

The Discipline of Simple Devotion

THE SIMPLE DISCIPLINE OF MEDITATION: THE KEY TO TRANSFORMED CHRISTIAN MIND

Let's analyze the world each of us live in.

- It is **busy**, right? More to do than time permits each day.
- It is also **distracting**. Many things draw and tug at our minds trying to get our attention.
- It is also **evil**. There is darkness pressing in around our hearts and souls each moment as the last days breathe down upon us.

Now, if I could offer you a secret that could make you powerfully godly in a busy, distracting, and evil world – would you be interested? How about if I offered to show you a proven technique that has always worked – in any time, in any place, and under any pressure? Sounds too good to be true? No it is even worse than that. It is too simple to be actually considered. So here goes. Please turn with me to Hebrews 11.

What do Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Job, David, Ezra, and Daniel all have in common with Jesus? Listen as we stand and read Hebrews 11.1-10.

All of them held on to God's Word and turned it over and over in their mind until they digested it into their life. In Hebrews 11 we can start, there we find a roster of those who heard God's Word and held on to it.

- In Abel's life it is called **OFFERING TO GOD** (11.4). Think of Abel living with his flocks, seeking the Creator of the Universe, and dying for his testimony in Genesis 3-4.

- Enoch's life it is called **WALKING WITH GOD** (11.5-6), Enoch lived in one of the worst times in history. In fact his description of the time just before the Flood is the ungodliest verse in the whole Bible. Turn there if you'd like, it is Jude 14-15.
- In Noah's life it is called **OBEYING GOD**, (11.7) the world was ending, and Noah had to work for 100 years building a boat. And all the way his mind was on the Lord.
- In Abraham's life it is called **BELIEVING IN GOD**, (11.8-10). Can you imagine living in a tent, camping for
- In David's life it is called **FOLLOWING CLOSE AFTER GOD** (Psalm 63:8), Psalm 63:8 My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.
- In Ezra's life it is called **TAKING HEED TO GOD** (Psalm 119:9-11),
- In Daniel's life it is called **PURPOSING TO LIVE GOD'S WAY** (Daniel 1:8) . . . do you realize that you don't have to search any further for answers? Do you realize don't have to research any more for sources? In this Book is ALL that God wanted us to know and have to live for Him. So we should stop trying to find something else and focus right here!
- In Christ's life it is called **LIVING BY THE WORD OF GOD**, and in the Wilderness and through all the temptations, and with the physical weakness of the fasting – Jesus exemplified the victory of God's Word!

All these men knew, valued, and practiced the Solitude of Simple Discipline: Listening to God through Biblical Meditation.

Here are the challenged to Meditation, mark them down as we find them:

- ✓ Ezra who faced an entire nation that had drifted from God while living in Babylon cries in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee."
- ✓ Over and over in the book of Proverbs, God pleads with us to discover the richness of His Word, Prov. 4:1-12 listen to the rich metaphors of meditation: HEAR, GIVE ATTENTION, RETAIN, KEEP, GET, LOVE, GET, EXALT, EMBRACE, HEAR, RECEIVE, TAKE FIRM HOLD, KEEP! Get the idea? Grab on to God's Word inside your life and don't turn loose!
- ✓ In the death throes of Judah's history while besieged by Babylonians, drowning in a slimy well, hunted and near death Jeremiah¹ learns, "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." (Jer. 29:13).

¹ The prophet Jeremiah knew about the power of meditation. He cried out: "Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart..." (Jer. 15:16) Is your spirit joyful because real life giving "food" nourishes it - or is it malnourished? Is your quiet time with the Lord a joy -or a duty? God's Word is not something you read to fulfill a daily "obligation" or to show Him what a dutiful Christian you are. In a very real sense, it's meant to bring the kind of inner happiness that gives "healing to your body and refreshment to your bones." (Prov. 3:8)

- ✓ When Satan tempted Jesus He silenced the tempter, and it gave us our first lessons in true godly meditation as He responded: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4)

These verses are calling us to one of the simplest but most neglected spiritual practices - the godly practice of meditation. The simple exercise of getting alone, closing the doors of distraction be they computers, television, sports, or hobbies in order to read and dwell upon the truth of God and the wisdom stored up in His Word. Anyone who will choose to practice godly meditation, God's Word is going to explode with a richness of wisdom and spiritual fire within our souls.

