



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Memorize & Meditate: The Means to Treasure God's Word

PSALM 119:11, 15

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In today's world we are bombarded with an unbelievable amount of information. The 24/7 news cycle, television, magazines, radio, and the internet all assail us with a flow of data that can be overwhelming. (Just consider the amount of material that crosses your desk during the session.) Many speak of the stress caused by "information overload". Psychologists even have a term for it, "Information Fatigue Syndrome". This can certainly affect our work and productivity. More importantly, it can have a great impact on our spiritual lives. As our minds and hearts are filled with the thoughts and cares of this world, thoughts of God and His Word can easily be crowded out. The writer of Psalm 119 spoke constantly of loving and delighting in God's Word. He gave us the means of treasuring God's Word when he wrote of the importance of memorizing and meditating on God's Word. Throughout Psalm 119 we find expressed and implied the importance of memorizing and meditating on God's Word. Here are just a couple of examples:

*Your word I have treasured in my heart,
That I may not sin against You. (119:11)*

*I will meditate on Your precepts
And regard Your ways. (119:15)*

Before we examine the importance of memorizing and meditating on God's Word, let us read together another section of this remarkable Psalm:

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Teth.

*⁶⁵You have dealt well with Your servant,
O LORD, according to Your word.*

*⁶⁶Teach me good discernment and knowledge,
For I believe in Your commandments.*

*⁶⁷Before I was afflicted I went astray,
But now I keep Your word.*

*⁶⁸You are good and do good;
Teach me Your statutes.*

*⁶⁹The arrogant have forged a lie against me;
With all my heart I will observe Your precepts.*

*⁷⁰Their heart is covered with fat,
But I delight in Your law.*

*⁷¹It is good for me that I was afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.*

*⁷²The law of Your mouth is better to me
Than thousands of gold and silver pieces.*

MEMORIZING GOD'S WORD

"Thy Word I have treasured in my heart, that I might not sin against You." Here we see the Psalmist's practice: he "treasured" (KJV 'hid') God's Word in his heart. We also see his aim: that he would not sin against God. "Treasure" has the idea of hiding or storing up something as one might do a treasure in order to cherish it and keep it. We begin to treasure God's Word when we store it up in our hearts and treasure it like we might gold and silver. When we do so, it will indeed keep us from sinning against God.

How can we "store up" God's Word other than memorizing it? When we do so, then we have the Scriptures with us throughout the day in all the circumstances we face. Many of us went through Scripture memory programs or catechisms as young people. Are we still treasuring God's Word by storing it up as a valuable resource to be used when needed?

This verse speaks of treasuring God's Word in our hearts. We might say that memorizing Scripture is storing up God's Word in our minds. How do we get God's Word from our minds into our hearts so that it makes a difference in our lives? Psalm 119 shows us the importance of meditation on God's Word.

MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD

I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways. (119:15)

Eight times in Psalm 119 the writer speaks of meditating on God's Word. When we speak of meditation, perhaps we picture one sitting with legs crossed chanting a mantra while in some sort of mind-emptying trance. This is not the biblical view of meditation. Rather than emptying one's mind, biblical meditation refers to the process of filling one's mind and heart with the truths of the Word of God. The word "meditation" in Hebrew means basically to speak or to mutter. When this is done in the heart it is called musing or meditation. So meditating on the Word of God means speaking to yourself the Word of God. We think about it, mull it over, and contemplate it. We saturate our mind and our heart with the scriptures. We consider carefully how it applies to the situations of our daily lives. This is how Thomas Manton described biblical meditation:

**MEDITATION IS APPLYING OUR MINDS AND HEARTS
TO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE SCRIPTURAL
TRUTHS WE UNDERSTAND AND BELIEVE FOR
PRACTICAL USES AND PURPOSES.**

