



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD

Does the Word of God saturate your life, sinking into your inmost being? When you fix a cup of tea, you place a tea bag in a cup of hot water. As the tea bag soaks in the cup, the rich tea flavor is extracted and the hot water is colored reddish brown. The tea has completely permeated the hot water.

I want you to see yourself as the cup of hot water and the tea bag as the Word of God. When you allow the Word to soak into your life, then you will grow and experience change. As you soak up God's Word into your heart and mind, you will see transformation in your life. Just as the tea changes the color and taste of the water, the Word of God will change you – your thinking, your speaking, and your behavior.

How can you allow the Word of God to soak into your inmost being? How can the Word of God permeate the whole of your life? This can happen in your life as you meditate on the Word of God. Meditating on the Scripture will let the Word sink into your life bringing about change and growth.

Every believer needs to read, study, and memorize the Word of God. Reading, studying, and memorizing the Word are like dipping a tea bag into a hot cup of water. The more frequently the bag enters the water, the more effect it has. When you read, study, and memorize the Word, it will affect you. It will bring change and growth.

However, meditation allows the Word to sink deeply into your life. It lets the Word permeate the whole of your being. It goes much further beyond reading, studying, and memorizing the Word. Most of the life-altering power of the Scripture comes through meditation. Meditation exists as the bridge between reading, studying, and memorizing Scripture and a holy, changed life. It takes God's Word read, studied, and memorized and applies it to your life. It yields your whole life to the life-transforming power of God's holy and infallible Word.

Too often, we come away from the Word of God cold and unchanged. We see little growth and change in our lives. The Puritan pastor Thomas Watson tells us why this happens, "The reason we come away so cold from the word is, because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation."

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on meditating on the Scripture. We will look at what it means to meditate on the Scripture. We will examine how to meditate and what to meditate on. The purpose of this newsletter is to did you in the practice of meditation. The goal of this newsletter is to help you allow the Word to sink into your life for genuine change and growth.

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What Is Biblical Meditation?

Biblical meditation is the adoring believer's interaction with God by means of the Scripture. When the word "meditate" occurs in the Old Testament, it generally translates one of two words – *hagah* and *siach*. These terms do overlap one another but they give us much insight in what it means to meditate.

"*Hagah*" is often used to refer to the plotting of evil men as they form destructive plans. It is used in **Psalm 2:1**, "Why do the nations rage, and the peoples' plot (*hagah*) a vain thing?" These wicked people thought at length on their evil plans and how to carry them out. These are the "meditations" of evil men.

God wants His people to have the same focus and intensity in their "meditations." Yet, He points us in a different direction. The believer is to think at length on the Word of God. He is to dwell on what God reveals and how to put His Word into practice in our lives.

"*Siach*" means to reflect or contemplate internally or audibly (think out loud). This shows us that believers are to reflect on the Word of God. They think about its meaning and application to their lives. Believers contemplate God's Word, His ways, and His will. They may do this internally in their thoughts. On the other hand, they could do it as they speak, as they think aloud.

These words show us that the believer is to think on God's Word. He is to reflect and contemplate His truth and its application in his life. The believer interacts with God by accepting His Word, contemplating and reflecting on the meaning and then applying it to his life.

When a person receives a love letter from someone, he doesn't read it like it was a business letter. He reads it slowly, savoring every line. He thinks about everything that the loved one writes. He takes it all in and applies it to himself.

The Bible is God's love letter to the believer. Meditation is our interaction with God through this amazing love letter. We take in what God has given us, reflect on it, contemplate it, savor it, and apply it to one's life.

What Meditation Is Not

All that is called meditation today is not identical with what the Bible describes. One sad feature of our modern culture is that meditation has come identified more with non-Christian systems of thought than with Biblical Christianity. Christians often associate meditation with spiritually counterfeit groups like the New Age movement. Just because a cult has adopted meditation for its own purposes does not mean that we ignore the Biblical mandate to meditate on the Word of God.

The kind of meditation in the Bible differs from other kinds of meditation in several ways. The following will help you see the difference. **BM** stands for **Biblical meditation** and **OM** stands for **other types** of meditation.

Mental focus:

BM: Fills the mind with the Word of God.

OM: Empties the mind.

Content focus:

BM: Asks participants to focus on vital content – the living and eternal Word of God.

EM: Asks participants to repeat a single word, a mantra.

Goal:

BM: Honor God and experience genuine change and growth before God.

OM: Aids in self-fulfillment.

Mental activity:

BM: Constructive mental activity.

OM: Passive mentally

Method:

BM: Prays to God and depends on God.

OM: Visualize what you desire; dependence on self.

Resources For Meditation:

BM: The ultimate resource is God and His Word.

OM: The ultimate resource is within the person.

Why Practice Meditation?

You might wonder, "Why meditate? Isn't this just one more thing to put on my "good Christian" to-do list? Why practice this in my life?" The Bible offers several compelling reasons for meditating on the Word of God. These reasons should stir and encourage you to allow God's Word to sink deep into your life.

Meditation will help you to absorb the Word of God. Information floods our lives. Most information, even Biblical information, flows through our minds like water through a sieve. There's usually so much information coming in each day and it comes so quickly that we retain very little. However, when we meditate, the truth remains. It begins to fill our hearts and minds; it permeates our whole being. The Bible is compared to water in **Ephesians 5:20**. If we want to absorb the Word into our lives, we must meditate on it. Meditating on the Word will deliver us from simply hearing the Word. It will transform us into those who receive, understand, and apply the Word of God.

