

# What does it mean to meditate on God's Word?

By Pastor Wayne King

Recently I was asked how many times I've read the Bible cover to cover in my life. After thinking about it for a while, I replied that being a student of the Bible, I've probably read through every book in the Bible multiple times. I really couldn't say that I've read it beginning from the first book (Genesis) and continued on through every book to the last (Revelation). The Bible isn't written like a novel to be read from beginning to end. It is an assembly of writings that span over 3500 years and contain sixty-six total books. Which means that the Bible is a collection of books, all inspired by the Holy Spirit who breathed into various writers to say what God wanted to say. The different genres include the "Law of God" known as the Torah or first five books of the Bible, books of history, prophecy, wisdom and poetry, Gospel (good news) accounts of Jesus and what he said and of course letters called Epistles. I myself have never really kept track of how many times I've read each book of the Bible because in my daily time with the Lord, I read a portion of the Word of God and then dwell on it throughout the day. Reading the Bible is good, but studying the Bible and meditating on it is better.

Someone once said to me that nowhere in the Bible are we instructed to only read the Bible. That may be true because I have met atheists who have read the Bible but who still don't believe. That is why studying and meditating on God's Word is what we are instructed to do.

When Joshua was taking over for Moses and was about to lead the people of Israel into the promised land, God told him specifically to not let "this book of the Law depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8). Psalm 1 says that the one who delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on it day and night will be like a tree planted beside streams of water; a choice spot to grow and to live with the blessing of God. There are many Psalms that talk about meditating on the Word (often expressed as Law). Psalm 119 is a prime example of what happens when we meditate on the Word. Verse 105 tells us that "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." God's Word will guide us and help us to grow and to find our way in the world, but most importantly, we will see and understand the great plan of salvation for all people that God had in mind since the creation of the world and culminating with Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection. Throughout the Bible we see this thread that weaves its way through all of the books, uniting them as a whole of God's great love for all people to be near him and to find salvation in Christ's death and resurrection only.

So, how does one meditate on the Word of God? How are we to dwell on what we read? Certainly, it is not by emptying ourselves of all thought, sitting cross-legged and chanting as the Eastern Religions do. Instead, meditation is filling ourselves with knowledge and a working out of what that knowledge means for our lives. This requires some study by answering some basic questions of what we've read. What does the reading mean to me? Is there something that I can take out of this that will help me to understand God's will for my life? What is the context of the reading? In the Gospel accounts we find a lot of references to the Old Testament. What is Jesus referring to when he says something that seems strange to my ears? Who is speaking in the passage? What exactly is being said? Who is being spoken to? Am I missing something that the author is saying because I don't know what he's referring to? All these questions and many more help us to grow up in our walk with the Lord because when we seek the answers and dwell on what it really means, it becomes alive in us. It truly does draw us nearer to God and we are blessed by his word and his presence as we live with the peace that only He is able to give to us in the journey of life.