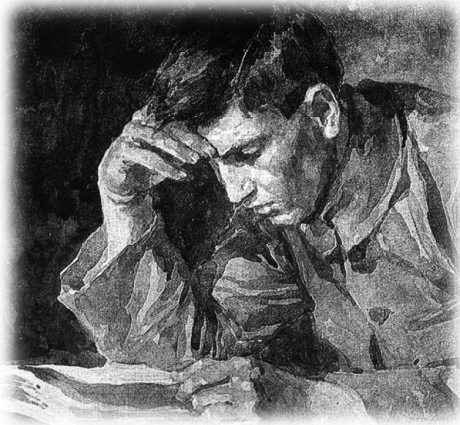




BIBLE MEDITATION





How not to Meditate

1

Do not neglect any portion of the Bible.

2

Do not rush thro' your meditation.

3

Do not be lazy while studying the Bible.

4

Do not depend solely on your intellect.

5

Do not ignore the context of the Bible text.

6

Do not place experiences above the Scriptures.

7

Do not probe into the secret things.

8

Do not neglect prayer life.

9

Do not delay obedience.

10

Do not stagnate with your knowledge.



How not to Meditate

Introduction

- If prayer is one wing for the Christian,
Bible meditation is the other —
Acts 6:4 ... prayer ... Word
Moses called these two as the unique privileges of
God's people—
Dt 4:7,8 ... Call upon Him ... such statutes
- God has magnified His Word above all His Name —
Psa 138:2b
The longest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119;
every one of its 176 verses speaks about the Bible.
- God's Word more important than daily food —
— Job (Job 23:12)
... more than my necessary food
— Jesus (Mt 4:4)
... man shall not live by bread alone
- Of the enjoyments of life,
some are legitimate;
others are illegitimate.
Even among the legitimate enjoyments,
only one has no limit of enjoyment,
and that's Bible meditation —
Psa 119:96 ... exceedingly broad ...
You can't be eating or playing the whole day,
but you can be meditating the Bible "day and night" —
Psa 119:97

- Everything we see today is temporal —
Buildings, Furniture, Automobiles, Dresses ...
There's only one exception —
The "Bible"
Jesus said it (Mt 24:35)
— This is about the "inhabited" earth.
Peter said it (1 Pet 1:24,25)
— This is about the "inhabitants" of the earth.
- The Bible: (Psa 119:105) *Lamp to our feet* (immediate)
Light to our path (distant)
We are in a world of darkness.
There's utter confusion and chaos everywhere.
Both individuals and governments are lacking clarity.
Only when we come back to the Bible,
our questions are answered, and our puzzles are solved.
- Bible "meditation" is becoming extinct.
People simply "read" the Bible.
God's call to sustained meditation —
Josh 1:8
Psa 1:2
Psa 119:15,23,48,78,97,99,148
- While reading a Bible passage, it is not enough
if we know what it SAYS;
we must also understand what it MEANS.
This is where meditation is indispensable.
- Very few Christians had been taught at the
beginning of their spiritual lives how to meditate the Bible.
As a result they have picked up more of wrong methods
than the right way of Bible meditation and
Bible interpretation. Hence this study —
*"How **not** to Meditate"*

How not to Meditate

1. Do not neglect any portion of the Bible.

- Many Christians limit their meditations to their favourite texts, passages or books—

For some it's Psalms

— because, all they want is some **devotional** material.

For others, it's Proverbs

— **practical** counsel

or, the Gospels

— **historical** narrative

or, the Epistles

— **doctrinal** content

For some, it's always the Old Testament

For others, it's always the New Testament

OT only: an overdose of the severity of God

NT only: an overdose of the kindness (grace) of God

OT only — legalistic — Joyless Christian

NT only — liberty in Christ — Careless Christian

OT & NT are the two “lips” of God.

The NT was concealed in the OT;

The OT is revealed in the NT.

The Bible is a *Treasure* box of both “*new*” and “*old*” (Mt 13:52).

- We are admonished to study the WHOLE Bible —

2 Tim 3:16,17

All ... complete ... thoroughly ... every good work ...

