

Module : Meditation

Session 3 : Matters to Meditate On

Focus : God's Word, Ways, & Who we Are In Christ



Word to the World
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We are always meditating. Our minds never stop working. We are always thinking and reflecting on something at any given point in time. It is virtually impossible not to think at all. The claim to have a 'blank mind' is highly improbable. Humans are given to ruminating; they just are prone to ponder on the wrong things. The issue is to '**DIRECT the MIND**' or '**SET the MIND**' [Eccl. 7:25; Jer. 31:21; Col 3:2; Phil 4:8, etc.] toward meditating on things ordained by God. THE MIND NEEDS 'DIRECTION' AND 'SETTING'.

After the original sin, man lost the '**default setting**' of his mind. *"A **default**, in computer science, refers to a setting or a value **automatically assigned** to a software application, computer program or device, **outside of user intervention**. Such settings are also called **presets**, especially for electronic devices. Default values are generally intended to make a device (or control) usable 'out of the box'."*(Wikipedia). The manufacturer of the product determines default settings. The original God-determined default setting for the mind of the spirit was to function by simply receiving and obeying the Word of God. The default setting for the mind of the soul was to simply blindly and reflexively follow the mind of the spirit without question. **Biblical meditation is designed to correct the default setting of the mind of the spirit and soul as determined by our Creator.** "**SET your mind on things above where you are seated with Christ**" – See Col. 3:1-2.

The employment of our minds in directing and setting it to dwell and be absorbed in any thought process must ultimately to find acceptance with God. **God must be pleased with what we choose to fill our minds with.**

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the **meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight**, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 104:34 May my **meditation be pleasing to him**, for I rejoice in the Lord.

MEDITATION'S MATTER – Part 2

1) GOD'S WORD

In our previous session, we demonstrated from various Scriptures that the primary motive and purpose of meditation is obedience. We also stressed that the Word of God is to be the primary object of our meditation, specifically truths and principles released from our spiritual father in the Lord, although you must also meditate upon your personal reading and study of God's Word [See Jos. 1:8; Ps. 1:2,3; 2 Tim. 2:7; 1 Tim. 1:13; Prov. 6:20-22; Ps. 119].

Also, you should meditate on ... **SPECIFIC PROMISES IN THE WORD OF GOD**

Psalm 119:148 My **eyes stay open through the watches** of the night, that I may **MEDITATE on YOUR PROMISES** (NIV)

Promises in God's Word that bear reference to your particular circumstance ought to be meditated upon. These need not only be need-centred issues, but may include issues of guidance, understanding, comfort, and most particularly – the imbibing of His Divine nature.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Whilst meditation's subject matter is the Word of God, Scriptures call us also to ponder upon the following, all of which are really expressions of His Word, or linked to His Word:

2) GOD'S WAYS: THE PERSON (NAME) OF GOD

God's name is indicative of His nature, which He reveals through His Word [refer to session 1].

Psalm 119:55 I meditate on YOUR NAME all night, GOD, treasuring your revelation, O GOD. (MSG)

Psalm 119:15 I will meditate on YOUR PRECEPTS And regard YOUR WAYS.

Psalm 27:4 One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple.

Meditate = baqar = to plough, to break forth, to inspect, consider, seek, search, enquire.

This word translated 'meditate' in Ps 27:4 implies an enquiry and a seeking – a **deep investigative searching out of the nature of God**.

The image of ploughing in this Hebrew word, **baqar** is interesting. In the natural, ploughing a field prepares it for the plantation of crops. Symbolically then, 'baqar' suggests the idea that meditation **prepares the mind to produce and bring forth deeper understanding and penetrative insight into the beauty of the nature of God. The meditated mind is a ploughed mind prepared for the reception of seed (Word) and production of a harvest of fruitfulness of Divine nature and purpose.**



This occurs '**in His temple**'. This could refer to: (1) Your body as the temple of God, (hence meditation occurs within you); (2) The corporate church in the city.

