



# Meditation & Memorization

In Which We Dwell On God's Word  
As It Dwells In Us

The purpose of the disciplines is to bring us into the presence of God, and nothing is more effective for that than deeply meditating upon and memorizing Scripture. In contrast to Eastern meditation — which is about emptying and detachment — Christian meditation is about drawing near to the Father and being filled with His Spirit as we take on the mind of Christ.

Memory Verse: “*Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*” — 1 Timothy 4:15-16 (NKJV)

## Assigned Reading

Richard Foster: *Celebration of Discipline*

Part I. The Inward Disciplines

2. Meditation

Donald Whitney: *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*

3. Bible Intake (Part II)

Eugene Peterson: *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*

10. Happiness: “Enjoy the Blessing! Revel in the Goodness!”

Ruth Haley Barton: *Sacred Rhythms*

N/A

## **A**ncedote

Read Joshua 1. Why does God tell Joshua to meditate on the Book of the Law?

*1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

*10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'" 12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, 13 "Re-*

*member the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, 15 until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He gave you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."*

*16 So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. 18 Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."*

## **B**ible: 1 Timothy 4

*1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

*6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that*

*which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach,[a] because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. 11 These things command and teach.*

*12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit,[b] in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. 15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*

Even though we walk by the Spirit, it is essential that we also be grounded in God's written word, lest we fall prey to deception [1]...

*1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,*

...and become deceivers ourselves:

*2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,*

Though they themselves ignore the true law, such deceivers often burden their followers with an ascetic legalism:

*3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

Depriving God's people of wholesome pleasures He intends for us to enjoy:

*4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is*

*to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

This is key. Apart from the "word of God" — which can be read as either Scripture or Christ — nothing is truly holy. But when submitted to His word, everything God has created brings nourishment instead of condemnation [2]:

*6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.*

Of course, it is not enough to merely feast on sound doctrine; we must also exercise:

*7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.*

As we discussed earlier, the purpose of discipline is godliness, which requires us to exert ourselves to seek God's name.

Paul — who must've been in excellent physical shape to survive his many hardships! (cf. 2 Cor. 11:24-27) — takes pains to remind us that spiritual conditioning is still far more important [3]:

*8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9 This [is] a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.*

In fact, Paul sees such fruit as the primary goal of his own efforts:

*10 For to this [end] we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is [the] Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.*

Paul sees no conflict between his labor and God's sovereign salvation, but considers the former a logical consequence of the latter [4].

He also urges Timothy to pursue the same — with authority!

*11 These things command and teach.*

Despite his youth:

*12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

In effect, to act as a proxy for Paul, to do for his flock what Paul cannot do from a distance:

*13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

Here in a nutshell we see Paul's priorities for how to lead a church to godliness, which we might summarize as:

- Reading the Word of God, in both private study and public proclamation
- Exhorting followers to conform their lives to God's character, as revealed in His Word
- Nurturing an intellectual understanding of God's truth, as revealed in His Word

No matter how you slice it, everything starts by reading God's Word [5].

Among other things, this is the foundation for the proper use of all spiritual gifts:

*14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.*

And what Paul commands Timothy to continually reflect upon:

*15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.*

This is a trustworthy saying, and worthy of full

acceptance. If we want our lives to manifest visible progress towards godliness, we must do as Timothy did: read God's word, and meditate upon its truths.

It is the best thing we can do — not just for ourselves, but also for those we influence:

*16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*

From everything we know, Timothy did in fact heed Paul's advice, and had an eternal impact for the Kingdom of God. Will we?

## C onversation

1. Have you ever been part of a ministry that underemphasized God's Word? With what consequences?
2. How does God's Word sanctify His creation?
3. Do you spend more time and effort on physical or on spiritual health? Why?
4. Does your understanding of God's sovereignty, and salvation by grace, encourage or discourage you to pursue godliness?
5. When has reading scripture impacted your life?

## D ecision

- Repentance: Ask God to show you where you might be deceived.
- Action: Commit to a regular time of reading and meditating on God's word.
- Worship: Meditate on God's goodness, as revealed in the many gifts you have been given.

## E<sub>x</sub>plore More

- Meditation - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- How to Memorize Scripture - The Navigators
- 1way2God.net - Apostle Paul
- Timothy - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

## F<sub>o</sub>r Next Week

For next week, read Matthew 6. What kind of prayer does the Father reward?

Memory Verse: *“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”* — Matthew 6:31-33 (NKJV)