

Meditation

Psalm 104:34 says, “My meditation on Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.” Scripture speaks twenty times about meditation. Today when we hear the word “meditation,” many of us think of someone sitting on the floor with legs crossed looking straight ahead humming and trying to clear his or her head of all thoughts. That is, I believe, what is called, “eastern meditation” or “transcendental mediation.” Scriptural meditation is essentially the opposite. It has been said that meditation is to the soul what digestion is to the body. One can be in most any position, being still and focusing the mind on Jesus or some other truth from Scripture. Meditation is deep, thorough contemplation, or pondering, which also means to muse. As an aside, it would do us well to note that, to muse is seriously “to think.” Amusement means not to think; the “a” as a prefix means “no,” therefore no thinking. Try to remember that, when you allow yourself or your children to sit for hours in front of a T.V. or engage in the myriad of other addictive “a-musements,” with which so very many seek to fill their lives, or perhaps to somehow compensate for a deficiency of God in their lives. For those who are without Jesus in their hearts, a-musements, non-thinking, may be the only comfortable refuge they can find.

Getting back to biblical meditation, one should cultivate and encourage such activity. But meditation isn't simply thinking about Scriptural matters wherever you are, or whatever you are doing. It involves setting aside specific times during which meditation is the only activity. When applied sincerely and personally it is extremely rewarding and restful to the spirit. Spurgeon called it a “couch of the soul” and “rest of the spirit.” He also called it “a very profitable exercise” and a way to “extract the most honey from a honeycomb.” To be fruitful, meditation must be conducted in solitude, being completely alone where there is quiet and where there are no distractions. It expands in its fruitfulness when it follows shortly after the reading of something of consequence, especially from Scripture, and when that is the focus of the meditation. My favorite and

most fruitful manner of meditation is to simply go to my room, shut the door, lie on my bed, and lapse into deep thought. My thoughts usually are about something I have read, or some Bible passage, which I don't understand, or it could be, as Spurgeon suggests, simply pondering the "weighty matters of eternity." It may be merely counting and appreciating my many blessings, or it may even be discussing with Him some troubling issues, spiritual or otherwise. Whatever the subject, I usually return to the world more edified and satisfied as well as more spiritually relaxed than I was before. It is during these periods of meditation when I become inspired with most of the ideas, which then become the compelling subjects of these papers.

I must warn you, however, that genuine meditation is very addictive! Once you have the habit, you will find that it becomes a necessity in your life. You will hunger for its effects and feel that your day was incomplete without it. Go without it for several days and you may expect to feel a sickness in your soul.

Meditation is what Spurgeon calls "the machine in which the raw material of knowledge is converted to its best use." I know that it's an effective means through which knowledge is often transformed into wisdom. It's how a truth, which is comprehended, can become one, which is apprehended. Psalm 4:4 advises us to "commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still."

You say it is a luxury you can't afford because you just don't have the time. I say that it's a necessity you cannot afford to do without if you value your Christian faith enough to want it to grow and strengthen! Do you watch any T.V., read magazines or newspapers? Are there times when you engage in other a-musements? If you say yes to these questions, you have refuted your claim to not having enough time!

Please note, that meditation is not a substitution for prayer. Meditation and prayer should be inseparable, not interchangeable. Prayer, in my opinion, should always precede meditation and also follow it. It need not necessarily relate to your main prayers, but

there should, I believe, be a short prayer asking God for a fruitful meditation and another one thanking Him for whatever was the result of this effort.

One last thought. Don't wait to meditate until you are mentally and physically too tired to think deeply. Just as you want to say your prayers when you are at your very best, and can, therefore, give Him your very best, so also should you meditate when your mind is alert. Try it! You'll like it! So will our Father.