

Review practical tips for meditating

1. Time—alert, energetic, and not stressed by other obligation
2. Place—quiet and relatively free of distractions
3. Consistent—same time everyday—building a habit
4. Frequency—not long intervals in between
5. Subject—have in mind what you are going to meditate on (cuds)
6. Pray—seek the Holy Spirit’s assistance
7. Persevere—maintain a warfare mentality

[How did it go this week?]

Review guidelines for meditating

1. Always approach a scripture within its context
2. Look at the overall structure
3. Look for contrasts, similarities, analogies, sequences
4. Look for cause and effect statements
5. Ask questions—who, how, why, when, where, what
6. Check cross references
7. Look at the root meanings of the words
8. Murmur (muse/ponder) on it one word at a time
9. Let it take you into prayer, praise and worship
10. Look for a personal application for it in your life

These are not necessarily done one at a time. As you meditate on the verse or parts of the verse various guidelines may come to mind and you should feel free to go with them. Remember it is time communing with your bridegroom and rigid structure or step following is not essential to fruitful interaction.

Practice run through on Colossians 2:8:

Beware

lest any man spoil you
through philosophy
and vain deceit,
after the traditions of men,
after the rudiments of this world,
and not after Christ.

Beware—warning; take heed; this is something we are to be on guard about; battle alert; have on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand

lest—It is possible; it can happen; it does happen; Christians are not immune to this

any—It can come from anyone, Christian or non-Christian; We need to sort through all we hear and run it through the grid of God’s word—Bereans (Acts 17:11—“Searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”)

man—It will come through other people’s words and influence. (Pro 29:25—“The fear of man brings a snare, who he who puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”); All men are fallen and the heart of man is wicked and deceitful, therefore we need to be alert.

spoil—indicates to mess up in some way, to ruin something that was okay before
[4812—*root = to rob; lead away as booty, fig. to seduce*]

through—it comes through something; it is a process; it could arrive fairly unnoticeably; I need to be alert to what it is and see it as an enemy of my soul; I need to utilize the armor the Lord has provided in order to stand against it.

philosophy—basic premise or way of thinking someone works from;
(Judges 17:6---“Every man did what was right in his own eyes.”)
[5385—*lit. the love of wisdom*]
Idol—loving wisdom more than the one who is to His church wisdom;
wisdom begins with a fear of the Lord

vain—empty; worthless; centered on self (“you’re so vain”), appealing to self
[2756—*self-conceited; desirous of vain-glory*]

deceit—something that seems real or true but is not; one of the problems with deceit is it is believable; another problem is that a deceived person does not believe he is—hence the spoiling mentioned earlier. (Doesn’t know he is being robbed)
[539—*delusion, deception, root = to cheat, delude, deceive*]

after—indicates there is a source or foundation beneath the philosophy and vain deceit that attempts to spoil us

traditions—ways held to that are done that way again and again; some times held to a law (Fiddler on the roof) [3862—*precept, ordinance*]

of men—(Matt 15:2-8—“...You have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition...in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”)

after—again another foundation or source beneath the philosophy and vain deceit

rudiments—1828 dictionary—“A first principle or element; that which is to be first learnt.”
This is foundational to traditions that are formed. These are the first or basic principles to all that man comes up with (traditions, vain deceit, philosophy) and these are at the root of the spoiling and that to which we are to be most alert. Important:---It is here the basic false or wrong pre-suppositions are exposed and rooted out.
[4747—*root = to march in (military) rank (keep step), fig. To conform to virtue and piety —walk (orderly)*]

world—the system of thought and practice produced in a fallen creation, apart from a reconciled relationship with its Creator

and not after—this sets a clear line of demarcation; a definite totally different set of foundational or rudimentary principles, a totally different set of traditions or practices, and totally different thinking and expressing truths

Christ—Sufficiently set in opposition to the whole world and the system it peddles; One being, sufficient in supremacy to every man and every thought and every basic principle of man; One life given sufficient to redeem and resurrect every one He was sent to deliver from the darkness and condemnation on this fallen creation; God incarnate—in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily—the fulness of wisdom, the fulness of truth, the fulness of judgment, the fulness of power, the fulness of present providence and eternal outcome, the fulness of life, the One who is all and fills all in all. In Him I lack nothing. He is the head of all principality and power. I am dead and risen with Christ, my life is hidden with Christ in God. When He appears again, I will also appear with Him and this time in glory. Therefore I put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Christ who created me. And I meditate in His truth day and night that I might be transformed by the renewing of my mind and not be conformed to this world.

