

## Key Question: Does everything we are ‘hearing’ from ‘God’s still small voice’ – agree with God’s Word?

**How can I have an active/proactive, intelligent faith – instead of a presumptuous, non-discerning pseudo-faith that accepts all meditation...or a fear-based pseudo-faith?**

- 1st:** We prioritize making sure that everything agrees with God’s Word
- 2nd:** We share Scripture & Spirit of Prophecy with those who have valid questions and concerns – because some pastors are deceiving people with new age meditation ☹
- 3rd:** We ask the person to agree with Scripture & Spirit of Prophecy – in context.
- 4th:** We respect their decision to accept or reject God’s Word & Spirit of Prophecy.

Page #	Content
2–3	3 Groups – Biblical Faith versus Presumptive ‘Faith’ versus Fear-based ‘Faith’
4–7	Do Ellen White and Pastor Mark Finley agree with God’s Word in Scripture? Scriptures about God’s ‘still small voice’ & Hearing Christ’s voice Scriptures
8	Ellen White’s quote on Christ “undeceiving” the people
9–10	Straight 2 the Heart’s statement (Part 1 & 2) – opposing an attempt to empty the mind, chanting, repetitive/new age/eastern religion prayer, etc. in our book: “The Hidden Half of the Gospel: How His Suffering Can Heal Yours”
<b>Separate page #'s for all 4 articles</b>	<b>Pastor Mark Finley’s article</b>
	<b>Article exposing “mindfulness” and negative effects of new age mediation</b>
	<b>Article on the negative effects of new age/eastern religion meditation by a former Zen Buddhist</b> (who is now a 7-th day Adventist Christian)
	<b>Article: Slides from Paul Coneff’s presentation on Biblical meditation</b>

People with strong, passionate convictions can easily assume they are right – just like the apostle Paul. He had such a strong passion to go to Jerusalem to save Jews for Jesus that he rejected multiple warnings from God, through: [[1] Spirit-filled disciples telling him to **not go at that time**, [2] Agabus the prophet warning him, and [3] The church begging him to **not** go. (Acts 21:4–12). But Paul went anyway. Then he accepted bad advice in Jerusalem, ending up in prison (Acts 21: 22–40) – forever limiting his ability to travel and share the gospel. \* *Being in prison was **not** the only way for Paul to write letters to churches.*  
 \* Now, some people use Paul’s mistake in Acts 21 to teach that we must keep all 7 OT feasts to be saved.  
 \* So, Paul created a **dual legacy** as the greatest gospel teacher/church planter **AND-AND** legalism. ☹

Those with strong passions can assume they need to correct others who do **not** agree with them. Sadly, they never assume that they could be wrong, they never assume they could be deceived.

Then they twist Scripture after Scripture into their limited perspective – even when Scripture after Scripture, and Spirit of Prophecy do **not** support their culturally conditioned attitudes.

So, in their need to defend and protect their understanding of God’s Word, they can actually end up twisting and rejecting God’s Word – in the name of defending God’s Word. ☹

**Instead of debating them**, my prayer is that we will take time to read *and* listen to *and* receive/accept God’s Word and Spirit of Prophecy **in context**...trusting God to give us His good gifts. **(Luke 11:10–13)**

And allowing God to write His New Covenant law on our hearts and in our minds, so we are living out HIS will, HIS plans, and HIS purpose for our lives, instead of being deceived by Satan into living with a presumptuous, feeling-based pseudo-faith, or a fear-based pseudo-faith that steals our peace, joy, and love in Christ. **(Luke 11:10–13)**

## Why do we fall into the temptation of branding certain words or phrases with rigid thinking – debating each other/trying to be ‘Right’ – instead of focusing on Jesus?

When Jesus shared with the woman at the well about her pattern of broken relationships and sin in her life – she had an *immediate reaction* to **avoid** facing her brokenness Jesus was revealing and speaking into – **so** He could heal her and set her free: (John 4:19-20, 23-29; Luke 4:18)

- She immediately tried to get Jesus into a religious debate/discussion (John 4:19–20)
- We are often good at following in her footsteps in this area of her life – debating and discussing religious/theological issues to **avoid** Jesus convicting us of the sinful patterns in our lives – keeping Him from “healing our broken hearts and set us free.” (Luke 4:18)
- We need to follow in her footsteps allowing Jesus to “*tell us everything we’ve ever done*” **so** we can have a testimony and witness for Jesus – **instead of** missing out on this blessing through our religious/theological debates that often distract from Jesus ministering to our broken hearts and minds. ☹
- Having theology built on God’s Word is very, very important. At the same time, how many of our theological debates are the result of us trying to **avoid** God convicting us of our patterns of brokenness – our fears, our self-righteousness, our pride, our need to be right, and/or to be self-righteous about being right?
- Listed on the following page are three options people can take when we are tempted to use religious debates/concerns with issues like prayer, meditation, and versions of the Bible etc.

