

LESSON 7: MEDITATION AND FELLOWSHIP

DAY 43

1. What is meditation?

{meditation}

THE HEBREW WORD FOR *MEDITATION* MEANS TO *SPEAK TO ONESELF*. *MEDITATION* IS THE ACT OF THINKING, CONSIDERING, PONDERING AND DWELLING ON A THOUGHT. THE BIBLE ENCOURAGES US TO MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORKS, WORD AND CHARACTER.

2. What is one of the purposes of meditation? (Psalm 49:1-3)
3. What does God want to be in our hearts? How does God help you to develop that heart? (Deuteronomy 5:29; Deuteronomy 6:4-6)

P2P: Is a love for God filling your heart? Are you focused first and foremost on your service to Him and your relationship with Him above any other thoughts?

4. What value did Moses place on meditating and observing all the words of the law? (Deuteronomy 32:46-47)

P2P: Meditation is not a futile activity; rather, it is one that affects the whole course of your life. You become what you think about and what you believe.

5. Read Deuteronomy 8:11-20 to answer the following questions.
 - a. What are the effects of not filling your heart with thoughts of God?
 - b. What is the connection between not meditating in your heart about God and pride? How does meditating on God and the things of God keep you humble?
6. What are God's meditations about you? (Jeremiah 29:11)

P2P: What is your response to God thinking thoughts of peace toward you, about giving you a future and a hope? All His instruction about meditation is to lead us in the paths of righteousness, to keep our hearts and minds focused on Him, His greatness, His righteousness, His wisdom and His perfect ways so that we are made in the image of His Son Jesus Christ. Proverbs 23:7 says, "as a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

7. God wants us to meditate on Him and His works. What impact does it have on you when you read these verses and think about the greatness of God? (Psalm 63:6-8; Psalm 77:1-20; Psalm 143:5)

PRAY Ask God to help you truly see the value of meditating upon Him and His works. Thank Him for His thoughts of good toward you, of a hope and future. Thank Him for His faithfulness and ask God to help you learn to live by the same principle of faithfulness that governs His life. Thank God for who He is.

DAY 44

8. Why does God want us to meditate on His laws and teachings? (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 119:9-16)

9. What kind of impact does it have on your heart and mind when you spend time thinking about God's specific teachings? (Psalm 119:25-32; Psalm 119:47-48; Psalm 119:148)

10. What does God want us to focus our thoughts upon? (Philippians 4:8)

P2P: Why does God want these things in your heart? What impact does it have on your attitude, your approach to life when you think about these things? Conversely, what is the impact of thinking about what is a bad report, what is evil, harmful, hurtful, impure, degrading, etc.?

11. What effect will this have on your words? (Matthew 12:33-37; Matthew 15:18-19)

P2P: Have you considered that what you meditate on affects what you speak? And how that which is in your heart affects your conduct?

12. How can meditating on God's word have a positive impact on you? Describe what the following verses reveal. (Psalm 119:97-104; Psalm 4:4-8; 1 Timothy 4:12-16)

13. What should be our approach to meditation? (Psalm 19:14; Psalm 104:34; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

P2P: Do you think about pleasing God with your thoughts? Have you committed yourself to bringing every thought into obedience to Christ?

MEDITATE

What you meditate on greatly determines who you are. What you speak and do are a reflection of what you think. The battle to give your life to God is one that happens in your mind and heart, where you think and believe. It is in our hearts and minds that the battle is either won or lost. Therefore, what we meditate upon is of utmost importance. Are you taking time to think about God, His love, His righteousness, His justice, His mercy, His compassion, His whole being and all His works and teachings? The things of God are truly unsearchable riches, but let us commit to give Him our thoughts and meditations daily.

PRAY

Thank God for giving you His law and His perfect ways that instruct you in His way of life. Ask God to show you how His law reveals the true reality of Himself and Jesus Christ. Ask God to bless you with His Spirit to teach you and reveal to you the truth and perfection of His Word. Ask God to help you commit to making your meditations constantly pleasing to Him and to bless your commitment that you may bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

DAY 45

14. How does what you meditate upon affect what you have to share with others in fellowship? (Psalm 145:1-21; Malachi 3:16-18)

P2P: Think about the impact you can have in edifying and encouraging others when you devote yourself to meditating on the things of God. Your meditation becomes a part of your fellowship with others.

The word *fellowship* means *to share*. It is the sharing of thoughts and meditations, the sharing of our belief and faith, the sharing of our goods and possessions, the sharing of our homes and hearts, the sharing of our prayers and spiritual gifts. Godly fellowship in the body of Christ is the sharing of all things, one with another, for the mutual service and benefit of all members.

15. What was the basis for the disciples' fellowship? (Acts 2:42)

16. What did they continue to do after they became believers? (Acts 2:43-47)

P2P: Do you share the meditations you have about God, His word and His works with others? Do you share your faith with others?

17. How does sharing your faith help others? How does it *refresh*? (Philemon 1:4-7)

18. What did Jesus command us to do to share our faith with others? (Mark 16:14-20; Matthew 28:19-20)

19. Are you prepared to share the gospel with others? (1 Peter 3:15)

MEDITATE How can your meditations help prepare you to give an answer when you are asked about the hope that is within you? If you are not meditating on God's word and the hope within you, are you truly preparing to give an answer?

