

The Practice of Meditating on the Word

“...on his law he mediates day and night”

(6-11-22)

“Set your whole heart on the word. Some people like to read so many chapters every day. I would not dissuade them from the practice, but I would rather lay my soul a soak in half a dozen verses all day than I would, as it were, rinse my hand in several chapters. Oh, to bathe in a text of Scripture, and to let it be sucked up into your very soul, till it saturates your heart! ...Set your heart upon God’s word! It is the only way to know it thoroughly: let your whole nature be plunged into it as cloth into a dye.” Charles Spurgeon

“Meditation is a middle sort of duty between the word and prayer, and hath respect to both. The word feedeth meditation, and meditation feedeth prayer. These duties must always go hand in hand; meditation must follow hearing and precede prayer. To hear and not to meditate is unfruitful. We may hear and hear, but it is like putting a thing into a bag of hole...It is rashness to pray and not meditate. What we take in by the word we digest by meditation and let out by prayer. These three duties must be ordered that one may not jostle out the other. Men are barren, dry, and sapless in their prayers for want of exercising themselves in holy thoughts.” Thomas Manton

“Meditation is the soul’s retiring of itself, that by serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to heavenly affections. ...A holy exercise of the mind whereby we bring the truths of God to remembrance and do seriously ponder upon them and apply them to ourselves...[Meditation serves as] the bellows of the affections...we light affection at the fire of meditation.” Thomas Watson

"Meditation upon the Word of God is one of the most important of all the means of grace and growth in spirituality, yes there can be no true progress in vital and practical godliness without it. Meditation on Divine things is not optional but obligatory, for it is something which God has commanded us to attend unto." A.W. Pink

"By meditation, your *knowledge* is raised.
 By meditation, your *memory* is strengthened.
 By meditation, your *hearts* are warmed.
 By meditation, you will be freed from sinful thoughts.
 By meditation, your *hearts* will be tuned to every duty.
 By meditation, you will grow in grace.
 By meditation, you will fill up all the chinks and crevices of your lives, and know how to spend your spare time profitably.
 By meditation, you will draw good out of evil.
 By meditation, you will converse with God, and enjoy God."
 William Bridge

"It is easier to walk six miles to hear a sermon, than to spend one quarter of an hour in meditating upon it when I come home." Philip Henry

“Our age has been sadly deficient in what may be termed spiritual greatness. At the root of this is the modern disease of shallowness. We are all too impatient to meditate on the faith we profess...It is not the busy skimming over religious books or the careless hastening through religious duties which makes for a strong Christian faith. Rather, it is unhurried meditation on gospel truths and the exposing of our minds to these truths that yields the fruit of sanctified character” Maurice Roberts

“Reading without meditation is unfruitful; meditation without reading is hurtful; to meditate and to read without prayer, is without blessing” William Bridge

Lesson 7 “The Reality of Biblical Meditation” Recap and Review:

What does it mean to meditate biblically? What part does personal application, or the personal practice of truth play in the pursuit of meditation? Read James 1:22-25 and explain what is the difference between the forgetful man and the blessed man? Any connection here to the man in Psalm 1:2 and the promise in Psalm 1:3? Why does the one man in James 1:22-25 walk away and forget all that he saw and heard from the Word? How often do you think this happens today in the modern church after listening to sermons? What is one personal response that should always follow the Word read, the Word studied, and the Word preached?

What are some unbiblical forms of meditation practiced by many today?