The 4-fold benefit—

- a) “*doctrine*” — mostly from the Epistles
- b) “*reproof*” — mostly from OT history (1 Cor 10:11)
- c) “*correction*” — mostly in the Gospels
(Jesus against traditions & wrong practices)
- d) “*instruction*” — mostly in the wisdom books
(Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, etc.)

— There’s nothing unnecessary in the Bible —

Rom 15:4 ... *WHATEVER is written*

— We are often warned against “adding” anything to the Bible

(Rev 22:18);

but what about “avoiding” certain portions?

Look at verse 19!

The second is worse than the first!

If you “add” ... (1) Plagues added

If you “avoid” ... (1) Book of Life (2) Holy City (3) Blessings

That’s why Paul was particular in declaring

the “*whole*” *counsel of God*

Acts 20:20,26,27

■ A call to Pastors and Preachers:

Teach people the whole Bible,

so Biblical illiteracy may leave the Churches.

Because the Preachers don’t teach the “whole” Bible,

our Christians know some Bible texts only;

they don’t know the Bible!

Only when we study the whole Bible,

we will get **wholesome** food for mind and soul.

Only then we will experience **wholesome** growth

and development in our Christian life.

That's how Jesus grew (Lk 2:52)

In wisdom — Intellectual

In stature — Physical

In favour with God — Spiritual

In favour with men — Social

This was because of His wholesome understanding of the Scriptures even at the age of 12 (Lk 2:46,47)

■ Helps:

- Read through the entire Bible once every year or once in two years' time.

Use Bible Reading Calendars

- Harder texts are there — Don't worry —
The question marks of the first reading will become exclamation marks in subsequent readings!

Unlike other textbooks, the Bible is the same for all age groups and spiritual levels. So you will not understand everything in the first instance itself. It's for lifetime!

— If we neglect any portion of the Bible,
we will be like a "*half-baked*" bread! (Hos 7:8)

What we don't understand here on earth will be understood in eternity (1 Cor 13:9-12).

Praise God for the 66 Books of the Bible!

How not to Meditate

2. Do not rush thro' your meditation.

- This age is characterised by —
 - speed ... fastness ... swiftness ... instant ...
 - This is a computer age
 - Fast food restaurants are more popular
 - than the conventional ones
 - Super-speeding cars are in great demand

This spirit and trend cannot be carried over into
Bible meditation—

The Bible gives us two things—

- a) Knowledge for our heads
- b) Message for our hearts

Acquiring of “knowledge” can be fast;
but receiving the “message” from God takes time —

Psa 130:5 ... *“I wait in His Word”*

The Bible is not a fast food
or a junk food!

The very first reference to Scriptures in Psalms, the longest
Book in the Bible, speaks of unhurried meditation—

Psa 1:1,2

- a) not “*sitting*” with scornful men — pastimes
 - b) but “*sitting*” with the Scriptures — patient reading
- This was the experience of the great prophet
“Jeremiah” —
- Jer 15:16,17 a) *I did not sit with mockers*
b) *I sat alone with Your Word!*

But what's our experience?

We spend long hours before TV or in other pastimes;
but only a quick "sip" with the Bible.

The world becomes noisy after 6 or 7 am.

The Psalmist chose the early hours for meditation

(Psa 119:147,148)

Golden Rule: Early to bed; early to rise!

- Meditating the Bible than just **reading** it —

You must read until you "*hear!*"

Rom 10:17 ... *Faith comes by hearing ... hearing*

As we patiently read God's **Word**,

we will hear His gentle **Voice!**

The voice of the Lord makes us skip like a young deer —

Psa 29:6,7

It's the "voice" that implants the Word —

eg) John the voice leads to Jesus the Word! (Jn 1:23,36)

- Days are normally quite hectic.

We are exhausted at the end of the day.

We are not able to get up early in the morning.

Remedy: Catch up in the weekends.

Do not attend too many Christian meetings.

Just a Sunday Service,

and then a few hours for unhurried meditation.

Why not apply for leave for a day or two

to exclusively sit with the Bible?

