

Theological Equipping Class – Silence, Solitude, Meditation

God Speaks

- Creation - *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.”* – Genesis 1:1-3
- Reveals His Character
 - *“He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.”* – Psalm 103:7
 - *“The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. ⁶ The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”* – Exodus 34:5-7
- He has given us His Written Word (Scriptures)
- Sends the Word of God – Jesus – *“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”* - Hebrews 1:1-3
- We Listen
- We speak in light of His speech
 - Declare divine mysteries – *“At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison.”* – Colossians 4:3
 - *“For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”* – 2 Corinthians 4:6
 - We are Ambassadors for Christ

Silence - Shutting your mouth to hear God

1. Silence teaches us that we to live by God’s Words

- *“Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”* – Deuteronomy 8:3
- *“Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. ⁶ He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. ⁷ Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!”* - Psalm 37:5-7

2. Silence stops your words so you can hear God’s

- *“All Scripture is breathed out by God (spoken) and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”* – 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- *“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak”* – James 1:19

3. Silence show you your words aren’t needed but God’s are

- *“On a long fast you discover that much of the food you normally eat is really unnecessary. When you practice silence and solitude, you find that you don’t need to say many things you think you need to say. In silence we learn to rely more on God’s control in situations where we would normally feel compelled to speak, or to speak too much. We find out that He is able to manage situations in which we once thought our input was indispensable.”* – Donald Whitney
- Silence also teaches you to control the tongue

- “Learning to keep silent for extended periods of time can help us control our tongue all the time.” – Donald Whitney
- “When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.” – Proverbs 10:19
- “Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. ²⁸ Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.” - Proverbs 17:27-28
- “Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.” – Proverbs 21:23

4. Silence teaches you to wait upon the Lord and trust His sovereign hand

- “For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. ² He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken...⁵ For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. ⁶ He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.” - Psalm 62:1-6
- “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. ³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; ³¹ but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” - Isaiah 28-31
- “The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. ²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.” - Lamentation 3:25-26
- “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” – Isaiah 40:8

5. Worship in Silence

- “Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests.” – Zephaniah 1:7
- “But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.” – Habakkuk 2:20
- “God was pleased to pour into my soul a great spirit of supplication, and a sense of His free, distinguishing mercies so filled me with love, humility, and joy and holy confusion that I could at last only pour out my heart before Him in an awful silence. I was so full that I could not well speak.” – George Whitefield

How to Practice Silence:

- Plan/Set aside time for silence:
 - Don’t neglect responsibilities
 - Carve out time in your Schedule
- Find times throughout your day for quick moments of silence
- Places easy places to be silent
- Fight for it
 - “I think the devil has made it his business to monopolize on three elements: noise, hurry, crowds...Satan is quite aware of the power of silence.” – Jim Elliot

Solitude – Shutting the World’s Mouth to hear God

Jesus getting away to be alone with the Father

- “Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.” – Matthew 14:13
- “And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.” – Matthew 14:23

- *“And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them.” - Luke 4:42*
- *“That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. ³⁵ And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, ³⁷ and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” - Mark 1:33-36*

1. Set your eyes on God

- *“We need to find a place to be allowed to hear the voice of Him whose presence is unseen yet more real than any other.” – Donald Whitney*
- *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith” – Hebrews 12:1-2*

2. Rest in God

3. Live in light of God and His Word

How to Practice Solitude:

- Actually do it
- Plan:
 - *“Our days are usually filled with more than enough noise, plenty of hurry, and demanding people. Unless we plan for daily times of solitary silence before God, these other things will rush in to fill our time like water into the titanic.” – Donald Whitney*
 - *“Above all, keep much in the presence of God. Never see the face of man till you have seen His face who is our life, our all.” – Robert Murray M’Cheyne*
- Seize opportunities for solitude
- Get creative
- *“Retire from the world each day to some private spot, even if it be only the bedroom (for a while I retreated to the furnace room for want of a better place). Stay in the secret place till the surrounding noises begin to fade out of your heart and a sense of God’s presence envelops you...Give yourself to God and then be what and who you are without regard to what others think...Learn to pray inwardly every moment. After a while you can do this even while you work...Gaze on Christ with the eyes of your soul. Practice spiritual concentration. All the above is contingent upon a right relation to God through Christ and daily meditation on the Scriptures. Lacking these, nothing will help us; granted these, the discipline recommended will go far to neutralize the evil effects of externalism and to make us acquainted with God and our own souls.” – AW Tozer*

Meditation – Soaking in what we Hear from God

Eastern Meditation vs Christian Meditation

- *“Whenever the Christian idea of meditation is taken seriously, there are those who assume it is synonymous with the concept of meditation centered in eastern religions. In reality, the two ideas stand worlds apart. Eastern meditation is an attempt to empty the mind; Christian meditation is an attempt to fill the mind.” – Richard Foster*
- *“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be*

as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” – Deuteronomy 6:6-9

- *“I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might” – Ephesians 1:16-19*

1. To know God and His Word

- *“If you feel that we live in a purely physical universe, you will view meditation as a good way to obtain a consistent alpha brainwave pattern. But if you believe that we live in a universe created by the infinite personal God who delights in our communion with him, you will see meditation as a communion between the lover and the one to be loved.” – Richard Foster*
- *“Let every encounter with the Bible be an encounter with the living God.” – John Piper*

2. To walk as God’s Child

- *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.” – Psalm 1:1-2*
- *“There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through meditation on his Word spiritual strength for labor in his service. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them.” – Charles Spurgeon*

3. To “squeeze” the Bible

- *“Truth is something like the cluster of the vine: if we would have wine from it, we must bruise it; we must press and squeeze it many times. The bruiser’s feet must come down joyfully upon the bunches, or else the juice will not flow; and they must well tread the grapes, or else much of the precious liquid will be wasted. So we must, by meditation, tread the clusters of truth, if we would get the wine of consolation therefrom.” - Charles Spurgeon*

4. Stir Affections/Joy of Salvation in God

- *“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. ⁹⁸ Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. ⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. ¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. ¹⁰¹ I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. ¹⁰² I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. ¹⁰³ How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! ¹⁰⁴ Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.” - Psalm 119:97-104*
- *“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. ² So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. ³ Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you... My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, ⁶ when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; ⁷ for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.” – Psalm 63:1-7*
- *“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! ² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, ³ who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, ⁵ who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. ⁶ The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.*

⁸ *The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹ He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. ¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. ¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.*” – Psalm 103:1-13

5. To expose the fleeting, false pleasures of the world

- “Live near to God, and so all things will appear to you little in comparison to eternal realities.” – Robert Murray M’Cheyne

How to Meditate

- Take a Biblical Passage – “*the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” – Philippians 4:7
 - Think through all implications
 - Think through what it says about God, about you, about the world, etc.
 - Think through how it should change your life
- Take a Truth: I am an adopted child of God
- Take your own Testimony

What to Meditate

- Meditate on the Bible
- Meditate on the Gospel
- Meditate on Who God is
- Meditate on Sin (in light of the Gospel)
- Meditate on who He has made you: Forgiven, Adopted, etc.
- Meditate on the Joy of Salvation
- Meditate on the Church, Family, Mission
- Meditate on the beauties of the Kingdom
- Meditate on Eternity