

God's Word – The Meditations Of My Heart (#20)

Text : **Psalm 119: 97-104, Philippians 4: 8-9**

INTRODUCTION :

A. When you have down time, what fills your thoughts ?

1. Things you want to do ? or things you have done ?
2. Things you want to possess ? or to achieve ?
3. Special people ?

B. Our thoughts define who we really are.

1. We are all masked to the world. (*Not to God*)
2. Evil proceeds out of an evil source.
 - a. **Mark 7: 21-23** For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, **22** deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness. **23** All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.
 - b. **Luke 6: 45**- The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

C. Our thoughts define who we will be.

1. **Joshua 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. (*Produces action = conformity*)
2. The transformation of a Christian to sanctification begins in his heart / mind.
Rom. 12: 2- And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,

D. Therefore, it is not surprising that the scriptures have plenty to say about the Christian's thought-life.

1. **Joshua 1: 8** (above)
2. **Phil. 4:8**- Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, 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 (*meditate*) on these things.

Therefore, the focus of this lesson will be on Christian meditation.

I. What do we mean by “meditation?”

A. In Western culture, meditation is becoming a lost art.

1. We lead a fast pace lifestyle. (*Look with disdain upon those who set and think*)
2. We are addicted to media. (*Mp3 in ear, TV, Radio, etc. = constant noise*)

B. We have come to think of meditation as something foreign.

1. We think of it as what guys do on mountaintops in Tibet.
2. Men in orange robes with shaved heads do it in airports.

C. In America, meditation is most often taught as a relaxation technique.

1. It is done sitting in an uncomfortable position and humming.
2. The objective of Eastern meditation is to empty one's mind.
 - a. One seeks to lose one's self ... to melt into the cosmic consciousness.
 - b. The final goal is detachment through control of brain waves.
 - c. Success is to achieve emotional wellbeing, calm, inner peace.

D. What is the meditation referred to in the scriptures ?

1. The Princeton dictionary has the most accurate definition I could find.
Meditation : continuous and profound contemplation or musing on a subject or series of subjects of a deep or abstruse nature;
2. Biblical meditation is not to empty one's mind, but to focus it.
 - a. It is to consciously turn one's thought from things of the world and open one's mind to biblical influence. (*To harness, To turn from .. to*)
 - b. In a disciplined way to focus one's mind, to ponder, to muse, to reflect on a specific spiritual subject.
 - c. This definition is implicit in the N.T. instructs to the church :
Col. 3: 1-2 **Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.**
2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.
3. Meditation is a learned skill which takes practice to master.
 - a. Our culture frowns on biblical meditation as being idle.
 - b. Time spent in contemplation of God and His word is never wasted.

II. What should a Christian meditate upon ? *(More than thinking good thoughts)*

A. Meditate on God Himself.

1. All who love God seek to better know Him better and to better understand Him.
2. **Psalm 63: 5-6** My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips. **6** When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches,
3. We serve an awesome God who is above man's comprehension. **(I Cor. 1: 21-25, 30)**

B. Meditate on the mighty deeds of God. Who can comprehend them ?

1. The creation, the flood, the Exodus, salvation in Christ.
Psalm 143: 5- I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands. **(cf. 77:12 & 143: 5)**
2. The providential way God works in our lives today.
Psalm 77: 5-6 I have considered the days of old, the years of long ago. **6** I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, And my spirit ponders:

C. Meditate on God's word. *(Eternal search, no man knows and understands it all.)*

1. Meditating on God's word is an overriding theme from the very first Psalms.
 - a. **Psalms 1: 2-** But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.
 - b. One's faith originates and grows in the word of God. **(Rom. 10:17)**
2. **Psalm 119** is the longest Psalm and repeatedly extols meditating on God's word.
 - a. **Vs. 23-** Even though princes sit and talk against me, Your servant meditates on Your statutes.
 - b. **Vs. 48-** And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, which I love; And I will meditate on Your statutes.
 - c. See also Vss. - **15, 27, 78, 97, 99, 148** **(cf. Josh 1:8-9)**

D. Meditate on spiritual and on godly things.

1. The world competes for our time and for our mind.
 - a. There is no limit to the diversions Satan provides.
 - b. Satan attacks our weakest point ... our flesh.
2. **Phil. 4:8-** Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, 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 (*meditate*) on these things.
3. **Christians must have a positive and a spiritual thought-life.**

