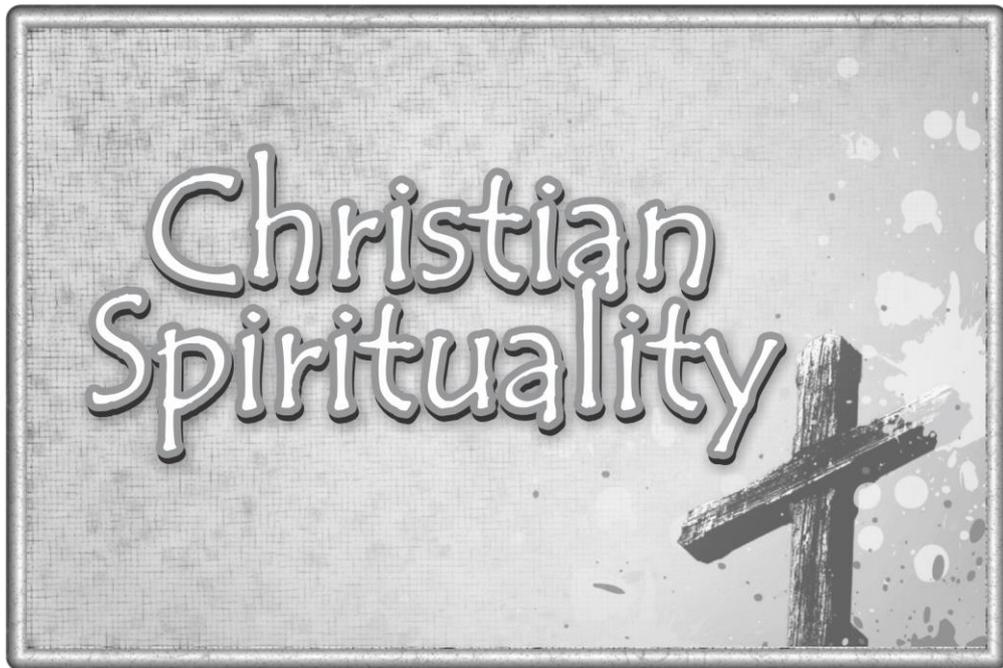


Section: Walking with Jesus
Category: New Disciple Mentorship (Personal Spiritual Development)
Action Item: Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual Disciplines:

Christian Meditation



How to Experience Intimate Communion with God

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(Used with permission, adapted and expanded by
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I. The Discipline of Meditation

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think [i.e. dwell, meditate] on these things - Philippians 4:8.

A. Introduction

This spiritual discipline is often misunderstood and sometimes associated with Eastern religion, New Age theology and the like. Eastern meditation calls for an **emptying** of the mind, whereas biblical meditation is about the **filling** of the mind with spiritual thoughts.

The root meaning of the Hebrew word for meditate is 'to give forth sighs,' and the word picture is of one poring over God's Word with audible sighs of contentment and delight.¹

Synonyms for meditate: ponder, think about, contemplate, reflect, consider, imagine.

B. The Importance of Meditation

Meditation is ... essential to the formation of Christian character.²

Meditation and prayer would keep us from rushing unbidden into the way of danger, and thus we should be saved from many a defeat.³

Meditation and prayer are necessary to a growth in grace.⁴

C. Four Areas of Meditational Focus

1. God's law / Word

a. Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2; 119:148

b. **Let us in *imagination* go back to that scene (i.e. the Sermon on the Mount) as we sit with the disciples and enter into the thoughts and feelings that filled their hearts. Understanding what the *words of Jesus* meant to those who heard them, we may discern in them a new vividness and beauty, and may also gather for ourselves their deeper lessons.⁵**

c. **Merely to hear or to read the Word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must *meditate* upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention and *prayerful thought* he must learn the meaning of the words of truth, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles.⁶**

d. **Meditation on [biblical] ... themes ... will open to the student treasures of which he has never dreamed. He will prove in his own life the reality of the experience described in the Scripture: 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' Jeremiah 15:16.⁷**

