

## Summary of Major Points in (Part 1)

1. "Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God's voice and obey his word. It is that simple."
2. *"To murmur; to converse with oneself, and hence aloud; speak; talk; babbling; communication; mutter; growl; roar; mourn; i.e. musical notation; ponder; reflection; devotion...To take care of, revolve in the mind, imagine..."* (Strong Exhaustive Concordance)
3. Meditation is much more than Hearing, Reading, or Studying...It is dangerous to allow your faith to be predominantly focused on an intellectual pursuit.
4. Instead, Biblical Meditation carries with it a deeper, intimate, experiential, relational interaction – dependent on God's Spirit to reveal truth to us.
5. It culminates not in just knowledge, but in a change of heart and behavior. Praise gratitude, repentance, and obedience are results of meditation as an encounter with the Living Word.

- **Biblical Precedent for Meditation**

Those who walked through the pages of the Bible knew the ways of meditation. "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening" (**Gen. 24:63**). "I think of thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the watches of the night" (**Ps. 63:6**). The Psalms virtually sing of the meditations of the people of God upon the law of God: "My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate upon thy promise" (**Ps. 119:148**). The psalm that introduces the entire Psalter calls all people to emulate the "blessed man" whose "delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night" (**Ps. 1:2**). The old priest Eli knew how to listen to God and helped the young boy Samuel know the word of the Lord (**1 Sam. 3:1–18**). Elijah spent many a day and night in the wilderness learning to discern the "still small voice of Yahweh" (**1 Kings 19:9–18**). Isaiah saw the Lord "high and lifted up" and heard his voice saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (**Isa. 6:1–8**). Jeremiah discovered the word of God to be "a burning fire shut up in my bones" (**Jer. 20:9**). And on march the witnesses. **These were people who were close to the heart of God. God spoke to them not because they had special abilities, but because they were willing to listen.**

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

### John 5:19,30

The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise...I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge...

### John 14:10

The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; the Father who dwells in me does his works.

**Meditation creates an emotional and spiritual space which allows Christ to build His inner sanctuary in our hearts. From there He guides, directs, encourages, and renews.**

- **Methods of Meditation**

- **Meditation on Scripture**

- Not technical analysis, or theological systematizing
- Pure and Simple Focus

**Psalm 119:15-16; 77:11-12**

I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.

But then I recall all you have done, O Lord; I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago. They are constantly in my thoughts. I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works.

- **Imagination**

We must not despise this simpler, more humble route into God's presence. Jesus himself taught in this manner, making constant appeal to the imagination, and many of the devotional masters likewise encourage us in this way. St. Teresa of Ávila says, ". . . as I could not make reflection with my understanding I contrived to picture Christ within me."

It is important to resist the temptation to pass over many passages superficially. Our rushing reflects our internal state and our internal state is what needs to be transformed. Bonhoeffer recommended spending a whole week on a single text! Therefore, my suggestion is that you take a single event, or a parable, or a few verses, or even a single word and allow it to take root in you. Seek to live the experience, remembering the encouragement of Ignatius of Loyola to apply all our senses to our task. Smell the sea. Hear the lap of water along the shore. See the crowd. Feel the sun on your head and the hunger in your stomach. Taste the salt in the air. Touch the hem of his garment. In this regard Alexander Whyte counsels us, ". . . the truly Christian imagination never lets Jesus Christ out of her sight. . . . You open your New Testament. . . . And, by your imagination, that moment you are one of Christ's disciples on the spot, and are at His feet."

Always remember that we enter the story not as passive observers, but as active participants. Also remember that Christ is truly with us to teach us, to heal us, to forgive us. Alexander Whyte declares, "with your imagination anointed with holy oil, you again open your New Testament. At one time, you are the publican: at another time, you are the prodigal . . . at another time, you are Mary Magdalene: at another time, Peter in the porch. . . . Till your whole New Testament is all over autobiographic of you."

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- Jesus' Parables
- Old Testament Metaphor
- Caution is Needed
- "Vain imaginations...**(Romans 1:21; 2 Cor. 10:3-5)**
  - Human Manipulation & Self-Deception

## ○ Mediation on God's Law for Prosperity & Success

### **Joshua 1:8**

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will achieve success.

### **Psalm 1:1-3**

Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, And on His Law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

### **James 1:25**

But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

- Meditating Daily on the Proverbs

## **Homework**

1. Choose a real interaction with Jesus in His ministry in Scripture. One at a time, diligently meditate on imagining being each character that interacts with Jesus in the story. What more did you learn by approaching the passage in this way? Explain.
2. Meditate on John 11:35 "Jesus wept." Spend a good amount of time chewing on it. What truths did you discover?