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Teaching Notes

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Cultivating Biblical Meditation and Prayer

Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Daniel 6:10

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I. The Most Electrifying Book I've Ever Read

A. Martyn Lloyd Jones's *Joy Unspeakable*

1. Basic theme: throughout church history, God has poured out on His people surprising revelations of Himself to encourage them and strengthen them for the work of evangelism and missions
2. Key verses: 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know-- God knows. ³ And I know that this man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows-- ⁴ was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

3. Astonishing reports from church history:

Thomas Goodwin: He describes a man and his little child, his son walking down the road and they are walking hand in hand. And the child knows he is the child of his father, and he knows that the father loves him, and he rejoices in that, and he is happy in it. There is no uncertainty about it at all. BUT SUDDENLY the father, moved by some impulse, takes hold of that child and picks him up, fondles him in his arms, kisses him, embraces him,

showers his love upon him and then he puts him down again, and they go on walking together.

- Blaise Pascal: [17th century French philosopher and mathematician; when he died, they found sewed inside his shirt a piece of paper on which was written the following] *This day of Grace 1654; From about half past ten at night to about half past midnight, Fire. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, Not of the Philosophers and the wise. Security, security. Feeling, joy, peace. God of Jesus Christ. Thy God shall be my God. Forgetfulness of the world and of all save God. He can be found only in ways taught in the Gospel. Greatness of the human soul.*

O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee. Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy. I have separated myself from Him. My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?... That I be not separated from Thee eternally. This is life eternal: That they might know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ. I have separated myself from Him; I have fled, renounced, crucified Him. May I never be separated from Him. He maintains Himself in me only in ways taught in the Gospel. Renunciation total and sweet.

- Jonathan Edwards: As I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that was for me extraordinary, or the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and His wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The Person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thoughts and conceptions, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; such as to keep me a greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love Him with a holy and pure love; to trust in Him; to live upon Him; to serve Him and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a heavenly purity.”
- D.L. Moody: [He had been a Christian, a minister in charge of a mission; he was seeing people converted, but he wanted more] “I began to cry as never before, for a greater blessing from God. The hunger increased; I really felt that I did not want to live any longer. I kept on crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day in the city of New York—oh! What a day! I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years. I can only say, God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand.”

The experience Moody had was so powerful and overwhelming, he felt as if he were going to be physically crushed. It changed D.L. Moody from a good, regular, ordinary minister of the gospel into the dynamic evangelist used so powerfully in the lives of thousands

Oh, how I yearned for THIS... to be swept up into the presence of God and have Him minister to me

My goal today is to make you yearn for it too, and to seek it BASED ON SCRIPTURE

B. The Barrenness of Modern Life

1. Never before have Christians had so many distractions from Christ and from His work in us and around us
2. Our affluence, leisure, and astonishing technology give us more DIVERSIONS from Kingdom business than any other generation in history
3. Corrie ten Boom said, “Beware the barrenness of a busy life.” I would also add, “Beware the barrenness of a shallow life” as well... a life in which we do not reflect on God, God’s word, God’s work

C. The Shallowness of the Western Church

1. At the same time that modern technology is infiltrating modern worship services, making them more spectacularly striking to the senses and sensational to the crowds that pour in to watch the show, the grasp on the deep things of the faith has never been weaker

Os Guinness on American preaching: “Nowhere else in the Western world are the pews so full of people and the sermons so empty of Biblical truth.”

Michael Green: “This is the age of the sermonette, and sermonettes make Christianettes.”

2. Shallow preaching comes from shallow Biblical meditation and prayer

D. Vulnerability to Satan’s Attacks

1. Because Biblical meditation is lacking, faith is anemic, and prayer is powerless
2. Therefore we are vulnerable to Satan’s attacks... since we are so unacquainted with the deep, rich, fellowship God offers the saints over His word and in prayer, we are craving SOMETHING, and become easily satisfied by the world
3. The REMEDY is here... in Scriptural Meditation and Prayer

E. Joy and Delight Await Us Here!!

1. Thrilled to Speak on this!!
2. The Bible is a MIRACLE
3. An inexhaustible treasure of wisdom and knowledge

4. I have been blessed with a great privilege here, and I yearn that God would help me in my weakness to make the most of this time together

II. Our Focus: Biblical Meditation Leading to Prayer

A. Many Types of Meditation

1. Non-Christian meditation

a. Rabi Maharaj, *Death of a Guru*

- i) Born in Trinidad, son of a renowned father who was revered in the Hindu religion as a Hindu of Hindus, a Brahmin of the highest castes, descended from generations of Brahmin priests
- ii) Rabi gave himself to this mind-emptying meditation, leading to astonishing flights of psychedelic visions and astral projection, but which left him feeling filthy and empty
- iii) He eventually came to Christ and speaks against this kind of Eastern mysticism and its mind emptying meditation

b. Buddhism: practicing total control of the body so the mind can be given wholly over to self-emptying; meditation on conundrums