2. God's works

- a. Psalm 19:1; 143:5
- b. **God encourages us to *contemplate* His works in the natural world. He desires that we shall turn our minds from the study of the artificial to the natural. We shall understand this better as we lift up our eyes to the hills of God, and *contemplate* the works which His own hands have created. His hand has molded the hills, and balanced them in their position, that they shall not be moved except at His command. The wind, the sun, the rain, the snow, and the ice are all ministers to do His will *The beauties of nature are a theme for contemplation*. In studying the natural loveliness surrounding us, the mind is carried up through nature to the Author of all that is lovely. All the works of God are speaking to our senses, magnifying His power, exalting His wisdom** ⁸

3. God Himself

- a. Psalm 63:6-8; 46:10
- b. **The affections should center upon God. *Contemplate* His greatness, His mercy and excellences. Let His goodness and love and perfection of character captivate your heart.** ⁹
- c. **Walk continually in the light of God. *Meditate* day and night upon His character. Then you will see His beauty and rejoice in His goodness. Your heart will glow with a sense of His love. You will be uplifted as if borne by everlasting arms. With the power and light that God imparts, you can comprehend more and accomplish more than you ever before deemed possible.** ¹⁰

4. Christ's life and sacrifice

- a. **It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in *contemplation* of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit.** ¹¹
- b. **Pride and self-worship cannot flourish in the soul that *keeps fresh in memory* the scenes of Calvary.** ¹²

D. Blessings that Come from Meditation

1. Surrounds us with a heavenly atmosphere by keeping God fresh in the mind.
2. Protects us from temptation.
3. Reminds us of our Saviour's past leading, giving us hope that He will never fail us in the future.
4. Creates a desire within us to be transformed into His image ("By beholding we become changed" – 2 Corinthians 3:18).
5. Motivates us to witness. We also want others to know and experience the God who brings so much joy to our lives.

E. A Definition of Christian Meditation

With your learning partner develop a concise definition of Christian meditation. Write your definition below.

F. How to Practice Meditation: A Suggested Format

1. Find a quiet place where you will not be interrupted.
2. Take time to "be still." Claim the promise of Psalm 46:10. This quiet time of preparation is a means of silencing all the meaningless chatter in your head!
3. Spend time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you and to fill your life with the presence of Jesus.
4. Read the passage of Scripture that you have chosen for your time of meditation. Read it slowly and carefully, several times. Allow your imagination to grasp the scene. Be open to what God wants to teach you.
5. After your time of meditation, write down your experiences and the lessons that God has taught you. Think of ways to apply the lessons you have learned to your everyday life. Keeping a prayer journal will give you additional time to reflect upon the meditation experience and will provide encouragement for you in later days as you review the way in which God has led you.
6. Conclude with prayer, praising God for His love and grace.

G. Suggested Passages for Scripture Meditation

1. Jesus and the storm - Luke 8:22-25.
2. Jesus visits Mary and Martha - Luke 10:38-42.
3. Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus - Mark 10:46-52.
4. Jesus stands at your heart's door - Revelation 3:20.
5. Jesus meets with mothers and children - Mark 10:13-16.

Obviously there are many, many more! But these passages will get you started. Choose one of the above stories and meditate on it for about 30 minutes.

What is God saying to you through this passage? Write your thoughts in the space below.

II. Endnotes

1. Andrews Study Bible on Joshua 1:8
2. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol 5, pg 113.
3. White, *Desire of Ages*, pg 126
4. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol 2, pg 187.
5. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pg 1.
6. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pgs 59-60.
7. White, *Education*, pg 252.
8. White, *Sons and Daughters of God*, pg 110.
9. White, *Our High Calling*, pg 116.
10. White, *Ministry of Healing*, pg 514.
11. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pg 83.
12. Ibid, pg 661.

For a complete bibliography of this devotional series, see the last module, viz., **Spiritual Disciplines: Scripture Memorization**