



SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Session Four | Meditation
Dr. Barry Stricker

READ

Philippians 4:8, Psalm 119:97, Genesis 24:63, Psalm 63:6, Psalm 119:48, and Psalm 1:2

INTRODUCTION

Every one of us will fill our mind and our heart . . . with something. Whether we mean to or not – whether we intend to or not – we will find something to dwell on, think about, and ponder. And Scripture is clear and compelling in calling us to dwell on God and his ways.

This spiritual discipline is called meditation, and it is beautifully illustrated in the Apostle Paul's words in Philippians 4:8. Take time to read Psalm 119:97, Genesis 24:63, Psalm 63:6, Psalm 119:48, and Psalm 1:2 as well.

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

According to Bible scholars, there are two different Hebrew words that convey the idea of meditation – and they are used 58 times in the Old Testament. The words mean “listening to God, reflecting on God's works, going over God's activity in our minds, ruminating on God's law.” And the result of that is ALWAYS change in our lives. Meditation on God and his ways leads to transformation, repentance, and obedience.

Dallas Willard is forceful when he describes what happens to us when we meditate. He says: “Meditation is an activity of the mind and body that we undertake with all the strength we have to make our total being cooperate effectively with God.”

More than that, **meditation also allows us to enter into the presence of the Living God – and in his presence** – to sense and hear and know his voice.

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In his book on the spiritual disciplines, Richard Foster actually apologizes that he cannot make meditation more complicated! Instead, he says, meditation is so very simple. No hidden mysteries. No secret words. No mental gymnastics. Just our willing response to this great God who desires our friendship and our fellowship.

Quite simply: dwelling deeply on God and his word. Thinking about God. Remembering God. Filling our mind with God.

Deeply devoted to this spiritual practice, Thomas a Kempis talked about his “familiar friendship with God.” When Dietrich Bonhoeffer was asked why he meditated, he answered simply, “Because I am a Christian.” (When Bonhoeffer founded his seminary in Finkenwalde, a daily half-hour meditation on Scripture was practiced by everyone at the school. His thought was that, by doing that, Scripture would sink in deeply and become real and true and close.)

And here's the thing: we are all going to meditate on something anyway! So why would not choose to dwell deeply on God and his ways?

As you explore – and practice – the spiritual discipline of meditation this month, choose some of your core Bible verses to dwell on. As the Apostle Paul would instruct us, think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and worthy of praise.

This is small step. But it is a step that can make such a difference in our lives.

And if we do this, we will be changed.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We all meditate on the things that matter most to us. What things matter most to you? What do you most often find yourself thinking about and dwelling on? What is it that fills your mind?
2. What do think would happen if you meditated daily on a portion of God's Word, a promise from God, or a truth about God?
3. Consider the fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22-23. How would – or how could – meditating on the fruit of the Spirit bring about change in your life?
4. How does the spiritual practice of meditation set us free from worry?

NEXT STEPS

1. Pay attention to what fills your mind – and ask God if what fills your mind is pleasing to him and helpful to you. Ask God if it would be good to change what fills your mind.
2. Choose a Bible verse, a Bible promise, or a truth about God – and meditate on that each day this week.
3. As you meditate on the verse or truth that you have chosen, notice what happens. Be attentive to God's activity – and notice any change that you see happening in your life.