

Russell Kelfer

The Pure in Heart: Meditation

548-A

Series: The Beatitudes

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Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

The Pure in Heart: Meditation

We have been studying in the Beatitudes about having a pure heart. In this lesson, we will discuss the issues and the answers concerning a clean or a pure thought life. We set our outline in the previous lesson which looked like this:

I- The Issues

- A- What is the heart?
- B- What are the marks of an impure heart?
- C- The thought life - the real you and me
- D- What is lust?
 - 1- Three things we lust over
 - 2- Six things we lust for
- E- The crisis of our secret thoughts
- F- Five motives for wanting a pure thought life

What we need are some answers. We need a way to reprogram or newly program the computer of the mind to think godly thoughts and to reject impurity. This is the will of God.

We determined in the last lesson to deal with the basic areas of purifying the heart. For the sake of simplicity, I want to outline it this way:

1- Prevention: The case for innocence. It involves the protecting of the mind of a child from ever being programmed by the bulk of garbage that the world wants to feed it.

2- Precaution: Transfusion equals transformation. Precaution can be labeled “what you see is what you get”. This is the principle of guarding the eyes. The principle in Scripture that refers to this says that the eye is the lamp of the body. The eye controls whether light or darkness enters the soul. The Word also teaches us that what we look at must be controlled at any cost.

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3- Decision making: The business of making a decision on a minute-by-minute basis. This is the ten-second moment of truth. Lust, which often enters through the eye, ignites the lower nature. James tells us that at that instant, the choice is ours. Lust can conceive and bring forth sin or we can cry out to God. In that ten-second eternity, if we do cry out to God, He will deliver us.

4- Thought life: Major surgery and how it is accomplished. If the thought life is the accumulation of data from birth, granted, we should guard it from birth. We should guard what we expose ourselves to continually, but what about the data that is already stored there? How do we deal with erasing previously recorded material and replacing it with God's programming? There are three things you can do with impurity in the heart. Howard Hendricks uses this illustration as a way to deal with our children. We can use it in regards to the transfer of sin from the heart.

a- Suppress it. You can screw the lid on real tight and play-act. You can go through all of the motions of the Christian life and allow the heart to remain just as it was. The word for this is hypocrisy.

b- Express it. It is comfortable today among many theologians to "be yourself". They encourage us to express our sin nature and let yourself be yourself, so therefore you are not a hypocrite. You are a fool.

c- Substitute it. This is God's way. It is a process that must be taken care of by an act of the will on a minute-by-minute basis for the entirety of your life. It involves breathing in the Word and exhaling it. It involves taking in the Word and allowing the Word to cleanse us from the sin nature.

It is time for us to consider the day-to-day principle of substitution. It is a process by which God changes a man or woman's heart permanently. The Scripture calls it meditation. It is transformation by substitution. I have another outline for this. We are going to call this lesson "Spiritual Breathing".

I- The Exploration: What Do You Know?

II- The Explanation: What does God Say in Answer?

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III- The Elaboration: Four Stages of Spiritual Breathing

IV- The Experience: Meditate Together

At the beginning of this lesson, you were asked to meditate on the passage from Matthew 28:19-20. I think it would be interesting to interview the people here to find out what you did during that period of silence. That is what this lesson is about.

First, I want to talk about the exploration. How many of you meditate on a regular basis? How many of you know what meditation is? How many of you think you know what meditation is? Here is a quiz to see how much we all really know about meditation. I want you to write down your answers to these questions.

1- One option for spiritual transformation is meditation. True or false?

2- Memorization is not vital for successful meditation. True or false?

3- Meditation is closing your eyes and opening your mind to your inner thoughts. True or false?

4- To be profitable, meditation should be done several times a week. True or false?

5- A good time to meditate is when you are depressed. True or false?

6- Meditation leads to spiritual wisdom. True or false?

7- Meditation prepares you for persecution and suffering. True or false?

8- God's goal for meditation is encouragement. True or false?

9- Proper meditation guarantees spiritual success. True or false?

10- Meditation requires a response, an act of the will. True or false?

Keep a record of your answers to compare with the rest of this lesson.

Statement 1- One option for spiritual transformation is

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meditation. True or false? The answer is false. Meditation is not optional. Joshua 1:7-9 paraphrased goes like this:

Be strong and do everything the Scripture says to do.

