

How Christians Meditate

Text : **Psa. 1: 1-3 ; 119: 15, 23, 27, 78, 97, 99, 148**

S#1.
S#2.

A. This being the beginning of a New Year, we tend to think about how things have changed and how we would like them to change.

1. The American economy has picked up to the point that people feel more secure.
2. Our wealth has enabled some people to enjoy leisure and buy expensive toys.
3. Affluence is rapidly bringing about some negative changes in our culture.
 - a. We've raised a generation of young people who feel entitled to many things.
 - b. People of all ages are demanding their own way and are contentious when denied.
 - c. Even though people have many strong desires most are unwilling to work for them.

B. Invariably, the changing culture of the world begins to affect the church. S#3.

1. For example, the way we dress for church; men no longer wear ties nor women hats.
2. Services other than Sunday morning are increasingly rare.
3. Churches are expected to act as community centers.

*** *None of these changes are evil, they are just different.***

C. There are cultural changes which have had an evil influence on the church.

1. The assemblies of many churches are more entertainment than worship.
2. Political correctness have stopped many churches / Christians from evangelizing.
3. The advent of media has cause many Christians to stop reading or studying scripture.

D. Our lesson today will center around one of those areas in which cultural changes have had a deleterious effect on Christians.

1. The pace of life have caused Christians to become less active in the church.
 - a. Christians schedule so much they often miss church to do other things.
 - b. Christians view Sunday as their day off and want to just kick back on Sunday P.M.
 - c. Christians watch sports, etc. instead of coming to church
2. Christians do not want to discuss their faith with other people.

S#4.

D. Christians don't meditate on scripture and that is what we want to discuss today.

We will ask :

- I. What is meditation ?
- II. Why should I meditate ?
- III. How do I meditate on scripture ?

I. What is meditation ?

S#5.

A. First let us define a couple of unfamiliar terms we will use in this study :

1. Discernment : { *aisthēsis* } 1 perception, not only by the senses but by the intellect 2 cognition, discernment of moral discernment in ethical matters

Phil. 1: 9 – And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

2. Hermeneutics : 1 The science of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures. 2 the branch of theology that deals with the principles of Biblical exegesis.
3. Exegesis : 1 critical explanation or interpretation of a text or portion of a text, especially of the Bible. (Antonym = eisegesis impose meaning on text)

S#8.

B. Biblical meditation is NOT the same as Eastern or transcendental meditation.

1. Transcendental meditation : a technique, based on ancient Hindu writings, by which one seeks to achieve a relaxed state through regular periods of meditation during which a mantra is repeated. One must first empty his mind.
2. Biblical meditation : (literally : to reflect, to muse, to ponder)
 - a. Dictionary.com = devout religious contemplation or spiritual introspection.
 - b. David Mathis : Christian meditation, however, is fundamentally different than the “meditation” popularly co-opted in various non-Christian systems. It doesn’t entail emptying our minds, but rather filling them with biblical and theological substance – truth outside of ourselves – and then chewing on that content.
 - c. Apostle Paul : **Col. 3: 16** – Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you,

C. Meditation is not something mystical.

1. Example of unhealthy meditation : You are on your way to work in the morning when a reckless driver cuts you off forcing you to slam on your breaks which results in your coffee spilling and your lunch landing in the puddle. You think some very choice words about that “Reckless Randy” (RR) as you proceed on to work. You have to purchase coffee from a vending machine and it tastes horrible so you think more unkind words about R.R. Your lunch is spoiled so you have to buy lunch and you think more choice words about R.R. When you get home you have to try to clean the coffee out of the carpet and think more choice words about R.R. You have meditated on that inconsiderate Reckless Randy.
2. Friday night your boyfriend take you out for supper and a movie. He treats you like a queen and everything goes perfectly. The next day you keep remembering the great time you had together, the flowers, the meal, the movie, etc. You are meditating on the great time you had together.

II. Why should I meditate on the scriptures ?

S#9.

A. Above all, followers of God are commanded to meditate on His word.

1. **Josh. 1: 8** – 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; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. **S#10.**
2. The inspired Apostle commanded Timothy to meditate on what was revealed to him.
 - a. **II Tim. 2: 7** – Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding **S#11.** in everything. (ESV)
 - b. **I Tim. 4: 15** – Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. (NKJV)
3. The Apostle commanded the brethren at Philippi to meditate on good things. **Phil. 4: 8** – Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, **S#12.** whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.
4. The brethren at Colossae were told to actively focus their thinking on spiritual things **Col. 3: 2-3** – Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on **S#13.** earth. **3** For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

B. The holy scriptures refer meditation being a righteous activity.

1. Isaac : **Gen. 24: 63** – Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening;
2. David : **Psa. 119: 15** – I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways. **S#14.**
48 – And I will meditate on Your statutes.
97 – O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.
148 – My eyes anticipate the night watches,
 That I may meditate on Your word.

