



Introduction:

David Wells says, “Every age has its own challenges. This one is ours. It is the affliction of distraction.”

“Over the last few years I’ve had the uncomfortable sense that somehow, or something, has been tinkering with my brain... I feel it most strongly when I’m reading. I used to find it easy to immerse myself in a book or a lengthy article. Now my concentration starts to drift after a page or two. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something else to do. I feel like I’m always dragging my wayward brain back to the text. The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle... The net seems to be chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. Whether I’m online or not, my mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once, I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski. My brain, I realized, wasn’t just drifting. It was hungry. It was demanding to be fed the way the Net fed it – and the more it was fed, the hungrier it became. Even when I was away from my computer, I yearned to check e-mail, click links, do some Googling. I wanted to be connected.”¹

Text: Psalm 1

Verse 1 —

- “There’s no space in our modern lives that can’t be filled up with entertainment, socializing, recording, or commentary.”
- Matthew 13:22 — “As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.”
- Donald Whitney: “I believe the convenience of sound has contributed to the spiritual shallowness of contemporary western Christianity...Because of this, and because we are the most urban, noise-polluted generation ever, we have an unprecedented need to learn the disciplines of silence and solitude.”²

¹Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Brain*, p. 5-7 + 16.

²Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, p. 179.

³Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, p. 178.

⁴David Wells, *God in the Whirlwind*, p. 38-9.



Verse 2 —

- Joshua 1:8 — “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 good success.”
- Psalm 77:12 — “I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.”
- Donald Whitney — “There are times to eliminate the voices of the world in order to hear undistracted the voice of God.”³
- David Wells — “Instantaneous knowledge from the Internet is one thing. Learning to know God is something quite different. The knowledge of God is, in fact, a lifetime pursuit, not an instantaneous download... Can we set aside the impatience that the Internet tends to breed, and the habits of being distracted which our highly compacted modern lives create, in order to focus on what really matters? I am confident that we can. We can all find a way to tame what distracts us from our pursuit of God. We can all teach ourselves to focus. We can all untangle ourselves from our appetite for instant results and immediate gratification. The most worthwhile things in life often come to flower only over long periods of time. We can teach ourselves to see this and change our frame of reference. Redirecting our minds in this way and learning to focus is a wondrously liberating thing. It allows us to untether ourselves from everything that wants to consume our attention, our energy, and even our soul. It frees us from the tyranny of the urgent. When we are thus untethered, we are free to be where we want to be. Where we want to be is before God.”⁴

In Conclusion: The Fruit of Meditation

Verse 3 - 4 —

- George Muller — “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, reproved, instructed; and that thus, by means of the word of God, whilst meditating on it, my heart might be brought into communion with the Lord.”

Application: What kind of daily and weekly habits can you develop to untether yourself from distractions to spend more time and attention meditating on God and His word?



Class: Weapons of Mass
Distraction
Lesson: part 3
Term: Fall (October 21 2018)
Professor: Mike Plewniak
