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These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

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Series: What the Word Says About the Word

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These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

Precious Heavenly Father, we worship You, we pause as we gather together to contemplate in our own hearts our relationship with You—the closeness of it, the consistency of it, the intensity of it, and the reality of it. And we realize, that as we do, we are not gathered here together to perform some religious formality, or even to gain information, but some of that might happen.

We are gathered here together, Father, because we want to be increasingly conformed to image of Your Son. We want Your Word to take root in our hearts and literally transform us into the likeness of Jesus.

We ask You to do that in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Try to picture two little children playing on the seashore. Each one, in their own way, is trying to fashion something for posterity. Little Susie is over here and she's writing a letter to her parents in the sand. She's wet the sand, she's taking a stick and she's saying, "Dear Mom and Dad, thank you for bringing us to the beach. Love, Susie." She is adorning her letter in the sand with twigs and leaves and made a rock border around the outside of it. And she is pleased with herself.

A few yards away her brother, Billy, a somewhat meticulous little lad, isn't doing so well, apparently. He has found himself a huge piece of rock. He's found an old tire iron that someone had abandoned and had taken his dad's hammer from the toolbox in the car. He was literally trying to chisel out a message out of the rock. Susie was finishing her work of art, and Billy's masterpiece apparently hadn't taken shape at all. In fact, it seemed as though he had virtually wasted his time.

I know you've probably never experienced this, but sibling sometimes like to take advantage of one another. And Susie began to laugh uncontrollably and she said, "Ha, Billy, by this

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

time next year, you may have a word. I'm going to go play in the water." With that, she went out to swim, took the big inner tube her parents had brought from home and preceded to spend the rest of the day in the water.

Billy, it seems, never got near the water. He just stood there homemade chisel in his hand, and inch-by-inch carved out his message. It was one sentence long and it took him five hours to do it.

That night at supper, both the kids ran in and told their parents that they had a surprise to show them the next morning. They jumped in bed and pretended to be sleeping, but, of course, sleep came hard because they were so excited. The next morning, they grabbed their parents, even before breakfast, and raced out to the seashore to show them their works of love.

Susie was in shock, because during the night, the tide had come in and her "work of art" as she called it, so beautiful, so distinctive, but so quick in appearing, had disappeared. She had done it the easy way, and it was impressive, but when the rush of the swirling waters came ashore, it was no match for their fury, to be sure.

Billy it seems, on the other hand, had the last laugh, because a few feet away, on a huge piece rock were carved the letters, "Mom, Dad, I love you, Billy." The waves had beat upon it as well, but the waters that destroyed Susie's letter had only cleaned out the dirt from the lines that Billy had etched in that rock and it actually looked better for having been attacked by the waves that beat upon it.

Now mom and dad were pleased, with both of their efforts and they told them so, but couldn't turn down such an obvious teaching opportunity. So they put the two children in their laps and they began to talk to them about the parable of the house built on the sand. Then ever so carefully, they taught them about engraving or chiseling God's Word in your heart.

Dad said, "You know you can listen to the Bible, read it, even study it, but sometimes when the tides of life come in, the power is missing. On the other hand, if you engrave the Word on your heart the way you would on tablets of stone...the way you did, Billy, on that huge rock out there, it will always be there when life's waves begin to beat upon the shoreline of your life. It takes a long time to do it, doesn't it, Billy? And the world around you will

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

wonder why you are wasting so much of your time memorizing something you can read; or why you are wasting so much time meditating over and over on the same thing. But sometimes, children, when life's high tides come in, you'll understand."

Susie and Billy never forgot that lesson. In fact, every summer for the next five summers, the family vacationed in exactly that spot. And the first thing they did was jump out of the car and run to that rock to see if Billy's message was still there. And it was. It seemed to be forever engraved in stone.

So we continue this morning our look at what the Word says about the Word. Those two children, it seemed, learned a lesson some of us don't ever learn. And the consequences of not learning it could make an eternal difference in the transformation that takes place in our lives.

