

What's on Your Mind

Numbers 14: 1-4 *Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night.*

2 *And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!*

3 *Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?"*

4 *And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."*

Introduction

To meditate is to have our thoughts consumed by something.

An anticipated pleasure, a problem, a desire, a dream,

or even a person—all these and many others can be objects of meditation.

The question for believers is: Are we consumed with thoughts about the Lord or have we allowed so many other things to fill our minds and distract us from what has to be our highest priority—knowing and loving God?

Meditation on God's Word focuses our minds on the Lord, strengthens us spiritually, and brings us closer to Him.

It's a private time in which we receive His good, righteous, and wise direction for our lives so we can become the person He wants us to be.

However, there will also be times when we feel God's conviction regarding sin in our lives that we need to confess and forsake.

Israel's Incorrect Meditation

- **All meditation is effective, good or bad**
- **Not all meditation is positive**

After spending 400 years in Egypt living as slaves, the children of Israel were delivered by God when He sent a plague in which all the firstborn Egyptians died.

Then Moses led the people through the wilderness to the Red Sea.



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Although Pharaoh pursued the Israelites and incorrectly believed he had them trapped, the Lord parted the sea so that they could cross over on dry land.

Afterward the water returned and drowned the Egyptian army.

When they finally reached the edge of the territory God had promised to give them, Moses sent 12 men to spy out the land.

Joshua and Caleb came back to report that the land was good and that the Lord would help them conquer it.

But the people chose to listen to the bad report of the other 10 spies who told them the inhabitants were too powerful for them to overcome.

Instead of meditating on the promises and power of God, the people's thoughts were consumed with fear.

Rather than trusting and obeying the Lord, they wanted to appoint a leader to take them back to Egypt to become slaves once again.

This is an example of unhealthy meditation.

They evaluated the situation based on their own abilities and left God out of the equation.

Although Joshua and Caleb focused on the Lord, the people could only think about themselves and the possibility of defeat and loss of life.

They chose to depend on themselves rather than on God.

We all have this same choice.

Will we depend on the Lord for every aspect of our lives or rely on ourselves?

Will we set our focus on the world and its pleasures, pursuits, and fears, or on God and His sufficiency to handle everything?

The Benefits of Meditating on Scripture

It quiets our spirit and calms our thoughts.

It also produces positive fruit.

- **He enlightens our minds** to think like He does and do what He desires.
- **He increases our energy** with His power, enabling us to obey Him in every circumstance.

- **He purifies our hearts by exposing sin** so we can confess.
- **He enlarges our view of Him.**

He is almighty God, and all things are under His control.

- **He increases our love for Him.**

As we spend time learning to know Him, our love for Him grows.

- **He increases our faith.**

We are able to trust the Lord in the trials of life because we see evidence that He is always with us.

- **He increases our awareness of His presence.**
- **He fills us with joy.**

Knowing Him more intimately through His Word produces indescribable joy, completeness, peace, and security.

Holy meditation is a conversation with God.

As we read and think about His Word and seek to understand what He is saying and how it applies to our lives, the Holy Spirit guides our thoughts as well as our questions.

Without the Lord's presence with us,

His Word guiding us,

and His Spirit helping us, we would be unable to live righteously in this world.

If we're not listening to the Lord by meditating and reading His Word, we are missing His best for our lives just as the Israelites did when they refused to believe and obey Him.

They lost the Promised Land and suffered 40 long years of wandering in the wilderness.

God's Word is His holy, eternal gift to every one of His children.

He doesn't want us to think and live like the world around us.

His plans for us are more wonderful, righteous, and fulfilling than anything the world can offer.

That's why we must listen to the Lord, let the Scriptures sink into our hearts, and let go of everything else that distracts or hampers our ability to meditate on Him.

Wrong Attitudes That Hinder Effective Meditation

- **Bitterness** steals our focus from the Lord and obscures our need to love and forgive others.
- **Anger** becomes stronger when it consumes our thoughts.
- **Hatred** for others makes a right relationship with God impossible.
- **Unforgiveness** is a barrier between us and God because our thoughts are centered on the wrong done to us rather than our own sins that put Jesus on the cross.
- **Hostility** is a desire to hurt others or get even, and this is incompatible with effective meditation on God.
- **Resentment** is a self-destructive dislike of others based on who they are or what they have.
- **Unbelief** is manifested by doubts that God is interested in our lives and will meet our needs.

However, reading and meditating on His Word can increase our trust in the Lord as we learn to know Him more fully.

- **Grudge**

Holding a grudge against someone is linked with other sins like anger, resentment, and hostility, which are spiritually destructive and make us miserable.

- **Fear**

This was the focus of the children of Israel when they faced what seemed like an impossible situation and forgot about God's power.

Today, fear still grips many people as they react to all the uncertainties and dangers around them and forget about God.

We all meditate on something.

The issue is whether we choose to dwell on God's Word, which is healthy and spiritually uplifting, or focus on ourselves, our fears, or worldly things.

God's blessings await us when we make Him our priority, but if we leave Him out, painful consequences are sure to follow.



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The Promised Land or the wilderness stands before us.

What we choose to dwell upon will determine which way we will go.

Take-Aways

- **God's plan is always best.**
- **Sometimes the process is very painful and difficult.**
- **Don't forget that when God is silent, He is busy on your behalf.**

What is the focus of your thoughts?

Do you tend to dwell more on your problems, plans, or even pleasures than on the God and His Word?

How does the focus of your thoughts affect your emotions and attitudes?

What effect does it have on your own faith?

How much time on any given day do you set aside to be alone with God, listening to Him through His Word and His presence?

Supporting Passages of Scripture

Psalm 19: 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Hebrews 13: 5-6 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

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