

“The Reasons for Meditation”

2024.01.14 Hopewell ARP Sabbath School

1. Priority, p95

- a. WSC 1 [the end of our creation and our redemption is to walk with God in worship and wonder]
- b. Ps 103 [all that is within us should be doing this]
- c. 1Cor 10:31 [everything that we do should be doing this]

2. Pattern, p96

- a. Heb 12:1. Isaac, Joshua, David, Solomon, Mary, Timothy, Paul [walk in the path that the others have taken, who have arrived where you are going]
- b. Heb 12:2. Most telling: the Lord Jesus Himself [follow the Author and finisher of our faith]
- c. Some of you are appointed pattern-setters. Walk in the way that those you are leading must go.

3. Prescription, p97

- a. Josh 1:8; Ps 1:1–3; Ps 119; Php 4:8 in the context of v4–7.
- b. Commanded for your good.
- c. Therefore, expect the flesh to oppose it.
- d. Therefore, resolve not only to do it, but to navigate any obstacles, and to kill any opposition.

4. Prerequisite, p98

- a. Necessary for knowing God’s Word.
- b. The (repeated) metaphor of digestion.
- c. Do not let the simplicity of the gospel become an excuse for robbing yourself of the riches of Scripture— especially those riches found in the nature of God, the person and work of Christ, and how the Spirit applies to us our union and communion (fellowship) with Christ.
- d. Scripture not only instructs our minds from Christ’s; it shapes our minds like Christ’s. It is this latter for which meditation is appointed. It shapes us to reason like He does, to rejoice like He does, to respond like He does.
- e. Learning without meditating produces a monstrosity in which someone sounds increasingly “Christian,” but all of those ideas and principles are smashed into fleshly reasoning, fleshly rejoicing, and fleshly responding.

5. Preparation for Prayer and Piety, p99

- a. Bible reading may maintain, but it is especially meditation that motivates.
 - i. The intellect reaches the will through the affections. Meditation sets the affections upon what we have learned, not only improving the intellect but especially moving the will.
 - ii. It is especially God Himself, and love for God, that motivates. Meditation brings information from God into an interaction with God Himself.

- b. Prayer, especially, is difficult for one who is unaccustomed to the presence of God and the fellowship of God.
6. Preservation, p100
- a. Ephesians 5:16
 - b. So much time will be lost without meditation. It preserves/reclaims what we have been given.
 - c. Redeeming the time is connected to the evilness of the day. If we are unintentional in the life of the mind, it will tend toward the same evils as the whole rest of the age in which we live.
7. Progression, p101–2
- a. Meditation is the appointed means of maturation.
 - b. Through meditation, wrong thoughts may be put off, and past sins may continue to be beaten down.
 - c. Through meditation, right and good thoughts may be newly introduced, and feeble virtues stirred up.
8. Preciousness, p103
- a. Love-letter from our Lord is not only to be read/processed but savored.
 - b. Meditation takes us beyond duty and discipline by filling these (and us!) with delight.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Well, i am glad to Have the opportunity.

Although i'm Sorry, for Our brother jim that he's not been able to shake this cold, that Uh, that was coming on. Uh, so suddenly But we are in chapter 9. Of the book. Reasons for meditation provided you with an outline, i'm actually just going to teach from the outline so that Although this is my last copy of the book.

Uh, you'll notice, there are page numbers on your outline if you grabbed one. In the back there, it'll help you follow along in the book, but anyone like to use Copy of the book to follow along. Because i'm not going to be reading all the quotes. Um, Although, Um, Forget bowls first name.

It's probably john. Um, It's one of my. Yep. John ball treat us of divine meditation. If you go through the chapter, Uh, maybe you'll have a different opinion than mine. But, I found john ball's. Quotes in the chapter. Uh, to be really the choice ones that made me want to get a copy of his treatise on divine meditation.

From 1660. Uh, and For made me. I'm sure in my flesh irritated that they got his name out of alphabetical order in the Um, In the bibliography. L comes before t into x. So, Um, yeah. Right

to rh training. I'm just kidding. Not not important enough for that. Um, But you're welcome to borrow it.

