

The Bible emphasizes the importance of meditating on scripture often (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2; Psalm 19:14; Psalm 104:34; Psalm 119:15; Proverbs 4:20-22; Job 22:2). “Meditating on scripture” is intentionally soaking in the endless riches of God’s word. To put it simply: **Meditating on scripture means to think about it deeply in intentional ways.** We are called to “write God’s word on our heart” through meditation because it helps us take ACTION in a fallen world (Prov 3:3). Meditating on scripture helps us find deeper application points from our reading and it reveals deeper truths to us as we continue to grow. When we dwell on the word of God, it seeps into our hearts and our day-to-day.

So how do we meditate? Start by keeping it simple! First, read your passage and select a “key” verse or phrase from your reading that you will focus on. Focus on a part of your reading that stood out to you in some way. It is always good to **“read BIG, and meditate SMALL”**. After that, you may choose to write the key verse down in your journal or simply read it aloud a few times before you use a “*meditation method*”.

There are many meditation methods you can use when going through scripture. Far more than I have included here. Still, this list is a great starting point. Look at the list and see which methods jump out at you. Don’t be timid; try as many as you can— even if it doesn’t seem like something you would want to do. This isn’t the “how to meditate on scripture” handbook. It’s just a springboard for you as you continue on a lifetime of following Jesus and learning from his word. Drink deep from the well of living water— it will never run out of ways to speak to your soul. **Remember: The Bible is the inspired word of an eternal God with an infinite mind— we won’t ever reach the bottom of what it has to offer us.** There are always endless applications and insights to be found. It would be arrogant and foolish to think we have already heard enough from a passage. Beware the dangers of “I’ve heard this verse before”.

Meditation Methods

1. “Squeezing The Text”

- Read through a passage repeatedly, emphasizing a different word each time. This helps us get a new understanding of the passage as we are emphasizing different components of it.

2. Rewrite the text or passage in your own words

- Restating the text *accurately and faithfully* while processing it in a new way

3. Formulate a principle from the text. Identify the lesson.

- Simplify the passage to a key principle, then simplify it again. Then again. Then again. All the way to the root.
- Make the principle easy to grasp and remember. Thus, it is easier to apply.

4. Think of a good illustration for the main principle of the text

- Jesus often exemplified this (Matt 13: “*The Kingdom of God is like...*”)
- *Example:* MLK’s “I have a dream” speech. He said “I have a dream that one day black and white children will play together in the schoolyards of Georgia”, not “I have a dream of racial equality”. He illustrated his point with a tangible example that clarified his vision.

5. Look for application points of the text (for your own walk with God)

- What responses or “*I will do...*”s would come from this in your life? (often pairs great with #3)

6. How does the passage point to The Law (why we need Jesus) or The Gospel (the good news of Jesus), or Both?

- Finding where this passage fits into the broader scope of The Bible: Law & Gospel (don't force anything)
- Useful for connecting scripture to The Law (our need for Jesus) and The Gospel (the good news of Jesus)

7. How does this passage point to something about Jesus himself?

- Christ is centric from Genesis to Revelation
- We don't want to force things that are not there, but we tragically do not see Christ in scripture as much as we should
- Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) was excellent at this in his sermons

8. Praying through the passage

- A method of prayer AND meditation
- Ex: Psalm 23: “God let me be more trusting of you as my shepherd today. Let me love you as my shepherd. Help me to see the green pastures you lead me to more clearly, that I might praise you more. Thank you for the moments of protection you have given me in dark times. Etc”

9. Memorize the passage / a key part of the passage

- Psalm 119:11— “I have hidden your word in my heart that I may not sin against you”
- Extremely helpful for application in day to day life. Memorize it and use it!
- Memorizing scripture is a great way to help us fight temptation or work out our faith in ways we struggle. “*Swing That Sword, Brother!*”
 - Dealing with Lust? Memorizing Job 31:1 and repeating it every time you are tempted to lust can help fight temptation.
 - Wanting to grow in grace with difficult people? Memorizing Colossians 3:12 and repeating it to yourself when you are struggling to give grace can help you in your fight

10. Create an artistic representation of the text

- Writing a poem, haiku, song, or prose in reference/response to the text
- This helps take us from scripture study into **worship** for what we have seen in our scripture study
- Give it a try! Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) composed songs of worship in private to God and was famously a very calculated, non-artistic man

11. Asking Key Questions: (there are MANY you could ask, but these are great starting points)

1. How does the passage describe or clarify God's character?
2. How could this passage be used to encourage a fellow believer? Or to encourage you in a dark time?
3. What aspects of the text could impact how you pray/communicate with God?
4. Are there any other passages or verses that come to mind when you read this passage?
5. What can you praise and worship God for as you read this text?
6. How could this passage be used to share more of The Gospel with an unbelieving friend?
7. What times in your life could you have benefited from hearing and understanding this passage?