— It is only when we spend quality time with the Bible,

the Word will **sink** into our hearts.

The Bible calls it as *“implanting”* the Word!

(Js 1:21) *HEAR* (v19)

It’s more than “scattering” the seed on the ground!

It’s “planting” the seed!

— This is the meaning of “eating” the Word —

Job 23:12

Not by bread alone ... (Mt 4:4)

No use in simply smelling the bread

or slicing the bread ...

It must be **“eaten”**

“I ate them!” (Jer 15:16)

- Take a decision: for daily meditation
for weekly meditation
for extended periods of study

D.L. Moody (1837-1899):

“A day without the Bible is a day ill-spent!”

How not to Meditate

3. Do not be lazy while studying the Bible.

- In secular study,
we need both intelligence and industriousness.

In Scripture study,

we need both “inspiration” and “perspiration.”

We are called to “*search*” the Scriptures;
not simply read them —

Prov 2:3-5 ... *cry out ... lift up ... seek ...*

search ... HIDDEN TREASURES

What may be found on the riverbed is only “pebbles” —
for “pearls” you must go for deep-sea diving.

“Searching” the Scriptures is a rewarding experience —

Isa 34:16

a) *None shall fail* — The certainty

b) *None shall lack its mate* — The clarity

Scripture explains Scripture.

D.L. Moody: “The Bible is the Bible’s best Commentary.”

This was the experience of a group of believers
in the city of Berea—

Acts 17:10,11 ... *more fair-minded than*

the Thessalonian Christians

:12 ... “Therefore”...many **Greeks** (wisdom)

prominent (status) men & women

Why does Luke **compare** these two groups?

To stress that mere reading and hearing is not enough.

- “*Diligent searching*” has been the habit of God’s men even before the Canon of the Scriptures was completed
1 Pet 1:10-12; Jn 7:52
- How to indulge actively in Bible study —

Helps

- a) Underline ... Wide margin Bibles/bold letters/
fine ballpoint pens/ etc.
- b) Jot down ... Notebooks/Diaries
When I write down what I read,
the texts get easily memorized.
- c) Refer to Study Aids:
 - Translations — Clarity
NKJV/NIV/ESV/NLT/Amplified
Parallel Bibles
 - Bible Dictionaries — Background ... Culture ...
Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary
Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary
Unger’s Bible Dictionary
 - Study Bibles — Book Introductions/Outlines/Notes
NIV Study Bible
NKJV Study Bible
ESV Study Bible
 - Concordances — Parallel/similar passages
Cruden’s Complete Concordance
Treasury of Scripture Knowledge
 - Commentaries — Interpretation
Matthew Henry Bible Commentary
IVP Bible Background Commentary

□ *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*

Personal: This is how I, a non-Seminarian,
am studying the Bible.

A wrong concept:

I don't need any such helps;
I will get everything "straight from Heaven!"

Misquote: 1 Jn 2:27

Context: v26 ... *Regarding "false teachers"*

We need to do both —

- a) Study personally
- b) Use Study Aids

eg) Paul to Timothy:

a) Study personally (1 Tim 4:13,15)
"reading ... meditate ..."

b) Receive help from others (2 Tim 2:2)
"What you heard from me ...

commit ... teach others ..."

Pastors, Preachers & Teachers of today can be "heard."

Those of yesteryears, can be "read."

- For choosing reliable study aids,
read the author's booklet —
Unless someone guides me ...

How not to Meditate

4. Do not depend solely on your intellect.

- The Bible is a supernatural Book —

Holy men ... Holy Spirit ... 2 Pet 1:20,21

i.e. Human authors but divine origin

eg) This God-breathed quality of the Word is mentioned
at least 25 times in a 2-Chapter book, Haggai.

The 66 Books of the Bible written by about 40 authors —
There's a time gap of even 1000s of years between some authors—
It was God who moved (prompted) them to write,
and He only inspired them to write,
and superintended their writing.

That's why there's no real contradiction within the Bible.

- A divine Book cannot be understood without divine help.