As you can see, there are eight subtopics. Um, In this chapter on. Reasons for meditation. And each of these p words that i put on the outline, for you do correspond to one of the bolded headings if you're following along. In the chapter. And so, the first reason for, Uh, Uh, for biblical meditation.

Given in the chapter, we have cold priority. Because bimco meditation isn't just necessary unto our priority. It is Our priority. Children, what is the chief end of man? It's an easy one man's defend just to glorify god. And to enjoy him forever. It's an easy one to memorize. Uh, it is a whole lifetime.

Of learning to grow into the end of our creation, the end of our redemption. Is to walk with god and worship and wonder And these are not things that once we do all the other things, Then we will have glorified god and may begin enjoying god. Uh no the glorifying and enjoying of god is what we are doing in, everything else that we are doing.

That we would always have heart and mind set upon him. That we would always be offering what we are doing. To him. That we would always be enjoying him, who is sustaining us in the midst of what we're doing, who has given us the purpose, and the place, and the particular duties that we are performing.

So that if we are aware, Of the involvement of god in our life. Like we ought to be That. That we would have our whole life as a glorifying, and Uh, enjoying of him. We want to have the Post methuselah Enoch life. I think we've mentioned this a few times, maybe Justin in conversation, but hopefully in teaching and preaching as well.

The that before Enoch in. In genesis chapter 5 Enoch's life before he became the father of methuselah is just he lived this many years. But it's described after he became the father of methuselah, Enoch walked with god, 300 years This is the life of a christian. A walking with god and Walking with god, meaning we do everything in worship of him.

Uh, and wonder at him for his glory and in enjoyment, that incidentally is a good summary of what it means to live in the fear of the lord. We walk in the fear of the lord. We are those who fear God, we live. In worship of him, we're offering everything.

We do unto him as worship knowing that he is god. And there is no other and also wonder at him, And there's enjoyment of him. And so this godly fear. Yes, it's trembles. Uh but it it trembles with zeal and diligence and devotion and trembles with delight and enjoyment.

And, And so biblical meditation, whether you're talking about, The meditation at particular times or whether you're talking about the reflection, Upon the lord himself and how he is interacting with you and every moment of the day, this is our life. And the fact that the subject is little touched, little node little experience in our age.

Uh, is Is a reminder that. Uh, we are at a place where we need to be in the Ups and downs of what God does in the church. Generally, we were to place where we need to be crying out for an outpouring of god's spirit, natural knowledge of god in our life and actual Uh, union and communion with jesus christ.

Uh, this is, of course. Uh, what? Psalm 103 teaches us to do with our own soul preaching. Uh, to ourselves bless the lord. Oh my soul. Uh, Uh, And all that is within me bless his holy name. And he then gives throughout that psalm the reasons for blessing god and did ascends.

To the place. Where just before the psalm closes, he's concluded that all of god's angels, all of god's servants, all of god's creatures, and in every part of his creation are supposed to be blessing Him with all that they are. And in all that they do something that of course in the this groaning age never comes completely to fruition, but knowing Whom god has redeemed you to be to himself.

That's a reason that he that he put you in this christian home or brought you from outside of a christian home. Some way to hear the good news of jesus christ, the reason he gave christ in the first place, the reason he brought you to faith. The reason you are now in his church is because he is bringing you at last to bless him with all that you are.

All of the time. And so that with which someone or three begins with psalm 103, concludes with after reflecting, not only on what god does particularly intimately with us. You know. He is like a, he's like a father to us and he spares us and he's gentle with us and he knows our friend.

And and all of these wonderful things about his mercy to us and the midst of our lives. So, our whole life is to be a responding to that, which, of course, first Corinthians 10:31, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

So, that's the first reason for meditation for biblical meditation in our lives. That it is. The priority of our lives. Second reason that he gives is the pattern of old saints. Uh, Uh, isaac joshua. Uh, Of meditate on his word. Um, Uh oh, all day. Uh, david psalm. Uh, Psalm 113.

Solomon mary. Uh, you remember meditating upon things. In her heart, Timothy urged to do. So by paul who is telling him to do. So following his own example, walk in the path, that others have taken, Did have arrived where you are going. That's the transition from hebrews, chapter 11, to Hebrews chapter 12, hebrews 11 presents us with all of these men.

