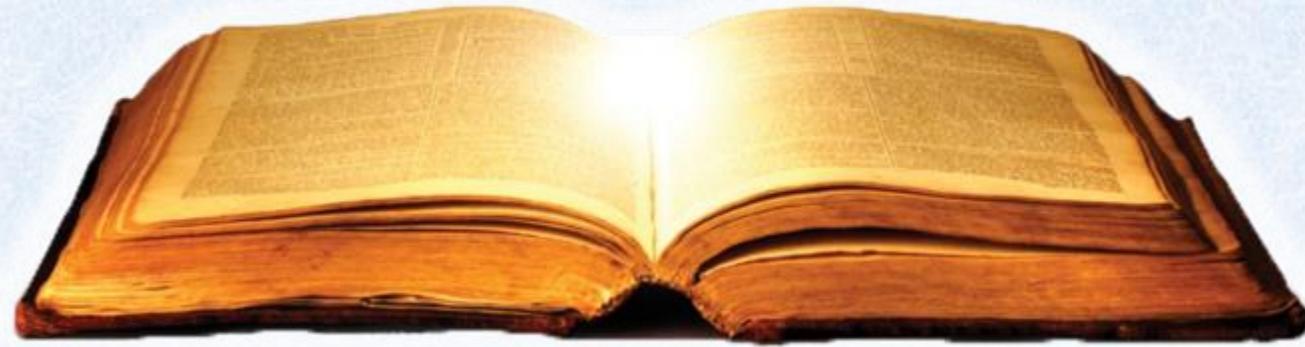


Biblical Christian Meditation



The Forgotten Discipline?

More “Spiritual” Content Than Ever!



Do we chew or gulp?

Meditation

Relative word-use in books from 1800 to 2000



Meditation

English definitions: 1828 vs. 2016

Meditate (1828)

MED'ITATE, *verb intransitive* [Latin *meditor*.]

1. To dwell on any thing in thought; to contemplate; to study; to turn or revolve any subject in the mind; appropriately but not exclusively used of pious contemplation, or a consideration of the great truths of religion.

His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he *meditate* day and night. [Psalms 1:2](#).

2. To intend; to have in contemplation.

I *meditate* to pass the remainder of life in a state of undisturbed repose.

Meditate (2016)

MED'ITATE, *intransitive verb* [Latin *meditor*.]

1: to engage in contemplation or reflection

I've been *meditating* a career change for months.

2: to engage in mental exercise (as concentration on one's breathing or repetition of a mantra) for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness

He *meditates* for an hour every morning.

Meditation

A Biblical Perspective

Psalm 1:1-3 - How blessed is the man 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 in His law he **meditates** day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water...

Psalms 77:12-14 - I will **meditate** on all Your work And muse on Your deeds. Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God? You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples.

Psalms 119:148 - My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may **meditate** on Your word.

Psalm 145:3-5 - Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised. His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of Your majesty And on Your wonderful works, I will **meditate**.

Meditation

Definition Reclaimed

Simple Definition

- **meditate** - a focusing of one's attention on something in order to understand. (e.g., “meditated on the meaning of life”)

Synonyms

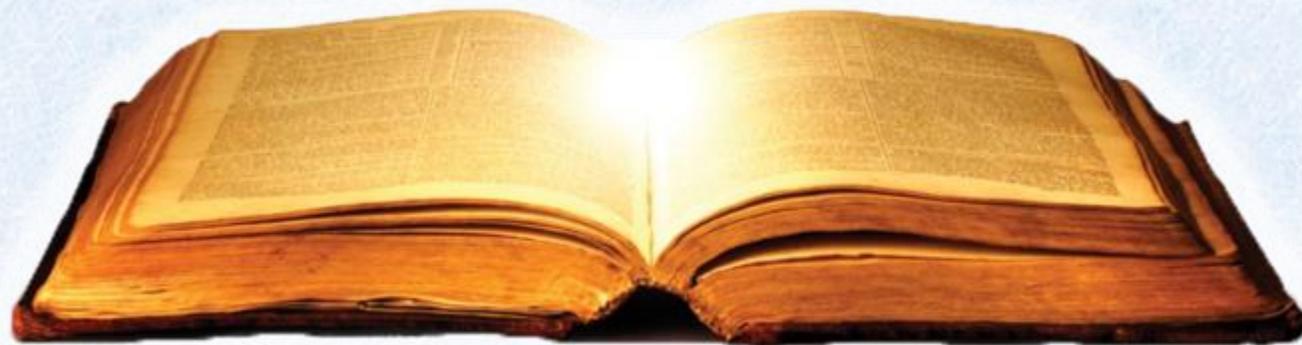
- **ponder** - a careful weighing of a problem or, often, prolonged inconclusive thinking about a matter. (e.g., “pondered the course of action”)
- **muse** - a focused remembrance. (e.g., “mused upon childhood joys”)
- **ruminare** - going over the same matter in one's thoughts again and again (e.g., “ruminated on past accomplishments”)

