

MEDITATION: SPIRITUAL COOL-DOWN

(2011 Congregational Theme: Daily Disciples: Meditation)

A. Remember your P.E classes in school or at home, if you were home schooled.

1. You did the warm-up exercises (calisthenics) before the activity of the day.
2. When you finished, you were told not to sit down & rest, but to walk & cool-down.
3. We understand the need for warming-up, getting the muscles ready for exertion, but why the cool-down?
 - a. It turns out that the cool-down is just as essential as the warm-up – it keeps the blood circulating to the muscles, providing them with the oxygen & nutrients they need to repair the little tears caused by the work-out.
 - b. The cool-down makes the work-out more effective, so that the benefits of exercise will not be lost.
 - c. Without the cool-down you will be in more pain & thus unable to continue your exercises.

B. Today, we're going to talk about a type of spiritual cool-down.

1. An exercise that will help us retain the benefits of other "Daily Disciple" disciplines like Bible study, Scripture memorization & prayer.
2. This exercise is called MEDITATION – & it is a Biblical concept.
 - a. Now, you may be picturing the little Hindu man ..., so to better grasp the Biblical topic of meditation, turn with me to Joshua 1:6-9.

C. Background: Moses was dead, & Joshua had been commissioned to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.

1. They had been in the desert for 40 years to allow an unbelieving generation to die off, when God called Joshua to finish the job Moses started.

Joshua's task required fearless courage, trust in the Lord & full obedience to His Law.

Don't we need the same - in the task the Lord has given us to accomplish? Read ([Joshua 1:6-9](#)).

I. WHAT IS MEDITATION?

A. **We don't get the sense** that the Lord was telling Joshua to sit in the lotus position & empty his mind.

B. **No, in fact, meditation** — as God would have it to be done — is about focusing the mind on something specific.

1. The Hebrew word for "meditate" is "hagah": *to murmur, ponder, devise, muse, imagine or plot.*

a. To meditate is to think-over something in your mind; to mull it over. **Definition:** *Thinking and/or Dwelling on a subject or series of subjects to seek greater understanding.*

C. **Meditation is connected to** but different from Bible study, Scripture memorization & prayer.

1. In Bible study we are seeking to learn what God has revealed.
2. In Scripture memorization we are seeking to commit passages to memory for quick recall.
3. In prayer we are seeking to communicate with God.
4. But in meditation, we are seeking to have a deeper **understanding** of God & His word, so that our **understanding** will stay in our minds indefinitely.

[Have you ever meditated on something that made you feel uneasy, or worried?

The point is - if you know how to worry then you know how to meditate, because worry is caused by meditating on the wrong things.

So once we learn WHAT God wants us to meditate upon, then we can stop the sin of worry ([Matt 6:25-34](#)) & gain a great spiritual advantage over our Adversary, the Devil.]

II. WHAT DO WE MEDITATE ON?

A. **Meditate On God's Word.** The Lord told Joshua, *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day & night"* (1:8a).

1. Joshua needed to take time to think about God's word when he read it. So do we!
2. Joshua needed to understand the meaning of God's word as it pertained to his life. So do we!
3. Furthermore, it will also help us to ask questions about what we read.
 - a. We begin with the premise: *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...."* (2 Tim 3:16-17).
 - b. Who is speaking? Who is being spoken too? What is the subject? Why did the speaker bring up this subject? What do the words mean? Does this subject apply to me?

4. Too often we read the Scripture & forget what we read, because we didn't meditate on it; we didn't take the time to truly understand it.

1. That can be a problem of such magnitude that it will prevent us from being blessed (Jas 1:25).
2. Meditation will help us to NOT forget God, because His word is imprinted in our minds by our constantly mulling it over.

B. **Meditate On God's Works.** *"I will remember the works of the LORD; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will meditate on all your works & consider all your mighty deeds"* (Psa 77:11-12; cf. 13-20).