C. Meditation is a precursor of understanding the scriptures.

S#15.

1. **Psa. 49: 3** – My mouth will speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart will be understanding.
2. **Psa. 119: 99** – I have more insight than all my teachers,
 For Your testimonies are my meditation.

D. Meditating on the scriptures brings us closer to God.

S#16.

1. **Psa 119: 103-104** – How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! **104** From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.
2. Reading brings the word into our head; meditation bring it into our heart.

III. How should we meditate on the scriptures ?**S#17.****A. Begin by committing yourself to add meditation to your lifestyle.****S#18.**

1. Satan fills your world with competition for thought time.
 - a. Your mind is like a community bulletin board .. cluttered with many items.
 - b. You have to put a cover on it so you can monitor what is posted in it.
2. You spend thought time on what you value most at that moment in time.
 - a. Driving your mind drifts to many things, but it gets your full attention when ...
 - b. Our meditation on scripture is what our mind turns to when not in demand.
3. Meditation only becomes part of our background thinking **IF** we decide it to be so.
Col. 3: 2-3 – SET YOUR MIND on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

B. Have the confidence that you have the time and the talent to meditate.**S#19.**

1. God will not command what man cannot do.
2. You already meditate about many things, it's just a matter of changing channels.
3. Meditation can fit into your current lifestyle with little extra time required.

C. Select a specific text or topic upon which to meditate.

1. The selection should have some relevance to you.
 - a. Not just something randomly selected from your daily reading.
 - b. It is best to meditate on something separate from your daily reading.
2. It could be a passage that addresses a need in your life.
 - a. Perhaps you are trying to overcome an habitual sin.
 - b. Perhaps you feel a need to apply a specific virtue in your life.

D. Come to a basic understanding of the passage before meditating on it.

1. If we understand the passage incorrectly, we are meditating on error.
2. You must develop a very basic understanding of hermeneutics.
 - a. Like mathematics, hermeneutics was developed and used **B.C.**
 - b. There are many books available on the subject.
 - c. There is a good basis course available from our brethren on line.
<http://school.wvbs.org/courses/hermeneutics/>
3. Understand the meaning of each word in the passage. (*use bible dictionary*)

E. Commit the passage to your memory.

1. Make a good effort to memorize it and at least be able to paraphrase it.
2. Write it down and carry it with you. *Post it where you can see it.*

F. Interrogate the selected text by asking basic questions of it.**S#20.**

1. Why is this text in the scriptures ?
 - a. Every text has relevance; **NONE** are there to entertain.
Example : Why does God tell us about the giving of manna in the desert.
 - b. There is limited space in the scriptures so each page is important.
 - c. The scriptures are to reveal God and His plan for HIS creation. *It teaches !*
2. What does this passage mean ?
 - a. We read to learn facts, but we meditate deepen our understanding.
 - b. What does the story of the garden teach me ? What does Cain teach us ?
3. How does this passage apply to life in modern America and to me ?
 - a. What does the calling of the Apostle Nathaniel mean to my life ?
 - b. Why does Acts tell us about Priscilla and Aquila ?
 - c. **Heb. 12: 14** – Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.
 - 1) What would sanctification look like in my life ?
 - 2) How can I pursue sanctification ? *AM I DOING IT ?*
 - 3) What changes will pursuing sanctification require ?
 - 4) Can a Christian become lost if he/she does not sufficiently pursue ?

CONCLUSION :**A. Meditation gives one the ability to practice what he knows.****S#21.**

Josh. 1: 8 – 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; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

B. Meditation is fundamental to spiritual success and growth.**S#22.****C. “day and night” Meditation must become a part of our lifestyle.****D. Is God like that old Glen Campbell song ... “Gentle On My Mind”****S#23.** ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :

Psalms 1: 1-3

1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! **2** But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. **3** He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

Psalms 119: 15

I will meditate on Your precepts
And regard Your ways.

Psalms 119: 23

Even though princes sit and talk against me,
Your servant meditates on Your statutes.

Psalms 119: 27

Make me understand the way of Your precepts,
So I will meditate on Your wonders.

Psalms 119: 78

May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie;
But I shall meditate on Your precepts.

Psalms 119: 97

O how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.

Psalms 119: 99

I have more insight than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies are my meditation.

Psalms 119: 148

My eyes anticipate the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.