



## Meditation: Is it Helpful & How?

Through the Bible, God teaches that meditation on His Word is good for man; something to be done continually. The LORD urged Israel to meditate on Scripture, causing obedience to what He instructed. Responding in faith empowered them to flourish.

Joshua 1:8 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."

Similar instruction is found for the Body of Christ. We are to think about and dedicate ourselves completely to God's Word. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." (1 Timothy 4:15) Notice how it not only profits the one who meditates, but also his 'circle of influence.'

The 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language, by Noah Webster, helps to sketch out a definition: To dwell upon something in thought; to contemplate, study, or consider truths. Further, there is a need to 'revolve' ideas, turning them over in the mind to reflect & gain insight.

When meditating, pray to keep the mind clear, open to listen/consider things the Holy Spirit is teaching, especially noting context. As you focus on verses, the Spirit stirs stored doctrine, comparing, contrasting, & connecting things already known in fresh ways, enabling new facets to surface.

Dwelling on Scripture requires mental time, but the busyness of life can often fill-up your thoughts. So quiet your mind & allow verses to come to the surface. Minding spiritual things has transforming power to renew thinking, prompting a walk of faith. As you regularly read/study Scripture, meditation begins to naturally occur.

This valuable provision from God develops wisdom, conviction, and peace, building intimacy with the Father. Purpose to use meditation to expand concentration and encourage new depth in appreciating spiritual things.

Paul instructs, "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true... honest... just... pure... lovely... of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9)

**How marvelous!**

## Christian Life Coach Support Services

Writers/Editors: Brian & Deborah J. Johnson, Certified Christian Life Coaches  
(804) 519-1210 — Look us up on Facebook - lifecoachesdjbj@yahoo.com  
Go to our new Website: [christianlifecoachsupport.squarespace.com](http://christianlifecoachsupport.squarespace.com)

# Just A Minute! With Scripture

Request subscriptions/past issues & forward questions/ideas using contact information above.

## Why We Need Boundaries: As Parents, Saints, and for Daily Living

Philippians 3:1 "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

Boundaries define what is 'ok' and 'not ok,' and are guidelines providing safety, which can also teach wisdom, such as 'The Rules of the Road' or 'The Constitution.' The Law was given to help Israel, as they were children, stiff-necked and disobedient, in need of direction. Scripture was spiritual nourishment for the Nation, teaching dependence on their Provider. "But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee." (Ezekiel 2:8)

Utilized in Parenting: Parents use boundaries with their young to keep them protected until acquiring basic life skills. Confines are eased as children grow and gain experience and understanding to apply wisdom. As the youth matures, internalized truths start to become guidelines for wise decision-making. "My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge." (Proverbs 5:1-2) Parents of an adolescent can slowly transition from being the 'Instructor,' 'Enforcer,' or 'Monitor' to acquire new roles: 'Encourager' and 'Coach.' Grace can be offered to the young adult, progressively giving freedom to make life decisions without hovering or condemning. Their God-consciousness, training, and experiences, along with natural sowing & reaping, can function as personal boundaries. Expect that growth & timing are unique to the individual. Wisdom is parental patience, limited strategic counsel, and above all, love/grace.

Our Identity as Saints: When we choose to mature in the sound wisdom of Romans, our inward man is fortified, providing the foundation for godly boundaries. A deep appreciation of Romans 6-8, in particular, builds our identity in Christ. Study & conviction in God's Word helps us avoid being blindsided by Satan and persuaded by 'what others think/do.' Standing apart from this world, even the religious system is NOT natural to our flesh. It takes purposeful, wise decisions to set boundaries using the Truth as our authority. In grace, acquiring the mind of Christ helps us re-evaluate: 'What's the best church to attend/why?' 'How ought we behave in a given situation?' 'Is our behavior consistent with who we are in Christ?' or 'How should we use our time/serve/study?'

