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Why I Pray

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I pray because I believe God listens. "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." (1 Jno. 5:14).

I pray because God has told me that He cares and is able to help. "...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you ...," (1 Pet. 5:7; see also Lk. 12:6,7; Heb. 4:16).

I pray because my Savior said I ought to pray. "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart," (Lk. 18:1).

I pray because I'm thankful for all the good things God has given. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God," (Phil. 4:6; see also, Col.4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16-18).

I pray because I need pardon. "My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," (1 Jno. 2:1; see also Acts 8:22 & Psa. 51:1-9).

I pray because I adore and love my Father. "In this manner, therefore, pray: 'Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name'," (Matt. 6:9).

I pray because I've read so many accounts of people who prayed to God with great results.

"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit." (Jas. 5:17,18). "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much," (Jas. 5:16).

I pray because of Paul's exhortation. "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior," (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

I pray because I believe God has the ability to grant even more than I'm able to think and ask. "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." (Eph. 3:14-21).

Meditation

by Mark Roberts

Do you meditate? Many Christians may instinctively answer “no” since meditation has become associated with the Eastern religions or the New Age movement. Yet the Bible recommends a kind of meditation that is far removed from such practices. David said, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119:11). Hiding the word in our hearts, the essence of meditation, is an essential discipline in the life of the serious Christian.

What does it mean to meditate? The Bible uses the term to mean an intense consideration of spiritual matters. When we meditate, we reflect carefully and deeply upon God, His Word, our conduct and our relationship with the Lord. Paul urges us to think about things “noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report” (Phil. 4:8). David says, “I meditate within me heart, and my spirit makes diligent search” (Ps. 77:6). The word David uses for “meditate” means to rehearse, to go over in one’s mind. The Scriptures admonish us to deliberately turn our minds toward spiritual things, and to introspectively look at our lives from the spiritual dimension. This is meditation.

The Bible extols the benefits of time spent meditating. Joshua was told success depended upon it (Josh. 1:8), and David defines it as the mark of a godly man (Ps. 1:2). Meditation will humble us as we look into the mirror of God’s word and see needed improvements (Jas. 1:22-25; Ps. 119:59). Solomon tells us that meditation results in better decision-making and gives us direction in life, for commandments “bound to our hearts” guide and watch over us (Prov. 6:20-23). Further, meditation will comfort us in times of distress and trouble (Ps. 119:23). Most importantly, meditation will draw us closer to the Lord because we are thinking His thoughts, not our own.

Please realize the distinction between meditation and Bible study. Studying the Bible gives us a basis for meditation, because it involves the acquiring of knowledge and facts. Meditation is the process by which we examine those facts and see how they affect our lives, and how they fit into the big picture of knowing God better. A failure to meditate can result in our becoming Bible encyclopedias - “know-it-alls” - who have no real relationship with the Lord. God did not give His word that we might become experts in Bible trivia but that it might change us to the core. We activate that change process in meditation.

How do we meditate? Meditation is a simple process, and it is best kept that way. Encumbering it with gimmicks and props only robs it of its power. Meditation only requires a willing mind and a quiet place. Remember how often Jesus sought solitude to pray and be alone with God? We must do the same. Then, select a verse of Scripture. David advises us to meditate on the law of God (Ps. 119:97). Turn the passage over in your mind, repeating it internally again and again. Think of each word and what it means. Then begin to think on how this verse applies to you. What is God saying here? How can you do what this verse instructs? Why did God command this? How does this verse show God’s love for you? What other Bible passages show this verse’s truths in action? Where can you put this verse “in play” in your life? Answering these kinds of questions takes time and energy. The payoff? As we ruminate upon the Word, we are building and strengthening our spiritual character.

As you gain more discipline to control your mind from wondering, and as your will wants to spend more time meditating, broaden your meditations beyond just Scripture. David meditated upon the accomplishments of God: “I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works” (Ps. 145:5). Malachi records people meditating upon God’s name, meaning they reflected upon every facet of God’s character (Mal. 3:16). Here is meditation’s highest goal: thinking more on God.

We ought to realize the value of meditation. Make time to meditate on the Lord and His word. “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer” (Ps. 19:14).