
How Do We Renew Our Minds?

Now that we have seen that our Father wants us to renew our minds, we need to see exactly how He tells us to do this. We renew our minds through constant study and meditation in God's Word. Everyone wants to prosper, but few people are willing to pay the necessary price of study and meditation in God's Word which is necessary in order for His laws of prosperity to be manifested.

If I could speak personally to each reader of this book I would ask you, "Do you want God to approve of what you do?" You undoubtedly would say, "Yes, of course I do." Here is how we win our Father's approval. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

We win God's approval by studying His Word! We win His approval by working hard enough at this study so that we won't be ashamed. I ask you, Do you believe that God has approved of your Bible study during the past week??? ... during the past month??? ... during the past year??? Are you ashamed at the amount of time that you spend studying the instructions that our Father has given to us?

There isn't any "easy way." Bible study is hard work. None of us should expect our Father to prosper us unless we are willing to pay the price of working hard at studying His Word. In fact, the Greek word *spoudazo* which is translated study in II Timothy 2:15 means exertion, diligence. In Hebrews 4:11 this same Greek word is translated to mean labour. There is no question that our Father expects us to work hard studying His Word.

Everything that any of us will ever need to know is contained in God's Word. If we have problems in one particular area of our lives, we need to do a thorough job of "rightly dividing" God's Word in order to find every possible verse of Scripture that covers this particular area. For example, in this book, I have "rightly divided" the Bible on the subject of financial prosperity. Studying the Bible isn't a high-flying, supernatural experience. There are a few times like this, but Bible study is often laborious and tedious. This is especially true for someone who isn't accustomed to studying the Bible.

It's difficult to get started studying the Bible. It usually takes quite a while to learn how to enjoy Bible study. Unfortunately, I have found that the great majority of Christians quit before they get to that point. The Bible will make us think like we have never thought before, but only if we're willing to dig and dig and dig without expecting it to unfold its secrets immediately.

What is the difference between "studying" the Bible and just "reading" the Bible? My business partner, Ed Hiers, once gave me an interesting comparison between reading the Bible and studying the Bible. Ed said that if he had a book titled *How To Survive When You're Lost In The Woods*, he might just "read" it if he was reading it in the comfort of his home. However, if he really was lost in the middle of a large forest and his life depended upon survival, he'd do much more than just "read" this book. He'd "study" it very thoroughly. He'd "devour" every fact in this book that could possibly show him how to get out of this predicament.

This is precisely what God wants us to do with His Word. Because of the difficult economic times that many economists are predicting, all of us should study what God's Word has to say about prosperity. We need to devour it. We need to learn everything that we possibly can about how to avoid or solve the financial problems that soon will come upon this world.

Millions of Christians are living far beneath their rights and privileges and children of God because they fail to pay the price of constantly studying God's Word in order to find out exactly what these rights and privileges are and how to attain them in their lives.

Specifically and exactly, how do we go about studying the Bible? This is a subject that would make a book by itself. I have covered this subject in detail on my two forty-minute cassette tapes titled How To Study The Bible. Write to the publisher of this book for information on these and other cassette tapes on the Bible.

Briefly, let me summarize the contents of these tapes in a few paragraphs. I want to start by saying that I don't believe that there is any one method of studying God's Word. I know several mature Christians who use different methods of studying the Bible. The methods may vary considerably, but I have always found that the principles of effective Bible study are similar regardless of the method that is used.

I personally use the "subject" method of studying the Bible. I decide the subjects that I need to learn more about. For example, here are a few subjects in alphabetical order: Anger, Faith, Fear, Forgiveness, Joy, Love, Patience, Prayer, Prosperity, Worry. Whatever our individual needs might be, I believe that each of us needs to "rightly divide" God's Word to find everything that we can on this particular subject.