Setting and affirming personal boundaries are also important, along with having an awareness of physical abilities/limitations/priorities. The capacity to set limits is a life skill, fine-tuned over time. Under grace, we can confidently say 'No' as needed. Sometimes, it may be to live our convictions for Christ. This promotes freedom from what other's think and one's own self-imposed expectations. God is our gracious judge; thus we can become motivated to live our faith, to do all 'unto the Lord.' (Romans 14:5-12)

Daily Living: Below is a meticulously built bridge, providing a 'boundary of safety' over a hazardous area. Today, we live in a dangerous place and time, with spiritual warfare happening all around. Know that God provides the Church, the Body of Christ, with perfect guidelines for living. It is the whole Bible, yet specifics are written to us in Romans-Philemon. We are to put on Truth, the 'whole armor of God.' (Eph. 6) Sound doctrine is our 'boundary of safety' in this dispensation of grace, **IF** we choose to know & live in what it teaches us! "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." (Philippians 3:1)

**Walk in This Wisdom**

**Women's Bible Study**

N. Chesterfield, VA

When: Every Fri. 1-3pm

Topic: Romans 9-11

Call for information - (804) 519-1210

Bring Questions!





Paul's Roman Epistle: Designed to Establish the Body of Christ



## Romans 3: Student Study Insights

Romans 3: 26 "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

*\*The goal each month will be to address one successive chapter in the book of Romans and relay a few helpful study insights for application.*

Romans 3 builds onto the first two chapters, providing progressive insight into 'the gospel of Christ.' Romans 2:29 transitions the student, preparing him to understand a key issue God desired to teach man since Genesis. "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." It's a humble attitude, a heart of faith, glorifying God. Even though Israel had 'God's oracles,' they still did not learn what He was teaching. Don't miss it! Use 2-3 ideas below to personally examine Chapter 3: (Review Issues # 16.1 & 16.2 to build a resource of study skills.)

1. Prepare your mind: Pray before reading, asking God for help to understand. Read the chapter a few times, circling/defining 'helping words.' How do they assist in studying?

2. Meditate: a) Read Romans 1-3 several times to reflect upon 'how' it teaches the gospel. b) Look at Romans 1:17 and 3:21 to see the 'similar' phrasing. Why was this done? c) Consider how 'But now' is used to indicate a time change in 3:21. Why is it here and what does it teach? Search how Paul uses 'now' & 'but now' through Romans.

3. Organization: What is the key verse in Chapter 3? Read to uncover a topic for each subdivision: 3:1-8, 3:9-20, 3:21-26, 3:27-31. How do they work to progress you?

4. "As it is written": This common phrase in Scripture notifies the reader that this is 'like' what was written. Locate two places it's used in Chapter 3. Find their references and closely examine them in context. Does it provide clarity?

5. Critical Terms to Understand the Gospel: Define key words: Righteousness, justified, propitiation, faith, remission, & forbearance. Write down what you think & compare with a Bible dictionary definition. (Meditate, then reread the context of each.)

6. Summary Verses: Locate two separate verses in this chapter that 'sum-up' a section. Paul often begins summary verses with a 'helping word,' making them easy to spot. Reflect on the conclusions drawn; it often functions as a 'checkpoint' to assess personal understanding of a key doctrine. If unclear, it ought to send you back to restudy the topic.

7. Word Studies: a) Blood: The issue of 'blood' is highly significant through the Bible. Search the concordance to find details; consider context. (Since there are many references, narrow the study to focus on a few in: Genesis/Exodus/Leviticus, the Gospels, Paul's Epistles, and also Hebrews.) Evaluate how this helps you understand 'faith in His blood.' b) Gospel: There are many 'gospels' in Scripture. Select 1 or 2 and search to find where they are located (use a concordance) & how they are similar/different: i.e. Gospel of the Kingdom, gospel of Jesus Christ, gospel of the circumcision, gospel of the uncircumcision, gospel of Christ, my gospel, gospel of the grace of God, everlasting gospel, and the gospel of God. c) Righteousness: Throughout the Scriptures, God's righteousness has been important in His relationship with man. Study how it's used in Romans, Paul's epistles, & then all the Scriptures, using a concordance.

