

(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 eighth series, the Bible teaches five responsibilities of Christian parents with respect to raising their children. The topic of today's meditation and memorisation is: TO LOVE BY SPENDING.

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

The new Bible verse that we will meditate and memorise is 2 Corinthians 12:14-15. We will meditate the truths in the Bible together. Let me read 2 Corinthians 12:14-15. "I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions, but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. So I will very gladly spend for your souls everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less?"

The memorisation verse is: To love by spending. 2 Corinthians 12:14b-15a. "After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. So I will very gladly spend for your souls everything I have and expend myself as well." 2 Corinthians 12:14-15.

(T) **First. The responsibility to spend possessions for your children.**

The apostle Paul travelled to many places to preach the gospel and to establish churches. But how did he live? In 1 Corinthians 9:14, he taught that the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. Christians ought to support the people who preached the gospel to them and who teach them. But the apostle Paul chose not to make use of this right himself. Although the church at Philippi sent gifts to him in order to support his missionary work, he generally worked with his own hands to support himself. Paul had a trade. He made tents and that was how he earned his money in order to support his needs.

In our passage, Paul says that he is about to visit the church at Corinth for the third time. Just like on previous occasions, he refuses to be a financial burden to them, because what he wants is not their money or material possessions, but themselves! Paul reminds the church at Corinth that he became their *father* through the gospel (1 Cor 4:15). In our passage he teaches that it is NOT the obligation of children to save up money for their parents, but it IS the obligation of parents to save up money for their children. It is not the responsibility of children to store up (amass) treasures for their parents, but the responsibility of parents to store up treasures for their children. That is why, the apostle Paul, as parent of the church at Corinth, refuses to burden them with supporting him. As a matter of fact, he is determined never to be a financial burden to them, even in the future (2 Cor 11:9-11). Instead of being a financial burden to the Corinthians, he will not only support himself, but he will come *to spend* his possessions on their behalf!

Likewise, Christian parents have the responsibility to save up money for their children and to spend money in order to support their children. Children not only need food and clothing, but also an education so that they may learn to support themselves and their children in the future. Parents should give their children a good training at home, the best possible spiritual training and a good education.

(S) **Second. The responsibility to expend yourself for your children.**

The apostle Paul says that he is coming not only *to spend* his possessions, but also *to expend* himself on their behalf! He says that he will willingly and gladly spend his property and energy for them! To spend one's property on one's children is a great sacrifice. But to expend oneself with all his time, energy and devotion for his children is the greatest sacrifice. In this passage and throughout the second letter to the Corinthians, Paul breathes a spirit of dedicated love for his spiritual children! In his letters to the Corinthians, he had rebuked them for their sins and he said very stern things to them. But *sternness and affection* dwell together in a father's heart. They are not mutually exclusive. True love of a parent demands discipline and not indulgence! A parent who loves his child *will not* and *cannot* rejoice in unrighteousness. 1 Corinthians 13:6 says, "Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth." To expend oneself means to spend one's money, possessions, time, energy, devotion, yes everything to the point of even being willing to die for one's spiritual children.

Moreover, Paul says that he will not only spend his property and himself for *their lives*, but for *their souls*! Paul's love is not for things, but for souls, for persons. The true parent will expend himself wholeheartedly for the soul of his child.

The apostle Paul does not simply give his life so that they might have a better material life, but that *their souls* may be saved! He does not want to bind the Corinthian Christians to himself, but to Jesus Christ! In 2 Corinthians 11:2, he says, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy." Just like a father wishes to give his daughter in marriage only to the very best husband, so the apostle Paul, as their spiritual father, wishes to prepare the Corinthian Christians as a bride only for the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, "I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him."

Finally, Paul says, "If I love you more, will you love me less?" The apostle Paul says that the reaction of the Corinthian Christians to his ministry will not change his attitude or dedication to them. Even if they loved him less, he will continue to love them! *Less love* on their part will not diminish *the greatness of his love* for them, because his purpose is not to bind them to himself, but to Jesus Christ!

The magnitude of Paul's love for the Corinthians, is a reflection of the love of Jesus Christ for us. Mark 10:45 says that Jesus Christ came, not to be served by us, but to serve us. He came, not to use our lives, but to expend his life for us! The supremacy of love is proved in that Christ's love is active to save people, who not only *love less*, but who *do not even love at all!* Romans 5:6-10 says that Jesus Christ loves people who are actually his enemies and hate him because of their sins. It is the love of Christ that constrains Paul and should constrain every Christian parent. Parents have the responsibility to *love souls*, that is, love persons and not things. Parents have the obligation to love the souls of their children. They love their children by expending themselves for their lives and souls.