The beauty of the Lord in its fullness is ultimately seen in His corporate temple – the city church. We seek Him there and meditate on those aspects of His nature which He makes known in that context. This takes place in 'His temple', i.e. primarily in the city church context, whereas beholding 'His beauty' may occur in His 'house', i.e. the local household (bayith) of faith. God's beauty is beheld in the household, but the mind is ploughed– literally prepared for deeper and wider understanding in the temple. Through meditation on what is released of God's nature through strategically positioned

apostolic fathers within a city church context, the mind is ploughed and prepared for deeper insight into the person of God within the local church context.

Psalm 63:6 When I remember YOU on my bed, I meditate on YOU in the night watches,

Psalm 35:28 And my tongue shall speak of YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS And of Your praise all the day long. (NKJV) [Speak = hagah = to meditate]

Psalm 48:9 Within your temple, O God, we meditate on YOUR UNFAILING LOVE. (NIV)

This word meditate here is translated 'thought' in the NASB from the Hebrew word '**damah**', meaning '**to liken, to compare, think or imagine**'. The Psalmist, in his reflection upon God's love, seeks **analogies for it** – for apt comparisons to it. But this word also implies a deep-seated desire to 'resemble' or 'be like' the subject meditated upon. Hence the desire here is to possess the unfailing love of God personally as a key quality within. As God's love is unfailing, so ought ours to be. Whatever aspect of God's nature you meditate upon, you are transformed into. This is the principle 'beholding we are changed' (2 Cor.3:18). As we see, so are we changed. The rate and extent of our transformation is conditional upon the power of our gaze into the nature of God. With the 'eyes of our understanding' (Eph.1:18) we are able to perceive deeper and more profound dimensions of God's person – and so be transformed. **As a man thinks, so is he; as a man meditates, so will he manifest**. A man will manifest the matter upon which he meditates.

Meditation on the Person of God indicates one's **REVERENCE AND FEAR** for God.

Job 15:4 "Indeed, you do away with reverence and hinder meditation before God

Meditation = siychah = reflection, musing, prayer

Mal 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. (NKJV)

Meditate = chashab = to plait or interpenetrate, to weave; to think, regard, value, compute

When we meditate upon God's nature – we demonstrate the esteem and value we accord to Him. The word plait (pronounced 'plat') is usually applied to the plaiting of hair – where at least three or more strands are interlaced so that it is not let loose to hang. The plaiting serves to maintain the hair neatly. Meditation plaits the mind with the Word of God. The mind is literally 'braided' – interpenetrated – pervaded with Divine thoughts and principles so that it is not easily dislodged or prone to lose focus, or invasion by foreign thoughts alien to the nature or will of God.



2 Thess. 2:2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. (KJV)

That you **not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed** either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. (NASB)

3) THE WORKS (DEEDS) OF GOD

This would include His creation as well as His doings in executing His plans and purposes in your life, in those close to you, and within the affairs of men generally. I demonstrate this using some examples later.

Psalm 77:12 I will meditate on all Your work and muse on Your deeds. (Muse = siychah)

This includes meditating on what God has done in the past as it serves to inspire us in the present.

Psalm 143:5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands.

Psalm 145:5 They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. (NIV)

Often times God would call on Israel (and us) to meditate and call to **REMEMBRANCE**, recounting in our minds His gracious and powerful deeds among us and within our lives. The psalmist remembered the Lord often and 43 of the 165 uses of the simple verb 'remember', are in the Book of Psalms (Zodiahtes). God always maintains us in His thoughts perpetually – He never forgets us – so why don't we mirror His actions by constantly remembering Him by meditating upon Him (Gen.8:1; 30:22; Ex. 3:24; 1 Sam. 1:19)

AN ASIDE: MEDITATE PROPHETICALLY ON THINGS TO COME

We can and must meditate on God's deeds in the past, but must never substitute what He did in the past for what He intends to do now in the present or in the future. We should not be so fixated on the past to the degree that we have nothing of God's present or future doings to muse upon in the 'now'. People tend to build monuments around God's past doing to the extent where this becomes a prohibitive factor to their embracing what God is doing in their lives today.