- i) Zen Buddhism focuses on an unanswerable question like, “What’s the sound of one hand clapping?”
- ii) As they meditate, a monk walks around with a switch to slap students who are dozing or whose minds are wandering
- iii) They empty the minds and focus only on one thing, this one question: “What’s the sound of one hand clapping?”
- iv) Since the goal of Buddhism is to become nothing, to lose your identity as a drop of rainwater in an endless sea, so also that meditation has mind-emptiness as its goal

c. Hindu meditation seeks to achieve peace and spiritual insight again by emptying the mind, but through sounds or syllables that are endlessly chanted or repeated

d. Secularized eastern meditation has become popular in yoga as a body relaxation technique without any real religious goals

e. Hollywood stars (like Madonna) have turned to Kabbala, a form of medieval Jewish mysticism in which adherents seek to uncover the secret things of God by chanting the 72 names of God uttered by Moses at the

Red Sea crossing; Brittany Spears had one of these Hebrew names for tattooed on her neck in order to bring her prosperity

Christian meditation has never sought emptiness but FULLNESS in Christ:

2. Long history of Christian meditation as well

- a. History of mysticism in the Christian church is deep and rich
- b. Bernard McGinn published a multivolume series on the Foundation, Growth and Flowering of mysticism in the Christian church
- c. Augustine as a deep thinker and meditator on the things of God

His Confessions are entirely addressed to God in the second person... a deep probing of the face of God in Scriptural prayer and meditation; some call it the primary pattern for centuries of the Western church in the journey of the soul toward God:

“You awaken us to delight in your praise, for you made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in you. Grant me, O Lord, to know and understand which is first: to call on You or to praise You?” *Confessions* I, 1

- d. Bernard of Clairvaux, a monk, great mystic and deep thinker: Martin Luther called him “the best monk that ever lived, whom I admire beyond the rest put together.”
 - i) Meditated deeply on the Song of Songs, focusing on the love of Christ for the Church and for the individual human soul
 - ii) Wrote love poems to Jesus and many hymns including the text to O Sacred Head Now Wounded and Jesus the Very Thought of Thee

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills the breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

- 3. Goal of these Christian mystics was always an experience of union with Christ
- 4. Many of their techniques of spiritual meditation I would commend to you, many I would not
- 5. Our focus here is on the TEXT of SCRIPTURE as the ground, the basis, the foundation of meditation

And not merely meditation, but meditation that leads directly to prayer

B. Many Forms of Prayer

1. Prayer of praise and worship
2. Prayers of thanksgiving
3. Confession of sin
4. Intercession
5. Fasting and prayer

Many things can stimulate us to prayer, and all of them are beneficial and commended in the Christian life

But here in this workshop, we are taking up one topic: how we can cultivate a practice of a deep meditation on Scripture that fuels a fervent prayer life

III. Scriptural Meditation Displayed and Commanded in Scripture

A. Scriptural Meditation Commanded

1. To Jewish parents

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

2. To Joshua

Joshua 1:8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Hebrew word translated “meditate” is translated in other places a variety of ways like **moan, growl, utter, speak, muse**

Like if you caught Joshua doing this you could hear inarticulate sounds coming from his mouth as he worked over each word, each syllable carefully

The Septuagint translation of this word is also found in...

3. To Timothy

KJV 1 Timothy 4:15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

Greek word means to cultivate yourself in the matters of the ministry... exercise yourself in, like soldiers on a drill

2 Timothy 2:7 *Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.*

[Faithful soldier, prize-winning athlete, hardworking farmer... images of zeal in the ministry]

4. Jesus, after the Parable of the Seed and the Soils:

Luke 8:18 *Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."*

B. Scriptural Meditation and Prayer Displayed

1. Psalm 1

Psalm 1:1-3 *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! ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.*

2. Psalm 19

Psalm 19:7-10 *The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. ¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.*

Psalm 19:14 *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

[Perhaps "words of my mouth" is meditation-saturated prayer... words given to God]

C. A Special Marriage: Scripture and Prayer in Psalm 119

Psalm 119:15 *I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.*

Psalm 119:23 *Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on your decrees.*

Psalm 119:48 *I lift up my hands to your commands, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees.*

Psalm 119:97 *Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.*

Psalm 119:148 My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.

1. Amazing structure... perfectly designed for our topic
 - a. all but four vss. mention written word: ten Hebrew terms for written Word of God [law, testimony, way, precept, statute, decree, commandment, judgment, ordinance, word]
 - b. all but four vss. directly addressed to God in prayer
 - c. perfect illustration of quiet time conversation: God speaks through the Word, the psalmist speaks back in prayer
2. The power of meditation on the word of God reflected back to God in prayer displayed again and again
 - Meditation promotes understanding // Understanding promotes meditation

--of course, meditation produces deeper understanding

119:99 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.

--AMAZING REVERSAL... understanding leads to deeper meditations

119:27 Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders.

