



MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2026

## **BEHOLDING: DISCIPLINES FOR IMAGERS ROOTED: THE DISCIPLINE OF MEDITATION**

### SCRIPTURES

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

**Genesis 1:1–3 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

**John 1:1–4 (ESV)**

<sup>1b</sup> ...“knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up.

**1 Corinthians 8:1b (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

**1 Corinthians 13:2 (ESV)**

<sup>16b</sup> ...God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

**1 John 4:16b (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

**James 2:19 (ESV)**

<sup>8a</sup> This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.

**Joshua 1:8a (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

**James 1:22 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

**Acts 17:11 (ESV)**

<sup>1a</sup> The Lord is my shepherd;

**Psalms 23:1a (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

**Ephesians 3:14–19 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

**Philippians 4:8–9 (ESV)**

## GROUP DISCUSSION

### OPENING PRAYER

Begin by asking God to open your hearts and minds to His Word, and invite the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and transform you through this time together.

#### Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- What stood out to you most from this week's sermon?
- When you hear the word "meditation," what typically comes to mind? How does that compare to biblical meditation?

#### Key Takeaways

##### 1. Biblical Meditation vs. Cultural Meditation

- Cultural meditation focuses on **emptying** ourselves
- Biblical meditation focuses on **filling** ourselves with God
- Meditation is "the slow, attentive, deliberate engagement of our mind and our heart and even our bodies, concentrating on experiencing the presence of God"

##### 2. The Purpose of Scripture

- The Bible is not primarily an information textbook about God
- The Bible is an introduction **to** God Himself
- We don't study to be right; we study to be **righteous**
- We don't study to know **about** God; we study to **know** God

##### 3. Knowledge vs. Transformation

- "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Corinthians 8:1)
- The goal isn't winning at biblical trivia—it's communion with God
- Even demons have correct theology, but it hasn't transformed them

##### 4. The Word as a Door

- Scripture is a door meant to be opened and walked through
- We're not meant to simply study the door—we're meant to enter it
- Meditation opens the door so God's light can shine upon us

## Discussion Questions

### Understanding Biblical Meditation

1. The pastor described meditation using the Hebrew word "haggah"—to moan, mutter, or read in a low voice. How does this physical, active description challenge or expand your understanding of meditation?
2. The sermon used the metaphor of a cow chewing its cud to describe meditation. What does this image teach us about how we should approach Scripture?
3. Read Joshua 1:8. What is the purpose of meditation according to this verse? How does meditation connect to obedience?

### The Berean Example

4. Read Acts 17:11. The Bereans "received the word with eagerness" and "examined the Scriptures daily." What does this two-part response teach us?
  - What does it mean to receive God's Word with eagerness?
  - What does daily examination look like in practical terms?
5. How can we balance being open to new truth while also carefully testing everything against Scripture?

### From Knowledge to Transformation

6. The pastor said, "We don't study the Bible to be right. We study it to be righteous." What's the difference? Why does this distinction matter?
7. James 2:19 reminds us that even demons believe in God and have correct theology. What does this reveal about the insufficiency of knowledge alone?
8. Read 1 Corinthians 13:2. Paul says that having all knowledge without love makes us "nothing." How have you seen knowledge without love play out—either in your own life or in the church?

### Practicing Meditation

9. The pastor demonstrated meditating on just one phrase: "The Lord is my shepherd." Walk through this exercise together as a group:
  - What does "The Lord" reveal about God's character and covenant?
  - What does "is" (not "might be" or "should be") tell us?
  - What does "my" mean personally?
  - Why do we need a "shepherd"?
10. What insights emerged from slowing down and chewing on these four words?

### The Spirit's Work

11. Read Ephesians 3:14-19. Paul prays that believers would:
  - Be strengthened in the inner being
  - Have Christ dwell in their hearts
  - Be rooted and grounded in love
  - Know the love that surpasses knowledge
  - Be filled with God's fullness

Notice that these are all things the Spirit does in us, not things we accomplish ourselves. How does this relieve pressure? How does it change your approach to spiritual disciplines?

12. The pastor said, "You never hear a fruit tree grunt." What does this teach us about spiritual growth and transformation?

## Personal Reflection

Take 3-5 minutes of silence for individuals to consider:

- **Honest assessment:** Do I approach the Bible more like a textbook to master or a door to walk through?
- **Heart check:** Am I more interested in being right or being transformed?
- **Current practice:** What is my actual relationship with Scripture right now—not what I wish it was, but what it really is?

## Practical Application

**This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE**

### Option 1: Daily Meditation Practice

- Choose one psalm (perhaps Psalm 23, 27, or 46)
- Spend 10-15 minutes each day this week meditating on it
- Use the "chewing the cud" approach—read it slowly, repeatedly
- Read it aloud (remember "haggah"—muttering, speaking in a low voice)
- Journal what God reveals through this slow, sustained reflection

### Option 2: The Berean Practice

- Each day this week, read a short passage of Scripture
- First, receive it with eagerness and openness
- Then, examine it carefully—ask questions, cross-reference, study
- Write down one way this passage calls you to action or transformation

### Option 3: Word-by-Word Meditation

- Take one verse that has been meaningful to you
- Spend the week meditating on it word by word
- Each day, focus on a different word or phrase
- Ask: What does this reveal about God? About me? About what God is calling me to?

## Accountability

- Share with the group which option you're choosing
- Exchange contact information with one other person to check in mid-week

## Closing Reflection

**Read together Philippians 4:8-9:**

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

## Closing Prayer

Pray together, asking God to:

- Give you hunger for His Word
- Help you move from knowledge to transformation
- Root you deeply in His love through meditation
- Fill you with His fullness
- Make you into the image-bearers you were created to be