

## BIBLICAL MEDITATION: MEDITATING on GOD'S WORD for HEART CHANGE

Meditation is perhaps the most neglected art and undeveloped skill of Christian living. The question is, *why?* Because meditation requires *time*, *discipline*, and *concentration*. This is unfortunate because meditation is a powerful life-changing force that brings both temporal and eternal benefits (see: Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:3, Psalm 119:15, 23, 48, 97, 99, 148 and Phil 4:6-9).

It is important and helpful to view meditation in the context of other methods used to bring the Word of God into our lives. The Navigators use *The Hand* to illustrate five of them. Each finger is a way of grasping the Word. In spiritual battles, we grasp the Word which is the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17), with all five fingers. In Hebrews 4:12 the Word is viewed as the surgeon's scalpel. Again, it must be held firmly with all five fingers. The five ways (fingers) are:

- **Hear the Word**                      Luke 8: 15
- **Read the Word**                     1 Timothy 4:13 (The text suggests regularly and consistently)
- **Study the Word**                    2 Timothy 2:15
- **Memorize the Word**               Psalm 119:9, 11
- **Meditation in the Word**        Psalm 1:2-3

Most of us understand what hearing, reading, studying, and memorizing the Word entails but are not trained in the art and skill of biblical meditation. Understanding and practicing the five steps below enables us to "*Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within us ...*" (Col. 3:16) and makes us beneficiaries of the growth blessings that the Word brings.

Consider the message of Psalm 1:2-3. The instruction is to meditate in the law of God day and night. As we do, our lives have **stability** (*firmly planted*), **sustenance** (*by streams of water*), **fruitfulness** (*yields its fruit in season*), **life flow** (*leaf does not wither*), and we **prosper** in all we do. What wonderful benefits (spiritual, psychological, physical, and social) are ours through meditating on the Word.

The steps for Biblical meditation of a passage are:

- Memorize-**     *Saturate the inner person with the Word. Let it dwell in you richly by memorizing it. Then you can think about it without the written text.*
- Visualize-**    *Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a word picture of the message in the text. Some passages have an obvious word picture. Psalm 1 has the tree, Psalm 23, the shepherd, and Ephesians 6:10-18, the Roman soldier, etc.*
- Personalize-** *Put yourself in the picture. Become the big stable tree, the sheep in the Shepherd's arms, or the soldier in full armor. Sometimes using a picture like those in Sunday School papers are helpful. As you seek the Lord, He may bring a diagram or conceptual picture to your mind as well.*
- Harmonize-**   *Speak the Word, sing it, pray it, and confess it. In doing this we are allowing the Word to flow through us and bringing our hearts (minds, emotions, and wills) into congruency with the outer world. The Biblical term "confession" means "to speak what is true." Harmonizing is an act of faith in which we express who and what we are in Christ. For example, pray Psalm 1. "Thank you, Lord, that as I meditate on your Word I become like a tree that is stable, fruitful, and successful."*
- Triggerize-**    *Identify an object or objects that remind you of a biblical truth. When you see that object, allow it to be a "trigger" to focus on a biblical principle; e.g. a tree triggers thoughts about Psalm 1:3.*



Biblical meditation is uniquely and distinctly different from all other forms of meditation. It is an act of obedience (Phil. 4: 6-8), motivated by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13) and done with the purpose of becoming like Him (Phil. 2:5). The content of Biblical meditation is the Word and the inspiration is the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:15-16). Biblical meditation is a way for the Spirit to use the Word and infuse our inner person with the life of Jesus. This is part of its uniqueness.

The life-changing force and value of Biblical meditation has been demonstrated over and over in the experience of many people. Developing the art and discipline of meditation for 3-5 minutes minimum several times a day is being a good steward of both our life and resources. Practical values like reducing stress and anxiety, purifying and edifying the inner person and obeying and worshipping the Lord are a few of the benefits. See meditation references, especially Psalm 119, for others.

**EARNESTLY STUDYING** the Scriptures allows God's Word to speak directly to our hearts—to correct, encourage, and edify us. Writing down your discoveries will help you organize and remember them.

**READING THE BIBLE** is often the way that God most directly speaks to us. Many people find it helpful to use a daily reading program or other method that takes a systematic approach to drawing lessons from the Bible.

**MEMORIZING GOD'S WORD** trains us to use the Sword of the Spirit when we are faced with temptations and opposition by Satan. By holding passages from the Bible in our minds we are also able to have them readily available for witnessing or in encouraging others with a "word in season" (2 Timothy 4:2).

**HEARING THE WORD** taught by godly pastors and teachers provides fresh insight into the Scriptures to challenge and expand your own understanding, as well as stimulating your own appetite for its truth.

**MEDITATION** is the thumb of the Word Hand, because when used in conjunction with each of the other methods, the Spirit begins to deeply move in our hearts and speak to our souls. Only as we meditate on God's Word—thinking of its meaning and application in our lives—will we discover its transforming power at work within us.

**Getting a Grip on God's Word**

As a "lamp unto [our] feet and a light unto [our] path" (Psalm 119:105), the Word of God is more than simply a set of guide-lines or recommendations. It gives us the foundation for how we live, move, and shape every aspect of our lives (see 2 Timothy 3:15-17). The Word Hand Illustration is a simple way to break down five methods of taking in God's Word.



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