PRAY Praise God for the fellowship opportunities He provides to you in His church. Ask God to deepen your friendships with believers through meaningful fellowship. Also ask Him for more courage to share your faith with others. Thank God for His word, through which you can prepare to give an answer for the hope that is within you.

DAY 46

20. Read 1 John 1:1-2:6 to answer the following questions.

- a. What is the fellowship we have been called into? (1 John 1:1-4)
- b. What does this passage tell us about how our fellowship with Jesus can be impacted positively... and negatively? (1 John 1:5-2:2)
- c. Why does not keeping God's commandments equate to not knowing Jesus? (1 John 2:3-5)

21. Is this fellowship limited to only you and Jesus? (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

P2P: Do you see how the fellowship you have with God has made you part of a bigger body of believers, all of whom are part of one fellowship? Think about that fellowship in terms of sharing with the other members in their lives, rejoicing when one rejoices and suffering when one suffers.

God gave us a great illustration in the physical body we all possess. When one member is hurt, all other members come to its aid as they can, some directly, and some for support of the overall body. But the body doesn't turn on itself; it is all directed by the head to care for itself. We in the body of Christ should also be caring for one another in service to the Head, Jesus Christ.

22. What is the mindset that we should take toward one another in the body? (Ephesians 4:1-6)

P2P: Maintaining fellowship with others is dependent upon walking with lowliness and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This attitude is far from judgment and condemnation. It is about care, consideration and service. True, godly fellowship is based on God's love for one another. Division, gossip and wrong judgment destroy godly fellowship.

If God so loved someone that He sent His Son to die for them, what should our attitude be toward them? Do we have a heart to save, or destroy?

23. How can meditation help you maintain a lowly, gentle, patient and loving spirit toward others? (Philippians 2:1-4)

24. How do these scriptures in Philippians relate to the second great commandment to love your neighbor as yourself? (Matthew 22:39)

MEDITATE Are you learning enough about others to look out for their interests as well as your own? *A key component of fellowship* is learning about one another so that you can serve them in prayer, with words of comfort, encouragement and instruction, with food and hospitality, and with whatever gifts God has physically or spiritually given to you.

PRAY Thank God for allowing you to have direct and intimate fellowship with Him and Jesus. Confess any selfishness or fear which is preventing you from sharing more in fellowship with the body of Christ. Ask God for a spirit of gentleness, humility and patience as you interact with others and look for ways to serve other believers.

DAY 47

25. What should be your approach in fellowship with those having differing practices from you? (Romans 14:1-23)

P2P: What are ways you might be putting a stumbling block before others and judging them improperly?

When you judge someone, bitterness often enters and it becomes very difficult to serve that person. Test your attitude to examine whether there is anyone you cannot serve because of your feelings for them.

26. Does the phrase *not to put a stumbling block* mean that we should overlook conduct that is sinful in our fellow believers with whom we are in fellowship? (1 John 5:16; Galatians 6:1-2)

27. What should you do if one in the body of Christ is sinning against you? (Matthew 18:15-20)

28. What is the body's responsibility when one member in the body is openly living in sin without repentance or even the desire to repent? (1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

P2P: Do you follow the instructions of God when it comes to someone in the body who is openly sinning without repentance? Why does God want us to break fellowship with those who are openly, willfully and proudly breaking His commandments?

29. What are some sins God says remove you from fellowship with Him in His church and kingdom? (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-7; Revelation 21:7-8)

MEDITATE Loving someone, combined with the understanding of what can lead one into death, is what truly gives you the courage to confront a brother who is in sin. As part of the church, we should never compromise on the definition of sin. All sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4), but "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3).

PRAY Ask God to sanctify His body and to give us a heart of humility and meekness in approaching our brothers. Ask God to be considerate of others in their differences of religious practice and worship *where no sin is involved*. Ask for the wisdom to know when we should approach others who are in sin and for a spirit of discernment without compromising God's word.

DAY 48

30. With whom should you have your deepest fellowship? (2 Corinthians 6:14)

P2P: Why does God instruct us not to be unequally yoked, believers with unbelievers? In what relationships do people become *yoked* to another person? Are you unequally yoked with anybody?

31. How can our fellowship with Christ and others be a help when we find ourselves in sin? (James 5:16-20)

P2P: Confessing trespasses to one another is an instruction to those who share a close fellowship and love for one another. This is done in a spirit of trust, among those believers who you trust will not further judge you, nor tale bear, but ones who will look upon you in a spirit of humility, compassion, mercy and forbearance. A believer desires to help those who confess, and never hurt them in any way.

32. What should be our approach in fellowship with one another? What is the attitude of sharing among believers? (Acts 4:32-37; Romans 12:10-13; 1 Peter 4:8-11)

P2P: Are you looking for opportunities to share and be hospitable with others, to meet the needs of others whenever you have opportunity?

33. What is the fruit of godly fellowship? (2 Corinthians 9:12-15)

PRAY Ask God for wisdom as you confess your trespasses to others in the body of Christ. Also ask Him for a caring heart toward each member of the body and for a cheerful heart with which to share with others, whether sharing the faith of Jesus, a word of correction or goods of this world.

DAY 49

MEDITATE & PRAY Spend time further reflecting upon and praying about the parts of Lesson 7 that really inspired you. Thank God again for the fellowship He provides to you.