**Instead of** allowing God’s Word to reveal the core motives and thoughts in our hearts (Hebrews 4:12) – we debate others, often pushing people away from Christ, away from a Christ- centered community of faith...**and** out of God’s church family. ☹

- We are so-so certain that we are “right” – that we can end up being deceived into believing that we are protecting God and God’s Word – in a way that we end up discounting and disqualifying God’s Word to fit HIS Scriptures into our own pre-conceived minds. ☹
- Then, in our attempt to defend and protect God’s Word – we end up undermining God’s Word, as we also miss out on freedom from the spirit of fear that reduces our love and our ability to have a sound mind. Even worse, we frantically try to recruit others into our deception, without realizing we are deceived. ☹ (2 Timothy 1:7; Matt. 7:21–23)

### Seriousness of Deception:

- We fail to consider the possibility that Satan is deceiving us in the same way he has deceived others into thinking that they are casting out demons and doing miracles in Jesus’ name – only to find out too **late**, that instead of doing ministry in the power of Christ and His truth...they have been working for Satan. ☹ (Matt. 7:21–23)
- Sadly, choosing to focus on a religious topic to avoid God speaking into brokenness, leads to being enthralled and *infatuated with their “enlightenment”* (like Eve taking the forbidden fruit) making it is almost impossible to agree with truth in God’s Word ☹

**During training sessions – I consistently meet three groups who are summarized in the three columns below – with their attitudes revealing three different kinds of faith:**

<p><b>#1: They are revealing a Proactive Biblical ‘Faith’</b></p>	<p><b>#2: They are revealing a Reactionary, Presumptive ‘Faith’</b></p>	<p><b>#3: They are revealing a Reactionary, Fear-based ‘Faith’</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Testing all information by “<i>every</i> word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)</li> <li>* ‘Proving <b>all</b> things and holding fast to that which is true” (1 Thess. 5:21)</li> <li>* Trusting <b>all</b> of God’s timing and sovereignty</li> <li>* In the ways He makes Himself known through His Word, relationships, music, life experiences etc.</li> <li>* Including those times when we feel life is a wilderness experience (like Moses, Abraham, Job, Jesus, &amp; Paul had)</li> <li>* <b>Rooted</b> in prayer that is focused on Christ and HIS “New Covenant mind-heart experience” that grows us in God’s grace, truth &amp; will daily (sanctification)...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Trusting in their own sincerity and feelings, discernment, and presumptions</li> <li>* Without “being wise as serpents and harmless as doves”</li> <li>* Opening their hearts and minds to <i>any-and-all</i> meditation, assuming God will bless and make Himself known if they chant certain words, phrases/mantra’s, or do certain behaviors</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Which is really trying to make ‘god’ in their own image...to control ‘god’ – to get what they want from ‘god’</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Rejecting Christ’s words against ‘vain repetitions’</li> <li>* <b>Rooted</b> in emotionalism leading to spiritualism... to try and fill the void of emptiness, dryness and fearfulness in their hearts and minds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Branding as negative, <i>all</i> words and phrases like meditation, prayer, contemplation etc. after hearing talks about the way <i>some</i> people and pastors misuse prayer</li> <li>* Instead of testing every teaching about prayer <b>by God’s Word</b></li> <li>* Throwing the ‘baby out with the bath water’</li> <li>* Missing out on the blessing of God giving us His Presence, grace and Holy Spirit, through “prayer and ministry of <b>His Word</b>” Acts 6:4</li> <li>* <b>Rooted</b> in legalism and an ‘intellectual assent to the truth’ (EGW) leading to pride, fear, judging others, to fill the voice of dryness, self-righteousness, and emptiness</li> <li>* With a mission to recruit everyone else into their belief...</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>So – HIS will is fulfilled in our hearts and minds and lives, according to His Word</i></b> (Hebrews 8:10; 10:16; Matt. 26:39, 42, 44)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Instead of</b> letting Christ heal them and set them free from independence and their reactionary, presumption-based ‘faith’ ☹</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Instead of</b> letting Christ heal them and set them free from their legalistic, rule-based, reactionary fear-based ‘faith’ ☹</li> </ul>

Pastor Mark Finley, one of the most respected pastors and evangelists in Adventism, has written a wonderful article on the topic of Biblical meditation, sharing how Ellen White uses the words “contemplate” and “meditate.” (It is the first article after page 10 in this PDF)

<p><b>Does this quote from one of Ellen White's most famous books:</b></p>	<p><b>We must individually hear Him speaking to the <u>heart</u>.</b></p>
<p>* Agree with the Scriptures listed below?</p>	<p><b>When every other voice is hushed, and in <u>quietness</u> we wait before Him, the <u>silence</u> of the soul makes <u>more distinct</u> the voice of God....</b></p>
<p>And if so, is God's prophet:</p>	<p><b>Here alone can true rest be found. Desire of Ages, page 363</b></p>
<p>* Teaching Biblical meditation or spiritualism?</p>	<p>* Please read Pastor Mark Finley's article attached to this PDF – and read the Scriptures listed below</p> <p>* Ellen White uses the words “meditate” and “contemplate” <b>over 1,100 times</b></p>

And if Ellen White's words (and Pastor Mark Finley's words) agree 100% with the Scriptures emphasizing the need to hear God's still small voice in a way that changes our hearts & minds:

- ❖ Am I willing to agree with God, God's Word, Ellen White, and Pastor Finley?
- ❖ Am I more focused more on trusting God to speak His truth into my mind and heart, or am I more focused on fear of being deceived by the devil? (**Luke 11:10–13**)
- ❖ Am I in danger of rejecting and disqualifying God, God's Word, and Ellen White because I am more focused on Satan's power to deceive me – than God's ability to protect me, and protect HIS translation in His Word, **and** in Ellen White's writings?
- ❖ If I see legalistic Sabbath keepers doing damage to the way God is wanting to reveal Himself through HIS Sabbath day:
  - ⇒ **Do I give up the Sabbath because of a bad witness from others?**
  - ⇒ **Or**, do I seek to know God and HIS Sabbath in a way that is a witness to Him?
  - ⇒ If I seek to know God and HIS Sabbath rest in a way that is a witness to Him, should I apply the same principle to prayer and knowing God – or should I reject God's Word telling me that He speaks in a “still small voice?”

