



Meditate on the Word of God

When we think about biblical meditation, we very often have a rather vague idea about the subject. In our society the word “meditation” is often linked to eastern religions, yoga, sects or transcendental meditation. In other words, we associate it with anything but BIBLICAL meditation! So, the question is:

WHAT IS BIBLICAL MEDITATION?

First of all, let us look at some scriptures about it:

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.** (Joshua 1:8 New King James Version)

Here we notice that it is God himself who speaks to Joshua and encourages, invites and urges him to find the guidance he needs, in order to succeed, through biblical meditation. Success means being able to accomplish every task, so in Joshua’s case he needed supernatural wisdom to lead the people of God just as Moses had done before him.

Let us read what the psalmist wrote about it:

Blessed is the man ... *whose* delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 New King James Version)

According to the verses just quoted, success, blessing, wisdom and guidance are all fruits of Biblical meditation.

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So I wonder: “Why do we often pray and ask God to give us all those things without doing what his word invites us to do in order to obtain them?” Our prayer should always be in line with the Scriptures, we cannot ignore them.

The Scriptures say: **...Meditate...then you will have good success...**

The meaning of “meditate” in Hebrew is very interesting: **הגה** hâgâh – *to ruminate, to ponder, to imagine, to speak, to study, to repeat and to murmur* (Strong’s Dictionary).

In English the verb “to meditate” means: *1. to think about something deeply 2. to reflect deeply on spiritual matters, especially as a religious act 3. to plan, consider, or think of doing (something).* (Collins English Dictionary)

In order to make this very important concept easy to understand we can say that “to meditate on the Scripture” means: to mentally embrace God’s thoughts and to keep them continuously before our eyes. In other words, when you study the Scriptures you need to invite and allow the Holy Spirit to instruct you and guide you into all truth (John chapters 15-17). Every time I study the Word of God, I ask myself some questions like these:

- What was happening in this passage of Scripture? (I imagine it)
- What does the Holy Spirit want to tell me through this passage? (I identify with it)
- How can I put what I read into practice? (I immerse myself in it)

The reading by itself often shows us the “WHAT”, while meditation shows us the “HOW” and the “PURPOSE”. Often we don’t have any answers to some of our questions, because we don’t ask ourselves the right questions.

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Meditation means thinking about what you read, pondering, thinking continuously about what the Bible says about that situation you are living with or facing.

Something I always need to keep in mind when I read the Scriptures is that God gave his Word TO ME, FOR ME!

Many people read the Bible just to transmit it to others.

Other people read it just to know what happened to others (to biblical characters).

Not many people have understood that the Bible, and in particular the New Testament, is a love letter that God personally wrote to us, and that first of all we need to apply it to OURSELVES!

You can be inspired to help others, or to preach the word to others, but this must come out of the abundance of the heart (Luke 6:45). We can't live on crumbs, let alone feed others with them. God calls us to live daily on his bread that comes down from heaven (Matthew 6:11).

Biblical meditation is, therefore, keeping in mind during the day what you have read, heard and learnt.

A difference between reading and meditating that I have noticed can be described simply as follows:

When I read, I READ the Bible, when I meditate, the Bible READS me.

The psalmist, who had really understood the importance of biblical meditation, wrote:

I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law *is* within my heart (Psalm 40:8 New King James Version)

[...]I will meditate on Your precepts [I kept my mind fixed on your counsel – The Message] (Psalm 119:78 – New King James Version)

Someone once said: *“Sin keeps you away from the Bible, the Bible keeps you away from sin!”*

I agree with that. Thinking continuously about the Word will influence your words and your deeds positively; your

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day will be different and your activities will be inspired and modelled by the God of the Word.

Now we can understand even better why God said to Joshua:

Meditate on my word, then you will make your way prosperous, then you will have good success.

The world can only experience an earthly success, but God speaks of GOOD SUCCESS, the success that comes to us with God's peace, honesty and blessing.

Francesco Basile

Some practical suggestions:

... Be doers of the word...

- Begin your day with the Word and end it with the Word (Meditate day and night).
- Begin to meditate on the letters written to the church, such as Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, etc. that are letters written for us.
- Underline the Bible while you read it, particularly sentences or words that catch your attention. This will help you to memorize visually.
- Put in the margin thoughts, words or sentences that come to mind. This will help you not to forget the enlightenment you may have on the spur of the moment.
- Write on sheets of paper the verse or words that touched your heart while you were reading and keep these sheets of paper where you can see them if possible. Keep them in places where you often stay, for example in the kitchen on the noticeboard.