Do not turn to the left or to the right. This will be accomplished by keeping the Scripture on the tip of

your tongue so that you can breathe it all day long and breathe it all night long. This is an order from God.

(Joshua 1:7-9 paraphrased)

This is a literal translation of the passage found in Joshua 1:7-9. Meditation is not an option for spiritual transformation. Meditation is a requirement for spiritual transformation.

Statement 2- Memorization is not vital to meditation. True or false? The answer is false. Memorization is vital. The Scripture says that the Word must not depart out of your mouth so that you can meditate in it day and night. It is possible to meditate on a passage before an open Bible, but to really visualize and meditate as you drive, as you cook, as you sew, as you walk, as you work and go about your day, memorization is a must.

Statement 3- Meditation is closing your eyes and opening your mind to your inner thoughts. True or false? The answer is false. Meditation may or may not involve closing your eyes. It is not opening your mind to your inner thoughts. That may be the world's definition, but God's definition is opening your inner thoughts to the Word of God. Joshua 1 says,

This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth,
but you shall meditate in it day and night,

(Joshua 1:8 NKJV)

This is not a mind at parade rest, wandering around. It is a mind that is meditating and breathing the Scriptures.

Psalms 119:15 says,

I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.
(Psalm 119:15 NKJV)

II Peter 1:4 says,

by which have been given to us exceedingly great and

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precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

(II Peter 1:4 NKJV)

The reason for meditation is to get to know God, His Word, His Worth, His Works and His Ways. The agent He uses is the Holy Spirit. The tool He uses is the Scripture. We must never confuse meditation with vegetation. You know, when you sit in the corner, suck your thumb and say that you are meditating. We must never confuse meditation with agitation. I have heard many people say, "I am just sitting here meditating." I then ask, "What are you meditating about?" They reply, "I am just so worried about what is going to happen." This is not meditation, this is agitation. The key is the Scripture. Do not listen to the voice of a stranger, listen to the voice of God.

Statement 4- For meditation to be profitable, it must be done several times a week. True or false? The answer is false. To be profitable, meditation must be done continually not just several times a week. Just imagine if you said, "Oh, good grief, it is Thursday afternoon and this is my time to breathe and I've got to breathe again on Monday at noon." We would never live. If you go on through these passages, the whole idea is that meditation is to be done minute-by-minute. We see this in Psalm 119:148 as David says,

My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word. (Psalm 119:148 NKJV)

The night watches were four 3 hour segments from 6 P.M. to 9 P.M., 9 P.M. to 12 P.M., 12 A.M. to 3 A.M. and 3 A.M. to 6 A.M. David said, "I sometimes lie awake and anticipate the night watch, the change, the 3 hour segment so that I can stop again and meditate on the Scriptures.

There are many other Scriptures that speak of meditation. Psalm 119:97 says,

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation (I breathe it) all the day. (Psalm 119:97 NKJV)

Psalm 1:1,2 says,

Blessed, happy, secure is the man who does not find his friendships in the world, who does not find his advice

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in the world, who does not find his pleasure in the world, his happiness is in the Scripture. He breathes in it and meditates in it day and night, continuously without starting or stopping. (Psalm 1:1,2 paraphrased)

Joshua 1:8,9 again says,

Don't let the Scripture ever leave the tip of your tongue, keep it on the edge of your consciousness always so that you can breathe it, consider it and respond to it day and night. (Joshua 1:8,9 paraphrased)

This is a continuous process.

Statement 5- A good time to meditate is when you are depressed. True or false? The answer is true. Turn to Psalm 143. What other cure is there for depression? This is it. Psalm 143:1,3 and 4 says,

Hear my prayer Lord, give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness, answer me.

For the enemy has persecuted my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me dwell in darkness, like those who have long been dead.

Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is distressed. (Psalm 143:1,3,4 NKJV)

The Psalmist said, "I am depressed." But then he said,

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands.

