

The Word on the Word Series: 8

Psalm 119

Meditating On The Word

In this psalm the Psalmist speaks of “fixing his eyes” on the word, and here in these verses he speaks of meditating on them. (15,23)

This is the path to experience all that we’ve mentioned in the previous lessons. You must meditate on Scripture. God’s Word must take root in our hearts. (11)

Think of meditating on the word as the act of *reading, thinking on, praying, memorizing, discussing, hearing, or singing God's word.*

Eastern meditation is emptying the mind, but Christian meditating is filling the mind – with God’s word.

The goal is “to let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Colossians 3:16). That is, live in the Word, like it’s your spiritual house. Abide in it. Let it saturate your soul. Let it affect you through and through.

Jesus said, “*If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and my words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts. Ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you*” (John 15.7, Amplified).

We commune with God through His word, not just a fleeting glance but by abiding in it and living in it – that is putting it in the heart.

a parrot can memorize. Every addict knows a few verses. Satan knows verses. What's the difference? - Its not in the heart.

Click the 'save' button that takes it from our head into our heart!

A. What Psalm 119 teaches us about Meditating on the Word

- a) While others plot, mediate on God’s Word (23)
- b) When down, get up and going, by mediating on the word (25-32)
- c) Delight in God through meditation (47-48)
- d) While others make false accusations, meditate on the word (78)
- e) Meditate on it all day (97)
- f) Grow in understanding beyond your years by meditating on it (99)
- g) Rise early to mediate on the Word (148)

Do you understand your need for meditating on Scripture?

Hundreds of issues would be taken care of in our lives if God’s Word got into us richly.

“If I were the devil, one of my first aims would be to stop folk from digging into the Bible. Knowing that it is the Word of God ... I should do all I could to surround it with the spiritual equivalents of pits, thorn hedges and man traps, to frighten people off”. (Jim Packer)

B. Why Don't People Meditate on the Word? (What traps does the devil use?)

- **Pride** – Some arrogantly think they don't need it.
 - God looks on the one who trembles at and reverences His word (**Isaiah 66:2**)
 - It is an evil thing to drink from other cisterns (**Jeremiah 2.13**) - **Amy Carmichael** (missionary to India) writing about other good Christian books: "*Drink from the Well, not from the streams that flow from the well*" - this can be applied to every other thing.
- **Misguided Fear** – Some are intimidated by the Bible. They think only the clergy can understand it. Not so! (**Psalm 119:130**; **Psalm 19:7**).
 - Consider this - Paul wrote his letters e.g **Romans** to "laypeople," not theologians? He **expected** farmers, blacksmiths, tent-makers, shopkeepers, market traders, mothers, and other Christians to understand his letter. God's people can understand God's Word if they approach it with a heart of humility, seeking to obey it.
 - Theologian, **Wayne Grudem** says: "*No believer should think himself or herself too foolish to read Scripture and understand it sufficiently to be made wise by it.*"
- **A belief that the Bible is boring.** Some find no joy in meditating on the word. Remember, the fault is not in the Bible, but in the reader.
 1. Test yourself to see if you are truly born again (**1 Peter 2:1-3**).
 2. Pray for God to teach you and give you a love for his word. (**Psalm 95** – an everyday Psalm). Do not harden your heart. Pray for the Spirit to illuminate God's Word so that it burns in your heart (**Luke 24:32**).
 3. Look for the gospel in the Bible - the good news! Angels long to look at the gospel! (**1 Peter 1:12**). It never gets boring.
 4. Test your lifestyle to see if you are addicted to entertainment to the point that you can't slow down enough to read quietly and meditatively. If so, unplug from these things for a season and read. Consider '*fasting*' these things
 5. Keep it fresh! Select a good reading and study plan and constantly review it. Ask your pastor for some good study resources to recommend.
- **Busyness** - Part of the exercise of meditating on Scripture is *making time*. One must plan to spend **unhurried and unhindered** time with God. No one oozes into Christ-likeness.
 - You don't accidentally become a student of Scripture. Prioritise sitting at the feet of Jesus like Mary, who chose what was best (**Luke 10:38-42**).
 - **Illustration**: A doctor who is obviously hearing from his overweight patient that "he's too busy to exercise", responds: "*What fits your busy schedule, exercising one hour a day or being dead twenty-four hours a day!?*"
 - **William Wilberforce**, the British statesman, who was largely responsible for the abolition of slave trade throughout the empire, wrote in his diary in 1819, "*Walked from Hyde Park Corner, repeating the Psalm 119 in great comfort.*" That was a busy man.
 - **Martin Luther**, the Reformist, once said "*I have so much business I cannot get on with it without spending three hours daily in prayer (prayer and meditating the word)*"

- **Laziness** - We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, nor because it is dull and boring, or because we are busy but rather because it is **work**
 - We look upon it as a chore, and we would rather be doing something other than 'work'.
 - We have just said that we need to make time for meditating the word. That requires effort on our part.
- **Unbelief.** Not that we don't believe God's word but rather an unbelief in the value of Scripture will keep you from God's Word.

Do you really believe:

- its more valuable than gold?
- that faith comes from hearing it?
- that joy is derived by understanding it?
- that God transforms us through it?
- that we desperately need the gospel every day?

Do you realize how much you need it to be able to share the gospel, to counsel others and fight the good fight.

C. How to Meditate (Useful Pointers)

Think of meditating on the word as the act of *reading, thinking on, praying, memorising, discussing, hearing, or singing God's word.*

When reading the Scriptures I often put myself 'in the scene' – it brings the Bible alive to you.

Find ways to hide God's word in your heart (memorise it):

- write it
- art – draw it
- put it to music
- stick verses on the fridge
- be creative! - use of games, puzzles etc

Find suitable places that enhance your meditating:

- good place to sit or walk
- countryside, beach, riverside

and finally -

Switch off the phone! - spending time meditating the word without any disturbances.