

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Lesson 1 w/Answers

The Discipline of Meditation

We begin our study of Living the Christian Life with a lesson on meditation, read and consider how the following verses can help us in daily living, and in this study. Beginning with this lesson, and continuing with the remaining lessons, read Psalm 1 and Romans 12:2. They provide specific instructions regarding how to conduct our lives—day in and day out; and they provide advice regarding how best to handle the challenges that come at us each and every day of our lives.

Let me assert from the beginning that growing in our walk with Christ and practicing the disciplines that we will be studying in this series of lessons are not intended as intellectual activities, nor should they be viewed as "life improvement exercises". The sole purpose for these practices to enable us to successfully pursue a friendship with Christ, and through that friendship, allow Christ to transform us.

Furthermore, Introducing discipline of any kind into our lives isn't about the exercise, nor is it about gaining a new ability or skill; it's about growing closer to Christ in a very personal and loving way. The better we learn and exercise these disciplines, the more they enable us to be close to Christ, and with Christ—which is our sole objective. Being a super holy person is not.

Now let's take a look at the first discipline, which is that of meditation.

Consider the following:

1. Define the following terms:

a. Eastern Meditation

- i. ANSWER: A mental discipline in which the person attempts to move beyond conditioned thinking of the mind into a deeper state of relaxation and awareness. Its goal is to free you from yourself and to provide inner peace and to transcend the rational mind.

b. Transcendental Meditation

- i. ANSWER: A technique based on Hindu traditions aimed at relaxing the mind and body using a silent mantra repeated over and over again.

c. Meditation associated with Yoga

- i. ANSWER: Yoga is a general term for spiritual disciplines in Hinduism and Buddhism that are directed toward attaining higher consciousness and liberation from ignorance, suffering, and rebirth.

d. Biblical Meditation - Provide partial definitions based on each verse below; then provide a summary definition.

i. Psalm 1:2

1. ANSWER: Thinking on His Word.

ii. Psalm 119:97

1. ANSWER: Thinking on His laws.

iii. Joshua 1:8

1. ANSWER: Putting God's Word into our heart, so that we are able to meditate on it.

iv. Deuteronomy 32:4

1. ANSWER: Thinking on His works.

v. Hebrews 12:2-3

1. ANSWER: Thinking on Jesus.

vi. Psalm 19:14

1. ANSWER: Thinking on things pleasing to God.

vii. Colossians 3:2

1. ANSWER: Thinking on eternal things.

viii. Summary

1. ANSWER: Biblical meditation is thinking, pondering, reflecting, and allowing God to focus our mind and our thoughts.

2. What do the verses below further tell us regarding Biblical meditation?

a. Psalm 63:6

i. ANSWER: Meditate on God and His word before you go to sleep.

b. Psalm 119:15

i. ANSWER: Think about God's "precepts" and consider God's ways. God tells us that our ways are not his ways, so we should focus on His in order to be able to better understand them.

c. Psalm 119:23

i. ANSWER: We are to think about the things that God has decreed and take comfort in them.

d. Psalm 119:48

i. ANSWER: We are to love God's commands and meditate on them.

e. Psalm 46:10

i. ANSWER: We are to be still. We cannot reflect, meditate, nor fully consider God or His decrees and laws if our mind is not first still.

Meditation is often something Christians avoid doing, believing that somehow it's not spiritual. They believe this based on what they have seen, and perhaps even experienced, through the secular world's various forms of "meditation", which focus on emptying the mind (as an end), taking the person to a different place, or voiding the person of some fear or other encumbrance. As we have observed from our study, Biblical meditation is completely different. Its goal is to build us up as God leads us.

Employing meditation allows us to reflect, to be still, and to be open-minded and receptive, so that God can reveal deeper insights and precepts to us. Through meditation, we spend time with God, the Holy Spirit, and Christ—growing more intimate, closer, and stronger as we experience their presence in our lives in a focused and structured way. Spend some time this week thinking on God, His Holy Word, and His son Jesus, and see if He won't draw you closer than ever before. For starters, trying meditating on the teachings in Romans Chapter 12; they are life changing.

In Christ,

Wes