

(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 sixth series, the Bible teaches five important decisions Christians must make when they prepare themselves for marriage. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: FOR A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE BOTH MUST BE BELIEVERS.

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

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is 2 Corinthians 6:14. We will meditate the truths in the Bible together. Let me read 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1

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? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’ ‘Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”

The memorisation verse is: Both believers. 2 Corinthians 6:14. “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.

(T) **First. The meaning of a yoke. What is the meaning of “a yoke”?**

The yoke here is a “double-yoke” under which two animals work side by side, for example when they plough together. A yoke is an instrument that couples or binds two animals together, so that they will go in the same direction, make the same movements, walk at the same pace, stop at the same time and generally do everything in synchronisation. If one animal strays from a straight line, the other will be pulled in that direction. If one animal slows down and stops, he forces the other animal to also slow down and stop. If the two animals try to follow two different leaders, they will be tugging and pushing each other to go their separate ways and thus hinder every kind of progress.

The apostle Paul had the words of Deuteronomy 22:10 in mind, which says, “Do not plough with an ox and a donkey *yoked together*.” He adapts and applies this principle with the purpose of emphasising the incongruity of believers being paired with unbelievers. A Christian who is yoked together with a non-Christian is going to experience how the non-Christian pulls him away from the right path of God, slows down his growth and even forces him to stop believing altogether.

(S) **Second. A Christian is forbidden to marry a non-Christian.**

In the original language of the New Testament, the verb in verse 14 is a continuous command. It literally says, “*Do not go on and on and on being unequally yoked together with unbelievers.*” The command implies that the Bible definitely forbids Christians to marry with unbelievers. The continuous tense of the verb implies that some Christians in the church at Corinth were preparing to get married to non-Christians. The apostle Paul commands these Christians to continue no longer with these compromising situations! Christian boys and girls should stop “dating” non-Christian girls and boys!

(T) **Third. What Christians do *not* have in common with non-Christians.**

Christians do have certain things in common with non-Christians. For example, they eat the same food, wear the same clothes, ride in the same bus and use the same kind of money, etc. However, there are specific things that are peculiar to non-Christians, from which Jesus Christ has once-for all separated Christians. For example, while the non-Christian's *life is centred* on himself, the Christian's life is centred on Jesus Christ. While the *treasures* of non-Christians are temporary and on earth, the treasures of Christians are eternal and in heaven. While the *values* of non-Christian are the values of this sinful world, the values of Christian are those of the sinless world that is to come. While the non-Christians *seek* the glory of man, the Christians seek the glory of God. These examples show that with regard to *the purpose of life, the direction of life and the values in life Christians and non-Christians have nothing in common!*

(S) Fourth. The Bible forbids Christians to have a yoke-relationship by associating with name Christians who behave like non-Christians.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 says, "I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people - not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave the world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat."

The Bible forbids Christians *to associate with name Christians who behave like non-Christians*. People who call themselves "Christians", but are sexually immoral, greedy for money, cheat in business transactions, over-indulge in alcohol, cannot control their tongues, participate in terrorist activities or are involved in the idolatry of other religions, are not genuine Christians at all! Their behaviour shows that they are not genuine Christians!

Thus, a Christian may *not pull in the same "social yoke"* together with a name-Christian who behaves like a non-Christian. Christians are forbidden to even eat with them.

(T) Fifth. The Bible forbids Christians to have a yoke-relationship by welcoming false teachers and false prophets into their homes and lives.

2 John 7-11 says, "Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work".

The Bible forbids Christians *to welcome false teachers and false prophets into their homes and lives*. The apostle John warns that very many false teachers and false prophets have already gone out into the world. They often disguise themselves as "Christians", but their teachings are definitely non-Christian. For example, some modern false teachers reject that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit is one God. However, Colossians 1:15 clearly teaches that Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God! And Colossians 2:9 teaches that all the fullness of God lives in Jesus Christ in bodily form!

Thus, a Christian may *not pull in the same "religious yoke"* together with a false Christian teacher or false Christian preacher! Christians are even forbidden to welcome them into their homes! Christians should not listen to their teachings and should not read their books!

(S) Sixth. The Bible forbids Christians to have a yoke-relationship by settling their legal disputes before non-Christian judges.

1 Corinthians 6:5-6 says, "I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against another - and this in front of unbelievers!"

The Bible forbids Christians *to settle their legal disputes before non-Christian judges*. When a Christian has a legal dispute with another Christian, they should allow wise Christians in the church to judge their dispute! If the dispute cannot be resolved, it is better to accept suffering of loss and leave the final judgement in the hands of God.

Thus, a Christian may *not pull in the same "legal yoke"* together with a non-Christian. Christians should resolve their conflicts and disputes in front of wise people in the church and not in front of the worldly authorities!

(T) Seventh. The Bible forbids Christians to have a yoke-relationship by dating or marrying non-Christians.