Straight 2 the Heart's focus is allowing God to reveal, release, and replace negative thoughts creating a false identity – so God can live out **His** will, **HIS** hopes, and **HIS** plans for our lives (surrendering to HIS will revealed in HIS Word). And this emphasis is in the “Cross” prayers.

Verse	Context Questions:
1 Kings 19:12	God does <b>not</b> speak through: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____  God <b>does</b> speak through HIS: _____
Psalm 46:10	In times of crisis (and at any time) – God is asking me to know Him by choosing to be: S _____ and K _____
John 10:1–10	What is one key characteristic of Christ’s disciples?
John 10:3	What do they hear? _____
John 10:4	Who do they know? _____
John 10:5, 8	Whose voice will they <b>not</b> know, <b>IF</b> they know His voice? _____
John 10:6–7, 9	What does Jesus say in verse 7, when they don’t understand His parable about the shepherd and the sheep?  Is Jesus a real door, with a real door handle on Him, hanging on a real hinge?  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Jesus is a real door, with a door handle on Him? <input type="checkbox"/> No, Jesus is using a practical example from real life.
John 10:8, 10	<b>Reflection Question:</b> Why is it so important for Jesus to emphasize our need to hear His voice, in the context of thieves coming to steal, kill and destroy?  _____ _____ _____
Revelation 2–3	Who is speaking to all 7 churches, including the last church, Laodicea?  <input type="checkbox"/> Jesus is speaking to all 7 churches, including Laodicea? <input type="checkbox"/> Someone else than Jesus is speaking to all 7 churches?
<b>Church #1:</b> Revelation 2:7	What is Jesus wanting His church, His sheep to do? He who has an ear... _____  What blessing comes from hearing His counsel to us?  _____

<p><b>Church #2:</b> Revelation 2:11</p>	<p>What is Jesus wanting His church, His sheep to do? He who has an ear... _____</p> <p>What blessing comes from hearing His counsel to us? _____</p>
<p><b>Church #3:</b> Revelation 2:17</p>	<p>What is Jesus wanting His church, His sheep to do? He who has an ear... _____</p> <p>What blessing comes from hearing His counsel to us? _____</p>
<p><b>Church #4:</b> Revelation 2:28–29</p>	<p>What is Jesus wanting His church, His sheep to do? He who has an ear... _____</p> <p>What blessing comes from hearing His counsel to us? _____</p>
<p><b>Church #5:</b> Revelation 3:5–6</p>	<p>What is Jesus wanting His church, His sheep to do? He who has an ear... _____</p> <p>What blessing comes from hearing His counsel to us? _____</p>
<p><b>Church #6:</b> Revelation 3:12–13</p>	<p>What is Jesus wanting His church, His sheep to do? He who has an ear... _____</p> <p>What blessing comes from hearing His counsel to us? _____</p>
<p><b>Church #7:</b> Revelation 3:20–22</p>	<p>What is Jesus wanting His church, His sheep to do? He who has an ear... _____</p> <p>What blessing comes from hearing His counsel to us? _____</p>
<p><b>Decision:</b></p>	<p>What similar theme is Jesus sharing from John 10:6–7, 9? Jesus is referring to Himself as: _____</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I am <b>not</b> willing to risk losing all these blessing Christ is offering to me?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I <b>am</b> willing to risk losing all these blessings Christ is offering to me, in these Scriptures, to avoid the deception of new age/eastern religion, even if I am <b>not</b> willing to see <b>if</b> I am protecting <b>myself in my own strength</b>?</p>

Revelation  
22:18–19

What serious consequence takes place if I change God’s Word?

What happens if I am so afraid of the wrong way people introduce eastern religion/new age “meditation” – that I mentally **remove** the word “meditate” from Psalm 1, Psalm 119 and many other places in God’s Word that tells us to “meditate” on God’s Word? \_\_\_\_\_

**Applying:**

\* Psalm  
139:23–24

\* Hebrews  
4:12–13

Am I willing to let “God be God,” like King David, when he asked God to search his heart, turning it into a personal prayer to God, with Hebrews 4:12, for the purpose of:

- a. God revealing my anxious thoughts?
- b. God revealing any sinful ways in my life?
- c. God leading me in the “everlasting way?”
- d. God revealing my deepest thoughts and motives, including any fear-based thinking that leads to more “faith” in Satan deceiving me, than in God’s protection for me – as I surrender to **HIS** truth He has revealed in **HIS** Word?

And if I am **unwilling** to let “God be God” like King David and the writer of Hebrews...

What happens in the Hebrews 4:13 judgment, when I have run out of time to trust God with all my fears, lies, thoughts, motives, and desires in my heart, and I realize, too late, that I have risked:

- ❖ Being naked before God and the universe in this judgment, realizing my deception when it is too late? (Matt. 7:21–23; 2 Thess. 2:9–10)

2 Timothy  
1:7

Am I willing to ask God to replace any spirit of fear, any lack of love for God’s Word, and any ways I am living with an ‘unsound’ mind – with:

- ❖ HIS peace, HIS love and a sound mind that sees God’s protection as a greater power (and focus) than Satan’s ability to deceive **those intentionally seeking to surrender to God’s will...?**
- ❖ **Instead of** trusting in culturally conditioned attitudes, fears, lies, and wounds that keep me from reading God’s Word **in** context, in way that I am responding to and obeying God and His Word?
- ❖ **Instead of** investing time in religious debates to **avoid** Christ speaking into my patterns of brokenness? (John 4:19–20)
- ❖ **Instead of** living with:
  - ⇒ A reactionary presumptive pseudo-faith? **Or.**
  - ⇒ A reactionary fear-based pseudo-faith?

