

# Introduction to These Studies About "Meditation"

## Opening comments

Meditation is a topic that must be learned by practice; merely reading about it will accomplish very little at all. Because of this, writing about it becomes a balancing act between saying *too much* (thus minimizing the reader's ability to contribute to the study) and *too little* (thus not providing a sufficient foundation for a new learner to build upon). The format used here is an attempt to go between these two extremes.

In many respects, this study is incomplete. In my own personal study of this topic, things were observed which are not included here. Often, these omitted items are personal observations that would not really mean much to others. Yet in other instances, things are omitted in order that the reader may have the opportunity to make some of the discoveries himself. You can consider this an incomplete project... *and your job is to finish it!*

Though given some orderliness and organization, this study is not intended to be a "polished professional presentation." Meditation does not occur that way. When you study and think about the Bible, your main goal is to become more Christ-like, not to come up with a fancy outline. It doesn't have to look pretty. It may not mean much to others - though you yourself may benefit greatly from it. The important thing is that you *do it*, rather than worrying about the impression others may get. Ultimately, it's between you and God.

When you are finished with this study, you do not need to have discovered all the answers to all the questions that may have entered your mind. Renewing one's mind (Romans 12:1-2) is a life-long process. There is so much more in God's Word that is just waiting to be discovered! Perhaps you will even find some of the answers you are looking for while you are thinking about some other issue in the Bible!

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## What is it? (Brief Overview)

### What is Meditation? (According to the Bible)

1. Thinking constantly about something, mentally repeating something, etc.
  2. In many ways, this is the *opposite* of the world's concept of "meditation," which is a by-product of various Eastern religions. There are many "Christianized" versions of this, but each of them focuses on the idea of "emptying" or "quieting" the mind of thoughts, rather than "focusing" the mind on thoughts. *The Bible never uses the word "meditation" in this way.*
  3. For a more comprehensive look at the Bible's concept of "meditation," see: "What is "meditation" all about? (Definition)"
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### ***All people do it; the only question is what we focus on.***

1. All people have things that they like to think about, whenever they get the opportunity to do so. Even when an individual is involved in other activities, something will normally be in the back of his mind, waiting to come to the forefront whenever the opportunity exists.
2. The difference isn't *whether* or not people meditate (think about things), but *what* they meditate (think) about.
3. By the way... We can often learn a lot about someone, by observing what he does with his *free time* - the time he has the opportunity to choose whatever he wants to do. What we do in our free time is often related to what we think (meditate) about.  
[See the short article (just a few comments) about: "Free time".]
4. QUESTION: What types of things do you like to think about?

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### A few comments about this group of studies.

1. **The Christian desires that his *thoughts* be pleasing to God.**
  - Psalm 19:14; 2 Corinthians 10:5
  
2. **Both Old & New Testaments have a God-centered theme. Both encourage us to *think* about God and his works.**
  - In this study, our focus will be on the Old Testament verses that are often translated with the word *meditation* or *meditate*.
  - Other verses in the Old Testament are also relevant, even though they use other words, such as: *think, consider, ponder, reflect*, etc.
  - The same concept ("thinking about things") occurs many times in the New Testament, though the word *meditate* is not present. Philippians 4:8, which focuses on our thinking in general, is an example.
  - A CHALLENGE: Look for other verses which are not mentioned in this study - verses that use *other* words to describe how we should think.
  
3. **Why this focus on God?** It might be easiest to explain using an illustration:
  - According to Matthew 22:36-40, our greatest obligation is to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. *After that* comes our second greatest obligation, love for our "neighbor" (which includes our enemies). Both duties are required by us, but they must be done in this order: God first and neighbor second. This is because *love for God defines love for neighbor*.
  - It is the same way with what we are to meditate (think) on: Meditation on God and on his Word comes first, *then* comes our focus on the other things we do. Both are necessary, but *the first defines the significance of the second*. This study focuses primarily on our first obligation.