I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty land. (Psalm 143:5,6 NKJV)

We see the same feelings in Psalm 104:33. This changes your perspective when you are depressed. You need to meditate.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

May my meditation be sweet to Him; I will be glad in the Lord. (Psalm 104:33,34 NKJV)

This is how the sweetness, the joy returns to your life. Now turn to Psalm 77:1-17. You may remember here that the Psalmist was in the pits, so to speak. He was feeling like he was at the bottom of the barrel. There seemed to be nowhere to turn. He said,

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I cried out to God with my voice—to God with my voice;
and He gave ear to me.

In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my hand
was stretched out in the night without ceasing; my soul
refused to be comforted.

I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and
my spirit was overwhelmed.

You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot
speak.

I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient
times.

I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate
within my heart, and my spirit makes diligent search.

Will the Lord cast off forever, and will He be favorable
no more?

Has His mercy ceased forever? Has His promise failed
forevermore?

Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut
up His tender mercies?

And I said, “This is my anguish; but I will remember the
years of the right hand of the Most High.”

I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will
remember Your wonders of old.

I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your
deeds.

Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a
God as our God?

You are the God who does wonders; You have declared
Your strength among the peoples.

You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons
of Jacob and Joseph.

The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You, they
were afraid; the depths also trembled.

The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound;
Your arrows also flashed about.

(Psalm 77:1-17 NKJV)

What changed the depression to praise? Meditation.

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Statement 6- Meditation leads to wisdom. True or false?

The answer is true. Meditation leads to wisdom as we see in Psalm 119:

Oh how I love the Scripture. I love it so much that I breathe it all day long.

Through it I have wisdom, spiritual discernment that leads to right responses and more wisdom than all of my enemies.

I have more wisdom than all my teachers and more wisdom than all of the ancients.

(Psalm 119:97-99 paraphrased)

Statement 7- Meditation prepares you for persecution and suffering. True or false? The answer is true. Psalm 119:77-79 says,

Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; for Your law is my delight.

Let the proud be ashamed, for they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; but I will meditate on Your precepts.

Let those who fear You turn to me, those who know Your testimonies. (Psalm 119:77-79 NKJV)

The same idea is found in Psalm 1:1,2.

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

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1,2 NKJV)

Statement 8- God's goal for meditation is encouragement. True or false? The answer is false. This is a trick question. Sometimes God's goal for meditation is encouragement. Sometimes God's goal is conviction. Sometimes God's goal is an awakening. Sometimes His goal is to grieve you. The goal of God always for meditation in the Scripture is obedience. We see this in Joshua 1:8 where it says,

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.

(Joshua 1:8a NKJV)

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All of these passages say the same thing.

Statement 9- Proper meditation guarantees success. True or false? The answer is true. Joshua 1:8 says

For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:8b NKJV)

This is in regards to spiritual success. We see this also in Psalm 1:3,

He 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.

(Psalm 1:3 NKJV)

Statement 10- Meditation requires a response. True or false? The answer is true. Again we see that you might observe to do all that is written. I Timothy 4:15 says,

Meditate on these things, breathe them and give yourself totally to doing them so that everyone may see your success. Pay attention and keep on paying attention. It will deliver you and those to whom you minister.

(I Timothy 4:15 paraphrased)

Meditation is not an option, it is a command. It needs the Word memorized on the tip of your tongue. It is not wallowing in your own thoughts, but it is breathing the Word of God. It is not a weekly assignment. It is a minute-by-minute experience. It will lift you from depression. It will give you unspeakable wisdom. It will prepare you for suffering. It will give you the capacity to obey. It guarantees spiritual success. In order for all of this to happen, it requires a continual response on our part.

What is meditation? It is the recalling of the food of the Word of God to the mind. The illustration that Bill Gothard and others give is that it is the same root word in the Hebrew that is used for a cow re-chewing its cud. The word means to draw back. It is the pump that cleanses the blood in your spiritual heart. The Word is received, and then through meditation, it re-circulates until it dislodges, replaces, and removes through cleansing the old thoughts and old hostilities. It is contemplation by examination. It is a safe, sure arrangement by which God becomes God experientially. It is the breathing

of the Scriptures. This is what meditation is all about.

