

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



The Power of Godly Meditation

KEY PASSAGES: Psalm 19:14; 119:97-105 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Joshua 1:9 | Psalm 86:11; 104:34
Matthew 7:7; 14:21-23 | Mark 1:35 | Philippians 4:19 | 1 John 1:9

► SUMMARY

We've probably all experienced times when shortly after reading a passage from the Bible, we can't remember what it said.

Knowing that every believer should read Scripture, sometimes we treat it as a duty to be checked off rather than a valuable opportunity to commune with God. Although consistent Bible reading is important, our minds must be engaged and focused in order to benefit from it. In other words, we need to learn to meditate on God's Word, not just read the words.

► SERMON POINTS

The Scriptures were given to us by God so we could know Him. Although no one can fully comprehend all that is written by an infinite God, He has made it possible for Christians to understand His Word. Yet comprehension is not to be an end in itself. In order to be transformed by the Word, we must also apply what it says to our lives.

Therefore, as we read, we must think deeply about God's Word and practice prayerful application by asking the Lord to clarify it for us and show us any words of encouragement, warning, or command. The goal is not simply to get through a Bible reading plan but to let our meditation be pleasing to God (Ps. 104:34).

The Lord has preserved His Word so that every generation can read, hear, and apply it. Scripture should be as precious to us as it was to David who said, "O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97).

God's Word gives us wisdom, insight, understanding, and protection from sin and every false way. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path to guide us through life (vv. 98-105).

If we truly believe everything this psalm says, we will read the Word rather than fill our minds with ideas from other sources that lead us astray. Whatever we choose to put into our minds influences our behavior, and that is exactly what the Scripture will do if we tune our hearts toward it rather than the world.

What is godly meditation?

Meditation is the process by which we learn to listen to the Lord through His Word, apply biblical principles to our lives, and watch God work.

When we trusted Jesus Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit came to indwell and seal us as children of God, empower us to live righteously, and teach us to believe and understand His Word. As we meditate on Scripture, the Holy Spirit applies its truths to our lives according to the needs of the moment, giving us the right perspective and direction for every circumstance we face.

People without Christ lack God's guidance and are like someone adrift in the ocean without a compass or map. However, as believers we have access to divine direction for life. In meditation we think about what God has said and pray as David did: "Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name" (Ps. 86:11).

What is involved in meditation on God's Word?

- **It's focusing our hearts on the Lord and shutting out everything else.** Meditation requires time alone with the Lord in His Word and prayer without external distractions.
- **It's more listening than talking.** As we quietly seek to understand the Word, God brings truths and insights to mind that we need to consider.
- **It's the most important activity in the life of a follower of Jesus.** The Lord Himself demonstrated the necessity of spending time alone with God. After feeding a multitude of over 5,000, He sent the crowds away, made His disciples go ahead of Him across the sea, and went up on the mountain by Himself to pray for an extended time (Matt. 14:21-23). On another occasion, He rose early in the morning to find a place of solitude in which to pray (Mark 1:35). If the Son of God needed time alone with His Father, we certain do as well.

What are the benefits of meditation?

- **It quiets our spirits.** When we are troubled, God's Word calms our hearts, assuring us of His faithfulness, love, and sovereignty over our lives.
- **It enlightens our minds.** To see our situations through God's eyes, we need to learn to think like He does, and this is only possible when we understand His ways and desires as revealed in His Word. In the process, He gives us a sense of peace and confidence in Him so that we can trust Him.
- **It increases our energy.** In moments of weakness, we find strength in God's Word. He knows exactly what we need and will provide it according to His riches in glory (Phil 4:19). When we are inadequate in ourselves, the Lord gives us His strength.
- **It purifies our hearts.** As we meditate on the Word, the Holy Spirit exposes sins in our lives that we need to confess, repent of, and receive forgiveness and cleansing from the Lord (1 John 1:9).

- **It enlarges our view of God.** Meditation on Scripture reveals aspects of His nature that we may not have seen before. His love in saving sinners, His capacity to forgive those who don't deserve it, and His care and interest in every detail of our lives assure us that He is trustworthy and good.
- **It increases our love for God.** The more we get to know the Lord through His Word, the greater will become our devotion to Him. Certain passages of Scripture will inspire us to love Him more and will become lifelong reminders of His love, care, and provision for us.
- **It increases our sensitivity to the authority and power of God.** As our view of the Lord is enlarged, we will realize how dependent we are upon Him and how much we need to humble ourselves before Him rather than walk in pride.
- **It strengthens our faith.** Our trust in God grows as we learn of His faithfulness in His Word and experience it in our lives through answered prayer.
- **It increases our awareness of God's presence.** Time alone with the Lord makes us more sensitive to His constant presence with us and His work in us.
- **It infuses us with joy.** After meditating on God's Word, we come away with a sense of joy, knowing that He is in control.

► RESPONSE

- When you read the Bible, do you take time to think about what it says and how God wants you to apply it to your life? If not, what excuses are you using? What changes can you make today that will facilitate meditation on God's Word?
- How has Scripture encouraged, strengthened, guided, or convicted you when you've taken time to read and pray about it? What other benefits of meditation have you experienced?

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