



Basic Lesson 5

-Response to Biblical Meditation

Some words appear in different colored font to give extra emphasis, encouraging further meditation.

Basic Principle: There is a need to respond to what you hear God saying to you as an essential part of meditation.

Reminder: Biblical Meditation isn't an intellectually stimulated activity that one learns about. It is a spiritual action that a person participates in. In other words, when writing lessons on this topic we have endeavored to offer a real life meditative/prayer/reflective component, with a few necessary pieces included on the front end. Thus far we have covered what Biblical meditation is, why context is necessary, how to hear from God, the role worship and praise plays in this activity and now, how to respond when God speaks. The heart of these lessons is to practice the activity, not to just have Bible study about the components. The result will be a fresh approach to reading the Bible that lends itself naturally for prayer in the situations of life, and for the world around us.

Thinking Things Through

1. Share with your group a goal that you have made for yourself and then failed to accomplish.
2. Why do you think we are our own worst enemies when it comes to change and achieving the things our heart desires?
3. Think through one area in your life you know God wants you to change. What have you accomplished so far regarding moving in this new direction? When you feel you have failed – do you eagerly continue God's direction, or hide from it and feel unworthy? Why?

Leader- In Genesis 3:9 God asks "Where are you?" God asks this of Adam (and Eve) after they sinned and hid from God in the Garden of Eden. Even though God knew where Adam and Eve were physically, He is asking, "Where are you?" mentally, emotionally, spiritually? "What caused you to do this?" The response here is an opportunity for repentance (change). In meditation, listen for the "Where are you's?" These queries from our Father are always positive, even though at times they call for repentance. Other times they call for encouragement, an affirmation that strengthens.

Digging Deeper

God always knows exactly where you are regarding your development. He uses biblical meditation to help nudge us on the right path and encourage us. He will speak to you and see if you will respond to his leading. Like Adam and Eve in the garden our natural tendency is to hide from him.

Print off the **Putting it Into Practice** section at the end. Now familiar with the process, your group will participate in the meditative portion here and then move back into the question/answer small group format.

The response in meditation is a personal benefit.

James 1 is a description of Biblical Meditation and the response.

- Look into the Word.
- Continue meditating in it until you receive something from God.
- Use the Word as a mirror to see how you line up with the Word.
- Be a doer of the Word.
- You do this through your personal response to God as you apply the Word to your own life.

Take time for everyone to individually go through this passage using the **Putting It Into Practice** section.

4. What did you receive from this meditative look at this passage from the Book of James?

Leader – Spend a few minutes sharing insights from the meditative/journaling session. What was the author trying to convey? What does it mean to us? What insights did the Holy Spirit reveal? What should be done with what was received?

5. James 1:19-21 list specific behaviors. How does meditation help people turn away from them?

Leader - Certain sins are easy to spot. They are black and white. However, much of our other behaviors take reflection and contemplation to see. When exactly are you angry? When is anger appropriate and when is it sin? If I am to get rid of all moral filth, what determines in one's life what is filthy? How do you know? Examples like the ones listed here are only revealed and dealt with by quiet contemplation and reflection, allowing God's word to shine a light on us. Examples like the ones listed here are really only revealed and dealt with by quiet contemplation and reflection, allowing God's word to shine a light on us.

6. James 1:21 refers to “The word planted in you.” How does this happen?

Leader –The act of planting connotes a sense of effort being put into the process. Soil is disturbed, a seed is planted, the soil is returned, and fertilizer and time are added. A seed that yields its fruit does so with applied effort. Therefore, to ensure that the Word takes root in us we must ensure that we properly ruminate/chew on it and filter our life through it. This takes time, but is time well spent. v21 gives a picture of how the Word is received. First, James shows a preparation of the heart to receive the Word. The Word itself has power to convict of sin, bring to repentance (if necessary) and convert (change) your soul. (Hebrews 4:12) v21 “Therefore lay aside all filthiness (moral uncleanness) and overflow (abundance) of wickedness, (evil) and receive (take) with meekness (agree with God’s Word) the implanted Word, (the engrafted Word that grows) which is able (supernaturally) to save your soul.” (mind, emotion, will).

Read James 1:22

7. Why is the word “deceived” here and what does it mean? How do we deceive ourselves when it comes to serious pursuit of God?

