

# Meditation on Scripture

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## The Biblical Teaching on Meditation

In psalm 1, when the psalmist speaks of meditating on the law, he uses a Hebrew word that has a range of meaning. When the term is used with an animal as its subject, it can mean to coo or moan like a dove (see Isa. 59:11), or it can mean to growl like a lion over its prey (see Isa. 31:4). However, when the same term is used with a human as its subject, the word can mean to mutter (see Ps. 1:2), or it can mean to ponder to oneself (see Isa. 33:18). Biblical meditation does not involve emptying your mind, like modern eastern meditation. Instead, it is an activity that involves filling one's mind with the Bible by uttering the words of Scripture and pondering their significance.

In the space below, I will propose and explain five different methods of biblical meditation. This list of methods is not intended to be exhaustive, only suggestive, for someone interested in giving biblical mediation a try.

## The Practice of Biblical Meditation

### Repeating the text with different vocalizations

This method of meditation involves selecting a text of Scripture and giving each word of the text special emphasis with one's vocalization of the individual words. This method would involve speaking the same text out loud multiple times with each successive utterance emphasizing a different word. Using this method, a mediation on Psalm 23:1 would look like the following:

- **The** LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- The **LORD** is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- The LORD **is** my shepherd; I shall not want.
- The LORD is **my** shepherd; I shall not want.
- The LORD is my **shepherd**; I shall not want.
- The LORD is my shepherd; **I** shall not want.
- The LORD is my shepherd; I **shall** not want.
- The LORD is my shepherd; I shall **not** want.
- The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not **want**.

### Reading the text in multiple translations

This method of mediation involves selecting a text of Scripture and looking up the various translations of that verse. To do this method, one would either need: multiple Bibles in various translations, a parallel Bible that has multiple translations in one volume, or the ability to utilize digital Bible software. Additionally, using a website like biblegateway.com is a great resource to practice this method of meditation. Using this method, a mediation on Psalm 23:1 would look like the following:

- The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (ESV)
- The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. (NIV)
- The LORD is my shepherd; I have what I need. (CSB)
- The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need. (NLT)
- Yahweh is my shepherd; I will not lack *for anything*. (LEB)

### **Memorize the text**

This method of mediation involves selecting a text of Scripture and looking it up in your favorite translation. This text will be committed to memory word for word. Memorization plants God's truth in your heart, gives you nourishment for your soul, and provides an apt defense against temptation. As you get started, here are a few tips that might help you in practicing this method of mediation. First, make a plan. If you don't make a plan and a commitment to see the plan through, it probably won't happen. Second, select a partner to help keep you on track. An accountability partner is a great aid to memorization. Finally, try the following method: (1) on the first day, read the passage aloud ten times, then say it ten times without looking; (2) on the second day, repeat it ten times, looking only if you have to; (3) repeat the verse at least once daily for the rest of the week.

### **Pray the text**

This method of mediation involves selecting a text of Scripture for the purpose of turning the words of that text into a prayer. This method would involve reading the passage and then praying what you find in the text or what it brings to mind. Using this method, a mediation on Psalm 23:1 would look like the following:

- Father, you are my shepherd. Thank you for leading and directing my life. You have never led me astray. Today, I ask that you would lead and direct my family and friends. You know just what they need. Additionally, I pray that you would bring to mind all the many ways that you have blessed me this past year. I am so blessed and truly have all that I need. Moreover, you sent your Son, the Good Shepherd, to take care of my biggest need—my need of a Savior. So, I ask all this in Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Apply the text**

This method of mediation involves selecting a text of Scripture for the purpose of applying it to real life. This method would involve pondering how a given passage might impact your life. In order to think through appropriate application, it is helpful to ask application questions of the passage. To use this method, ask and answer the following questions with your selected text in mind:

- What does God want me to understand based on this passage?
- What does God want me to believe based on this passage?
- What does God want me to desire based on this passage?
- What does God want me to do based on this passage?