Solitude is getting alone with God because I love Him.
Simple Devotion is listening to God in His Word.

Too² often it seems we're only motivated to pursue God when we encounter a problem in our daily walk But meditating on the Word of God should be our daily way we go about getting His life-giving truth into the core of our souls - down into the place where the vital decisions of our lives are made every day.

Meditation is the process by which God's Word passes from your head down into your spirit where its power can be released.

"Meditation is the digestive faculty of the soul³." Even though Jesus was physically depleted from 40 days of fasting, He was so strong in spirit from seeking God and meditating on the Word that He wielded a few words and they were a powerful weapon to defeat His adversary.

To apply this, here are six simple but important principles I use to deepen and enrich my meditation in God's Word:

- (1) PRAY FIRST: Ask God for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation into God's Word*** (Ephesians 1:17) ***He*** wants to give us insight through our meditation! It's very important that we understand that fact so we don't keep letting our feelings and emotions stand in the way of our time with the Lord. You may have to fight through a case of the "blahs" - but God never does!
- (2) GRAB SOMETHING: Write the scripture down in your notebook or journal.*** Writing down the scripture takes a

² Adapted from YWAM article by Fran Paris, MEDITATION: OUR LOST TREASURE. "Meditation is the way we can "mine" the treasure in God's Word. It's the way we hide God's Word in the storerooms of our heart so we can draw steadily from those stored-up riches. Just as food nourishes your body, God's Word is real spiritual nourishment. It's like vitamins, minerals, proteins, and carbohydrates! Without food, you become malnourished and sickly. Eventually you die. And if you don't have a healthy, regular practice of taking God's Word into your inner man - you'll experience similar results in your spiritual life. "

³ Campbell McAlpine, Alone With God.

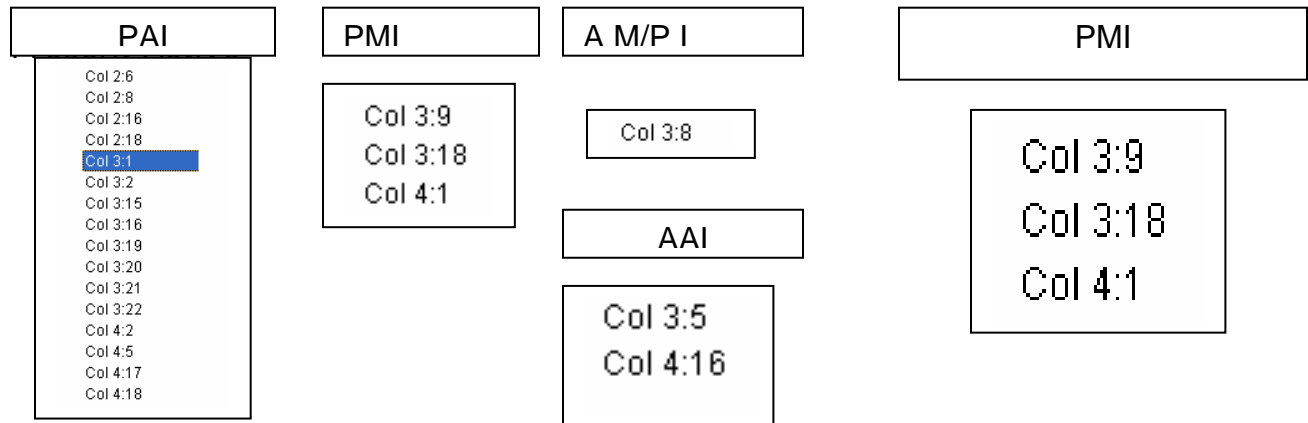
disciplined effort, and the more disciplined you are, the more opportunity you give the Holy Spirit to speak to you. When you write something down you tend to think about it in a deeper way. You analyze it more carefully, and your thoughts are more penetrating.