1- The Preface to the Word.

Our study of Psalm 119, and the related Scriptures about the Word, have taken this shape up until now. We looked first at preface to the Word; the attitude God expects us to have as we approach the Word. And we learned, you remember, that He expects us to tremble with excitement when He speaks.

The second thing we learned, as far as the preface is concerned, is that God wants us to ask Him to open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of His law—that we may behold His nature, His character out of every word.

2- The Pursuit of the Word.

Then we looked at the pursuit of the Word, that God expects us to go after it the way we would for gold, for fine gold, for great spoils; the way we would enjoy honey from the honeycomb. Finally we learned that Job said we were to actually want the Word of God more than our necessary food, more than the bread and water it takes to keep us alive.

3- The Partner to the Word.

In the last lesson we looked at God's partner to the Word, and that is what role affliction plays in driving us to the Word.

4- The Placing of the Word.

In this lesson we begin to look at a series of three or four lessons on placing the Word. That is, how do we get it into our lives so that it will stay there, and so that it will bear the fruit it's

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

supposed to bear? We are going to ask God to give us revelation, explanation, illumination, and simplification, as we go.

You may remember the whole purpose in teaching Scripture, as we learned, as we looked at Jesus teaching the Sermon on the Mount, was for the eternal God to explain His nature through the absolutes of Scripture in such simple terms that even a child could understand it. So issue we would face is not some theological discussion, but whether or not we are going to obey it. And we will see that in very simple terms in this lesson.

The key that I think is missing is that the Word simply must remain. It's got to be put somewhere in a vault where it is safe, where it is accessible, where we have a handle on it. You've come to Sunday school this morning, you'll go to church, you'll go home and turn on the radio and listen a program or a sermon, and maybe go to a Bible study this week. You may hear be eight different messages, eight different portions of Scripture poured into your life this week. But the question I ask you is, will your life be different? When the waves of life beat upon the shoreline of your life, will you have the power within you to stand, and having done all, to stand? The question is, is the Word where it is both safe and accessible?

The Scripture teaches us there is one little word that is the key to unlocking the door to that vault. That word is *meditation*. It's a key ingredient to virtually everything the Spirit does in our lives and yet most Christians cannot even define it, do not understand it, and do not practice it. It seems to me that the psalmist understood it, because even in Psalm 119, over and over again we read,

Thy servant meditates [whatever that means] on thy statutes. (Psalm 119:23b KJV)

I will meditate on thy statutes. (Psalm 119:48b KJV)

I will meditate in thy precepts. (Psalm 119:78b KJV)

O, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day. (Psalm 119:97 KJV)

Thy testimonies are my meditation. (Psalm 119:99b KJV)

And those are just verses where that word is used. The whole of the Psalm is wrapped around this precept. Now it is miss used a lot in our generation. But I believe if it is as important as the psalmist says it is, we maybe better take a hard look at it.

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

We'll begin, as we always try to, by defining the word, because if we don't know what we're talking about, we can each draw our own conclusions. We'll look first at the definition from a Hebrew dictionary and then we'll look at the definition from a regular secular dictionary, and we'll find that they mean virtually the same thing.

To meditate:

- 1- To think over with intent to do.
- 2- To ponder, personalize, rehearse, or review.
- 3- To chew over and digest to gain nourishment.

Now the dictionary definition is very similar.

- 1- To consider as something to be done or effected.
- 2- To reflect or contemplate.
- 3- To ponder or think over.

Most of us probably meditate a lot, but that's not necessarily good. Unless you're meditating on the Word of God, it's not good at all.

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

1- Meditation has something to do with something you know. You possess something and now you want to appropriate what you possess.

2- It is thinking seriously about something you know. It isn't a casual exercise. We know from the usage of the word, it is a very serious, intense activity.

3- It has something to do with personalizing what you know. It isn't general or doctrinal, it's personal.

4- It involves planning action based on what you know. The purpose of meditation is to lead to action. We'll see that in a moment.

