

GLEANINGS — October 18, A.D. 2015  
Emphasis Meditation

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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."

With that commandment, found in the first chapter of the book bearing Joshua's name, God himself encouraged Moses' successor, and we do well to heed that commandment as well. In this high tech, high noise, high speed time a disciple of Jesus is in danger of losing the still and quiet blessing of meditation.

Isaac was out in a field one evening meditating, probably at the end of his work day, when God brought him a very special blessing (Genesis 24:6ff). The Psalmist both prescribes meditation as a means of dealing with anger (Psalm 4:4) and describes the blessed man as one whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on God's law day and night (Psalm 1:2).

Some of the Psalms are themselves meditations (e.g. 5, 7, 9). The 19<sup>th</sup> Psalm includes the well known prayer, "let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight."

In other Psalm passages meditation is encouraged and exemplified, and its value extolled. The prophet Malachi (3:16) identifies those who fear the LORD with those who meditate on His name. And in at least two places in the New Testament, meditation is commanded (Philippians 4:8, 1 Timothy 4:15).

The lost world has many vain and foolish ideas about meditation. Some involve bodily contortions, others use the endless repetition of a syllable to which magical power is assigned, still others attempt to "empty" the mind (*while the devil smirks in anticipation of filling the vacuum*). The Christian, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is concerned with **Biblical** meditation. What is it, and how does one do it?

We might compare it to digestion. Man does not live by bread alone. We open our spiritual mouths and take in a "chunk" of the inspired word that proceeded from the mouth of God. That chunk might be a precept of wisdom, an abiding commandment, an inerrant historical account of God's dealings with men, a reflection on one of His righteous judgments or tender mercies. We chew on it, then take it down the spiritual esophagus into our innermost being. There, by God's grace it provides nourishment for those in Christ, Who is the great Subject of all Scripture. (Cf. Isaiah 25:6-9)

Let's press the analogy. We know that we should chew a bite of an apple or a steak slowly and thoroughly, and not "wolf it down." **Emphasis meditation** is one way to do likewise with a wholesome morsel of Scripture. Here's an example, suggesting Hebrews 12:14 as a seven course meditation meal. Using the following plan, it takes seven days, not seven seconds, to consume it...

The Lord's day – **PURSUE peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.** Each day consider the whole verse, but on this first day of the week target the truth that zealously GOING AFTER peace and holiness is necessary. Attainment is by grace, but that does not mean it will "just happen." Grace energizes. It puts us hot on the trail, pressing toward the goal.

Monday – **Pursue PEACE with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.** Today, zero in on the beauty and wonder of peace, and how those who pursue it can know the blessedness of being a peacemaker (Matthew 5:9). "Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:18).

Tuesday – **Pursue peace with ALL PEOPLE, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.** On the third day of week, as you again meditate on the entire verse which by now you likely know by heart, emphasize that your pursuit relates to every person in your life. "When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." (Proverbs 16:7) How much more his wife, relatives, friends, and neighbors?

Wednesday – **Pursue peace with all people, and HOLINESS, without which no one will see the Lord.** Today, concentrate on how the pursuit of peace is linked with the pursuit of this beautiful adornment of the Christian walk, holiness. Are my thoughts holy? Is my speech holy? In what ways does unholiness still characterize my life? How do peacemaking and holiness go together? "...be renewed in the spirit of your mind...put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:23,24 condensed)

Thursday – **Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which NO ONE will see the Lord.** Thursday is warning day! Recognize the obvious – "no one" includes YOU! Holiness is not optional. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1B). In 2 Timothy 3 and elsewhere, we learn that the unholy have no future – at least no desirable one.

Friday – **Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will SEE the Lord.** Today, emphasize that when we walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7), by faith we see Him at work here and now in our relentless pursuit of peace and holiness. And what a thrilling truth: in God's time, hope and faith will give way to glorious realization and sight! And filled with that hope, we move on to dessert day.

Saturday – **Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the LORD.** On this last day of the week, put the accent where Job put it in the midst of severe trial. "I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall SEE GOD, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27). May God cause our hearts so to yearn.

Next week, take another passage. Do a longer passage over a month, or a shorter one over a few days. Do an express emphasis meditation as a morning devotional, or at any time. **Let the word of Christ dwell richly within you.** Hmm, there are seven key words in that short statement.