



# SPIRITUAL FORMATION

*Midweek Teaching Series*



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Study & Meditation

# 2 Corinthians 3:15-18



<sup>15</sup> Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. <sup>16</sup> But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom <sup>18</sup> And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, **are being transformed into his image** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.      (*2 Cor 3: 15-18*)

**Spiritual Formation** = Process of being transformed into the image of Christ for the benefit of others

# Study



Study is:

- Analytical
- Focused
- Objective

Study is *not*:

- Just for teachers
- Only for those who need to explain things
- Optional

# Think



8 Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise—dwell on these things

*Phil 4:8*

# What do we study?



## Books

### Internal aspects

- Understanding the book
- Interpreting the book
- Evaluating the book

### External aspects

- Experience
- Other books
- Discussion & debate

# What do we study?



<sup>12</sup> You will indeed go out with joy  
and be peacefully guided;  
the mountains and the hills will break into singing  
before you,  
and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

*Is 55:12*

Non-verbal “books”

# Four steps



<sup>18</sup> "Imprint these words of mine on your hearts and minds, bind them as a sign on your hands, and let them be a symbol on your foreheads.

*Deut 11:18*

Repetition



# Four steps



<sup>2</sup> Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth.

*Col 3:2*

Concentration

# Four steps



<sup>31</sup> So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples. <sup>32</sup> You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

*John 8:31-32*

Comprehension

# Four steps



<sup>3</sup>This is eternal life:  
that they may know You, the only true God,  
and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.

*John 17:3*

Reflection

# Reflection on Study



1. When was the last time I studied God's Word in this way?
2. Which of the 4 steps do I need to improve most?
3. Set aside 10 minutes each for the study of a verse and the study of nature this week.

# Meditation



Meditation is:

- Simple
- Vital
- Relational

Meditation is not:

- Funny poses and chants
- Connecting to the cosmos and other weird stuff!

# Meditation



Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God's voice and obey His word.      - *Richard Foster*

<sup>1</sup> How happy is the man  
who does not follow the advice of the wicked  
or take the path of sinners  
or join a group of mockers!

<sup>2</sup> Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction,  
and he meditates on it day and night.

*Ps 1:1-2*

# Meditation



<sup>63</sup> He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching.

*Gen 24:63*

<sup>148</sup> My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.

*Ps 119:148*

# Why don't we meditate?



<sup>18</sup> When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance <sup>19</sup> and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

*Gen 20:18-19*



# Why don't we meditate?



- Keeping a safe distance
- A life of distractions
- Loss of focus (on what matters)

# Purpose of meditation



- Growing into a familiar friendship with Jesus
- Learning to live on the basis of hearing God's voice and obeying His word
- We create space in our hearts for Jesus to build an inner sanctuary from which our transformation may spread
- Not the "emptying" of Eastern meditation
- Taking back our personal relationship

# Meditation



<sup>7</sup> But the Lord told him, “Listen to the people and everything they say to you. They have not rejected you; they have rejected Me as their king.

*1 Sam 8:7*

Our constant desire to have someone else between us and God – king, mediator, priest, pastor...

# Meditation



<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

*1 Pet 2:9*

We're all called to the relationship – no middleman!

# How do we do it?



- There's no magic formula
- What are our challenges?
  - Learning to simply be still
  - Being intentional about distractions
  - Fear

# How do we do it?



- Practical hints:
  - Choose a suitable place (and don't change it too often)
  - Remove all distractions (*switch your phone off!*)
  - Focus on a single text for at least a week (*imagine being there*)
  - Persevere and don't be discouraged (*this doesn't work for me*)
  - Take time to focus on creation (*Ps 19:1*)
  - Rinse and repeat and repeat and repeat

# How do we do it?



...just as you do not analyse the words of someone you love but accept them as they are said to you, accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did. That is all. That is meditation.

- *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

# Why don't we meditate?



<sup>10</sup> "Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world."

*Ps 46:10*

We can't hear and obey if we're not being still.



# Reflection on Meditation



1. What is it that stops you from making time for meditation?
2. What scares you about meditation?
3. Choose one scripture to memorise and meditate on every day this week.