Some of whom are not particularly admirable. Right? If iraq is in there and his account in judges is mostly about how he was such a failure. That god used a prophetess to do the job of the judge at the time. And yet sustained by faith. Uh, And so we have these witnesses in scripture, these examples that are listed On 2a of your outline of people, whom the lord brought.

In part and especially by way of meditation. And so hebrews, 12 verse 1, therefore we also since we are surrounded by so great. The cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every way and the sin which so easily ensnares us and let us run with endurance. The race that is set.

That is set before us the second half of hebrews 12 verse 1. There being a really good summary of the useful of what meditation is useful to do in number seven on your outliner. Page, 101 to 102 In the book but not just the example of others. But we are following them as they follow.

Christ. And that's hebrews. 12 verse 2, looking unto jesus. The author and author doesn't quite. Um, Quite capture it there as a as a greek word with a really rich meaning. Um, if I don't see anyone. Oh man, maybe is study a little bit of Greek arcade gloss. Um, sometimes you have the word captain.

Uh, it's someone who who goes ahead and knows the way and makes the way for us. Uh, Not necessarily to be innovative, but The translation i life for the word is trailblazer. Uh, if you've ever, you know, gone to camp or been in the woods and and someone has gone before you and made the path.

And then others have walked on the path. And you can kind of tell To tell where you are, you know that's that's the idea there and hebrews 12 one through two The lord. Jesus has blazed the trail to heaven for us. That's one of the That's one of the main points of the book of Hebrews, especially as it teaches about public worship, because it is in him that we enter heaven in the public worship, which is the primary subject of the book of Hebrews.

But not only has he plays the trail. He has also sustained many upon the same path and so when we see the lord jesus, yeah, out all night to pray. Getting up early in the morning with drawing to be alone with his father. Preparing. Yes, getting hungry over 40 days and 40 nights.

But as we recently saw in matthew being prepared, by the ministry of the spirits, to him to spend 40 days, praying and fasting. And, The, the lord jesus is being a man of great meditation. So that if we ever thought of someone who who we would have thought didn't need it, it would be christ.

But not only was he human and needing to grow and wisdom in favor and stature with god. And he would do things like get hungry and get tired in his body and he would need also to maintain his human soul, his human mind. As we also need to need to be maintained, meditation was a huge part of the Lord jesus's life.

And meditating upon god's word, thinking upon what we have heard from his word. And interacting with god himself in, what he has taught us from his word, that is a big part of what we need. What we need to be doing throughout our lives. So, we have this. Pattern.

Now, some of you are appointed pattern setters. Uh, especially here, i want to talk to Uh, the moms In god's providence, to you, you have little meditators in training, And i know we all feel like we are in training. But how are your children going to learn to bring what you started the day with in the scripture into what they are doing in the rest of the day?

Yes, with your children you are you are seeking to always bless God with them. Every little thing that God does for you, every little thing that god gives to you that, which might have been might have remained internal for you. As a woman walking with the lord and lifting your heart continually in praise and thanksgiving for this and that and asking god's help for every little thing that you have to do in this and that and remembering the scriptures that tell you about his health.

And and that tell you about the goodness that he's doing for you and that whole internal life of conversation, internal conversation with the lord ladies, the if you have children, don't let it remain internal. Verbalize it, so that your children who are walking with you throughout the day are learning this habit of interaction with God, and dwelling upon his word.

So, you have the, what you started the day with in, in scripture together with your children, and then, throughout the day, you reminding them. Do you remember what, what we Heard about this morning. And as you get into that habit, you'll find that throughout the day, there's all sorts of providence and occasion.

For that specific scripture in god's mercy and wisdom and in how he And how he governs your life. And one thing of course, that, Uh, one advantage, this gives the mom. Even over the dad. Is that by the providential assignment of having to lead. Someone else all the time.

She finds that her meditation, is improved by leading their meditation. Every dad knows that same dynamic. Don't? We from leading family worship with our children and the structure that

god imposes upon us, that we were too foolish. To do. Uh, for ourselves self-harming. On our own and not sticking to it but then god gives us a little eternal soul.

