

## Tuning In To God: 5

### The Practice of Meditation

Last week we were looking at the area of the Inner Witness of the Spirit.

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” **Romans 8.16**

When faced with a decision, a typical response would be to pray about it. The Bible tells us to let ‘peace be the umpire’ (Colossians 3:15). But even so, there can still be uncertainty about the answer. “Was that me, Lord, or was that You?” The good news is that when we spend time daily praying in the spirit, it becomes easier for us to hear the direction of the Holy Spirit as He reveals His will to our spirits,

This can still be an area of confusion when we are learning to walk in the spirit and hear from God. Most of the time we hear our own spirit speaking to our soul, which is our mind, will and emotions. The audible voice of the Lord is rare in most of our lives. Almost every leading we will receive in everyday life will be a prompting, an impression, a thought, an inward witness or a leading from our spirits. The reason it sounds like us is because it is ourselves that we hear, it comes out of our own spirit. The Holy Spirit communicates with our spirits, and our spirits prompt, or enlighten, our minds.

Some have called this inner witness the ‘*still, small voice*’ - many look for God in circumstances, or through tangible things such as visions, signs, fleeces etc. God speaks to us through His word and through the witness of the Spirit – He may use tangible things but these will only confirm what we already know. The prophet was looking for God and he did not find Him in the circumstances, the tangible things but in this ‘still, small voice’

“Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; (12) and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. (13) So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ” **1 Kings 19.11-13**

Since God is going to use our spirits, or our conscience (Romans 9.1) to speak to us, which is our mind, will and emotions – our mind must then be ready to hear from Him.

#### **Romans 12.2**

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

We prove what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God by having our minds (or spirit) renewed.

We renew our minds / spirit with the Word of God, but how? What is the process?

### **Joshua 1.8**

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.....”

Joshua was told to be careful to stay in the word of God – He had to read it, hear it, speak it and meditate it. It was through this that God was going to reveal to him the way and direction he should go as he went through the Promised Land. Following the leading of the Spirit, through meditating on the word, would make his way prosperous and successful

This is another way that we hear from God - through meditation. As we consider, contemplate and ponder the word. The Holy Spirit speaks to us by revealing things that we need to know.

### **What Is Meditation?**

Biblical meditation is not the same as meditation that the world understands. This is rooted in Eastern religions. This type of meditation is emptying the mind, but Christian meditating is filling the mind – with God’s word.

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

The word meditation literally means to ‘murmur or mutter, to ponder’. Note that God told Joshua not to let the word depart from his mouth, but he was to meditate in it – to keep it in his mouth. To keep going over it time and again – not through vainly repeating a word, but through repetitive contemplation.

A good parallel to help you understand this concept is that of the ruminants. These are animals like the sheep, cow, deer, camel. These animals have more than one stomach chamber and when they graze and feed the food goes into one of the chambers. These animals are then able to bring the food back up and chew it again to extract even more nutrients. We call this act ‘chewing the cud’. This act of regurgitation to enable the animal to feed again is just like meditation.

We feed on the word of God, and then through meditation, bring it back and chew it again. When we do this we are allowing the word of God to renew our minds and the Holy Spirit will speak to us through it.

Let us look at some examples from the Scriptures:

### **Acts 10.17-19**

In the verses that preceded these, we read that Peter saw a vision of a large sheet descending from heaven. In this sheet were many different kinds of animals, insects and birds. In the vision he heard a voice telling him to ‘kill and eat’. But Peter’s response was that he wasn’t going to eat anything unclean. Then he heard a strange comment ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ He saw this vision three times and he didn’t understand it and it troubled him.

“Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. (18) And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. (19) While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. (20) Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.”

Peter was meditating on this vision –

- he thought about it, he pondered it in his heart,
- no doubt repeating the words to himself ‘Rise Peter, kill and eat; Not so Lord, I’ve never eaten anything that’s unclean’
- Why would God tell him to eat unclean animals?

As Peter pondered the vision, the Holy Spirit spoke to him. He heard the voice of God, the prompting of the Spirit inside

Later he testified:

“Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. ” (vs 28)

“Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. ” (vs34-35)

Where did he get this revelation, this perception? Through meditation – pondering the words that he heard, and being open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

“I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, And my spirit makes diligent search.” **Psalm 77.6**

The psalmist went over the words of a song, he meditated on it – as we meditate our spirits search for the answer from God. Our spirit communes with God, looking for and seeking the witness of the Spirit.

### **John 15.7**

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ”

We abide or live in the word, not just by reading it, but through mediating it.

The goal is “to let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Col 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.

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!**

### **Psalm 119.11, 15-16**

“Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.... I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. (16) I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.”

The psalmist knew the secret of hiding the word in his heart through meditation. He meditated and pondered the word of God through all of life's circumstances. Why because this is where his counsel came from, this is how he heard God's voice to lead him.

- 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)

Paul's desire and prayer for Timothy was that God would give him understanding, revelation and leading as he pondered the word of God.

“Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things” **2 Timothy 2.7**