



Review study... any thoughts on what you tried out this week?

- Recognize moments of hurry
- Take one of the “steps into solitude”
- Have a day without background noise
- Be ready to talk about it next week

Seasons of life... some very little solitude, some a lot... we need those of you who have it to take advantage...

Dangers of spiritual disciplines...

- “end” of themselves...
- Legalism leading to pride or guilt

- Leads to our need for meditation. **What do you think of when you think of meditation?**



Why don't Christians meditate?

Misconceptions that Keep Us from Meditation

It is "**New Age**" or trendy.

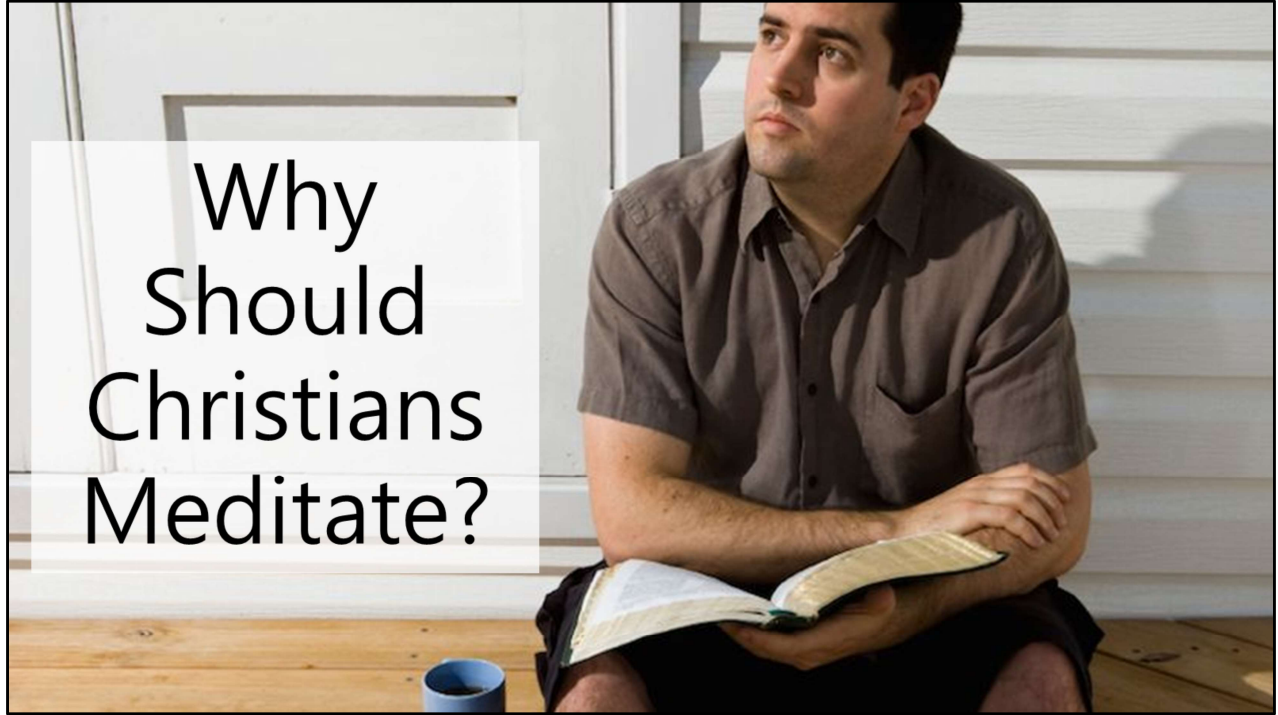
It's only for **monks**.

It's too **mystical**.