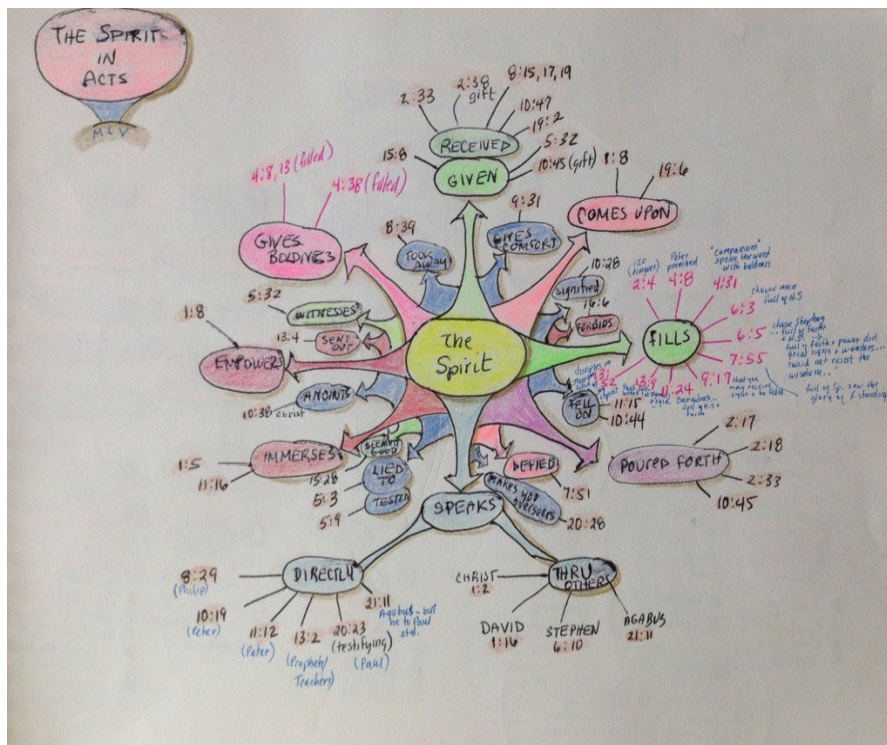
1. Roman Catholic Spirituality:
2. Mysticism:
3. Contemplative Prayer:
4. Transcendental Meditation:
5. Meditating on Lesser Things:
6. Meditating on Wickedness:

What are some common denominators between these unbiblical forms of meditation as contrasted to what the Scriptures call believers to do in meditating?

Lesson 8 The Practice of Biblical Meditation:

Remember what we have already learned in lesson 7 about practicing biblical meditation while working through Phil 4:8. We walked through some principles and practices for meditating on and through a specific text and passage. Consider how Phil 4:8 provides a basic framework for meditating, “forcing one’s mind to dwell on”, most texts, passages, and theological topics. Below are some further practical ways to implement biblical meditation...

1. **Rewrite** the text (without changing its meaning) in your own words (Jonathon Edwards)
2. **Summarize** longer texts in a concise phrase that highlights the main point of the passage
3. **Think** of a practical illustration that further encapsulates and explains the text
4. **Ask** how this text points me to and teaches me about God; Christ; Man; Sin; Gospel
5. **Pray** through the text
6. **Memorize** the text
7. **Sing** through the text
8. **Mind Mapping** so as to create a pictorial outline of the text, passage or topic (godliness pyramid or the one below by Jim Elliff on the Holy Spirit in Acts [found here](#))



9. **Identify** another passage, story, or biblical example that further illustrates, connects to, and or explains the truth of the text
10. **Speak** about and or **share** this text/truth with others

11. **Write** out lessons learned from the text and or resolutions in applying the text
12. **Clarify** how this text impacts and applies to your life and walk with Christ

Biblical meditation is meant to **slow you down** so that you can soak up the text and/or theological truth! Meditate small and slow so that you can think deeply about and grow stronger in truth.

