

Christian Meditation

Lesson 10-Exhortation to Meditate

Definition- *“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.”*

“I am in the next place to exhort Christians to this so necessary duty of meditation. If ever there was a duty, I would press upon you with more earnestness and zeal, it would be this, because so much of the vitals and spirit of religion lies in it. The plant may as well bear fruit without watering, the food may as well nourish without digesting, as we can fructify in holiness without meditation. God provides the food, ministers can but cook and dress it for you, but it must be inwardly digested by meditation.”

‘O let me persuade such as fear God, seriously to set upon this duty. If you have formerly neglected it, bewail your neglect, and now begin to make conscience of it!’

There are two main objections people have for why they don’t meditate as they should:

1. My days are so _____, I can’t find _____ to meditate

“The world indeed is a great enemy to meditation. It is easy to lose one’s purse in a crowd, and in a crowd of worldly enjoyments it is easy to lose all the thoughts of God...to answer the objection, have you so much business that you have no time for meditation-as if piety were a minor matter-a thing fit only for idle hours? What! No time to meditate! What is the business of your life but meditation? God never sent us into the world to get riches (I speak not against labor in a vocation), but I say this is not the end of your existence. The errand God sent us into the world about, is salvation. And that we may attain the end, we must use the means, namely, holy meditation...What madness is it to hear Christians say they have no time to meditate?”

2. Meditation is too _____. It takes so long to actually get to the place where I am able to really think about eternal things.

Watson gives three replies to the person who makes this argument:

Reply 1: It is hard on _____-This is the plan of God.

“Our salvation cost Christ blood, it may well cost us sweat...A godly Christian must offer violence to himself (though not natural-self, yet sinful-self). Self is nothing but the flesh. The flesh cries out for ease. It is reluctant to take pains, reluctant to pray, to repent-it is reluctant to put its neck under Christ’s yoke...He (the Christian) must offer violence to himself by mortification and meditation. You say that it is hard to meditate. Is it not harder to lie in hell?”

BONUS-Lets look a little deeper at a _____ understanding of this idea of holy violence by looking at looking at 3 different Puritans

Matthew 11:12 *“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.”*

Luke 16:16 *“The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.”*

Ephesians 6:12 *“For we do not wrestle (“a contest between two in which each endeavor to throw the other, and is decided when the victor is able to hold his opponent down with his hand upon his neck”) against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

John Bunyan (1628-1688)-He gives an illustration of this in Pilgrims Progress-part 1

Thomas Watson (1620-1686) *“Heaven taken by storm”-A short book explaining Matthew 11:12*

“The earth is inherited by the meek-Matthew 5:5. Heaven is inherited by the violent. Our life is military. Christ is our Captain, the gospel is the banner, the graces are our spiritual artillery, and heaven is only taken in a forcible way...Though heaven is given us freely-yet we must contend for it...Our work is great, our time short, our Master urgent. We have need therefore to summon together all the powers of our souls and strive as in a matter of life and death, that we may arrive at the kingdom above.”

Christopher Love (1618-1651) *“The Zealous Christian”-5 Sermons on Matthew 11:12*

“This is a holy violence whereby men press forward to obtain the grace of this kingdom. And so it is generally taken to be a holy violence of affection, or a gracious deposition that was implanted and wrought in the hearts of many men in John the Baptist’s days. Violence is here opposed to lukewarmness and moderation in religion, to that coldness and frozenness that is in the hearts of men under the preaching of the Word...They were so earnest after Christ in the gospel that no difficulties or discouragements could take them off from their pursuits after Christ.”

“We have violent temptations against us. Our affections must be equal to our temptations...Shall we not be as violent to save our souls as the devil is to damn them?...Shall wicked men run fast to hell, and will you but creep slowly to heaven? Shall a man make speed to the place of execution, and you but move slowly towards a crown and throne?...Heaven is compared to a hill and hell to a pit. It will cost a man sweat and labor to get up a hill, but it is an easy thing to go down into a pit...Heaven is not had without eagerness.”

Reply 2 - We don’t argue that _____ are hard-yet we do them

“We do not argue so in other things. Riches are hard to come by. Therefore, I will sit still and be without them. No! Difficulty is the grindstone of industry. How will men venture for gold? And shall we not spend and be spent for that which is more precious than the gold of Ophir?”

Reply 3 - Though it is hard at the first, the longer you truly biblically meditate the _____ and _____ it will become

“Christ’s yoke at the first putting on may seem heavy, but when once it is on, it becomes easy...When a Christian is upon the mount of meditation, he is like Peter on the mount when Christ was transfigured. He cries out, ‘Lord, it is good to be here!’ He is reluctant to go down the mount again.”

“How sweet are the visits of God’s Spirit. When Christ was alone in the wilderness, then the angel came to comfort Him. When the soul is alone in holy meditation and prayer, then not an angel, but God’s own Spirit does come to comfort him. A Christian who meets with God in the mount would not exchange his hours of meditation for the most orient pearls or sparkling beauties that the world can afford...Therefore, let not the difficulty discourage. The pleasantness will infinitely countervail the pains.”