Also, certain experiences in God, although valid and relevant for its time, might not necessarily be an acceptable focus of meditation in a present season in which God is wanting us to forcefully direct our minds to what He is about to do.

Is. 43:18,19 "Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. "Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.

Ponder = biyn = to separate mentally; to discern; to understand; to attend; to consider diligently.

Call to mind = zakar = to mark; to remember; to recall; to mention; to make known.

Note here that God first calls upon us not to meditate ('call to mind'/'ponder') on old or obsolete things of the past. He then announces He is about to do something new. The essential thought here is that God **is concerned that His people do not adopt a mindset or mental preoccupation which is not conducive to the unfolding of the new thing He is about to do. In this sense, meditation must also incorporate a prophetic quality of perceiving the intent and purpose of God about to break forth upon us.**

While the past may inspire us in the present, what God did in the past must never substitute for what He wants to do in the present. Don't be obsessively meditative upon the past that you cannot even mentally enter into embracing what God wants to do NOW and in the days ahead.

4) WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE ...

Generally, within the framework of God's Word, Ways and Works, one could literally extend meditation's focus to anything. Two portions of Scripture provide a list of aspects to meditate upon:

Phil. 4:8-9

- 8 Finally, brethren, whatever is **true**, whatever is **honorable**, whatever is **right**, whatever is **pure**,
 whatever is **lovely**, whatever is of **good repute**, if there is any **excellence** and if anything
worthy of praise, **DWELL ON THESE THINGS**.
- 9 The things you have **learned and received and heard and seen in me**, practice these things,
 and the God of peace will be with you

1 Tim. 4:11-16

- 11 **Prescribe** and **teach** these things.
- 12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and
 purity, **show yourself an example of those who believe**.
- 13 Until I come, **give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching**.
- 14 **Do not neglect the spiritual gift** within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic
 utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.
- 15 **Take pains** [**'Meditate on' in the KJV**]* **with these things; be absorbed** in them, so that your
 progress will be evident to all. *[my insertion]
- 16 **Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things**, for as you
 do this you will **ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you**

Summarising the scriptural portion above, Timothy, and we, are called upon to meditate upon the following:

- How not to succumb to a physical, mental or emotional limitation (in Timothy's case it was youthfulness, ill-health and timidity) that will cause others to disesteem you and so limit your unique expression of God's will.
- Being an example to others in key elements of Godly character, especially Godly speech and conduct, love, faith and purity.
- The priority of the Scriptures (reading, exhortation and teaching).
- Our focused development of and maturation in the employment of the specific spiritual or ministry gift or unique ability afforded to us by God's grace.

5) IDENTITY IN CHRIST AS HIS FIRSTBORN SON

A major focus in meditation should be on who we are in Christ – our identity as **His firstborn son**.

As we meditate upon God's Word, it is akin to gazing into a mirror, in which we see, not so much ourselves as we presently are, but who God made us to be in Christ – [*Refer to Session 5: 'The Mirror of God's Word'*]. The Scriptures reveal and show forth the very nature of God. As we perceive Him in His Word – we also see who we are in Him and so become transformed into His image that we behold, from glory to glory, by His Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18).

Much of our success in this life is dependent upon the view of ourselves. Belief informs behaviour. Inward mentality determines outward function. As a man thinks, so is he. You will never amount to more than your thinking or mentality. The quality of your life is a reflection of the state of your mind. Your status and identity in Christ as His firstborn son is a positional reality that must translate into a subjective practical reality. Firstly, it must become a predominant mentality that governs our thinking and our view of ourselves. Our self-concept must be **saturated by this principle**. This must become the primary and only view of our status in Christ. Identity determines destiny. How I view myself will determine the efficacy and efficiency with which I function in life.