5- Meditation, apparently, according to the same Hebrew word, is similar to how a cow chews its cud. It involves calling something up to the mind over and over, nourishing it, and chewing it over until it gives you strength or meets a need.

Let's summarize then.

Meditation: pondering, personalizing, rehearsing and reviewing something we already know, with the intent of putting it into practice or making it work.

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

We're going to look at four or five key passages this morning that define it better than the dictionary.

If I were to ask you what is the best commentary you know on the Bible, how would you respond? Don't answer out loud, but just think in your own mind. Let me answer that for you. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible. If you want to know what the Word of God says, you cross-reference it with other verses. Scripture will always confirm itself, illuminate itself, expand itself, and simplify itself. There is nothing wrong with learning what man thinks about the Scripture, but it's much more important to know what the Scripture thinks about the Scripture. So, let the Scripture be its own best commentary.

Let's look at Deuteronomy 6, Deuteronomy 11, Psalm 1, Joshua 1 and Psalm 119, and ask God to give us revelation, explanation, illumination, simplification, that we may apply unto wisdom. Let's stop pray.

Father,

We really want to understand Your Word, not so that we can gain knowledge; we want to be obedient. And somehow, Father, this subject of meditation is something that all of us have heard about, talked about, and some of us know about, but very few of us do.

We ask that You would use these verses to somehow make it come alive, so that we leave this place this morning not just intellectually challenged, but spiritually changed.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

1- Our first passage is, perhaps, the most familiar, Joshua chapter 1. Beginning with verse 7, you remember the words,

Only be strong and very courageous [here is your key word if you are an underliner], that you may observe to do [that's the purpose of it all] according to all the law [underline the word all] which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. (Joshua 1:7 NKJV)

In verse 8, in order to do that,

This Book of the Law [the Word of God] must never not depart from your mouth, instead you must meditate [There is our word. How often? You must meditate now and then? You must meditate weekly? No.] You must meditate all day long,

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

and all night long so that it will not depart, that you may observe to do, having meditated day and night according to all that is written therein. (Joshua 1:8 paraphrase)

REASON TO MEDITATE

I want us to see some common threads. The first common thread is very simple. There is one basic reason to meditate.

1- There is one basic reason to meditate—that we “may observe to do.” Now I know some of you say, “Well I meditate and it make me feel better.” That’s wonderful. That’s a side-effect but it’s not why you meditate. You say, “I meditate to be more aware of the presence of God.” That’s wonderful. That’s a good reason to meditate but that’s not the real reason you meditate. You say, “Well, I meditate because I become more Scripturally literate.” That is a good benefit. But the reason you meditate over and over and over the Scripture says, is singular. You have to get the Word into your heart so you can call it up, ponder it, personalize it, rehearse it, and review it, until it becomes so much of your life that you obey it.

In our generation, we have made Bible study an end within itself. If you can just get into more studies, and get more information, you are supposed to be more spiritual. But, beloved, the reason for getting the Word into your life is not so that you can have a bigger head, it’s so that you can have a bigger heart. The reason for studying the Word is singular: “That you may observe to do all that is written therein.” So, the first reason we meditate is to obey.

2- In order to get it, to where it can become that much a part of you, you have to memorize it. It must not depart out of your mouth. You cannot meditate on something you do not know. We’ll get to that in a moment.

3- It won’t work unless you do it all the time—day and night, night and day. More about that later, too.

The next passage is in Deuteronomy 6:1-9. The children of Israel had just received the Word of God on tablets of stone. This is what they were told to do.

“Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, [Why? So that you may get a certificate? No, it doesn’t say that.] [God commanded to teach you] that you

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

might do them, in the land where you are going over to possess it, (Deuteronomy 6:1 NASB)

...[that] you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you... (from Deuteronomy 6:2 NASB)

Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, (Deuteronomy 6:3a KJV)

And then it says,

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:5 NASB)

This is how it works.