In my cassette tape, I explain in detail how to use the various versions of the Bible, a reference Bible, a Bible concordance, a topical Bible, a Bible dictionary, Greek and Hebrew lexicons and other Bible study tools. All of these tools are available to help us "dig out" every possible verse of Scripture on any given subject and then to understand exactly what these verses of Scripture mean.

In this book, I have "dug out" dozens and dozens of verses of scripture on the subject of financial prosperity. I have explained what these verses of scripture mean. This part has already been done for you.

Next, let's discuss what it means to "meditate" on these verses of scripture. Let's start by looking at two verses of scripture that tie the words meditate and prosper together. The first one says, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

This is one of the most important verses of scripture in the entire Bible for anyone who is interested in prosperity and success. In fact, it is the only verse of scripture in the entire Bible which contains the words prosperous and success.

I have worked with many Christians in the area of prosperity and success and this verse of scripture has been one of the most significant verses in showing them the three things that our Father tells us to do if we intend to be prosperous and successful:

We must speak His Word constantly. His scriptures should constantly come out of our mouths. We should constantly study His Word and meditate "day and night" on what it says. We should live our lives exactly as His Word tells us to live them. We should know His Word so well that we conduct our lives "according to all that is written therein."

The second place that we find scripture that ties meditation and prosperity together is at the very start of the Book of Psalms. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day

and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3).

First, God tells us that, if we want to prosper in everything we do, He will bless “the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.” God bless will us if we will follow His laws of prosperity instead of following the world’s methods of prosperity.

God doesn’t want us living the way the sinful world lives. He doesn’t want us looking at things the way worldly people do. We have already seen in Romans 12:2 that He tells us not to conform to the world’s way of doing things, but, instead, to transform our lives by following His laws.

How do we do this? We do this by loving His Word so much that we actually “delight” in it. Because of this great “delight” we just can’t get enough of God’s Word. We’ll be so hungry and thirsty spiritually that we’ll meditate day and night in His Word in order to find out everything that we possibly can about our Father’s laws for living our lives.

What will happen to us if we do this? God’s Word tells us that we will be like a tree planted next to a river. No matter how bad a drought might be, the leaves of such a tree will never wither and dry up because the roots of this tree will be able to draw water from the river. So, no matter how bad a drought may be, the trees that are next to a river will always continue to bear fruit.

Many economists believe that a “financial drought” is coming over our land. Inflation, recession, unemployment and all the rest are already causing our economy to start to “wither.” However, in the midst of such a drought, Christians can still thrive. We can still bear fruit. We can still prosper in everything that we do if we have meditated day and night in God’s Word so that our “roots” reach deep into our Father’s laws of prosperity.

Unfortunately, many Christians will “wither” financially during this financial drought. Many Christians will be destroyed because of lack of knowledge of God’s laws. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...” (Hosea 4:6). If Christians want to be delivered from this financial “drought” they can be delivered in exact proportion to their knowledge of God’s laws of prosperity. “...through knowledge shall the just be delivered” (Proverbs 11:9).

How Do We Meditate in God’s Word?

Now that we have seen how Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:1-3 tie “prosperity” and “meditation” together, let’s look at this word “meditation” in more detail. Exactly what does meditation mean and exactly how do we go about meditating in God’s Word? Once again, I don’t believe that there is any “one way” of doing this. However, I’d like to share with you a system of meditation that has worked wonderfully for me and for many other Christians who have followed it.

This system starts with reading and studying the Bible in order to find every possible verse of scripture on one subject – in this case, the subject of financial prosperity. Once all of these verses of scripture are found, I believe that the process of meditation on these verses should start by typing or neatly printing each of these verses on a 3x5 file card.

I recommend this size card because it will fit easily into a man’s shirt pocket or a woman’s purse. You can easily carry these cards with you throughout the day. Once these cards are completed, then I suggest that you arrange your stack of file cards in the order of their importance to you – the ones that mean the most to you on top, the next most important verses in the middle of the stack, etc.

