

# Equipping People to Biblically Meditate on Creation

2021 – A doctoral project by Scott Paul Steltzer

## The Old Testament Man Job exhorts others to engage God's created world in Job 12:7-10:

- <sup>7</sup> “But ask the beasts, and they will teach you;  
the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you;  
<sup>8</sup> or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you;  
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.  
<sup>9</sup> Who among all these does not know  
that the hand of the Lord has done this?  
<sup>10</sup> In his hand is the life of every living thing  
and the breath of all mankind.

Jesus  
encourages  
meditation  
on creation  
in Luke  
12:24-27:

Jesus says: “<sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! <sup>25</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>26</sup> If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? <sup>27</sup> Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

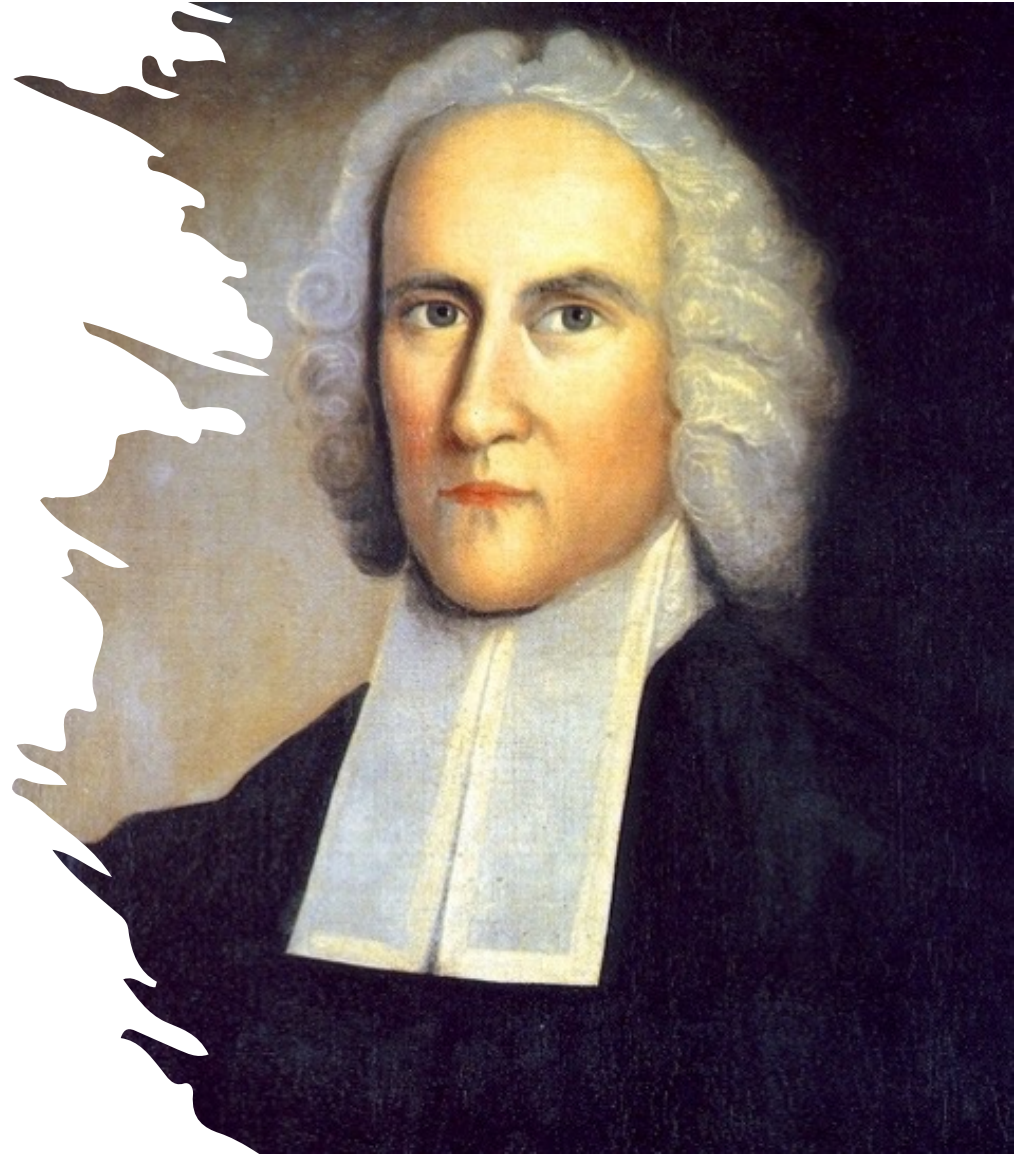
## Invitation to Adventure—

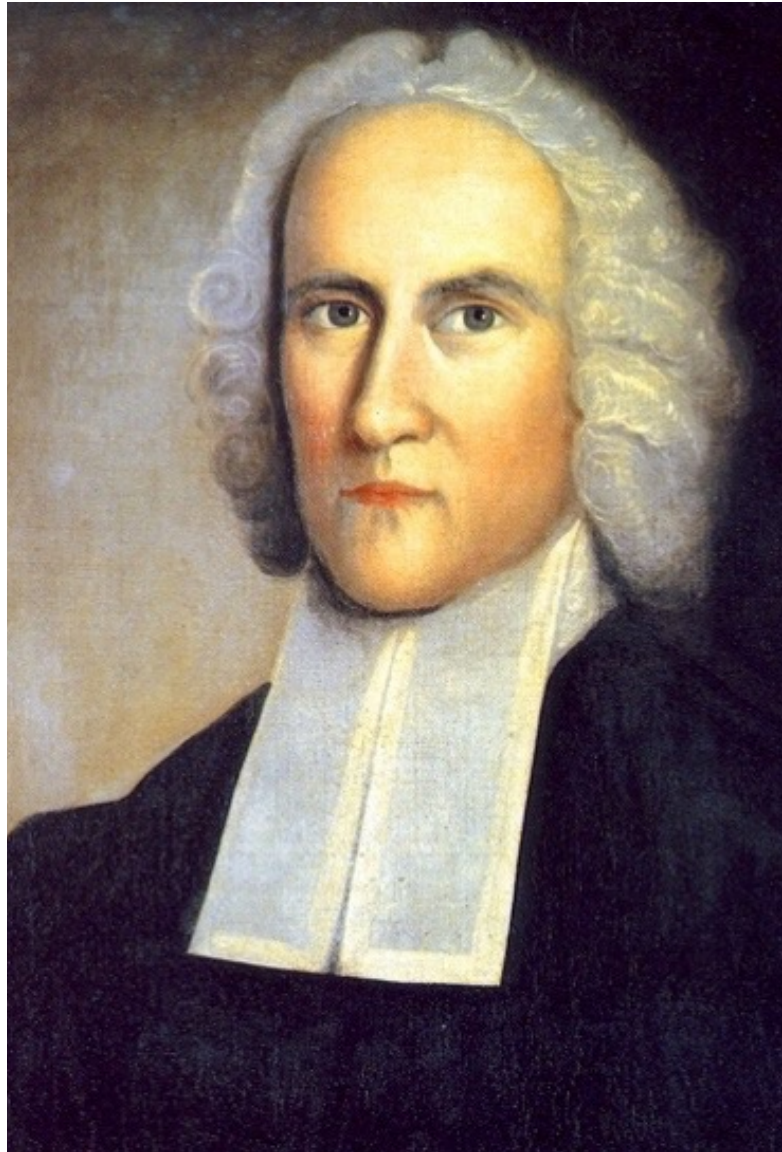
No reasonable person, having heard about an unmarked and difficult path to a beautiful, remote mountain lake, would venture into the wilderness in search of the lake without a map and compass—and, likely, a guide. In many ways, this remote lake scenario is an apt description of the current situation of evangelicals regarding creation meditation. At one time, during the Puritan era, the meditative path to the crystal waters was well worn and the beautiful lake frequently enjoyed, but that path has since become largely neglected. In current evangelicalism, the means of meditating on creation are almost completely forgotten. Though the Bible is a more-than-sufficient map and compass, today's Christians who pursue meditation on creation will likely need a guide also to lead them to the lakeshore and to inspire them to delight in the refreshing waters of creation meditation. There is no better guide than the eighteenth-century pastor and theologian Jonathan Edwards.

