

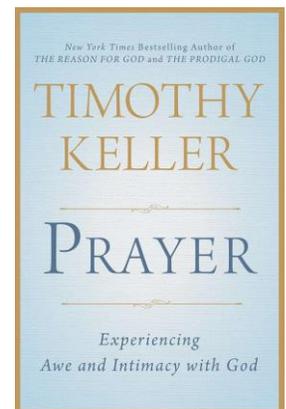


The Foothills Flyer: *Keeping the Church on Mission*

Tasting the Scripture Through Meditation

By Mike Potter **Value: Holistic Discipleship**

Pastor and author, Dr. Tim Keller has written an excellent book on prayer called *Prayer: Experiencing the Awe and Intimacy of God*. In it, he spends a good deal of time talking about biblical meditation as a prompter for prayer. And since we are focusing on the spiritual discipline of meditation this quarter, I thought I'd share some of what he says about it.



What is Meditation? Meditation is likened to tree roots taking in water. That means not merely knowing a truth but taking it inside and making it part of yourself. Meditation is spiritually “tasting” the Scripture—delighting in it, sensing the sweetness of the teaching, feeling the conviction of what it tells us about ourselves, and thanking God and praising God for what it shows us about him. Meditation is also spiritually “digesting” the Scripture—applying it, thinking out how it affects you, describes you, guides you in the most practical way. It is drawing strength from the Scripture, letting it give you hope, using it to remember how loved you are. To shift metaphors, meditation is taking the truth down into our hearts until it catches fire there and begins to melt and shape our reactions to God, ourselves, and the world.

To meditate is to ask yourself questions about the truth, such as: “Am I living in light of this? What difference does this make? Am I taking this seriously? If I believed and held to this, how would that change things? When I forget this, how does that affect me and all my relationships?” Meditation, then, is what gives you stability, peace, and courage in times of great difficulty, adversity, and upheaval. It helps you stay rooted in divine “water” when all other sources of moisture—of joy, hope, and strength—dry up.

Why Meditation? If prayer is to be a true conversation with God, it must be regularly preceded by listening to God’s voice through meditation on the Scripture. Many of us have a devotional life in which we jump from fairly academic study of the Bible into prayer. There is a “middle ground,” however, between prayer and Bible study, a kind of bridge between the two. While deep experiences of the presence and power of God can happen in innumerable ways, the ordinary way for going deeper spiritually into prayer is through meditation on Scripture. “If we pray without meditation,” writes Edmund Clowney, “our own communion with God becomes poor and distant.”



How to Meditate: There are many traditional ways to get such a clear view of a text. One is to read the biblical text slowly, answering four questions: *What does this teach me about God and his character? About human nature, character, and behavior? About Christ and his salvation? About the church, or life in the people of God?*

Another fruitful approach to meditation is to ask application questions. Look within the passage: for any personal examples to emulate or avoid, for any commands to obey, for any promises to claim, and for any warnings to heed.

Another approach to meditating on the Scripture, especially with a short passage, is to take one crucial verse and think through it by emphasizing each word. Ask what each word uniquely contributes to the meaning of the text, or what meaning would be lost from the statement if that particular word was removed.

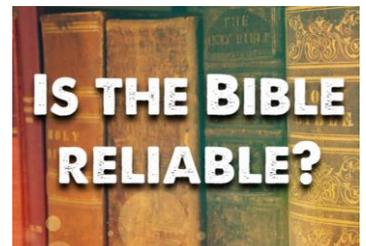
Another way to fix the mind on the truth of the passage is to paraphrase the verse in your own words. Read the verse(s) and close the Bible and try to restate it. Then look back at the passage and you will see how much you missed. Do this until you are satisfied with your paraphrase.

After advising meditation, Martin Luther describes how to do it. He uses the metaphor of a garland. "I divide each [biblical] command into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands. That is I think of each commandment as first, instruction, which is really what it is intended to be, and consider what the Lord God demands of me so earnestly. Second, I turn it into a thanksgiving; third, a confession; and fourth, a prayer." This turns every biblical text into "a school text, a song book, a penitential book, and prayer book."

Meditating with Confidence

By Joe Eastman **Value: Holistic Discipleship**

We're focusing on the spiritual discipline of biblical mediation this quarter, but how do we know that the Bible we have now is the Bible that was written back in Jesus' day? Can we trust that the Bible is true so that we can meditate on it with confidence? These are very good questions and ones that are often asked by those who are considering the claims of Jesus. So, if we are going to hold the Bible to be the Word of God, mediate on it, trust it to change us, and allow it to help us draw near to Him, we need to know that it can actually be trusted.



In that vein, this month I will be offering some help regarding these questions. I will be sending you an email soon with a link to an on-line video lesson featuring John Piper in which he talks about why we can trust the Scriptures. But until then, consider this...