Illus.: Reinvesting in the business... successful businesses produce a profit; good businessmen reinvest their earnings back into the business for even greater future profits

Suppose you had an eccentric old uncle living out in some small town in Arizona who took an interest in you; and you received news one day that he had died and had left you in his will an abandoned silver mine. Let's say you flew out there to investigate your new property. You went to the nearby town and told him about the will and they laughed. They said, "That old mine has been abandoned for years... no one has been up there even to look around... and as far as I know, no silver ever came out of that hole in the ground. Let's say you rent a 4x4 vehicle, drive up to the small mountain, climb up to the entrance and with a flashlight on push past the old plywood and 2x4s blocking the entrance... you poke around for two hours. Now, let's say you find nothing but spiders and dust... will you be motivated to ever go back in that hole again? NO! You'll try to sell the mountain and get something for your trouble

BUT let's say after 90 minutes, you suddenly notice a small tunnel leading off the main tunnel and it seems different than the others... you crawl about 100 yards, and suddenly your flashlight hits some shiny substance on the wall... your heart rate starts to elevate and you take your little trowel and dig some of the shiny rocks into your bucket... with building

excitement, you take it to the Assay office in town, and with a look of amazement they say, “This is silver, my friend.” Now let me ask the same question again... will you be motivated to ever go back in that hole again?

119:27 *Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders.*

Once you start discovering new things through meditation, you will go down into the tunnel again and again for more silver

3. Understanding promotes obedience // obedience promotes understanding
 - a. we just said “Understanding promotes obedience”... the more of God’s Law is written on your heart, the more obedient your life will be
 - b. YET amazingly, Psalm 119 also reverses it

119:100 *I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.*

A life of willing obedience to God affects your heart... it makes your spiritual eyes able to see more and more things in God’s law for you’re willing to do more and more for God

3. Throughout Psalm 119, the role of Prayer is emphasized... “Spiritual begging”
 - a. Prayer for understanding
 - b. Prayer for obedience

Prayer for Understanding

1. Fifteen times, the Psalmist prays to God for God to teach him Scripture

Psalm 119:18 *Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law!*

Prayer for Obedience

Spiritual beggars know that understanding is NOT ENOUGH... God must work obedience in us as well

TEN TIMES Psalmist asks God to make him obey

Psalm 119:35 *Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.*

Summary: Psalm 119 may be the best example in all of Scripture on HOW to cultivate a close link between meditation on the Word of God and Prayer

IV. Clearest Example and Pattern: Daniel 9

A. Daniel's Character on Display

- Two Major Themes of Daniel
 - God the King's absolute sovereign control over the rise and fall of nations and their rulers
 - What kind of individual God will bless or not bless in the midst of all that history
- Both themes can be found throughout Daniel
- What kind of person will God bless with His most precious self-revelation?

1. Commitment to Personal Holiness

Daniel's yearning for holiness is throughout this prayer

The fact was established at the beginning of the book

Daniel 1:8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

2. Commitment to Daily Prayer and Fasting

a. Emergencies: Daniel's instinct is to pray

Daniel 2: Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and his outrageous command to his wise men... Daniel gather's his friends for a time of deep prayer and seeking God for the answer

Daniel 2:22-23 He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. ²³ I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king."

b. Daily life: foundation of his life exposed in emergency when Darius foolishly commanded that everyone stop praying except to him

Daniel 6:10-11 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before

3. Scorn for Worldly Pleasures, Treasures and Power

Daniel 5:17 Then Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else.

B. Daniel 9's Pattern: Meditation and Prayer

1. Originated in Scripture

a. Meditating on the Scroll of Jeremiah

Daniel 9:2 I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.

NIV: "understood"; ESV, RSV, NAS: "perceived"... Hebrew = "to have insight, understanding"... this is the product of hard work in meditation

Jeremiah 25:11-12 This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹² "But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt," declares the LORD, "and will make it desolate forever.

b. Thoroughly acquainted with the Laws of Moses

- i) Throughout the prayer, Daniel is bringing himself and his people Israel in contact with the Law of Moses
- ii) His opening line is straight from Moses, Deuteronomy 7:9
- iii) All the way through he keeps in mind the Law of God in the Scriptures

2. Prompted by History

- a. Visions in Daniel 7-11 all identified by place in history: such and such year of so and so's reign

Daniel 7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream

Daniel 8:1 In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision

Daniel 9:1-2 In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom-- ² in the first year of his reign

Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.

Daniel 11:1 And in the first year of Darius the Mede

- b. Also Daniel has counted out the years from Jeremiah's prophecy... and the time is drawing near
- c. Application to us: we are in the 21st century... where are we in Redemptive History? What is God doing now?
- d. Is it not reaching the nations with the gospel of Christ? Unreached people groups?

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

3. Characterized by earnestness and fasting

ESV Daniel 9:3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

Thomas Brooks: "Cold prayers always freeze before they reach heaven."

4. Saturated with Confession of Sin and Humility

Daniel 9:4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed

- (5) We have sinned
- We have done wrong
- We have been wicked
- We have rebelled
- We have turned away from your commands
- (6) We have not listened to your servants the prophets
- (7) We are covered with shame
- We were unfaithful to you
- (8) We are covered with shame
- We have sinned against you
- (9) We have rebelled
- (10) We have not obeyed the Lord
- We have not kept Your commands
- (11) All Israel has transgressed
- Turned away
- Refused to obey
- We have sinned against you
- (13) And despite all your judgments, STILL we have not sought your favor
- We have STILL not turned from our sins
- We have STILL not given attention to your truth
- (14) We have not obeyed
- (15) We have sinned
- We have done wrong
- (16) Our sins
- Our iniquities

No less than TWENTY-FIVE statements of confession, humiliation, mourning over sin

What the Puritans called “loading up the soul” with a sense of sin, so that we turn to God humbly and with a broken spirit

Overwhelming sense: We have deserved everything you have done to us

5. Prompted by Deep Love for God

Jeremiah 29:13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Daniel 9:4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands...”

