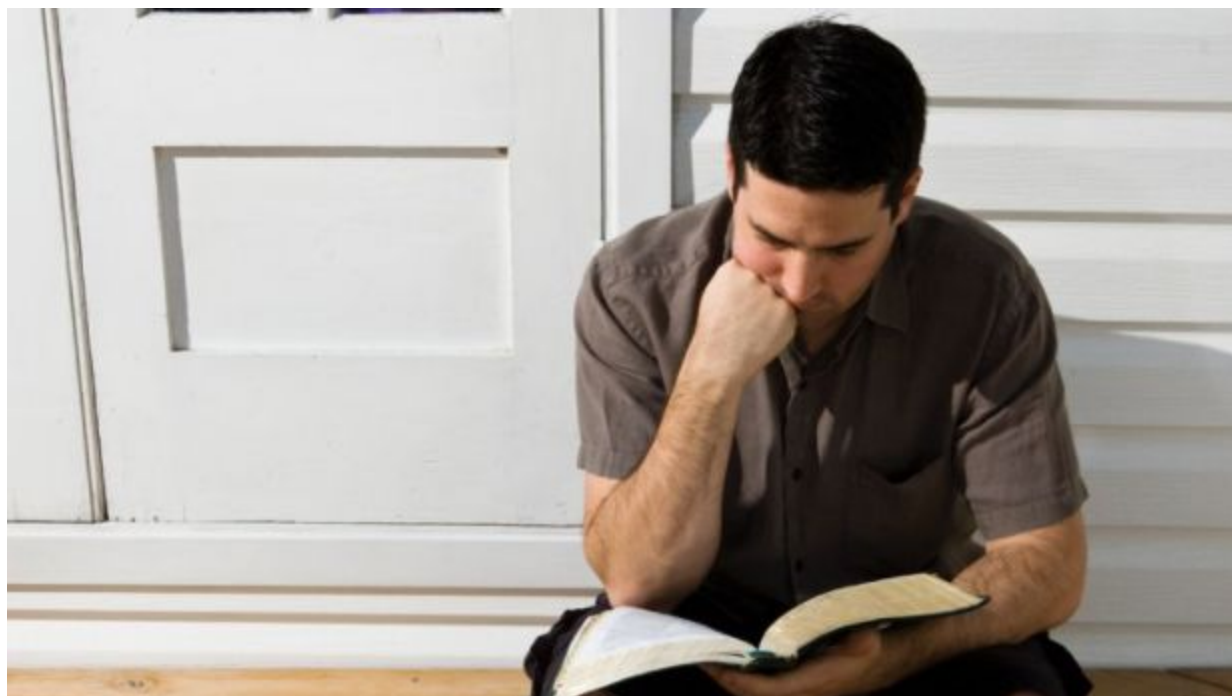


# Meditation on God's Word



Worldly Meditation: (Quotes from Yoga International) “Meditation is a precise technique for **resting the mind** and attaining a state of consciousness that is totally different from the normal waking state. It is the means for fathoming all the levels of ourselves and finally experiencing the **center of consciousness within**.”

...In meditation, the mind is clear, relaxed, and **inwardly focused**. When you meditate, you are fully awake and alert, but your mind is not focused on the external world or on the events taking place around you. Meditation requires an inner state that is still and one pointed so that the mind becomes silent.

I've highlighted the parts there that are contradictory to biblical meditation.

Biblical Meditation is

**ACTIVE**  
**FOCUS ON GOD and HIS WORD**

... No one has taught us how to look within, to find within, and to verify within. Therefore, we remain strangers to ourselves while trying to get to know others. This lack of self-understanding

is one of the main reasons our relationships don't seem to work, and why confusion and disappointment so often prevail in our life.

The goal of mediation is to go beyond the mind and experience our essential nature which is described as peace, happiness and bliss.”

**Again - this contradicts scripture and biblical mediation. We are sinners and need to have a changed, renewed essential nature from God and His Word.**

We are taught how to move and behave in the outer world, but we are never taught how to be still and examine what is within ourselves. When we learn to do this through meditation, we attain the highest of all joys that can ever be experienced by a human being. All the other joys in the world are momentary, but the joy of meditation is immense and everlasting.”

Meditation is a practical means for calming yourself, for letting go of your biases and seeing what is, openly and clearly... Meditation teaches you to systematically explore your inner dimensions. It is a system of commitment, not commandment. You are committing to yourself, to your path, and to the goal of knowing yourself.”

