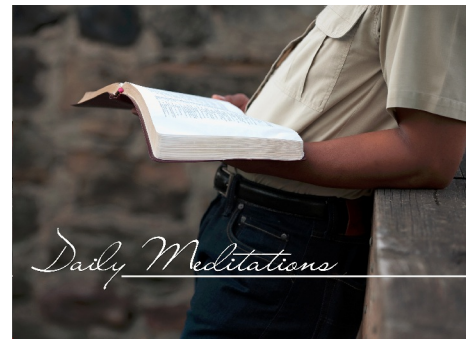


Church of God

Sunday School

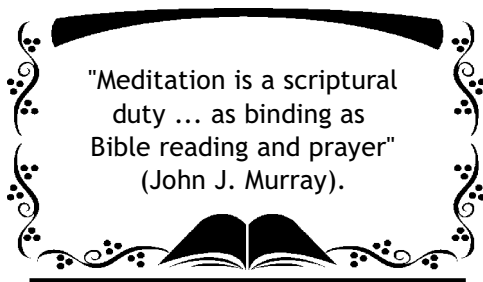
THE CHRISTIAN'S TOOLBOX #4 — MEDITATION



DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Meditation is commanded in the Bible (Joshua 1:8-9; 1 Timothy 4:12-16).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** The Bible gives examples of people who meditated (Genesis 24:63; Psalm 143:4-6).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** Meditation takes place in the heart (Psalm 19:14; Psalm 49:3).
- ❑ **Thursday:** Stillness is necessary for meditation (Psalm 4:4; Psalm 46:10).
- ❑ **Friday:** The Bible tells us what we should meditate on (Psalm 1:2; Psalm 63:6; Psalm 77:12; Psalm 119:15).
- ❑ **Saturday:** What you meditate on determines your words and actions (Luke 6:45; Acts 4:13).

MEMORY VERSE: *"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."*
—Psalm 19:14



What Does the Bible Say About Meditation?

After Bible reading, Bible study, and prayer, there is another tool every Christian should have in his or her toolbox—it is called *meditation*. Although very important, this tool is used rarely by too many Christians. Before you can use this tool, it is important to learn more about it. What is meditation? Does God's Word tell us to meditate? How does one meditate? All these questions can be answered by looking into the Bible.

If you were to ask people what meditation is, you might get a variety of answers. To the Buddhist (one who follows the teachings of Buddha), meditation is a means of transforming the mind. Other definitions of meditation are: (1) a ceasing of the thought process, (2) an emptying of the mind, and (3) an awareness of your surroundings. Are these what God had in mind when He commanded Joshua to "meditate . . . day and night" (Joshua 1:8)? By looking at Scriptures that speak about meditating and meditation, it will become clear exactly what God wants you to do. Do not allow the opinions and definitions of people and other religions confuse you!

If you were to search the Bible for Scriptures containing the word *meditate*, you would learn that Isaac went to "meditate in the field" while waiting to meet his bride Rebekah (Genesis 24:63). You would find the instructions God gave to Joshua after Moses' death included the command to "meditate [on the book of the law] day and night" (Joshua 1:8). In Psalm 63:6 you can read that David found it important to meditate about God in the middle of the night (perhaps when he could not sleep). Another example, in the New Testament, is found in Paul's letter to the young pastor Timothy. The entire chapter is full of good advice, and Paul said in the next to last verse, "Meditate upon these things" (1 Timothy 4:15). By reading these different examples, it becomes apparent that meditation is important!

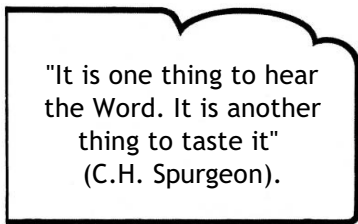
What Is Meditation and What Should I Meditate On?

The best source to understand the definition of *meditation* is not a dictionary or even an encyclopedia. Although, these are often good resources, the best place to start is with your Bible. Psalm 19:14 and Psalm 49:3 both tell us that meditation takes place in your heart. Of course, this is not your literal heart, which pumps blood throughout your body. If you were to look up the word *heart*

"He is not the best student who reads the most books, but he who meditates the most upon them"
(Charles Spurgeon).

in a Bible concordance, you would find that this is the place where thoughts, emotions, memory, desires, and reflection take place. The heart is where our secrets are kept (Psalm 44:21), and we are warned to guard our heart and keep it pure (Proverbs 4:23).

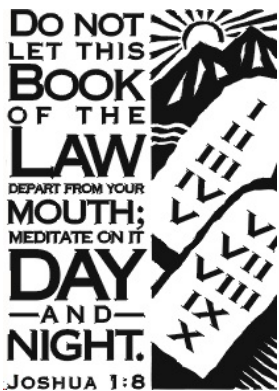
Since, according to the Bible, meditation takes place in your heart (or thoughts), what does God want you to be thinking on? Again, we must let God's Word be our guide. By looking up Scripture references containing the word *meditate*, you will find what people in the Bible meditated on: *the book of the law, thy precepts, thy works, thy word, thee, and thy statutes.* (The words *law, precepts, and statutes* all are speaking of God's commandments, which are found in God's Word.) What did people in the Bible meditate on (or think about)? God's words or commandments (Scriptures), God's works (the things that God has done), and on God Himself (who God is). These are our examples of what we should be meditating on.



