

Meditating on God's Word
Captain Jan Pemberton
Women's Ministry Secretary
Cascade Division

When we look at the word meditation, we think of someone on a yoga mat with their legs crossed in the lotus position chanting or something similar to that type of scenario. That is not the case when we look at meditating on the word of God. When we look at ways to take the time to meditate on the word of the Lord, we can set ourselves up for success in reading scripture. This time is also be seen as a time of contemplation. Some of us look to steal away to a quiet retreat, such as our offices with the door closed, some of us thrive and flourish in our alone time in a bustling coffee shop, and some of us like to listen to instrumental Christian or Classical music in our headphones to drown out the world around us. No matter how you recharge your spiritual batteries and meditate on the word of God, that moment in time is sacred and special.

When we are in Christian meditation, we can take our time reading the scripture God laid on our hearts at that moment or one our daily devotions have suggested. We can take the time to pray and meditate upon God's word in a way that gives us time alone with the Holy Spirit to guide us into a deeper relationship with Christ. When we are in the midst of our meditative time with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, we are taking the time to think deeply, to prepare our hearts and our minds for the time we are about to have with the blessed Trinity and to prepare ourselves for how they will speak into our lives through our prayer time.

God's Holy Spirit is there to help us when we are looking for guidance to learn more about Christ and His word and how He lived His life here on earth. There are many Scriptures that invoke meditative rest while in the presence of the Lord. A few are 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.*, Psalms 48:9-10 which says, *"Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love. Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness."*, and Philippians 4:6-7, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

When we take the time to ponder the word and take the time to listen to what the Holy Spirit wants us to learn from scripture, we cannot rush this precious time. Take time to practice deep, slow breaths, and this will cause your body and mind to become calm and focused on what God wants to learn from your studies. This is a time of quiet, receptive prayer without words, and during this time, we can experience and enjoy the presence of God.

When we take the time to meditate on the Lord and His word, we not only can experience true peace, but through the Holy Spirit, we can experience perfect peace! When we have times of anxiety, frustration, and depression, there is nothing that can match the perfect peace we can receive from God's word.

As we prepare to take the time to meditate on God's word and rest in His presence and perfect peace while waiting for an answer in his time, this is a time when we can ask ourselves some questions to seek God's answer.

When we look at meditating on God's word, we must also look at the verses that speak into our lives and keep those scriptures close to us and have them written on our hearts. This is where memorization comes into our time with God. When we pray to the Lord, the Holy Spirit is there to bring those verses that have impacted our lives in times of great stress, worry, doubt, and great joy. This is why reading our Bible is essential and goes hand in hand with a productive prayer life. This act of memorization of scripture is not to stress us out more it is a time to reflect on passages that spoke into our lives.

Prayer

Father God, I pray that I take the time for the rest, renewal, and refreshment that I need for my soul. Lord, when I can take time to myself to seek comfort in your word, let me do so with an intentional heart. Allow me the time of refreshment and time with you to comfort me while I am comforting others. As I pour into others, let me take the time to allow you to pour into me. In Jesus' name, Amen!

We can ask ourselves the following questions as we prepare for our time with God.

1. How can I prepare and focus my heart and mind to be fully committed to this time of contemplation with God?
2. Is my space conducive to making this time with God intentional?
3. How has God spoken to me through events in my life?
4. What scriptures has God placed on my heart that I know by memory? How can I use them in my life and in my ministry to others?

Below are some tips for author Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's book "Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us" on memorization, and we can use these tips to kick start our time of meditating on God's word and writing those words on our hearts.

MEMORIZATION

DESIRE: To always carry the life-shaping words of God in me and in all places.

DEFINITION: Memorization is the process of continually remembering the words, truths, and images God uses to shape us. Memorization provides us with a store of learning, which can be accessed anywhere and anytime.

SCRIPTURE: "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long." (Psalm 119:97). "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11). "Then they remembered his words." (Luke 24:8) "I think it is right to refresh your memory. . . . And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things." (2 Peter 1:13, 15)

PRACTICE INCLUDES: Memorizing Scripture, hymns, poems, quotes, etc., rereading portions of Scripture until they are committed to memory, memorizing Scripture verses that clearly reveal God's plan of salvation, memorizing the books of the Bible, particular dates and times as well as where various verses are found learning by heart portions of Scripture that encourage you when you are tempted.

GOD-GIVEN FRUIT: Keeping company with Jesus by hiding his Word in your heart, recollecting God-given encouragement and exhortation, developing a habit of remembering that anchors your life in biblical truth, committing to memory Scripture, hymns, poems, and quotes that God is using in your life, knowing where well-loved portions of Scripture are located.