

## Meditation on Scripture

by Bill Murchison

In Joshua 1:8, we are told to meditate on God's word day and night so that we may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. There is a correlation between application of Scripture and meditation. As we meditate on Scripture it penetrates and transforms our heart. As we meditate on Scripture we gain insights into a passage, and also find ways of applying the word to our lives.

(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."

There are also blessings associated with meditating on Scripture. In Joshua, we are promised that our ways will be prosperous and that we will have success. In Psalm 1:3, we are promised that we will be firmly planted by streams of water which yield its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither, and whatever we do we will prosper. That indicates a strong, healthy, fruit-bearing tree that has a constant source of water and nutrients. In Psalm 119, we are promised that we will have more insights than our teachers or the aged through meditating on God's word. All of these are wonderful benefits to meditating on Scripture.

(Psalms 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! {2} But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. {3} And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers."

(Psalm 119:97-100) "O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. {98} Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine. {99} I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. {100} I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts."

But what does it mean to meditate? Some people use the word meditation to describe chants that they say repeatedly. Other people think of meditation as thinking of nothing and just trying to be still. When we discuss meditation, it is important to define the term. The dictionary defines meditate as: to ponder, consider, reflect, engage in thought, ruminate, or cogitate. In the Scriptures, the word meditation is only used in the Old Testament. However, the concept and principle of meditation is used in both the New and Old Testament. So, we will use the Hebrew words in the Old Testament to define meditation.

In both Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:1-3, the Hebrew word, *hagah* (Strong's H1897), is used. It means to murmur, ponder, imagine, meditate, speak, study, talk, or utter. In Psalm 119:15, 27, 48, and 148, the Hebrew word, *amar* (Strong's H559), is used. It means to say, answer, appoint, avouch, bid, or call. Both words give the thought of pondering, imagining, uttering or saying something. I believe that when we are meditating on God's word, we are thinking and pondering on God's word. The utterances, if audible, are to the Lord. Most of my meditation is done silently, and my mind is speaking or uttering things to me about the passage that I am thinking about. For me, meditation on Scripture is a rich time where the Holy Spirit illuminates the word, gives understanding, insights, and applications for me. The word of God is speaking to me as I think and ponder the word, verse, or passage.

(Psalms 119:15) "I will meditate (amar) on Thy precepts, and regard Thy ways."

(Psalms 119:27) "Make me understand the way of Thy precepts, so I will meditate (amar) on Thy wonders."

(Psalms 119:48) "And I shall lift up my hands to Thy commandments, which I love; and I will meditate (amar) on Thy statutes."

(Psalms 119:148) "My eyes anticipate the night watches, that I may meditate (amar) on Thy word."

How do we meditate on Scripture? What are some things that we can do to help us meditate?

- 1) Think and ponder on a verse word by word or thought by thought. Emphasize different words as you review the verse.
- 2) Think of cross references. Let your mind consider other passages or verses that talk about that thought or word. The longer you practice meditation, the richer your meditations become.
- 3) Think of examples of this thought or word.
- 4) Ask yourself and God questions about the verse. Talk to the Lord about the verse. My meditations are not something I do just by myself. It is quality time with the Lord. What does this reveal about the character and nature of God?
- 5) Think of applications. How does this apply to me? How can I implement this in my life? My family? My wife? How does this apply in the church? Is this something that I can encourage others with? Is this something I can teach others?

Here are some helpful suggestions that I have found from my own times of meditation.

- 1) Read over the verse. Familiarize yourself with it. Memorize the verse. (Ps 119:148) Often times, I wake up thinking about the verses I read the night before. (Ruminant!)
- 2) Do it while you are still and quiet. Early morning or late at night is great while laying in bed. (Ps 4:4, Ps 63:6)
- 3) Write down your meditations. Some people think better while writing. Some think better just being quiet before the Lord.

Here is a personal example of a meditation on 1 Timothy 1:12. I have listed the verse in three different translations: New American Standard Bible (NASB), King James Version (KJV), and the New International Version (NIV).

(1 Timothy 1:12 NASB) "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service;"

(1 Timothy 1:12 KJV) "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;"

(1 Timothy 1:12 NIV) "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service."

### **1. Emphasizing different words.**

- I thank .....
- I **thank** Christ Jesus.....
- I thank **Christ**.....
- I thank Christ **Jesus**....
- I thank Christ Jesus **our**...
- I thank Christ Jesus our **Lord**...
- I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who **has strengthened**...

### **2. Think of cross references. (faithful)**

- Luke 16 Jesus said he who is faithful in little is faithful with much
- Luke 16 Jesus said he who is faithful with mammon will be faithful with true treasures.
- Luke 16 Jesus said he who is faithful with another mans treasures will be faithful with his own.
- 2 Tim 2:2 Paul tells Timothy to invest himself in faithful men who will then train others.
- 1 Cor 4:17 Paul says that Timothy is a beloved and faithful child in the Lord
- 2 Tim 4:6-8 Paul was faithful in his own calling
- 1 John 1:9 God is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness
- 1 Cor 10:13 God is faithful and will not let us be tempted beyond what we are able, but will...
- 1 Thess 5:24 Faithful is He who calls us and He will bring it to pass.
- Gal 5:22 Faithfulness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. When I walk in the Spirit, I will be faithful

### **3. Think of examples of people in your life or in the Scriptures who are faithful.**

- Paul had a big split up with Barnabas in Ac 15:36-41 over John Mark. John Mark had deserted them on the first missionary trip. He had been unfaithful and now Paul did not want to take him. Barnabas wanted to give him another chance. So Paul and Barnabas broke up their ministry partnership and commended each other to the grace of the Lord. Later on in 2 Tim 4:11 we find that John Mark had become a faithful man and Paul requests him to come to him.

### **4. Ask questions and talk to the Lord about it. (faithful)**

- How does a person become faithful?
- What does it mean to be faithful?
- What is the root word? (Faith, pistis) What does faith have to do with faithfulness?
- How do you measure faithfulness?

### **5. Think of applications. (faithful)**

- How can I be more faithful?
- What areas do I need to become more faithful in. (Giving, Prayer, Word, Study, Chores, etc.)
- Who do I know that I can encourage about their faithfulness (Heb 10:24-25)?
- What steps do I need to take to become a more faithful person?
- Would God consider me to be faithful?
- Would my wife consider me to faithful?