- (3) STOP FOR A MOMENT: Write down what you understand from that particular scripture.** At this point you might think, "This thought is nothing new - nothing unusual. Why bother writing it down? I'll wait until I think of something really unusual." But if you do that, your mind is going to start floating away on another subject. So write down your thoughts, even though they might not seem very profound to you at the time.
- (4) LISTEN TO GOD: Apply the understanding to your life.** As you continue to meditate, the Lord will probably begin to fill you with incredible insight concerning His character and His love. When you receive these "nuggets of gold" in your heart, don't just relax and be content to store them away for safekeeping - start to apply them to your life! Ask yourself:
- (5) ANSWER HIM: Respond to God.** Nine times out of ten, meditation will bring you to a point where you're bursting with a new response to God. Don't lose that moment by hesitating! Seize the opportunity to respond with all your heart to the living God!
- (6) START A NEW HABIT: Seek Wisdom.** Meditating⁴ and receiving understanding from the Lord is not just a quiet and passive activity. We don't just sit there with an open Bible while the Lord fills us to the brim! Instead, the Lord requires us to take an active stance in meditation. As the truth of God penetrates your mind it attacks and demolishes the sin it confronts. John 17:17 was what Jesus told us, Mt. 4 He demonstrated it! Jesus said the way we become holy is through the Word. Remember this book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book!

Now let's stop talking about it, and do it. So where should we start? How about the first book and chapter many people are disciplined from – Colossians 3?

⁴ There are seven byproducts of meditation: Prosperity Joshua 1:8; Fruitfulness Psalm 1:2; Peacefulness In Trials Psalm 35:28; Stability In Rough Seas Psalm 37:30; Personal Worship In Dry Times Psalm 63:6; A Lifelong Testimony To God's Faithfulness As Old Age Comes Psalm 71:24; Comfort In Adversity Psalm 77:12

The key to grabbing gold in Colossians is noting the imperatives:



There are seven byproducts of meditation:

1. **PROSPERITY:** JOSHUA 1:8 [Think of taking the reins from perhaps the greatest leader who ever lived. A man who could talk to God face to face, lead 3 million people for 40 years, a judge, prophet and priest. What is the prescription to follow such a monumental man? Meditate on the Word!]
2. **FRUITFULNESS:** PSALM 1:2 [At the front door of the longest book of the Bible is a secret recipe for spiritual success. God wants us to prosper and bear fruit. How? Meditation!]
3. **PEACEFULNESS IN TRIALS:** PSALM 35:28 [No one in scripture has more of their life laid bare than David. His affair, family problems, job stress, people problems, enemies, Satanic attack and more. How did you do it David? Meditation on the Word!]
4. **STABILITY IN ROUGH SEAS:** PSALM 37:30 [Is your boat rocking? Starting to list, sink? What is the sure fire way to stabilize things? Meditate on the Word!]
5. **PERSONAL WORSHIP IN DRY TIMES:** PSALM 63:6 [Are you running fast and thin? Do your nights and days run together? How many times have you wished for a quiet day at a mountain, seaside or forest retreat with just your Bible and a cup of coffee? God says, the coffees on and I'm waiting at every turn of your life. Turn your car, bus, sink, computer workstation, desk or whatever into an altar. How? By Meditating on the Word!]
6. **A LIFELONG TESTIMONY TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AS OLD AGE COMES:** PSALM 71:24 [Ever want to end up as sweet as some of the precious saints you know. They die serenely, enduring those last long and pain filled days with a strength and peace that only comes from

God. Where did they get that in life and into the shadow of death? By Meditating on the Word!]

7. COMFORT IN ADVERSITY PSALM 77: 12 [Do you feel it is too hard to even go on? Does the enemy seem to be winning? Are the problems multiplying like weeds? God has a solution and it is simple and powerful. What/ Meditating on his Word!]

Solitude of:

TIME John 17; Mat 26.36; Luke 6.12; Mark 1.35;

PLACE: Mat 14.13, 23; Mk6.46; L5.16; 6.12; Jn18.2

SPIRIT: L9.18