

Meditation on God's Word

How do we participate in the work of God's Spirit? The primary "means of grace" or spiritual disciplines by which we train ourselves to be like Christ (1 Tim. 4:8) are Bible intake (listening, reading, studying, memorization, meditation, and application) and prayer. In devotional time, we tend not to connect these two primary spiritual disciplines. We read or study the Bible, put it down, and then turn to pray. What I suggest below is to connect these two as we devote time daily for devoted relational time with our God and Father.

There are two ways to connect Bible intake and prayer. The first is through memorization of Scripture. This can quickly lead to meditation on God's truth and prayer. It is heart memorization whereby you are memorizing Scripture in the spirit of prayer or in presence of the Author. The second way to connect the two primary disciplines is through meditation.

To meditate on Scripture is to think deeply upon the Scriptures. God's Prayer Book, the Book of Psalms, begins with a call to meditate on God's Word. "Blessed is the man... who *"meditates day and night"* on God's Word (Ps. 1:1-2). Meditating on the truth and spiritual realities can be a gateway into deeper prayer. In 1896, George Mueller, a famous prayer warrior and founder of many orphanages, wrote a book interestingly called *Soul Food*. He wrote, "The difference between my previous practice and my present practice is this: formerly when I rose, I spent all of my time before breakfast in prayer, but what was the result? I often spent an hour on my knees before having been conscious to myself to divine humbling of the soul and comfort and often suffered from much wandering thoughts. I scarcely suffer from this now. I began to meditate on the New Testament. I began searching through every verse, not for the preaching, but for the obtaining of food for my soul. After a few minutes, my soul would lead to confession, thanksgiving, or intercession. Then, I would go to the next words or verse, turning all that into prayer as the Word may lead to it. It often astonishes me that I did not see this point before."

How then do we connect the two disciplines? There are many ways to meditate. One method that I have found helpful comes from Martin Luther. Luther was at his barber getting a haircut and his barber said, "Master Luther, how do I pray?" Luther wrote his barber a 40-page letter which was turned into a booklet called, *A Simple Way to Pray*. It offers an excellent method of connecting the two spiritual disciplines by meditating on the Scriptures. Here are some of his thoughts:

First, we must prepare ourselves to spend time with God. We do this by quieting ourselves and asking God's Spirit to *"illuminate our mind, warm our spirit and mold our will."* The Spirit's work is to lead us into the truth.

Secondly, we read a short passage slowly. If you are reading through the Bible in a year, I encourage you to isolate a passage for meditation. Slow reading is reading with the heart. It is tasting the truth, not just reading it. Practically, I am talking about reading the short passage two or three times. As you read, you will want to write down what strikes you about the passage.

Thirdly, try to distill the main teaching of the passage. Four questions will be very helpful to distill the meaning of the passage. They are as follows:

- What does the passage say about who God is?
- What does the passage say about what God does?
- What does the passage say about who we are? (That is who we are and what have we been like that day (thinking, feeling, doing)
- What does the passage say about who we should be?

Fourthly, write down the teaching of the passage and then use the teaching to prepare us to pray. On the basis of the teaching, how can I love, thank, and adore God (adoration)? On the basis of the teaching, how can I confess my sin (confession)? On the basis of the teaching, what do we ask for (supplication)? Write those adorations, confessions, and supplications (A.C.S.) down.

Fifthly, use the A.C.S. as the basis of our prayer.

Lastly, as we pray, be sensitive to and write down any insights God's Spirit gives you.

I hope that by using these simple steps, you will find yourself being drawn closer and deeper into the Presence of God. I pray that you will enjoy Him more and that He will increase your understanding of His Word in your heart and mind as you daily walk in fellowship with Him.

Great Peace in the Lord

Eddie