

# Meditate

In an issue of *US News and World Report* a few weeks ago, one of the cover articles was entitled "Fifty Ways to Fix Your Life." That's just what we all need! I guess they've done the "Get Rich Quick" scheme and now they are onto the "Fix Your Life" scheme! They started the article by quoting from Benjamin Franklin, and showed how this desire to improve and elevate the person has been around in part of the American psyche for a considerable period of time.

They devoted a large portion of the magazine to the "Fifty Ways to Fix your Life." They start by advocating that the first thing one has to do to fix one's life is to simplify. The first ten ways to fix your life were associated with simplification.

We could spend some time on the first of these: "Set Your Priorities", but I don't wish to today, because I hope that you have all yours correct!

The second one they focused upon was perhaps more surprising: "Learn to Meditate." They went on to describe meditation in some detail. Two pages of the magazine were given to meditation. But the meditation that they were talking about is not the type of meditation that we would normally think of in terms of God's Word.

As the writer said, there are countless forms of the ancient mind/body practice also known as "mindfulness" which is thousands of years old. They go on to describe "transcendental meditation," "body awareness meditation," and various other forms of meditation.

They are suitably portrayed with an elegant lady sitting cross-legged on a stool in a meditative pose. She described how eventually, after much time she was able to "empty her mind of everything," and she could just hear herself breathing. Obviously there was something in her mind that she could recognise her breathing, but she didn't recognise that. She was advocating this from the point of view of a person's health, well-being and dealing with stress management and some of the troubles in which people find themselves in this day and age.

The Bible speaks about meditation in a very different way than "transcendental" or "body awareness" meditation. If one considers the aspect of meditation in the Bible, we find that it is most frequently associated with the Psalms and wisdom literature. The majority of references to meditation within God's Word are found principally within two books: Psalms and Proverbs. There's a reason for that.

One of the immediate lessons we draw from that in terms of the Psalms and Proverbs is that meditation is a KEY to developing a relationship with God. That is God's intention for it.

Another lesson is that it characterises the way in which people MISUSE meditation: to destroy relationships, to destroy relationships with their Creator and with their fellow man.

But the majority of the lessons we are given in terms of meditation throughout those two books is in terms of developing a relationship with our Creator and with our fellow man.

We find a very major difference between the meditation of which this world speaks and the meditation of which God speaks.

The Hebrew word that has been translated "meditate" is frequently translated in other ways as well. This creates the very first difference between the meditation of this world and the meditation that God requires of us.

The meditation that God requires of us can be vocalised! It does not have to be silent! It CAN be silent, but frequently, when meditation is referred to in God's Word, it is also spoken of in terms of articulating what is being thought about. There are a number of words that relate to this aspect of meditation that have been taken from the Hebrew word which means "to meditate" and they have been developed in terms of the translation to try to convey the meaning a little more fully.

Let's look at some of the other words that have been used by the translators.

***Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous studies how to answer ...***

... notice this aspect of studying, of taking something, of examining and considering it.

***28 ... studies how to answer,  
But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.***

People's hearts can generate evil. This brings in another very interesting aspect. What is it that studies to understand righteousness? It's the heart that studies to understand how to answer. Here is something that is associated with the heart. The Hebrews didn't divide the body up into various parts which had no relationships whatsoever. The heart was the seat of the emotions. They did not necessarily understand the operations of the mind and the brain in the way that we might do in the 20th century. But the heart was the very seat of the human being. That's where it all was at. We might say that the heart controlled the approach of the human being to another human being or to their Creator. The heart is very fundamental in terms of Scripture. We find that in the New Testament as well.

We might say, "The heart of the righteous MEDITATES how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil."

Just in case you think that it's a very quiet study, the heart of the righteous studies how to "answer," so this has to be articulated in some manner. It either has to be spoken or it has to be addressed.

