

## MEDITATION

The word *meditation* is understood in diverse ways to different people. Some understand it as being still and relaxing, emptying your mind of worldly thoughts and emotions, studying words or phrases in religious texts for deeper meaning, or some other interpretation. While there is good to be gained from some of these, the Bible paints a clear image of what meditation is and how children of God should utilize it in their spiritual journeys.

### Meditation in the Bible

When we find the word *meditation*, *meditate*, or other phrases that speak of the same thing, it is always focused on God's Word, Will, or nature, for the purpose of knowing and drawing closer to Him. Meditation is clearly taking the time to focus on God and His will for our lives. In the **Old Testament** we find these examples:

#### Joshua 1:8

The Lord speaking to Joshua: "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." God wanted Joshua to succeed and be prosperous. For that to happen, Joshua was to faithfully study and think about God's will, as declared in the Law for the Israelites, have it ever in his thinking, and ready always to speak it with his mouth.

#### Psalm 1:2

Speaking of the person who would be a child of God, the psalmist says ". . . his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he *meditates* day and night." Continuous focus on God and commandments in the Law for the Israelites was the psalmist's declaration.

Psalm 119:97 shares the same sentiment – "Oh, how I love your law! I *meditate* on it all day long."

A few other places that use the word *meditate* or *meditation*, or imply it, can be found in **Psalm 4:4**, **Psalm 48:9**, **Psalm 119:27**, and **Psalm 119:148**.

The **New Testament** does not use the word *meditate* or *meditation*. Rather, we find the idea or image of meditating (thinking) about God and God's will for the purpose of life change and conforming us to the image of Christ. Under the Old Covenant, being a child of God meant strict adherence to the written Law. Under the New Covenant of grace, being a child of God means being led of the Holy Spirit, not the letter of the Law (**Romans 7:4-6**). Here are some examples in the New Testament:

### **Philippians 4:8**

Paul declares to the Philippians, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—*think about such things.*" Doing so and acting on the promptings of God's Spirit draws us closer to Him and moves us to Godly action in a life of holiness that is ours in Christ Jesus.

### **James 1:22-25**

James shares the idea of meditating in God's word for the purpose of doing what is right in the sight of God, not just reading the word and forgetting it. "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does."

Under the Old Covenant, people meditated upon the written Law and frequently memorized it but failed to live it out. Under the New Covenant, the life of Jesus Christ in the form of the Holy Spirit lives within us to teach us God's will, guide us, and help us live lives pleasing to God. Kristin Wetherell on the *Unlocking the Bible* website\*\* suggests five steps for biblical meditation:

**Meditate to focus** on God and your spiritual walk with Him.

**Meditate to understand** the Word of God and what it speaks to your heart.

**Meditate to remember** the biblical narrative and what God has done for you.

**Meditate to worship** the One who has given you true life.

**Meditate to apply** God's Word and will in your life.

## Other Forms of Meditation

Non-biblical forms of meditation, usually based in false religions, are different from the meditation instructed and encouraged in the Bible. Transcendental meditation (TM), with roots in the Hindu religion, is a good example. TM and similar meditation practices center on achieving inner peace by reciting a mantra silently. Supposedly as the mind is emptied, you are able to enter a state of bliss and tranquility. It is undefined or not known what happens (or is supposed to happen) to the mind and body during this type of meditation.

The Bible does not speak about TM but it does provide guidance on what is helpful for our minds. The Bible says that meditation is focused on God and God's Word, rather than us through meaningless and repetitive words or phrases. When we meditate on the Lord and His word, we find things like blessing (**Psalm 1:2**) and peace via the fruit of the Holy Spirit (**Galatians 5:22**). Blessing and peace are only found by filling our minds with the Word of God, not emptying them to be overrun by the cares and evils of the world.

Some adherents say that TM has healing effects. However, though TM may bring about relaxation and better self-understanding, studies have shown no provable effect on diseases in the human body.

## Closing Thoughts

TM and other forms of New Age meditation should be avoided. Biblical meditation on the God of the universe and His will for our lives should be embraced, transforming us into the likeness of Christ to fulfill God's purposes.

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This is an introduction on the subject of *Meditation*. Here are a few other resources you may wish to explore:

\*\* [Five Steps to Meditating on the Bible · Kristen Wetherell](#)

[Biblical Meditation | Bible.org](#)

[20 Bible Verses about Meditation - Introspective Scripture Quotes](#)

[\(biblestudytools.com\)](#)

[What Is Biblical Meditation? | Unlocking the Bible](#)

[What is Christian Devotional Meditation? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[What is transcendental meditation? | GotQuestions.org](#)