# JONATHAN EDWARDS

“I believe the whole universe, heaven and earth, air and seas, and the divine constitution and history of the holy Scriptures, be full of [emblems] of divine things, as full as a language is of words; and that the multitude of those things that I have mentioned are but a very small part of what is really intended to be signified and typified by these things: but that there is room for persons to be learning more and more of this language and seeing more of that which is declared in it to the end of the world without discovering all.”

[From Jonathan Edwards, Images of Divine Things, \(WJE 11:152\)](#)





## JONATHAN EDWARDS'S EXPERIENCE

“I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father’s pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there, and looked up on the sky and clouds; there came into my mind, a sweet sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction: majesty and meekness joined together: it was a sweet and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness; a high, and great, and holy gentleness. . . . My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; I was almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. Spent most of my time thinking of divine things, year after year. And used to spend abundance of my time, in walking alone in the woods, and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy and prayer, and converse with God. And it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. And was almost constantly in [spontaneous] prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me; as the breath, by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent.”

[From Jonathan Edwards, Personal Narrative \(WJE 16:794\)](#)

Songwriter Ellie Holcomb explains the same concepts as Edwards in the following song:

<https://youtu.be/fNsoXsyeUE0>



The following  
exhortation is  
not just for Job  
but for you and  
me too!

