

Meditate (muse) means to “think upon” or “reflect.”

[a-muse = no thinking; amusement]

Meditation is not something new or novel. It is a vital skill and habit for all of God’s people. It is healing to the heart and mind (ex. Satanic ritual Abuse victims)

[Scripture records that our forefather Issac did it.]

Genesis 24: 63—“And Issac went out to **meditate** in the field in the evening...”

What would he have been meditating on?

[God required it of Israel’s first leader in the promised land—Joshua]

Joshua 1:8--- “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but **you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.** For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

[God required it of His people going into the promised land]

Deut. 4: 5-9—“See, **have taught you statutes and rules**, as the Lord my God commanded me, **that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples**, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon Him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.”

[God required it of any king in Israel]

Deut. 17:18-20 ---"And when he (the king) sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and **he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them**, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.”

[David was a man who pleased the Lord; a man after His own heart.]

Psalm 1: 2—“But his **delight** is in the law of the Lord, and in His Law he **meditates day and night.**”

Psalm 39:3—“My heart was hot within me; **while I was musing (meditating), the fire burned.**”

[Notice the response of true disciples]

Luke 24: 13-33—...“Did not our **heart burn within us while He talked** with us on the road, and **while He opened the scriptures** to us?”

The following notes are from **Puritan Reformed Spirituality** by Joel R. Beeke, reformation Heritage Books, pps. 74-79

[A challenge for believer today from the Puritans]

Thomas Watson defined meditation as “a holy exercise of the mind whereby we bring the truths of God to remembrance, and do seriously ponder upon them and apply them to ourselves.”

Edmund Calamy wrote, “A true meditation is when a man doth so meditate of Christ as to get his **heart inflamed** with the love of Christ; so meditate of the Truths of God, as to be transformed into them; and so meditate of sin as to get his heart to hate sin...Thou must so meditate of God as to walk as God walks; and so to meditate of Christ as to prize Him, and live in obedience to Him.”

Meditation was a daily duty that enhanced every other duty and relationship of the Puritan’s Christian life.

Two kinds of meditation: Occasional and Deliberate

Occasional (extemporal)—practiced any time and any place and among any people.

We are always meditating on something. What is important is the subject upon which we are meditating. Phil. 4: 8—“Whatever things are true...noble...just...pure...lovely...of good report...any virtue...anything praiseworthy—**meditate on these things.**”

Thomas Manton—“A gracious heart is like a distillation apparatus, it can distil useful meditations out of all things is meeteth with. As it seeth all things in God, so it seeth God in all things.”

The Puritans differed some but generally feared getting too far from Scripture and into one’s imagination in meditation. The Puritans were “not likely to meditate upon events in the life of Christ but rather upon doctrines of specific propositions of Scripture.” Whereas Catholic writers reached excesses in visualizing gospel stories—particularly the arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ—to open imagination through the five senses.

Deliberate—engaged in a daily set times

Thomas Gouge—“A set and deliberate Meditation, is a serious applying of the mind to some spiritual or heavenly subject, discoursing thereof wit thyself, to the end thine heart may be warmed, thine affections quickened, and thy resolutions heightened to a greater love of God, hatred of sin, etc.”

Both kinds of meditation are essential for godliness; they both serve the needs of the head and the heart. Without heart application, meditation is no more than study.

Thomas Watson—“Study is the finding out of a truth, meditation is the spiritual improvement of a truth; the one searches for the vein of gold, the other digs out the gold. Study is like a winter sun that hath little warmth and influence: meditation...melts the heart when it is frozen, and make it drop into tears of love.”

Reasons why the Puritans stressed the necessity of meditation:

God commands us to meditate on His Word—When we fail to meditate, we slight God and His Word and reveal that we are not godly.

Without meditation our reading will be less fruitful

Thomas Watson said, “We must not run over it in haste, but meditate upon God’s wisdom in indicting, and His love in sending it to us.”

Without meditating one cannot be a solid Christian.

Psalm 119: 92—“Unless Your law had been my delight, I would have perished in
Without meditation the truth will fail to profit us.

Thomas Watson—“There is as much difference between the knowledge of a truth, and the meditation of a truth, as there is between the light of a torch, and the light of the sun: set up a lamp or torch in a garden, and it has no influence. The sun has a sweet influence, it makes the plants to grow, and the herbs to flourish: so knowledge is but like a torch lighted in the understanding, which has little or no influence, it makes not a man the better; but meditation is like the shining of the sun, it operates upon the affections, it warms the heart and make it more holy. Meditation fetches life in a truth.”

Without meditation, our prayers will be less effective.

