

# Unlocking the Mystery: Introduction to Bible Study Prayer and Meditation

## Holy Spirit

God has promised the Holy Spirit to help us understand this Book.

John 16:12-15, 1 Corinthians 2:14-15, Ephesians 4:11-12

## Focus on Christ

As you read portions of the Scriptures, it might be helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Which parts of the event, story, etc., either directly or by example show our sin and need of a Savior?
2. Which parts show God's kindness either directly or by example, which is bound together with Christ's finished work?
3. Which parts of the Scripture invite us to faith in Christ's work either directly or by example, and, also, thus to praise, thanksgiving and works of love? <sup>1</sup>

## Pray before reading

Prayer should be much more than just presenting a grocery list of requests to God. Be humble before God and let Him speak to your heart.

1 Peter 5:5, James 1:5-8

## Meditate on what has been read

This time should be when you focus your heart, when you drive your roots deep into the nourishing soil of His Word, for the nurture of your soul.

Psalm 1:1-3

Meditation brings strength. Its purpose is both to deepen our relationship with Jesus and to lay a foundation, built on Christ, which will remain steady during the storms of life.

Psalm 46:10

Here are some aspects of meditating – not all may occur each time we try this, this is just a list of things other Christians have found useful.

1. Read until a verse “strikes a chord in your heart.” Psalms are a recommended place to begin, but if you are already on a Bible reading plan or doing other study, keep following that. The plan we handed out during the first class includes some Psalms every week.
2. Underline and date the verse, with notes about why it seems meaningful.
3. Use your God-given imagination to picture the setting of the verse; place yourself in the verse.
4. Think again about why this passage resonates with your life right now.
5. Make a prayer based on this verse, asking the Holy Spirit to help you.
6. Sit quietly and ask God to speak to you through the verse, re-reading and repeating it aloud if possible. Prepare your heart to accept the truth contained there.
7. Try rewriting the verse in your own words, to be sure you understand it.

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Saleska. “How to Study the Bible.” *Thy Kingdom Come*, Vol 3, No 3. (Ft Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary)

8. Respond with a commitment. This commitment may take the form of a planned action or a changed behavior, but it is just as important to release your situation into the Lord's hands, based on the truth you have just learned. Remember those wooden forms for the cement foundation? This is where the Lord may show you how to walk by faith.<sup>2</sup>

### **Does God show us things not explicitly in the text?**

This is a Living Word and it you may approach it both for Truth which is *ageless and applies to all mankind*, and also for *inspiration and wisdom to guide your personal walk*.

*Logos* is the written Word, the Bible.

John 1:1, Matthew 7:24, Colossians 3:16

*Rhema* often refers to the Word of God specifically for one believer.

Luke 1:38, Luke 3:2, Luke 5:5, John 6:63

John 3:16, Matthew 22:21

Two things to Note: the *rhema* should always line up with the *logos* (God will not instruct you to rob a bank, for instance); and, the Bible is not a Christian horoscope (beware of reading into it some mysterious instructions for the day).

John 16:13, Psalm 16:7, John 8:47

John 14:23, John 17:3, 8, Psalm 119:105

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<sup>2</sup> Kathy Dice, *Personal Devotions: Taking God's Word to Heart* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, ©2000 Willow Creek Assoc.), p. 28.