

- **\*READ Psalm 119:9-16\*** I have made the observation before, and I'll make it again as we begin this lesson. When we are reading the Scriptures, we are not just reading another book. We are not just reading the words of another person, because we know that the words of Scripture are actually the words of God. With this being the case, we can say as Bryan Nash does in his book, *Hearing The Holy...* we are encountering God when we come to the table to partake of Scripture.
- This means that our consumption of the Bible must be different than the way we consume other kinds of literature. Sometimes we read literature as entertainment. Sometimes we read literature just to pass the time. Sometimes we read literature to memorize it for some kind of test or exam. However, when we come to divinely inspired literature...we shouldn't come to it for entertainment, the passing of time, or for a score's sake. Instead, we must come to Scripture in order to be changed by it.
- This seems to be exactly the understanding of the Psalmist here in **Psalm 119**. Notice the question of **Psalm 119:9**, *"How can a young man keep his way pure?"* The answer? *"By keeping it according to Your Word."* If we want to be changed in such a way that we might be pure in the sight of God then we must be a people who are committed to seeking after God's Word with all of our hearts. If we are willing to do such a thing then we find that it will lead to us being a people who will meditate upon the precepts or the standard and commandments of the Lord. We must be a people who are in the habit of meditating upon the Word of God.
- Yet...sometimes when we think of meditation, we get a little lost because we might not exactly understand what it means to meditate upon something. When we think of meditation it might be that what is brought to mind is an image of a ninja type warrior who is seated with his legs crossed and his hands held up with his pinky and pointer fingers touching as he lightly hums to himself. If this is what we are thinking of then the thought of us meditating upon God's Word seems like a very unfamiliar thing to do, but I'll suggest to you that not all meditation is done in such a manner.
- In fact, I'll suggest to you that meditation could simply be strong consideration of God's Word that leads to greater appreciation and obedience. Remember, the Psalmist wanted to know how the young man could stay pure. His answer was for the young man to be fully devoted to God's Word, and that devotion would lead him to be a person who meditated upon the Word. We, too, should want to be a people who are pure before God. We, too, should be a people who are devoted to God's Word. This means that we, too, must be a people who are meditating upon the Word on a regular basis. Let's use our time of study this morning to consider how we can meditate upon the Word, the importance of such, and the great benefits that comes from meditating upon the Word.

## I. Meditation can take various forms.

### A. Sometimes done alone.

1. Sometimes our meditation can look like us simply being by ourselves in a quiet place thinking upon the things of God. In **Genesis 24:63**, it is recorded Isaac went out in the field toward evening in order to meditate. Isaac, a man considered one of the great patriarchs of the Old Testament, saw it fit that he go out by himself into the field in the evening time in order to meditate. Yet...we know that he wasn't actually alone for when he went out to meditate...he would come to encounter the God whom he loved and served.
2. When we seek to meditate upon God and His Word, it can be a very beneficial practice to leave other people and go meet God alone in a quiet place. Sadly, we know that this can sometimes be much easier said than done for many of us are very much depended upon by others, but could we not say the same about Isaac? Surely he was a very important man, but he recognized the importance of him getting away for a time in order to be alone with His God and his thoughts with as little distraction as possible.

## B. Sometimes done through prayer.

1. Sometimes when we find ourselves with that alone time, we might meditate upon the things of God by lifting up our thoughts in prayer. There is a strong connection that can be found between godly men thinking upon and considering the things of God and praying. One such connection can be seen in what David writes in **Psalms 143:1-6**. David is deep in prayer to his God during a time of oppression, and in the middle of doing so he says that he meditates and muses upon the works of God. Those things of the Lord are foremost on his mind as He is praying.
2. Jesus Himself is also a prime example of someone who would leave the presence of others in order to find a quiet place where He might give His full attention and consideration to the things of God through prayer. Time and time again throughout the Gospels we see this pattern in the life of Jesus. **(Luke 5:16)** This habit of Jesus should be a habit that we have within our own lives. We should be a people who are habitual in finding a quiet place in which we can focus on God in meditation and prayer. Yet, not all meditation must be done alone.

## C. Sometimes done with other people.

1. In fact, I would suggest that we have done much meditation upon God's Word even this morning. Remember, meditation is simply strong consideration of God's Word that leads to us appreciating and obeying Him more. Are not our times of Bible study that exact thing? This morning, even right now, are we not strong considering God's Word so that we might be able to appreciate Him more and be more obedient? Most certainly this is the case.
2. Even more...would not our singing together be a meditation upon God and the truths revealed within His Word? We know well that when we sing we are speaking to one another and teaching one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. **(Ephesians 5:19 & Colossians 3:16)** When we do so, we are strongly considering God's Word and learning to appreciate Him all the more which should lead to stronger obedience within our lives.
3. Yet...we are not the first people to make this connection between meditation and the communicating of truths to one another and to God. This can be seen in the following three Psalms, and it leads us to an unavoidable conclusion.
  - a) *"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer."* **(Psalm 19:14)** [psalm for the choir director]
  - b) *"My mouth will speak wisdom, and the mediation of my heart will be understanding."* **(Psalm 49:3)** [psalm for the choir director]
  - c) *"I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; As for me, I shall be glad in the Lord."* **(Psalm 104:33,34)**