What a blessed privilege to still have free access to the completed Word of God!

(Page 4: A related article on the gospel)



### Fasting - It It For Us Today?

Most see fasting as abstaining from nourishment, not eating or drinking. Technically, a fast is 'a hold or stop' on something. Scripture reveals its purpose can: humble or focus a person, make requests of God, or express repentance/mourning in anticipation of calamity or judgment. Examples:

Study it out: **1)** The Lord Jesus in the wilderness: "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred." (Matthew 4:2) **2)** Esther asks, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day..." (Esther 4:16) **3)** Also, in Jonah 3:5, "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth..."

Paul makes reference to fasting only once, in I Corinthians 7:5. "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer...". The use here seems to promote 'setting affections' above, to bring the body into subjection. (Col. 3:2/I Cor. 9:27)

Study Paul's writings yourself, but this writer didn't find direct instruction to fast today. There is no need, as in time past, to fast to obtain God's grace & mercy, get a blessing, or show grief or sorrow for sin. Today, we have forgiveness, peace,

and a grace standing with God. (Rom. 5) However, some may find benefits to use fasting to apply some things in Romans.

Personal Thought: Fasting can provide focus, practicing the 'inward man's' control over the flesh, yielding your will and body unto God. For example, if you don't eat for a day, as you feel the body's demand for food, realize 'it' is not in control. Knowing you are under grace, fast to exercise the doctrine in Romans 6-8. Meditate upon it.

Rehearse by setting your affection on things above, yield all things to Him, motivated by grace. Say 'NO' to your body, mortifying your flesh; pray/yield to access God's power. Replace your body's cries for attention with God's view. The flesh is NOT your god. Start with brief fastings; they can humble you to 'keep the body in subjection' in many areas: a fast of TV, electronics, or even talking (a hold on speaking thoughts). Fasting can be a true resource to gain insight, so "...I will not be brought under the power of any." (I Cor. 6:12)

Over time, fasting can strengthen the inner man's awareness of the power of the flesh, helping to learn 'how' to work through challenges in a controlled setting. (The 'Grace Cycle' in action. Issue #16.2) "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (I Cor. 9:27) **To God be the Glory!**

**Family Bible Study**  
Chestersfield, VA

**Brian's Topic: How strong is the flesh?**  
Time: Fridays, 7-9 PM For details - (804) 519-1210



## Reflections: Practically Applying Grace Principles to Your Life

The Sin and Grace Cycles were addressed in the last two issues. The doctrine is directly from Romans 6-8 and can be life changing. (This section explains 'how' to access the power and wisdom of God, so grace can reign in your life.) If Grace principles still seem difficult to apply, prayerfully reread & study Romans 1-8, then review the two articles. Concepts taught early in Romans may need to fall into place before you can apply aspects of the Grace Cycle. Give it time as learning is individual, affected by perception and strongholds.

Many know doctrinal facts about God's grace message, yet stumble over 'how' to apply grace, especially in the midst of sin/challenges. Don't be fooled, yielding in faith is hard godly labor. Yes, there are tough choices and it's WORK to live godly; yet it is all Him. "...Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor.1:24) The key is to **trust**, "...fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." (Rom. 4:21)

**Yielding as servants:** In Romans 6:19, the Father instructs, "...now *yield* your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." God desires us to say 'No' to living in the flesh (ungodliness), refusing to be enticed and controlled by our own lustful desires. (Romans 6:1-2/James 1) So, what does it mean to yield and how can we do it? The term seems critical to understand 'how' to apply Romans 6-8, for a holy life unto God.