BIBLE STUDIES

BUDGET WEEK BIBLE STUDY

THURSDAY, MARCH 18 12:00 NOON - SENATE PRESIDENT'S CONFERENCE ROOM (M219) LUNCH PROVIDED

Memorize & Meditate: The Means to Treasure God's Word

We see an emphasis on the importance of mediation on God's Word throughout Scripture. Joshua was a military/political leader who found himself in a position over his head. This was God's encouragement to him: **"This book of the law shall not 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 success. (Joshua 1:8)** The Book of Psalms begins with a call to delight and meditate on God's Word: **"How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."** (Psalm 1:1-2) In the New Testament we find Paul's exhortation to the church of Colossae to **"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you..."** (Colossians 3:16)

Meditating on God's Word provides the connection between the head and the heart. We get the Scriptures into our head when we read it, hear a sermon, or perhaps even memorize it. We get it into our hearts when we closely consider what it means to us and it begins to affect our lives. We begin to understand the verse or passage and gain a competent knowledge of it. Then we accept the teaching of Word by faith. Next begin to appreciate and welcome the truth we have been contemplating. Lastly, the Word becomes deeply rooted in our hearts and begins to work its way out in our lives. Meditating on God's Word is the key to being a doer of the Word, not just a hearer (James 1)

Thomas Manton described two kinds of biblical meditation. The first he called *occasional* meditation. By this he did not mean to meditate occasionally but rather to look carefully and constantly for spiritual truth in every occasion and situation of life. As we go throughout the day we think of how situations, circumstances, or objects might point us to thoughts of God and His Word. "The holy heart will not lack an object to lead him to the meditation of God's power, goodness, glory, and wise providence..."¹ Manton also writes of *solemn* meditation. Here he describes setting aside time to seriously discuss *with ourselves* the condition of our own heart and our walk with God. There may be time of serious study and contemplation of what a particular verse or passage of scripture might mean and what it means to us. There may be religious observances that help us with such meditation such as communion, but in the midst of our busy lives and schedules, we must conscientiously set aside time to participate in this important task.

We find there are tremendous benefits to treasuring God's Word through memorization and meditation. **1) It will help us guard against vain and**

sinful thoughts. "The mind works upon what it finds in itself, as a mill grinds whatever is put into it, whether chaff or corn." We should begin to fill our minds and hearts with the Word of God. **2) When we are "on our own" it will provide us counsel, comfort, and reproof.** We may face situations where we don't have a Bible, a minister, or a Christian friend to help us. Memorization and mediation on the Word will sustain us during these times. **3) It will help us in our prayer lives.** It is helpful for us to 'pray the Word' – use the truths, admonitions, and promises of the Scriptures in our prayer life. "When we have a good store of the Word of God, it will burst out in prayer". **4) It will help us in all our business and affairs.** "For the one who treasures God's Word in his heart, the Word will ever be upon him, urging him to duty, restraining him from sin, directing him in his ways, seasoning his work and employment". **5) It provides relief against temptations.** When Jesus faced Satan's temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4), He responded with the Word of God. He gives us an example to do the same. **6) It will provide great relief in times of trouble and affliction.** We must have the comforting truths of the promises of God's Word embedded in our lives before we face the trials of life.

THE CENTRAL FOCUS OF OUR MEDITATION

There are three main truths found throughout Scripture upon which we should constantly focus our hearts and minds in meditation. First is the glory, holiness, and majesty of God. Second is our own sinfulness before Him. And third is the story of redemption from which we learn how Christ suffered and died in our place so that our sins might be forgiven and His righteousness credited to us.

CONCLUSION

How do you begin to treasure God's Word more by memorizing and meditating? Start simply. Read God's Word. Hear God's Word preached. Memorize verses or passages that deal with particular sins, challenges, or trials in your life. Write down verses and notes on cards you can carry with you throughout the day. Block out time regularly to quietly consider your relationship with God

In so doing, in this day of "information overload" you can make sure you are treasuring God's Word so that God can use it to change your heart and life.

¹ Manton, Thomas. 190 Sermons on Psalm 119