

What the Bible teaches about how to

Meditate



More Effectively

by Robert Curry

God's Christian Power Tool

We Need to Use More Effectively

My favorite scripture is 2 Thessalonians 1:11, New Living Translation: “Live a life worthy of [God’s] call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith [of God] prompts you to do.”

God has given us five spiritual power tools in our Christian toolbox

We're most familiar with PRAYER, BIBLE STUDY, FASTING, and now, ASSEMBLING ON GOD'S WORSHIP DAYS.



But one tool is really powerful but, for most Christians, underutilized:

Biblical meditation

I know it's the power tool I need to improve in most.

What about you?

Have you ever thought about how giving thanks and meditating have much in common. Count your blessings, name them one by one also takes focused pondering. We love our spouse and kids but probably haven't taken enough time to specify why! Thanksgiving 2023 is past, but who among us wouldn't want to be more thankful?

Meditation promotes being thankful—also personal growth, purification and refinement like removing dross from gold or silver, only from us!

What is biblical meditation and how can we do it more effectively?

Obviously we need to look in the Bible and soak up what it says! Meditation involves concentrating one's thoughts on the Word of God—perhaps seeking understanding of a biblical principle or

doctrine.

I'm not talking about transcendental meditation by a Hindu guru or staring at our belly buttons. That's umbilical, but it's unbiblical!

We should not be emptying the mind in a trancelike state or chanting a mantra to free imaginary inner power.

Biblical meditation is focused thinking about God the Father, how to have the mind of Jesus Christ, and how to live successfully by following Their instruction book. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Meditation of the Heart

A foundational place to start is with Psalm 19:7-14, penned by David. He knew the value of the law of the LORD, the testimony, the statutes, commandments and judgments (verses 7-9). "By them your servant is warned, and in keeping them is great reward . . . Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults ... [and] presumptuous sins" (verses 11-13). "Let the words of my mouth and *the meditation of my heart* be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and Redeemer" (verse 14, emphasis mine throughout).

Meditation of his heart was square on the mind of the man after God's own heart! Is it on ours?

"Oh, that they had *such a heart in them* that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever" (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Yes, pray with fervency—the key to answered prayers in the Bible, study with diligence, fast with complete surrender to God's will, and meditate with our whole heart!

Combining all the power tools together synergistically

powers more effective meditation.

Jesus said some things come out only with prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21). One formula for effective fasting is to first pray for

God's inspiration one hour, study the Bible for one hour asking God to guide you what to study and "speak to you" through His Word, meditate one hour, and then cycle again until you end the fast.

In my 54 years living God's Way, for me it works best to combine prayer, Bible study and meditation together, as the Spirit guides, especially during a fast. This way does not involve watching a clock and maybe struggling to drag out a particular action to the hour limit.

The Psalms contain the most instruction about meditation in the Bible

Psalm 119 has 176 verses extolling God's law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, words, ordinances and judgments—and many of those verses are about meditation.

Verse 1 kicks off with "walk in the law of the Lord." My go-to place conducive to meditation is the Greenhorn Trail about a half mile from our home—quiet, peaceful, hardly anyone, looking up at the majestic hills and God's creation at different seasons of the year. I'll share about this place with you but hope you don't come populate it!

Jesus went to the mountains to get away from it all. No doubt including away from His disciples. When we get to be too much today, how does God the Father and Jesus Christ get away from us now that we have 24-7 access to Their throne in heaven!

"Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes!" (verse 5). "With my whole heart I have sought you" (verse 10). "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (verse 11). Verses 15-16 (NLT) say, "I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word . . . Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from Your law." Verse 99 points us to God's testimonies.

It's no use carrying around power tools. We have to choose to use them. We have to choose to meditate!

Meditate Like a Lion!

A Hebrew word for meditation is *hagah!* (Haw-gah'). *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* says this Hebrew word is used 25 times in the Old Testament. One translation is “murmur” and we do tend to talk to ourselves when meditating.



The most interesting one of its meanings is “expresses the growl of lions.”

With this Hebrew word God gives us a fitting word picture that amazingly describes meditation.

God says we are to meditate like a lion!

What does that mean? Ever see a lion posing in deep thought like Rodin’s “Thinker”? Never!

So what can we learn from a lion about meditation?

A lion kills an animal and starts to *devour* it. He sets a good example for us by always preying before eating! He is passionate about his lunch!

We mediate because we love God’s law, but we also want to come to love it even more! We want God’s Word and Way to become a part of our very being—thinking.

The lion eats the flesh and innards. When he gets down to just the bones, the lion snaps them with his powerful jaws and eats them and the marrow!

The lion completely devours his prey!