6. Based on the glory of God... God’s concern for His own name

Four times He mentions the NAME of God, praying God’s concern for His NAME back to Him

Daniel 9:15 "Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day

Daniel 9:18-19 Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹ O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

7. Praying God’s Promises Back

Daniel’s whole prayer was based on what he read from Jeremiah, and the other promises of the restoration of Jerusalem

Thomas Manton, on praying Scripture back to God: “Show Him His handwriting, God is tender of His word!”

Daniel 9:16 O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill.

Daniel 9:19 O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

8. Persistence

a. Daniel is extremely persistent in prayer

b. Later, in Daniel 10, he fasts and prays for twenty-one days

c. Here in Daniel 9, no sense at all of the time... but it must have been irrelevant to Daniel

C. Astonishing Answer: An Angel Bringing News of the Seventy Weeks!!

1. Gabriel comes with an astonishing answer and a high commendation
2. Commendation: "Highly esteemed"

Daniel 9:21-23 *while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. ²³ As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision*

3. Astonishing answer... clear timetable for the coming of the Messiah and for His suffering and death
4. Also... an invitation to MORE meditation and prayer!!!

Daniel 9:23 *Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision*

"Perceive" and "Discern"

Daniel 10:11 *consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you."*

Again, a call for more meditation based on revelation

D. Summary

Daniel 9 is a glorious example of the kind of Biblical meditation leading to intense supplication

It is rooted in specific and relevant texts of Scripture, it is connected with the flow of events in Redemptive History, it is carried on by a godly man whose whole life is directed toward serving God; it is humble and broken-hearted, it is saturated with Scriptural insights, it pleads the promises of God and humbly asks Him to do the very thing God said He would do

V. Six Good Reasons Why We Should Meditate

A. The Nature of Scripture

1. Scripture is God breathed and perfect, a holy treasure of wisdom that is literally inexhaustible
2. Scripture is infinite in its concepts and connection

3. You will never be “done” with a single passage of Scripture; therefore it always rewards diligent thought and prayerful contemplation

B. The Nature of Our Hearts

1. Our hearts are naturally hard, unyielding, resistant to the Word of God
2. Israel is called “stiff-necked” because they resist, they don’t yield to God
3. So also with our hearts... like engraving on a steel wall with a stylus, it takes repetition for us to get it

Illus. Once I was drilling a hole in a piece of granite... I bought a special drill bit and still made extremely slow progress

So it is with our hearts... we are naturally slow to take in spiritual truth and need constant repetition

4. Jesus said to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus

Luke 24:25-27 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

C. The Nature of Salvation

1. Salvation is a process, with a daily struggle involved
 - a. Justification: Instantaneous, by faith alone
 - b. Sanctification: Daily struggle
 - c. Glorification: Instantaneous, by grace alone

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling

2. The Holy Spirit must speak to us constantly and He does this primarily through Scripture
3. The essence of our daily sanctification is hearing Christ speak to us by the Spirit in the Word of God, and as Hebrews 3 makes plain, THE ISSUE is hearing and NOT hardening our hearts

Hebrews 3:7-8 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts

D. The Nature of Our Changing Lives

1. Scripture constantly has new things to say to us because we are constantly changing, constantly in a new place in our lives
2. The words themselves are the same, but they now have become different because we can hear something new from them

Example: Daniel 4:

Daniel 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

From warning to promise... yet the exact same words

Meditation enables us to hear something new from an old text

E. The Nature of Our Techno-Crazed World

1. Never in the history of the church have we had so many distractions from the Kingdom of God
2. Our senses are constantly assaulted by input... sights, sounds, information assaulting us, barraging us
 - a. TV ads attack the eye with an almost staggering array of images
 - b. New book: *The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business...* dustcover:
 - i) Trillions of documents circulate in US offices daily
 - ii) Internet traffic doubles every hundred days
 - iii) Approximately two hundred messages flood manager desktops daily
 - iv) Welcome to the attention economy, where the scarcest resource isn't ideas or even talent—its attention itself
 - c. Cell phones, pagers, wifi internet connection, people are CONSTANTLY taking in input... technology is absolutely ASSAULTING OUR BRAINS
 - i) We become lazy... we don't need to remember much anymore... just know how to Google it
 - ii) We can always call if we forget something... the information is always readily available

- d. Net effect: reduction of attention span, attack of linear thought, inability to follow a train of thought
- e. God means to REASON with us, to speak to us in sentences and paragraphs

Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord”

With distracted minds and hearts, its much harder than ever to hear the “still small voice” of the Lord

- 3. We need THIS:

Psalm 23:2-3 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³ he restores my soul.

