

Discipleship

A Journey in

OCTOBER 2007

BEP SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

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THE RADAR

Helping keep your small group on the same frequency!

☉ **Ministry Fair** *Our ministry fair is coming on October 14. This will be a time for ministry leaders to engage in conversation and to share God's story of their ministry those interested in participating. Pray that He would unite more men & women at BEP with your passion for ministry.*

☉ **Cornerstone** *November 8 at 7 pm*

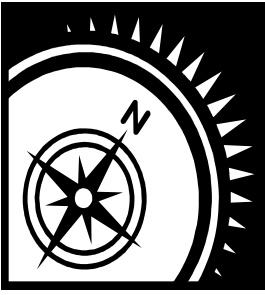
Here's what's on the docket.

Vision *-A time for you to express your vision for ministry to the staff and session.*

Values *-We will discuss and enter into the absolute vital role of prayer in ministry.*

Vehicles *-We will evaluate our process of discipleship specifically our Journey in the Word discussion groups, unfolding into small groups & "black out dates" for ministries.*





How Do I Meet with Jesus?

Week One

KEY CONCEPT -MEDITATION

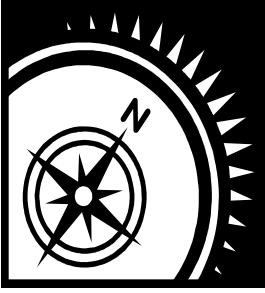
- ☞ Traditionally "devotional" time consisted of a) Bible reading and b) prayer. But for many these alone do not get to the experience of God's presence the Psalms call us to (see Psalm 27, 63, 84). Meditation is a 'middle' practice which bridges between reading and prayer. It is at once prayerful reading and informed prayer. It is "the descent of the mind with truth into the heart, until our whole being yearns for God." (Peter Toon) Discuss this kind of meditation. Describe what this looks like in the most practical terms. (Refer to *lectio-meditatio-oratio-comtemplatio* on page)

- ☞ See meditation practiced in the Psalmist's life. Read Psalm 27 and describe what we are to "seek" and "look" for and how we are to seek and look for it.

- ☞ Read Psalm 63 & 84 and describe the attitude of the Psalmist.

- ☞ The Biblical term 'meditation' often appears in the Psalms. One Hebrew word for it means literally to 'talk to oneself.' This refers to how meditation entails both focused attention and personal application. Meditation is a conversation with God. As we prayerfully concentrate on his Word we respond to God in personal worship and commitment. This conversation is different for everybody. Share with one another how you like to have time with God. Mine is always with coffee! If you don't have regular time with God take time to share useful and practical ways of deepening your time with Him.

- ☞ This month we will continue to look at three areas of this kind of meditation. We will ask What exactly is biblical meditation? How does meditation affect our walk with God? What keeps us from engaging in this kind of deep intimacy with our Father? Discuss your initial thoughts in response to those questions.



How Do I Meet with Jesus?

Week Two

Read Psalm 1:1-6

☞ What can you learn about meditation from v.2?

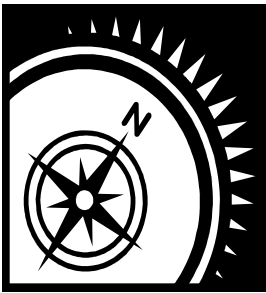
☞ What can you learn about meditation by the contrast in v.1? (Hint: what is the significance of the progression from 'walk' to 'stand' to 'sit'?)

☞ How is v.3-5 an example of meditation itself? a) Make a list of what the extended contrasting metaphors tell us of godliness and ungodliness? b) How is a tree like a meditating person? c) What else does this example tell you about meditation in general?

☞ What does v.5-6 promise? How can this be the result of a life of meditation?

☞ Psalm 1 is not itself a prayer, unlike most of the rest of the Psalms. It is a meditation on meditation. Why do you think it was chosen to stand here as an introduction to all the rest of the prayers of the Psalms?

(Refer to Supplemental Answers on the Following Pages)



How Do I Meet with Jesus?

Week Two-Supplemental Answers for Leaders

Psalm 1:1-6

☞ What can you learn about meditation from v.2?