Meditation will inflame your passion for God. The Bible says in **Psalms 39:3**, "My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned; then I spake with my tongue." The Hebrew word for "musing" in this text stands closely related to the word "meditate" in **Joshua 1:8**. This word "musing" means to meditate on intensely. The psalmist says while he was musing, the fire burned. In other words, while he meditated, his heart burned with passion for God and His Word. Meditating on the Word stokes the flames of your passion for God. As you meditate on the Word, your passion for God will grow in greater intensity. Your love and zeal for God will burn more brightly in and through your life.

Meditation will enable you to gain wisdom and insight from the Word of God. The Word of God says in **Psalms 119:98-99**, "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation." In both verses, the psalmist declares his commitment to meditating on the Word of God. He says that God's commandments are "ever with me." He

declares that his commandments are "my meditation."

The result of this meditation makes him "wiser than his enemies" and he has more understanding than all his teachers. This means that he has gained significant insight. He has absorbed more Biblical truth than his enemies or his teachers because of his regular meditation on the Word of God.

As you meditate on the Scripture, you gain a greater understanding of it. You will have insights that cannot be gleaned from simply reading, studying, or memorizing the Word. You will grow in the ability to apply these insights in your life and therefore, grow in conformity to the Word of God.

Meditation will make you spiritually fruitful. The Bible says that the godly person delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on it day and night (**Psalms 1:2**). Then, the Bible says this, "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season" (**Psalms 1:3**). There is an intimate connection between meditating on God's Word and fruitfulness.

The fruitful believer regularly meditates on the Word of God. Meditation opens the soil of your heart and allows the water to soak deep in your heart and mind. This will cause spiritual fruit to come forth from your life. If you desire to bear fruit for God, meditation will help you exhibit and cultivate fruit for His glory and for His kingdom.

Meditation can make you stable. Meditating on God's Word will strengthen you to stand firm in all the circumstances of your life. In **Psalms 1**, we also see a connection between meditation (**1:2**) and stability. The Bible says in **Psalms 1:3** that the believer will be like a tree "planted by the rivers of water . . . his leaf also shall not wither." This believer will continue to grow and not fade away regardless of the circumstances of his or her life. Meditating on the Word leads to stability – like that of a tree that has an abundant water supply.

If practiced faithfully, meditation will help you cultivate the stability that **Psalms 1** commends. Like a tree with an abundant water supply that stabilizes it in all conditions, the Word received and absorbed through meditation will help the believer to stand firm and faithful. It

will empower the believer to bear fruit in the driest seasons of life. Meeting with God in His Word produces in them a courageous stability that will not fade in any circumstance of life.

Meditating on the Word can make you successful before God. The Word of God says in **Joshua 1:8**, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success." The Word provides a definite connection between success and the practice of meditation.

The prosperity and success that the Lord speaks of here is prosperity and success before His eyes. It does not necessarily refer to worldly wealth and material prosperity. From the New Testament perspective, we know that the main application of this promise will focus on the prosperity of the soul and spiritual success. This does not rule out worldly success and prosperity; some measure of prosperity in our human endeavors will ordinarily occur when we live according to God's wisdom. Yet, the primary emphasis in this text is on spiritual success and prosperity.

If Joshua desired to succeed in his calling, he had to regularly meditate on the Word of God. If Joshua desired to prosper in glorifying God and fighting the battles of the Lord, he had to spend time reflecting on and applying the Word of God to his life. If Joshua wanted to fulfill God's purpose for his life and ministry, he had to think long and hard about God's truth.

The same is true for you. Spiritual success and prosperity flow out of meditating on the Word of God. As you meditate on the Word of God, it provides you with the wisdom and the insight that you need for your life, your calling, and your ministry. It equips you with the knowledge that you need to live before God and others. It fills you with the understanding that will aid you in pleasing God and sharing His truth with others. As Puritan pastor Thomas Watson put it, "They usually thrive best who meditate most."

Meditation can renew your spiritual life. The Word of God says in **Psalms 119:93**, "I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me." The psalmist confesses

that the Word has "quickened" him. This means that it renewed his spiritual life. It reinvigorated his zeal and desire for God and the things of God. In our lives, our desire and zeal for God can wane. Temptations, Satan's attacks, the pleasures of the world and a host of other things can zap our spiritual energy and vigor. Yet, meditating on the Word can renew our spiritual life. The psalmist prayed, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken thou me according to thy word" (**Psalms 119:25**). Reflecting on the Word can infuse fresh power and strength into our lives. As we meditate on the Word of God, the Spirit will quicken us. He will draw us out of our spiritual backsliding and apathy. He will grant us vitality in our relationship to God and to His service. He will remove the spiritual deadness and unleash fresh strength in us.

How Do I Meditate?

You may understand the Biblical mandate to meditate. You see the need. You have a desire to do this. Now you're wondering, "How do I meditate on the Scripture?" There are three basic parts to meditating on the Word.

- (1) *Realizing the truth of God's Word.* This happens when you read, study, and memorize the Word. You cannot separate meditation from these things. These things lead one into meditation.
- (2) *Reflecting upon the truth.* Once you receive the truth, you now need to personalize it. You are to think about how the truth applies to your life. Contemplate the personal implications for your life.
- (3) *Responding to God because of the truth.* Meditation leads to action. Meditation may begin at any place in the Scripture but it always ends at God's throne. It ends when you adore God, confess sin, thank Him, commit yourself to some action, or pray for the grace to change in light of the truth.

You might have meditated without being aware of it. On the other hand, many Christians simply read the Bible during their quiet time – if