These words which I command ye this day shall [must] be in your heart. (Deuteronomy 6:6 KJV)

Then...

You can teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk about them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise [get] up.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between [before] your eyes.

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates [everywhere the Word].

(Deuteronomy 6:7-9 NKJV)

You see all the elements of meditation again, in that one passage of Scripture—described, explained, illuminated, and simplified. It says if you're gonna to be spiritually successful and dwell in the land of promise with spiritual prosperity, you have to put the Word of God in your heart.

The New American Standard says,

And these words which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. (Deuteronomy 6:6 NASB)

The literal meaning is “inscribed on your heart”. You have to memorize it.

Now I would like to explain it some other way. I've spent more time in my life trying to explain that away. If I'd just spent that time and memorizing, I would probably know the Bible. There isn't any other way to do it, beloved. We'll get to that in a few minutes. Scripture memory isn't something a particular Christian group

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

has a handle on, and you should do it if you belong to that group. Scripture memory isn't something we give our children to do, so we can pat them on the head and say they've gotten it out of the way while they were young. I don't know how many parents and grandparents, myself included, I've heard say, "Isn't it sweet, little Johnny's learning his memory verses." And Johnny must be thinking that if it's so sweet, why aren't mommy and daddy learning theirs? Every born-again child of God is commanded to have the Word of God in their heart and on their lips. In future lessons, we're going to talk about some ways to do that. But I want to remind you that it is a given. We're commanded to meditate day and night in the Word, and we can't meditate on something we don't have.

I want to give you an example. You're not going to drive down the freeway, I hope, one hand on the steering wheel and one eye on the road, peeling open your Bible looking for a verse God wants you to memorize, personalize and appropriate. It's got to be in your heart. You're not going to leave the light on all night, and keep the family awake just in case you wake up, you can jump up, grab your concordance, and find the verse that God wants to be impress upon you, so you can pray through it. It's got to be in your heart.

You're not going to tell that clerk in the store who is offending you, to wait a minute so you can go out to your car, get your Bible, get your concordance and look up the passage on turning the other cheek so you can respond properly. It's got to be in your heart.

You're not going to be able to stop and run to the bookstore, buy another Bible and look up those passages on resisting the devil every time that crucial temptation comes into your life. It's got to be in your heart.

You can't wait until you find it and read it any more than you can wait to buy gas when you need the car. Just imagine the baby is sick, or someone needs you to pick them up in an emergency, or you're loved one calls and wants you to meet them in a hurry. It's too late to go out in the garage, find the gas can, walk to the gas station, buy gas, make your way home, pour it in, prime the car, and then try to remember where you were going. It's got to be in your car. And in the same way, the fuel the Holy Spirit uses to run the engine of your life is the Word of God, planted there

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

by memorization and review, and etched there indelibly by the process of meditation. It's got to be in your heart.

You don't have to do it to be known in the Christian community. You don't even have to do it to be in a ministry. But you have to do it if you want to be transformed into His likeness, in order to be the man or woman He wants you to be.

Deuteronomy chapter 11 verses 18 through 21, another great section of verses to memorize,

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,

that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.”
(Deuteronomy 11:18-21 NKJV)

Frontlets before your eyes—the Word of God. Written on the doorposts of your house—the Word of God. When you're sitting in your house, what do you think about, talk about, and meditate on? The Word of God. When you're “walking by the way,” going about your daily routine, what do you think about? The Word of God. When you lie down at night what is be the last thing you think about? The Word of God. When you get up in the morning, what's the first thing that should pop into your head? The Word of God.