- 4. God speaks to us in the quiet... and He does it as we come apart and wait alone with Him, listening to Him

F. The Nature of Our Work

- 1. God has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation
- 2. We are given the task of making disciples of every nation to the end of the earth and to the end of time
- 3. It is a MASSIVE undertaking, and it is comprised of a countless number of daily tasks God has prepared for us to do

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- 4. God doesn't just prepare the task for us... he clearly prepares US for the task, and Peter's prayer time in Acts 10 is a plain example... God got Peter ready to go into the house of Cornelius by showing him a vision of a sheet with unclean animals
 - a. Now more likely God will get you ready for this day's good works by your quiet time
 - b. A rich meditation on Scripture and a prayer time based on that meditation will be additional tools in your tool box for heart work in someone else

VI. The Goal of Meditation and Prayer

A. Insight, Leading to...

- 1. Insight is “Aha” moment... something new, hitting you in a new way

Psalm 119:18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Psalm 119:130 The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

2. Insight shapes the mind, it is a building block, a concept from which the city of truth is erected in your soul brick by brick

3. This leads to...

B. Increased Faith, Leading to...

1. Faith is LIVING, not set piece

2. It is more like a green plant than like a marble and brass trophy

3. It needs food, and the food of faith is the word of God

Romans 10:17 faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

4. New insight feeds FAITH

5. Growing faith leads to...

C. Hotter Affections, Leading to...

1. Jonathan Edwards said the essence of true religion is in the AFFECTIONS... what we love and what we hate

2. This means our love for God and for His works in the world

3. Hotter passion comes from insight coupled with faith

Psalm 119:97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

Psalm 119:104 I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.

4. Hotter affections for God and His word means a more passionate pursuit of holiness and evangelism... so it results in

D. Holy Resolutions

1. A passionate time of meditation on God's word and prayer of it to God results in holy resolutions... determinations to walk uprightly

Psalm 119:34 Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart.

Psalm 119:145 I call with all my heart; answer me, O LORD, and I will obey your decrees.

2. It is from these resolutions that we grow in grace and advance Christ's kingdom through evangelism

VII. A Four-fold Focus for Self-Enrichment in Meditation and Prayer

Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures*, spoke about the concept of preaching to yourself... this is a form of meditation that can lead to powerful renewal and prayer

He was basing it on Psalm 42

Psalm 42:5-6 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and ⁶ my God.

I think then a Christian needs to go to the law, the cross, the great commission and the heavenly hope every single day, and be enriched

A. Focus #1: Christ Administering the Law (Looking Inward)

John Owen's *Mortification of Sin*:

"Load thy soul" with a sense of the seriousness of sin, of its guiltiness, of its ugliness

1. John Piper's marvelous biographical address on Charles Simeon

"Simeon invariably arose every morning, though it was the winter season, at four o'clock; and, after lighting his fire, he devoted the first four hours of the day to private prayer and the devotional study of the Scriptures"

2. Specifically, Simeon grew UPWARD by humbling himself DOWNWARD

Charles Simeon: With this sweet hope of ultimate acceptance with God, I have always enjoyed much cheerfulness before men; but I have at the same time laboured incessantly to cultivate the deepest humiliation before God. I have never thought that the circumstance of God's having forgiven me was any reason why I should forgive myself; on the contrary, I have always judged it better to loathe myself the more, in proportion as I was assured that God was pacified towards me (Ezekiel 16:63). . . . There are but two objects that I have ever desired for these forty years to behold; the one is my own vileness; and the other is, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: and I have always thought that they should be viewed together; just as Aaron confessed all the sins of all Israel whilst he put them on the head of the scapegoat. The disease did not keep him from applying to the remedy, nor did the remedy keep him from feeling the disease. By this I seek to be, not only *humbled and thankful*, but *humbled in thankfulness*, before my God and Saviour continually.

3. This “law-work” self-applied on Simeon’s soul enabled Simeon to have extreme periods of exaltation in Christ without losing his bearings

Simeon's missionary friend Thomason writes about a time in 1794 when a friend of Simeon's named Marsden entered his room and found Simeon "so absorbed in the contemplation of the Son of God, and so overpowered with a display of His mercy to his soul, that he was incapable of pronouncing a single word," till at length, he exclaimed, "Glory, glory." But a few days later Thomason himself found Simeon at the hour of the private lecture on Sunday scarcely able to speak, "from a deep humiliation and contrition."

4. So, in daily meditation, it is good to seek in the Scriptures an accurate picture of our own sinfulness
 - a. Perhaps in the words of the Law of Moses or other commands in the New Testament
 - b. Perhaps in the sins of the nation of Israel as a whole
 - c. Perhaps in the sins of biblical figures like King Saul or King David or Gideon or Peter
 - d. Perhaps in the Sermon on the Mount
 - e. Perhaps in the convicting messages of the Prophets to wayward Israel
5. The Goal: Remind me again how much I needed Christ! How great a sinner I still am, and how much I still need His grace

Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

B. Focus #2: Christ’s Cross and the Empty Tomb (Looking Upward)

1. German Pietists used to meditate deeply on the sacred wounds of Christ, on the blood effusing from His Body... focused their mind’s eye on Jesus the man hanging from the cross, saw His wounds, pictured His agony in lurid detail
2. I do not recommend this kind
3. Rather, just seek to be brought again and again to the cross...
4. Isaac Watts: “When I Survey the wondrous cross...” SURVEY IT
5. Having uncovered your sin in the first focus, find in Christ crucified AMPLE grace to cover all your sin
6. Find in the cross of Christ the fullness of God’s wisdom, God’s love, God’s power, God’s wrath, God’s righteousness