Leader - To receive the Word means to agree with it for some future obedience. This is the response in meditation and brings you into being a doer of the Word. Are you willing to respond now to v21, to allow the Holy Spirit to check your heart for sin so the Word can be sown in prepared ground and yield lasting fruit? If the Holy Spirit shows you something, deal with it.

8. When have you ever felt your spiritual activity is a waste of time? What does this verse indicate a reason for that is?

Leader - Hearing the Word is not enough, we must receive it and respond (be willing to do what it says), or we deceive yourself that anything happens. Our response means there will be some future obedience to the Word. Spiritual **activity** in our life must result in life change. Anything else is a waste of our precious time. Yet the benefit is that the received Word reproduces itself as an engrafted Word. Hear and understand this Word, respond to God about it, and as you come into agreement, you receive the Word and seed it, then it reproduces itself in your life. In other words, this is time well spent.

9. What does James 1: 23 say “truly receiving the Word” means?

10. Here the Word is presented as a mirror. What makes it feel like a mirror? Do you like the idea of a constant check on your life? Is this helpful? Discouraging?

Leader - Explore these thoughts. See what it will take for you to line up with God's Word. Be honest with any reluctance, ask the Holy Spirit to help you.

11. Verse 24 warns us of a human tendency. Why would we not react to what we see, and don't like, when we look into God's word?

Leader - When you hear the Word (and see yourself as you really are) and don't obey, you are like someone looking in a mirror, seeing a flaw, the spots and wrinkles but not doing anything about it. The Word of God is like a mirror; it will show the truth, the spots and wrinkles. You need to deal with what you see in yourself to be blessed.

12. Verse 25 offers a promise. What is it and how might it motivate you to seek after it? How might your life change?

Leader - The Word is called the perfect law of liberty. It is not legalistic; the Word will set you free. When you continue with something it implies that you take it further. The implications (context) of this passage is that we continually look back into God's word and allow his Spirit to direct us and change us. We are never complete and never stop growing. You do this as you meditate and respond to God regarding the Word He is showing you. This means there will be some future obedience as you become a doer of the work, i.e. being obedient to the Word. This is how you become rooted in the Word. This is how you grow.

Doing Life Together

Finish by praying out what you received during your meditative time on James 1

Spotlight on the Material

Benefits of responding: James 1:25 Hearers who receive the Word “will be blessed in what they do.” (apply the Word personally) To be blessed in what you do, you must be a doer of the Word. This is similar to the Psalm 1 blessing for the one who meditates on the Word “And whatever he does shall prosper.”

The response brings about a transformed mind that leads your soul into agreement with God’s Word. As the Word is implanted in you, it reminds you for example, that you are now set apart for God and your thinking and behavior will continue to change. You are different, alive to God and spiritual things. As your behavior changes through a transformed mind you will see this as a blessing in itself.

As you meditate, allow God to speak to you through the Word, your response is dialogue with God, an essential part of your relationship.

Responding to the Word brings spiritual growth and is a result of meditation.

Your soul will be saved, your mind renewed and transformed.

In [Genesis 3, to hide from God in fear when you sin is a flesh response](#). The Word can be a detector of sin leading you to repentance. The response in meditation provides this with the promise; that confession of sin brings forgiveness and cleansing with a restored sense of righteousness with God. (1 John 1:9)

For example, how do you respond when you sin? Is fear present that your relationship with God is broken? Do you run to God or hang back? Do you confess sin and still feel unworthy? Do not follow these emotions; they do not line up with 1 John 1:9. You need to know that repentance in response to the Word brings times of [refreshing](#) in the [presence](#) of God. (Acts 3:19)

The response is some kind of honest [agreement](#) to what God is saying to you. Your response can range from, “Yes!” to “I don’t even know if I want to do this.” Be honest; God knows where you are and wants to help. “Help me!” is a good response.

Meditate through these Scriptures in James 1 and see how your response can lead to a transformed soul.