1 Corinthians 7:39 says, "A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord."

The Bible forbids Christians *to marry a non-Christian*. Christians may only marry another genuine Christian. A Christian is regarded as somebody who really "belongs to the Lord", that is, the Lord lives in him through his Holy Spirit and actively guides his life.

2 Corinthians 6:14 clearly says that a believer may not be unequally yoked to an unbeliever. A Christian may only marry with another Christian.

This conclusion has consequences also for "dating". Actually becoming intimate friends with a non-Christian is a dangerous thing. When friends become close, they share deeper thoughts and feelings that will stay in their minds for a very long time. They begin to depend on each other and influence each other deeply. However, an intimate friendship relationship between a Christian and a non-Christian will become like an "unequal yoke" relationship. The Christian cannot simply ignore the non-Christian's desires, values and goals. He will be pulled down by the non-Christian to

worldly desires, values and goals. Whatever the non-Christian believes will influence the Christian's faith and behaviour. Because "dating" is such an intimate relationship, a Christian *may also not "date" a non-Christian.*

Some Christians say, "But if I marry this non-Christian, then I will lead him to Christ. Isn't that pleasing to God?" No, this is not pleasing to God, because God clearly forbids this in 1 Corinthians 7:39 and 2 Corinthians 6:14 and also because in 1 Corinthians 7:16, God says that you cannot know if you will be instrumental to save this person.

Therefore, a Christian may *not pull in the same "marriage yoke" or "dating yoke"* together with a non-Christian. It will be a very sad day, when you leave Jesus Christ for the sake of any human friendship. It would not be any better if your non-Christian friend decides "to become a Christian" or follow Christ half-heartedly just to please you. In either way your friendship will suffer. Although nothing is impossible for God, we must be wise and *obey* what God has commanded! God commands us not to be unequally yoked to a non-believer, because he really has our happiness in mind!

(S) Eighth. The Bible forbids Christians to have a yoke-relationship by joining non-Christians in pagan revelry. 1 Corinthians 10:7 say, "Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry."

The Bible forbids Christians *to join non-Christians in pagan revelry.* These "parties" were characterised by excessive indulgence and lack of self-discipline. People were eating too much and especially drinking too much alcohol. According to 1 Peter 4:3-5 and Ephesians 5:3-5, these parties were often accompanied by wild dancing, loud music, shouting and coarse joking. The people committed acts of lust, idolatry or occultism.

Thus, a Christian may *not pull in the same "wild party yoke"* together with non-Christians. Christians should not go to places like these, but instead organise their own meetings where people can develop healthy and God-honouring relationships.

(T) Let me summarise *the unlawful yoke-relationships* with unbelievers that are described in the Bible. Unlawful yoke-relationships with unbelievers are *all close relationships with unbelievers in which Christian harmony cannot be expected to flourish.* They are *all close relationships with unbelievers in which Christian principles are compromised.*

(S) Ninth. What a Christian should do when he is still unequally yoked together with an unbeliever in some area of his life.

He should do what verse 17 says, "Come out from them and be separate." In the original language of the New Testament, the verbs literally say, "You must immediately come out from among the unbelievers. You must definitely be separate from the unbelievers". The implication was that some Christians in the church at Corinth were still continuing in their compromising situations. The apostle Paul commands them *to make a definite and permanent break with their compromising situations!* Christians are definitely forbidden to have compromising relationships and also forbidden to be involved in compromising activities. The negative command "do not be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever" carries with it the opposite and positive command "Come out from them and be separate." Christians should first break with all compromising relationships and compromising activities. Then, Christians should get equally yoked together with other Christians and pull in the same direction. They should encourage and help one another in the faith and serve together in unity. Christians should get equally yoked together with Christians in marriage, in service and in public witnessing. Because Christians live among non-Christians all the time, Christian teachers and preachers should teach the Christian boys and girls and men and women what kind of relationships and activities are compromising and therefore forbidden for Christians. They should also organise meetings and activities for their Christian boys and girls and men and women that build them up and honour God.

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

Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. The topic today is "Both believers" and the reference is 2 Corinthians 6:14. Let us memorise the Bible verse together.

(T+S) Both believers. 2 Corinthians 6:14. "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.

(S) Both believers. 2 Corinthians 6:14. "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.

(T+S) Both believers. 2 Corinthians 6:14. "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.

(T) Both believers. 2 Corinthians 6:14. "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) **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 character”, verses 1-5.

(T) **Christlikeness. 2 Corinthians 3:18.** And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

(S) **Purity. 1 Peter 2:11.** Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 1 Peter 2:11.

(T) **Love. Mark 12:30-31.** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these. Mark 12:30-31.

(S) **Faith. Romans 4:20-21.** Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in the faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. Romans 4:20-21.

(T) **Humility. Philippians 2:3-4.** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4.

(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”.