Psalms 37 uses the same word that we would otherwise translate as "meditate" in terms of articulating what we know. The Psalmist said:

***Psalms 37:30 The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom,  
And his tongue talks of justice.***

Here, the aspect of meditation is associated with speaking. The mouth of the righteous "speaks" wisdom. So having studied, or meditated how to answer, a meditative answer is able to be given and provided.

***Psalms 35:28 And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness ...***

Once again, the term "speak" is translated from the same word which has been translated as "meditate" in other places. "My tongue shall 'speak' of Your righteousness ..."

***28 ... And of Your praise all the day long.***

The psalmist had an appreciation for God's righteousness. His mind was given to it and he wished to articulate that and carry it to other people.

Jesus Christ drew the same analogy. Speaking to the leaders of His day, and to the rest of humanity (including ourselves), He addresses this very same important aspect, even though it is not necessarily speaking of meditation.

***Matthew 12:33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.***

How are we known? Jesus Christ gave a standard by which we can judge ourselves.

**34 "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks!

**35 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.**

**36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.**

Here was a challenge that they were to appreciate. If you want to speak good things, it isn't just your mouth articulating it. People can provide flattery - but what is behind it? What is the SEAT of good and evil in the human being? It comes from the heart.

Jesus Christ was very much aware of this. He was speaking to this very aspect that both David and Solomon had spoken beforehand, about how the heart of the righteous "studies" or "meditates" how to answer.

What comes out? What's in the heart? You might say the aspect of meditation goes right to the very SEAT of a human being. What are we all about? What motivates me? What motivates you? What is the BASIS of our relationship with God? I think it's worthwhile to consider that for a period of time.

Perhaps one of the most valuable lessons a person can really ask themselves is, "What is the BASIS of my relationship with God?"

When I started doing studies in theology, one of the first assignments we had to do was a 20-page paper on the core of our theology: "What is the centre of our theology?" It was interesting to see the papers of other people who wrote at that period of time, to see what it was that motivated them.

I know what it was in terms of myself. I know what I wrote about. I wrote about obedience to God and keeping God's commandments, and not keeping them just as an end in themselves, as so many people do, but keeping them as a means of coming to understand the very character and nature of God.

What are we all about? What is our centre? Many people have been with us and are with us no longer, because ultimately speaking, they didn't really have a centre. There was nothing really in their heart that linked them to God, that they could meditate on, that they could relate to the Creator in a profound way.

Let's go back to the Psalms. Many times, David, by way of summary at the end of a Psalm, comes back to this aspect of meditation.

**Psalm 71:23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You,  
And my soul, which You have redeemed.**

He appreciated his relationship with God. He appreciated the fact that he had been redeemed from sin and that he was able to have this relationship with God.

**24 My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long ...**

"This is what I'm all about. I appreciate the Being that You are, and what You have done, and what You are doing for me, and for the rest of humanity."

**24 ... For they are confounded,  
For they are brought to shame  
Who seek my hurt.**

"I don't have to worry about them. They are going to be confounded. They can challenge me to all the duels they wish, but they are going to be confounded because I have my hope and my relationship in God."

He expresses how his tongue would talk of God's righteousness. His tongue was going to be "meditating" on the righteousness of God. Where was the tongue connected? What was driving the tongue? It was the very heart of the issue, the very centre of the man. It wasn't something flippant and light. This was the same man who was able to say the words contained in one of the most beautiful Psalms in terms of meditation:

***Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.***

"Let what I am thinking, the very core of me, and what I express as a result of that, let everything about me be acceptable in Your sight."

David talked about the occasions on which he meditated on God.

***Psalm 63:6 When I remember You on my bed,  
I meditate on You in the night watches.***

He is saying, "I don't lie awake at night counting sheep if I have time on my hand. My mind is focused on God. I meditate on Him."