That's why the Psalmist prayed like this —

Psa 119:18 ... *"Open my eyes..."*

:125 ... *"Give me understanding ... know"*

Even though he was one of the Biblical authors!

Why "**open** my eyes...?"

Because of the Fall,
the entire mankind is under "spiritual blindness" —

2 Cor 4:4 ... *god of this world ... has blinded ...*

When we turn to Christ,
we receive the **first** touch to understand the Gospel (v6).
We need several **further** touches to understand
the truths of God's Word.

- God has no respect for those who approach the Bible as learned Professors —
 - Lk 10:21 ... When the 70 returned with joy ...
“hidden from the wise ... revealed to babes ...”
 - These disciples were mostly unlearned/untrained.
 - God expects in us a childlike attitude
 as against the know-it-all attitude.
 - (Children don’t hesitate to ask questions;
 in fact they ask too many!)
 - A reverential spirit of obedience a must —
 Jer 6:10 ... *I speak ... their ears ...*
 - Isa 66:1,2 ... *“Heaven My Throne ... trembles at My Word”* —
 Intellectual arrogance leads to spiritual ignorance!
 - eg) In the incident of healing of the blind man
 who was asked to wash in the Pool of Siloam,
 at the end, Jesus said —
 Jn 9:39-41 ... *Those who (think they can) see
 may be made blind!*
 - “Those who do not see”*— ignorant
“Those who see” — arrogant
 - That’s why I teach new disciples to **kneel** down
 while reading the Bible, whenever possible.
- Only the Holy Spirit can teach us spiritual things
 - 1 Cor 2:13 ... *comparing spiritual things with the spiritual*
 - Otherwise, we will be only *“twisting”* the Scriptures—
 2 Pet 3:16
 - We have more Bible-twisters
 than Bible-teachers these days!

- The Bible is a Treasure Book.

*“Eye ... not ... seen ... ear ... heard ... heart ...
but God thro’ His Spirit ... revealed ...”*

1 Cor 2:9,10

Even the best of brains cannot comprehend
the deep things of God.

Let’s never tour the Bible without the Guide,
the Holy Spirit!

Every time you open the Bible whisper the prayer,

*“Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things
from Your Law...” (Psa 119:18)*

And at the end of each meditation,
thank God for the help of the Holy Spirit.

How not to Meditate

5. Do not ignore the context of the Bible text.

- A text out of context is a pretext!
- “*Rightly dividing the Word*” (2 Tim 2:15)
 - “*dividing*” = cutting of leather pieces for stitching the tent
 - Tentmaker ... leather patchwork ... ashamed ...
 - Similarly, Tailors ... Bible Teachers!
- The Bible is an ancient (not just old!) Book —
 - First 5 Books — 1400 B.C. (i.e. 3400 years ago)
 - Last Book — 90 A.D. (i.e. 1900 years ago)
 - Approximately 3000 years of gap!
- What is contextual interpretation?
 - Ask 5 questions —
 - a) **WHO** said it?
 - eg) Nicodemus: “*No one can do these miracles ...*”(Jn 3:2)
 - Even Egyptian magicians performed miracles.
 - Jesus warned against “*great*” *wonders of false prophets*
 - (Mt 24:24)
 - Paul: Antichrist, the lawless one —
 - “*with **all** power, signs and*
 - lying wonders*” (2 Thess 2:9)
 - Nicodemus was a religious leader,
 - but he was “*ignorant*” of spiritual things —
 - Jesus: “*Though you are a teacher in Israel ...*
 - ...even earthly things you don’t understand...!*” (Jn 3:10,12)

b) To or about **WHOM** was it said?

Take for example, the promises in the Bible—

Psa 34:20 ... *“None of His bones ... broken”*

In general we can claim God’s protection;

but this is exclusively for the Messiah —

Jn 19:32 ... broke the legs of both the unbelieving thief
and the converted thief.

:33 ... Jesus’ legs not broken!

Because, v36!