## Christ “UNDECEIVING the people:

When Christ forbade the people to declare Him king, He knew that a turning point in His history was reached. Multitudes who desired to exalt Him to the throne today would turn from Him tomorrow. The disappointment of their selfish ambition would turn their love to hatred, and their praise to curses.

Yet knowing this, He took no measures to avert the crisis. From the first He had held out to His followers **no hope** of earthly rewards. To one who came desiring to become His disciple He had said, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.”

Matthew 8:20.

If men could have had the world with Christ, multitudes would have proffered [offered] Him their allegiance; but such service He could not accept. Of those now connected with Him there were many who had been attracted by the hope of a worldly kingdom. **These must be undeceived.**

The deep spiritual teaching in the miracle of the loaves had not been comprehended. This was to be made plain.

And this new revelation would bring with it a **closer test**. Desire of Ages, 381

### Deception Question:

#### Am I willing to ask God to “undeceive” any fear I have:

- ❖ Because I’ve had a bad experience with eastern religion?
- ❖ Because I know of someone else who had a bad experience? Or...
- ❖ Because I have heard someone speak against it – blindly trusting that person/pastor **without** doing my own research in God’s Word and Spirit of Prophecy, on this important topic?

**Especially when** that person/pastor focuses on the deceptions (which are happening) **without** telling me what Biblical meditation is – **and** why Biblical meditation:

- ❖ Activates our minds, increasing our blood flow to our frontal lobe, increasing our personal awareness of ourselves, God and His Word, making it impossible to empty our minds at the same time???
- ❖ Never-ever-ever empties the mind?
- ❖ Always focuses on knowing God and seeking to surrender to **His** will for our lives? (*the exact opposite of eastern religion chanting and mantra’s offering the self-centered, self-manufactured, self-willed illusion of control and numbing our pain by escaping reality*)



## **Straight 2 the Heart's Position on Prayer: Part 1**

### **DISCIPLESHIP TIP:**

#### **BIBLICAL MEDITATION versus EASTERN MEDITATION**

Although Straight 2 the Heart uses a Christ-centered prayer process, we emphatically distinguish ourselves from Eastern and new age religions that advocate emptying of the mind or chanting (see more in the glossary). Instead, we base our practice on God's Word, which, as the Apostle Paul explained, is what renews and transforms us, and is, as the writer of Hebrews said, able to "penetrate and lay bare out deepest thoughts" (Heb. 4:12-13; Ps. 46:10; 139:23-24; 1 Kings 19:12).

In his book, *Depression the Way Out*, Dr. Neil Nedley summarizes scientific research revealing the difference between biblical and new age/Eastern meditation. Biblical mediation involves the beta brain waves, increasing our active reasoning skills.

This is in direct contrast to Eastern meditation that uses alpha brain wave rhythms, where thoughts are repressed. This means that the person cannot "critically analyze incoming information" during new age meditation, hypnosis, chanting, and mantra's.<sup>13</sup>

We never support or promote emptying our minds or using vain repetitions because Jesus specifically taught against both—saying that the first opened the door for demons, and the second was a practice for those who didn't believe in God (Matt.12:43-45; 6:7-8). We trust God's Word, which the Bible says is living and active, increasing our reasoning ability to prayerfully navigate the challenges of life, instead of trying to escape them. (See Discipleship Tip: Listening For God's Voice, within the coming pages for more information)

*(The Hidden Half of the Gospel: How His Suffering Can Heal Yours, pages 79–80)*

## Straight 2 the Heart's Position on Prayer: Part 2

### DISCIPLESHIP TIP: LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE:

“How do I know if what I’m hearing is from the Holy Spirit?” This is a common question when a person starts trying to listen for that “still, small voice.” Straight 2 the Heart addresses this question, like all others, by referring to Scripture.

Based on the Bible, we believe God wants us to have a New Covenant experience, one in which His truths are written on our minds and on our hearts (Heb. 8:10; 10:16). The Holy Spirit ministered to Jesus’ disciples during their ten days of praying together, fulfilling Jesus’ words that His sheep would hear His voice (John 10:3–5, 16, 27; Acts 2:1–3). This is the same Holy Spirit that speaks Jesus’ words to the seven churches of Revelation (Rev. 2–3), it is the same Holy Spirit that Jesus said would bring words to the disciples when they stood in front of leaders (Matt. 10:18–20), and it is the same Spirit that the Apostle Paul said had the power to “take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:3–5, NASB).

As we claim these promises, we ask the Holy Spirit to direct our thoughts to God’s truths so He can produce His spiritual fruit within us, as a testimony to His love and grace. Finally, we know we are hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit when what we hear agrees fully and completely with Scripture (John 15:7–17; Gal. 5:22–25). As we spend time together at the throne of grace, we pray for God to lead us in a way that remains consistent with the truths of the Bible, because we know God would never lead us outside of the holy principles in His Word (John 8:31–32; 16:13).