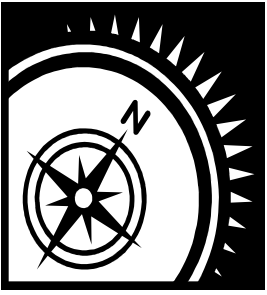
First, we see that the object or basis for meditation is "the law of the Lord", the Word of God. There are many other things that people may and should meditate upon. But in Psalm 1, the primary concern is meditation on the Scripture.

Second, we see that closely associated and involved with meditation is "delighting" in the law of the Lord. If we are honest, we will observe that we do not usually think of the word 'delight' and 'law' as appearing in the same sentence. But this shows us at least two things about meditation. a) Meditation involves not just the head but the heart. 'Delight in the law' is not simply intellectual study, but an internal relishing and cherishing of the truth. b) Meditation involves not just thinking but acting. 'Delight in the law' is not simply a matter of noticing truths and principles. You only 'delight in the law' if you just love having God tell you what to do! Meditation, then means very hard thinking: 'how does this apply to me? how does this change me? how does this affect me? how does it make me different?

Third, we see in the term "day and night" the consistency and discipline of meditation. This is not just a spontaneous epiphany that happens to us. It is something we decide to do. It must happen regularly, relentlessly. It is something you do whether you feel like it or not.

Note: Eugene Peterson in his study of Psalm 1 brings out the fact that original meaning of the Hebrew word used here for "law"--torah comes from a verb means to throw something to hit its mark, as in a javelin. That is highly significant. The Scripture are not words to simply study for an exam, unlocking information to use as we will. These are energies hurled at our heart. God's words are designed to penetrate, wound, remove, heal, infuse! In the New Testament we read that the Word of God is alive and active, a sword (Hebrews 4:12). Now this is quite important practically. This realization is necessary for meditation--that his word is TORAH--living truth aimed to penetrate. Sometimes that very thought itself almost spontaneously moves us into meditation and prayer.

☞ What can you learn about meditation by the contrast in v.1? (Hint: what is the significance of the progression from 'walk' to 'stand' to 'sit'?)



How Do I Meet with Jesus?

Week Two-Supplemental Answers for Leaders

First, we learn that meditation leads to blessedness! Because there are so many contrasting clauses in this first sentence, which stretches out all the way across the first two verses, we often miss the point of it. If we look only at the beginning and the end, it becomes clear. "Blessed is the man who...meditates day and night." Once we remove all the contrasts and the qualifiers, we see the point. If you want 'blessedness' you must meditate. The word "blessed" in Hebrew means far more than just "happy"--it refers to complete peace and fullness of life, total well-being. That is an enormous promise.

Second, we learn what we could see implicitly before, that meditation is not just an intellectual exercise, but the basis for your whole way of life. The life of a godly man in v.2, based on meditation on God's law, is contrasted with the life of the ungodly man in v.1. Notice, however, that even ungodly life is also based on some form of 'meditation'. It begins with 'walking in the counsel of the ungodly.' 'Counsel' means a form of wisdom and thinking. We will either be meditating and walking in God's wisdom or meditating and walking in worldly human wisdom. What shapes your thinking (counsel) shapes your behavior (way) and attitude/heart (scoffers).

Thus we must always consider what we are listening to/meditating on--in our heart of hearts. We will naturally meditate on 'counsel of wicked' or we will deliberately make ourselves meditate on the law of the Lord. There are no other alternatives.

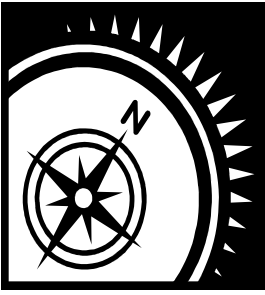
In summary: v.1-2 Our blessedness or lack thereof depends on what we are listening to or meditating on in our heart of hearts.

☞ **How is v.3-5 an example of meditation itself? a) Make a list of what the extended contrasting metaphors tell us of godliness and ungodliness? b) How is a tree like a meditating person? c) What else does this example tell you about meditation in general?**

One of the most fascinating things about the psalm is how it actually does a meditation on meditation.

a) Make a list of what the extended contrasting metaphors tell us about godliness and un-

Verses 3 through 5 is an extended consideration of how the ungodly life contrasts with the godly life



How Do I Meet with Jesus?

