

Meditation That Honors God

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:6–9; Joshua 1:8

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The period of European history known as the Dark Ages were just that—dark. Mortality rates were exceptionally high. Medical advances could not keep up with the spread of disease. Poverty and illiteracy were pervasive. And on top of all that, the light of God's Word was monopolized and distorted by the Roman Catholic Church. Only the religious elite had access to Scripture, and most of them manipulated and perverted its message beyond recognition.

That darkness gave way to the Reformation. The Protestant Reformers recovered the gospel and made Scripture accessible to the common man. They rejected the idea of a pope who presumed to speak for God on earth. God spoke through Scripture and the Reformers devoted themselves tirelessly to the labor of making it readily available in the language of the people.

Today, people all over the world can own and study the Bible in their own languages. That great blessing for Christians brings the responsibility to study God's Word. And from that study, believers have the joy and duty of representing the Creator and proclaiming His message. Over the previous two weeks we've looked at several aspects of how to study the Bible, including:

1. [Placing the proper value on God's Word.](#)
2. [Reading both the Old and New Testaments.](#)
3. Interpreting a biblical text before it is applied.
4. [Avoiding common errors of interpretation.](#)
5. [Bridging the gaps between the modern reader and the original author.](#)
6. [Knowing the principles of Bible interpretation.](#)

Those fundamentals, when incorporated into your study of Scripture, will progressively grow your knowledge of God and yourself, and cultivate a well-rounded biblical worldview. It is in His Word that God has chosen to reveal Himself to us in an intimate and saving way. He owns us, knows us, and holds us responsible to know, understand, and proclaim Him on His terms and not our own.

Scripture is sacred and we should treat it as such by carefully handling its truth. Paul exhorted Timothy to study Scripture as a workman “accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). The tradesmen of Paul's time needed to carry out their work with precision and great care. Paul was saying that the same sort of approach is needed when studying Scripture.

God instructed Israel concerning that very issue:

These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. (Deuteronomy 6:6–7)

In other words, you ought to have God's Word running around in your mind all the time. If you're reading a portion of the New Testament thirty times in a row, as [previously suggested](#), it will penetrate and shape your thinking. It should lead to meditation, which takes all the dimensions of study we've discussed and molds them into a unified understanding of biblical truth.

The word *meditate* can evoke thoughts of empty minds and eastern religions. But it is more likely that Hindus and Buddhists borrowed the term from the Bible and twisted its meaning to conform with their false religions. From the time of Joshua's military conquest of Canaan, we hear the Lord instructing His people to meditate on God's Word (Joshua 1:8). So what does meditate mean? Biblically, it means to focus your mind on one subject.

In Deuteronomy, God tells His people that they should bind His words, "as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals to your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:8–9). God says He wants His Word everywhere.

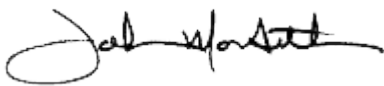
David highlighted the role meditation plays in our sanctification when he wrote the first Psalm. The blessed man is one who meditates both day and night on God's law rather than seeking counsel in the fellowship of unbelievers (Psalm 1:1–3). It is the key to his perseverance and fruitfulness as a child of God.

Meditation is no less needed today. We live in a culture that continually assaults us with distractions through billboards, television, the Internet, and more. God says that we should keep His Word perpetually in front of our eyes, filling our minds and conversations wherever we go.

Paul clarified what our minds should feed on:

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

Ultimately, our ongoing relationship with God hinges on sound biblical study. He places monumental importance on knowing, proclaiming, and worshipping Him rightly. And Scripture is the engine driving all of those things. The Dark Ages may have ended, but those who neglect to study and meditate on Scripture shun the light of God's Word and continue to walk in willful darkness.



(Adapted from [How to Study the Bible](#))

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