

HOW TO MEDITATE PROFITABLY IN THE WORD OF GOD

Bible Reading: Psalm 119:1-40

Personal devotion is crucial to spiritual growth. Essential to devotion is meditation, which is purposeful interaction with God's word for personal edification (2 Cor 3:15-18). Shallowness or lightness is evidence of poor meditation life. Effective meditation will enrich your spiritual life and make you fruitful. True meditation leads to rich prayer, transformation, godly decisions and joyous ecstasy, which glorifies God.

PROFIT IN EDIFYING MEDITATION FOR THE BELIEVER

Man's fellowship with God began at the Creation (Gen 3:8). Communion with God strengthens the inner man. Meditation is part of communion. Your thought life shapes you; what you meditate about forms your character. Ancient believers meditated. Isaac went at the eventide to commune with God in the field (Gen 24:63). He must have learnt that from Abraham. Before they had the bible, God spoke to them personally; they also could see God in creation (Psalm 19:1-3). What are the benefits of meditating in God's word?

1. Spiritual depth and strength (Col 3:16; 1 John 2:14). He who meditates deeply will live deeply and talk deeply as an oracle of God. The word of God is food for the inner life.
2. An enriched prayer life (Num 14:17,18 cf. Exo 34:5-7; 2 Sam 7:25; Dan 9:1-4). Meditation on God's word makes your heart burn with heavenly fire. There will be fuel for effectual prayer. You will receive promises. Prayer based on meditation on the word of God is scriptural, solid and powerful.
3. Freshness, fruitfulness, prosperity, good success (Jos 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3). God teaches man to excel.
4. Defence against persecution or opposition (Psalm 119:23,78). God's word makes you bold and calm.
5. Understanding beyond what man can teach (Psalm 119:99). God's word is Spirit and life.
6. Salvation of preacher and people (1 Tim 4:15,16). He who meditates in the word will not go astray.

PATTERN OF EFFECTIVE MEDITATION IN THE BIBLE

Biblical meditation is taking time to soak and saturate yourself in the word of life. It should not be confused with the occultic practice of closing your eyes, breathing or gazing into the sky for extrasensory experiences. God is the Object of our meditation – His Person, will, works, creation, wonders, etc. The word of God is the revelation of His mind to us. It contains commandments for us to obey, warnings for us to heed, promises for us to claim, duties for us to do, comfort for us to repose in, etc. How do you meditate effectively in the Bible?

1. **Cultivate solitude** (Mark 1:35). Avoid distractions. Seek a quiet place. Pray and sing worship songs if your heart is noisy. Clear guilt, etc., out of the way by proper repentance and restitution.
2. **Consult the Spirit** (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:19-21): The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible. Seek Him for revelation. The Bible is beyond an academic book; it is inspired; it is spiritual; it is alive. Your approach should be one of dependence on its Author. Ask Him to open your eyes to see wondrous things. Let Him touch and teach you so you can be transformed.
3. **Concentrate on Scripture** (Jos 1:8; Psalm 1:2). God speaks to His children through His word:
 - a. Select a portion from the Bible on which you can focus meaningfully.
 - b. First get the meaning of the text. Read it a few times to understand what is written. Use a dictionary where necessary, e.g. for new words or uncommon expressions.
 - c. Check the context of what is written. To whom? Under which circumstances?
 - d. Check its message: A promise? A commandment? An instruction? A duty? A warning?
 - e. Ask how the passage applies to you. What are you expected to do? What changes should come to your life through this passage? How does it relate to your situation now?
 - f. Draw out the principle: What is the underlying message of this text that you can take as a general principle to apply in other situations? For example, when God forbids to muzzle an ox while it treads the corn (let the ox eat while it works), Paul shows that it is not only applicable to an animal but also to a labouring man (Deu 25:4; 1 Cor 9:7-10; 1 Tim 5:18).
4. **Conclude with supplication** (Hab 3:1,2). Meditation should climax in prayer, which makes what you have read stick with you. Derive prayer points from the text. This is how to internalise God's word.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" – John 13:17