When problems arise, you call on the Word. When temptation comes, you call on the Word. When decisions need to be made, you call on the Word. When you're weary in well-doing, you call on the Word. When you're offended or persecuted and you want to retaliate, you call upon the Word. When your mate or someone you love becomes unlovable and you don't know how to respond, you call upon the Word. When you're grieving, you call on the Word. When you're happy, you call on the Word. When you pray, you call on the Word. When you praise, you call on the Word. As you witness, you call on the Word. It isn't something you have; it's something that has you. Your every thought, your every

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

response, your every decision is rooted and grounded, entrenched and reinforced by the Word of God. My friend, the Scripture is not a textbook you turn to for theological information. It is a living Word from a living God to make living godly. But unless it is where God can get hold of it and call it to your mind so you can ponder it and personalize it, you are asking God to feed you from an empty spoon. You are asking Him to make the car run when you haven't put the gas in.

Frontlets between your eyes? You bet. That means it's so engraved on your heart that you interpret everything in life through the Scripture, rather than interpreting the Scripture through everything in life. On the doorposts of your house? You bet. That means everywhere you look, you see the Word of God. You have it on cards, maybe on the dashboard of your car so you can meditate as you drive. You've have it on cassettes or CDs to listen to. You have it in your briefcase, in your purse, or on your desk on pieces paper. Wherever it needs to be, you have the Word of God, the Word of God, the Word of God. You have no excuses.

Deuteronomy 30 verse 11, explains to us where the problem is in modern Christianity, to a large degree. We think if we just go to church, buy some tapes or CDs, or listen to the radio, we'll get the Word of God. You can do that but Deuteronomy says,

For this commandment which I command you today is not hidden from you. It's not something you have to go get.

It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Let's send an astronaut up there and bring back the Word of God so we can hear it and then do it."

It isn't across the ocean, so that we give the Navy the responsibility to go get it and bring it back to us.

The word is very close you, it's in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

(Deuteronomy 30:11-14 paraphrase)

You see, when you need it, the Word isn't something you look for at church or at a bookstore, on a recording, or from some friend. Those things have their purpose. But it's supposed to be nearer to you than that. It's supposed to be on the tip of your tongue, in your heart and in your mouth. You don't have to grope for it when the enemy strikes. You don't have to scramble for it when trouble comes. You've been meditating so much that the first thought that comes to your mind is the Word of God. And it

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

isn't overnight; it's a lifetime process. It's never too late to begin, but it's always wrong to put it off. Psalm chapter 1 explains the difference. It's a real familiar passage.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path [way] of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

But his delight is in the law of the Lord [What does he do?], and in His law he meditates day and night [All day, all night.]

He [the one who meditates] shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so [not like that], but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. (Psalm 1:1-4 NKJV)

The difference between the man of God and the wicked man, can best be determined by what they put into their mind. The man of God and the woman of God, rather than running with the wrong crowd, consistently and deliberately, spend their time meditating on the Word of God. They ponder it, personalize it, rehearse it, and review it, with one goal in mind, which is to obey it.

As time goes by, something happens to them. They become different. They become like a like a tree—stable. They become like a tree planted by water—fruitful. And they become helpful; the fruit they bring forth feeds others. Their branches give shade to others. Why? Because they are such a hard-working trees? No, it's because they planted themselves by the water. They never stopped meditating on the Word of God.

WHAT MEDITATION DOES FOR YOU

What will meditation do for you? In Psalm 119 of our textbook, we see at least five things.

1- Meditation will give you the power to resist temptation.

Psalm 119 says,

Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? [How does a guy get his life cleaned up?] by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin
against thee. (Psalm 119:9-11 KJV)

Now you try it. Memorize passages that deal directly to the issues that are tearing your life apart—your besetting sin. But don't just memorize passages that confront it as sin. Memorize the corresponding quality of God that causes Him to hate that sin. So, your focus is dual. If your problem is lust, there are clear passages that say, "Thou shalt not...". But along with that memorize and meditate on passages dealing with the holiness of God. Because the reason you're not to lust is not simply because God tells you not to. It's because He wants to change you into His likeness and pour His character of holiness into you.

If your problem is lying, there are plenty of verses to memorize that say, "Thou shalt not lie." But, beloved, the truth of the matter is that God is Truth. He is the Way, the Life and the Truth. Meditate on who He is, and because He lives in you, no lie can exist in your life.