Worldly meditation is all about SELF.

Worldly mediation disregards that:

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning GOD...

Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick, who can understand it? I, the Lord, search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

Psalms 94:11 “The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath”

Proverbs 16:9 “The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps”

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

**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

**Occasional Meditation:** a serious bending of the mind to think upon some good and profitable subject...as we go about the duties of our calling or be exercised in some honest and lawful recreation.”

### Examples:

Proverbs 6:6 “consider the ant”

Psalms 8:2-3 “the heavens declare the glory of God”

John 4 physical water is a picture of the greater need for spiritual water

John 6 natural bread can lead to considering spiritual bread

The puritans understood that an empty or aimless mind would most likely be filled with wrong thoughts. Therefore, they encouraged occasional meditation as a method to promote godly thinking throughout the day. Occasional meditation serves as a divine plan to escape the temptation to allow the mind to wander in wrong or depressing places.

Henry Scudder says “When you are alone, be sure that you are well and fully exercised about something that is good, either in the works of your calling, or in reading, or in holy meditation or prayer. For whensoever Satan does find you idle, and out of employment in some or other of those works which God has appointed, he will take that as an opportunity to use you for himself, and to employ you in some of his works.”

You need to be aware of where your mind goes when you are not actively engaged in something. Times like driving, cooking, showering, doing laundry, mowing the lawn, etc.

Jerry Bridges calls this “godliness”. Simply living aware that everything is about God and His purpose.

Learn to use those times well so that your mind does not become idle and self-focused.

### **Deliberate Meditation: Setting specific time aside to think on God and His Truth**

solemn meditation on sermons, providence, practical truths of religion, and Scripture

Deliberate Meditation and Direct Meditation are what we will typically focus on in counseling as part of the sanctification process.

Thomas Hooker said “It’s one thing in our diet to take a snatch and away, and another thing to make a meal, and sit at it on purpose until we have seen all set before us and we have taken our fill of all. So we must not cast a glimpse at the truth,... but we must make a meal of musing.”

**Direct Meditation:** compete attention on something outside oneself such as the Word of God or some great truth.

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.”

**Reflexive Meditation:** Seeks to solve an unfortunate dilemma by asking, “What have I personally done with this truth that I have learned?”

1. Ponder scripture
2. How have I failed to live this way? Where will I end up if I keep going in this direction?
3. Repent
4. What will I do differently

**Biblical meditation includes:**

**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?

**The Practice of Meditation:** What works for you?

**Best time of the day:** find the most effective time for yourself and stick with it consistently. The best time is whenever you are most alert and fresh.

**Best place for meditation:** The place where you can have absolute concentration and freedom from distractions.

**Amount of time:** Meditate so long until you find your heart grows warm in this duty. “We ought not to leave off our prayer before that frame of heart is inflamed with His love” and “as long as we find the heart affected we are to continue it.”

Meditation is the primary means to maintain a loving, growing relationship of love with the Savior. Like any loving relationship, there are not strict time limits on conversation. Rather, one communicates as long as it is necessary to keep the relationship flourishing and healthy.

**Consistency:** the more consistency a believer practices, the greater success he will have in it.

- Increases knowledge of God, Christ, and heaven.
- Fosters greater relational intimacy with God.
- Becomes easier through frequent exercise.

### Start with bible reading

We hear lots about “reading the whole bible” and that is really important! We should be taking in the entirety of God’s word. But, if we are reading too quickly or reading to accomplish a reading plan, we miss out.

All of God’s word is profitable and useful.

Leviticus shows us God’s love of the details of life. He cares about how we clean our houses and do laundry because all is to be done for His glory and He is an orderly and organized God.

The minor prophets show God’s pursuit and warnings.

Yes, keep reading the entirety of the bible but also slow down enough to take it in deeply!

Thomas Watson says: “Meditation without reading [the bible] is erroneous; reading without meditation is barren. The bee sucks the flower and then works it into the hive, and so turns it into honey. By reading we suck the flower of the Word, by meditation we work it into the hive of our mind, and so it turns to profit.... The reason we come away so cold from the reading of the Word is because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation.... without meditation the truth of God will not stay with us; the heart is hard, and the memory slippery, and without meditation, all is lost.”