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How might special seasons in life or special days throughout the year provoke us to meditate biblically on the Word and ways of God? Was this part of God’s design for Israel in creating the Sabbath (Deut 5:15)? What about the seven holy convocations, “feasts”, established by God as seen in Lev 23:1-44? Each feast was designed by God, in part, to provoke His people to theocentric meditation. How should “Communion” (1 Cor 11:23-28) on the Lord’s Day (Rev 1:10) serve as special day for meditation? How should baptisms also serve as a special time for pondering deeply on the gospel for the people of God (Mt 28:18-20; Acts 2:37-41; Rom 6:1-4)? How should funerals serve a serious and sobering time for meditation (Ps 90:12; Ecc 7:2; Rom 5:12; 2 Cor 5:8; 1 Thess 4:13-18)? What about weddings (Gen 2:18-25; Mk 10:1-12; Eph 5:22-33; 2 Cor 11:2; Rev 19:7) and times when children are born (Deut 6:1-9; Ps 127; 128; 139; Eph 6:1-4)? Times when children graduate (Prov 3:5-8; 4:20-27; Ps 37:4; Mt 6:33; Mk 10:44; 1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 5:9-10)? How might political election seasons provoke biblical meditation versus sinful consternation (Job 12:23 & Ps 75:5-7; Ps 118:8-9 & 143:3; Prov 21:1; Dan 4:34-35; Rom 13:1; Col 1:15-17; Eph 1:11; Rom 8:28; 1 Tim 2:1-4; Rev 22:12-13)? How might even hard days of suffering or temptation be turned into productive days of meditation (Gen 39:7-10; 50:20; Job 1-2; 42:1-6; Ps 119:9-11; Rom 5:1-5; 8:17-39; 1 Cor 10:1-13; 2 Cor 4:16-18; 12:7-10; Js 1:2-4; Heb 12:1-2; 1 Pet 1:3-9; 2:21-25; 5:6-11)?

What are some profitable biblical subjects/topics for meditation?¹

1. The Omniscience of God (1 Kings 8:39)
2. The Holiness of God (Isa 6:1-7)
3. The Wisdom of God (1 Tim 1:17)
4. The Power of God (Gen 1:1)

¹ I found several helpful puritan resources that listed out specific subjects for meditation much of which closely followed systematic theology paradigms. Thomas Watson’s book, *Meditation, A Christian on the Mount*, (edited by Dustin Bengé, 2021) was very helpful. I pulled some of this list from Watson’s book on pgs. 27-69.

5. The Mercy of God (2 Cor 1:3)
6. The Promises of God (2 Pet 1:4)
7. The Guilt of Sin (Rom 5:12)
8. The Source of Personal Sin (Mk 7:14-23)
9. The Filth of Sin (Isa 64:6)
10. The Process and Goal of Sin (Js 1:12-13)
11. The Curse of Sin (Gal 3:10)
12. The Stupidity of Sin (Prov 28:26; Eph 4:17-18)
13. The Vanity and Duty of Man (Ecc 1:1 cf. 12:13-14)
14. The Excellency of Grace (2 Cor 9:8)
15. The Spiritual State of Your Soul (Prov 27:23; 2 Cor 13:5)
16. The Hard Way of the Gospel (Mt 7:13-14)
17. The Easy Way of Destruction (Mt 7:13-14)
18. The Reality of Apostasy (Heb 6:4-6)
19. The Certainty of Death (Heb 9:27)
20. The Proximity of Death (Ps 39:5)
21. The Uncertainty of Time (Js 4:13-17)
22. The Coming Judgment (2 Cor 5:10 & Rev 20:11-15)
23. The Place of Hell (Mt 25:30)
24. The Eternal Condemnation of Hell (2 Thess 1:5-9)
25. The Eternal Life in and with Christ (Ps 16:11; Rom 8:1; 1 Jn 3:1-3)
26. The Place of Heaven (Rev 21:1-5)
27. The Love of Christ (Jn 15:9; Rom 8:34-35)
28. The Sovereignty of Christ (Col 1:16-17)
29. The Forgiveness and Cleansing of Sin (1 Jn 1:9; Ps 103:12)
30. The Glory of God (Rom 11:33-36; 1 Cor 10:31)
31. The Sanctifying Grace of God (Phil 2:13-14)
32. The Sustaining Grace of God (2 Cor 12:7-10)
33. The Sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17)
34. The Mysterious Providence of God (Ps 139:12)
35. The Fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1)