III. When and where should one meditate ?

- A. The time does not seem to be as relevant as the frequency and consistence.**
1. Joshua was commanded to meditate on the word “**day and night.**” (**Josh 1: 8**)
 2. The psalmist meditated at varying times.
 - a. “**day and night**” (**Psa. 1: 2**)
 - b. “**in the night watches**” (**Psa. 63: 6**)
 3. ***Meditating on God and His word must be an ongoing part of our thought process.***
- B. No limitation is given as to where the Christian may meditate.**
1. Wherever we are God wants His word to be on our hearts.
 - a. **Deut. 6: 6- These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.** (Vs. **8- when you lie down and ... rise up.**)
 - b. God goes on to say His commands are to be part of our daily dialog. (**6: 5-9**)
 2. The prophet David meditated both in the temple and in his bed. (**Psa. 27: 4, 63:6**)
 3. Isaac meditated in the field near evening. (**Gen. 24: 63**)
- C. Christians are free to meditate at the times and places of their choosing.**
1. Meditation should be daily.
 2. We should each have a place to go.

IV. How does one meditate ? (Not legs folded with fingers curled and humming)

- A. It's not difficult, but it takes some self-discipline to begin meditating.**
1. Anything new seems awkward at first. (*Remember your first bicycle ride ?*)
 2. It will not be convenient at first. (*Satan is a persistent competitor.*)
 3. Do trial and error, but don't give up.
- B. You cannot meditate upon that which you do not know .. Read & study.**
1. Before contemplating a passage or section of scripture :
 - a. Read it and re-read it until the content and context is clear in your mind.
 - b. Read related passages.
 - * ***You don't have to be a bible scholar to understand God's message.***
 2. Pray for God's assistance in understanding it.
 3. Give the word of God time to work in us. **I Thes. 2: 13** (Cf.- **Phil. 2:13**)

C. Contemplate the passage from different perspectives.

1. Examine it like a woman examines her new engagement ring.
 - a. Holds it up to the light and moves her hand.
 - b. She turns it so every facet hits the light.
2. Propose different scenarios of meaning.
 - a. Look at it from the perspective of the original recipient. (*apply today*)
 - b. What if this
 - c. What does it mean to
3. Why is this passage in the scriptures ?
 - a. Every passage has a purpose and a use.
 - b. Not all passages are as significant as others. (*Gnats & Camels*)

D. Ask the passage questions.

1. Who, what, when, why, where, ... How do I apply it to my life ?
2. Is this a specific instruction or is it a general principle.

E. Always approach every passage as a seeker.

1. Christians do not study the scriptures as an academic pursuit.
 - a. In college one is required to study academically.
 - b. The bible is a practical guidebook for living and should be studied as such.
- * *Many young preachers have difficulty making that transition after graduation.*
2. Christianity is not a legal system so the Christian is not seeking laws.
 - a. We seek guidance for life and godliness. (**II Pet. 1: 3**)
 - b. We seek to be equipped for every good work. (**II Tim. 3: 16-17**)
 - c. We seek to learn what pleases our Lord. (**Eph. 5: 10**)
 - d. We seek to prove what the will of God is. (**Rom . 12: 2**)
- * *Our meditations must be centered upon learning to discern the mind of God.*

V. What will be the result of daily meditations ?**A. God will be glorified.**

1. Every hour or every day we are all involved in a spiritual war. (**Eph. 6: 10-17**)
2. Meditation is a form of worship.
Psa 104: 34- Let my meditation be pleasing to Him;
As for me, I shall be glad in the LORD. (cf.- 27: 4)

B. The one who meditates on the word of God comes increasingly sanctified.

1. **Psa. 4: 4-** Tremble, and do not sin;
Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still.
2. **Psa. 119: 11-** Your word I have treasured in my heart,
that I may not sin against You.
3. The changing of one's mind begins the transformation process. (**Rom . 12: 2**)

* *Physically we are what we eat.
Spiritually we are what we think about.*

C. When Christians meditate on God's word :

1. They become more unified with God and with each other.
2. They become more active in God's service.

(The cease being a “*Cino*”, i.e., **C**hristian **i**n **n**ame **o**nly.)

D. Meditation is essential to a true knowledge and understanding of God's word.

1. **Psa. 49: 3**
2. **Psa. 119: 27, 97-8**
3. **Psa. 77: 12**

* *The End of study is information.
The end of meditation is practice. ... Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge.*

CONCLUSION :

- A. There is no downside to meditating on God's word.
- B. It is something every Christian can do.
- C. It produces a host of positive results.
- D. I challenge you to try it every day for 8 weeks.

INVITATION :

Lesson Text :

Psalms 119: 97-104

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

98 Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies,
For they are ever mine.

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

100 I understand more than the aged,
Because I have observed Your precepts.

101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way,
That I may keep Your word.

102 I have not turned aside from Your ordinances,
For You Yourself have taught me.

103 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.

Philippians 4: 8-9

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, 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. **9** The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, **practice these things**, and the God of peace will be with you.