Back on October 15th we were looking at “isms” and we defined an ism as, “a distinctive doctrine, ideal, system or practice.”

2 Cor 10:4,5—“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God, for pulling down strongholds (“isms”), casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.”

The Colossian church was plagued with some “isms.”

[Notes from The MacArthur Study Bible—“Several years after the Colossian church was founded, a dangerous heresy arose to threaten it...It contained elements of what later became known as Gnosticism: that God is good but matter is evil, that Jesus Christ was merely one of a series of emanations descending from God and being less than God (a belief that led them to deny His true humanity), and that a secret, higher knowledge above Scripture was necessary for enlightenment and salvation. The Colossian heresy also embraced aspects of Jewish legalism, e.g., the necessity of circumcision for salvation, observance of the ceremonial rituals of the OT law (dietary laws, festivals, Sabbaths), and rigid asceticism. It also called for the worship of angels and mystical experience.”]

[Notes from Spiro Zodhiate’s The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible—“Supposedly, one could achieve perfection by progressing through a number of initiations and levels of wisdom in spiritual mysteries.”]

[Zodhiates—“Instead of refuting the false teaching point by point, Paul shows that all things are fulfilled in the person of Christ. He stresses that all wisdom and spiritual understanding can be found in the God-Man who redeemed them and holds authority over all things.”]

“The solution to every ism is Him.”

Personal Application

What “ism” is the Lord addressing in my life?

In what ways (basic principles, practices, philosophies) am I being influenced by and conformed to the world (“squeezed into its mold”) instead of conformed to the image of Christ?

What has my heart more than He does?

What do I find my mind dwelling on more than Him?

Note: Our natural response is covering up or denial when our sin or weakness is exposed—we need to open our hearts to what God is addressing and move toward His conforming us to Christ.

Consider our natural credentials:

Romans 3:10-12—“There is none righteous, no not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They all have turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.”

Jeremiah 17:9,10—“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

The question is not, “Is there any way that I am conformed to the world?” or, “Is there any “ism” having any expression or influence in my life?”

The question is, “Which one is the Lord addressing in my life?”

We all have them in varying degrees and expressions.

If we didn’t have any then we wouldn’t need anything in Scripture except the historical accounts. Meditation often opens our heart to the Word of God in a way that we can see the influences or we are drawn nearer to Christ in a way that overcomes the influences.

Isms are always there and always trying to advance and increase their influence.

Secularism:

“Secular” is defined as—“of or belonging to the world and worldly things as distinguished from the church and religious affairs.”

Secularism—(Webster’s def.)

1. A system of doctrines and practices that rejects any form of religious faith and worship.
2. The belief that religion and ecclesiastical affairs should not enter into the functions of state, especially into public education.

If we are to “beware lest any man spoil us through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”, we have to recognize that secularism is not really trying to make a distinction between non-religious and religious.

Secularism stands in opposition to God. It hates God. It is “not after Christ.”
Therefore we need to regard it as a wife of Satan and be ready to wrestle against it at every turn.
Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God:

(I John 2:15-17) “Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world...”

(Col 2:16-23) “So let no one judge you in...Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false...and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body...grows with the increase that is from God...therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why as though living in them, do you subject yourselves to regulation...according to the commandments and doctrines of men?”

As God’s people, we march to a different set of rudiments and under a different commander.
Col 3:23-24—“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing from the Lord you will receive the reward of inheritance.”

The word “secular” implies more.

It traces back to two Latin words for “world”; *saeculum* and *mundus*.

Saeculum referred to the “when” of life—the here and now as opposed to the eternal.

Mundus referred to the where of life—this place earth as opposed to heaven or hell.

Secularism denies the eternal.

It disregards that anything in the here and now has eternal consequences.

If religion has value for the here and now it is allowable.

A person can go to church “to be religious” but the heart’s treasure, the things most valued, the things most sought out are for the here and now.

Ex.—Sunday only Christianity

When the here and now of life takes precedence over one’s sense of eternity and occupies most of one’s time and one’s heart and mind, that person is under the influence of secularism.

But here is what is true for the Christian:

I John 5:19-21—“We know we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true; in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen”

Colossians 3:1-5—If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore..(how to walk it out).”

John 17—The bridegroom’s prayer for His bride—notice her relationship to the world.

Meditation for next week—Matthew 6: 19-34