7. The cross is like a diamond, revealing different aspects of God's glory
8. Meditate on Christ crucified as an AMPLE FOUNTAIN of grace, of richness from God to your needy soul
9. Return to Christ your full thankfulness for forgiveness, praise Him for His abundant grace... bask in the doctrine of the atonement every single day until it makes you happy and strong
10. Meditate also on the cross as the pattern of your daily battle with sin and your daily service to others... to deny yourself, take up your cross DAILY and follow Christ
11. You will NEVER be done with the cross
12. Nor will you be done with the EMPTY tomb!
13. Focus on the resurrection of Christ as the power of a new life, a life of God's power flowing through you for sanctification and service to the Kingdom

Romans 5:8-9 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

C. Focus #3: Christ's Church (Looking Outward)

1. Remember that Christ did not save you alone... He is working a magnificent Redemptive plan that includes elect from every tribe and language and people and nation
2. The building of Christ's church IS the work God is doing in this world

Matthew 16:18 on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Ephesians 2:21-22 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

3. This building is built as each LIVING STONE gets put in place through missions and evangelism
4. AND as each living stone gets more and more polished and perfected through the ministry of the word
5. As each Christian uses his/her spiritual gifts and redeems the time, we are helping to build this glorious structure

6. Therefore, as I meditate on Scripture and pray it back to God, I am seeking to be conformed more and more to this heavenly building project
7. I want to be like Daniel, reading in Scripture the plan of God then praying it back to God so I can be a part of it

D. Focus #4: Christ in Heaven (Looking Forward)

1. We are commanded to live lives MENTALLY FOCUSED on our heavenly reward

Colossians 3:1-4 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Hebrews 11:16 Instead, they were longing for a better country-- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

2. I believe it is impossible to please God day to day without nourishing within our hearts a LIVELY hope in our heavenly reward
3. We are supposed to cherish our eternal future with Christ, and long for that day when all death, mourning, crying, and pain is done, when the elect from every nation will be fully saved and in resurrection bodies, when we will be dwelling in the New Heaven and New Earth, seeing God face to face and serving Christ in His perfect world
4. Randy Alcorn's book *Heaven* does a phenomenal job of helping us focus on our heavenly life, even if sometimes he speculates too much... more on that in a moment
5. BUT I believe we should be FEEDING our hope through Scriptural promises and prayers of yearning to God

So then, our daily Biblical Meditation should center around these four vital themes: our own sinfulness, Christ's perfect work at the cross and empty tomb, Christ's incomplete work of building His church with believers all over the world, and our future with Christ in heaven

VIII. Seven Rich Silver Mines of Biblical Meditation

Proverbs 2:1-5 My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, ² turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, ³ and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, ⁴ and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

A. Silver Mine #1: Creation

1. This is precisely the meditation that God leads Job on to heal Him
2. In Job38-39, God marvels in Job's presence over His own creation, and how it displays His power and wisdom
3. So also the Psalmist in Psalms 8, Psalm 19, Psalm 104

Psalm 8:3-4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

Psalm 19:1-4 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. ³ There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

4. I am not advocating just going for a walk in nature and thanking God for it
5. Rather I am advocating a SCRIPTURAL meditation on the creative power of God, what it reveals about His goodness, power, and wisdom

B. Silver Mine #2: Attributes of God

Psalm 145:8-18 The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. ⁹ The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. ¹⁰ All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you. ¹¹ They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, ¹² so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. ¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made. ¹⁴ The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. ¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. ¹⁶ You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. ¹⁷ The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made. ¹⁸ The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

1. This is the work of systematic theology, but no less scriptural than any of the others
2. Get an attribute list, and support each attribute with passages of Scripture
3. Then go broad or deep
4. Broad: pray through the whole list, thank God for each of His attributes

5. Deep: choose one or two attributes and trace them out across Scripture, praying back to God what you have found is true about Him in the Bible

C. Silver Mine #3: Redemptive History: God's Mighty Works for His People

Psalm 77:11-15 I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. ¹² I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds. ¹³ Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God? ¹⁴ You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. ¹⁵ With your mighty arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

Psalm 145:4-13 One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. ⁵ They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. ⁶ They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. ⁷ They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.... ¹¹ They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, ¹² so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. ¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

1. The idea: God is unfolding a great story of redemption over history
2. God has worked miracles in the past to achieve His redemptive purposes
3. God has displayed His sovereignty, eternity, and wisdom in making prophecies about Christ, then bringing them to pass
4. Trace out Redemptive History:
 - a. Creation to the Flood to Abraham/Isaac/Jacob to Moses and the Exodus to Joshua and the conquest of the Promised Land to King David and King Solomon to the ministry of the Prophets during the time of the divided Kingdom to exiles under Assyria and Babylon to the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah
 - b. Then trace out from the time of Christ through the time of the Apostles to the establishment of the church
 - c. Then, if you can, trace out Redemptive History since the Apostolic Age ended: the glorious suffering and triumph of the church in the Roman Empire, the protection of the church during the Barbarian invasions of Rome and the ensuing Dark Ages, the coming of the Reformation and its full flowering, the Puritan age, the age of modern missions, right up to the present time