**Defined:** The Vines Expository Dictionary relays the idea to '**present** or commend oneself,' making heart choices for godly **service**. As we mature through Paul's Roman epistle, we learn to yield, 'offering up' our bodies to serve, walking by faith: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present** your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable **service**." (Romans 12:1)

**Step 1: Preparation:** Before godly service can occur, Romans 8 turns our attention to 'the mind,' as behavior follows one's thought life. In order to make hard life choices to please God, we need to become 'fully persuaded.' In faith, read and 'dig into' the Word. Yielding precious time to allow the Spirit to ' **dwell**,' or be at home, enables us to acquire the 'mind of Christ.'

Minding spiritual things pushes out carnality, quickening (making alive) our body so Christ can live in the details of our life. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead  **dwell** in you, he... shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that  **dwelleth** in you." (Romans 8:11)

YIELD

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14) Yielding our mind involves trusting God's way, submitting to His grace/provision, as the Spirit leads us through the Truth. Romans 12:2 reinforces this initial step to please God: "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

**Step 2: Service unto God:** To do His will, we need focus and strength. In thankfulness, as we immerse ourselves in sound doctrine, the Spirit uses this power/wisdom to motivate. We're enabled to yield our body so it's Christ's work, not a 'fleshly imitation.' Trusting that 'God is able,' we make decisions each moment to 'physically do' what we have been instructed. We live our convictions, even when they are against personal 'feelings.' The Word provides boundaries & is the power to make choices consistent with what God is teaching us; this is who we are in Christ. In faith, we can now set aside the flesh, and "...if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. 8:13) The Spirit stirs up verses in our mind, helping us mortify (deny life to) our fleshly deeds, to live unto God.

**Why do this godly labor?** It is in great appreciation for all He has done, of course! Grace living often requires HARD choices. It's NOT, yield once in your mind, then, metaphorically, get in an easy chair and put your feet up to watch God work. "For we are labourers together with God..." (1 Cor. 3:9) Yield your time and body to worship/serve the Lord Jesus Christ, *not to serve SELF!* Stay focused, yet don't over-analyze whether you are walking 'after the flesh' or 'after the Spirit.' Be confident, walk by faith, & stay in the Word. Prayerfully, "...put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." (Romans 13:14) Be 'transformed' as you learn, meditate, and mature in sound doctrine each day, maintaining a 'renewed mind.'

### Yield Your Time and Yield Your Body

1) **Prepare:** Prayerfully yield your time to acquire God's wisdom, fully persuaded 'He is able' to do the work in you. (READ/meditate on His Provision, sound doctrine, daily.)

2) **Serve:** Choose to labor with God; yielding your body to live out the Truth, even when it's challenging to your flesh & there are fears. **Trust God's Way... HE IS ABLE!**

Personal Note: If you are struggling and unable to apply this teaching, look to your local assembly for one mighty in the Scriptures. If this help is unavailable, it would be our privilege to help a dear brother or sister in Christ. Purpose to contact us.

### Christian Life Coach Support Services

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In person or phone-Call (804) 519-1210  
Presentations - Retreats -  
Fees: 'As a man purposes in his heart.'

## Sharing Our Faith as Instructed: What is the Gospel Today? Part II

Romans 1:17 "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

There are many views about the Gospel. It is important to know that Romans-Philemon is where the specific teaching for the Church, the Body of Christ, is located. 'Foundational doctrine' is in Romans, strategically placed first for edification. Not surprising, the gospel is the main issue in this letter. The two main aspects of the gospel: Righteousness & Godliness. (Insight: Examine this overview more deeply to gain personal conviction. Pray and keep studying.)

**Romans 1-5: Imputed Righteousness** (How we are just with God)

**Romans 1:16-18:** The key issue in the 'gospel of Christ' is God's righteousness offered to man, as he responds in faith. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

In these verses, note three key components: 1) The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, 2) It contains the righteousness of God, 3) Our response is to be faith: our faith to Christ's, his faithfulness to go to the cross, & the just shall live (unto God) by faith. Man's sin problem is then exposed: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness...". The 'gospel of Christ' explains how God and His powerful righteousness deal with: *Man's Ungodliness* (how he lives) and *Unrighteousness* (his sin status).