Psalm 119 refers to meditation on some 12 occasions. For instance:

***Psalm 119:15 I will meditate on Your precepts,  
And contemplate Your ways.***

What we have been reading, tells us something very important about meditation. Godly meditation presupposes there is something there to meditate about! Godly meditation isn't mindlessness, having an empty head. It is having one's head FILLED with the things of God, as opposed to the meditation that this world seeks, of emptiness. There must be something there. Meditation is spoken about in that way.

The majority of Biblical references to meditation, are in the books of Psalms and Proverbs, but there are a few references outside those two books. One of the first occasions in which meditation is referred to, is in the book of Joshua.

***Joshua 1:1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying:  
2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them - the children of Israel.  
3 "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.  
4 "From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.  
5 "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.  
6 "Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.  
7 "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.***

Joshua has been told to undertake various things. One of the things that God focused his mind upon, is the fact that he is to remember, observe, do, live by, all the Law which Moses had commanded him. "You are not to turn to the right hand or to the left. You are to live, instruct and lead these people in the way that I have set out."

The Eternal picks up on this by saying:

***8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth ...***

... figuratively speaking! He didn't have that large a mouth to accommodate the scrolls of the Law! But it was to control his mouth. All the judgments, all the instruction that Joshua gave to the children of Israel was to come from the Word of God, from the Law that God had given through Moses to the people. He said, "You've got to bear that in mind. It has got to control your speaking, the way you instruct and lead these people.

And how was his mouth to be controlled? Very simply ...

***8 ... but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.***

In other words, if one is going to meditate in a godly manner, there has got to be something there to meditate upon. The Word of God has got to have a very firm place in our heart. We have to know it, just as Joshua had to know it. Joshua was instructed that he was to live by that Word, and meditate on it day and night, constantly reviewing it and considering it.

David picks up on this in the first Psalm. We sing it frequently. We sing about meditating. What does David say?

***Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man  
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,  
Nor stands in the path of sinners,  
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;***

There are places he keeps away from. There are things that are avoided. Rather ...

***2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD (the Eternal),  
And in His law he meditates day and night.***

Once again, the Law of God becomes very central to the life of a person. Who is this? This is the man who is going to be blessed. This is the man that God is going to bless. He talks about how he is going to be fruitful. It comes back to what Jesus Christ was saying to the people of His day, and to you and me.

What fruits do we produce? Are the fruits of our lives the fruits that come because the Law of God is so much within us, that it becomes part of the meditative process of our life?

It is very important. If you want to appreciate just how important it is, David provides a very interesting little corollary to this. In the next Psalm, meditation is mentioned again:

***Psalm 2:1 Why do the nations rage,  
And the people plot a vain thing?***

How do people go about plotting against others? A lot of THOUGHT goes into it. Do you realise, the word that is translated "plot" is the same word that is translated "meditate"? God's Word shows the way in which people meditate against one another in a destructive manner. It's not the type of meditation that God desires we have.

How much energy and how much effort do people put into their machinations against others? How much time do people spend planning to put down and belittle their opponent? People "plot," or "imagine" as the King James Version translates it, "a vain thing."

That's the type of effort that needs to go into our meditation. We study God's Word. What do we DO when we are studying God's Word? We probably each have different methods of studying God's Word. When you have finished your study for the day, what happens to what you have read? Can you remember what you read, an hour later, or has it gone? Is it something that can stay there and be considered and thought about, and asked questions of, hour after hour throughout the day? Is it really part of our heart?

Many of you review your sermon notes during the week. That's very good. Repetition is a great form of memorising and getting those things stuck in the mind in an appropriate manner (that's if it is a good sermon).

But how often do things remain part of us? Is our Bible Study something that we get through, we've done that, and then we're onto the next thing, and there is never any connection between what we have studied and what we are doing for the rest of the day? If there is no connectivity at all, then we need to learn to meditate! We need to take that and start to work with what we've read and come to understand it and make it a part of our lives, and see how it does relate to us.

