

Alo02 – Meditating on God’s Word – Romans 12:2

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Open your Bibles. This is the second message in our **Alone With God** series. Title of the message, “Meditating on God’s Word.” Our key verse is Romans 12:2.

In their study of “Scripture Engagement” Taylor University (in Indiana) refers to a research book titled **Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth**. And the key conclusion of that book after surveying one thousand churches was this (quoting the book)...

“Nothing has a greater impact on spiritual growth than reflection on Scripture . . . If churches could do only one thing to help people at all levels of spiritual maturity grow in their relationship with Christ, their choice is clear. They would inspire, encourage, and equip their people . . . to reflect on Scripture for meaning in their lives.”

That basically is what I said at the beginning of last week’s message. If there were only one thing we could do *to help people grow in their relationship with Christ*, it would be what we are talking about in this series. This is the one thing that I’ve seen be one hundred percent effective in *transformational growth in Christ*.

What we teach people to do with our Daily Devotion Journal, Taylor University calls, “Scripture Engagement” and here is a part of how they define “Scripture Engagement.”

[Scripture Engagement] is a marinating, mulling over, reflecting, dwelling on, pondering of the Scriptures, resulting in a transformative engagement with God.

There’s the key right there ***resulting in a transformative engagement with God***. If you want to develop a transformative engagement with God, we want to help you do that. And today we want to help you do that by learning what it means to *meditate on God’s Word*.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, we need you to do this. This is in the supernatural zone, Lord. But God we need to learn how to do it. And so inspire us supernaturally and instruct us and mostly God give us a desire to know you at this level. To have a genuine relational engagement with you through your Living Word and covered by your Spirit. Please open our eyes to the incredible necessity of this truth today. For your glory and in your name Jesus, amen.*

Martin Luther said there are three components to a flourishing Christian life – *prayer, meditation... and suffering*. In this series we’re going to develop two of those three components to a flourishing Christian life – *meditation and prayer*.

MEDITATION is us learning how to listen to what God is saying in his Word and PRAYER is us speaking to God – communing with him – as we hear from him and as we apply his Word to our lives.

And as we take action based on God’s Word over time we will be transformed by the renewing of our mind, as Romans 12:2 says.

Romans 12:2 (NLT)

2 Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Be Transformed – by changing the way you THINK

***Then you will learn to know God’s will for you,
which is good and pleasing and perfect***

That is what learning to engage God in his Word will DO for you.

Last week, to open this series, we talked about making a time and a place to get alone with God. Today we’re going to start talking about what to do during that alone time with God – because what we do during that time alone with God is absolutely critical.

If you don’t hear anything else today, please hear this. *Every part, every step, every section of what we are discussing in this series is fully, completely and exclusively directed by God’s Word.* Our entire time alone with God is fully, completely and exclusively directed by God’s Word.

So let’s start with some explanations and a warning.

Have you ever thought Christians are not supposed to meditate? ...that meditation is some kind of Eastern Mystical thing? No! Meditation is not just an Eastern Mystical thing, it is actually a very BIBLICAL concept and meditating on God’s Word is not the same (in any way) as Eastern Mystic Meditation – in fact it is the exact opposite.

In Eastern Mystic meditation the goal is *detachment* and an empty mind – which we believe is very dangerous.

In Biblical meditation the goal is *attachment* to God and *attachment* to his Word – leading to the transformation of our life – *according to* and in *alignment with* God’s Word.

In Joshua 1:8 God tells Joshua,

Joshua 1:8 (ESV)

8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth (a reference to meditation), 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.

Psalm 1:1–2 (ESV)

1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked . . .

2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

The Hebrew word for meditating involves a low murmuring or a low kind of “talking to yourself” (repeating God’s Word).

In the New Testament meditation takes on the form of
setting your mind on Christ and heavenly things (Colossians 3)
thinking on Godly things (Philippians 4)
giving complete attention to God’s Word (1 Timothy 4)
having the same mind (attitude) as Christ (Philippians 2).

Meditating on God’s Word is *marinating, mulling over, reflecting, dwelling on, pondering of the Scriptures, resulting in a transformative engagement with God.*

It’s done in a quiet time with God – usually alone.

It’s empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Its purpose is to replace YOUR thinking with GOD’S thinking.

It’s you setting aside your own thoughts and opinions and receiving – taking in – God’s Word instead

And over time God’s Word replaces your natural thinking and you will actually start living your new life in Christ.

Now – often – learning to do this takes some discipleship, someone coming alongside you to help you develop this time with God – *so consider that.*

God’s Word is the core, the crux, the fulcrum of our relationship with the Lord.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

17 that the man (& woman) of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

But that power of the Word of God to bring true transformation has been virtually untapped in most Christian’s lives.

We would like to change that in your life.

And now, just one warning before we continue meditating on God’s Word is NOT to be used as a form of Bible study or Bible interpretation. You and I do NOT get to come up

with what we think the Bible means. The Bible means what it means and we get a grasp on what it means in sound Bible study methods. Meditating on God's Word is to come up with how the Bible *applies to our lives* and it's to come up with how we are going to respond to what God is impressing on us – through his Word.

When we first developed the Daily Devotion Journal we included some simple Bible study steps to make sure you weren't going down "*Crazy Interpretation Road*" (which is near here somewhere I think) but the process became too intensive for Daily Devotion use.

And so I've been considering doing a few messages on simple Bible study methods after this series to kind of go along with this series and to help in this area.

But I can give you my most recommended resource for this problem that will give you the general context and line-of-thinking of any verse in the Bible.