Week Two-Supplemental Answers for Leaders

as a tree contrasts with "chaff". [Some of us urbanites need to recall that chaff is the seed covering and husk and other debris that breaks off and separates from the more valuable grain during threshing. In ancient times, the grain and the chaff were thrown into the air, allowing the wind to blow away the useless chaff, which is lighter, leaving the heavier grain to fall back to earth and be gathered for planting or food.] What does this metaphor-contrast tell us? (1) A tree is useful, but chaff is useless. So ungodliness is of no profit. (2) A tree is stable and lasting, while chaff is blown about and blown away. So ungodliness leads to instability and all its gains are temporary. (3) A tree bears fruit, thus it gives life to people and grows more trees. Chaff cannot bring forth any new life. Nor can it even feed anyone--it has no nutritional value. So godliness matures, nurtures, bears life, while ungodliness leaves you empty and hungry and unsatisfied and starving.

b) How is a tree like a meditating person?

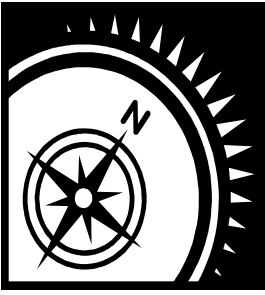
Verse 3 begins 'he is like'. Who is 'he'? The man who meditates on the law day and night (v.2). Therefore, the tree in v.3 is an extended meditation on the one who meditates. What do we learn? Ironically, as soon as we begin to answer the question--we are beginning to meditate!

(1) Meditation takes time, like a tree putting roots down. Trees don't grow overnight!

(2) Meditation leads to depth and stability. The deeper one's 'roots' in meditation, the less likely that a wind storm will blow you over.

(3) Meditation is looking at the Word of God like a thirsty tree looks at water. This shows us that meditation goes beyond the intellectual. It is spiritually 'tasting' the Scripture--delighting in it, sensing the sweetness, thanking God and praising God for what you see. It 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 also drawing strength from the Scripture. Letting it give you hope, using it to remember how loved you are.

(4) Meditation will always lead to character growth--to fruit. It is not just a way to feel 'close to God'. Real meditation changes the heart permanently, into a heart of love, joy, peace, patience, humility, self-control (Gal.5:22ff.) "The tree is no mere channel, piping water unchanged from one place to another, but a living organism which absorbs it, to produce in due course something new and delightful, proper to its kind and to its time." (Kidner, p.48)



How Do I Meet with Jesus?

Week Two-Supplemental Answers for Leaders

(5) Meditation leads to stability, but not immunity from suffering and dryness. This tree only bears fruit 'in season' though 'it's leaf does not wither.. This means that on the one hand, meditation will lead to stability. A meditating person is an evergreen! Yet we must not always expect meditation to lead to uniform experiences of joy and love. There are 'seasons' for great delight (springtime blossoms?) and for wisdom and maturity (summer fruit?). It means there are also spiritual winter-times, when we don't feel God close, though our roots may still be firmly in his truth. "The promised immunity of the leaf from withering is not independence from the rhythm of the seasons, but freedom from the crippling damage of drought." (Kidner, p.48). Only in light of the balance of this metaphor can we understand the last line of verse 3. When the Psalmist says: "whatever he does prospers," he does not mean that "he reaches every goal" or "he is always successful." Rather, it means something like this: "a meditating person will always grow! Sometimes it is growth internally through suffering (as in winter) and sometimes it is externally through success (as in springtime). But you will always grow and prosper!"

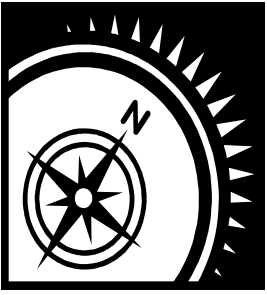
☞ What else does this example tell you about meditation in general?

We learn here that meditation has a lot to do with the imagination. You are trying to get a grasp on how truth really affects you. There is no better way than to create an image in mind, for an image not only helps you make an abstract truth more concrete to your understanding, but also more gripping to your heart. Someone once defined meditation as 'the mind descending into the heart'.

4. What does v.5-6 promise? How can this be the result of a life of meditation?

Verse 5 gives us the chilling interpretation of the 'chaff' metaphor. As the chaff is blown away by the wind into oblivion, so the wicked will be blown away by God on judgment day. By way of inference, we are being told that the one who meditates on the law of the Lord can be confident of 'standing' on that day. Verse 6 tells us that the Lord 'watches over' us--a word that means he comes close and cares for us. In sum, we will not have to be afraid of what will happen when we stand before God. We can have assurance that we will stand in the judgment.