It requires effort on our part. It's not like the mindless transcendental meditation. This requires some effort of us. This requires that God's Word be very central to us, and we appreciate that.

David said:

***Psalm 77:10 And I said, "This is my anguish ...***

"I have a problem. I have difficulties in my life."

Who doesn't? To be human is to have difficulties! To be human is to be challenged!

***10 ... But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."***

"I will remember the way in which God has always intervened and helped me. I will never forget that. I will never allow the problems of my life to get in the way of the greatness of God's power."

***11 I will remember the works of the LORD (the Eternal);***

***Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.***

***12 I will also meditate on all Your work,***

***And talk of Your deeds.***

David said, "I am going to meditate on all Your work, on everything that You are doing, and appreciate that."

We live in a rather fascinating period of time in terms of what we can see and appreciate in God's work. I came across a statement the other day, which gives you an idea of the works of God. The statement simply said:

"In 300 centuries, humans observed less than a million stars. But just in the last two centuries, innovations and methods and research has revealed a cosmos of one billion times one billion stars."

How great is the work of God! We can look at photographs taken by the Hubble Space Telescope on the Internet. We can look at some of these wonderful pictures that exist of nebulae and various other forms of the heavens in a way in which Abraham was never able to do. He may have been able to see a little more than some other generations of humanity. Maybe the earth's atmosphere wasn't as polluted in that period of time, and on a clear night, he could see a lot more than a million stars. But I think it's a case in point, that no matter how many millions stars that David and Abraham were able to see with their naked eyes, you and I have the privilege at this point in time of appreciating the works of God in a way that they could never do - simply because of the use of technology.

We live in a day and age in which people write and talk about "intelligent design." People come to realise that this universe of which we are a part is so governed by laws and interrelationships that it is not an accident!

David said, "I'll meditate on all Your work, and talk of all Your deeds," - all of the things that God has done, the way in which He has rescued and taken care of people's lives. He repeats that again in:

*Psalm 143:5 I remember the days of old ...*

"I remember what You have done in terms of our lives, and the lives of our forefathers."

*5 ... I meditate on all Your works;  
I muse on the work of Your hands.*

Rather interestingly, David uses the terms "meditate" and "muse." Both Hebrew words mean "to meditate." He didn't want to have repetition, but he used two different words which can be translated as "meditate." He said, "I remember the days of old. I remember the way in which You have intervened and You taken care of your people; the way in which You have intervened to deliver them from bondage, from slavery or from the enemy. I meditate on all Your works. I muse on the work of Your hands."

David had an appreciation of the greatness of God.

I think it goes without saying that if we are going to meditate, there has got to be something THERE to meditate upon. We MUST BE PUTTING SOMETHING in our mind and heart upon which to meditate - and that comes from the Word of God, and from an appreciation of who and what God is.

Why should we meditate? I'd like to discuss three separate reasons. The first is that which flows most naturally from the Scriptures we have read:

**1. To Develop a Relationship with our Father and His Son Jesus Christ**

... to develop a family relationship. God the Father and Jesus Christ live in a particular manner. They are particular Beings. They have a particular character, and all those things have been manifest to us through the Word of God. They are there for you and me to appreciate.

Most people don't see God's Word that way. They see it as arcane, futile, and chaotic, but you and I have a structure upon which we can appreciate the Word of God. We understand the plan of God. We understand God's purpose. We understand very clearly that this present world is not God's world. That is a major platform for us to meditate from.

People write about trying to "save" the world. The problem is, the difficulty of accomplishing that grows greater with each year they live. People write out the equations of "how many people they have got to reach to turn to Christ." At the end of it, they become frustrated because they can never accomplish enough! The population growth is greater than their ability to reach these new people. So people become frustrated and they turn to other forms of salvation. They turn to pluralism, and think that people can be saved under all sorts of gods, etc, etc.

It's fascinating, at times, to read the way in which people write about such things, and realise their real sense of frustration: "the way in which the Bible just can't work in terms of saving everybody."