Thomas Manton—“Meditation is a middle sort of duty between the word and prayer, and has respect to both. The Word feeds meditation, and meditation feeds prayer; we must hear that we be not erroneous, and meditate that we be not barren. These duties must go hand in hand; meditation must follow hearing and precede prayer.”

Without meditation we are unable to defend the truth.

Thomas Manton—“A man that is a stranger to meditation is a stranger to himself.”

Thomas Watson—“It is meditation that makes a Christian.”

Archbishop James Ussher—“Thus you see the necessity of meditation, we must resolve upon the duty, if we mean to go to heaven.”

Without meditation sermons and teachings will lack depth of understanding, richness of feeling, and clarity of application.

Sample of a deliberate meditation on John 14: 21-24

He who has My commandments and keeps them,
It is he who loves Me.
And he who loves Me
will be loved by My Father,
and I will love him
and manifest Myself to him.

Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;
and My Father will love him,
and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

He who does not love Me does not keep My words;
and the word which you hear is not Mine
but the Father’s who sent Me.

[Context]

Several themes are going on throughout John chapters 13-17—loving God, loving one another, abiding with God, His abiding with us, bearing fruit, the coming of the Holy spirit (another Comforter), the world's response to God and His set apart ones—though all are distinctive, all go together too.

[Root meanings of words in the text]

“Commandments”—(1785) from *1781*; *injunction*, i.e. an authoritative *prescription*:---
commandment, precept

---(*1781*) *to enjoin*:—(*give*) *charge*, (*give*) *command (ments)* [Strong's]

[Note: (3551) is the word commonly used for law; usually referring to law in general. (1785) is more specific, being used of a particular command.] [NT Syn.]

“Keeps”—(5083) *to guard* (from *loss* or *injury*, prop. by keeping *the eye* upon;),

to note (a prophecy; fig. *to fulfil* a command) [Strong's]

[Lexicon—*to observe, keep*, enactments or ordinances]

[Vine's—to observe, to give heed to, as of keeping commandments]

“Loves”—(25)—perh. From **agan** (*much*); *to love* (in a *social or moral sense*) [Strong's]

[Note: (25) is the word used of God's love to men. It is also the word ordinarily used of men's love to God. And it is the word used of love to one's enemies.] [NT Syn.]

“Manifest”—(1718)—*to exhibit* (in person) or *disclose* (by words):—appear, declare (plainly), inform, shew, signify. [Strong's]

[Vine's—“metaphorically, of the manifestation of Christ by the Holy Spirit in the spiritual experience of believers who abide in His love.”]

“World”—[NT Syn---means the inhabitants of the world, mankind in general, as opposed to God.]

“Word(s)”—**Logos**—[Vine's—a saying or statement by God.]

“Make”—[NT Syn.—refers more to the object and end of an act than the means by which it is attained. It means *to accomplish* more than just *to busy one's self about*. It often means to do a thing once for all rather than to do continually or repeatedly.]

“Home”—(3438)—*a staying*, i.e. *residence* (the act or the place):—abode, mansion

[Questions to ask the text—who, what, where, when, why, how & related scriptures]

What commandments (or words)?—All that God has said; from the ten commandments (enlarged upon in application in the Larger Catechism) to the recent “new commandment” of loving one another as He loved us.

Luke 21: 33—“*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away.*”

Matthew 4: 4—“*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*”

2 Timothy 3: 16—“*All scripture is God-breathed...*”

Why commandments?---The heart of the matter is not that every jot and tittle of the law be perfectly kept—I could never do that—and Christ has done that for me. The heart of the matter is where my heart is oriented—do I look to God and what He has said first or look somewhere else (like my own understanding)? Am I fully depending on Him or am I trying to serve two masters? My love (my heart) is revealed in what I look to for my way, truth and life.

Deut. 8: 1-2—“*Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. And you shall remember that the Lord Your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and to test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.*”

Jeremiah 17: 5-10—“*Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord [parched]...Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord [fruitful]...The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked (incurably sick); who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind (the most secret parts, lit. the kidneys), even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.*”

“Why keeps?”—When I keep something, I value it; I don’t want to lose it or be without it; I have something in mind for it. If I am keeping a directive from a higher authority, I continue to use that as my direction until I hear differently from that same authority. “(I) keep” has the sense of personal commitment on my part.

Meditation is a way to “keep” the commandments and words of God in my heart.

Psalms 119: 1-2, 10-11, 14-16—“*Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart...With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You... I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.*”

Psalm 119: 97-104—“*Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.*”

James 1: 21-25—“*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*”

“Why loves?”—Faith and hope put my trust in another, but love puts my affections on another. Love involves sacrifice and giving. Love involves dying to myself. Love holds the purposes of another above my own. True love is the only thing that can completely set me free from myself.