Um, As if there's such a thing as a little eternal soul, Uh, and that is what presses us into keeping the morning and the evening and always wanting to have the, the word of god on our list. So that which was On our hearts comes out on our mouths, and we have this, When we go out, and when we come in, And the way our lives are constructed, a lot of the going out and coming in.

Is what mom is leading? Mom becomes a pattern center? And when you rise up and when you lay down, well, dad is there. For the rising up and laying down, and he has the special duty. So you see from Deuteronomy 6, That. That mom and dad are patterned setters for living a life of meditation.

With god, meditation upon god's word and fellowship with god, just as god has given us in the bible, all of these. What do we call them? Fathers in the faith. Or marry a mother in the faith who also meditate Upon god's word. And and jesus, yes.

Thank you.

Thank you. And he gives us these fathers and mothers in the faith in scripture. Not only so that we can follow them as they follow jesus because jesus has gotten them there already. And one of the things that we want for you children, Is to learn in your home, growing up.

This life of walking with god and one day dad, will be gone, or mom will be gone or both will be gone. And you will remember them. As one's whom jesus has also gotten there. In this same way. And now he is getting you there. In this same way.

And so pattern, Uh, so reasons for meditation it is our priority. God has given us a pattern foremost in christ, but also in the way that he has Ordained for for generations. One to the next to set an example for for each other prescription, god commands it. God commanded it to Joshua and joshua one verse 8, which mirrors psalm 1, verses 1 through 3, and jesus is the blessed, man, of course who meditates on god's law.

He delights in the law of the lord and on god's law, he meditates day and night. But when jesus saves us, he starts to make us to be like himself and we too. Find our delight in the law of the lord. And this is the way that we are kept.

From walking or standing or sitting with the evil man or in the seat of the scoffer. Is it gets replaced by meditation upon the law of the lord just like, When we get to number six and the preservation or redeeming or reclamation of our time, redeem redeem, the time for the days are evil.

So there's this inertia of evil, that is reinforced by the sin that remains in us that if we don't redeem the time. If we don't, Make a resolved. Uh christ's dependent effort to meditating on scripture. Then we are just going to buy a inertia default to all kinds of emptiness.

And yes, even all kinds of evil. Living for fun, wondering how much people admire us? And all of these things that our hearts immediately go to You know, a child who is constantly saying i'm bored Is also constantly saying my purpose in life is to have fun and be entertained.

They need to be taught to redeem the time because the days are evil. How are they going to do that? If, if we are, we the parents are not doing it, but god has given us therefore good

prescription when he commands this meditation and Joshua 1, when he commands, this meditation, uh, gives us the implied command in the pattern of christ.

The this meditation and psalm one versus one through three, the whole of psalm 119. The source of wisdom. How affliction is made useful to you. All of god's helping us in every sort of situation and life? Meditation on his word. Is key in every one of those things and so he gives us all of these commands, Philippians 4:8, you know, whatever is true, whatever is lovely, etc.

Meditate on these things. How come we memorize philippians? Fourth fourth, through seven and Philippians. 4:8, as if they're these two completely separate passages Rejoicing in the lord. Always comes by way of meditating upon all the good that the lord has taught us in his word and all the goods that the words teaches us to see in the lord and what he has created, and what he is doing, being anxious for nothing.

But being able to in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, that comes again. By the lord blessing to us our dwelling upon him and interacting with him meditating upon these things. And give you. Uh, some advice. This is of course how our lord jesus was. If, if you Well, let me just cut to the chase.

Don't be a podcast, christian. The, the brash always mocking. Willing to to be a little bit coarse in. In their joking or in their language type, men are not following jesus. And Psalm 113 and psalm 119 and the strength and courage that comes from joshua and that context obeying joshua one verse 8.

And having a philippians 4 8, life of meditation upon god, himself and fellowship with god himself that produces going forward in Philippians being able to do all things through christ, you strengthens him, whether in exaltation or a basement and exaltation is harder. Because a man that gets full of himself, instead of full of god, When things are going well.

