

A PRIMER ON MEDITATION

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A PRIMER ON MEDITATION

M. A. Ronasoff, long associated with  
Thomas Edison, had worked futilely for  
over a year to soften the wax of  
phonograph cylinders by altering their  
chemical constitution. THE RESULTS WERE  
NEGATIVE. Rosanoff relates how he mused  
night after night trying to "mentally  
cough up" every theoretical and  
practical solution.

"Then it came like a flash of  
lightning. I could not shut waxes out  
of my mind, even in my sleep. Suddenly,  
through headache and daze. I saw the  
solution.

"The first thing the next  
morning, I was at my desk and half an  
hour later I had a record in the  
softened wax cylinder... this was the  
solution! I learned to think waxes...  
waxes... waxes, and the solution came  
without effort although months of  
thought had gone into the mental mill."

Rosanoff learned to think waxes.  
It was like unrolling a ball of string  
out of the unknown and night after night  
pulling it toward his mind, not knowing  
what might be attached to the other end  
of every thought or concept.

Meditation is the art of hauling  
in that ball of mental thread.

This is a generation of hustle and bustle. "Time out" for anything except sleep and medical checkups is considered idling your motor when you ought to be in high gear.

Reflection and deep thought in a quiet place is a thing of the past. This idea of taking time to be holy is more often a song we sing than an accomplishment. It takes time to be holy. It takes lots of time to be truly effective for God.

Each of us needs time to think waxes -- this was Rosanoff's secret. He daily gave his problem a second thought. It is a mistaken idea that meditation is only for those who have time for it -- daydreamers, scientists, novelists, ascetics and cloistered saints of religion.

Giving life a second thought is the need of every man. "Meditation is the skeleton key that unlocks the greatest storeroom in the house of God's provisions for the Christian." The men who carry this key upon the chain of their daily life come into a knowledge and relationship that the "activist" and the restless ones have never known.

With the solitude of the meditation room, there is produced a quality of life that must be standard equipment for all the Master's men.

"Now come along to some quiet place by yourself, and rest for a little while" (Mark 6:31 Phillips).

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

"Meditation is simply thought prolonged and directed to a single object. Your mystic chambers where thoughts abide are the secret workshop of an unseen Sculptor chiseling living forms for a deathless future. Personality and influence are modeled here. Hence, the biblical injunction: 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life'" (A.T.Pierson).

Meditation is CHEWING. It is

like the graphic picture of a cow and her process of mastication -- bringing up previously digested food for renewed grinding and preparation for assimilation. Meditation is pondering and reviewing various thoughts by mulling them over in the mind and heart. It is the processing of mental food. We might call it "thought digestion." "Chewing" upon a thought, deliberately and thoroughly, provides provides a vital link between theory and action. What metabolism is to the physical body of the cow, meditation is to your mental and spiritual life.

Meditation is ANALYZING. It is the art of taking a good, long look at a given object as the craftsman does his dazzling jewel -- polishing the diamond to reflect all its light and beauty. Meditation on a portion of the Holy Bible is like gazing at a prism of many facets, turning the stone from angle to angle in the bright sunlight. Steady and constant reflection reveals unlimited beauties from the Scriptures which will never otherwise be seen. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psalm 119:18).

Meditation is ACTION. Someone has described it: "Making words into thoughts and thoughts into actions." It is mental planning ahead with definite action in mind for accomplishing a job. Andrew Murray describes it: "Holding the Word of God in your heart until it has affected every phase of your life... this is meditation.

Now tie these three thoughts together: chewing, analyzing and action. Reflect on each of them now before reading any further. Give God time for divine polishing in His secret place in order to more effectually reproduce His glory and beauty in public.

NOT WITHOUT PROBLEMS

"Muse" was the name given to an ancient Greek god who spent much time in solitude and thinking. The statue of "The Thinker" is the artistic concept of deep concentration and absorption. Add an "a" to the beginning of "muse" and you

have: "amuse" -- sports, games, television and a score of other tools used by the enemy to keep God's men from concentrating on man's God.

Beware of getting alone with your own thoughts. Get alone with God's thoughts. There is danger in rummaging through waste and barren desert-thoughts that can be labeled -- daydreaming or worse. Don't meditate upon yourself but dwell upon Him -- seek God in your inner thought life. There is always danger in meditating upon problems. Develop the habit of reflection upon the Word of God and therein find the answers to your problems. "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: When I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches" (Psalm 63:5,6).

#### SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO MEDITATE

Let's get started. Since we want to make this a built-in habit of daily living, start with a moment of prayer. Ask God's help in concentration, alertness of mind and that inward sense of His abiding Presence. As a means of getting under way, here are five suggestions that will make the following Bible verse extremely practical:

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:24)

1. One of the most helpful approaches in meditation is to emphasize different words within the verse. As you throw them out vocally, the Holy Spirit will echo them back to your heart through your ears and mind. Read the first phrase aloud several times with striking emphasis upon the word in caps:

HITHERTO have ye asked nothing in My Name.

Hitherto have YE asked nothing in My Name.

Hitherto have ye asked NOTHING

in My Name.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing  
in MY NAME.

2. Put this verse from the King James Version into your own words. Say it over and over, silently and aloud, until you can communicate it back to yourself in language that has meaning. Reflect slowly. Don't be in a hurry to reword it -- rearrange the words and use your dictionary to look up words you don't understand. Perhaps you will end up with something like this:

"Up to this moment you have not been asking anything in God's authority; go ahead and ask, see if God doesn't love to answer. This is because He wants you to be full of cheerfulness."

3. Now that you have taken it apart and have paraphrased it so it is your very own, start asking questions. Use the ones the newspaper reporter starts with: who? what? where? when? why? and how? Here's how it works on John 16:24.

Who is Jesus talking to?

What is He saying? What does He say I should do?

Where should I pray? Where have I failed in my praying?

When should I ask? When is my joy full and complete?

Why does God say I should pray?

How should I go about asking?

Every question is not equally productive, but by asking such questions, your mind will be focused on the Word of God -- this is the beginning of meditation. When you start asking questions, you start to dissect. Not questions that just bring up facts and doctrine but also heart-feeding application. Questions and answers to the above put the Scriptures into the

bloodstream of your soul.

4. Apply John 16:24 immediately. 2\_Timothy 3:16-17 says that all Scripture is profitable in a four-fold function: it is useful in teaching the faith, for correcting error, for resetting the direction of man's life and for training him in good living. Tackle John 16:24 once again from these four angles:

a. Is there some truth I should know from this verse?

b. Is there something I should stop doing in light of this verse?

c. Is there a practice in my life I should change?

d. Is there a habit I ought to begin?

5. A "verse a day" can be selected during your quiet time in the morning. \* To begin with, it can be done within ten minutes. Try analyzing, dissecting and chewing over such a verse during odd moments of your day -- walking to work, riding the train or bus, waiting for meals or "killing time" for that appointment. Apply it that very day. Perhaps you will have the opportunity to share it with someone else.

\*[ A workable plan for busy people desiring a daily morning time with God has been written in a little brochure, Seven Minutes With God, published by NavPress.]

<7minutes.txt/zip is also available in etext form. Check for print-media availability of Seven Minutes With God, as well as this booklet, A Primer on Meditation: how to reflect on the Word of God.>

The crown fruit of meditation is the changed life. Without the transformed life, meditation is useless. This was the problem Jesus had with the Pharisees of His day. They knew the facts and were experts in doctrine. They were conscientious, sincere and dedicated men. But the Lord called them sons of Satan -- "Ye are of your father

the devil." Why this stinging indictment? All their study of the Old Testament didn't change their lives. There was no heart application. They still oppressed the poor, defrauded the widows and pursued doubtful business practices.

Beware of meditation that ends in just pious words. True meditation ends in moral action. A changed attitude toward God and fellow man is the result. A changed work habit. A changed relationship to your family. In short -- a changed life! Anything less is not enough. "O how I love Thy law: it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97).

Bring the fruit of your meditation and offer it to the Lord for His blessing. Ask the Holy Spirit to apply the Word to your heart and enable you to live today in conformity to it.

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

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<note inside front cover>

The Navigators is an international, interdenominational Christian organization. Jesus Christ gave His followers a Great Commission in Matthew 28:19. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." The primary aim of the Navigators is to help fulfill Christ's Great Commission by making disciples and developing disciplemakers in every nation.

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