

# SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



## Requirements for Effective Meditation

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Samuel 7:18-19 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Psalm 46:10; 62:1-2 | Matthew 7:7 | Mark 1:35

### ► SUMMARY

#### What do you consider important in your life?

Is it something you spend, save, wear, or drive? All the good things and activities of this world cannot be compared with the value of your personal relationship with Jesus Christ because it determines everything else in your life. If you believe this is true, then meditation on God and His Word should be the priority of your life.

### ► SERMON POINTS

Godly meditation requires time alone with the Lord, listening to what He is saying in His Word, thinking deeply about it, and moving forward in obedience. We see an example of this in David's life after the prophet Nathan told him that God was going to establish his kingdom forever. Second Samuel 7:18-19 records a small portion of his response to this amazing revelation from the Lord. As David sits before the Lord, he tries to digest the message delivered to him through Nathan the prophet, and praises God who so graciously gave him this promise.

“Then David the king went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, ‘Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord GOD, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. And this is the custom of man, O Lord GOD.’”

In the same way, we too need to sit before the Lord as we contemplate what He has said to us in His Word. This is the most important segment of time we can spend in any

given day. The all-sufficient, omnipotent, eternal Creator of all things is worthy of our praise and attention every day. He is our heavenly Father who loves His children unconditionally and has called us into fellowship with Himself, and meditation is the way we avail ourselves of this awesome privilege.

Although many other concerns and activities vie for our attention, there must be a time in the day when we close off all the noise and distractions in order to concentrate on the Lord and what He has to say to us. Meditation begins with confession of sin so we can receive cleansing and come to God with a pure heart. It's a time to read His Word, ask questions, bring our requests before Him, seek His will, and simply enjoy being with Him.

#### Practices That Aid Meditation

Making meditation a habit in our lives doesn't come easily in a culture inundated with noise and activity, but it can be done if we will make the following practices a part of our lives:

■ **Specific Period of Time.** First we must set aside a segment of time each day for communion with the Lord. The length will vary depending on each person's circumstances. The goal is to meet with the Lord each day whether it's for 10, 15, 30 minutes, or longer.

Although we have the privilege of fellowshiping with God at any time or any place, we also need a segment of time alone with Him. Jesus often met with His Father early in the morning before facing the busy demands of the day (Mark 1:35), and that is a good pattern for us

as well. If we don't deliberately set aside time for the Lord, our days will be automatically filled up with other activities of much less value.

- **Stillness.** Multitasking and meditation do not mix. When we try to combine other activities with our time alone with the Lord, we will quickly become distracted because of the competition for our attention. Psalm 46:10 says, "Cease striving (be still) and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." To grow in our knowledge of the Lord we must spend time focusing on Him and His Word.
- **Seclusion.** Any intimate relationship requires time alone with the other person, and this is certainly true in our relationship with the Lord. Since the sinless Son of God felt the need to withdraw in order to be alone with His Father, how much more do we need to make this the practice of our lives? Being alone with almighty God as we read His Word takes away fears and apprehensions, infuses us with His power, and equips us for whatever we may face in the coming day.
- **Silence.** We need a quiet place in which to concentrate on God and His Word. We must shut out all the noise that usually surrounds and distracts us. Sometimes this means we must stop talking so we can listen to what God is saying. At other times, we need to quiet our minds and hearts so we can focus on the Lord. Psalm 62:1-2 says, "My soul waits in silence for God only; from Him is my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken."
- **Self-Control.** When meditation is our priority, we must exercise self-restraint by rejecting distractions. There's no need to interrupt our conversation with the Lord every time the phone rings or a random thought enters our minds. This is a time to literally give the Lord first place in our lives.

- **Submission to God's Will.** As we read the Word and listen to what the Lord is saying, we may be convicted regarding an area in which we need to obey Him. It could be the need to repent, reconcile a relationship, or change an attitude. Whatever it may be, we must submit to His will, rely on His strength to obey, and do what He says.
- **Sensitivity.** The Holy Spirit within us makes us sensitive to the things of God and interprets His Word to us so we can understand and apply it. He is always at work in us to give guidance and conform us into the likeness of Christ in our character, attitudes, and actions.

## ► RESPONSE

- Do you have a regular time for Bible reading, prayer, and meditation? If not, what obstacles are keeping you from consistently meeting with the Lord? What adjustments and sacrifices would you have to make in order for meditation to become the priority in your life?
- Although there may be legitimate situations that make it difficult to set aside a quiet time with God, sometimes our reasons are really ways to excuse ourselves from this responsibility. What rationalizations and excuses have you used to explain why a daily time of communion with the Lord doesn't work for you?
- If you struggle with consistently meeting with the Lord, begin by setting aside a small segment of time to pray and meditate on Scripture. In time you will learn to value your fellowship with the Lord, and it will become your joy and delight.

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