

# PRACTICING BIBLICAL MEDITATION

Christians throughout history have meditated in the biblical sense of thinking and reflecting on the truths of Scripture. We see this sort of meditation throughout God's Word in the lives of the patriarchs, David, and others. Rather than emptying our minds, we fill them with the truth of who God is and what he has done. We respond to reading and hearing the Word in meditation, which leads us to adore and praise God.

Yet even in light of the rich biblical history of meditation, most shove it under the rug. Whether out of laziness or an unfortunate misunderstanding about the nature of biblical meditation, we prefer to read the Word and check it off our to-do list rather than sit and dwell on the truths revealed in it. By neglecting meditation, we cut ourselves off from a discipline God has given us to grow in our adoration of him.

So why should we meditate? What's at stake? Reflecting on the Puritan understanding of meditation, Joel Beeke and Mark Jones give these 7 points that we should all seriously consider<sup>1</sup>:

1. Our God who commands us to believe commands us to meditate on His Word.
2. We should meditate on the Word as a letter God has written to us.
3. One cannot be a solid Christian without meditating.
4. Without meditation, the preached Word will fail to profit us.
5. Without meditation, our prayers will be less effective.
6. Christians who fail to meditate are unable to defend the truth.
7. Meditation is an essential part of sermon preparation [*and I would add that it applies to all believers as we seek to declare the truths of Scripture to those around us*]

Here are some additional thoughts on what it looks like to practice biblical meditation inspired by various comments Joel Beeke has made on the topic over the years:

- Pray! Express your need for God's grace as you read the Word, meditate on it, and seek to apply it to your life.

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<sup>1</sup> Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 55.

- Read the text (this might be several chapters if you are working through a plan or perhaps a shorter passage)
- Latch on to a particular verse, phrase, or theological truth that jumps out to you in the text
- If it's a verse or phrase of a verse, try to memorize it!
- Focus your thoughts on the truths of the verse (consider writing out your reflections)
- Determine how you will apply the truths you have been meditating on to your life
- Pray that God will give you grace to walk in accordance with his Word