And that is not doing all things through christ, if a man is full of himself, Yeah. Those whose minds are full of the goodness and glory of the lord, jesus of his faithfulness, of his constant companionship. And help those, whose minds are full of that, their mouths will be full of that.

And they tend not to make paint podcasts unless you know living here, twists their arm, and has them talk about something for four hours and then get chops it up into 20 minutes sections. Uh, for them. But we have this good prescription from god. That he has commanded us, that which is good for us and therefore because god commanded it and because it's good for us, our flesh is always going to oppose it.

Our, our remaining sinfulness is always going to opposite. So we have to resolve. Not only that, this is something that we're going to do, but that we're going to navigate any obstacles. To meditating upon god's word and having life as a fellowship with him, and we're going to kill whatever opposition to it.

We find a rising in our own hearts. Fourth reason for meditation is a prerequisite. It's necessary for knowing god's word. He the the book uses again. In fact, i thought one of the quotes was actually repeated The metaphor of digestion. Uh, you don't need to just eat food and have it pass through you like so much theological.

Uh, Gi. Uh, issues. Uh, but you need to eat and digest. Now, one of the things that is very wise and that he draws from the puritans and that section That begins on page 98 or maybe is spans page 98? Is the danger of letting the simplicity of the gospel?

And the gospel is simple. God saved sinners by Christ the Lord. That's it, but there's a danger in letting the simplicity of the gospel become an excuse for robbing ourselves of the riches of scriptures. See, yes, the Um, The. Uh, the scripture has enough in it, that's playing that a mouse can.

Uh, can take a drink from it, but it's also deep enough. That an elephant can swim in it. I don't remember if that was from the Uh, the chapter. It's a common. Uh, image metaphor. It's not, it's not original to me. But there are these riches. In the nature of who God is in himself, especially in the In the intratinitarian.

Uh, relation of the godhead and the character of God. There are riches there that that the that captivate our minds and fill our hearts, that this is the God who made us, and that we are actually being made to know him and every bit you learn. Uh, reminds it, if you meditate on his word and fellowship with him, in this way, you don't become more and more full of how how excellent your doctrine is.

You become more and more amazed with the glory into it with, with which you become familiar. And yes, you opposed wrong doctrine because wrong doctrine doesn't know this. God who is this, God, who made us this God, who is in himself? And all of these riches that he has in himself and how he has, he has joined that to us by the incarnation of the Son.

So that so that the second person of the godhead is a man and we who are men, we are human. Have a union with the Lord Jesus, and actually being made like him. So that there is now this perfect expression. Of what a man is like in conformity with God.

Who has Jesus Christ. And we are being made like him until we perfectly. Are conformed to his image. It, you know, there are all and then all of the details of those things just telling you that it's glorious. But the, the Hundreds and thousands and and is probably infinite ways and details of that glory.

Those are the things to be discovered. And enjoy it. And meditation upon God's word in fellowship? With him. Scripture, not only instructs our minds from Christ's mind something that happens during teaching or preaching or study. But it also shapes our minds. To be like, Christ's mind. And this especially comes by meditation.

When we dwell upon God's word in the way that Christ does, and his Spirit applies him to us, And the place where that is. Is most clearly and profoundly taught in the Bible, is in John 17. Where Jesus the glorious Son from all eternity is about to complete his redemption mission.

For securing the other sons, the other children sons and daughters and he calls God. He calls his Father, it's the only place in scripture where this language is used. Holy Father. And he is eager that we would be brought into this knowledge of Father Son and Spirit that God has had in himself.

And what is he say sanctify them by your truth? Your word is truth. Is immediately proceeded by for this reason, I consecrate myself. Saying I am going to the cross, not merely that they may be forgiven. But that they may be made like me that they may become holy children of the Holy Father, and come into the joy and fellowship that the Godhead has had from all eternity.

And so, Uh, There is this there are these richest to be known and so yeah, you could. You could just say, well, the gospel is simple. Why do all that theology stuff? Why? Meditate upon God's word? Um, Yeah, his his mind is always. It has always in heaven. Well, the y is in the glory of God himself.