You and I have a unique platform, an advantage, in terms of developing a relationship with the Father and Jesus Christ, because we understand the very plan of God. We have the opportunity of understanding that relationship.

One of the few occasions in which the word "meditate" is used in the New Testament is in 1st Timothy chapter 4. It is appropriately translated as "meditate," because the Greek word, from which this word is translated as "meditate" in English, is the same Greek word that was used in the Greek Old Testament for the word "meditate."

Paul has been instructing Timothy about the way of life that he is to live, the way of life that he is to instruct others to follow:

*1 Timothy 4:13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

... to the *Torah*, to the teaching of God.

***14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.***

***15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.***

He said, "Meditate on these things. Give yourself entirely to them, so that your progress may be evident to all." Then he said:

***16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine (to the teaching). Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.***

In other words, by meditating on the teachings that Paul had given him, that had come from God's Word, by making those very much part and parcel of himself, by taking heed to himself, by continuing in them, he was not only going to be able to create a relationship with the Father and His Son, but he was going to help OTHER PEOPLE develop that relationship as well. It wasn't just for him alone. It was for others also.

This aspect of developing a relationship with God is a very important one in terms of meditating. David spoke at length of that, because he appreciated God's righteousness. He would meditate on it. He would meditate on the ways of God and continue in them.

This aspect of developing a relationship with God is a very important purpose for meditation. There is a goal to it.

## **2. Overcoming Sin**

Another very important aspect that flows from this, another important goal for meditation, is the avoidance or overcoming of sin. If we want to have a relationship with God, it means that we are going to want to purify ourselves even as He is pure. It means we will to put sin away from ourselves. As David said:

***Psalms 19:12 ... Cleanse me from secret faults.***

He realised that he was human. He had faults, faults that he didn't see. He knew that God saw them, and he desired to be cleansed of those.

David asked:

***Psalms 119:9 How can a young man cleanse his way? ...***

How can he make sure that his way is pleasing to God? He answers it very simply:

***9 ... By taking heed according to Your word.***

He doesn't talk about "meditation." As I said, various words that mean "meditate" in the Hebrew are referred to frequently in this Psalm. He doesn't refer EXPLICITLY to meditation here, but he asks this question: "How do we clean ourselves up?"

There's only one way we can do it, and that is "by taking heed according to Your Word." Of course, that involves accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That's why you are at this point of wanting to clean your life.

Proverbs picks up on this aspect and develops it for us on terms of meditation:

***Proverbs 6:20 My son, keep your father's command,  
And do not forsake the law of your mother.***

***21 Bind them continually upon your heart;  
Tie them around your neck.***



A very intimate relationship is being established for a young man with the Word of God, the commands and instructions of his mother.

***22 When you roam, they will lead you;  
When you sleep, they will keep you;  
And when you awake, they will speak with you.***

"They will 'meditate' with you." That's really what the Hebrew says!

Do people understand what it means to "meditate WITH you"? We think that meditation is a one-way street, that it's what we do, ourselves.

But God is saying, "No! 'Meditate' is something you do with My Law, and with My way of life. You look at it, you study it, you come to understand it, you appreciate it for what it is and you see the benefits of being in harmony with it. It is something that provides a 'give and take' between us as we look at it and understand it."

***23 For the commandment is a lamp,  
And the law a light;  
Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,***

We meditate upon God's Word. It can be a lamp. It can be a light. It can provide reproofs of instruction for the way of life to which we have been called.

***24 To keep you from the evil woman,  
From the flattering tongue of a seductress.  
25 Do not lust after her beauty in your heart,  
Nor let her allure you with her eyelids.  
26 For by means of a harlot  
A man is reduced to a crust of bread;  
And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life.***

Is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," the end of the issue? Solomon, in writing this, had considered the matter. He had meditated upon WHY one shouldn't commit adultery. He had seen the consequences of what happened to a person when they commit adultery: momentary pleasure and terrible consequences, not just for the individual, but for the spouse, and for the family.

