

## Methods of Meditating on Scripture

*An adapted summary of some methods taught by Dr. Don Whitney*

**1. Repeat the verse or phrase with emphasis on a different word each time.** Reflect on what each word adds to the meaning and possible applications.

**Psalm 119:36a**

Incline my heart to your testimonies,  
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**2. Rewrite the verse or phrase in your own words.**

**Psalm 119:2**

“Blessed are those who keep his testimonies,  
who seek him with their whole heart,”

**Paraphrase**

Those who obey God’s Word and do it with a heart that is set on knowing God, will be most happy.

**3. Look for applications of the text. What should you do in response to it?** Decide to not close your Bible until you have at least one application to take with you for the day.

**Joshua 1:9** “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

**Application** I should memorize a passage so I can meditate on it any time or any place. I should obey what I see in the passage I meditate on.

**4. Formulate a principle from the text. (Good for narrative passages).**

**Example from Genesis 1:** Physical creation is a good thing. Or, we are responsible to God for how we use (or fail to use) the physical world – we are stewards of God’s world and must image him.

**5. Pray through the text.**

**2 Tim. 2:5-6** “An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. <sup>6</sup>It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.”

**Prayer** “Lord, help me to labor knowing that you reward those who faithfully serve you. Help my children to love your rules. Help our pastors to labor like farmers-diligently even when a harvest seems uncertain or far off.”

**6. Discover a minimum number of insights into the text** (set the number in advance).

**7. Ask how the passage or verse points to something about Christ.**

- Does he fulfill it? (ex. Jesus is the Passover lamb).
- Is he an example of it? (ex. “Love is patient and kind...” 1 Cor. 13).
- Is he the opposite of it? (ex. King Ahab who was a wicked king in the Old Testament).

## 8. Ask the Philippians 4:8 questions.

Example using Philippians 2:14 “Do all things without grumbling or disputing”

**What is true or what truth does it exemplify?**

That God is in control.

**What is lovely about it?**

Not being grumbly and argumentative  
promotes lovely relationships

**What is honorable about it?**

It demonstrates trust in God in the face of  
adversity.

**What is admirable or commendable about  
it?**

It gives others an example to follow

**What is right about it?**

It flows from trusting God

**What is excellent about it?**

It shows that God is most valuable

**What is pure or how does it exemplify  
purity?**

It shows motives that want to glorify God

**What is praiseworthy about it?**

It leads to God’s glory being displayed.

## 9. Write out a poem reflecting the beauty of the truth you learn.

For example, you might write a poem about each of the “I am” statements in John’s Gospel.

## 10. Write each phrase separately and write your own commentary on it (including definitions, logical connections, applications, questions you have, cross references).

## 11. Ask application related questions

- Is there a promise to cling to?
- Is there a truth about God to believe and praise him for?
- Is there a sin to forsake?
- Is there a command to obey?

## 12. Write out the verse and use spacing, underlines, capital letters, and colors to visually emphasize commands, promises, and main points.<sup>1</sup>

Isaiah 41:10

FEAR NOT

For I am with you;

BE NOT DISMAYED

For I am your God

I will strengthen you

I will help you

I will uphold you

With my righteous right hand

1 Thess 5:14

And we urge you, brothers,

ADMONISH the **idle**

ENCOURAGE the **fainthearted**

HELP the **weak**

Be  
Patient  
with ALL

<sup>1</sup> This method is not adapted from Dr. Whitney.

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**4. Formulate a principle from the text.** (good for narrative passages).

**5. Pray through the text.**

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- Does he fulfill it?
- Is he an example of it?
- Is he the opposite of it?

**8. Ask the Philippians 4:8 questions.**

*What is true or what truth does it exemplify?*

*What is lovely about it?*

*What is honorable about it?*

*What is admirable or commendable about it?*

*What is right about it?*

*What is excellent about it?*

*What is pure or how does it exemplify purity?*

*What is praiseworthy about it?*

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<sup>2</sup> All, except method nine, were taken or adapted from Dr. Don Whitney's notes on meditation.