<sup>14</sup> “Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the  
wondrous works of God. - Job 37:14



## Creation Meditation is:

- A Christ-honoring and Biblical Spiritual Discipline.
- A filling of the believers mind and heart with truth.
- An experiential wondering on emblematic elements in creation—leading to deep thinking on the interconnecting truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture—for the purpose of deepened understanding, strengthened faith, and enlivened worship.

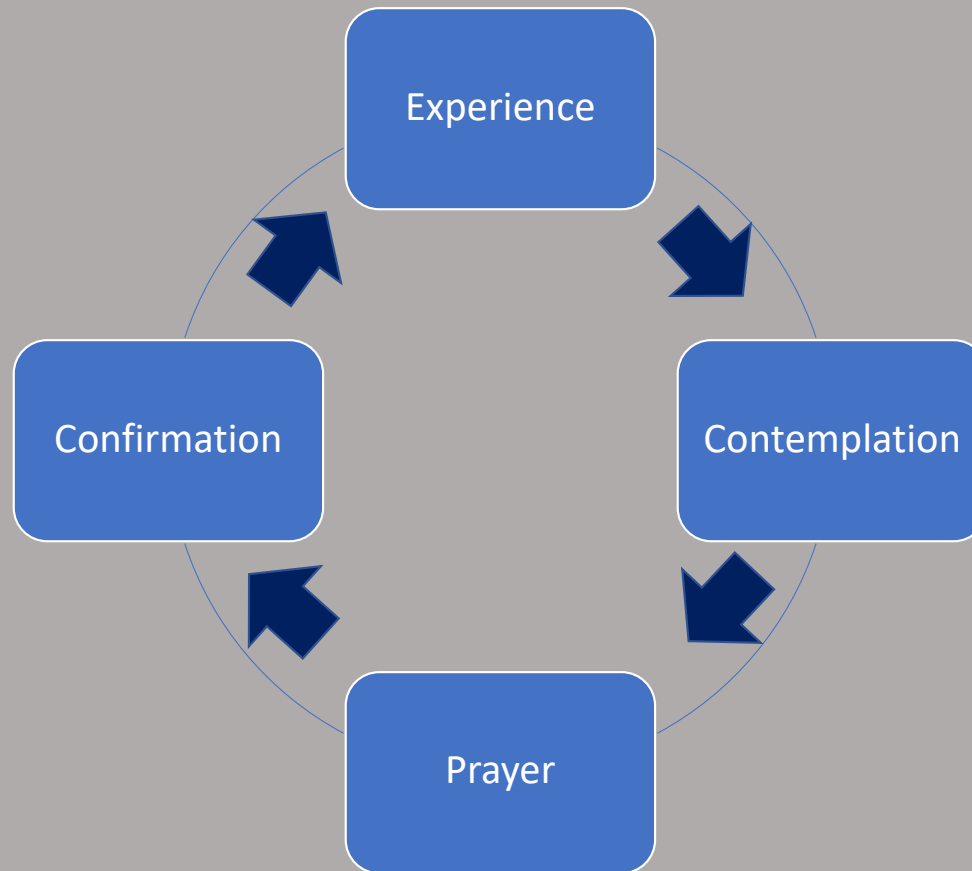
Creation Meditation is **NOT**:

Worshipping  
the creation.

Worshipping  
creatures.

Transcendental  
meditation

# Creational Meditation is simple, it's ECPC!



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# Experience:

Engage all your senses to enjoy  
creation and evoke biblical  
meditation.

What are your five senses?

What other “sense” do you have?

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# Contemplation:

Using your mind to think about an element of creation in the following three ways –  
(1) imagination & wondering,  
(2) biblical & theological thinking, and  
(3) scientific observation.

# Contemplation:



Realization: an act of becoming fully aware of something as a fact beginning with imagination and speculation (wondering). What do you speculate or imagine the meaning is for an element of creation?



What connections might this element have with God, God's Word, and God's creation?



What are some simple observations you have about the element? What do you already know?

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# Prayer:

Simply means to be prompted to pray and guided in prayer by an element in creation.

In what ways does this element prompt you to praise, thank, confess, or ask?

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# Confirmation:

Confirmation is the process of establishing that Scripture affirms what you suspect a particular element in creation is communicating.





# Confirmation

- Establishing the emblematic meaning of an element by Scripture (Special Revelation).
  - What confirmations did you find of your meditations?
  - What else did you learn from the Scriptures?
  - How has God spoken to you through His world and His Word?
  - Application– What application does this have for your life?



# Unconfirmed Elements

- So what about the thousands of elements we can't establish the emblematic meaning of in truth or correctness from Scripture?
- General Revelation – we might be able to say this is generally true – meaning it is consistent with what is revealed in Scripture. (Example: Evergreen Pine Trees)
- Evocational Element - a prompt– How might this be an ongoing prompt for you?
  - Elements may still serve as a personal reminder to you even if they have no general or special revelation qualities.
  - Warning- Emblematic theology is not a theology of special personal meaning or directly personal divine communication. Beware looking for signs and personal meaning!