

# Biblical Meditation

*With Particular Emphasis in the Old Testament*

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**Joshua 1:8 (Hebrew Text):**

לֹא יִרְמוֹשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ וְהִגִּיתָ בוֹ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה לְמַעַן תִּשְׁמָר לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכָל־הַכְּתוּב בּוֹ

**Joshua 1:8 (Author's Translation):**

*"You shall not let this book of the Law depart from your mouth. But you shall meditate on it day and night so that you might be careful to do according to all that is written in it."*

## **Explanation of Biblical Meditation:**

God tells Joshua, the new leader of Israel, that he must meditate on the Torah of God. Amazingly, God does not provide Joshua with a myriad of military tactics nor does he give him sociological helps to lead an entire nation. Rather, God tells Joshua that he must, first and foremost, meditate on the Word of God.

But what exactly does God mean by **meditate**? At least two elements are included in biblical meditation in the Hebrew semantic domain (in the Old Testament).

### **1. Meditation Focuses Upon God Himself (Ps 63.6), his works (Ps 77.12) or His Law (Ps 1.2; Josh 1.8).**

The overarching goal of the Hebrew idea of meditation (דַּגְדַּג) is to know God and to know what He has done and how He has manifested Himself in the written revelation that He has given to man. Thus, meditation inherently includes God and it *never* seeks to eliminate God. Biblical meditation strives to see *more* of God rather than free the mind and thus eliminate God. Biblically, meditation includes seeking *more of* God as one *spends more time* in the Word of God and consequently *fills himself* with the Word of God and the God of the Word.

When the psalmist prays and affirms to God that he meditates on God in the night watches (Ps 63.6) he is centering his thoughts, affections, desires, and heart on God. He wants more of God. He longs to live more devoutly for God. Of course, the way that a person can truly learn about the glorious God and the wonderful works of God is by careful examination of the Word of God. This activity defines for us what the Old Testament/Hebrew concept of meditation entails.

### **2. Meditation Is An Activity that Is Done Aloud, Repeatedly (Ps 2:1; Isa 31:4; Isa 16:7).**

An important element in the Hebrew notion of meditation includes a vocal activity that is repeatedly done. Used negatively, the godless nations plot or devise (דַּגְדַּג, meditate) vain things against God (Ps 2.1). Meditation is an activity that is audible and something that can be heard (Isa 31.4; Isa 16.7). The psalmist prays to God in Psalm 119.148 and longs for the "night watches" so that he can meditate (דַּגְדַּג) on God's Word. In other words, the psalmist eagerly anticipates the repeated night watches that come day after day which provide him with opportunities to pore into the precious Word of God.

So then, let us strive to learn from the Hebrew concept of meditation and implement these important elements into our daily lives. We should strive to think more and more of God and seek more of Him — never attempting to free ourselves away from Him. We must also engage in the activity of vocally and repeatedly musing on God's truths, vocalizing them to ourselves and others throughout the day (Deut 6.4-6). Biblical meditation in this sense aids in perpetual thoughts about God and awe-inspiring amazement at the person, work, and Word of God Himself. May we be those who faithfully meditate on God and on His Word.