Accidents, Surgeries, Persecutions (martyrdom)

c) **WHEN** was it said?

eg) *Don’t carry moneypurse* —

While sending the 12 to Israel...not Gentiles

(Mt 10:9,10)

But later ... Lk 22:35,36 ... *Take moneybag*

d) **WHERE** was it said?

Culture— *“Greet one another with a holy kiss”* (Rom 16:16)

This is practised in certain parts of the Middle East —
also in Europe and the West.

It’s very different in India —

Handshake permitted in certain areas.

In Rajasthan and several other Indian villages,

women won’t even uncover their faces before men!

e) **WHY** was it said?

eg) Why did Paul write to the Philippian believers,

“Our citizenship is in Heaven” (Phil 3:20)?

— Philippi was a Colony in Rome (Italy)

Philippians were given Roman rights

but not Roman citizenship.

Similar to Srilankan Tamils in India.

Wrong interpretation:

Jehovah Witnesses refuse to salute the National flag,
quoting Phil 3:20

A Christian must be patriotic, though not nationalistic.

■ Five Questions to understand the context:

1. Who — Persons
2. Whom — Persons
3. When — Period
4. Where — Place
5. Why — Purpose

How to find this?

- a) For difficult verses, read the entire chapter or the Book.
- b) Refer to Book Introductions in Study Bibles.

Start studying the Bible this way —

It will be the most revealing and rewarding experience!

You'll get **addicted** to the Bible!

"Blessed is the man whose delight ...

... in His Law he meditates day and night!" (Psa 1:1,2)

How not to Meditate

6. Do not place experiences above the Scriptures.

- We must not bend the Bible to suit us.
 - Do not be hunting for Bible verses to prove your experiences;
rather, test your experiences by the Scriptures.
The Bible is the anvil!
 - Do not establish a truth or doctrine by any experience;
rather encourage experiences which are
endorsed by the Scriptures only.

Thumbrule: Not Experience to Truth but Truth to Experience

- The “*Word*” must become “*flesh*”—
not vice versa!
What’s born of the Spirit is spirit (Jn 3:6)
That’s what the Scripture is —
“the words I spoke ... spirit and life” (Jn 6:63)
But what’s born of flesh is flesh!

- Certain classic examples to explain this truth—
 - Peter’s experience on the Mount of Transfiguration
2 Pet 1:16-21

A genuine experience; but *we have a “more sure Word.”*
 - Paul’s transportation to Heaven
2 Cor 12:1-4 ... “*I do not know*” (thrice)

But while presenting Biblical Truth —
Gal 1:11,12 ... *not according to man ... not from man ...*
— so assertive!

- Dreams & Prophecies (Jer 23:28,29)
 - “prophet ... dream ... My word ... chaff ... wheat ...
fire ... hammer”*
- Age-old traditions vs. Truth
 - Mk 7:9-13 ... *“Commandment of God ... traditions”*
“Corban”
- The Bible is the *“Plumbline”* for building our lives & ministries.
 - eg) *“Unless one competes according to the rules ...”*
(2 Tim 2:5)
 - Lot of things we do
 - out of fleshly zeal and soulish enthusiasm;
 - but it is the Word of God — *“scalpel”* —
 - that divides the *“soul”* and the *“spirit”*
- Beware of extra-Biblical experiences and revelations —
 - 1 Cor 4:6 *“... not beyond what is written”*
 - Thumbrule: Bible plus or minus zero
 - The Bible is not only supreme; it’s also sufficient (Jn 20:30,31)
Enough for *“eternal life”*
 - If a dream/vision/experience is not thoroughly Scriptural,
do not share it with others.
Keep it to yourself.
- Be Bereans: Even if it is Paul who is the preacher (Acts 17:11)
Paul himself said:
 - “Even if we or an angel preach any other Gospel ...”* (Gal 1:8)
 - i.e. Differing from the original revelation

How not to Meditate

7. Do not probe into the secret things.

- There are certain things which are just “mentioned” in the Bible, but not fully “explained.”

We must not probe into such things.

“Secret things belong to God” (Dt 29:29).

Stop where the Bible stops.

Be silent where the Bible is silent.

