

Meditation: Think About It!

I Introduction

Over seventy years ago, Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, developed the Hand Illustration to show how an individual could get a grasp on the Word of God. He let the fingers represent methods of intake such as hearing, reading, studying, and memorization of the scriptures. The anchor of the illustration was the thumb which represented *meditation*.

Today, we will take a close-up look at Biblical *meditation* to learn what it is (and is not!), what are the benefits, and what are some practical tips on how to do it.

II Semantics of Meditation:

Eastern religions - *Passive*

Many Eastern religions advocate meditation and "higher forms of consciousness" as a way to discover a secret inner divinity.

Examples:

Yoga

Transcendental Meditation

Hinduism - Release from the cycles of reincarnation are achieved through yoga and meditation. Disciples meditate on a word, phrase, or picture. Yoga involves meditation, chanting, postures, and breathing exercises.

Biblical Meditation - *Active/Deliberate*

In the Bible, meditation always means pondering God's revealed truths and reflecting on how they pertain to us. In Psalms 119, for example, the writer revels the richness of God's law throughout. He encourages us to meditate on it: "I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word" (Ps. 119:15-16). Since all Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16), all of it is profitable for meditation in the biblical sense.

Working Definition: Spending time in quietness, usually alone, drawing close to God and listening to Him, pondering on His word, His creation, His mighty works or other aspects of His self-revelation.

The Bible presents at least 7 Hebrew and 2 Greek words for the word "meditation". For the purposes of this workshop, we will not delve into each one but suffice to say they mostly fall into the following categories:

To “Meditate” as it appears in Webster's dictionary, means to reflect deeply upon, ponder, or contemplate.

A. To *reflect upon*, that is, to plan or intend in the mind; to form an image of (an object), to mirror, to give back a likeness, and to think or consider seriously.

B. To *ponder*, weigh mentally, consider carefully.

C. To *contemplate*, consider thoughtfully, to regard as possible, take seriously, to intend or anticipate.

D. Synonyms - chew over, muse, mull over, ruminate, speculate.

III Benefits of Biblical Meditation:

Obedience:

•Psalm 119:11 (ESV) “I have stored up your word in my heart, *that I might not sin against you.*”

•Joshua 1:8 (ESV) “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 119:55 (ESV) “I remember your name in the night, O Lord, *and keep your law.*”

Understanding and wisdom:

•Psalm 119:97–98 (ESV) “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. *Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me.*”

•Psalm 119:27 (ESV) “*Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous works.*”

Praise and worship:

•Psalm 48:9–10 (ESV) “We have thought on your steadfast love, O God, in the midst of your temple. As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth. Your right hand is filled with righteousness.”

•Psalm 63:5–6 (ESV) “My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night.”

•Psalm 104:33–35 (ESV) “I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to Him, for I rejoice in the Lord. 35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!”

•Psalm 119:97 (ESV) “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.”

Prosperity and success:

•Joshua 1:8 (ESV) “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*.”

Delight in the Lord:

•Psalm 1:2 (ESV) “...but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”

•Psalm 119:15–16 (ESV) “I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.”

•Psalm 119:23–24 (ESV) “Even though princes sit plotting against me, your servant will meditate on your statutes. Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.”

•Psalm 119:77–78 (ESV) “Let your mercy come to me, that I may live; for your law is my delight. Let the insolent be put to shame, because they have wronged me with falsehood; as for me, I will meditate on your precepts.”

Confidence and faith:

•Psalm 16:8 (ESV) “I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, *I shall not be shaken*.”

Happiness:

James 1:25 (JBP) “The one who looks steadily into God’s Word and makes that Word his habit, not listening and then forgetting, but actively putting it into practice will be *happy* in all he does.”

Christian Character:

Philippians 4:8 (Amplified) - “..., brethren, whatever is *true*, whatever is worthy of *reverence* and is *honorable* and *seemly*, whatever is *just*, whatever is *pure*, whatever is *lovely* and *lovable*, whatever is *kind* and *winsome* and *gracious*, if there is any *virtue* and *excellence*, if there is anything *worthy of praise*, *think on and weigh and take account of these things [fix your minds on them]*.

IV Application:

A. Day and night - In Jim Downing’s classic book on “Meditation” by Nav Press, he shares the following regarding the meditation process day and night:

- When we sleep, the conscious mind goes off active duty and the subconscious mind comes on active duty.
- The job of the subconscious mind is to rebuild the body during the night, but generally what the conscious dumps on the subconscious is an unsolved

problem that prevents the subconscious from accomplishing its primary purpose. There is a communication breakdown.

- The only legitimate use of the subconscious mind is to meditate on the Word of God (Proverbs 6:22).
- Following Jim Downing's advice, I have found it most profitable to read the Bible just before going to sleep and finding a command, promise, or encouraging word to meditate on through the night. "When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches." Psalm 63:6

B. Learn to wait -

- Psalm 46:10 - "He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God'..."
- Psalm 40:1 - "I waited patiently for the Lord..."
- Isaiah 40:31 - "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

C. Memorize Scripture - Psalm 119:9,11; Proverbs 4:22,23

When meditating, don't expect to always receive some cool insight or mind blowing revelation. This should be a time when we remain quietly before The Lord in His presence. This is where the remolding and conformation to the image of Christ takes place. Romans 12:2 (JBP); II Corinthians 3:18. When we meditate, we abide.

When God gets your attention, stop and consider what He may be telling you. Listen to that "still, small voice" (Isaiah 30:21) and determine to obey.