- The Christian life as described in the Bible is mystical.
- It is the Spirit of God coming alive in you to enable you to do things you cannot do and know things you cannot know (**Ephesians 3:16-21**)

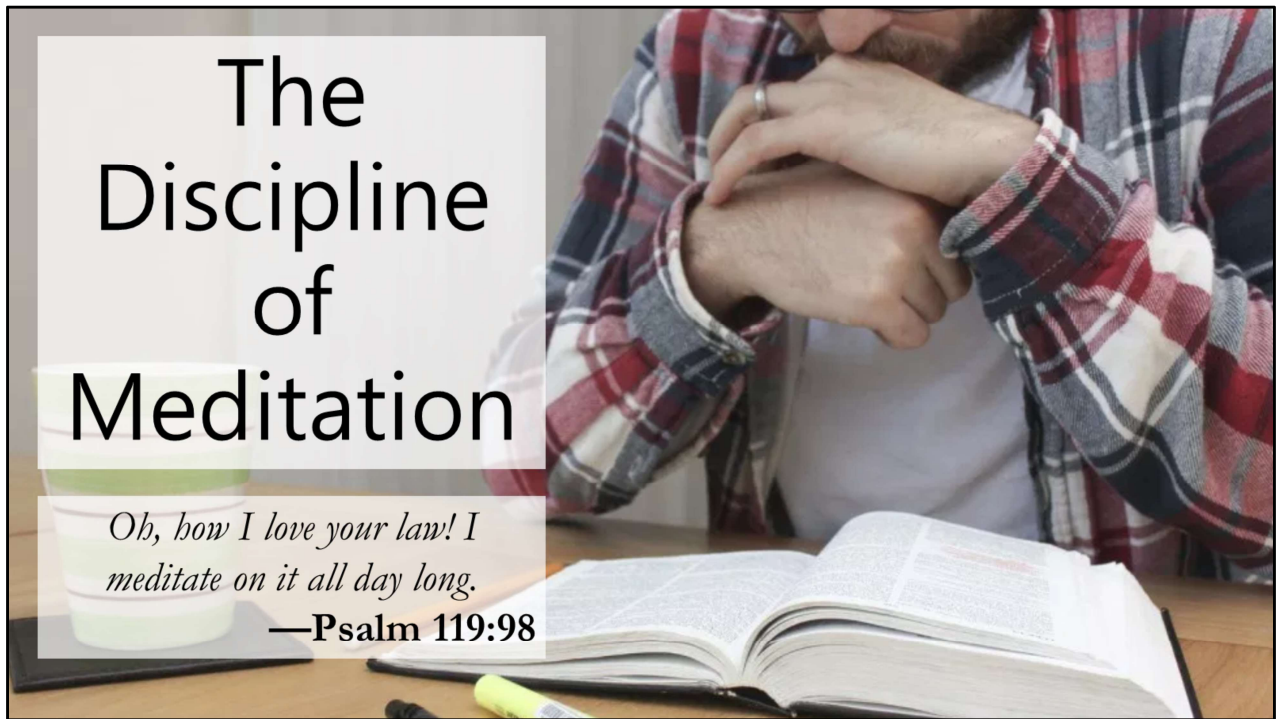
It is too **hard**

- Our inner resistance is a testimony to the **necessity** of meditation...



WHY WE CAN CHOOSE TO MEDITATE ANYWAY

- We already meditate on things of this world.
What does a farmer meditate on? A physician? A lawyer? A businessman? A wicked person? A sports fan?
- God commands meditation (**Joshua 1:8**)
- The devil opposes meditation.
- It is counter to our flesh and transforms and renews our minds (**Romans 12:1-2**)



The Discipline of Meditation

*Oh, how I love your law! I
meditate on it all day long.*

—Psalm 119:98

“Meditation” brings up images of...

Eastern: empty the mind; detachment

Christian: fill the mind; attachment to God

Psalm 119:98—“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.”

**MEDITATION FIGHTS OUR COMPULSION TO
PUT A MEDIATOR BETWEEN US AND GOD.**



*I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey
your word. I have not departed from your laws, for you
yourself have taught me.*

—Psalm 119:101-102

- b. What does it fight our human compulsion for to put a mediator between us and God...
 - i. Story of Moses and the mountain: “You speak to God...”
 - ii. Priests, professionals...
 - iii. But God has something to say directly to you, Ps 119:101-102—“I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me.”