We must *“thirst”* and *“hunger”* for the things of God; but curiosity may land us in trouble —

Man’s curiosity to go into the forbidden rather than enjoy the permitted things is there from time immemorial (Gen 3:11)

eg) Even if Adam had tasted one new fruit everyday 1000 years wouldn’t have been sufficient!

- Paul’s thorn — 2 Cor 12:7

What is revealed —

- a) Where was the thorn? *“in the flesh”*
- b) Why was the thorn? *“to prevent self-exaltation”*
- c) What was the nature of the thorn? *“a messenger of Satan”*

That’s all —

We are **not** told **what** the thorn was.

Don’t probe into it or pray to find out what it was.

Be satisfied with the moral: *“God’s grace is sufficient!”*

- Another example is regarding **when** Christ would return.
 Jesus has only told us **how** the times would be —
 Mt 24:3 ... *Signs of Your coming*
 They asked “*when*” also.

He told them what signs and conditions to look for:

- *deception* (vv 4,5)
- *wars* (vv 6,7)
- *sun ... moon ... stars* (v29)

“*BUT ... the day and hour no one knows*” (v36)

In some translations: “*Not even the Son knows!*”

Jesus repeated it before His ascension —

Acts 1:6,7

“*It is **not** for you to know ...!*” i.e. Not necessary!

What’s important is the Preparation.

No date-setting but goal-setting to reach people (Acts 1:8)

- People talk about “endtime” revelation —
 What does it mean?

a) It refers to the revelation of Jesus Christ

— Heb 1:1,2

Christ is the final revelation from God to mankind —

eg) Peter: “*Christ the Son of the living God...*”

Even the Holy Spirit will not speak of Himself,

but take from what Christ has said (Jn 16:13)

After resurrection:

“*Things concerning Himself from Scriptures*” (Lk 24:27)

Another revelation —

b) The Gentiles (non-Jews) also will be inducted
 into the Body of Christ —

“*Gentiles should be fellow-heirs ...*” (Eph 3:3-6)

God has not forgotten to tell us anything so far
that He suddenly remembers to say now!

- We must accept that our knowledge today is imperfect —
1 Cor 13:9,10
“That which is perfect” is yet to come.
Christ is the Perfect One.
Our spirit, soul & body will be perfected (1 Thess 5:23).
This old heaven and old earth will be removed
—The perfect New Heaven & New Earth (2 Pet 3:10-13)
Total *Restoration of all things* (Acts 3:20,21)
- Endeavour to practise all that’s revealed.
Leave the rest with God.
Do not cross the boundaries and move into forbidden territories.

eg) Whatever we need to know about Heaven and Hell
already given in the Scriptures.
Eye has not seen... but God has revealed (1 Cor 2:9,10)

Do not go crazy after anyone who claims
to have visited Heaven!

Even Paul, who was *“caught up to the third Heaven,”*
did not go about telling what he saw or heard!

2 Cor 12:4 ... *Paradise ... inexpressible words!*
He simply went about preaching the Gospel.
William Booth (1829-1912), Founder, Salvation Army:
What we need is a vision of Hell rather than that of Heaven!
Then we will become more active and aggressive
in Evangelism than ever!

— Jesus spoke more about Hell than about Heaven!

How not to Meditate

8. Do not neglect prayer life.

- Some people spend lot of time in Bible study,
but very little time in prayer;
whereas others spend lot of time in prayer,
but too little time in Bible study.

Both must be avoided.

There must be a healthy balance.

- A classic example —

Neh 9:3 ... Restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah.

Walls of Jerusalem rebuilt.

A huge gathering of God's people (v1)

3 hours of Wordstudy

& 3 hours of Worship

They equidistributed their time

for listening to God and talking to God.

A conversational experience with God!

This is an example of a **gathering**.

- How about a personal exercise?

Daniel 9:2,3

"understood by books ... then ... prayer ... supplications"

Ezr 7:10 ... *Ezra prepared his heart to study ...*

That's why I often encourage folks to study the Bible
on their knees.

eg) George Muller of Bristol, England (1805-1898) — 93 years.
During his life he had read the Bible 48 times on knees!