Nathanael Ranew says “Reading brings me meat; meditation brings forth sweetness. Reading brings coals to the wood; mediation makes the flame. Reading brings me the sword of the word; meditation whets it. Reading barely, proves pouring water into a sieve; meditation is putting gold into a treasury; the former lets the water out, the latter locks the gold up. Oh, let me

read much, but let me also meditate much, that meditation and reading may be commensurate; my soul's digestion proportioned to its reception, it taking in by reading."

### **Meditate on sermons**

Christians listen to countless sermons each year, yet so few seem to integrate biblical truths into their lives. Why does this sad phenomenon occur? Watson provided the answer: "Better meditate on one sermon than hear five. Many complain that they do not profit from sermons; this may be the chief reason, because they do not chew the cud; they do not meditate on what they have heard."

Get in the habit of learning from sermons and meditating on them.

Take notes during the sermon.

Work through the 3 components of meditation

**Consideration - How have I failed to live according to God's Word?**

**Affection - How does this help me grow in love and reverence for God?**

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

### **Meditation for Communion**

Examine his own heart for hints of unacknowledged sin and evil disbelief

Reflect on Christ and His sacrifice

Joyfully consider the blessings of the new covenant - the cleansing of sin through the blood and eternal redemption through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

### **Steps for Meditation:**

- 1. Begin with prayer for the Spirit's aid to keep the heart focused.**
- 2. 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
- 3. Look for what you adore about God.**
  - a. What attributes are on display?
  - b. What about God are you thankful for?
- 4. 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?”**
5. **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**

\*\*\*\*\* It may be really helpful to **journal through this process**.

Read the same chapter of scripture every day, all the way through, for a week. Each day choose one verse to sit on and think through and respond to some questions in written format.

Some really have a hard time with this at first. It is much easier to move quickly through scripture. To stop and think through specific verses or chunks of scripture takes learning and patience and training your mind to focus.

One author, I think it was Paul Miller, said you can use a cup of tea as an example. If you just **dunk** your tea bag quickly into water and pull it out, the “tea” is weak and useless. If you **soak** and **steep** the tea bag, the tea is strong and useful. We need to soak and steep in God’s Word.

I have some examples below that will show different ways to journal.

### **Choosing a Topic for Meditation:**

1. **Be simple** - pick out easy topics such as the love of Jesus, His death on the cross (not the hypostatic union or the Trinity)
2. **Be balanced** - don’t get stuck on one subject but vary your choices
3. **Be practical** - choose subjects that stir your heart to greater holiness and godliness
4. **Be fitting** - choose subjects that are most appropriate to your current situation

### **Example: God’s Attributes**

God’s **Sovereignty** Job 42: 2, Romans 8:28-29

Ephesians 1:11 “In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory!”

God’s **Wisdom** Romans 11:33

“Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!

God’s **Love** - Psalm 86:15 “But You Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness”

**Consideration:** How do I live? Do I live like this is true? Where do I live like I doubt these truths? What actions or words show I am not trusting these truths?

**Affection:** Praise God. Think about how awesome God is and how His attributes bring meaning and purpose and hope to life.

**Resolution:** What will it look like specifically in my circumstances to trust God? What do I need to change in my thinking, acting, speaking, attitude?

**Example: Sin**

**If you are struggling with a particular sin:**

Meditate on scriptures that show how God views sin in general.

Meditate on scriptures about God’s holiness.

Meditate on passages that show God’s response to sin.

Meditate on the foolishness and consequences of sin.

Meditate on what your sin has cost you and how it has affected others.

Meditate on forgiveness and the price Christ paid for you sin.

**Example: Meditate on subjects designed to conquer a particular temptation to sin.**

Ephesians 4:23 “Renew your mind” between putting off old self and putting on new self

**\*\*What sin do I need to specifically work on?**

Lust?

Speech?

Anger?

People pleasing?

Anxiety?  
Selfishness?

**What specific sins do you need to put off. Go to verses that help you see the command about the sin, the warnings about what happens when you choose this sin, the promises of obedience, the joy in finding Christ sufficient, etc**

Bring the authority of the Word, and the power of Christ, and the help of his grace against sin, which both helps to discover and subdue the sin.