Most of us probably know someone who has been through that. In some way, you may have helped them carry the burden of divorce as a result of adultery. It's very difficult.

The cost in terms of society is ENORMOUS. Yet Solomon said, some people get allured by the flattering of the eye, or the anticipation of some excitement. They never ever have stopped to think of the consequences of what follows.

The apostle Paul was addressing the same thing to Timothy when he told him to "flee" fornication. It wasn't that he should "run," by itself, but that he should really consider what was involved. He should really consider the consequences in terms of the broken human relationships that come as a result of fornication or adultery. He should realise that when God said, "Don't do it," it was not because God wanted to deny human beings pleasure, but because God saw the very destructiveness of it.

Here we have Solomon preserving words either of his own, his father's or one of the other patriarchs, words of someone who had really meditated on why God did not want people to commit adultery, and had come to understand in a very great way that God gave His Law to AVOID destruction of relationships. If we break God's Law, it destroys relationships.

***32 Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding ...***

They don't understand God's Word to begin with.

**32 ... He who does so destroys his own soul.**

That's how destructive it is.

**33 Wounds and dishonor he will get,  
And his reproach will not be wiped away.  
34 For jealousy is a husband's fury ...**

In those days, a husband could have his fury, whether it was with the sword or a slingshot or whatever it may have been. We might say that he could have his pound of flesh, and wrack a reward for this individual having committed adultery.

**34 ... Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.  
35 He will accept no recompense,  
Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.**

You can't pay ENOUGH to rectify the problem you create! You can't pay to rectify the damage to the mind of a child that has gone through a divorce. It has an effect upon them.

I remember talking to some Church members on one occasion. As parents do, from time to time, they had been talking to their adult children about aspects of their upbringing, and what they remembered about their lives. They were floored because the three children told them that the worst time in their lives was when they were around seven, eight or nine years of age, and they thought their parents were going to divorce. Those little children's lives had been turned upside down, in a state of turmoil, because they anticipated that their parents were going to divorce.

The parents suddenly realised, "We conduct ourselves in a particular way towards our family without any real thought of the damage we might be doing to them."

Solomon is giving instruction that has come about as a result of meditating upon the Word of God. Solomon needed to meditate a little further on it, or to keep the meditation a little further in mind, because eventually it was strange women who were able to lead him away from his relationship with God. It's very, very sad. But it just goes to emphasise just how much meditation needs to remain part and parcel of our being. It needs to be very much a CONSTANT part of our being.

### **3. To Give An Answer**

A third reason for meditating is so that we can give an answer. Are we able to respond to those who ask questions of us? It's important that we are able to do so.

Let's start with a Scripture in the New Testament where the word "meditation" is used. In the Olivet Prophecy, Jesus Christ had been telling his disciples about what was going to happen in the world.

**Luke 21:9 "But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately."  
10 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.  
11 "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.  
12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake.  
13 "But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.  
14 "Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer;  
15 "for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.**

Jesus Christ said. "You are going to be brought before rulers and kings for My name's sake, and I am going to use it as an occasion for testimony. Settle in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist."

Does that mean to say we shouldn't meditate? Jesus Christ said, you don't have to meditate on how you are going to answer that particular situation. You don't have to be concerned about that.

But we certainly need to meditate, because if we have never meditated on the Word of God, how is God going to be able to put the answer in our mouth? Do you think that He is going to use us as He used Balaam's donkey?

I would put it to you that God is going to make abundantly clear to us what will need to be said, and suddenly a Scripture that we have known for a period of time, will make sense in a way that perhaps it hasn't made sense before. Why? Because God is putting that Scripture into our minds, and giving an understanding of that Scripture as a means whereby an answer can be given!

