

# Counseling Homework: Meditation

By Wendy Wood



All throughout Scripture we are commanded to meditate, consider, remember, ponder, think about, and dwell on God's word. God has ordained that believers are sanctified through His word and the power of His Holy Spirit at work in us through Scripture. I will briefly outline the importance of meditation on God's word and then give **SIX** practical ways to assign meditation as homework.

**Biblical meditation is God-focused and is commanded by God.**

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 good success.”

Psalm 1:1-2 “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”

### **Biblical Meditation is key to sanctification (and therefore counseling)!**

Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect”

Ephesians 4:23 “and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds”

**Defining Biblical Meditation:** Biblical meditation is the practice of thinking personally, practically, seriously and earnestly on how God’s Word should look in life. When a believer meditates, he fills his mind with truth so that his life becomes governed by the attitude of the Savior.

Scripture uses lots of different words and descriptions to talk about meditation.

### **Dwelling or Thinking**

Philippians 4:8 “think” is translated from “logizomai” which means “to give careful thought to a matter, think (about), consider, ponder, or let one’s mind dwell on”

### **Considering**

Hebrews 11:19 Abraham was “considering” that God was able to raise him up, even from dead; from whence also he received him in a figure”

Hebrews 12:3 commands believers to “consider” the suffering of Christ “Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility...” comes from the word “katanoeo” which means “to direct one’s whole mind to an object, also from a higher standpoint to immerse oneself in it and hence to apprehend it in its whole compass”

### **Pondering**

Luke 2:19 “Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart”  
From “sumballomai” which means “to think about seriously, ponder, reflect on, or debate”

### **Setting One’s Mind or Affections**

Colossians 3:2 “set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth”

From the Greek verb “phroneo” which means “to keep on giving serious consideration to something - to ponder, to let one’s mind dwell on, to keep thinking about, to fix one’s attention on”

### **Remembering**

Revelation 2:5 “Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place - unless thou repent.”

Hebrews 13:7 “Remember them which have rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”

Remember is from “mnamoneuo” which means “to recall information from memory”. It is a command to the believer to recall or to think about again.

### **Puritan definitions:**

Thomas Hooker: “Meditation is a serious intention of the mind whereby we come to search out the truth, and settle it upon the heart.”

William Fenner: “Meditation is the settled exercise of the mind for a further inquiry of the truth, and so affecting the heart therewith, and

therefore there be four things in meditation... 1) An exercise of the mind.... 2) A settled exercise... It dwells on the truth... 3) To make further inquiry... Meditation pulls the latch of the truth and looks into every closet, and every cupboard, and every angle of it... 4) It labors to affect the heart.”

William Bates: “Meditation is the serious exercise of the understanding, whereby our thoughts are fixed on the observation of spiritual things in order to practice.”

Thomas White: “Divine meditation... is a serious, solemn thinking and considering of the things of God, to the end we might understand how much they concern us, and that our hearts thereby may be raised to some holy affections and resolutions.” He explains that mediation has three parts: consideration, affections, and resolutions.

Thomas Watson: “Meditation... is a holy exercise of the mind whereby we bring the truths of God to remembrance, and do seriously ponder upon them and apply them to ourselves. Meditation is the soul’s retiring of itself so that, by a serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to heavenly affections.”

John Ball: “Mediation is a serious, earnest and purposed musing upon some point of Christian instruction, tending to lead us forward toward the Kingdom of Heaven, and serving our daily strengthening against the flesh, the world, and the devil.”

Thomas Manton: “Meditation is the duty or exercise of religion whereby the mind is applied to the serious and solemn contemplation of spiritual things, for practical uses and purpose.”

#### Key Points:

Focus on God and His Word

We are to understand and apply it

Increase our love and reverence for God

## Homework Assignments:

Assign a short passage or a verse for your counselee to meditate on for the entire week. Then choose one of these ways to assign for that week. You may want to assign different methods of meditation until the counselee has several options to choose from and figures out what works well for them.

**Assignment #1** Have your counselee work through consideration, affection, and resolution.

Consideration: What have I personally done with the truth I have learned?  
How have I failed to live out this truth?

Affection: What do I see about God in this scripture or sermon? What do I learn that causes me to grow in love and reverence for God?

Resolution: What specific, determined steps of change do I need to take?

**Assignment #2** Begin with prayer for the Spirit's aid to keep the heart focused.

Choose an appropriate scriptural topic for meditation.

- a. Choose a small enough verse or theme that enables detailed concentration
- b. Example: Ephesians 1 is too much, but Ephesians 1:7 yields many topics: Christ's redemption and blood, forgiveness, one's trespasses, God's grace

Look for what you adore about God.

- a. What attributes are on display?
- b. What about God are you thankful for?

Questions, Considering, and Examining Oneself

- c. The goal is to surrender the will to the purposes of God
- d. Consider spiritual dullness, confess sin, petition for grace to grow, place confidence in God's purposes and promises

- e. Have you applied all the blessed promises of the topic to your perspective on life?
  - f. Question your own belief in and obedience to the topic, probing the mind in a convicting way
  - g. Consider the exactness of the commandment, the faithfulness of the promise, the terror of the threatening, the weightiness of the examples
  - h. Ask yourself, "O my soul, is it this way with me?"
- Conclude with personal application, resolution and prayer
- i. First look backwards - what have I done?
  - j. Look forward - what will I do?
  - k. Make resolutions to change with serious intention

**Assignment #3** Pull apart a verse - think through each word and what it really means. Here is an example.

Ephesians 4:29 "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."

Let - I have a choice

No - no excuses, no tolerance, absolutely none

Corrupt - rotten, poor quality, worthless, unfit for use

Talk - words, communication

Come - proceed, come out of, go forth, depart from

From your mouth - heart, soul revealed by mouth (Luke 6:45)

But - contrast, alternative

Only - narrowed choice, specific

Such as is good - useful, pleasant, honorable

Building up - strengthen, make better

Fits the occasion - according to the need of the moment

That it may - opportunity, so that

Give - grant, supply, furnish

Grace - undeserved kindness, unmerited favor

To those who hear - focus on loving others, not self

Consideration- how have I specifically failed to do this?

Affection - How has God shown me grace? What do I learn about God's words to me?

Resolution - what changes will I make with specific people?

**Assignment #4** Read the text slowly answering four questions:

- A. What does this teach me about God and his character?
- B. About human nature, character and behavior?
- C. About Christ and his salvation?
- D. About the church, or life in the people of God?

**Assignment #5** Take on a crucial verse and think it through emphasizing each word :

A. What does each word uniquely contribute to the meaning of the text?

B. What meaning would be lost from the statement if that particular word was removed?

**Assignment #6** Paraphrase the verse in your own words

A. Read the verse and try to restate it, make necessary corrections

B. Turn your paraphrase into your own heart language