**In focusing on a scripture of specific sin you need to remember:**

1. **Remember the Gospel! - you can put off the sin because you have the Spirit of God in you and Christ has lived a perfect life, died and took the punishment for your sin, resurrected and defeated sin and death and is alive and advocating for you.**
2. **Trust in God's Promises - He will bring to completion what He has started!**

Romans 8:30

**And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.**

Meditation on biblical passages about specific sins should be considered as one of the primary ways of escape when solicited by sin.

Example: sinful speech

Pull apart a verse - think through each word and what it really means.

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?

### **Example: Meditate on God's Promises**

Everyone needs to focus on what John Piper calls the "future grace" of God. All that Christ did on the cross is a huge key in change - remember and thinking through that Christ lived a perfect life, died on the cross as our substitute and took all of God's wrath and punishment for our sin, and then rose and defeated death, sin, and Satan and then ascended to live in God's presence as our Mediator and Advocate.

But God's continued, day by day grace, and the promises that are guaranteed are also things to meditate on.

**Promises:**

**1 Peter 5:10** “And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

You can write that out. **Journal !!** You can study what the words **restore, confirm, strengthen and establish** mean.

Relate this to your current suffering and think about how this relates to 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 that says our troubles are “light and momentary afflictions compared to the eternal weight of glory God is preparing.”

You can write out a prayer asking God for help to trust this promise and make resolutions about how you will change your thinking and response in light of this promise.

**Isaiah 41:10** “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Start with affection for God. How does His presence affect you? How does God’s promise of strength encourage you to trust Him?

Where are you acting or thinking fearfully? Are you feeling dismayed? Stop and ask God for forgiveness.

Make resolutions about how this will change your thinking and speaking and acting. When I am fearful I will \_\_\_\_\_.

Other verses to consider:

Romans 8:32

Philippians 4:19

Psalm 84:11

2 Corinthians 9:8

Example: Meditating on God to find Grace and Help

1. Meditate on God's glorious nature.

- a. Psalm 145:5
- b. "Let your thoughts be exercised upon the infinite, eternal and incomprehensible majesty of God."

3. Meditate on God's works and providential dealings.

- a. Psalm 143:5 "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all your works; I muse on the work of Your hands."
- b. The loving control of all of life by God
- c. Matthew 6:26
- d. Psalm 139:12 "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
- e. Psalm 139:16 "Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written every one of them the days that were formed for me when as yet there was none of them."
- f. Romans 11:36

4. Meditate on eternity

- a. 2 Corinthians 4:18 "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.
- b. Psalm 90:12 - "So teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom"
- c. Meditation on eternity would make us overlook present worldly things as flitting and fading... He who thinks on eternity will despise the passing pleasures of sin.

5. Meditate on the certainty of death

- a. Ecclesiastes 7:2 "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart."
- b. Brevity of life
- c. This purifies and focuses one's priorities
- d. Hebrews 9:27
- e. Psalm 39:5 "Behold you have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing before you"
- f. Ecclesiastes 9:10
- g. Destroys pride of life
- h. Prepares spiritually and stops procrastinating
- i. Fight sin and grow in holiness

6. Meditate on God's sure judgment

- a. Hebrews 9:27 "it is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment"
- b. 2 Corinthians 5:9

### 7. Meditate on the **glories of heaven**

- a. Colossians 3:1-4 “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above....”
- b. John 14: 2-4 Jesus is preparing a place for us
- c. Revelation 7:13-17 -
- d. **Strive for purity for the pure in heart will see God**
- e. **Joy in believers heart**
- f. Growing love for God and others

### 8. Meditate on the **reality of hell**

- a. **Creates desire for evangelism**
- b. Focus on Christ’s sufficient payment for sin on the cross

## **Benefits of Meditation**

Deepens repentance

Increases resolves to fight sin

Inflames heart affection for the Lord

Increases growth in grace

Provides comfort and assurance to the soul

Creates a life of joy, thankfulness, and contentment

Deepens and matures a Christian’s experience

Improves the knowledge and retention of God’s word

## **Conclusion**

David Saxton says, “There is a theological reason that one cannot become a strong Christian without meditation. This is because God has ordained meditation as a means for progressive sanctification and renewal of the mind.”

Thomas Watson says “A Christian without meditation is like a soldier without weapons or a workman without tools”

Meditation is how lasting change, progressive sanctification, and victory over sin take place. It is the replacement of vain thoughts with the renewal of the spirit of one’s mind.