(The Hidden Half of the Gospel: How His Suffering Can Heal Yours, pages 82–83)

<b>Ellen White</b>	<p>Does Ellen White’s statement in Desire of Ages, page 383: (see page 4)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Agree</b> with any-and-all these Scriptures about God’s <i>still small voice</i>?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Disagree</b> with any-and-all these Scriptures about God’s <i>still small voice</i>?</p>
Pastor Mark Finley	<p><b>Pastor Mark Finley’s article begins on the next page.</b></p> <p><b>After reading his article...</b></p> <p>Does Mark Finley’s article on Biblical meditation and Ellen White:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Agree</b> with any-and-all these Scriptures about God’s <i>still small voice</i>?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Disagree</b> with any-and-all these Scriptures about God’s <i>still small voice</i>?</p>

<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2012/08/biblical-spirituality-rediscovering-our-biblical-roots-or-embracing-the-east>

# Biblical Spirituality: Rediscovering Our Biblical Roots or Embracing the East?

## Mark Finley Article

Mark Finley

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During a question and answer period at a spiritual convocation on the West Coast of the United States, a man stood up and asked, “What do you think of contemplative spirituality, spiritual formation, and meditation?” In some circles, these terms have become lightning rods; they engender heated discussions and sometimes more heat than light. There are those who believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has become cold, formal, legalistic, and spiritually lifeless; and its members desperately need to experience a fresh breath of spiritual newness. They are convinced that the way to reach postmoderns is through experience, not doctrine. To them, the answer lies in contemplative spirituality. For others, contemplative spirituality is no more than Eastern mysticism clothed in Christian terms—the devil’s deception. This group believes that contemplative spirituality leads unsuspecting church members into a counterfeit religious experience based on subjective feelings and emotions rather than scriptural truth.

This entire issue leads us to some vitally important questions. What is Christian meditation? How does the Bible define it and how does it differ from Eastern mysticism? What are contemplative and centering prayers? Are there dangers in these approaches to prayer? Is the concept of spiritual formation biblical? Where can we find answers for the Laodicean complacency, spiritual barrenness, and cold formality common in too many of our lives?

# Christian meditation

Throughout Scripture, meditation stays always active, never passive, and always has an object. The goal of Christian meditation comprises filling the mind with the Word and works of God. Meditating upon His greatness and matchless love, we are changed into His image (2 Cor. 3:18). In Christian meditation, we look out of ourselves to Him. Jesus is the object of our thoughts, the supreme focus of our attention (Isa. 45:22; Heb. 12:1, 2). We recognize that the heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked, and that in us there is no good thing (Jer. 17:9; Isa. 53:6; Rom. 7:18). Our hope is in Him. Our mind is fixed upon Him. Our attention is focused upon Him, and when meditating upon Him, we are transformed into His likeness (Col. 3:1, 2). The psalmist speaks of meditating on God's Word, His law, His testimonies, and His works (Ps. 119:97, 99, 104). He also meditates upon God's precepts and contemplates His ways (Ps. 119:15). **Christian meditation thus focuses our thoughts on the grandeur and greatness of God, lifting us from what is around us and within us to what is above us.**

**Ellen White uses the terms *meditate* and *meditation* 569 times.** Speaking of Enoch, she declares, "The infinite, unfathomable love of God through Christ became the subject of his meditation day and night; and with all the fervor of his soul he sought to reveal that love to the people among whom he dwelt."<sup>1</sup> Describing the importance of filling our minds with the Word of God in active meditation, she states, "We must be constantly meditating upon the word, eating it, digesting it, and by practice, assimilating it, so that it is taken into the life current."<sup>2</sup> The significant factor in both the biblical and Ellen White's counsel is that meditation is always rooted in God's word, His works, and His ways, and anchored in His character, majesty, love, and power. Meditation's goal is not to enter into the "silence of the soul" and somehow mystically "dwell in His presence," but to actively engage the mind in focusing upon the matchless charms of His love and the amazing wonders of His grace.

In the high technological, frantic pace of our twenty-first century living, genuine Christian meditation may become a lost art. The prophet Isaiah reminds us, "For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength' " (Isa. 30:15).<sup>3</sup> Thoughtfully opening God's Word, reading a few verses, meditating upon His love, contemplating His character, and reflecting upon His greatness are life changing. The Holy Spirit speaks to us in these quiet moments. "When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait

before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Psalm 46:10. This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God. Amidst the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, he who is thus refreshed, will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. He will receive a new endowment of both physical and mental strength. His life will breathe out a fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men's hearts."<sup>4</sup>

## Contemplating Jesus

**The word *contemplative* simply means attentive, pensive, reflective, or thoughtful.** A person who is contemplating is musing or pondering, reflecting or thinking. **Ellen White uses the word *contemplation* 580 times.** Her usage of the word is very similar to the way she uses the word *meditation*. She speaks of contemplating God's Word, God's works, and God's providence. Here are just a few examples:

"The Bible is God's voice speaking to us, just as surely as if we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe we would open God's Word and with what earnestness we would search its precepts. The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One."<sup>5</sup>

"In the Bible a boundless field is opened for the imagination. The student will come from a contemplation of its grand themes, from association with its lofty imagery, more pure and elevated in thought and feeling than if he had spent the time reading any work of mere human origin, to say nothing of those of a trifling character."<sup>6</sup>

Probably the most well-known Ellen White statement on the value of genuine Christian contemplation is this: "It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ.

