

Meditation ... on what?

Meditation with an OBJECTIVE

- PART 1 - Meditation on God's Word
 - PART 2 - Meditation on God / His Works / His Wonders
 - PART 3 - Meditation on Our Dependence on God
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PART 1 - Meditation on God's Word

A. Focusing on God's Word

- **Psalm 119** - The psalmist really thought that God's Word was important! Seven times he refers to it as the object of his meditation. (One other time he indirectly associates it with the Word.)
- [See the separate study on this Psalm.]

B. RESULTS of meditating on the Word: Will be prosperous/successful

- **Joshua 1:8** - Meditating on "this Book of the Law"
- [See the separate study on Josh. 1:8.]

C. RESULTS of meditating on the Word: Being blessed

- **Psalm 1** - Meditating on God's Law
- [See the separate study on Psalm 1.]

D. NOTE: Results of understanding God's Word (which can occur when we meditate on it):

- **Psalm 119:27**- Understanding God's Word makes us able to meditate on God's *wonders*! The one makes us able to do the other. (See the next section)
 - [An understanding of God's Word will influence our perspective on everything!]
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PART 2 - Meditation on God / His Works / His Wonders

A. Meditation on God (a general statement)

Job 15:4 - [Expressions of...] devotion to (*or* meditation on) God.

- By implication, this passage teaches that doing this is good. Job was falsely accused of hindering (*or* discouraging) this, when he argued against his false accusers.

Psalm 63:6 - "I think about (*or* meditate on) you [God]"

- He longs to be with God.
- Context: He was in the wilderness when he said it, and probably felt quite alone!

B. Meditation on God's Wonders

Psalm 119:27 - "I will meditate on your wonders."

- This is the result of having a proper understanding of the Word (which is often the result of meditating on it). According to this verse, once God's *precepts* are understood (which goes beyond mere awareness of their existence), then the psalmist can properly meditate on God's *wonders*.
- The context: Meditating on God's wonders, even in times of sorrow. [How different from the way many people do it today! They complain, instead.]

C. Meditation on God's Unfailing Love

Psalm 48:9 - "We meditate on your unfailing love." [Context: in the temple.]

- How did God display his love? (Read the psalm.)
- Note that God's love does *not* contradict or nullify his justice! In the context, his love is connected both with righteousness and with the destruction of his enemies!

D. Meditation on God's Wonderful Works

Psalm 145:5 - "I will meditate on your wonderful works."

- An expression of praise for God's mighty acts - for all the awesome things he has done! (See the context.)
- [Note: For comments about a minor textual variation in this verse, see: "A Technical Note About Psalm 145:5."]

E. Meditation on God's *past* works ... resulting in a *present* expectation of amazing works by God.

Both of these passages use two different Hebrew words which are often translated as "meditate." For variety, translations will often use a different word for one of them - such as *muse, ponder, consider, reflect*, etc.

Psalm 77:12 - "I will meditate on all your works. / I will meditate on all your deeds."

- He is calling out to God during a time of trial, confident that he will bring deliverance. This is a prayer for deliverance "as in the past."

Psalm 143:5 - "I meditate on all your works. / I meditate on the works of your hands."

- He is referring to what God did in the past. (Refer to the Old Testament books about Israel's history.)
- This is an appeal for deliverance from enemies. The psalmist remembers God's *past* acts of deliverance.

COMMENT: ABOUT THE PSALMIST'S VIEW

- What God did in the past is the basis for what we can expect in the future, since he is consistent with his character. The *unchanging* God did

wonderful things in the past... he will continue doing them in the present and in the future!

- God often uses the forces of nature to accomplish his purposes, rather than going against them. Many people think that God is involved only if he *violates* the laws of nature (which he created) In reality, he is powerful enough to *use* them, to accomplish some very awesome things! He can *control* nature... he doesn't have to *fight* it!

PART 3 - Meditation on Our Dependence on God

Psalm 49:3 "The utterance (*or* meditation), from my heart will give understanding"

- What is this "utterance / meditation"? The message of this psalm - v. 5-20.
- The psalm reflects on the trust people often have in wealth and in themselves. Such a trust is futile; and people who have such a trust will one day lose everything. They will be like beasts that perish. This is contrasted with those whom God redeems from the grave - those who trust in God, instead!

QUESTIONS:

1. What God is like? In some sections of this study (such as Psalm 19), we have focused on the issue of God being revealed in Creation. We can get a glimpse of his power, wisdom and glory by looking at what he has done in creation. But until his Word changes our lives and minds, we cannot see these things in the way we *ought* to see them. What is the relationship between God and his Word? What are some of the things that are revealed about him in the Psalms you have been studying (and any other parts of the Bible you may wish to include). Such things had an effect on the lives (and lifestyles) of those who wrote the psalms. How can/should they have an effect on you?
2. In Psalm 48, note some of the issues which form the context of God's expression of love. Many people find some of these things to be "unacceptable" - incompatible with *their* view of what God is like. Where is our concept of God supposed to come from? In your studies, have you found any characteristics of God that surprised you, or were contrary to your expectations? If so, look for

- other passages which say similar things, and try to develop a better understanding of them. You may want to study the way Scripture connects these "unexpected" characteristics with those you are already familiar with. (It doesn't treat them like conflicting "opposites"!)
3. How often do you think about God's power and works? How did such thoughts influence the psalmists? Learn from their example! Begin thinking about God's power and work, and how it ought to effect your own perspective on situations. Furthermore, consider not only his works in the world *around* you, but also his work *inside* you, in making you Christ-like! What is he doing in your life? See Romans 8:28-31 and Philippians 1:6.
 4. Study Psalm 49. Describe the ways the psalmist contrasts those who trust in God with those who trust in themselves and in their riches. What is the end result of each type of trust? What do you trust in? Is there anything in your life that might resemble the one who trusts in himself and in riches? It might be good to look for other verses that describe the "rich," to make sure that we are heeding any warnings that Scriptures may give us. (All of us who are reading this study would probably be considered "rich," compared to most of the people in the world.)

A TECHNICAL NOTE ABOUT: Psalm 145:5

There is a small textual variation at the beginning of this verse. The New Living Translation reads:

Psalm 145:5

**I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor
and your wonderful miracles.**

In a footnote it says:

**Some manuscripts read They will speak.*

The issue is whether the first line connects with the word "*they*" in the previous verse, or the word "*I*" in the second half of verse 5 (implied in this translation). There is no serious problem with interpreting it either way, for it is obvious that both "they" (of verse 4) and the psalmist would be eager to speak about the glorious splendor of God's majesty! It's just a technical detail of trying to decide (if we think we need to) which idea the psalmist had in mind at this specific time. Either way, it will not have a negative impact on our study.

It is nice to know that almost every "variation" among manuscripts is as insignificant as this. And among the few variations that are more significant, *no* serious doctrinal issue is involved. God has made sure that, even through centuries of hand-copying of Bible manuscripts, *no* significant problems exist in the text. Though there may be some question as to the *specific wording* in some places, *there is no question as to the message!!*