Week 6 — Build a Life in the Word

Holy Meditation, Thomas Manton[1]

Defining Meditation

- *Meditation is the duty or exercise of religion whereby the mind is applied to the serious and solemn contemplation of spiritual things for practical uses and purposes.*[2]

- *Because it is contrary to self-love and carnal ease, the worldly person chokes his soul with business so that his thoughts do not (like a mill) grind on him. Some people pass their days in pleasure, thereby charming their soul into a deep sleep so that it does not disturb them. It is necessary for a Christian to take some time to converse with himself and to ask himself some serious questions: Who am I? Where have I been? What have I done? What temptations have I experienced? How have I overcome them? We would think it strange if two men who conversed every day for fifty years did not know each other. Yet this is often the case between us and our soul. We live a long time in the world yet remain strangers to ourselves.*[3]

- *When we read God's Word, we bend the bow. When we apply biblical truths to ourselves, we let fly the arrow. When we work these truths on our hearts by way of meditation, we hit the bulls-eye.*[4]

[1] Thomas Manton, *Holy Meditation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2026).
[2] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 12.
[3] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 6.
[4] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 28.

- *Meditation is a middle duty between reading or hearing God's Word and praying. The Word feeds meditation, and meditation feeds prayer. These duties must always go hand in hand; mediation must always follow the hearing or reading of the Word, and it must always precede prayer.*[5]

- *In brief, it is the mother and nurse of godliness because it assists the work of grace on the understanding, affections, and life.*[6]

- *Ponderous thoughts are the bellows that kindle the affections. They inflame those latent sparks of grace that are in the soul.*[7]

Obstacles to Meditation

- *Obedience too is expressed by a constant course of work and labor. In sum, religion is constant exercise.*[8]

- *It is difficult to deny familiar delight because pleasure is natural to us. But we should consider that, by communion with God in spiritual exercises, delight is not abolished, but advanced to a more noble object.*[9]

[5] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 15
[6] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 19.
[7] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 23.
[8] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 40.
[9] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 44.

The Object of Meditation

- *Wonderful, unutterable joy! These are the apprehensions of God's children. Others may look on the gospel as a probable truth, but God's people find it to be a comfortable truth. Therefore, their hearts are raised in wonder.*[10]

- *It was God's will that salvation should be brought about [by sending his Son]. In the whole business of salvation, God would proceed by choice, not necessity. God could have come as a king in glory and triumph and wrestled with Satan and rescued all the elect out of his hands. BUt the Lord would not reveal his power but his love...Adam fell by pride, and to counterwork this, Christ was to restore humanity by humility. When he comes to save us he lays aside his majesty and puts on a humble garb. He would not save humanity by power, but by suffering. The Lord's design was to show the nature of the disease by the quality of the remedy.*[11]

The Theological Foundation for a Quiet Time

[10] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 124.
[11] Manton, *Holy Meditation*, 129

10 Practical Tips for a Fruitful Quiet Time[12]

1. Set aside sufficient, unhurried time

2. Be consistent with your time and place

3. Have a plan, but don't become enslaved to it

4. Cultivate connections between Scripture and the rest of your spiritual life

5. Take practical steps to prevent mental drift

6. Turn your Bible reading into prayer

7. Let Scripture guide your intercessory prayers

8. Memorize Scripture

9. Read books that increase your desire for Scripture

10. Evaluate and adjust your habits regularly

[12] These tips come from Mike Bullmore's "Spiritual Disciplines" class that I attended at the SG Pastors College, 2021.

A Simple Three-Step Quiet Time

Step 1: Pray for God's help

Step 2: Read and meditate on Scripture

Step 3: Pray for yourself and others

Summary

1. Be consistent.
2. Be unhurried.
3. Be prayerful.
4. Be intentional.
5. Be grace-driven.

Pray → Read and Meditate → Pray

Conclusion — A Life of Hearing and Obeying