Practically, meditation visually and experientially relates the character of God to the circumstances of man. When you put the two together, it changes your life. Here are some examples of the character qualities of God found in Galatians 5:22,23. Love, joy, contentment, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are the qualities listed in these two verses. On the other hand, some of the circumstances that you and I face that the Scripture has an answer to are mentioned. These are persecution, facing the unknown, making a marriage work, responding to financial crises, handling prosperity, rearing children, dealing with your enemies, developing a ministry and handling the details of life. All of these are circumstances that we come in contact with. What we need is the character of God to relate ourselves properly to the circumstances of life.

Meditation is the process of inhaling from the Scriptures the principles and the person and the character qualities of God. The Spirit applies them to the circumstances of life. An example is love. What is love? Love is the dominant quality of God's character that remains consistent with no regard to worth or response. That is love. You need to understand love. The Holy Spirit, through meditation, will help you apply that to making your marriage work, to dealing with your enemies and to developing a ministry.

What is joy? It is inner rejoicing at the sovereignty of God regardless of the circumstances. Through meditation, we learn that we can count it all joy when we are persecuted. We learn there is joy facing the unknown when Christ is in control of our lives.

What is peace or contentment? It is an inner tranquility that defies understanding. We see this in Philippians 4. Through the meditation of the Word, we learn that we can have peace or contentment. Paul says that we can even have peace and contentment in the midst of a financial crisis if our minds are on Him.

and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

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Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

I know how to be abased (poor), and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. (Philippians 4:7, 11,12 NKJV)

Patience is a life that waits for God. You learn how to be patient with your children and with your enemy. We learn how to be patient in developing a ministry. We discussed this in the last lesson.

Kindness is the life that reaches out to meet the needs of others. I want to deal with these at another time because time is so short. This is basically what these verses are trying to teach us.

Let's get to the "How To's". So many times we have lessons or hear sermons regarding meditation and the thoughts are grandiose. We then leave and we go home to try to meditate and we don't know what to do. I want to ask you to try it. I have a four-step plan. You can turn yours into 27 points, or three points or whatever works for you. This is not a legalistic system, but I believe it is the essence of meditation.

- 1- Engraving
- 2- Examining
- 3- Exploring
- 4- Experiencing

To engrave is to memorize and to ask yourself, "What does this Scripture say?"

To examine is to visualize and paraphrase and ask yourself, "What does this mean?"

To explore means to personalize it and ask yourself, "What does it mean to me?"

To experience is entering into the passage with response. There are five possible responses to Scripture that I would like to mention. In reality there are millions of them.

Response 1- Commitment. "Lord, by Your grace I will do..." This is a response of commitment.

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Response 2- Surrender. “Lord, here I am. Do what you need to do to me. Use me.”

Response 3- Rest. So often we will meditate on the Word and the Holy Spirit will come along and you are moved to say, “Thank You, Lord, that You are in control.”

Response 4- Worship. “Lord, I want to praise You for what You said to me this morning.”

Response 5- Have a burden for someone. “Lord, I want to reach out. You have broken my heart for my son or my daughter or my parents or my friend.”

Let’s see how this works in a passage of Scripture. I want to look at Psalm 37. We are going to meditate through this Psalm together. The first thing you want to do is memorize it. As you are memorizing it, you need to begin to meditate. In your study time, look up the key words and look up the phrases to see what they mean. You can also get a cross-reference to see other verses that are similar. You can compare other translations. You are then ready to paraphrase. If you don’t like to do it or don’t know how, get a copy of a paraphrased Bible to get the idea such as the Living Bible or the J.B. Philips Translation. These are suggestions to look at. You can then write it out in your own words, which is a paraphrase.

I want to read the King James Version of Psalm 37 one verse at a time. I will then read a paraphrase. As we go, we will visualize what this verse might be saying. We will then come back to try to personalize it. Close your eyes if you will so that I can read it to you. Psalm 37 goes like this:

Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. (Psalm 37:1 NKJV)

Meditate on this verse. The Word literally says,

Don’t be anxious or jealous of the apparent success of evil men or of the rampaging progress of sin in the world. (Psalm 37:1 paraphrased)

In other words, visualize what the world is coming to. Think about the increase of all of the evidences of evil in your mind. You might picture walking down the street and seeing all of the forms of degradation. You might visualize the

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success of someone you know who is a cheater or a liar and does not follow the things of God. Visualize in your mind the thought that Satan plants in your life that says, “That person is succeeding without God. The world is succeeding without God and where is it all coming to?” Visualize this and then listen to God as He says, “Don’t be anxious or jealous.” In verse 2 we continue as God says,

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. (Psalm 37:2 NKJV)

We can visualize this as He says,

Imagine a tall field of grass being mowed down with a lawnmower. (Psalm 37:2 paraphrased)

That is what will happen to the evil ones. Imagine a weed that will be cut down like grass and wither as a green herb. Imagine a weed that seems so strong, but when you look out the next day, it is dead. Verse 3 says,

Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. (Psalm 37:3 NKJV)

Visualize now as we hear the secret.