## II. The Psalmists put a great emphasis on meditating upon God's Word.

### A. Over and over again in the Psalms we see this strong focus on meditating upon God's Word.

1. Nearly twenty times throughout the Psalms we see specific writings that refer to either the author meditating upon the things of God, or we see the author imploring others to do the same. This might not seem like a huge number in comparison to the number of Psalms that are recorded, yet consider the degree to which meditating is considered.
2. In fact, we don't get but two verses into the Psalms before we read, *"But his delight in the the Law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night."* **(Psalm 1:2)** According to the opening Psalm, the blessed man is one who meditates on the things of God continually.
3. Meditation is something that is, again, habitual within the life of the one who is seeking to be pleasing to God in all things. It is no wonder then that we continue to read of godly individuals meditating during the night **(Psalm 63:6)**, meditating on the works of God **(Psalm 77:12)**, meditating on the commandments of God **(Psalm 119:15,48,78)**, and even mediating during the time of intense difficulties. **(Psalm 119:23)**

**B. If meditation seems to be such an important part of the life of the godly in the Psalms, then surely we recognize how important it must be in our lives.**

1. Every year that I have been at this congregation we have put a great emphasis on the need for daily consideration of the Bible, and that hasn't been something that is done without cause. We have so greatly planned and stressed our Daily Bible Reading schedule because we see the great need for daily mediation upon God's Word.
2. However, let me suggest that just because we have read the texts assigned each week doesn't mean that we have actually accomplished the task of meditation. It can be very easy for us to take out our Bibles, speed read through the text, put a nice check mark beside that text for the week, and then go about our daily business without another thought of what we have just read. Meditation demands more than just a cursory or shallow reading of the text...It demands that we read, seek to understand what we have read, and then consider how this text helps us to appreciate God more and be more obedient to Him. The Psalmists weren't about a simple reading of God's law, but they were about the business of consuming, internalizing, and then living out what it was that God willed for them to do and be in this life. This takes a great deal of effort and time, but it is well worth it!

### **III. We ought to spend time in mediation because it feeds the soul.**

**A. We understand the importance of nourishing our bodies.**

1. I've shared a meal with just about every person that is hearing my voice right now, and I'm here to establish that if we are good at one thing in this church...we are good eaters! Let's further establish that we are good eaters because there are a lot of good chefs within this group, and if there is good food then we are going to most certainly get our fill.
2. Very few of us would pass up the opportunity to enjoy delicious food that is set before us. We wouldn't want for it to go to waste, and more importantly we recognize the necessity of the good food that we enjoy. We don't just eat to enjoy the good taste...but we eat because we know that we need the nourishment that the food provides to us. If we want to be strong and healthy people then we need to make sure that we are taking in the proper nutrients that will allow for us to be strong and healthy people. As my father-in-law likes to say, "*A high performance machine needs high quality fuel to operate the right way.*" How true this is for our physical bodies, and how just as true it is for our spiritual wellbeing.

**B. We must make sure that we are giving nourishment to our souls through mediation upon the Word.**

1. I have seen firsthand in my life the negative results of spiritual malnourishment through a neglect of partaking in the Word of God, and there might even be some here who have seen the same thing in your own life. Spiritual malnourishment is especially noticeable when you are coming down from a place of being spiritually well fed. If you have ever found yourself in one of those valleys in your faith where you have neglected the things of God after having been at the peak of spiritual strength, then you know just how bad things can get when we neglect feeding ourselves from the Word.
2. We must be supplying our souls with a steady and wholesome diet of God's Word and a great deal of that nourishment will come from those times where we consume the Word of God and then take time to digest it through meditation. If we're continuing the food analogy then we need to further point out that this means that we don't just scarf down our food, but we take time to enjoy and savor what has been supplied to us. Our consumption of Scripture shouldn't be like eating fast food, but instead it should be like a fine dining experience. We should take in a bit at a time, chew it up, tasting all of the different parts of what we have consumed, and then we swallow it...allowing it to go and strengthen us as God has promised that it will do.

- C. This should be our approach, and it comes with great benefits. We must remember that God has made great promises to those who are committed to Him and His Word. Let's finish up in **Psalm 1**, and let's notice the promise that God has in store for the one who meditates upon His law. *"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 1:3**) Just as the body prospers from proper nutrition, so does the soul prosper from proper nutrition of constant consumption and mediation upon the Word. In doing so we come to appreciate God more, and this naturally results in our desire to be obedient to Him in all things.

It can be easy to look around, see people who are fit and in good shape, and become jealous of them, but the truth is that the vast majority of those people are in that kind of shape because they have put in the work of good nutrition and giving their bodies the attention they need. Sure some people are just lucky and have great genes. Not much we can do about that, but that isn't the case with spiritual things. However, there is always something we can do if we want to be spiritually fit and successful. If we look around, see those who are spiritually strong and thriving, and decide that we want to be like them then we must be willing to feed our souls as they have been doing. We must be a people who are committed to developing the habit of meditation upon the Word of God. If we will commit ourselves to strong and habitual considerations of God's Word then we too can become spiritually strong and successful. The process is before us, the examples are within Scripture, and all that is left is our willingness to put in the work to see the results. May God strengthen us as we seek to be a people who are committed to meditating upon His Word.

**\*PRAYER\*** *Our loving Father in heaven...we pause at the close of this mediation expressing our tremendous thanks for giving us our daily spiritual bread in the form of Your Word. We acknowledge that it is truly a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. May You help us to commit ourselves to daily considerations and meditations upon it so that we might be strengthened to more greatly appreciate You and everything You have done for us. May this appreciation lead us to be more obedient in all things to Your honor and glory. May these considerations this morning strengthen and nourish to greater faithfulness and service, and it is in the name of Jesus that we pray...amen.*