

How To Meditate The Word Of God

Jun 17, 2020

Scripture: Psalms 119:145-148

145. I call with all my heart; answer me O Lord, and I will obey your decrees.

146. I call out to you; save me and I will keep your statutes.

147. I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word.

148. My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.

How to meditate the word of God:

Perhaps one of the most neglected disciplines in the Christian life these days is that of Meditation.

I believe that very few Christians have been taught how important it is to pay close attention to what they think about.

Consider the following:

Watch your thoughts; they become your words.

Watch your words; they become your actions.

Watch your actions; they become your habits.

Watch your habits; they become your character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

We have all heard the expression, "you are what you eat", but is also true to say "you are (and are becoming) what you think."

Here is a challenge for you.

Consider the following questions.

- How much time do you spend worrying about this or that?**

- How much time do you spend grumbling or complaining or feeling sorry for yourself?
- How much time do you spend thinking about the TV shows you watched last night?
- How much time do you re-live the bad things people do to you?
- Do you list out all your misfortunes?
- Do you allow yourself to be angry for long periods of time?
- Do you think about bad things happening to the people you are angry with?
- Do you think about bad things happening to yourself?
- Do you dwell on lustful and impure thoughts?

Did you know that you are what you are right now - not what you would like to be, nor what you ought to be, nor are you what you used to be.

You are what you are today.

Today, the 'real you' is shown by what you do and by what you think about in your heart - what you meditate on.

Further, the things that you allow your heart to dwell on today are building what you will be for tomorrow and the tomorrow after that.

Let's look at some verses which illustrate that you act out of and can be judged by the state of your heart.

Lk 6:45,

45. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Matthew 15:18,

18. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

Matthew 7:20-23,

20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Proverbs 27:19,

19. As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.

Proverbs 4:23

23. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

Your -'inner life' is an accurate representation of the real you.

No matter what service you perform for God, or what you appear to be to others, the important thing is the purity of your inner self.

Consider the words of Christ as he speaks to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law.

Matthew 23:25-28

25. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26. *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

28. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

The Pharisees were an obvious case of hypocrisy.

But not so obvious that they noticed.

They spent all of their time making sure that they obeyed the letter of the law perfectly.

From the outside, it appeared that they were keeping God's law perfectly and were therefore righteous men.

In spite of all their work, they are all dismissed as being filled with greed, self-indulgence, hypocrisy and wickedness.

What a shock this accusation must have been to them.

You see, our God is not impressed with what we appear to be.

We are all very good at 'playing Church'.

No, God is most interested in what we are like on the inside.

He wishes to change us from the inside out.

His goal is to make us clean on the inside so that we would naturally be clean on the outside.

If you are clean in your heart, then you will automatically be clean on the outside.

Paul talks about the importance of having a loving heart

Meditate: to engage in observation or reflection, to focus one's thoughts on: reflect or ponder over, to plan or project in the mind

Meditation is a function of the mind and the heart.

It is what we think about in our hearts and it is something we each do every day.

Whether we realize it or not, we all spend a large portion of our time in some form of meditation.

The thing is, what we meditate on may or may not be worth-while.

In fact, what we habitually think about is frequently unhealthy for our growth as Christians.

Often it is simply sinful.

This is why I asked you earlier to spend some time making notes about what you think about.

This is the first step in the process of training ourselves to think correctly.

Ps 143:5,

5. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse [think] on the work of thy hands.

Ps 145:5,

5. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.

Ps 104:34

34. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.

The verses quoted above describe to us what we should be doing.

But this type of meditation does not come naturally.

By nature, we stir up and act out that which is in our hearts.

If your heart is filled with good things, you will have a tendency to meditate on good things.

If your heart is filled with bad things, you will naturally think about and meditate on these things.

Here are some comments on the thoughts of heart of the 'natural' man:

Ge 6:5,

5. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

Ge 8:21,

21. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.

Isa 55:7,

7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Isa 59:7,

7. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.

Jer 4:14

14. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

But how do we accomplish this?

First, we must become consciously aware of what we spend our time meditating on now.

We must take a detailed account of what we think about and based on biblical principles decide whether it is good or bad.

When you catch yourself meditating on something undesirable, renounce it and cast it away.

Imagine yourself throwing it to the ground and stepping on it to kill it.

Then immediately choose to replace the thought with a good one, such as a prayer, a memorized scripture or song.

Do not be discouraged if you find yourself thinking about that same thing only a minute or two later.

Simply recognize sin as sin, renounce it again and choose to replace the thought with something worthwhile.

You will find that many of your personal idols are firmly attached to your hearts as if with elastic bands so when you through them away they just snap back at you.

But eventually the elastic will break and you will be free.

Similarly, do not think it strange if you find it difficult to cast off the undesirable thought pattern.

Remember that your heart has a basic tendency to enjoy such things; you will be fighting with yourself.

But you do not have to give in.

Consider Paul's attitude about discipline in the Christian life:(1 Cor 9:24-27)

24. Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

25. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

26. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.

27. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Please note that the Greek word translated 'beat my body' has a literal meaning of 'to bruise under the eye'.

So, if you desire to overcome a certain sin, and are fighting it, why not choose to bash your head against the wall (figuratively speaking) and say "I will not do this".

For we are told if we resist the Devil, he will flee from us.

Feed your mind, feed your heart...

Your mind and your heart are both like clay - being shaped and formed with each passing day.

There are some questions to be asked:

- Whose hands are forming my heart and mind?**
- What are they being formed into?**
- What is my responsibility in the process?**

Whether you realize it or not, your character is being formed and solidified with each passing day.

This is true whether you plan through what you want to be or if you just let life happen.

Some of the most powerful influences on the development of your character come from the following sources:

- 1. What you read**
- 2. What you look at**
- 3. What you listen to**
- 4. The people you associate with**

5. What you think about

All these things feed your brain and together are a significant influence in the way your mind is programmed.

Piece by piece, like bricks in a wall, this programming trains you how to respond, how to think, what to think, what to value and pursue, how to treat others and what you should/should not do.

Do not be deceived, even small amounts of negative input have a noticeable effect over the long run.

You have heard the expression that applies to computers - "garbage in, garbage out".

This applies to your mind as well.

You can be holy in an unholy world, but it's hard to avoid being effected by the ungodly influence that society have on you.

It's all around us every day.

Society does not teach godly behavior.

Each day we are exposed to a great deal of negative re-enforcement.

But, we can limit this negative input by carefully selecting the things we do when where there is a choice.

For example:

- Avoid watching television shows which suggest ungodly behavior is acceptable.**
- Do not read books which glorify ungodliness.**

Avoid pornography of all forms.

- Refuse to listen in on dirty jokes or gossip.**

Do not participate in the activities of crude people.

Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. (Eph 5:4)

• Do not listen to music which promotes sin and ungodliness.

There is a lot of programs, books, music, activities and other things which are not known as 'Christian things', but are still good.

Participate in fellowship with Christians and associate yourself with godly people.

The point is, you need to deliberately avoid certain types of input and replace it with others.

In doing so you will begin to find that you are free to live a life pleasing to God.

Just as your digestive system processes the food you eat so it can be of use to your body, so also meditation digests all things concerning God and makes them a power which can renew your heart.

(1)Personalize it!!!

Consider the well-known verse from John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him, will not perish but have everlasting life."

Wrong way of meditation:

Empty minded. But we don't empty our mind...we fill our mind with the word of God!!!

My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises. (Ps 119:148)