Rest the weight of your life completely on God. You will live in the Promised Land. (Psalm 37:3 paraphrased)

Visualize walking through a door into the bright sunlight as you then see all of the promises that God has promised for you laying before you. Visualize this in your mind. Then visualize that as you walk into the room, it says that you will never go hungry. You look into the room and see a huge banquet table. The Lord Jesus is sitting at the head of the banquet table. He invites us to come to sit down beside Him. All of the treasures of the kingdom are there for us to enjoy for all of eternity. That is what it says. In verse 4 it says,

Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4 NKJV)

With your eyes closed, just imagine what you delight in. Many of you delight in watching the Super Bowl. You will delight in seeing a huge throng of people. Just imagine in your mind’s eye that you have come to this stadium filled with people. Imagine instead of 22 men running out on the field,

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that the Lord Jesus Himself will come to stand in the midst of that field. He says, "You delight in Me."

Suppose you delight in having a delicious dinner. You can imagine that you are sitting down to this meal and visualize that the dinner passes away and suddenly before your eyes is all of the spiritual food that God has prepared for you. This verse says to delight ourselves in the Lord and find our pleasure in Him. This is an important passage, because so many people misunderstand it. They quote it and say that God will give you the desires of your heart, but the first part says He will do this IF we make His will our desire. We continue in verse 5,

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and
He shall bring it to pass. (Psalm 37:5 NKJV)

Make a once and for all commitment of your way unto the Lord. Can you visualize driving down the freeway? As you are driving, you see a sign that says, The Will of God. As you look at all of your friends, you see that they are going the other way. You have an immediate choice to decide if you are going to take that fork in the road and follow everyone else or are you going to follow the sign that says, "The Will of God." Visualize, that in your mind, He says that we need to rest the weight or cast the weight totally on Him, and He will bring it to pass.

Imagine standing at a second story window in a house that is on fire. As you look out, you realize that you are going to be consumed. But when you look down, the Lord Jesus Christ is waiting for you below with His arms outstretched, and He says, "Jump. Throw your weight on Me. I will never fail to catch you." Underneath are the everlasting arms. This is what this passage is saying. It says,

He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and
your justice as the noonday.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret
because of him who prospers in his way, because of the
man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

(Psalm 37:6,7 NKJV)

We can visualize resting and relaxing in the Lord. We

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need to lay ourselves down at His feet to rest. We continue in verse 8,

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm. (Psalm 37:8 NKJV)

This verse can be paraphrased,

Put away anger forever and give up your rights to a bad temper. Don't even think about doing evil.

(Psalm 37:8 paraphrased)

He continues in verse 9,

For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the Lord, (Psalm 37:9 NKJV)

Paraphrased this says,

Evildoers will disappear, but those who do the will of God will one day inherit the earth. (Psalm 37:9)

Now, I want to personalize that verse. We have examined it, paraphrased it and visualized it. We have done this very quickly and very inadequately, but I wanted to do it as an illustration. I want to very quietly personalize this passage as you would meditating at home.

Let's go back to verse 1. It says, "Don't be anxious or jealous or fearful of sin or success in the world". Now, is there anyone here who is anxious about the world situation? If you are, right now, just breathe that verse back to God. This is what meditation is. You can say, "Lord Jesus, I realize now that it is sin to fret or to be anxious about the evil of the world. Lord, You are in control. As honestly as I can, I want to give it back to You." Are any of you anxious about the success of evil men in the world, and you cannot put it together with the gospel? Right now, turn loose of it as you say, "Lord Jesus, this is Your problem, not mine. I want to praise You for that."