**Romans 2:6-16:** Since Adam, sin has separated man from God. In order to justly deal with *Unrighteousness/Ungodliness*, God thought it good and necessary to have eternal consequences to man's response to Him. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds...In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." When man responds in faith, there are great rewards: eternal life, glory, honor, and peace. Exceedingly sad results occur, as he continues in unbelief and rebellion to God & His provision: indignation, wrath, tribulation, & anguish.

**Romans 3:10-20:** All efforts of man fall short and he can't justify himself. Alone, he's without hope before God. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Basically, this teaches man to stop 'trying' and just 'trust God.'

**Romans 3:21-26:** As man is ready, he is able to see God's wonderful, gracious gift: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...". The Father has made a way, the only way, to impart His righteousness to man (a just standing before God). It is by simple faith. In unfathomable love, the Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood to fully pay for all sin:

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

**Romans 4 & 5:** It is NOT just wiping the sin slate clean. Much more, God 'imputes His righteousness' to our account. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Now we are 'made the righteousness of God.' (Romans 4:8/II Cor. 5:21) Romans 5 goes on to teach, we have an 'at peace' relationship and a 'standing in grace' before God, receiving eternal life. Clearly, we are 'justified by his blood,' 'saved from wrath,' & 'have received the atonement,' 'so grace might reign.' (Rom. 5:21)

**Romans 6-16: Godliness** (How to be holy, living by faith) \*Note: This aspect of the gospel is often overlooked. It is exceedingly important, as it is 'why' God saves us. Study to see this yourself!

**Romans 6-16:** In order for 'grace to reign,' the Father teaches 'how' He's empowered us to live a holy, godly life: **1)** Chapter 6 instructs we are 'dead to sin.' **2)** Chapter 7 explains we are 'dead to the law.' **3)** In Chapter 8, we are taught by faith to 'mortify the deeds of the body,' being led by the Spirit. **4)** Romans 9-16 progresses us to learn many components in order to serve in selfless love. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12: 1-2) The Lord Jesus Christ (the Word) renews our mind, as we 'dwell' in Scripture, yielding our thoughts and life in faith. Paul's remaining epistles are built upon the doctrine placed in Romans, helping us to live out God's plan & purpose.

**Now that the gospel is clear, roll up your sleeves, this is a great privilege... share it with others!**

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be underlined, numbered, or made bold for emphasis.

### 'On A Personal Side'

Please forward testimonials, praises, personal growth or feedback about this newsletter, We will print all we can.



### From Our Readers...

"I am so excited for the retreat...We love your newsletter and look forward to it monthly. I have shown it to some of the ladies at the church where I have my sewing group every week." (Florida)

"When I read your newsletter, I always come away enthused." (N. Carolina)

"The literature you send is so very encouraging and very much appreciated. Sending love and prayers to you and your family."

(California)

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#### Grace Women's Retreat

Retreat Speaker: Deborah Johnson

Topic: **The Key to Please God:**

**Let Grace Reign**

Orlando, Florida - Friday & Saturday,

**April 15-16**

Location: **Fellowship Bible Church**

**Reservations Required/Call:**

Sue Ann Fitzpatrick

(804) 690-6789

sueannfitzpatrick@gmail.com

Join us for a wonderful time of fellowship! We will resume the study of our *Identity in Christ*, progressing to *Romans 8*, learning how to let grace reign in life. We will also continue to learn study tools and aspects of practical living. This Retreat will be interactive teaching, with discussion and small group assignments. Feel free to bring a friend!

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Where: 1312 Gaskins Rd.  
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Date: **Thurs, March 24, 2016**  
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