We should rip a verse apart! Get every morsel off the bone. Completely devour it!

Each day the lion “chews on” the dead carcass a little more. He guards it

Night and day

David said in Psalm 119:97, “O how I love your law! It is my meditation *all the day*.” Verse 148 says, “My eyes are awake *through the night watches* that I may mediate on your word” (see also Psalm 63:5-6).

Learning to meditate when I can’t sleep is easily the best opportunity for me to improve in this Christian power tool.

The book of Psalms launches into urging meditation right at its beginning.

“His delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates *day and night*. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he *does* shall prosper” (1:1-3).

Meditation should lead us to doing!

Joshua chapter 1 is a foundational section on meditation—The LORD (Jesus Christ) charged Joshua, “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.” What will result from effective meditation that leads to godly action? “For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Joshua would powerfully lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. We need this on our march to the Kingdom!

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-12, a powerful New Testament section to meditate on. Paul exhorts Christians to war according to the spirit—not comparing ourselves to others or to the world but to God’s exacting holy standards. We think we’re not as bad as “they” are, but Barna surveys conclude too many Christians and even pastors pretty much mirror the world they live in.

God’s standards are higher than we can imagine, and He has higher hopes for us than we can dream!

When other scavengers come to try to help themselves, the lion “hahah!” roars and warns them away! Meditation can help us defeat the chief scavenger, satan the devil, who is a roaring lion himself (1 Peter 5:8). We’d better not be just lyin’ around in the sun; we’d better “Be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour!”

Satan wants to devour—not a scripture—but you! This is no doubt why Jesus advised us in His Lord’s Prayer outline to pray: deliver us from the evil one.

So, future kings in Christ’s government coming to this earth (Revelation 5:10), let’s learn from the king of the beasts:

Meditate like a lion!

Meditate on These Things

Whatever things are true . . . noble . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8). We want biblical meditation, so we should look to the Bible for what things to meditate about!

Back when I was courting my wife, I wrote her a card and after this verse, wrote “Thinking of you!” She still is all those exemplary things! I’m still thinking of her!

Evidently, God inspired me to think about that verse because later Mary told me that those words of Paul were so special to her because they were the last ones her mother spoke to her.

For our wedding, I wanted to create a song and sing it for my wife. I wrote lyrics telling that true story about sending the card and Mary relating how important the words were to her.

The real blessing was one of my roommates, Keith Haitley, a super-gifted blind pianist, sat down at our piano, and after listening to my lyrics once, composed a beautiful accompaniment on his first try! When it turned out that a conflict would keep him from the wedding, in one try he recorded his accompaniment. Somehow I kept my solo for the wedding under wraps so that it worked out as a big surprise for Mary and the guests.

A special moment was immediately after I finished, our marrying minister John Kennedy moved swiftly to the mic and pointed out that in verse 9 Paul added, “And the God of peace will be with you.”

God must have liked John Kennedy’s blessing because He and His peace have been with us—and we just celebrated our 34th anniversary Nov. 12!

We should note what else Paul wrote in verse 9: “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do.”

Meditation must result in action—in doing

How does it apply in my life? How am I putting it into action? How change? How grow?

Paul expected the brethren to imitate him as he imitated Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). God provides His true ministers to unselfishly shepherd His little flock (Acts 20:28). And His sheep are to meditate on their examples and instructions and honor them (Hebrews 13:17). The best place for that to occur is when we assemble for Church services on God's Sabbaths and Holy Days (Hebrews 10:25). That's why meditation and assembling are considered tools in the Christian toolbox.

Jesus said our thoughts and our words originate from our heart and show what's in there (Matthew 12:34-37). "For as he thinks *in his heart*, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

What if our thoughts flashed on a neon sign for all to see! No need for a sign, Jeff Foxworthy! People do see.

Help yourself . . . to this 30-minute *Beyond Today* telecast titled "[You Become What You Think About](#)" by Gary Petty. I love his opening lines: "The way you think might be ruining your life. It's time to start thinking about . . . what you think about!" Gary Petty is one of my favorite speakers and he speaks powerfully about how to become a better child of God.

Meditation Can Help Us Press Toward the Goal

Biblical meditation is a way to thoroughly dig into a scripture and find all the meanings possible.

“Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” (Romans 11:33). God has written such richness and depth into the scriptures. Harkening back to the way Leo or Clarence thoroughly devour their prey, we may need to spend several days searching out just one verse or thought or question.

Church of God pioneer Dr. Herman Hoeh was known for marking something in his Bible that he didn’t understand. Eventually, he said God would show him!

God wants us to “magnify His law” (Isaiah 42:21)

Like looking at something through a magnifying lens, you see so many additional facets of it appear right before your eyes!