In verse 3, the Psalmist says, "Rest the weight of your life upon Him." Are any of you anxious about the cares of life? Are you having financial problems? Maybe you have a job change that you cannot quite grasp yet. Maybe you have a problem with your family that just does not seem to have a solution. He says to rest the weight of your life upon Him. To meditate on this verse, breathe it in and respond by saying, "Lord Jesus,

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I am going to stop trying to live my life. I am going to ask You, in me, to take the steering wheel. Lord, here it is. You have told me to be anxious for nothing and in everything by prayer and supplication to praise You and You will take care of everything. Lord, Jesus, right now I want to hand you this problem.” Visually, personally, give Him the problem of that son or that daughter or that friend or that job or that money or those parents or those in-laws. Whatever it is, by an act of your will, breathe that verse back to Him and praise Him.

As we look at verse 5, we can find direction. Maybe you have had problems committing yourself to do the will of God. Maybe you know there is something that God wants you to do, but yet you have wrestled with it and fought with it. Verse 5 tells us to,

Commit your ways to the Lord, trust Him and He will
bring it to pass. (Psalm 37:5 NKJV)

Rest, relax but decide once and for all to follow the sign that says, The Will of God. To meditate on that verse right now means for you to say, “Lord, I don’t understand it all. I’m not really sure what to do. But, I want once and for all, right now, to commit my way unto You. I want to give this problem to you. I want to trust and rest the weight of my life completely on You. I believe that You will bring it to pass.”

In verse 8 we see that we are to put off anger forever. If there is even one person here who has been wrestling with a temper for days or weeks or years, this Scripture is for you. With meditation, take this verse and pray it back to God. You can say something like this, “Lord Jesus, I surrender my anger and my right to a temper. Once and for all Lord Jesus, I want you to soothe me and calm me and give me a sweet spirit.” This, you see, is a very quick example of meditation.

Another passage that is good for meditation is Matthew 11:28. We don’t have time to do it right now, but I do want to mention it.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and
I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28 NKJV)

You can visualize the Lord Jesus Christ with out-stretched arms. This passage teaches us that He says, “If you have toiled

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to the point of weariness, and you come to Me, I will be an oasis in the desert.” He says, “I will give you rest. I will fit you for a yoke that won’t chafe your neck. Therefore, I can control the direction you will go.” You can meditate on this verse. You can come to the Lord and lay those burdens at His feet and learn of Him.

This is how meditation works. You engrave. You examine. You explore. You experience. Another, easier way would be to think of this pattern. You memorize. You visualize. You personalize. You respond. In your study time, you may prepare and paraphrase and memorize. As you go about your daily work, cooking, cleaning, driving, waiting, working and going to sleep at night, you can visualize the verse in your mind’s eye. You personalize it by putting yourself in the picture and by responding with an act of the will to the commandment of the promise that God gives you. In other words, learn to have the Scripture on the tip of your tongue. Breathe it. Inhale it. Exhale the response. You will replace impurity and spiritual disease with holiness and wholeness. Isn’t that what this is all about?

I don’t know about you, but my prayer to God this morning goes something like this:

Dear God, I want to be your man
For that’s what life’s about.
I want to learn to let Your Word
Breathe its treasure out.

I want to more than act the part
And play the “Christian role”.
I want to be so changed by You
That You will own my soul.

Oh, God this morning, this I pray
That from this moment forth,
I might learn to breathe the Word
Your ways, Your works, Your worth.

Oh God, that I might meditate
Even in the dark of night,
Until through breathing Scripture
The darkness springs to light.

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Oh God, I yearn to be Your man
To glorify Your name.
Oh may I learn to meditate
And never be the same.

This week, why don't you take one or two or three of the passages of Scripture and breathe them into your life. Do this night and day, day and night. I'm going to give you some suggestions that you might "observe to do according to all that is written therein". The Scriptures we did for this lesson are Psalm 37 and Matthew 11:28-29. Let me suggest Philippians 4:6-7; Isaiah 40:28-31; Isaiah 26:3 or Matthew 28:19-20. Just for one week, give yourself wholly to breathing that passage into your life. You have a promise,

For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed,

(Joshua 1:8b,9a NKJV)

As you meditate,

for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

(Joshua 1:9b NKJV)

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