And what is in the bible? There are riches presented to us by means of the word by means of the truth. Conversely, if we learn without meditating. We will become a monstrosity. Because the one whose mind is filled with ideas that are from the bible, But the minds that is full of those ideas is not being shaped.

To be like the mind of christ. Well, we'll we'll then have all of these truths and ideas. But it will be packaged in a person. Who is not becoming like jesus. And what they do with the doctrine in their own life, will be and abuse and what they do with their doctrine in what they do, in the world will be and abuse, there will be amongstrocity.

Not a christian And so biblical meditation is vital for us to practice in our lives so that we have this fellowship with god in christ, by which we are actually brought more into the shape more into the likeness of christ. So that whatever truth we do know and believe and speak.

It's coming in the package of of a man who is being conformed to christ and god's providence to us. Uh, next week on james chapter 3, Um, There's is almost entirely on that, what a teacher should be like. And that if we aren't being made, like jesus specifically in things like humility and gentleness, Which he emphasizes in that chapter that it may appear to be divined wisdom, but it's actually earthly.

And demonic is the language of james chapter 3 for that. So it's a it's a Uh, well, we just covered number five. In in large detail as well. A bible reading. May maintain. Right doctrine. But medivation meditation, especially motivates, right living. The way what we understand from the bible, in our intellect, reaches, the what we do in our lives by our will is through the affections.

And the affections are warmed through meditation. Um, You know, the And you know, the the spark as it were of bible reading bible study theology. The way it is warmed into flame is by feeding it with the the meditation on his word in fellowship. In fellowship with god prayer, especially as difficult.

Uh, for one who is unaccustomed to the presence of god. If you are not living in fellowship with god, is very difficult to come into a time, a directly interacting with him and prayer. Because he's a stranger to you. Um, Then there's the Uh, preservation which we already covered to large extent progression.

Meditation, being an appointed means of maturation. Uh, You remember, in the book of Hebrews, Those who still couldn't. Uh, still couldn't process solid food. Uh, christian maturity is a thing. We should be growing and meditation is a significant part of how the lord does that. By dwelling upon god's word.

We're not only informed, but the things that we think and feel are are brought into Into interaction with the truths of god's word and we'll find. And some of the things that we think and feel would bring it into interacting with God's word and we're meditating upon it. They don't stand up with this and we have to change what we think we put off, wrong thoughts, and wrong, feelings, and wrong desires.

Similarly, meditation upon god's word is one of the ways that right truths. Uh, start, right and good thoughts starts to form in us and Virtues in our lives, that had been feeble unto that point. Are stirred up and then in the last place on that last page page 103, you know, he makes the point that God has loved us from before the world began.

And the whole bible really is. Uh, at least in one one aspect of what it is. There's a love letter to us. You don't just read a love letter for information. You save it. You dwell upon it. You, you give your heart and yourself to the one who sent that that letter because they sent themselves by it.

And there is not, there's never been a love letter. Uh, that is so aptly described in that way as the bible. God has given himself. To us by the bible. So we mustn't just receive information from it. We must receive him and have fellowship with him by means of it.

And so that is the reason. For living a life. That is punctuated by set times that god has appointed. For deliberate, direct meditation. But in between those set times living a life, also. Of the meditation, the setting of our hearts upon god and living in fellowship with him. And yes.

That will make the things of earth grow. Laid in. You'll come to consider it not, so strange won't you? You're like, oh, Of course they're done. Look at what they're compared to. And then, let's pray. Our father, we thank you for Uh, your word which teaches us all these things.

All these passages that we visited and didn't have time to dwell in and meditate upon grant even. Oh god, that we might take that as a start Uh, we bless your name for the lord today. In which? You remove all these other distractions. That our hearts may may get a sense of the sweetness, and maybe strengthened and the practice of meditating upon you and having fellowship with you.

Oh, lord. Conform us to christ. By the work of your spirit, sanctifies by your truth, used your word, which is that truth for that work. So that we may be brought to think like he does to know you as our father as he knows you his father to have his joy in us.

To enter into that, for which he prayed. So earnestly, The night that he was betrayed and which he has been interceding and praying for ever since in glory, granted we asked even as he asks, And so we ask it through him. Amen.