How can a life of meditation lead to this kind of confidence and assurance? We who read Psalm 1 in the light of Jesus Christ have a ready answer. Without Jesus and the cross, it is frightening to meditate on "the Lord watches over the way of the righteous" (v.6) Who in the world is righteous enough



How Do I Meet with Jesus?

Week Two-Supplemental Answers for Leaders

for God? Without the assurance of Jesus' death for me and his righteousness imputed to me (2 Cor.5:21), I will lose confidence, the more I meditate on Psalm 1 and on the righteousness of God on judgment day. But if I meditate on what Jesus has done for me, then I truly will find my assurance growing.

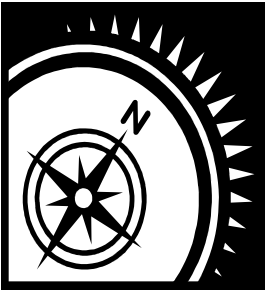
"It is an item of faith that we are children of God; there is plenty of experience in us against it. The faith that surmounts this evidence and that is able to warm itself at the fire of God's love, instead of having to steal love and self-acceptance from other sources, is actually the root of holiness...We are not saved by the love we exercise, but by the love we trust." (R.Lovelace, Dynamics of Spiritual Life, p.213).

When Lovelace speaks of "warming oneself at the fire of God's love"--he is describing what it means to meditate on the righteousness we have in Christ by his sacrificial death. If we don't meditate on that till our hearts are hot with assurance, we will 'steal love and self-acceptance' from worldly achievements, beauty, status. That is why there are only two paths! We either walk in the counsel of the world--getting our warmth from there and walking in accordance with it (v.1) or we delight in what the Word tells us about our salvation. If we do v.3, we will have the confidence of v.5-6.

In summary--meditation on the Scripture is pondering, relishing, imagining, applying, rehearsing God's truth until it becomes real to the heart and permanently affects your attitude and behavior. It leads to blessedness (v.1), stability and the ability to grow in all circumstances (v.3-4), freedom and independence from the world's ways (v.1-2), confidence and assurance in our relationship to God (v.5-6).

☞ Psalm 1 is not itself a prayer, unlike most of the rest of the Psalms. It is a meditation on meditation. Why do you think it was chosen to stand here as an introduction to all the rest of the prayers of the Psalms?

These psalms were collected and arranged at a certain point in Israel's history, and so its first place is not an accident. This Psalm stands as the gate or doorway into the Psalter, the prayerbook of the Bible--and its subject is the doorway into real prayer. It is not itself a prayer. It is itself--what it talks about--meditation. Now, if the first Psalm is about meditation, that is a strong indication that meditation is the necessary preface or preparation to deeper prayer.



How Do I Meet with Jesus?

Week Three

Read Psalm 77.

☞ Describe the countenance of the Psalmist in verse 1-9.

☞ Describe the diligent search in verse 6. Is it ok to question God like this in vs. 7-9?

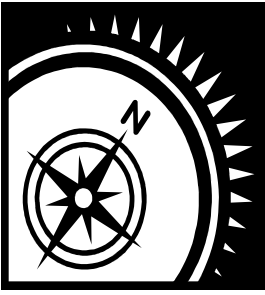
☞ Verse 9 reveals something about God's character. What do we learn about these two aspects of God's character? Does this influence the way we relate to Him? If so, how?

☞ There is a turning point in verse 10. What is it?

☞ The "appeal to the right hand of the Most High" is another way of saying I will appeal to what God has done. Describe the track record of God in vs. 11-20.

☞ Describe God's track record in your life. What is the most recent way God has shown his faithfulness in your life?

☞ What would be the outcome of continually meditating on God's power & faithfulness in your life?



How Do I Meet with Jesus?

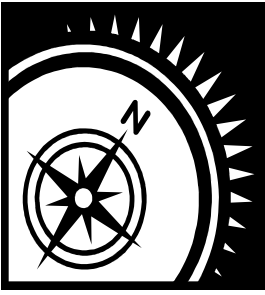
Week Four

Psalm 145

Instead of discussing the text this week, we will spend this time together meditating and worshipping God through the text.