More “Spiritual” Content Than Ever!



We need to take time to “ruminate!”

Context, Objects, and Purpose of Christian Meditation



Christian vs. Non-Christian Meditation

| | Non-Christian | Christian |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Context | No contextual prerequisites - "Think outside the box!" The only context is self. | The Word of God - "Think outside the box, but inside the Book!" |
| Objects | Loosely defined objects inherent to the self, such as breathing, mantra, nothingness, etc. | God, His Word, His works, etc. |
| Purpose/ Goals | Higher spiritual consciousness (e.g., an ecstatic state, sense of oneness with God or the universe), relaxation, self-actualization | To develop a deeper understanding of God and His Word. To internalize and personalize the Scripture so that its truth affects our thinking, attitudes, and actions. |

Don't Throw the Baby out with the Bathwater

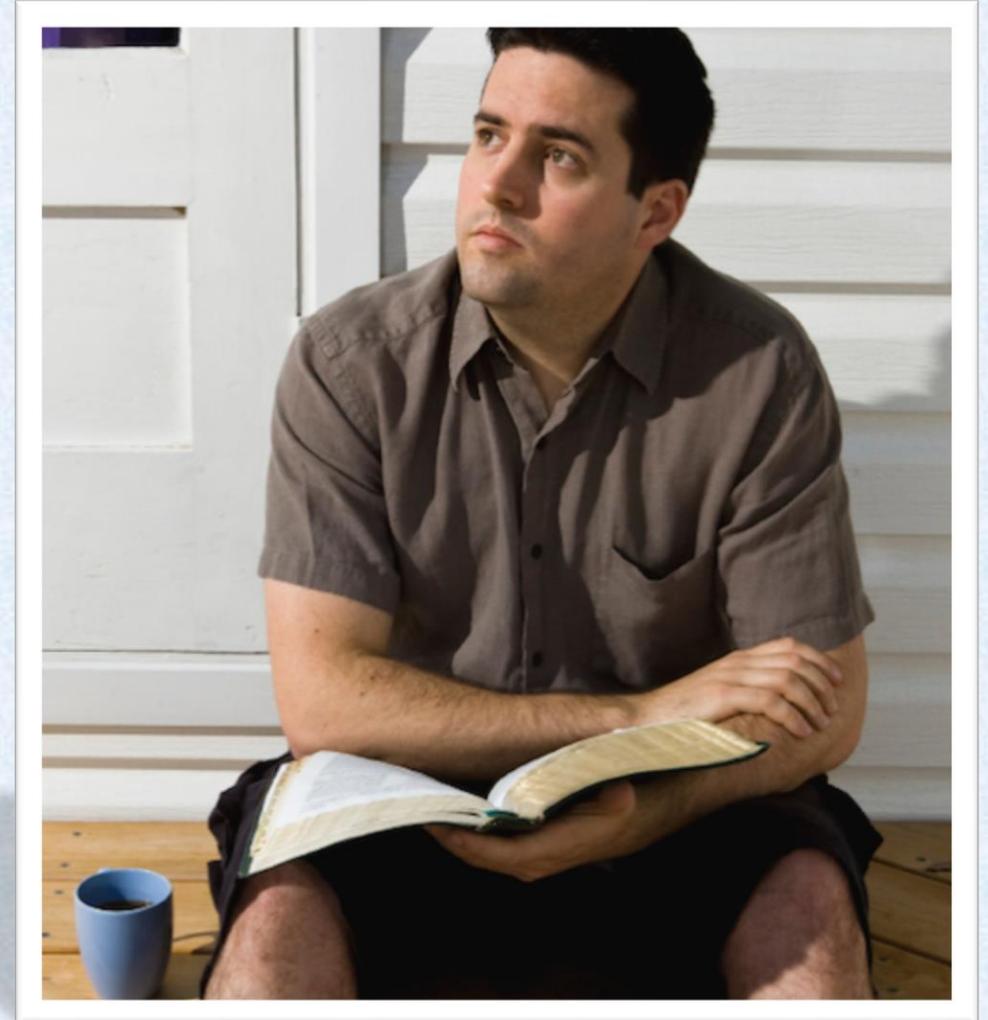
"Most Christians have moved away from meditation because of the non-biblical connotations that other religions have emphasized. However, one of the most famous psalms of the Bible encourages us "to meditate" on God's law day and night (Ps. 1:2)."

