

MEDITATING ON THE WORD



There are many reasons why it is good to meditate on the Word of God. The important thing is not to argue the issue of meditation, but rather, to search Scripture on the guidelines it provides on the matter.

In the same manner that we get to know/remember a song, a billboard, an advertisement on television, etc. by repeatedly listening to it or seeing it, there is great value in the repetitive 'intake' of God's Word, whether it is by hearing, reading, etc. The average Christian knows some Scripture verses but might not even notice if someone should quote these Scriptures out of context!

Every believer in Jesus Christ desperately needs to know Him more intimately – who He is, what He is like and what He does. All of God's commands are good and helpful. They empower us to enter into a closer walk with Him.

Biblical definition of meditation

Whenever we want to understand a term, it is helpful to find its origin and its earliest uses. The Old Testament Hebrew defines “*meditation*” as the following: OT Hebrew Strong's #:1897: *Hagah* (daw-gaw); to murmur (in pleasure or anger) by implication, to ponder, meditate, mourn, mutter, roar, speak, study, talk, utter. The New Testament Greek Strong's defines it as: NT Greek Strong's #3191: *Meletao* (mel-et-ah'-o), to take care of, i.e. (by implication) revolve in the mind: imagine, (pre-) meditate.

The simplest definition of meditation is *to repeat a Bible verse* whether it is by writing it, praying it, reading it, singing it, etc. Meditation is focussed repetition of Scripture verse(s) or phrase(s) with the focus on gaining a deeper understanding or revelation of God's intention for him/her, or just simply of the verse/phrase itself.

How to do it practically

Set a time: Find a regular time of the day that is best suited to your own situation and your family life. If possible, it should be a time when you are not likely to be disturbed. Decide how much time you need for meditation and prayer – and then stick to it! Be realistic. Do not schedule a long period to start off with if you are not used to it. Rather begin with 10-15 minutes and gradually increase the time. Some days you might take 30 minutes and other days 15 minutes. Do not feel guilty about this.

Find a place: Find a place where you will not be easily distracted and where you can focus – preferably a quiet spot where no one will disturb you during the time you have set apart. This may be a window seat, a spot in the garden, a particular chair, a corner of a room etc. It may also help

to create the right atmosphere by arranging the space in a special way. Stand, sit, kneel, dance, or draw pictures. Do not make yourself too comfortable that you risk falling asleep and make sure there is a restroom close by.

Journal/Stationery: Have a Bible, paper and a pen at hand so you can make notes of what the Lord tells you or of things you want to study later.

Praying Scripture: When you prepare to pray Scripture, it is helpful to choose a specific Scripture before you start praying. Begin by picking a verse (your favourite one) and write it down. If possible, write it down from different translations of the Bible.

Example

The following is an example of how to facilitate a time of meditation:

1. Meditate - Remember these 5 letters: R–W–S–S–P

Read it: Read the verse several times. Look for key phrases or words. Focus on what you read and its possible meaning in context.

Write it: Copy down the verse directly from your Bible. Then set aside your Bible. Write down the insights, thoughts and revelations, and draw any pictures you get from the Holy Spirit. Write the phrase repeatedly during your meditation. Writing often unlocks something that reading does not.

Say it: Say the verse or the phrase out loud. Say it loud enough that you can hear yourself. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). As you repeat the verse or the phrase, certain words will draw your attention. These words you can repeat prayerfully.

Sing it: Take an isolated phrase from the verse and sing it repeatedly.

Pray it: Prayer is a divine means of communion with God. When you repeat a phrase and believe it, you are speaking it to God, which is prayer.

2. Follow up

Write the heading 'Follow up' somewhere on the page and use the space to capture other verses and themes that come to mind, that you can focus on later.

3. Avoiding distractions

The moment we begin to pray or meditate on the Word, many things tend to come to mind that distract us from our time of prayer. Usually distractions come as good ideas, sleep or sinful thoughts. Of these three, the most difficult to deal with are the good ideas.

On a separate page write down a) things you must do (distractions) and b) any good thoughts and ideas that come to mind. Then, go back and focus on your Scripture for meditation.

Using headings like these will help you organise your thoughts towards the goal of staying focused on meditation.

Application

As you go about your day, try to apply what you have meditated upon in your devotional time:

1. Use it in prayer

For example, your verse for meditation may have included the words “call upon the name of the Lord and be saved” (Romans 10:13). If you happen to drive past an accident scene, you can pray, “Lord, I pray on behalf of everyone involved in this accident - to live, to call upon Your name and be saved.”

2. As encouragement

You can also share this verse from your meditation with someone else, whether the person has a relationship with Jesus or not.

3. Use it to walk in repentance and faith

Say you have meditated on: “Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” (Proverbs 18:21). If you have fallen prey to speaking negative pronouncements over yourself and your abilities, you can start speaking life. For example: Instead of saying “I will never be good enough or able to do this”, you can pray “Lord, I lack wisdom. I ask wisdom from You who are the Source of all wisdom. With You nothing is impossible.”

Time that you will treasure

Meditating on the Word will become a time that you will treasure every day. When you start renewing your mind by letting the Scriptures change you, you will be transformed into the image of Christ and abiding in Him will become more of a reality in your life. There can be no greater joy. So, keep on meditating on Scripture. You will reap the fruit of it!