

## **The Voice of God: Meditation | Part Four**

### **Pastor Cameron Brice**

- Today we are going to be exploring the spiritual discipline of meditation. But, before we do so I want to explain the difference between biblical meditation and what most modern people think of when we hear the term:
- Over the last forty years the idea of meditation has become increasingly more accepted in the western world. Even though it is a practice that has been observed by many religions including Christianity and Judaism long before it gained prominence in the US, many secular people have come to adopt it into their everyday life. There are many different techniques or versions of meditation in the world but, the most widespread and studied form is known as transcendental meditation. This practice gained influence in the early 1970s when it began to spread through circles of celebrities, universities and now a variety of online courses geared at teaching the masses a way to achieve “inner peace”.
- This technique of mediation requires practitioners to repeat a special word or tone known as a mantra. A mantra is meant to be meaningless, no more than one or two syllables and should be effortless to say. The repetition of this mantra is aimed at arriving to a state of mental and bodily calm. This state is said to be achieved by dissolving anxiety, until finally a person is no longer conscious of stress or fatigue. TM is said to be a discipline of “not doing” and is designed to “defeat effort”. In contrast, Christian meditation is almost entirely different.
- While TM is a practice in effortlessness and thoughtlessness, Christian meditation is rooted in the use of our God given intellect and imagination as we make space for the voice of God to speak to us concerning His word. Instead of transcending our world and ignoring its stresses, believers are to use meditation as a means of rooting ourselves in God’s function within our lives and world. For us, it is a practice that makes space for the voice of God to illuminate our minds and to help us engage in our lives in the ways God intended us to! Today I want us to learn to hear God’s voice through mediation by first examining its biblical definition:

#### I. Biblical Meditation:

A. *At its core biblical meditation is taking time to think intentionally and deeply about God’s words and God’s works.*

1. One of the most insightful portions of scripture as it pertains to this definition of meditation is Psalm 119:

- a) "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways." - Psalm 119:15
  - b) "...your servant will meditate on your decrees." - Psalm 119:23b
  - c) "Cause me to understand the way of your precepts, that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds." - Psalm 119:27
  - d) "I reach out for your commands which I love, that I may meditate on your decrees." - Psalm 119:48
  - e) "...I will meditate on your decrees." - Psalm 119:78d
  - f) "My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may mediate on your promises." - Psalm 119:148
2. Over and over we see the act of meditation being used to bring God's words and God's works to the forefront of the writer's attention.
- a) But, it isn't just thinking about God's words and works that we find through this psalm. It is much deeper than that.
    - (1) The Hebrew word used in all six of these passages is the word:
      - (a) Siyach - to consider, to become absorbed in thought, to think about deeply, thoroughly, and carefully, to occupy one's attention in thought and consideration, to gaze on steadily or reflectively.
      - (b) The idea being presented to us through the use of this word is an intentional and deep thinking about God's words and God's works.
3. So, while TM and other meditation techniques like it, seek to eliminate thought and effort, Christian meditation is giving ourselves to intentional, deep thought about God's words and works.

## II. What is the benefit of practicing biblical meditation?

### A. The Bible makes a direct link between meditation and success in this life!

- 1. "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." - Joshua 1:8 NKJV
  - a) God told Joshua that if He thought deeply and intentionally about His words that He would be successful in his life.

- b) The Hebrew word translated success is:
    - (1) Sakal - to have correct insight needed for life.
  - c) When we think deeply and intentionally about God's words and works, His voice speaks and we receive the correct insight needed for life!
2. "Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper." - Psalms 1:1-3 NKJV
- a) Again, we see that thinking deeply about God's words leads to being prosperous in life.
  - b) Reading scripture can inform us about God's words and works, but meditating on that information leads us to life transformation.
  - c) How?
    - (1) Reading scripture gives us information about God's words and works, and through meditation God can speak to us about the right application of His words and works in our present day life.

### III. How do we meditate the biblical way?

A. Here are three keys to biblical mediation:

#### 1. Make space.

- a) Since meditation is a form of prayer we can apply what Jesus said in teaching His disciples in prayer:
  - (1) "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place..." - Matthew 6:6a-d NKJV
    - (a) Pick a time, pick a place, and show up.
      - i) We make time for what is important.
        - (1) Set a timer when you sit down to watch TV.
        - (2) Look at your screen time statistics.

(3) Take an honest inventory on your time.

(4) Ask yourself if the way we spend your time is actually beneficial. Do shows and social media ACTUALLY benefit us?

(b) Make time to be silent and:

## 2. Shut the door.

a) Do your best to remove distractions.

(1) Turn your phone off.

b) Shut the door in your mind.

(1) Keep a piece of paper to write things down that come to your mind.

(2) This is a mental practice!

(a) It takes time to train our minds and hearts to focus on God's words and His works.

(b) "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," - II Corinthians 10:4-5 NKJV

(c) "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things." - Philippians 4:8 NKJV

## 3. Think intentionally and deeply!

a) Pick a scripture

b) Think about what the words mean.

c) Use your imagination.

d) Let's practice!

(1) "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." - Psalms 23:1 NKJV