
Meditation

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” – Joshua 1:8

Meditation is a wonderful place to start for a person who desires to receive nurture from God. It is intentional vertical connection that is both spiritually nurturing and emotionally healing. Richard Foster says, “That is why meditation is so threatening to us. It boldly calls us to enter into the living presence of God for ourselves. It tells us that God is speaking in the continuous present and wants to address us.”¹

While meditation can always be done in a place of solitude, it is important to find places to integrate it into our normal daily routine as well. Here it is important to find a place that is quiet and free from interruption. It might also be helpful to have a consistent place versus trying to find a new place each time.

It is important to understand the difference between meditation and study. Thomas Merton has defined this well: “By study we seek the truth in books or in some other source outside our own minds. In meditation we strive to absorb what we have already taken in.”²

- Select a portion of Scripture. You might find it helpful to use a translation or paraphrase that you are not as familiar with so that the words are fresh. Try repeating it several times. Each time you repeat it, emphasize a different part of it. You might consider writing it on an index card and placing it somewhere to remind you over the next week.
- A similar exercise to the one above is praying the Scripture. Choose a passage that is simple and practical. Read the passage very slowly, only a portion at a time. Do not focus on how much you read, but the way you are reading. One author has described this as the difference between a bee that merely skims the surface of a flower and one that penetrates into the depths of the flower. As the Scripture begins to sink in to your soul, spend time interacting with God about what the passage is saying to your life.
- Think about some of the new principles you have recently taken in. Choose a phrase or a concept which you desire to become a deeper part of you life. Sitting in quiet, focus on the this phrase or concept. Consider taking this concept with you into your day.
- Go somewhere to be in nature. Spend at least 30 minutes contemplating all that is around you. As you take this in, thank God for his creation. Allow the beautiful surroundings to nurture your soul.
- One very helpful exercise suggested by Richard Foster is called “palms down, palms up.”³ You begin by placing your palms down as a symbolic indication of your desire to turn over any concerns you may have to God. Pray about your concerns as you do this. Next, turn your palms up as a symbol of your desire to receive from the Lord. As you meditate in this posture, pray in a way as if receiving directly from the Lord. There is something very helpful about using our hands to illustrate what is going on in our heart.

¹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 19.

² Thomas Merton, *Spiritual Direction and Prayer* (Collegetown, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1960), 53.

³ Foster, 24.