5. Look for the MIGHTY WORKS of God! Commend Him for His marvelous deeds
6. Look on the flow of Redemptive History from a personal standpoint, all that God did to get the Gospel to you personally... like a glorious relay race over twenty centuries from Christ

D. Silver Mine #4: Pictures of Christ (Use with Old Testament Law and Prophets)

1. Old Testament filled with pictures of Christ... it is wise for us to try to find them
2. Ultimately, all roads should lead to Christ anyway
3. Spurgeon's advice to young preachers

Preach Jesus Christ, brethren, always and everywhere; and every time you preach be sure to have much of Jesus Christ in the sermon. You remember the story of the old minister who heard a sermon by a young man, and when he was asked by the preacher what he thought of it he was rather slow to answer, but at last he said, "If I must tell you, I did not like it at all; there was no Christ in your sermon." "No," answered the young man, "because I did not see that Christ was in the text." "Oh!" said the old minister, "but do you not know that from every little town and village and tiny hamlet in England there is a road leading to London? Whenever I get hold of a text, I say to myself, 'There is a road from here to Jesus Christ, and I mean to keep on His track till I get to Him.'" "Well," said the young man, "but suppose you are preaching from a text that says nothing about Christ?" "Then I will go over hedge and ditch but what I will get at Him." [C.H. Spurgeon, Sermons Likely to Win Souls]

Preach Christ to your own SOUL!!!! Then preach Him to others

4. Sacrificial system filled with imagery of Christ
 - a. Each animal sacrifice reminds us of Christ's sacrifice for us
 - b. Each element of the Tabernacle shows us some aspect of Christ's priestly ministry for us
5. Test case: "Christ rose from the dead according to Scripture"

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

Luke 24:44-47 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and

forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

a. Psalm 16 openly predicted the resurrection... Peter quoted it on Pentecost

Acts 2:27-28 you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

b. Jesus said His resurrection would be “the sign of the prophet Jonah”

i) Jonah was “buried” in the fish and came out after three days

ii) BUT this is clearly just a TYPE, a pattern, a picture...

iii) No Jew reading the Jonah story would have seen him as a prediction of the resurrection of the Messiah!!

c. Therefore I think there are a lot more pictures of Christ’s resurrection in the OT than we might think

d. Doing Scripture memorization in Daniel 6, I found another: the sealing of the lion’s den with the signet rings:

Daniel 6:17 A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed.

The parallel to Jesus’ burial was clear: Daniel’s enemies had falsely accused him and contrived his death by the power of an unwilling ruler, Darius, who made every effort to save him; in the end the ruler caved in to the enemies of the righteous man and consigned Daniel to a stone grave with the lions; he put a stone over the entrance and sealed it with his signet ring so that none could change his situation. But Daniel EMERGED triumphant from the grave, completely vindicated by God in whom he’d put his trust

So also Jesus’ enemies falsely accused Him and contrived His death by the power of an unwilling ruler, Pilate, who made every effort to save him; in the end, the ruler caved in to the enemies of the righteous man and consigned Jesus to a stone grave; he put a stone over the entrance and sealed it so that none could change his situation. But Jesus EMERGED triumphant from the grave, completely vindicated by God in whom he’d put his trust

Matthew 27:65-66 "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

I am convinced that there are MANY more pictures of Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, and the worldwide advance of His Kingdom...

- e. Say “Lord, open my mind that I might understand the Scripture... especially where your crucifixion, resurrection, and the worldwide advance of your Kingdom may be found.”

E. Silver Mine #5: “You Are There” (Use with Historical Narrative and the Gospels)

1. Picture what it would have been like to have been there
2. Glean as many details as possible from the narrative...
3. When Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, what must their faces have looked like
4. When Jesus came through the walls of the upper room, what would it have been like to see Him

F. Silver Mine #6: Verbal Logic on Fire (Use with the Epistles)

1. Paul’s epistles lend themselves well to careful word studies, and analysis of the logical train of thought
2. Ask always, “What does this mean?” “Why did Paul use this word?”
3. What is the logic here? What argument is Paul making?
4. Then, pray the insights back to God

G. Silver Mine #7: Imagination Rooted and Soaring (Use with Apocalyptic Texts)

1. We are to feed our hope with a lively sense of heaven
2. Randy Alcorn makes a strong case in his book *Heaven* for the use of sanctified, Scripture controlled imagination in considering heaven
3. Read Revelation 21-22, its vivid depictions of the New Heaven and the New Earth
4. Try to picture what it will be like to walk in your resurrection body on the perfect earth

IX. The Vital Role of Scripture Memorization

A. Memorization Fuels Meditation

1. Constant repetition is the “murmuring” that Hebrew word refers to
2. Though memorization is not THE SAME AS meditation, it strongly leads to it
3. The endless repetitions lead to meditation, deeper insight

B. Essential to Fruitful Prayer Life

John 15:7-8 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

X. Summary and Conclusion

A. Summary

1.

