

## Meditation

*What's your first thought when you hear the word **meditation**?*

*Meditation* is not a sleepy, meaningless practice that we mindlessly practice. God promises rich blessings as we *meditate* on His timeless Word. In order to meditate day and night, though, it's helpful to have memorized some key Scripture. LifeChange accelerates and deepens through meditation.

*"What, me meditate!"*

Please don't place hyper-sanctified ideas on the word *meditation*. We can all do this. Think back to the last time you worried. You can worry, right?

Well, if you know how to worry, you have already developed the necessary mental skills to meditate. Just change the object of your focus! Worry is sponsored by fear of the future and meditation is supported by faith in the living God. The essence of all that we've been doing together to develop a natural learning culture is learning to think more deeply on the text. Meditation enhances this process since God has promised to richly bless meditation.

Joshua, when he was one of God's up-and-coming leaders, provides a great pattern.

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth;  
meditate on it day and night,  
so that you may be careful to do everything written in it.  
Then you will be prosperous and successful (Joshua 1:8).

- Spend time in God's Word.
- Meditate on God's Word often.
- This leads to a ready obedience.
- Obedience makes me spiritually prosperous and successful, in the fullest NT sense of these words. Limiting this promise to physical wealth is far too limiting for a God like we serve.

The first Psalm amplifies on this with rich word-pictures of a harvest.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and  
on his law he meditates day and night.  
He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit...  
Whatever he does prospers (Psalm 1:2-3).

Meditating in God's Word always brings prosperity, when we define prosperity in terms of what really counts. As we engage with Scripture, our primary aim is not to accumulate knowledge (although we will). Our heart's desire is that everything we do in word and deed will be pleasing in the sight of our Family-of-Three, God the Father, Son and Spirit. Our prayer is...

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer (Ps 19:114).

Prayerful meditation on the Word of God means to turn truth over in our minds repeatedly. Ruminates. Marinate in the truth. Chew on a passage of Scripture like a cow chews its cud. Visualize what it would have been like if we had been there (use solid background information as fuel for your sanctified imagination). Place yourself in the story as if you were there. Most of us worry in living color with emotions, smells, sights and sounds, right? So why not also in our meditation?

When we love something, we give our all to it. “Law” in Psalm 119 is one of ten synonyms for God’s Word.

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long (Ps 119:97).

Some today fear using imagination in Bible study because of abuses. Rather than discard the God-given study tool of our imagination, ground our sanctified imagination in the text and background material. This then provides a proper scope for meditation to tap into the lives of the original hearers. Now we experience what they thought and valued, felt and did at that time in order to release His life in us now. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us to understand and to impact our lives with His truth.

“This book contains: the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. [The Bible] contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, and the Christian’s charter. Here heaven is open, and the gates of hell disclosed.

“Christ is the grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and a river of pleasure. It is given to you here in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and is established forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its contents” (Source Unknown).

To meditate rightly, though, we must heed Jesus’ gentle call from loneliness to solitude with Him. The fear of being left alone petrifies people and causes us to shy away from meditating quietly, blocking out the world of noise and bustle. For instance, I still vividly remember my loneliness as my mom and dad drove off after dropping me at college for my freshman year. However,...

“Our fear of being alone drives us to noise and crowds. We keep up a constant stream of words even if they are inane....But loneliness or clutter are not our only alternatives. We can cultivate an inner solitude and silence that sets us free from loneliness and fear. Loneliness is inner emptiness. Solitude is inner fulfillment.”<sup>1</sup>

As we grow in knowing and loving the relational Trinity, we experience far more of the inner circle of friendship with the Father, Son and Spirit. Now we are free to experience the silence of the stillness before the God who created us for intimacy. Silence is waiting on God to engage our heart through His Word and His presence. Solitude before God seeks to re-create the listening ears of the heart burning after Jesus.

Wherever we go during our busy day, we carry a portable sanctuary with us in our hearts since we are His temple. Scatter quick times of turning to Him into the common and routine of your day.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), p. 96. This classic on spiritual disciplines is a must read at some time in your early years of growth. It presents spiritual disciplines within a healthy framework of a joyful passion for Jesus.