The subject of 'Firstborn Sonship' is an issue we shall explore in a later module. Here are some Scriptures on this for your deep reflection: Rom 8:28,29; 1 John 4:17; 1 John 3:2; Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 12:22; Ps. 89; Num. 3:13.

Gideon's view of himself ('the least'; 'the youngest') was vastly different from God's estimation of him ('valiant warrior') and he had to align the thinking of himself to that of God's if he was to effectively execute God's purposes (see Judges 6).

Judges 6:12-16

- 12 The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, **O valiant warrior.**"
- 14 The Lord looked at him and said, "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. **Have I not sent you?**"
- 15 He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house."
- 16 But the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man."

Judges 6:22-24

- 22 When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the Lord, he said, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face."
- 23 The Lord said to him, "**Peace to you**, do not fear; you shall not die."
- 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and named it **The Lord is Peace**. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites

Meditation upon God's view of you as revealed in and through His Word, aligns your own perception to agree with His, so that you can function in the power of the truth of Himself presented to you in His description of you. In Gideon's case, God wanted to deal with the Midianites. **Midianite** means '**strife and contention**'. Peace destroys contention, and hence God unveils Himself as 'The Lord of Peace' - (Jehovah Shalom) to Gideon – who begins to embody and imbibe the reality of God's nature. This then

becomes key to Gideon's success. The Divine condition/character of peace within him that He possesses from assimilating it impartationally from '**The Lord is Peace**', becomes the principle from which Gideon destroys the Midianites, who are people intent upon strife – literally the breaking of the peace. What we become of the Christ within us is our empowerment for victory and success in every Kingdom assignment. [**Aside thought**: You cannot destroy enemies of God until you function as God, embodying His nature and character, a nature/character that is antithetical, but also authoritatively superior to the enemy you seek to obliterate.]

Meditate today on God's description and estimation of you as His firstborn son. How God comes to you in terms of stressing a specific aspect of His nature, is crucial for adjusting and thus establishing your identity in Him and for the efficient, successful fulfillment of your assignment in His Kingdom. Consider how differently the Lord unveils himself to each of the seven churches in the book of Revelations chapters 2 and 3.

Presently **God's FATHERING nature** is being accentuated from the heavens and through his Word. This is designed to bring to the fore and to fully mature the reality and substance of **us as His firstborn son**. Meditate upon these realities and function in rest, provision and power. **May 'FIRSTBORN SON' be the 'DEFAULT SETTING' of your mind.**

Aside – For your own study: Jeremiah too, as with many others in Scripture, had a similar experience as Gideon (see Jer.1:4-8).

CONCLUSION :

In our previous session we established that meditations motive is to receive **UNDERSTANDING so as to OBEY**. In this study, five broad factors were raised as the subject matter of meditation. In each area, understanding will be enlarged and thus obedience heightened.

God's Word (especially as released through your spiritual father), **God's Ways**, **God's Works**, **Spiritual Values/Virtues** and our **Identity and Status in Christ as Firstborn Sons** are to be the subject matter of our meditation. These must be **in our minds and in our mouths**, as the Hebrew word 'hagah' for meditation suggests. **Think upon these things consistently and speak them repetitively**. Whatever is in your mind will be in your mouth, and as Jesus said, "You have whatever you say". God's Word will be incarnate within you; God's ways, nature and thoughts will be yours; acceptable spiritual virtues and values will be the signature of your character in God; and your identity as a firstborn son in Christ will find practical and subjective reality. Meditate for success today (Jos. 1:8).

In our next session, we shall demonstrate the aspects of meditation's focus highlighted in this study. We shall examine several individuals in the Scripture who meditated effectively and obediently executed God's plan, both for themselves and for people, which were both proximate and distant in time and geographical space.

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