How Should I Meditate?

Meditation has often been compared to a cow chewing her cud. For proper digestion, a cow must chew her food twice. Almost one-third of every day is spent chewing her cud. This ensures that the cow gets all the nutrients from the food she has eaten (Cattle-Empire.net). When you first hear or read Scriptures, you cannot fully take in all the help and encouragement those Scriptures can give. By bringing them to your memory and reflecting on them later, you will have a deeper understanding of what those verses are about. However, it is difficult to remember something that you read or heard sometime ago. This is why memorizing Bible verses is important! When you have memorized a Scripture, you can more easily reflect or think on it later.

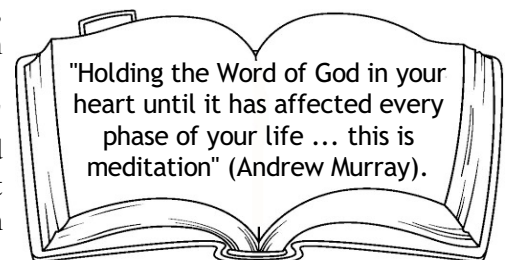
How does one memorize Bible verses? How do you memorize multiplication facts or history dates for tests in school? Depending on your learning style, different methods might work better than others. Some ways to memorize Scripture include: write it down, say it aloud over and over, highlight important words within the verse, write it down from memory, set the verse to music, create word associations, and think of the story behind the verse. Many people keep a notebook where they write down the verses they are working to memorize. Find a method that works for you. It is important that you store up God's Word in your heart (Psalm 119:11).



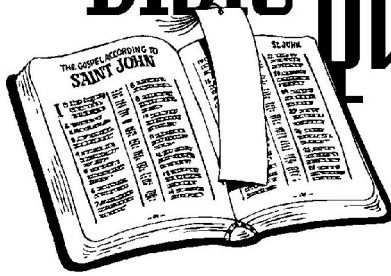
When Should I Meditate?

Finding quiet time can seem impossible in the busyness of our culture. There is continually something to see, listen to, or watch. You will never *find* time to meditate; you must *make* time. But when is the best time? David wrote that he meditated at night, while lying on his bed. This might have been during the time when he was fleeing from King Saul, and his only quiet time was at night, before falling asleep. When God was instructing Joshua, He told him to meditate "day and night." In other words, continually or as often as possible. Proverbs 23:7 tells us that we are what we think. The amount of time you can give to meditating on God and His Word will become obvious to others. What is in your heart (mind) will come out through your words and actions (Luke 6:45). Your friends and family will be able to tell when you have spent time meditating on the good things of God (Acts 4:13).

Meditation will require unplugging from things that interfere, things like music, electronics, books, and technology. Psalm 46:10 and Psalm 37:7 (Amplified Bible) talks about the importance of becoming "still." What does that mean? Do you literally need to stand still? No. You can meditate while driving, while taking a walk, while riding in a car or on the school bus, or even while doing chores. The stillness required is within one's soul (or mind). Psalm 4:4 says to "commune [think] with your own heart . . . and be still." To be still is to be quiet, to stop all the noise of everyday life in your mind (thoughts about what you need to do or of something that bothers you). It is removing everything from your mind that is not about God, making room for the meditations that are "acceptable" in God's sight (Psalm 19:14).



Bible Quiz



1. What is one of the definitions of *meditation* (not found in the Bible)? _____

2. What Bible character was meditating while waiting for his bride to arrive? _____

3. What Bible character meditated on his bed during the night hours?

4. Where does meditation take place? _____

5. How should you prepare for meditation? _____

6. What should you meditate on? _____

7. Why is memorization important to meditation? _____

8. What are some of the methods of memorization that might help you? _____

9. When are good times for you to meditate? _____

10. What does the Bible mean when it says to be still? _____

11. How is being still important for proper meditation? _____

12. Read the first part of Proverbs 23:7. Explain how meditation affects who we are. _____

Ways to Meditate



The Five W's

Memorize a Scripture, and then ask yourself five questions about the content.

EXAMPLE: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35).

Who was He weeping over?

Why did He weep?

What happened before He wept and after?

Where was He when He wept?

When did this happen?

Emphasize Each Word

Memorize a Scripture, and then emphasize each word separately. Does that give new meaning to the verse?

EXAMPLE: "For God so loved the world" (John 3:16).

"**FOR** God so loved the world."

"For **GOD** so loved the world."

"For God **SO** loved the world."

"For God so **LOVED** the world."

"For God so loved **THE** world."

"For God so loved the **WORLD**."



Make It Personal

Replace pronouns in the promises of the Bible with your own name. Does this make the verse more real to you?

EXAMPLES:

"Yea, though _____ walk through the valley of the shadow of death, _____ will fear no evil: for thou art with _____; thy rod and thy staff they comfort _____" (Psalm 23:4).

"But _____ [is] poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon _____: thou art _____ help and _____ deliverer" (Psalm 40:17).