Putting it Into Practice

1. Print a copy of this section for each participant of your group.
2. Pray that God's spirit would open your hearts and minds to his living Word.
3. Slowly read aloud James 1:19-25, pausing at the end of each sentence.
4. When you get to the end of the passage allow people to make notes on what God's spirit is impressing on them.
5. After three or four minutes, reread the passage and repeat the exercise, allowing God's spirit to further impress upon your hearts His Truth.
6. Move back into the study and debrief the experience. How is this different or similar to how you normally pray? What did you learn from this passage that changed how you prayed

Biblical Meditation is

sitting at Jesus' feet | hearing God through His Word | receiving His Word by faith | responding, being a doer of the Word | praying out what you received

Biblical Mediation results in

building faith | revelation | heart preparation | healing | strength | relationship | discipleship

Meditation can be practiced in this way:

- Use your Bible, read through the passage carefully.
- Take a silent time meditating on the passage.
- Go back and reread the passage, be alert, pondering the Word of God.
- Allow the Holy Spirit to direct you to focus on a portion of the Word.
- What is God saying to me that I can pray about? (What God desires for us in this passage, we can also pray for others)
- How do I apply this to myself? Ask- What does this teach me about the character of God? (God is quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry. His anger is righteous) What does this teach me about His will for my life? (He desires that I be morally pure) His will for his Kingdom work on earth (That all people look into the word and use it to guide their life).
- What is my response to God?

¹⁹My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.²¹

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

²⁵But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.



The Blessings of Meditation

Joshua 1

TAKE IT HOME

Joshua 1:8 is an illustration of how to meditate.

Benefit: The previous Psalm 1 and Joshua 1 go hand in hand. Each has a blessing for the meditator. Psalm 1, blessed whatever you do and Joshua 1, blessed wherever you go.

Joshua 1:8

“This Book of the Law (Word) 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.”

Do not let the Word depart from your mouth, make it a continuing process until it becomes part of you. Receive the Word into your inner being, live it. (James 1:21 Be a doer of the Word.)

Response: Meditate day and night. How?

This word for meditation is not only a mental exercise, it can involve speaking the words in a soft droning voice with complete focus, maybe much like when you learned your times tables. 8 x 8 is 64; if you learned them this way you still know them. This word for meditation also includes the use of your imagination, and pondering a word, a thought.

Meditate day and night - This is not as hard as you imagine. Worry and complaining are examples of negative meditation and we do them easily. Speak the Word aloud and/or silently to yourself. Go over it in your mind; use your imagination, ponder it, then respond to God about what the Word is speaking to you.

Look at the Word from different perspectives.

Example: Speak the Words aloud, emphasizing a different Word each time. THIS Book of the Law, This BOOK of the Law; This Book of the LAW, and so on. The different emphasis will give a different perspective. A benefit here is that you will find yourself memorizing the passage without deliberately doing so.

Response: If you were focusing on the word as LAW, how do you feel about God's authority in your life? This might be an issue to deal with.

Response: Your response is based on your obedience to the Word. Most important, talk to God about the Word; this is to be a dialogue. Approach the Word as if God is speaking to you directly and looking at you for your answer. This will change the way you read the Word.

Continue on through the passage, noting what God will say to you.

Context: In Joshua 1, they were dispossessing enemies. This is what we do in a spiritual sense we come into possession of our own Promised Land with personal victory over sin, freedom from bondages to live in our spiritual inheritance.

Context is important in meditation. Note the surrounding verses for insight and balance. Verses 6,7 and 9 surround the verse on meditation and all repeat the same instructions, **“Be strong and of a good courage...”**

v6 “Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.” Keep the goal in sight.

v7 “Only be strong and very courageous that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.”

v8 “...For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” You determine the outcome by your obedience. **Prosper and good success** in v7 and 8 are the same word meaning to act circumspectly, to think through things and act wisely, further glimpses of what meditation looks like. Your **way** is your pathway, the road you take in life.

Prosperous in v8 means you will be able to push forward, to have a breakthrough in a good sense. This is the same word in Psalm 1:3, you will **prosper** in whatever you do. You will not stagnate. Psalm 1 says you will bring forth fruit in its season and you will not wither.

Application: Note the things you receive from the Word, use your responses as the basis for your prayers. As you pray for the Church, your prayers touch all believers, yourself included. Learn to expand your prayers. Intercessors pray for others but they are included in prayer for the Church. Pray for the Church; you will be blessed.