(T) Third. The responsibility to love your child according to the principles in 1 Corinthians 13.

Parents should love their child not in a sentimental way or by spoiling the child. They should love him according to the principles in the Bible. *Patience* is the love that can wait. It is the love that does not enforce kindness on the child, but can wait to show kindness. *Kindness* is the love that helps and that does not let a chance go by to do the child good. *Not being jealous* is the love that generously gives the child appreciation, credit and honour where he deserves it. *Not boasting* is the love that is modest about his merits and accomplishments and does not try to impress the child. *Not proud* is the love that is humble about his strengths and weaknesses in the relationship to the child. *Not behave rudely* is the love that shows good manners and tact towards the child. *Not self-seeking* is the love that unselfishly seeks the interests of the child above his own. *Not easily angered* is the love that meekly submits to the injury and hurts the child sometimes causes.

(S) Fourth. The responsibility to love your child by giving undivided attention.

Parents need to give undivided attention to their children, otherwise the children will no more want to give any attention to their parents when they become teenagers! Parents reap in their children's teenager years what they have sown during their childhood! (Gal 6:7-8)

The parents should begin by listening to their children. Proverbs 18:13 teaches, "He who answers before listening - that is his folly and his shame". Parents should not listen selectively, making assumptions about what the child wants to say. They should also be patient and keep on listening to the child until the child is completely finished with speaking. They ought to take serious what the child is saying and help the child to feel accepted (Rom 15:7). When children feel that their parents are critical about what they are saying, or make fun of them, then they feel that their parents are not only rejecting what they are saying, but are also rejecting them! If a child is not listening to his parent, it is possibly because the parent is not listening to the child!

The parents should plan to spend uninterrupted time with their children on a regular basis. Do creative things together with your child, like playing with them, going on an outing with them, making music with them and telling them stories.

(T) Fifth. The responsibility to love by developing maturity and a healthy inter-dependence.

A parent should not be negligent. Give the child a yoke to bear.

Lamentations 3:27 teaches, "It is good for a man to *bear the yoke* while he is young". God has given parents the responsibility to raise the child and therefore the parents should not neglect to do their duty to God. Developing or training children takes wisdom, time and lots of effort for the parents. But it also takes a lot of time, effort and self-discipline for the child. God says to you as a parent: don't be afraid to let your child carry this yoke of activities and responsibilities. When children have lots of free time, they feel bored and get involved in all kinds of mischief and even crime. But when children are kept busy with healthy activities and responsibilities, they develop into mature and responsible adults. The activities and responsibilities that a child learns in the protective circle of his home and family will later enable him to do these same things in society! Part of bearing the yoke is teaching your child to be *content* with what he has. Real love for your child will not give him everything he wants, because it will spoil the child. But when he learns to be content in situations where he does not have something, he will also learn to be creative and to take the initiative.

A parent should not be over-protective. Support him in his difficulties.

In Isaiah 43:2, God promises his children, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned!” When parents try to protect their children from every kind of danger or evil, the child will never learn how to face danger or how to resist evil! He will also never learn to trust God to help him when he has to go through deep problems or face difficult temptations. Parents should protect the child wherever it is still necessary. But they should give the child the opportunity to face his own temptations, problems and dangers. Only in this way, the child gets the opportunity to learn wisdom, to make good choices and decisions and to trust God’s promises. Stand with him, encourage him, give him wise counsel and pray for him, so that the child is not overwhelmed by his difficulties. But do not take away all his opportunities to learn!

A parent should not be possessive. Teach him self-denial, sharing and serving.

Psalms 127 already taught us that every child belongs to God. Parents may therefore not become possessive and treat the child as something they own. Children are entrusted to parents and parents raise children on behalf of God. *Possessive love* of especially a mother is when she demands to know the child’s every thought and action, or when she cannot let go of the child when it is necessary to let go of him. *Possessive love* of especially the father is when he tries to make decisions and choices that the child should make himself. If parents have possessive-love towards their children, then the children will also become possessive! They will become self-centred and selfish, greedy or stingy, secretive or arrogant. Instead, parents should make it their aim to teach the child some very important characteristics, like self-denial, sharing and service.

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

Write the Bible verse on a card or in a notebook. The topic today is “Love by spending” and the reference is 2 Corinthians 12:14-15. 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 by spending. 2 Corinthians 12:14-15. I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions, but you.

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(T+S) To love by spending: 2 Corinthians 12:14-15. I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions, but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.

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(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 marriage”, verses 1-5.

(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) 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 resolve conflicts: Matthew 5:23-24. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24.

(S) To remain faithful: Proverbs 3:3-4. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favour and a good name in the sight of God and man. Proverbs 3:3-4.

(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

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