**We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit.** If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross."<sup>7</sup>

Contemplating the Cross draws us into an intimate relationship with Jesus, providing a solid foundation for our faith.

**Neither Ellen White nor the Bible writers speak of an aimless or mindless contemplation in which the mind resides in some sort of neutral trancelike state of oneness with God.** In Scripture, the same Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible, speaks through the divinely inspired Word to transform our lives as we prayerfully meditate upon its passages. Jesus stated this plainly when He declared, “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life’ ” (John 6:63, NKJV). The apostle Peter adds, “By which have been given to us exceeding great and precious promises that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). James declares, “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and the overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

Our characters are transformed as we actively meditate on God’s Word. The Bible writers also describe the life-changing power of contemplating God’s creative works (Pss.19:1–6; 32:6–12). The point of these divinely inspired writers is the same: Christian meditation does not seek to empty the mind but seeks to fill the mind. It does not seek oneness with a mystical god within, but seeks to understand more deeply the nature of God who created and redeemed us, and we then more fully reflect His character.

## Understanding centering and contemplative prayer

**In *centering prayer*, the individual chooses a common word and continually repeats it to center his or her thoughts** ☹. This exercise purportedly prepares the worshiper to enter a contemplative state in which all distractions cease. The goal involves a journey to the center of one’s being to enter into a state of oneness with the divine presence within. *The Cloud of Unknowing*, written by an anonymous fourteenth century author, includes practical principles of contemplative prayer. It instructs those interested in experiencing this form of prayer to “Take just a little word, of one syllable rather than of two. With this word strike down every kind of thought under the cloud of forgetting.”

*Centering and contemplative prayer* have been **taught by Roman Catholic monks in monasteries for centuries**. More recently Thomas Merton, Thomas Keating, and Basil Pennington, as well as Quaker Richard Foster have advocated it and conducted retreats for thousands of people on contemplative spirituality. Their books have sold hundreds of thousands of copies.

Most of the advocates of contemplative spirituality see real value in learning from the techniques of Eastern meditation. They often draw from the teaching and writings of medieval mystics, as well as Hindu and Buddhist spiritual teachers. Basil Pennington, one of the well-known proponents of the centering prayer technique, has delineated four guidelines for centering prayer.

1. Sit comfortably with your eyes closed, relax, and quiet yourself. Be in love and have faith in God.
2. Choose a sacred word that best supports your sincere intention to be in the Lord's presence and open to His divine action within you ("Jesus," "Lord," "God," "Savior," "Abba," "Divine," "Shalom," "Spirit," "Love," etc.).
3. Let that word be gently present as your symbol of your sincere intention to be in the Lord's presence and open to His divine action within you.
4. Whenever you become aware of anything (thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, associations, etc.), simply return to your sacred word, your anchor.

Pennington's guidelines for entering into centering prayer are deeply influenced by a group of monks called the Desert Fathers in the Middle Ages. These men lived a monastic lives of prayer and meditation in the deserts of the Middle East. **The whole concept of looking to the Desert Fathers and the monastics for a deeper spirituality is seriously flawed.**

Jesus declared that His followers were to be in the world but not of the world (John 17:15). They were to be " 'the salt of the earth' " and " 'the light of the world' " (Matt. 5:13, 14). Paul affirms this truth by declaring that followers of Christ should shine as "lights" in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Phil. 2:15). Jesus and the disciples lived their lives between the mountain and the multitude. They spent time with God but did not neglect spending time with people. Their lives were dedicated to devotion, but they were focused on service.

True genuine spirituality involves both a relationship with God and loving service to God's children and can never be truly lived by choosing to live a life of isolation. The One whom we serve "went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt. 9:35).

**Daniel Goleman's comments should give every Christian pause before entering into contemplative spirituality.** "The meditation practices and rules for living of these earliest monks bear strong similarity to those of their Hindu and Buddhist renunciate brethren several kingdoms to the East."<sup>8</sup>

**The concept of centering prayer raises serious questions for followers of Christ.** The use of a sacred word to center one's thoughts seems strangely similar to the mantras of the East. Is centering prayer Eastern mysticism in Christian garments? Jesus is very clear when He admonishes, " 'When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do' " (Matt. 6:7).

**Does not the constant repetition of a "sacred word" violate Christ's clear instruction?** Why is there such a conspicuous absence of anything like centering prayer in the Bible? The Old Testament prophets, the New Testament believers, and Jesus never give even the slightest hint of continuously using a sacred word to center their thoughts in prayer. This should give us serious pause before we experiment with something that may open the door for satanic delusions.

Thomas Keating and Basil Pennington state, "We should not hesitate to take the fruit of the age old wisdom of the East and 'capture' it for Christ. Indeed those of us who are in ministry should make the necessary effort to acquaint ourselves with as many of these Eastern techniques as possible."<sup>9</sup>

This counsel would sound very strange to Peter who proclaimed, " 'Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' " (Acts 4:12). **The New Testament believers did not "turn the world upside down" with a gospel that blended Eastern philosophy with Christian doctrine. Neither should we.** The New Testament believers did not seek to get "in touch" with the divine presence within. They looked to their crucified, resurrected, and returning Lord, and their lives were transformed.