Meditate on Scripture, as you walk by the way, as you sit down, as you rise up, as you go to sleep, as you wake up. You tell your children about them. Pray through them. Personalize them. Appropriate them. And then watch what happens the next time the enemy comes and tries to gun you down using the same line he has always used. Suddenly, God's Word pops into your mind, and it is just as though you are able to stand tall and say, "It is written!" Something wonderful happens. You have strength, you have power, you have grace. You resist the devil and he flees from you. You draw nigh unto God. How? By meditating, and by engraving the Word of God on your heart.

2- Meditation gives you perspective in times of affliction.

Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant
did meditate in thy statutes. (Psalm 119:23 KJV)

Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me
without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts.
(Psalm 119:78 KJV)

In other words, the psalmist is saying times got hard. Enemies were real. I got a bad deal out of life. The mechanic didn't fix his chariot, but he charged him anyway. The doctor misdiagnosed his illness. The children didn't show up at the temple when they were supposed to. The shoemaker forgot to fix his sandals on time. The boss blamed him for someone else's mistakes. Taxes

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

are too high. Jobs are too few. What a rotten life. What did he do? Strike back? Get depressed? Blame God? He was tempted to do all those things. But what he did instead, was meditate on the Word of God. It didn't change his circumstances, but it changed his perspective.

3- Meditation gives you words of praise with which to worship God. Have you ever wished you had just the right words to use to praise God when you're praying? Have you? Then meditate on God's Word and He will call them to your mind and you praise them back to Him. Psalm 119:62 says,

At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments. (Psalm 119:62 KJV)

Mine eyes precede the night watches, because I am excited about meditating on Your word.

(Psalm 119:148 paraphrase)

Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgments. (Psalm 119:164 NKJV)

"I couldn't stop praising God," he said, "because I'm meditating in His Word. It's engraved on my heart. It's all I think about."

As if that isn't enough there is a fourth reason.

4- Meditating on God's Word gives you God's mind. It give you wisdom, the kind of discernment that lets you make wise decisions, speak with authority, keep godly priorities.

Memorize, if you like, verses 97 through 100. The psalmist said,

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies [and there are plenty of them, that's what the rest of the verse means]; for they are ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers, [reason?] for [because] thy testimonies are my [source of] meditation.

I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. (Psalm 119:97-100 KJV)

What made this guy so smart? What made him so wise? He had understanding that confounded his enemies. He had wisdom that made his teachers seek him out and wonder what was going on. He discovered truth that even the great minds of the past didn't understand. Why? Was it his great intellect? No. His incredible education? No. His special parents? No. He

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

meditated on the Word of God. He loved it. It was his life. And because it was, his life became the epitome of wisdom. People came from all over just to seek him out. Because he'd read the latest books? No, because he knew *the* Book. And he read it, and read it, and memorized it. He let it flow through his mind every waking moment. As he walked, as he worked, as he waited, as he wondered, he meditated on the Word of God. And, my friend, that same Word of God is available to you, if you're willing to pay the price to put it in your heart.

One last thing.

5- The Word of God, builds hunger, for itself. The more you meditate, the more you want to. If you wait until you feel like it to start, you probably never will. You start because God said to and the Word, itself, will give you an appetite you cannot believe.

I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. (Psalm 119:15)

Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works. (Psalm 119:27)

My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes. (Psalm 119:48 NKJV)

In other words, the more you meditate, the more respect you have for the Word of God, the ways of God, and the works of God. It just stands to reason; it builds upon itself. God exalts His name, you honor His Word, and as a by-product, you gain respect for that Word. You gain respect for God. You don't wait until you feel like it.

Now in the lessons to come, we will look at some specific ways to *memorize* Scripture, and some specific ways to *meditate* on Scripture. We will talk about what it means to keep the Word of God. And we will ask God for explanation, illumination, simplification, and revelation.