1. Here, the psalmist promised God that he would dwell on & think over the mighty works of God.

The creation days - **the** punishment of Adam, Eve, & the Serpent - **the** flood waters on wicked world - **the** confusion of the languages - **the** providential care of the patriarchs - **the** plagues in Egypt - **the** protection of the Israelites - **the** parting of the Red sea - **the** appearance of God at Mount Sinai - **the** manna from heaven - **the** water from the Rock - **the** conquering of Canaan.

- a. These are a few of the mighty deeds of God, which we & the Psalmist have read from God's word.
2. But, we also need to meditate on the works that God has done in our lives.
- a. Often we forget to acknowledge that God has answered our prayers, or has helped us overcome our trials.
 - b. It is important to think back over our lives & see how God has worked to fit everything together for our ultimate good (Rom 8:28).
 - c. That's what Paul did (2 Cor 1:3-5; 7:5-7; Ecc 3:14).
 - d. Ultimately, we should admit that all of God's works are mighty works, & He does them because they are good & right.

[In Philippians 4:8, where Paul told us to think on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous & praiseworthy – isn't he really telling us to think on the words & the works of God?

That is WHAT we are to meditate on. But WHY? What will meditation on the word & works of God DO for us?

According to Joshua 1:6-9, meditation can have at least three positive effects in our lives.]

III. WHAT DOES MEDITATION DO?

A. Meditation Makes Us Strong & Courageous (1:6, 7, 9).

- 1. Joshua was going to need all of the strength & courage he could muster to face the challenges ahead of him.
 - a. But that strength & courage was not going to come out of thin-air, it was going to come by meditating on the word & works of God.

2. Do you think you're going to need some strength & courage to face the challenges ahead of you?

To grow in the grace & knowledge of the Lord – to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace – to be ready to give a defense to those who ask a reason for our hope – to not compromise the Truth for friend or family – to resist the wiles of Devil?

- a. Oh yes, we're certainly going to need a lot of strength & courage.
- b. And we'll get it the same way Joshua did, by meditating on the word & works of God.
- c. *"The LORD is my strength & my shield; my heart trusts in him, & I am helped"* (Psa 28:7).

[Next, the Lord told Joshua that he would need to be strong & courageous in order to OBEY Him.]

B. Meditation Makes Us Obedient (1:7, 8).

1. In Joshua's farewell speech, he indicated the reason for Israel's success; the Lord had given them victory (24:1-13).

2. But why had the Lord given them victory? Some of the people were still serving idols (24:14-15).

a. Israel won its victory because the Lord was with Joshua (and Caleb).

b. And the Lord was with Joshua because he & his family were serving the Lord.

c. You see, for all those years Joshua & his family had been meditating on the word & works of God.

d. And their meditation empowered them to obey the Lord in everything they did.

3. What a lesson for us (Psa 119:11; Matt 4:1-10)!

[Finally, the Lord told Joshua that meditating on God's Law would give him strength & courage to obey, & through obedience he would SUCCEED.]

C. Meditation Makes Us Prosperous & Successful (1:8).

1. Question. When did Joshua become prosperous & successful? Wasn't it after he finished his mission?

2. When will the Christian become prosperous & successful? Will in not be after he or she has finished the Lord's work in this life?

Matt 25:23 – His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, ***I will make you ruler over many things***. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

- a. Isn't that the kind of prosperity & success the Lord has in mind for us, & not the material variety that so many seek?

[There are indeed abundant spiritual blessings in Christ, & He showers many material blessings on our earthly pursuits, but the prosperity & the success we seek will come after we complete our duties to Him on the earth as His servants.

Strength, Courage, Obedience, Prosperity & Success are all tied together by the effort we make to meditate on His word & works.]

CLOSING

- A. Are you prosperous & successful in the Kingdom of the Lord? You are if you are a Daily Disciple.
 1. What was Nathanael doing under that fig tree (**John 1:48**)? Was he meditating?

- B. In closing, let's consider David's recipe for success.

Psalms 1:1-3 – 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; 2 ***But his delight is in the law of the Lord, & in His law he meditates day & night***. 3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; & whatever he does shall prosper.
