

# Meditating on the Word

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As you read the scripture, keep one question in mind: "Lord, what are you saying to me?" Look at this question again. It does not ask what God has to say to someone else, but only to you, where you are, and who you are. Your Bible study is for you. Once you have sensed God speaking to you, underline or highlight the verse in which you find His truth. Because there are so many riches in the Word, try dealing with one verse at a time. Once you have centered in on a verse, follow the steps outlined below.

*By the way, it might be good to have a note pad handy in order to jot some things down. Again, the more senses you can involve in the study of the Word, the greater the retention, productivity, and effectiveness.*

## Step One: Around It

Think of the verse in context. What is the setting? For instance, if your verse is John 3:16, who was Jesus talking to? You may want to read the whole chapter. Read what surrounds your verse. This step will help you understand the verse better.

## Step Two: Adjust It

Adjust the verse by rewriting it or restating it. Put it in your own words. Write it out or say it in *your* "language." Use words you are familiar with rather than religious terminology. If you are not keeping a personal Bible study journal and you do not write out the verse, at least "say" the verse in your own language.

## Step Three: Analyze It

This step is the heart of meditation; in fact, it is the most enriching and has two parts to it.

Part I: Select a key word or phrase in the verse. It should be a word that is important to the initial thought you had as you sensed God speaking. Of that word, ask the "who," "what," "why," "when," and "how" questions. Not all of these questions will be applicable every time, but remember to let the verse answer each question. Let the verse answer each question.

As an example, from John 3:16 we select the words "everlasting life." Our questions and answers from the verse then could be: "**Who** receives everlasting life?" or "**Who** gives everlasting life?" Anyone in the world who believes in the Son of God receives everlasting life. God is the one who gives everlasting life. "**What** is everlasting life?" It is God's gift to us so we will not perish. "**When** do you receive everlasting life?" It comes, as you believe in Jesus as the Son of God. "**Why** is everlasting life given?" Because God loves the world. "**How** does everlasting life come?" It comes through Jesus whom God sent into the world. Remember, as you ask the question using your key word, let the verse answer the questions.

*Remember, let the verse speak for itself and answer the questions. Taking a bias to the scriptures keeps the scripture from becoming clear.*

Second, to further analyze the verse for deeper meaning, start with the first word of the verse, and emphasize it as you read the verse. Then, read the verse again, but this time only emphasize the second word. Repeat it again, but emphasize the third word, and so on until you have repeated and emphasized each word of the verse. The "color" that is brought to the verse is enlightening. Try this with John 3:16 and see what happens. This exercise of repetition will also help you commit the verse to memory.

#### **Step Four: Apply It**

Evaluate how the verse applies to you. Insert into the verse your name or personal pronouns. You have already put the verse in your own words, so go one step further and write out or say what the verse says to you. Use common language and direct it to you not someone else. To use John 3:16 again, your personalization might be: "God loves **me**, and He has shown this to **me** because He has sent Jesus to this earth to die for **me**. If **I** believe He is God's Son, then **I** have eternal life, and **I** will not perish."

Since the Scriptures are given to us for *doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction*

What does the verse say that you should know?

What does the verse say that you should stop?

What does the verse say that you should start?

What does the verse say that you should be?

Take action to apply the truths that you have discovered. How does what you have "heard" from God affect your job, your family, your relationships, your faith?

#### **Step Five: Affirm It**

Affirm the truth learned by praying the verse back to God. What this means is that you have sensed God speaking to you, and you have thought about what He has said. Now it is time for you to say something back to Him. It may be in the form of thanksgiving: "Thank you, Father, for giving me eternal life" or "Thank you, Lord, for giving me Jesus." It may need to take the form of confession and repentance: "Father, forgive me for thinking I needed to be good in order to receive eternal life. I know now it is your gift to me." Remember we started the Bible study with a question in mind? "God, what are you saying to me?" In this final step of the study, the question is, "God, what now do I need to say to you?"

*If you use this method of meditation to study the scriptures, you will find yourself wanting to spend more time in the Word. You cannot receive of all the blessings God desires to give and you cannot grow to the maturity God has planned unless you "continue in My Word" (John 8:31).*

## **An Example of Meditation**

Scripture Text: ***Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*** 1 Peter 5:6-7

### **Around It**

Peter is encouraging the believers to be humble toward one another because God resists those who are proud.

### **Adjust It**

"You must humble yourself to the rulership of God and His care and He will lift you up in His time. Because of this fact, we can give our worries to Him for we know He cares for us."

### **Analyze It**

Key Word Choice - *careth*

Questions: **What** is cared for?

*All my cares and everything that weighs me down are cared for.*

**Who** cares or **who** is cared for?

*God cares and He cares for me.*

**Why** does He care?

*He cares for me because He loves me and wants the best for me.*

**How** does He care?

*He cares for me by allowing me to see Him working in others.*

**When** does He care?

*All the time, because He is sovereign.*

### **Apply It**

"If I realize my insufficiency and my desperate need of God, submitting to Him rather than to my wishes, I would find greater peace."

What I should know – God cares for me and wants to lift me up.

What I should stop – being so proud.

What I should start – being more humble before Him, give Him my cares.

What I should be – confident that I am cared for.

### **Affirm It**

"Dear Father, forgive me for caring for myself at the expense of omitting your blessing for me. I humble myself before you, acknowledging your might and love for me."