Thomas Merton describes the goal of centering prayer in these terms: "At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusions, a point of pure truth ... This little point ... is the pure glory of God in us. It is in everybody."<sup>10</sup>

Thomas Keating adds these thoughts, "Contemplative prayer is not so much the absence of thoughts as **detachment from them**. It is the opening of mind and heart, body and emotions—our whole being to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond words, thoughts and emotions."<sup>11</sup>

It is well to note these phrases in the above quotes, "point of nothingness," "and the glory of God in us which is in everybody." This sounds strangely like Buddhism. The idea of "the god within" comes directly from Eastern mysticism. Keating's expression, "beyond words, thoughts and emotions" calls into question the nature of genuine spirituality.



Can it be defined as a mystical experience or a relationship with God based on truth and fact that is life changing?

The biblical declaration that we are created in the image of God reinforces our ability to think and reason. **Should we not be exceedingly cautious of any approach to spirituality that bypasses the mind and leads us to depend on a subjective, mystical experience as the measure of genuine spirituality?**

Mysticism is purely subjective. It does not rely upon biblical truth as the measure of spirituality but shifts the emphasis to our own experience. Yet, the Word of God has been given to us for the very purpose of establishing our faith. Jesus' own words are too plain to be misunderstood; " 'Sanctify them by your truth, Your Word is truth' " (John 17:17). What we know about God is based on the truth of His Word. Trusting in experiential knowledge over the biblical record takes a person outside of the standard of all truth—the Bible. Encountering God in His Word leads us to a genuine Christian experience. **When our subjective experiences, feelings, and emotions do not lead us to the Word, beware!**

## Spiritual formation

Another concept that has generated a great deal of discussion is *spiritual formation*. Words have meaning in the way they are defined and who defines them. Is the concept of spiritual formation biblical? If we define spiritual formation as being formed into the image of Christ as we meditate upon God's Word, seek Him in prayer, and open our minds to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, certainly it is biblical. The apostle Paul admonishes believers at Rome "not [to] be conformed to this world but [to] be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

He urges the Philippians to "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). To the Colossians, he says, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above" (Col. 3:1, 2). Ellen White expresses the idea of our characters being formed in the image of Christ beautifully: "In Jesus is manifested the character of the Father, and the sight of him attracts. It softens and subdues, and ceases not to transform the character, until Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. The human heart that has learned to behold the character of God may become, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, like a sacred harp, sending forth divine melody."<sup>12</sup>

When the term *spiritual formation* is used to describe contemplative spirituality, centering prayer, and a religious experience based on a mystical involvement, however sincere its proponents may be, it is certainly not biblical.

**If by spiritual formation we mean blending the meditative techniques of priests and monks or non-Christian religions with biblical ideas to achieve some sort of spiritual oneness with the so-called spark of divine within us, this is not biblical at all.**

## Adventism's uniqueness

Adventism's uniqueness lies in our understanding of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. In contrast to an ever-deepening knowledge of Christ through His Word and an ever-closer relationship with Him, Satan will offer a counterfeit spiritual experience. Seventh-day Adventists believe that in the final conflict over the law of God, His people, saved by His grace, and transformed by His love, will reveal His compassionate character before a waiting world and watching universe. God will have an end-time people who desire to be like the One they most admire, a people who long for something much deeper than a mystical experience based on subjective feelings, on the one hand, or cold, legalistic formalism based on an intellectual assent to doctrinal truth, on the other. The words of the apostle John will beat fervently in their hearts, "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

## References:

1 Ellen G. White, *Conflict and Courage* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1970), 28.

2 White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1976), 89.

3 All Bible references are quoted from the New King James Version.

4 White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), 58.

5 White, "Our Great Treasure-House," *Signs of the Times*, April 4, 1906.

6 White, *Child Guidance* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1954), 507.

7 White, *The Desire of Age* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), 83.

8 Daniel Goleman, *The Meditative Mind* (Los Angeles: Tarcher/ Putnam Inc., 1988), 53.

9 Thomas Keating and Basil Pennington, *Finding Grace at the Gate* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Pub., 1978), 5, 6.

10 Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (New York: Doubleday Publishers, 1989), 157, 158.

11 See Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group), 18–23.

12 White, "Christ Our Hope," *Signs of the Times*, August 24, 1891.

**Ministry reserves the right to approve, disapprove, and delete comments at our discretion and will not be able to respond to inquiries about these comments. Please ensure that your words are respectful, courteous, and relevant.**

# Meditation/Mindfulness Study

Meditation Study Adverse Affects Journal of Counseling

<http://jenniferjill.org/mindfulness-meditation-whats-the-buzz/>

The study, published in January in The Journal of Counseling and Development, says:

“Adverse effects were reported in three major domains: intrapersonal (e.g., increased negativity, disorientation, addiction to meditation, boredom, pain), interpersonal (e.g., family conflicts, more judgmental), and societal effects (e.g., increased alienation, discomfort with the real world). It is interesting to note that respondents with the longest meditation practice history reported the highest rate of adverse effects at each time point.”<sup>[i]</sup>

<sup>[i]</sup> Hanley, et. al, “Mind the Gap: Are Conclusions about Mindfulness Entirely Conclusive?” Journal of Counseling & Development, January 2016, Volume 94

<sup>[ii]</sup> ST (Signs of the Times) APR.14,1890

## Mindfulness Meditation: What’s the Buzz?

POSTED ON [FEBRUARY 19, 2016](#) BY [JENNIFER JILL SCHWIRZER](#)

A Buddhist form of meditation called “mindfulness meditation” has taken the mental health field by storm. It has produced many well-documented positive effects and has been basically touted as a panacea for most psychological ills. In terms of popularity and buzz, mindfulness is to mental health what organic coconut water is to physical health—a somewhat good thing promoted as a cure-all. Some think, “What’s the harm? It has documented positive effects, and at the very least it’s harmless.”

