

How People Change

7 strategies to aid in the pursuit of growth

Equip Class – Session 3 – January 24, 2024

Think Holy Thoughts

I. Introduction

“If men would step aside a little out of the noise and hurry of business, and spend only half-an-hour every day thinking about their souls and eternity, it would produce a wonderful alteration in them and tend very much to a real and blessed conversion” (Thomas Watson, *A Godly Man’s Picture* pg. 207).

II. Meditation.

A. A basic definition of meditation is “focused thinking on biblical truth.”

B. A more advanced understanding of meditation

- “How can we turn our knowledge about God into knowledge of God? The rule for doing this is simple but demanding. It is that we turn each truth that we learn *about* God into matter for meditation *before* God, leading to prayer and praise *to* God . . . Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God. It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God” (J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*).

C. Meditation in Scripture (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-2; Psalm 19:14; Luke 6:43-45).

III. Developing the Discipline of Meditation (Sam Storms article on meditation)

A. Presence of God (Psalm 46:10; Psalm 16:8).

B. Peruse (Acts 17:11).

C. Personalize (Proverbs 29:25; Psalm 23:4; Deuteronomy 6:4-7).

D. Pray – about those things.

E. Praise – worship God (Hebrews 1:3).

F. Practice – the aim of meditation is communion with God that leads to moral transformation.

IV. Practicing the Discipline of Meditation (Romans 8:5-17).

A. Presence of God – get alone with God and read His Word.

B. Peruse – make observations? What do you see? What is God telling you?

1. To set the mind on the things of the flesh (thinking unholy thoughts).

2. To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace (thinking holy thoughts).

C. Personalize

D. Pray

E. Praise

F. Practice

V. Meditation as a Lifestyle

A. Identity Statement: A helpful identity statement: I am a child of God (John 1:12) who will never be rejected or condemned (Romans 8:1), but who is in fact so deeply loved by God (Romans 8:38-39) that He calls me friend (John 15:15) and that will never change (John 10:28-29), despite my imperfect performance (Romans 4:4-5).

B. Collecting Specific Scripture: on which to meditate – and possibly memorize.

1. The Gospel (Acts 4:12; John 14:6; John 3:16; Rom 10:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph 2:8-9).
2. Anxiety (Matthew 6:33; Proverbs 3:5-6).
3. Fearful (2 Timothy 1:7; Deuteronomy 31:8).
4. Doubts (Mark 9:24; John 20).
5. Trials (James 1:2-4; Psalm 46:1; 1 Peter 1:6-7; Job 42:2; 2 Peter 2:9a).
6. Unsettled - Lack of peace (John 14:27; Isaiah 26:3).
7. The challenge to persevere (2 Timothy 4:7-8; James 1:12).
8. Anger (Proverbs 29:11; James 1:19-20).
9. Discouraged (Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 15:13).
10. How you speak to others (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6).
11. Assurance of salvation (1 John 5:11-13; 1 John 2:19).

12. Lust (Philippians 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:22).

13. The Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Proverbs 30:5).

C. A personal example: a meditation sheet for a specific challenge in my life
(Remember/Resolved – January 24, 2014).

1. Remember that God has a good purpose in my current trial (1 Peter 1:6-7; Romans 8:28-29).

- Suffering and trials will either push us away from God or pull us toward Him.
- Therefore, I resolve to read the Scriptures daily; believing what it says about God, and no longer doubting the goodness of God.

2. Remember what God has given me and my family in Christ (Romans 8:32).

- Christ's sacrifice proves once and for all that we can be sure that God will give us all we need to endure our present challenges.
- Therefore, I resolve to remind myself and my family of the faithfulness and generosity of God because "worry is momentary atheism crying out for correction by trust in a good and sovereign God" (Randy Alcorn, *The Goodness of God* pg. 110).

3. Remember to lighten my load through prayer (Matthew 7:7-8; 1 Peter 5:7).

- God uses our suffering to break us of self-dependence and bring us to rely on Him.
- Therefore, I resolve to daily ask the Lord to relieve our financial difficulties through whatever means He chooses: a gift from His hand; new opportunities; and/or better stewardship of our finances.

4. Remember to keep eternity in view (Colossians 3:2).

- Whatever decisions that need to be made to resolve our current financial struggle do not involve neglecting my wife and children for temporal comfort (Ephesians 5:25; 3 John 4).
- Therefore, I resolve to invest in my family by consistently reading the Bible and praying with my children as well as regular, open communication with Tara regarding finances to tell our money where to go.

5. Remember that God is not indifferent or uncaring to my situation (Hebrew 4:15-16).

- Why is God allowing this situation? I am not sure of all the reasons, but because of the cross I can be certain it isn't because He doesn't care.
- Therefore, I resolve to live with joy in His presence whatever trials come our way (Psalm 16:11).

VI. Conclusion

VII. Discussion Questions

A. How would you summarize what you heard into a sentence or two that can be helpful for you going forward? *It is really important what we think because it influences our lives tremendously. Therefore, we must be armed with the truth of God's Word to meditate on to help us grow in godliness.*

B. What did you find most helpful or challenging from this talk?

C. What is your reaction to the identity statement for all Christians that was shared earlier? How could that statement be helpful to meditate on in our lives?

Identity Statement: A helpful identity statement: I am a child of God (John 1:12) who will never be rejected or condemned (Romans 8:1), but who is in fact so deeply loved by God (Romans 8:38-39) that He calls me friend (John 15:15) and that will never change (John 10:28-29), despite my imperfect performance (Romans 4:4-5).

D. What is your reaction to the admonition to spend 30 minutes every day thinking about our souls and eternity?

E. What is a Scripture you heard tonight that would be helpful for you to meditate on, and perhaps memorize, to help you grow in godliness in a particular area of temptation?

F. Is there a struggle in your life that is significant enough that you could create your own Remember/Resolve meditation sheet? If so, would you consider sharing the nature of the challenge and then have someone pray for you about that struggle.