It's called "With The Word" by Warren Wiersbe and it will give you enough of the correct context of any verse to make sure you're not on "Crazy Interpretation Rd" and it's a small book, easy to carry, easy to use. "With The Word" (Not the "BE" series).

And one final thing – you can meditate on any amount of scripture. My only caution is to not take too small a piece of scripture. Using just a word or two can get wacky very quickly.

I would say at the very least a sentence or two or one complete thought. (Ignore verses – look at sentences.) Or you can use a paragraph or a section or a chapter or an entire book. Just choose a logical selection that you will have the time and ability to meditate on. We'll talk more about choosing the scripture as we continue.

So let's take a quick look at the Daily Devotion Journal to orient us to where we're at today. (www.calvarynuevo.org under "resources" tab) And let me say one thing here about the act of writing. Most of us think best through the end of a pen. When we have to write down our thoughts it forces us to refine general feelings to specific "writable" thoughts. So you really should write through this process – if you can.

1st) CHOOSE your scripture (which we'll talk more about)

2nd) PRAY – slow down – get alone with God

Honestly, you cannot do this while you're driving in traffic and putting on your make-up (and you girls can't do it then either). You have to make a time and a place in order to sit and pray that God would quiet your mind as you prepare to meet him. When you get to that place, *then* you are ready to begin to meditate on your scripture for the day.

To MEDITATE on God's Word is to *mull it over – reflect on it – ponder it – dwell on it* (in it)

It's spending enough time in God's Word until you recognize God SPEAKING to you personally.

You can think about what it meant to the original hearers

You can think about what the author was thinking or feeling

You can ask the Holy Spirit WHY he has you looking at this particular scripture on this day

And as you begin *responding in thought* to this scripture you will most likely enter a type of dialogue with God and that dialogue is called PRAYER – real prayer. You will likely find yourself praying about this scripture and you'll be praying (interacting with God) according to this scripture. And as you do, the Lord will speak to you through his living Word and by his Holy Spirit, most often by causing you to focus on a particular part of the scripture or a particular subject in the scripture.

At this point you are engaging God in his Word and you are listening to what he is impressing on you within this scripture. But you cannot jump to applying the scripture yet – that's the next step. At this point you're just mulling and reflecting and interacting with God in his living Word.

This takes a few minutes. You have to slow down enough, your mind has to be focused enough and you have to be engaged with God enough and then you can sense what the Holy Spirit is impressing on you in these verses and you will start to become amazed!

Now, everyone will do this differently, but just to give you an idea let me put one of my recent Daily Devotion Journals on the screen (Just the Meditation section). And I re-wrote it so you could read it. If you would like to get started using the Daily Devotion Journal right away, you'll find all the instructions on the back.

For the Word By Mail family and those listening later, we'll have the Daily Devotion Journal as a download on this message at www.wordbymail.com and everyone can get it at www.calvarynuevo.org (church site) under the "resources" tab. If you would like some scriptures to try it out, I'd suggest signing up for any "Verse of the Day" subscription and try plugging that verse that day into the Daily Devotion Journal.

Guys, I could read you verses on the transforming power and the wonder of God's Word all day. But let me just say this – we have got to fall in love with God's Word because it is God's love letter to us and because our actions are *driven by what we love*. And the best way to fall in love with God's Word is to experience engaging God genuinely – in his Word.

Once you start experiencing a genuine two-way interaction with God in his Word where you say to the Lord during your alone time with him, "*Lord, I hear you – I HEAR what*

you are saying IN your Word to me, personally, today” – when you begin experiencing that, this process will become an invaluable part of your life.

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

12 For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires . . .

If we will allow it to!

Engaging scripture with our mind, our heart and our actions all aligned with God’s Word and all in the power of the Holy Spirit is the most effective and transforming way that you and I can grow in our life in Christ.

But remember, I’m talking about much more than just intellectually skimming over the surface of a Bible passage so we can say we have knowledge without the Word of God ever truly transforming our lives.

We’ve got to approach God’s Word like what it is
it’s our Daily Bread for our life with Jesus Christ
It’s God dynamite to explode and transform our lives
and it is the Great Physician’s scalpel.

And maybe that’s why so many of us shy away from it, but we serve a loving and a grace filled God and he has made a way for us to come to him in confidence that we will receive mercy and grace from him.

In Psalm 27:8 David says to the Lord,

Psalm 27:8- (ESV)

8 You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, Lord, do I seek.”

We can know the Lord in this exact same way but it takes committed, devoted – time with him.

It starts by making that time and place with God then preparing your heart and mind through prayer and then meditating on God’s Word.

This is a *supernatural process*.

This is the Almighty God of Creation saying
I WILL MEET YOU personally and
I WILL TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE radically.

Here is the challenge (and the guarantee) that we always give. I guarantee you, if you will create a daily, dedicated time alone with God and if you will meditate on God’s Word for

thirty day focused on the same topic every day (different scriptures) I guarantee God will begin to transform your life on that topic within that thirty days.

We have never had someone complete the thirty days meditating on the same topic without experiencing the beginning of a noticeable transformation in their lives *on that topic*. Give it a try. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose... except those ungodly things that are destroying your life today.

God is waiting to meet you *in his Word*. He is waiting to engage you, to speak to you and to transform you by the renewing of your mind.

Let's pray. *Lord, you are calling us to meet you in this way, to engage you, to seek your face. Lord, inspire us to say "I'm coming, I will engage you. I will seek your face. I'll meet you in this place and in your Word. I'm anxious, I desire for you to genuinely transform my life. Walk with me down this path, Lord, until I'm meeting you this way on a regular basis. For your glory in my life, and in your name, Jesus, amen."*