- A prayerful study of any Book of the Bible will deepen our understanding of the characteristics of God, leading to worship —

eg) Book of Daniel

God is (a) awesome — 9:4 (b) eternal — 4:3,34; 6:26; 12:7
(c) forgiving — 9:9 (d) great — 2:45; 9:4
(e) living — 6:20,26 (f) merciful — 9:9,18
(g) mighty — 4:3; 9:15 (h) powerfull — 2:20
(i) righteous — 9:7,14,16 (j) sovereign — 4:17; 5:21
(k) wise — 2:20

- If it's only study,
you will dry up! — Empty theory
— Puffed-up knowledge

If it's only prayer,

you will blow up! — Spurious revelations

This explains why, after extended periods of fasting, several preachers come up with novel and questionable revelations.

But Jesus during 40 days of fasting —

“... *live by every word* ...” (Mt 4:4)

Head knowledge becomes heart experience

when Bible study is prayer-saturated —

Lk 24:27,32

Studying in the fellowship & presence of Jesus —

“... *hearts burning* ...”

- My personal testimony —
 - I'm not legalistic about 50-50 distribution on a daily basis for Bible meditation and prayer —
 - I have extended periods of study as well as extended periods of prayer.
 - But I endeavour to maintain a **spirit** of prayer even if it's a serious study or Biblical research.
 - Biblical information & spiritual inspiration and illumination must go hand in hand.
- A practical suggestion —
 - If you feel **dry** in your spiritual life in spite of regular Bible reading, increase your prayer time.
 - If you feel **weak**, increase your Bible meditation.
 - These are like two wings for your flight.
- As a College student (1962-1970) I used to spend long hours in fasting and prayer with the Bible in jungles and forests. That's when I got a grasp of many Biblical truths.
- Learn to use the very Scripture texts in your prayer —
 - eg) Jonah's prayers & Psalms
 - Psa 3:8; 5:7; 18:4-19; 30:2,3; 31:6,22; 39:9; 42:6,7; 59:17; 69:1,2; 120:1; 142:3; 144:2
- **Conclusion**
 - Let your Bible study be prayer-saturated; and prayer Bible-saturated.
 - Bible study & Prayer fuel each other.

How not to Meditate

9. Do not delay obedience.

- What we need today as Christians
is not more of revelation but more obedience!

Delayed obedience —

Psa 119:60 *“I made haste!”*

What a testimony!

The early disciples & apostles insisted on it —

eg) Ananias to Saul Paul regarding baptism:

Acts 22:16 ... *“Why are you delaying?”*

That’s why they baptized people even at *“midnight”*

— the Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:33)

and in the *“wilderness/desert”*

— the Ethiopian Minister (Acts 8:38)

- Immediately after the Parable of the Sower,

Jesus warned —

*“Take heed **how** you hear!”* (Lk 8:18)

We normally interpret this Parable for evangelism only;

but Jesus told this to *“His disciples”* — (see vv 9,18)

Here lies the reason why we suddenly lose freshness/
excitement in Bible study —

“Whoever has (obeys), to him more will be given”

Immediately after this —

“His mother and brothers...hear AND DO!” (vv19-21)

Arrears in obedience!

Students not promoted to higher classes with arrears!

Why should God be wasting His time and revelations
with an irresponsible person?

God will bypass us! (Rom 10:20,21)

God has bypassed many in history —

eg) King Saul (1 Sam 15:28)

- The understanding of God's Word becomes deeper
and deeper only when there's an attitude of obedience

Jn 7:17 — *"If anyone wants to DO, he shall know!"*

Not, if anyone just wants to **KNOW!**

We understand the Bible better by obeying it,

rather than analysing it!

The greatest blessing from the Bible comes mainly
by obeying it — even if we don't understand it —

Rev 1:3 ... *"read ... hear ... keep"*

Those days, someone "read" and others would "hear,"
as everyone didn't have a copy!

Between "*reading*" and "*keeping*,"

the word "understanding" is not there!