There are over 5700 Greek ancient New Testament manuscripts and over 9000 in other ancient languages. These manuscripts are fragments of the New Testament. Some contain a few verses, and some contain complete copies of entire New Testament books. According to New Testament scholar Bruce Metzger, by comparing these manuscripts together we can be sure that our present text is 99.5% accurate and the .5% which we are not sure about doesn't affect any Christian doctrine. Even more impressively, we have so many quotes from the church fathers (the first few generations of church leaders after the Apostles) that we can construct all but 11 verses of the entire New Testament just from their writings! If you are interested in learning more about the reliability of the New Testament here are a few resources which will go into much greater detail:

[Reinventing Jesus](#) by Ed Komoszewski

www.bible.org/seriespage/4-manuscripts-tell-story-new-testament-reliable

www.rightnow.org (Enter "Trusting the New Testament" for videos and other resources)

Ministry Updates...



Foothills Prayer Ministry. Steve Radigan has been affirmed by the church membership to serve as deacon over a new *Foothills Prayer Ministry* on Sunday mornings that will begin soon and will be for those who request prayer immediately after and in response to the Sunday worship service. This ministry will offer those who would like prayer trained and ready pray-ers who are prepared to pray with them, and Steve is the one to ready them - in addition to being a pray-er himself.

If you would like to participate in this ministry of prayer, please contact Steve at (505) 934-0299 or radigan.steven@gmail.com.

Youth "Journey Camp." This summer, our youth will be taking a look at the amazing gift God has given them - the awesome journey of life. Instead of choosing to go to a conference in Durango, they chose to stay in-town and intentionally focus on service within the community. Based on the "let's work hard, then play hard" mentality, Tom has put together a week of service projects, worship, biblical teaching, fellowship, and fun. Their service projects will be at ECM, Foothills, and other places around town. In the middle, they will be having worship nights, group challenges to build unity in the youth group, and biblical teachings about the journey of life. To finish off the week, they will head up to Colorado where a good friend of Tom's is allowing them to camp on his property. He runs the missions based rafting company *Journey Quest* and is going to take them on a rafting trip down the Arkansas river. Tom's prayer for the week is that this adventure would be richly fulfilling and will draw the students closer to God and to each other. Pray that many students will be able to attend. Pray that the service projects will be a help to the community in a way that will show their love for Jesus. And pray for safety in their travels, on the rafting trip, and while playing games. Thank you for all your support and prayers!



Children's My Message Ministry. Our children have had a great year with the ORANGE curriculum so far and will continue to receive great biblical lessons during the *My Message* program this summer. Sarah is still recruiting summer teachers! She is looking for teachers to sign up to cover 2 weeks in a row - but if you are not able to commit to both weeks PLEASE do not hesitate to cover one week this summer. She is still in need of 6 teacher teams (facilitator and assistant). The 3-5 yr. class will be studying the story of creation at "Creation Station" and the 1st through 4th graders will be focusing on faith with the examples set by Jesus and Paul. These are great lessons that are fun and easy to deliver to our great kids at Foothills!



Parents - please note that children 4 yrs. to 4th grade are welcome to continue attending the *My Message* time during the service throughout the summer, and we will have a "graduation" and back to school bash on August 7th. After the graduation party students who will be moving onto 5th grade will graduate to the *Grounded* mid-high youth group program and participate in the adult service on Sunday mornings. Please contact Sarah with any questions about the summer schedule and let her know as soon as possible what dates you are able to cover! sarahedumas@gmail.com



Brandon & Anne Cox / Master Plan Ministries. This summer they will be staffing *Crush Fear* for their first time! This is a 17-day summer project at our ministry's ranch near Durango, CO from May 18 to June 3. It will focus on leadership development, Great Commission training, and outdoor adventure. They will equip students to better follow Jesus and expand His kingdom. Project activities include sharing testimonies at local churches, rappelling, white water rafting, evangelism in town, teaching from God's Word, and much more. For more info, videos, and photos visit www.crushfear.com.

The Coxes are trusting God as they raise \$1,100 for needed ministry expenses, materials, travel, etc. Would you to consider helping them with a special financial gift? You can help them staff this project and change student's lives! If the Lord leads you to give a special gift for this project, you may send a check made to *Master Plan Ministries* sent to Master Plan Ministries, PO Box 1082, Durango, CO 81302, MEMO: Cox Crush Fear.

The Foothills Flyer is a monthly newsletter under the oversight of Pastor Joe Eastman that is aimed at keeping Foothills on mission and keeping us committed to our 9 Core Values.

OUR MISSION: Foothills Fellowship exists to be a worshipping community of God's people whose lives are shaped by the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and who participate in the mission of God's kingdom by proclaiming the good news locally, nationally and globally.

OUR CORE VALUES: 1) Jesus Christ, the Head 2) Biblical Leadership 3) Everyone A Minister 4) Ancient/Future Worship 5) Hospitality Without Exception 6) Unity in Community 7) Intentional Families 8) Global Missions 9) Holistic Discipleship