B. Application

1. Give yourself fully to this...
2. Devote yourself daily to seeking the face of God
3. Do not think, "I don't need this!"
4. Ask the Lord to lift you into His presence and give you a strong sense of His love for you
5. Pick a passage of Scripture and go to it in the pattern I've given you here

XI. Practical Advice from George Mueller

The following is George Mueller's Personal Account of His Own Discovery:

While I was staying at Nailsworth, it pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, irrespective of human instrumentality, as far as I know, the benefit of which I have not lost, though now... more than forty years have since passed away.

The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit.

Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing, to give myself to prayer, after having dressed in the morning. *Now* I saw, that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed; and that thus, whilst meditating, my heart might be

brought into experimental, communion with the Lord. I began therefore, to meditate on the New Testament, from the beginning, early in the morning.

The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate on the Word of God; searching, as it were, into every verse, to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word; not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon; but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul. The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that though I did not, as it were, give myself to *prayer*, but to *meditation*, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer.

When thus I have been for awhile making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it; but still continually keeping before me, that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation. The result of this is, that there is always a good deal of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession mingled with my meditation, and that my inner man almost invariably is even sensibly nourished and strengthened and that by breakfast time, with rare exceptions, I am in a peaceful if not happy state of heart. Thus also the Lord is pleased to communicate unto me that which, very soon after, I have found to become food for other believers, though it was not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word that I gave myself to meditation, but for the profit of my own inner man.

The difference between my former practice and my present one is this. Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible, and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer, or almost all the time. At all events I almost invariably began with prayer.... But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour on my knees, before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc.; and often after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began *really to pray*

I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experimental fellowship with God, I speak to my Father, and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it!) about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word.

It often now astonishes me that I did not sooner see this. In no book did I ever read about it. No public ministry ever brought the matter before me. No private intercourse with a brother stirred me up to this matter. And yet now, since God has taught me this point, it is as plain to me as anything, that the first thing the child of God has to do morning by morning is to *obtain food for his inner man*.

As the outward man is not fit for work for any length of time, except we take food, and as this is one of the first things we do in the morning, so it should be with the inner man. We should take food for that, as every one must allow. Now what is the food for the inner man: not *prayer*, but the *Word of God*: and here again not the simple reading

of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts....

I dwell so particularly on this point because of the immense spiritual profit and refreshment I am conscious of having derived from it my self, and I affectionately and solemnly beseech all my fellow-believers to ponder this matter. By the blessing of God I ascribe to this mode the help and strength which I have had from God to pass in peace through deeper trials in various ways than I had ever had before; and after having now above forty years tried this way, I can most fully, in the fear of God, commend it. How different when the soul is refreshed and made happy early in the morning, from what it is when, without spiritual preparation, the service, the trials and the temptations of the day come upon one!

(George Mueller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealing with George Muller, Written by Himself, Jehovah Magnified. Addresses by George Muller Complete and Unabridged*, 2 vols. (Muskegon, Mich.: Dust and Ashes, 2003), 1:271-272.

Adoration: What God is Like

- 1) Self-existence: *"I AM WHO I AM"* Exodus 3:14
- 2) Immutability: *"I the Lord do not change."* Malachi 3:6
- 3) Absolute Perfection: *"As for God, his way is perfect.."* Psalm 18:30
- 4) Eternity: *"Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."* Psalm 90:2
- 5) Immensity: *"But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heavens cannot contain you."* 1 Kings 8:27
- 6) Perfect Unity: *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."* Deut. 6:4
- 7) Omnipresence: *"'Am I only a God nearby,' declares the Lord, 'and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do I not fill heaven and earth?'"* Jeremiah 23:23-24
- 8) Omniscience: *"Great is the Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit."* Psalm 147:5
- 9) Omnipotence: *"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted."* Job 42:2
- 10) Spirituality: *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."* John 4:24
- 11) Invisibility: *"No man has seen God at any time."* John 1:18

- 12) Holiness: *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of His glory.”* Isaiah 6:3
- 13) Wisdom: *“...to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ!”* Rom. 16:27
- 14) Truthfulness: *“He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind.”* 1 Samuel 15:29
- 15) Love: *“God is love.”* 1John 4:16; *“God’s love endures forever.”* 1 Chron. 16:34
- 16) Compassion: *“Our God is full of compassion.”* Psalm 116:5; *“Jesus wept.”* John 11:35
- 17) Patience: *“The Lord is gracious and compassionate... slow to anger.”* Ex. 34:6
- 18) Goodness: *“The earth is full of God’s unfailing goodness.”* Psalm 33:5
- 19) Grace: *“But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate.”* Neh. 9:17
- 20) Mercy: *“For the Lord your God is a merciful God.”* Deuteronomy 4:31
- 21) Righteousness: *“Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God...”* Psalm 71:19
- 22) Justice: *“For I, the Lord, love justice.”* Isaiah 61:8
- 23) Wrath: *“God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.”* Ps. 7:11
- 24) Sovereignty: *“[God] works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.”* Ephesians 1:11
- 25) Glory: *“The city does not need the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.”* Revelation 21:23
- 26) Happiness: *“Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him.”* Psalm 115:3