the Christian Church (11-12). There is a great diversity of gifts of the Spirit among the members of the one Body of Christ. The list in verse 11 is not intended to be complete. Other spiritual gifts are mentioned in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28-30. This diversity of Christ’s grace in the Body of Christ promotes the unity of the Body, because every member uses what he has received to serve others and he needs the services of others himself.

(S) The fourth goal of every Christian church is to build up the relationships among Christians.

In Ephesians 4:12-13, the emphasis is on *the unity in the relationships in the Church*. Every Christian should be engaged in building relationships and fulfil his so-called “one another responsibilities” to others. For example, Christians should carry one another’s burdens, encourage one another and teach and admonish one another.

The unity of our Christian relationships is not based on the organisation of our church, but on faith and knowledge. All genuine Christians have the same *Christian faith*, that is, we all believe in the same truth as it is revealed in only the Bible. All genuine Christians know Jesus Christ personally, fellowship with him and walk with him. Thus, the relationships among the Christians should be based on personally knowing and fellowshiping with Jesus Christ, on the correct teachings of the Bible and on doing what the Bible says.

(T) The fifth goal of every Christian church is to evangelise among the lost people.

The Christian Community or church *grows in quantity by evangelising* people. The followers of Christ proclaim the message of God’s grace and declare to all people that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in Jesus Christ (Act 20:20-27). They proclaim the kingdom of God, the whole will of God, the unsearchable riches of Christ and the manifold wisdom of God. They evangelise (4:11) and speak the truth in love (4:15).

No one is born a Christian. A genuine Christian must be born again! Without rebirth, no one becomes a genuine member of Christ’s Body (1 Cor 12:12-13). Without faith in Jesus Christ, no one will be saved (Jn 3:16,18,36).

(S) The sixth goal of every Christian church is to establish all Christians as disciples.

Ephesians 4:13-14 teaches that the Christian Community or church *grows in quality by establishing* all the new followers of Christ through growing to maturity in Christ. It says, “Until we all ... become mature ... to the measure of the fullness of Christ.” The way to help Christians to grow to maturity is to make them disciples of Jesus Christ (Mt 28:19). The objective of making disciples is not to turn new Christians into members of some denomination, but to help them to become *disciples of Jesus Christ*. Especially mature Christians should help the young Christians to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, to develop Christian attitudes, habits and character, and to practise what they learn. The measure of Christian maturity is *Christlikeness* (4:13). Some visible results of maturity are: *unity* on the basis of the teachings of the Bible and on the basis of *knowing* Christ personally as Saviour and Lord and *fellowshipping* with him every day (4:13); *stability* and *discernment* in the teachings of the Bible (4:14); *truth* in beliefs and *love* in all relationships (4:15).

A great enemy of growth in the Christian Community is to depart from the truth and to compromise with the lie, whether in beliefs, words or deeds. Another great enemy of growth in the Christian Community is to be coldly indifferent to the thoughts and feelings, trials and interests of the people we are trying to serve or win to Christ.

(T) The seventh goal of every Christian church is to equip all Christians to do some work of service.

Ephesians 4:11-12 teaches that the Christian Community or church is built up by *equipping all the Christians to works of service*. The word *equipping* means *to restore, to make complete, to train and to equip*. Especially those Christians who have spiritual gifts of equipping others should equip the other Christians to do at least one task within the Christian Church. Some of them may be leaders and others may be gifted trainers in the Christian Church. Ephesians 4:11-12 says that people like missionaries, preachers, evangelists, pastors and teachers should prepare or equip God’s people for works of service. The Christians are equipped to do the many different kinds of services in the local church as well as in the Church world-wide. For example, some followers of Christ are equipped to evangelise, while others are equipped to care for new believers. Likewise, some followers of Christ are equipped to preach or to teach, while others are equipped to lead or to show mercy. And again other Christians are equipped to counsel, to show mercy, to serve or to give. No member of the Christian Community should just passively *attend the Christian community* or house church.

The goal should be to equip every member in the Christian Church to do at least one service, no matter how small it may be. Every member should eventually function in the task that Jesus Christ has assigned to him (Mk 13:34). Equipping every Christian can make the Christian Church a very influential group of people on earth! In this way, they can be involved in telling everyone in the world about Jesus Christ. They can be involved in building up healthy families and societies. They can make a positive contribution to schools and hospitals. They can give the world good books and newspapers to read. Every Christian can be God’s instrument in the establishment of God’s kingdom, that is, God’s sovereign rule in the hearts and lives of people on earth!

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

Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. The topic today is “The ministries of the church” and the reference is Ephesians 4:12-13. Let us memorise the Bible verse together.

(T+S) The ministries of the Christian Church. Ephesians 4:12-13. "To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:12-13.

(T) The ministries of the Christian Church. Ephesians 4:12-13. "To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:12-13.

(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 "The kingdom of God", verses 3-5 and series "The Christian Church", verses 1-2.

(T) Preach the gospel of the kingdom. Matthew 24:14. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:14.

(S) Never look back from serving in the kingdom. Luke 9:62. "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62.

(T) The triumph of the kingdom. Daniel 2:44. "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those other kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever." Daniel 2:44.

(S) The nature of the church. 1 Peter 2:5. "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:5.

(T) The activities in the church. Acts 2:42. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42.

(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".