

Recap: Humility, Gentleness, & Other Forgotten Fruit

- Jesus is building a kingdom in which humility is the primary virtue. We're called to be poor in spirit and meek, like He was.
- Christ is the greatest illustration of the principle that "...everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:14b). Philippians 2 speaks of Jesus' humility, and how God highly exalted Him because of it. We contrasted His humility with Satan's terrible pride.
- We are called to "let that mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus!"

1. What is the Bible?

1.1 Revelation from God.

Nature teaches us that there is a Creator: "...since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse..." (Romans 1:20). This is **general revelation**.

In **special revelation**, God intervenes to disclose Himself more openly. God did that primarily through His Word.

Jesus is the Word of God made flesh, and He showed us in a unique way what God is like. Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father...” (John 14:9b).

1.2 The Composition of the Bible.

The Bible is actually 66 books, written by some 40 different people over ~1500 years.

- There are a number of different genres in the Bible: historical books, poetry, prophecy, biographies, and the epistles.
- The Old Testament deals with the history of Creation and God’s activity up until the time of Christ, and the New Testament tells us the story of Jesus.

1.3. The trustworthiness of the Bible.

We know the Bible is reliable because of its accuracy. No one has ever found a true inaccuracy in it. The Bible gives us numerous historical details which were unknown for centuries, or which secular historians had once denied.

Archaeology has upheld the accuracy of the Bible in many ways, e.g., the book of Daniel’s discussion of the kings of Babylon, and the discovery of the Hittites.

The Bible also contains many fulfilled prophecies, many quite specific. Dozens, even hundreds of prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus at His first coming.

Nor does the Bible make scientific mistakes. The writers of the Bible knew many things that modern science didn’t discover until centuries later.

Jesus said that not one jot or tittle of the Law can pass away; He said that the Scripture cannot be broken. God preserves His Word supernaturally.

2. What does God say about His Word?

Psalms 138 says that God has magnified His Word above all His Name. Consider: God's reputation depends upon the trustworthiness of His Word. Besides teaching us doctrine, the Word is also profitable for correcting and training us.

1. God created everything by His Word and He upholds Creation by it.

"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalms 33:6); "...upholding all things by the word of his power..." (Hebrews 1:3).

2. His Word is infallible, and it's the final authority for the Church.

"...the Scripture cannot be broken..." (John 10:35b); "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

3. God's Word is established and settled.

"Forever, O LORD, Your Word is settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89). God's Word is infallible. It's the final authority for the Church, in every place and in every age.

We need the Word. We should seek it even to the point of hungering for it. "Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105).

3. Why should I read the Bible?

3.1. Because it is revelation from God.

It explains His Will, His character, and what He expects from mankind.

3.2. To be acquainted with Christ.

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).

3.3. To renew our mind.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).

3.4 To learn the ways of God.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalms 119:105).

3.5. For our sanctification.

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word” (Psalms 119:9). The Word of God is compared to a **laver**.

3.6. To grow in our faith.

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

3.7. Because it is the daily bread for our spirits.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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” (Josh. 1:8).

4. Meditating in God's Word

1. Hearing the Word.

The Bible says faith comes by hearing, hearing the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17) James tells us to be doers of the Word, and not forgetful hearers (James 1:25).

2. Reading the Word.

“Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:13). Six different times, Jesus asked His religious opponents, “Have you not read?” or “Have you never read?” Jesus also said, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29).

3. Memorizing the Word.

“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119:11). Remember: the Bible isn’t like other books; it carries the life of God.

4. Study the Bible on deeper levels.

There are many ways to go deeper into the Word – ask a trusted friend or leader. But don’t start in the deep end of the pool. Start at a place that’s appropriate to your level.

5. Basic Principles of Biblical Meditation.

Nowadays *meditation* means something mental. But biblical meditation is **filling** your mind. The word for meditation in Joshua 1 means *to murmur, to mutter, and to ponder*.

- God says the Book of the Law shall not depart **from his mouth**.
- Second, we should do it **day and night**.
- Third, we should pay attention to **“all that is written in it.”**

6. Meditation Practices.

We meditate in the Word when we “chew on” a specific portion. This is more than a daily reading plan or memorization. One way to meditate upon or ponder a passage:

1. Read it through at a regular speed.
2. Then, read it slowly to yourself out loud, paying careful attention to the contents and lingering at significant points. Repeat to yourself those passages which the Holy Spirit seems to be highlighting to you. Don’t get distracted but make notes for later research.
3. After you work your way through the chapter, read it over again at your normal reading speed.

7. Practical Benefits of Meditation (refer again to Joshua 1:8).

God says we must meditate so we can **observe** to do what He has written. The second thing God told Joshua was that if he engaged in this good habit, he would **make his way prosperous**. The third thing was that he would have **good success**.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper” (Psalms 1:1-3).

5. Praying the Word of God

There are a number of reasons that we also need to **pray** the Scriptures. The Word will teach me **how** to pray:

- It will keep me from praying wrong.
- It will teach me about His will and promises.
- It will show me the proper attitude for prayer.
- It will open my eyes to the possibilities of prayer!

Only those who pray the Word can be truly deep in prayer! Get started:

1. Invite the Spirit to open up the Word to you. David said: “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law” (Psalms 119:18).
2. Ask the Spirit to lead you and guide you in prayer.
3. Ask what the passage says about God.
4. Does the passage say something about you?
5. Does the passage reveal something that God desires from you?

6. Is there something that calls for a response from you?
7. Finally, come into agreement with God and submit to His purposes.

Homework

For homework this week, read Psalm 119! (Suggestion: read eight verses in the morning, and eight verses in the evening.)

Some Verses on Meditation from Psalm 119

“I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.... Princes also sit and speak against me, but Your servant meditates on Your statutes.... My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on Your statutes.... Let the proud be ashamed, for they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; but I will meditate on Your precepts.... Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.... I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation.... The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Psalms 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 97, 99, 130).