A “FAMILIAR FRIENDSHIP” WITH JESUS



Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

—Revelation 3:20

Jesus tells us that he waits for this kind of fellowship...

Revelation 3:20—“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

The goal of meditation is to gain what Thomas a Kempis called “a familiar **friendship**” with Jesus—not in an irreverent “buddy” relationship but a ***transformational conversation*** that goes on as you go about your day acknowledging God’s presence in and with you.



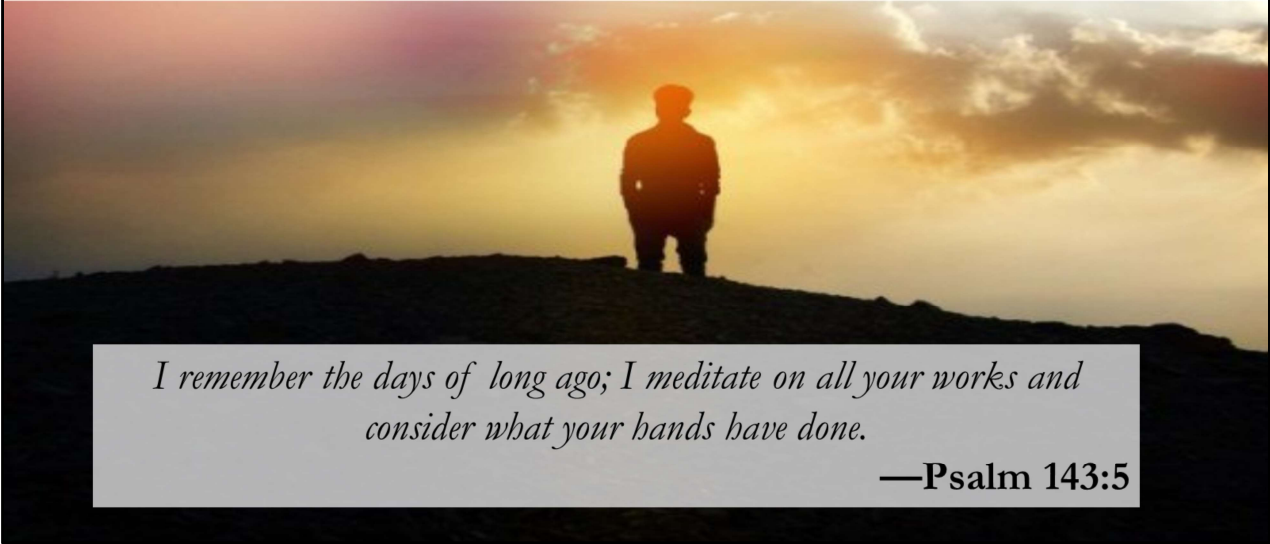
A Transformational Conversation

Those who have walked that path before us say it begins with **focused** meditation...
Undivided attention... doing nothing else
Heart and mind reach out to God and open up to him
Might involve physical (certain postures, etc.)

Primary object: Scripture

There are two ways given to meditate on Scripture and they are both found in Scripture...

Meditate on His Works



I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.

—Psalm 143:5

Meditate on his works: use your Spirit-anointed **imagination** to put yourself there...

Psalm 143:5—“I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.”

Make the stories autobiographical; imagine yourself seeing the sea part... feel the terror... hear Moses’ booming words, “The Egyptians you see today you will never see again...”

See Jesus... even be Jesus, imagining what it would be like to do the things he did.

Meditate on His Word



Meditate on his Word: receive the Word rather than analyze it...

Promise: let it seep in and take root

Turn verse over and over, putting emphasis in different places,
allowing God to speak



Study is the work of the **brain**, meditation of the **heart**.