We’ve all had the experience of going back over a scripture we have been over so many times before and suddenly seeing whole new meaning in it! For years I read Deuteronomy 30:19 about choosing this day whom I would serve because God’s way is best for me, but one day my father’s eyes were opened to its assurance that it would also be well for my children!

Meditating on the book of Deuteronomy each day

has been highly recommended to me by Heather Duyck, a Church of God member from The Dalles, Oregon.

“I read a couple of your posts recently and like your sense of humor that comes through. It makes your points come through easier. Thanks for writing articles to encourage God’s children in these last days.

“One article I read was on an easy way to start daily Bible Study. . . By reading chapters from Proverbs and Psalms for the calendar date. I have done that off and on for many years and we enjoy the ease of it.

“I wanted to write to you and say what an amazing experience and wonderful blessing it has been for me and my family to read through Deuteronomy that way too. There are only 34 chapters in Deuteronomy so it lends itself well to that format and it’s easy to squeeze the few extras in. Reading the law helps us keep it fresh in our minds and apply its principles to our daily lives and things we hear about in society and on the news.

“It’s interesting meditation as things come up throughout the day. As we will be kings and priests in the Kingdom we should be very familiar with God’s law and how it is applicable and a great help navigating everyday situations.

“Reading Deuteronomy each month of the year is a Bible reading plan I highly recommend.”

Thank you, Heather! I’m now doing Deuteronomy each day as you urged.

“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter” (Proverbs 25:2). God says we will be kings in Jesus Christ’s millennial Kingdom! We can learn to search like one now!

“I remember the days of old. I ponder all your great works and think about what you have done” (Psalm 143:5). We should learn from past mistakes. “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”—George Santayana.

But we should not wallow in the past. “One thing I do,” Paul said, “forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you” (Philippians 3:13-15).

As Danny Gokey sings so powerfully in “Tell Your Heart to Beat Again”: “Yesterday’s a closing door, you don’t live there anymore! Say goodbye to where you’ve been. Tell your heart to beat again!”

Your current situation is not your final destination. “Never be a prisoner of your past. It was just a lesson—not a life sentence.”

Biblical meditation can help us press on toward our calling and goal of the Kingdom of God.

“Let the Meditation of My Heart Be Acceptable in Your Sight”

“ How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” exclaims Psalm 119:103. Our relationship with God should flow both ways. Interestingly, the psalmist in 104:34 asks, “May my meditation be sweet to Him.” Have you ever experienced biblical meditation being one sweet exchange between you and God!

Paul writes about good conclusions he has drawn from what he deeply thought about. “For *I consider* that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

That’s what David did as a shepherd looking up at the starry heaven. “What is man that you are mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:4).

Every thought and intent of our heart matters to God! What’s in there?

God “delights in every detail of [our] lives” (Psalm 37:23, NLT).

We need a quiet place to go every day

We need to slow down, get quiet, and allow meditation to happen. Daniel “went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem . . . three times a day, just as he had always done” (Daniel 6:10). We are so captive to our phones and computers; we should shut our Windows to meditate and seek God!

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2).

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is

your reasonable service. 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” (Romans 12:1-2).

“The meditation *of my heart* shall give understanding” (Psalm 49:3).

God’s next Holy Day season is Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. God’s people know that this time leading up to it is a perfect time for effective meditation. “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

In Proverbs 4, the father tells his children to “give attention to my words (verse 20) . . . “keep your heart with all diligence” (verse 23) . . . ponder the path of your feet” (verse 26). God our Father tells us the same!

God will give us power!

Listen again to my new favorite scripture: “May [God] give you the *power* to accomplish all the good things your faith [of Jesus Christ] prompts you to do (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of *power* and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). So Paul urges us to “stir up the gift of God which is in you . . . !” (verse 6).

God has given us five power tools in our Christian toolbox It seems like most of us find we need to work harder on meditating more effectively.

Imagine what God could accomplish through us as His children if we more effectively use the five Christian power tools He’s given us!

If we meditate like a lion: passionate about God’s Word and completely devouring it! Chewing on it day and night! God standing with us enabling us to withstand—and resist the roaring lion!

“Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him [probably the Book of Life] for those who fear the LORD and who *meditate on His name*. ‘They shall be Mine,’ says the

LORD of hosts, on the day that I *make them My jewels.*’ And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him” (Malachi 3:16-17).

We should be desiring God’s pearl of great price with all our being (Matthew 13:45-46), grateful that God values us as a JEWEL of great price—the death of Jesus Christ for our sins (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Let’s go back to Psalm 19:14 again: “Let the words of my mouth and *the meditation of my heart* be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.”



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robertcurry6@hotmail.com

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