

How to Have a Quiet Time

By Dr. Charles Stanley

The word “meditation” tends to evoke images foreign to the Western mind. Perhaps that’s why so many contemporary believers have removed the word from their vocabulary. But we do this at our great peril because scriptural meditation greatly helps us to listen accurately to the Lord.

Godly meditation means turning your heart heavenward and listening, focusing your attention solely on Christ. We must have a pure purpose for the practice—namely, to know God more intimately. We should have a plan for when we come to Him, including a portion of time spent meditating on His Word. It’s also a good discipline to keep a prayer journal in which we write conversationally to God about what He tells us through Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

With that in mind, here are seven factors to consider when you sit down to pray and meditate.

Time

When we tell God we don’t have time for Him, we’re really saying we don’t have time for life, joy, peace, direction, or prosperity, because He is the source of all these. The essence of meditation is a period of time set aside to contemplate the Lord, listen to Him, and allow His Spirit to fill us. When we meet with God in this way, He equips us to carry out our duties, whatever they might be. As we meditate, God prepares us for life.

Stillness

Stillness brings us to the point where we can concentrate. We often miss divine interventions in our lives because we are so distracted by other things that we can’t see or hear God. When we become still before Him, the competing elements of life gradually ebb away. The Lord’s goodness, greatness, and grace come to the forefront of our minds, and our problems begin to diminish.

Seclusion

Everybody needs to be alone at times. It’s wonderful for husbands and wives to love each other and desire being together, but there are times when they need to be apart. Sometimes God wants your absolute, undivided attention. For example, suppose there were always four or five people hanging around your spouse 24 hours a day. It wouldn’t take long for you to become annoyed at that situation. So, too, God wants you to have a private time with Him.

Silence

If we quiet ourselves before Him, God can interject His thoughts into our minds. He may bring up a passage of Scripture, reveal a truth, or give peace to our inner beings—or He may do all three.

Silence and seclusion allow our hearts to clearly perceive what the Lord is saying to us. Though He may not speak audibly, He will move in our spirits and impress His thoughts upon our minds. We will be certain God has spoken.

Self-Control

As we begin to meditate, we may have to labor a bit mentally to focus our attention on God. If that is a problem, we can turn to a psalm to help center our thoughts. After a few moments, you can stop reading and begin to think only about Him. What could be better, more productive, or more rewarding in your life than to become lost in great thoughts about a great God?

Submission

James wrote: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10). If we are rebellious in our hearts and insist on having our own way, we won’t meditate. Rebellion is the antithesis of submission, and if we are to hear God adequately, our minds and hearts must be totally surrendered to Him. Yielding ourselves to the Lord is vital in listening to His voice.

Get to Know the Lord

Without practicing daily meditation, it is impossible to consistently experience holiness of heart, contentment, or joy. If we don’t draw our strength from God, we soon run out of it.

So meditate on the Lord—His majesty, glory, goodness, faithfulness, and promises. Meditate on who He is, and you will come to know His character and His presence in a deep, fresh way.