But as we close this lesson, let's take a deep breath. I'm going to ask you to take a hard look at your own life. I want to remind you the purpose for Bible study is to change you into the likeness of Jesus Christ. And that is the purpose for this study.

This is not a dissertation on meditation for you to take home, put it in you file drawer under "M." This is not a treatise on Scripture memory for you to use to badger your children. This is

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

God speaking to us from His Word, saying to us, if you are not spending every waking moment contemplating His Word, you're are missing the blessing of the Spirit-filled life. Unless God's man and woman meditates day and night, they never come to fully grasp what it means to do all the things that are written therein.

God goes on to say that if you do that you will become like a tree, a planted by rivers of water. It won't happen overnight. You have to memorize it in ways that apply to your real needs. Then you ponder it, you think about it, and as you walk by the way, as you rise up, and as you go to bed, you put the Word of God wherever you look. Without the discipline that follows a specific decision to become like that tree, whatever the cost, you may come to the end of you life, only to find you never became the tree you were meant to be. Maybe you became a shrub with a little greenery on it, and you were planted outside the church house, and everybody thought that was okay. Maybe you became a plant that grew up among the weeds. Maybe you became a little tree that looked good until the winds came along, or until someone tried to climb in your branches and you fell over.

Don't you see, at some point in Psalm 1, Mr. Tree, made a decision. He planted himself by the water and he stayed there. It wasn't because it was the only place to be, but because it was the only place for him to be to grow the way he was supposed to grow. The storms came, but he stood his ground. The winds blew, but he stood his ground. The floods rose up and the river overflowed, but he stood his ground. He never considered not staying there, because that's where God planted him.

And my friend, that's where God wants to plant you. Meditating day and night that you may observe to do all that is written therein. Like Billy in the opening illustration, you can have God's truth engraved in granite where it will always be there for you to cling to. Or, like Susie, you can go to Sunday school, go to Bible study or listen to sermons, and there is nothing wrong with those things, but if you don't etch it and engrave it in your heart, when the winds begin to blow upon the coastline of your life, it may not remain.

I'm going to ask you to take one passage of Scripture this week, just one. Joshua 1:8-9, Psalm 1:1-2, or Deuteronomy 6:1-9; any of those verses. Meditate on the passage for one week. As you do, personalize it. For instance say over and over, "This book

These Words Shall Be On Your Heart

of the law shall not depart out of my mouth. But I will meditate therein day and night that I may observe to do what is written therein.” Then ask God to bring to your mind some of the things that He has called you to observe to do that you’re not doing. And you meditate on it over and over until you literally breathe it. Purpose in your heart that never again will the enemy steal from you, the resolve that God has put in your heart to engrave His Word there. It will change your life. You will become wiser than your enemies, wiser than your teachers, wiser than the ancients, beloved. You will become like a tree. Not just any tree, a very special tree—a tree planted by rivers of water. Jeremiah 17 defines that tree as,

...a tree planted by the waters, that spreads out her roots by the river, that will not wilt when heat comes; but her leaf shall be green, she shall not be anxious in the year of drought, and will never ever cease from yielding fruit.

(Jeremiah 17:8 paraphrase)

What a tree! What a promise! What a challenge! And the challenge is yours. You can begin this week and never, ever stop until Jesus comes again, memorizing, meditating, personalizing and pondering His precious Word of God.

Or, you can just keep on saying, “Someday I plan to do that.” Until one day He calls you home, and you realize you never did.

Let’s pray.

Our Father and our God,

What a precious gift you have given us in Your Word. What a priceless privilege You have given us. And we can actually engrave it on the tablets of our hearts so that it will always be there to lead us, to guide us, to comfort us, to encourage us, to strengthen us, and to convict us.

How could we have such a gift and not be willing to take the time to apply it to the wounds of our lives? How could we have time to do everything else, and not time to memorize and meditate on life itself?

Dear God, forgive us, and from this day forward, may we meditate constantly on Your Word, so that in due time, that we may become just like that tree.

In Jesus’ Name.

Amen.

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