The design of study is "**notion**;" the design of meditation is **piety**. *"The one searches for the vein of gold; the other digs it out."*

Cultural obstacles to formational Bible study...

- Church as "school"
- Pragmatism of Western culture

| Informational Reading | Formational Reading |
|---|--|
| Covering as much material as you can in a timely manner (getting to the end of a chapter or book) | Keeping a 'holding pattern' over words or phrases that speak to you; your goal is not to finish a section but to meet God. |
| Reading in a linear fashion, moving quickly over the surface of the text | Reading for depth, 'open to multiple levels of meaning' and deeper dimensions |
| Hoping to grasp the text and master it | Allowing the text to master you |
| Controlling the text and looking for what fits our systems of thought | Hoping to be shaped by the text, we 'stand before the text and await its address' |
| Approaching the words objectively and analytically | Approaching the words in a humble, detached, receptive way |
| Hoping to find solutions to problems | Maintaining openness to mystery and to whatever God may say |

Study puts the **reader** in charge; meditation seeks to put the **Holy Spirit** in charge.

Meditation is not application

Application is common-sense reflection; it is **analytical**.

Meditation is **intuitive**.

The effect of application is a new **rule** for yourself. The effect of meditation is a new **heart** about the matter.

Given all this, why is study still important?

(forms boundaries for meditation... helps test the spirits... etc.)



Also Meditate on your life
Ask God for insight... often “mundane” revelations
“palms up, palms down” exercise



Beyond these times of focused meditation is **quiet** meditation...

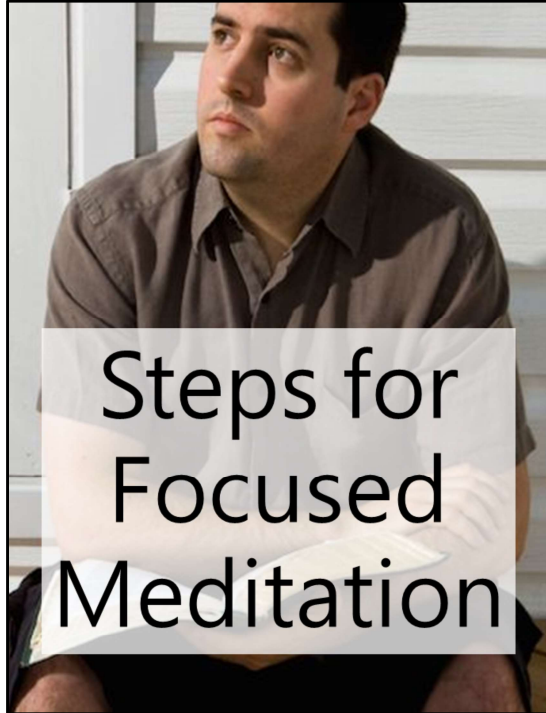
Reclaiming those times when you could have relative quiet but must keep moving...

Meditate on your surroundings

Events in the news, in your life

Nature (good for walk in the woods)

“Chewing the cud” in spare moments



Steps for Focused Meditation

Reading

(Read passage twice, aloud if possible)

Meditation

(ask questions of yourself, God, and the text)

Praying

(Open up dialogue w/God, pray words of passage)

Contemplation

(silent waiting: alert, hopeful listening)

Reading

(Read passage twice, aloud if possible)

Meditation

- How is my life touched by this passage today?
- What is this passage inviting me to do?

- How do I feel about what is being said?
- Why do I feel this way?
- How do I respond deep within? Why am I responding this way?

Praying

- Open dialogue with God: ask “show me...” “thank you...” Help me...
- Pray back words of Scripture

Contemplation

- 2nd part of the dialogue: you listen in silence... alert, expectant, hopeful...
- About hearing/receiving the love of the Father

Meditation Practice



Then Jesus told them this parable:

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

—Luke 15:3-7

Meditation Practice



Challenge for This Week

- Take 20 minutes and go through steps of focused meditation.
- Try “palms up, palms down” prayer.

