

A New Year's Resolution - Meditation
Gary Wiley, January 9, 2022

INTRODUCTION

- A. A New Year is a time for resolutions.
1. They can include losing weight, exercising, controlling one's temper. The list is endless.
 2. I encourage those of us who are Christians to narrow the list to things that can make a difference not only in this life but in the life to come.
 3. Anonymous, *He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place it leads to.*
- B. Choose wisely
1. John Bunyan (1628-1688) wrote a book called *The Pilgrim's Progress* which chronicles the journey of Christian to the heavenly kingdom.
 2. I believe it is wise to do what is most useful for my spiritual journey.
 3. My resolution is to meditate on the Word of God.

A RESOLVE TO MEDITATE

- A. What is Christian meditation?
1. It is the practice of focusing one's thoughts on specific spiritual matters.
 2. It is interacting with the texts of Scripture.
 3. Charles Swindoll, *Meditation is disciplined thought, focused on a single object or Scripture for a period of time.*
- B. Bible verses on meditation
1. About me - application
 - a. 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.*
 - b. Psalm 1:2, *but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*
 - c. Psalm 19:14, *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*
 - d. Psalm 49:3, *My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.*
 2. About God - worship
 - a. Psalm 77:12, *I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.*
 - b. Psalm 104:34, *May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.*
 - c. Psalm 143:5, *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands.*
 - d. Psalm 145:5, *On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.*
 3. Both: Psalm 119:15, *I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.*
- C. What is the value of meditation?
1. It is a means of understanding the Bible.
 - a. Hebrews 4:12, *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*
 - b. John Piper, . . . *to wrestle God's meaning from a book.*
 - c. 2 Timothy 2:15, *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*
 - d. E. M. Bounds (1835-1913), *Faith grows by reading and meditating upon the Word of God.*
 2. It draws one closer to God.
 - a. Prayer is speaking to God. Meditation is discerning what God has to say to us.
 - b. It is the active use of the mind to engage God through Scripture.
 - c. George Swinnock (1627-1673), *Our design in meditation must be rather to cleanse our hearts, than to clear our heads.*
 - d. John Bunyan, *If you would be rid of a hard heart . . . be much with Christ upon the cross in your meditations.*
 - e. R. A. Torrey (1856-1928), *The prayer that is born of meditation upon the Word of God is the prayer that soars upward most easily to God's listening ear.*
 - f. Charles Spurgeon, *To believe a thing is to see the cool crystal water sparkling in the cup. But to meditate on it is to drink of it.*
 - g. I want to know Him not just to know about Him. I can learn about Him when communication becomes personal.

4. It promotes application.
 - a. It is taking the study of the Bible and applying it to one's life.
 - b. Greg Parsons. *Meditation bridges the gap between the then of the text and the needs and issues of the now.*
 - c. Mark Bailey, *Meditation provides the creative think-time to absorb the truth before it is practiced.*
 - d. John Bunyan, *The end of study is information, and the end of meditation is practice.*
 - e. I can learn about me because meditation makes it personal.

D. How do I meditate?

1. Pray to hear, understand and obey.
2. Learn to read the Bible as for the first time.
3. Learn to read it as a love letter.
4. Read it repeatedly.
5. Read it patiently.
6. Read it expectantly.

E. Am I able to meditate?

1. Every person who has placed faith in Jesus Christ has access to God, Revelation 3:20, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*
2. If you take the time, Howard Hendricks, *Meditation, thinking and rethinking, about God's Word is often crowded out in younger years.*
3. You have the time. How are you going to spend it?

F. A recent example of meditative reading by Charles Spurgeon,

Isaiah 40:3-4, *A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.*

Pastor Spurgeon identifies four things that must take place for a way of the LORD into the hearts of every man, woman and child.

- ***Every valley must be exalted.*** *Low and groveling thoughts of God must be given up; doubting and despairing must be removed; and self-seeking and carnal delights must be forsaken. Across these deep valleys a glorious causeway of grace must be raised.*
- ***Every mountain and hill shall be laid low.*** *Proud creature-sufficiency, and boastful self-righteousness, must be leveled, to make a highway for the King of kings. Divine fellowship is never promised to haughty, high-minded sinners. The Lord has respect to the lowly and visits the contrite in heart, but the lofty are an abomination unto Him. My soul, beseech the Holy Spirit to set you right in this respect.*
- ***The crooked shall be made straight.*** *The wavering heart must have a straight path of decision for God and holiness marked out for it. Double-minded men are strangers to the God of truth. My soul, take heed that in everything you are honest and true, as in the sight of the heart-searching God.*
- ***The rough places shall be made smooth.*** *Stumbling-blocks of sin must be removed, and thorns and briers of rebellion must be uprooted. So great a visitor must not find miry ways and stony places when He comes to honor His favored ones with His company. Oh, that this evening the Lord may find in my heart a highway made ready by His grace, that He may make a triumphal progress through the utmost bounds of my soul, from the beginning of this year even to the end of it.*

CONCLUSION

- I don't have the gifts of Charles Spurgeon but I am a child of God who can learn more about me and my God than I ever imagined.
- We who have placed faith in Jesus Christ alone have the indwelling Holy Spirit and the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, interceding for us at the right hand of the Father.
- At our ages, we have the time to slow down and smell the roses, to find the beauty of fellowship with our Creator God.