Philip Comfort, Treasury of Key Bible Words

Meditation

Quiet, inner contemplation and reflection on the Person, Word, works, ways, and wonders of God through which one may experience and understand God and His Word in a deep, satisfying, and personal manner, leading ultimately to **action in the form of worship, service, and/or personal transformation.**

A Christian Definition



Objectives of Meditation

UNDERSTANDING

- Psalms 49:3 My mouth will speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart will be understanding.
- Psalms 119:27 Make me understand the way of Your precepts, So I will meditate on Your wonders.

MOTIVATION

- 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 have success."

Objectives of Meditation

WORSHIP

- Psalms 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.
- Psalms 77:11-14 I shall remember the deeds of the LORD; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. (12) I will meditate on all Your work And muse on Your deeds. (13) Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God? (14) You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples.

Objectives of Meditation

TRANSFORMATION

- **Psalms 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.
- **Romans 12:2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Practice of Meditation

1. READ
2. REFLECT
3. RESPOND

READ

- "Think outside the box, but inside the Book!"
- Reading God's Word must always precede meditation
- Read
 - Respectfully – Remember that you are reading GOD'S WORD!
 - Repetitively – Read and reread
 - Recordingly – Write down your thoughts/questions



Practice of Meditation



REFLECT/RUMINATE

- **Quietly and Calmly**
 - Psalms 4:4 Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still.
- **Prayerfully**
 - Ps. 119:18 "Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Your law"
- **Patiently**
 - Psa_37:7 Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him
- **Purposefully**
 - Ps 119:15 "I will meditate on Your precepts, and regard Your ways."
- **Properly**
 - **2 Corinthians 10:5**taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ...

Practice of Meditation



REFLECT (continued)

- **Imaginatively**

Biblical Imagination - A faculty of the sanctified mind exercised by contemplation that seeks to understand, form connections between, and visualize ideas and objects not entirely grasped by thought or observation alone.

Imagination allows us to experience the inexperienceable!

Psalms 77:11-20...

Imaginative Reflection

Psalms 77:11-20 - I shall **remember** the deeds of the LORD; Surely I will **remember** Your wonders of old. I will **meditate** on all Your work And **muse** on Your deeds. Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God? You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples. You have by Your power redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. The waters saw You, O God; The waters saw You, they were in anguish; The deeps also trembled. The clouds poured out water; The skies gave forth a sound; Your arrows flashed here and there. The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook. Your way was in the sea And Your paths in the mighty waters, And Your footprints may not be known. You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Imaginative Reflection

Meditation/Contemplation leads to questions that cannot be answered through study or observation alone. For example:

- What must God *be like* to have created the universe?
- What must it have *been like* for Christ to take on sin?
- What *was it like* for God to give up His only Son?



Imagination seeks to answer such questions.

It may not (and probably never will) fully reach the answer, but the **process** allows us to **enter into** the mysteries of God...

Practice of Meditation

RESPOND

- Appropriately
- Immediately
- Obediently



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 have success."