☞ **Instructions:** Divide the twenty one verses of Psalm 145 among those who are willing to read aloud and pray. Start at the beginning and each person read their portion slowly, stopping to respond to what is said. This will create a rhythm of reading aloud and praying. If there is some attribute or act of God to be praised, the person reading should stop and praise God in prayer. If you sense that the text speaks to some sin in your life, personally or corporately, stop to confess. If it gives an instruction or command, stop to ask for guidance to the specific application in your life. Read and pray slowly, concentrating and listening for what God says to you in the text. (Suggestion: Look at the text through lens of what Christ has done for you on the cross and your new identity in Him.)

☞ **Discussion:** What you have just done is biblical meditation. You meditated on the attributes and actions of God and their weight upon your life as they are revealed in his Word. Discuss your experience and explain why it was positive or negative. Could you practice this in your own personal devotional life?



How Do I Meet with Jesus?

A model of meditating on the Scriptures

☞ **Lectio:** Reading First understand the passage.

- Read slowly through the whole passage. When a thought, phrase, or word captures your attention, stop and dwell on it. Underline or note each.
- Read a second time and ask: “What truth is the author getting across here?” Ask what it says about 1) who God is, 2) who we are, 3) who Christ is and what he did.
- Read a third time. List each: 1) example to follow, 2) command to obey, 3) promise to claim.

☞ **Meditatio:** Reflecting. Second, meditate and listen for the voice of God.

Choose the 2 or 3 most important insights or verses from your reading and ask:

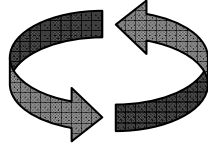
- How does this lead me to adore and praise God? (What attribute of God does it show?)
- How does this lead me to confess or repent to God? (What wrong thoughts, feelings, and behavior happen in me when this is forgotten?)
- How can I thank Jesus for being the ultimate answer to this sin? (How is this sin being caused by an inordinate hope for something to give me what only Jesus can really give me?)
- What does this lead me to petition God for? (What do I need from God if I am to realize this truth in my life?)
- Why might God be showing me this today?

☞ **Oratio:** Praying. Third, on the basis of your meditation, speak very directly to God about what you are learning and hearing. Pray every one of the meditations--"Adoration", "Confession", "Thanksgiving" and "Supplication"--back to him.

☞ **Contemplatio:** Sensing. Often, though not always, during reading, reflecting, or praying you begin to get a 'sense on the heart' of the reality of God and his presence, and you may receive strong assurance of belonging to him. Stop and enjoy him.

BEP Adult Ministry

A simple process of discipleship



WORSHIP TOGETHER

Sunday Worship

Set up/ Ushers/ Greeters /Enfolding Team/
Reception Team/Worship Teams/AV Team

LEARN TOGETHER

Adult Christian Education

Journey in the Word/ W2W & Men's Ministry
Bible Studies/Discipleship Series

SERVE TOGETHER

Ministries & Missions

Deaconate/ Deacon's Assistants/My Brother's
Pantry /Boys & Girls Club/ Habitat for Humanity/
Car Clinic/Fifth Quarter/ Family Club/ Tuesday
Open Gym /Karate Club/Missions

LIVE TOGETHER

Small Groups & Church Fellowships

Small Groups

Couples/ W2W/ Men's / Divorce Care/ College & Career

Church Fellowships



LORD, HOW SHALL WE PRAY?

A PRAYER GUIDE FOR BEP

- ❖ *Pray for the Ministry Fair on Oct 14; that God would continue “to raise laborers for the harvest field?”*
- ❖ *Pray for 5th Qtr. Pray that God would bless the preaching of the Gospel and that we would see many students come to faith in Christ this Autumn.*
- ❖ *Pray for our Fall Festival; that it would be a sweet time of fellowship among the Body and that new relationships would be forged.*
- ❖ *Pray for our small groups; that many people would be enfolded and connected in small groups.*

JOURNEY IN DISCIPLESHIP

ROAD MAP



<u>Month</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Key Concept</u>
October	How Do I Meet With Jesus Myself?	Meditation
November	How Do I Meet with Jesus with Others?	Worship
December	How Do I Relate to Others Who Wrong Me?	Forgiveness
January	How Do I Relate to other Christians?	Members

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B . E . P .

B e c o m i n g a C o m m u n i t y ...
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