At times people feel, "I want God to inspire me." Fine, I think that's a commendable approach. But God is not going to inspire you if you are not putting anything in there! If we are not FILLING our heart with the Word of God, God is not going to inspire us. God will not give us the understanding to be able to give the answer that is needed to be given, unless we have "filled the well," and unless we are intimately associated with the Word of God.

***Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous studies (meditates) how to answer ...***

It is constantly looking at and considering the Word of God.

These two Scriptures are not necessarily speaking about the same thing. In Luke, Jesus Christ was talking about a very specific circumstance that we might find ourselves in. Proverbs is talking about the general situation that we find ourselves in. We study how to answer.

How do we answer? How do we convey those lessons that need to be conveyed? The heart of the righteous meditates how to answer, but on the other hand:

***28 ... But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.***

How do we meditate? As I have said several times, there has to be something to focus upon. To me it is fascinating that the aspect of meditation is focused in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. They are two books that are very clearly related to the Law of God, the application of the Law of God, and how we live our lives in accordance with the Word of God.

They give us positive examples. They give us negative examples, things to avoid. The books of Psalms and Proverbs are very practical instruction on how we live our lives, and how, as a result of living our lives in a godly way, we have a relationship with the Father and Jesus Christ, and we have a relationship with our neighbour: how we learn to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and strength, and how we love our neighbour as ourselves.

In light of that, I would suggest that meditation needs to be focused upon the CONSEQUENCES of the Law of God. Why does God's Law exist? It is so that we have relationships, so that we have relationships based upon godly standards, not upon human standards.

Oftentimes, I have found that people love to meditate on something altogether different. People love to meditate on prophecy. At times, prophecy has been the flavour of the month. People have been highly motivated by prophecy. Because of the earthquake and tsunami in south-east Asia, we trundle "prophecy" out again. We are always wanting to try to detail prophecy in a great way. A lot of effort is put into prophecy.

But the Psalms and the Proverbs aren't about prophecy! They are about our relationship with our Creator. They are about our relationship with one another. They are about the very character of God, the very character that we are supposed to be building.

If we are going to focus upon something, I would suggest that we follow David's lead of focusing and meditating upon the Law of God, making that very much a part of our lives, with the end result that we can focus upon our relationship with our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and with one another. We can build godly relationships.

Would a husband commit adultery, if he really meditated on the blessings that God had given him in his wife? Let's return to this aspect that Solomon talked about. Why do husbands commit adultery? It is because they see so many negatives in their wife, and they think that they can get the positives elsewhere. That's it, basically!

Why do people divorce? Because the "benefits" of divorcing outweigh the negatives of staying together. People focus on the negative. They don't focus upon the positive.

Can we think of the blessings that God has given to us?

Can we focus upon the blessings of one another? We may be a strange lot! But that's God's doing! He has called us to be part of this Body together, so maybe we ought to appreciate His calling of each and every other person who is part of it. We ought to appreciate them for what they are, appreciate them as being a potential member of God's Family. We ought to see their positive aspects and their strengths, rather than their weaknesses.

As I said earlier, meditation does not need to be conducted in total silence. Oftentimes the word "meditation" is associated by commentators with the aspect of "muttering," or even "the cooing of a dove."

One of the other relationships that the Bible gives us in terms of meditation is the aspect of prayer. That opens up yet another big subject to look upon. But just consider this: prayer is a natural situation in which we can meditate! How much of our time in prayer is given to meditating on the things of God? Is that part of our prayer life? If it is, then we can have a very profitable and very successful meditation with God.

Clearly I think there are ways we can "fix" our lives, as the *US News and World Report* said. We can always improve. We can always benefit from learning. Our lives will benefit from being able to meditate on the Word of God; not the empty-headed mindless meditation that is espoused in their article, but the very profitable, God-centred meditation that is presented to us throughout God's Word!

... *Peter Nathan*  
15 Jan 05

[Back to Top](#)

[Back to Sermon Summary List](#)