Js 1:25 ... *"doer of the Word ... blessed"*

Disobedience is serious ... It leads to "*deception!*" (v22)

A classic example for obedience: Mary

"How can this be?" Lk 1:34,35,38

She accepted God's Word before she could understand it!

Result: She had Jesus in her womb for 10 months!

- Maximum number of references to God’s Word is in the Book of Psalms. Strikingly the verses referring to “obedience” outnumber others —
 - eg) God’s Word to be desired: 21 verses
 - God’s Word to be proclaimed: 20 verses
 - But,
 - God’s Word to be OBEYED: 52 verses

- No other generation had so much of Bible study materials —
 - Thank God for this **privilege**;
 - privileges carry **responsibilities** with them —
 - Lk 12:47,48 ... *“To whom much is given ...”*
 - “Many stripes”* if there’s no obedience.

 - i.e. Chastisement ... Psa 119:67,71

 - Buy as many Study Bibles & Study Aids as you can,
 - and** study them;
 - but don’t forget the conclusion of the whole matter —
 - Eccl 12:9-13 ... *many proverbs ... many books ...*
 - “whole” matter ... “whole” duty ...*
 - fear God ... obey Him ...*

- A hymn of prayer by J.D. Burns (1823-1864):
 - O give me Samuel’s mind,*
 - A sweet, un murmuring faith,*
 - Obedient and resigned*
 - To Thee in life and death,*
 - That I may read with childlike eyes*
 - Truths that are hidden from the wise.*

- Read the Author’s book —
 - “Blessed are the Obedient!”*

How not to Meditate

10. Do not stagnate with your knowledge.

- Share with others whatever you learn from the Bible —
 - Col 3:16 ... a) *dwell “in you”*
 - b) *teach “one another”*

If there’s no “output” or “outflow” in proportion to the “input” or “intake,” there will be stagnation.

Stagnation will block further inflow.

On the other hand —

Lk 6:38 ... *Give and it shall be given ...*

Prov 11:25,26 ... *grains ... watering*

Agriculture: A picture of evangelism

Practically speaking, it is only when we share we receive more understanding and revelation on the subject.

Personal testimony:

I understand just about 50% while studying; the remaining, in stages, while sharing.

- This principle taught both in the OT & NT
 - Abraham —
 - Gen 18:17,19 ... God: *“I **know** he will teach ...”*
 - Paul & Timothy — 2 Tim 2:2 i.e. Paul knew that Timothy was *faithful* enough to pass on the truths to others!

Similarly, Parents have the responsibility of transmitting the eternal truths to their children —

in “simple” and “contemporary” manner
(Prov 4:1-4)

eg) Mentioning of the Name of a “grandmother”
2 Tim 1:5 “Lois!”

(How much time we spend with children for school homework!)

- Do not always think of a PULPIT!

It can be one-to-one or in small groups.

(Timothy: “Commit” (not teach/preach)...” (2 Tim 2:2)

eg) How I started my ministry following my rebirth in 1962

1963-1970: I shared my meditations daily
with a group of 5 to 10 students in the College Campus.

“Faithful in small things” (Mt 25:14-30)

5 Talents — Another 5 + 1

2 Talents — Another 2

“To him who has, more will be given”

This means, he who “**gives!**” (i.e. multiplies ...)

The majority of Christians are like the one-talented man.

They compare themselves

with pulpit preachers (= 5 Talents/ 2 Talents)

They think they don’t know so much as to teach others —

Give what you **have!**

Have a circle of friends with whom you can regularly share
whatever you learn.

Suppose you return from a Conference/Seminar,
collect a few persons and share what all you learnt.

You can even introduce a **Study Bible** or a **Study Aid**
which has blessed you!

Tamil Proverb: “Let the world enjoy what I enjoy!”

யான் பெற்ற இன்பம் பெருக இவ்வையகம்!

■ **Conclusion**

If you follow these 10 lessons, Bible meditation would become
the most delightful occupation of your life —

*“**Blessed** (=happy) is the man ...
whose delight is in the Law of the Lord;
in His Law he meditates day and night!” (Psa 1:2)*