Next – and this is important – take just one of these cards at a time. Don't fall into the trap of "spiritual indigestion" by trying to digest too much of God's Word at one time. Take only one verse of scripture with you and meditate on that one verse of scripture throughout that day and night. Don't rush. God is never in a hurry. He wants us to be calm and quiet in our meditation in His Word.

I believe that meditation means to fix our attention on a particular verse of scripture and to turn this verse of scripture over and over in our minds – looking at it from every angle. I believe that meditation means to "personalize" a verse of scripture – to think deeply about how each particular verse of scripture applies to our own lives.

When we meditate on a verse of scripture, our thought process should be something like this: "What does this verse of scripture mean?" "What is God telling me?" "Exactly how does this apply to my life?" "What changes do I need to make in my life in order to do what God is telling me to do?" "What am I going to do differently today? ...this week? ...this month? ...during the next year?"

This is so beautiful. Unlike the meditation that people do in transcendental meditation, yoga and similar forms of meditation which tell us to "empty" our minds, we are, instead, meditating by "filling" our minds with the awesome power of the Word of God. As we meditate more and more on God's Word, this meditation brings us more and more in touch with our Creator.

This process of daily meditation isn't easy at first. When we're not used to something, it takes time for it to become part of our daily habit pattern. Be patient with this system of meditation. Give it a fair chance to become part of your daily habit pattern.

Most readers of this book have jobs that require you to work approximately eight hours each day. This means that most of us can't "study" God's Word throughout the day. However, we certainly can "meditate" on it constantly. We can meditate on it while we're getting dressed in the morning, while we're driving to work, during our lunch hour, while we're driving home, etc.

Some people work at occupations which will enable them to meditate on God's Word while they are working. In addition, all of us have discretionary time at the end of each day's work and on weekends that can be used to meditate on God's Word.

During these times of meditation, in addition to personalizing these verses of scripture by turning them over in our minds, we also should speak these verses of scripture over and over with our mouths. In fact, the Hebrew word that is translated meditate in Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2 actually means to murmur or to mutter.

When God's Word tells us to "meditate day and night," this means that we should constantly open our mouths and speak the verse of scripture that we are meditating on. We should do this over and over and over day and night. As we constantly speak a verse of scripture, this helps us to memorize this verse of scripture. Also, as we constantly speak a verse of scripture, this releases the power of that verse of scripture.

Be sure to meditate on just one verse of scripture at a time. Turn it over and over in your mind. Think how it applies to your particular need. Say it out loud over and over and over. Memorize it. Keep doing this until it becomes a part of you, until you know it so well that it has gone from your Bible to your 3x5 card to your mind and then down into your heart.

This should always take at least one full day. Sometimes, this will take several days. Don't rush this process. Even if you finish only one verse of scripture a week, you still will have fifty great teachings from God deep down in your heart at the end of one year.

This system has worked beautifully in my life. I have worked with several people who have followed it and the results have been exceptional in their lives, too. Many times when I happen to meet Christians who are following this system, they smile and pull out the 3x5 file card that they are carrying that particular day.

If your mind hasn't been renewed, this might sound like a lot of drudgery. However, God's Word tells us that this continuous meditation eventually will be just the opposite of drudgery. Psalm 1:2 told us that we should meditate day and night in God's Word because we "delight" in His laws. What will happen to us if we "delight" in God's Word and "meditate day and night" in it? Here is the answer: "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon the earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house; and his righteousness endureth for ever" (Psalm 112:1-3).

God's Word should be an absolute delight to us because His Word tells us everything that any of us will ever need to know in order to live good lives here on this earth. "...as you know Him better, He will give you, through His great power, everything you need for living a truly good life: He even shares His own glory and His own goodness with us!" (II Peter 1:3 The Living Bible).

Once we fully understand what this means to us, we won't be able to get enough of God's Word. We'll be so delighted that we'll gladly meditate day and night in His Word. If we do this continually, we will prosper in every area of our lives – financially, spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally.

Jack Hartman