John 3: 16—“*For God so loved that He gave...*”

Ephesians 5: 25-27—“*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*”

John 15: 5-17—“*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you*

do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”

John 8: 31-32, 36—*“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free...Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”*

2 Peter 1:2-11—*“May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”*

“Manifest how?”—Christ *“upholds all things by the word of His power”* and runs the whole world by His word and ordinances. Christ will love me and manifest Himself to me as I keep His words or commandments. This motivates me even more to meditate on His word. As I chew and chew on His thoughts, words, laws, commands, precepts, statutes and principles they don’t become what I am, I become what they are. Not only do I learn about Him, but I learn of Him. My mind is renewed to think like Him and instead of being squeezed into the world’s mold, I am transformed into His image. The outworking of His word being manifested to me and in me is that I learn and prove what is the will of God—I bear His fruit. All of this is a work of the Holy Spirit done in conjunction with the Word of God.

Psalm 119: 89-91—*“Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all are Your servants.*

Psalm 19: 7-14—*“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.”*

1 Timothy 4: 1, 7-8, 13-16—“*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ...but reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come...Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*”

Romans 11: 33-36, 12: 1-2—“*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!...for of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*”

1 Cor. 3: 16—“*Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*”

2 Cor 3: 17-18—“*Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*”

Galatians 5: 22-23—“*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*”

Luke 6: 43-45—“*For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaks.*”

“Isms” are wiles of the devil and subtle in their influence—often appearing as light or right.

Isaiah 5: 20—“*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*”

[Quotes on “Relativism” by John R. Sittema, from *With A Shepherd’s Heart*, 1996.]

“Not only does the devil tear at the flock of God with the dripping fangs of secularism and materialism, but he also attacks their inner strength with the erosion of commitment that occurs because of relativism...Every culture possesses and exhibits its basic values in the way it lives its life. Those values are shaped by its heart convictions. To say it a bit differently, secular materialists *are* religious and they *do* have ethics, but their religion and their ethics are shaped by their secularism and their materialism. Cannibals eat the flesh of their enemies, but not of their fellow tribesmen. Al Capone killed many people, but never failed to stop at the Catholic church each morning for confession and Mass...Everyone has a set of values, a way of determining right and wrong. But in a world in which the eternal has been excluded from having a decisive role and in which the here and now has been elevated to divine status, such values are determined exclusively by the individual himself and for himself. No longer may we appeal to an eternal and sovereign God who has revealed Himself in His Word, and Whose Word is absolute truth...No, in a culture that denies the eternal and worships the here and now, any eternal and absolute truth is rejected in favor of a here and now judgment. It’s ethics on the fly!

To think that the Bible, penned over two millenia ago, could be the absolute standard of right and wrong is viewed as nonsense, plain and simple. Such a belief is met, in the mind of today’s relativist, with disbelief and indignation....In Chuck Colson’s book, *The Body*, Colson observes that the only thing that our relativistic society holds as an absolute is that there are no absolutes, and that those of us who believe that such absolutes exist are absolutely wrong!

What effect has this had on the church?

* Many people in the church have lost all respect for church discipline. “After all, who are you to judge me or what I do? It’s my life; leave me alone.” Along with the individual’s rejection of biblical standards applied by God’s appointed shepherds to their lives, comes the ease with which the discontented lone sheep can find refuge in another fold. For you see a corollary of relativism is pluralism. Don’t like the church where you receive God’s care? Move to another one.

* Many church members have lost the conviction that the Bible is true. Replacing that conviction is the relativistic notion that the Bible *contains* truth, but that since Christians have never been able to agree completely on what the bible says, none of us really know what truth is, anyway. Besides, “other religions contain a measure of truth, too,” That’s been the point of the World Council of churches for many years, seeking to accord respect to any and all religions.

* Don’t for get the corollary; if the bible is no longer confessed to be absolute truth, then there is nothing the Christian church may declare to be absolute error, either. Pastoral elders are no longer expected to denounce as sin errors of doctrine; they must likewise tread lightly when

applying ecclesiastical sanctions to people living in moral sin lest they find themselves embroiled in a defamation lawsuit. “Who do you think you are, telling me that abortion is wrong?” cries the relativistic church member. “The Christian faith is about love, not about judgment!” cries the homosexual pastor of the Metropolitan community Church downtown. “Leave me alone; quit hassling me!” demands the child of a long-standing church member who has been living with his girlfriend without the benefit of marriage. If there is no truth, there is no such thing as heresy either!”

Hosea 4: 6—“*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*”

Relativism is basically situational ethics.---*What I decide to do is relative to what ever other factors are important to me at the time.* As a disciple of Christ everything I decide should be relative to His Word as my absolute and infallible standard for both doctrine and life. This again only reinforces the need to meditate in the word day and night.