

WASILLA BIBLE CHURCH

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BIBLICAL MEDITATION: "THE MUMBLE METHOD".

There are various ways to think reflectively and carefully through Scripture - to meditate on God's Word. The following are notes for a simple system that I have found extremely beneficial over the years. I encourage you to try it.

First: The system is built on repetitive review using what I call reflective memorization as a meditative tool. It is important to understand that word perfect memorization is *not* the end goal. The idea is to use the process of reflectively and incrementally reviewing the material for "close to perfect" memorization in order to keep the mind focused in the midst of life's distractions.

Second: You can start with this basic approach. It may seem familiar to you because I have mentioned it and even presented it to the congregation at various times. Over time you can adjust and tweak it in a variety of ways but this is a good way to begin.

Pick a passage of scripture. We will start with a relatively short passage of foundational importance: 2 Peter 1:1-11.

Day 1: Read verse 1 out loud (a quiet mumble to yourself is good enough) seven times. Then, try to recite it, (the "mumble method") three times. Check to see what you missed between each recitation. You are done for the day. Take your time and do not worry if you are not word perfect.

Day 2: Read verse 1 out loud two times and try to recite it two times. Then read verse 2 seven times followed by three recite attempts with a check between each recitation. You are done for the day.

Day 3: Read verses 1-2 out loud, together, two times and then try to recite them together two times.

After that warm up review move on to read verse 3 seven times followed by three recite attempts with a check between each recitation.

Day 4 ...: Continue that pattern of reviewing what you have already done followed by the addition of a new verse each day until you have worked your way through all the verses in the passage.

Final Day: Read the entire passage out loud twice and recite it twice. You are done with that passage and we can move on to another.

Third: The ability to memorize varies greatly from person to person. Most of us are better at it than we think - we just have not developed the skill in a simple and sustained approach. The number of repeated readings and recitations can be adjusted to fit your individual pace over time. If you need to spend multiple days on a verse slow down and do so - this is not a race - but always include a review of the verses leading into it. The first days in a passage will not take much time. You will be tempted to add more than one verse a day if you are quick at memorization. Do not. Again, this is not a race. At this point we are trying to get a routine and pattern developed and, besides, as you get further into the passage the review will take longer and longer.

Fourth: It is best to develop a consistent pattern or routine with respect to what days and times during the week you will do focused meditation on the passage. You will find yourself able to go back to the text during other times in more spontaneous moments of review but it is important to have a base pattern. For me early morning, five to six days a week, has proven best. Experiment until you find a sustainable pattern.

Fifth: The "mumble" element may seem a bit odd. It is not essential (especially if there are others around). But I do think it is significant that the Hebrew word for "meditate" was "mumble". I believe, from experience, that it does make a positive difference - especially if you mumble the text at a conversational pace and with a conversational feel.

Finally, like a broken record I repeat myself, do not make memorization the end. It is just a tool for helping you pay reflective, meditative, attention to every aspect of a text. Our minds are prone to wander. This provides a way to focus.

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man

who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

**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
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

The wicked are not so,

but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Grace on you,
Pastor Kroon