

Christian Meditation

Lesson 1-Defining Biblical Meditation

Our mind is _____ thinking. Our minds, because of sin, will naturally be thinking about that which is opposed to God. We do not, by nature, think right. We must understand this, acknowledge this, in humility seek the Lord's help in this, and go about to do that which is necessary for our spiritual growth.

Meditating on things that are above (heavenly doctrine) is the call of the Christian-Colossians 3:1-2

“Paul here exhorts the Colossians to meditation upon the heavenly life...If ye are risen with Christ. Ascension follows resurrection: hence, if we are the members of Christ we must ascend into heaven, because he, on being raised up from the dead, was received up into heaven, that he might draw us up with him. Now, we seek those things which are above, when in our minds we are truly sojourners in this world, and are not bound to it.”-Calvin's commentary on Colossians

The practice of meditation was considered a normal and _____ part of the Christian life in previous centuries. Jonathan Edwards frequently encouraged his congregation to meditate on divine things.

“True religion disposes persons to be much alone, in solitary places, for holy meditation and prayer.”

“When we meditate, then we act as reasonable creatures, then reason acts, then the soul is in exercise. Shall we have souls within us, and let them lie dead without any exercise? We ought to spend much time in meditation...”

What is Meditation?

The Scriptures tell us that God's people _____ meditate on the Word of God (Joshua 1:8 & Psalm 1:2).

“That the Psalmist may show how much of the godly man is habituated to this blessed work of meditation he says, ‘In His law does he meditate day and night’ (Psalm 1:2). Not that there may be sometimes intermission: God allows time for our calling; He grants some relaxation. But when it is said, the godly man meditates day and night, the meaning is, frequently-he is much conversant in the duty.”

The word meditate simply means to engage one's mind in _____. Now even in the world there is an understanding that controlling your mind and thoughts is a good thing. The secular idea of meditation is to control one's mind by seeking to focus on the emptying of one's mind. However, the historic Christian understanding of meditation is focused on filling the mind with divine truth. Both the secular and Christian model are seeking to “help” people, but the method and goal are very different.

“Meditation is the chewing upon the truths we have heard...Meditation is like the watering of the seed, it makes the fruits of grace to flourish.”

“Rather than reading Scripture quickly only to move on and think about other things, meditation involves a careful and deep attending, often compared to chewing and digesting.”-Strobel, 116

Thomas Watson gives us his definition of meditation which he then breaks into 3 parts and explains:

“Meditation is the soul’s retiring of itself, that by serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to heavenly affections.”

Section 1: *“Meditation is the soul’s retiring of itself...”*

“A Christian when he goes to meditate, must lock up himself from the world. The world spoils meditation.” (the example of Christ going to a mountain to pray-Matthew 14:23, Isaac going to the field in evening-Genesis 24:63)

We must leave the lower thoughts of this world and not allow them to distract us as we seek to be focused on taking our minds upward to give time for the thinking upon things that are _____.

“Zacchaeus had a mind to see Christ, and he got out of the crowd...So, when we would see God, we must get out of the crowd of worldly business. We must climb up in the tree and retire to meditation, and there we shall have the best prospect of heaven.”

“When a Christian is going up the hill of meditation he should leave all secular cares at the bottom of the hill that he may be alone and take a turn in heaven. If the wings of the bird are full of slime, she cannot fly. Meditation is the wing of the soul. When a Christian is covered with the slime of the earth, he cannot fly to God upon this wing. Say to yourself, ‘I am going now to meditate, O all you vain thoughts stay behind, come not near!’ When you are going up the mount of meditation take heed that the world does not follow you and throw you down from the top of this pinnacle. This is the first thing, the soul’s retiring of itself-lock and bolt the door against the world.”

Section 2: *“...that by serious and solemn thinking upon God...”*

Biblical meditation does not involve light and quick fleeting thoughts but deep and _____ thoughts. One must take some time to set their mind upon eternal things.

“Meditation is not a cursory work to have a few transient thoughts of religion like a dog that lap and then run away...In mediation there must be a staying of the thoughts upon the object.”

Section 3: *“...the heart may be raised up to heavenly affections.”*

The goal of meditation is not simply to think and to grow in knowledge. The goal of meditation is to stir up our naturally cold and lifeless _____ to affections for God and divine truth.

“A Christian enters into meditation as a man enters into the hospital-that he may be healed. Meditation heals the soul of its deadness and earthliness.”

“The goal is not just to think hard about something, but to have that idea raise your affections...Meditation is necessary because Christianity demands more than just abstract knowledge; it entails affectionate knowledge.” -Strobel, 115

Importance of meditation: *“The Spirit illumines the real world to us, so that the false world of the flesh, sin and death fade away. Meditation is attending deeply to God’s truth, purposes and revelation, so that the lies of the world are seen as lies, and so the truth of God can pervade every aspect of our lives.” Ibid*