But is it? Relatively little has been said about its adverse effects, but good science and responsible living demand that we examine the whole picture. Fortunately, a study has now emerged that inserts one dissonant note into the otherwise unison chorus of praise for mindfulness meditation.

### Definition of Mindfulness

Before quoting the study, let me define mindfulness and mindfulness meditation:

Mindfulness is the practice of self-awareness, of being “in the moment” rather than letting the thoughts take us elsewhere. When we are mindful, we observe our thoughts and feelings in a detached, non-judgmental way.

Mindfulness meditation involves breathing and relaxation, while clearing the mind of cluttered thoughts and focusing on the breath. It induces a trance-like state that often brings at least temporary relief from suffering.

“Mindfulness” was translated from the Sanskrit word *smṛti*, which means “to remember” and refers to remembering the *dharmas*, or teachings of Buddhism. The student of *smṛti* uses this form of meditation to detach from this world and enter “the stream” which leads to Nirvana, a state of freedom from desire and its consequence, suffering. One doesn’t need to dig very deep to discover

error here because Buddhism, like all world religions except the biblical Christianity, crafts an elaborate method of salvation through self-effort.

As Buddhist mindfulness has become a mainstream practice used in clinical and therapeutic settings, it has lost its religious overtones while retaining its core purpose of detachment from reality, in particular suffering.

### **Pros and Cons of Detachment**

And who wouldn't want to detach from the difficult aspects of life? All have diversions that put a distance between ourselves and our suffering for at least a short space of time. But apparently detachment works like any other good thing—some helps, but too much can harm. Even water taken in sufficient quantities is a poison.

The study, published in January in *The Journal of Counseling and Development*, says:

“Adverse effects were reported in three major domains: intrapersonal (e.g., increased negativity, disorientation, addiction to meditation, boredom, pain), interpersonal (e.g., family conflicts, more judgmental), and societal effects (e.g., increased alienation, discomfort with the real world). It is interesting to note that respondents with the longest meditation practice history reported the highest rate of adverse effects at each time point.”<sup>[i]</sup>

### **Contrasting Buddhist and Biblical Meditation**

Is there a type of meditation that provides the benefits of mindfulness meditation without the adverse effects cited in this study such as negativity, boredom and alienation? I think so. It's meditating on the Word of God. “Oh, how I love your law!” David exclaimed, “It is my meditation all the day,” (Ps. 119:97). Let's compare and contrast these two approaches:

Rather than emptying the mind, biblical meditation fills the mind with spiritual truth. “You should keep your mind filled with the precious promises of God,” Ellen White counseled us, “As Christians we do not make half enough of the promises, for God will never fail in any good thing which he has promised. We should take these promises singly, view them critically in all their richness, meditate upon them until the soul is burdened with their greatness, and delighted with their strength and power.”<sup>[ii]</sup> Notice she is not recommending a Bible study that jumps from line to line here, but rather a focusing on one point at a time, taking the promises “singly.” In this way we receive the benefit of quieting and focusing the mind without the risk of emptying the mind.

Rather than detach us from all desire, biblical meditation refines and redirects our desires. “A new heart also will I give you,” God promises, “And a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh. And I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes. And you will keep my judgments, and do them,” (Ezekiel 36:26 and 27).

Rather than merely detaching from my suffering, biblical meditation attaches me to Christ. God, the ultimate social being, created us in His image. We can't experience fulfillment apart from relationship. Worldly meditation can lead to withdrawal from relationships, but biblical meditation will connect us to God and ultimately lead to healthier relationships with people.

Through a walk with Jesus we enjoy the positive aspects of mindfulness without the negative

aspects. Through meditating upon His Word, we look toward a better world where suffering will end for once and for all.

[i] Hanley, et. al, "Mind the Gap: Are Conclusions about Mindfulness Entirely Conclusive?" Journal of Counseling & Development, January 2016, Volume 94

[ii] ST APR.14,1890 **Screening everything through  
Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy**

But that's not the only reason we use it. In short, it has been scientifically proven as a means of achieving better mood and lowered stress. The author Ellen White said of Christian schools, "The students should be taught how to breathe" (CE 182).

This implies a learning process, which we are attempting to achieve. The way we reason is that New Age-type meditation uses deep breathing, but that doesn't mean we can't.

We believe in screening science through God's principles, and if it passes, embracing it. An example of this is hydrotherapy, which has been used by New Age-type agencies but also scientifically validated as helping depression. We say yes to hydrotherapy because the Bible speaks of the healing power of water (Is. 12:3, 44:3, Amos 5:24, etc) and because it's one of the natural remedies.

**“Prove all things...hold fast to that which is good.” 1 Thess. 5:21**

**Ellen White used hydrotherapy for God.**

**Science reveals the value of hydrotherapy.**

**New agers use hydrotherapy as well.**

**So we follow truth in God’s Word and we do not follow beliefs or practices that twist truth in God’s Word.**

## Research On the Negative Effects Meditation

The study, published in January in The Journal of Counseling and Development, describes the negative effects of non-Biblical meditation:

“Adverse effects were reported in three major domains: intrapersonal (e.g., increased negativity, disorientation, addiction to meditation, boredom, pain), interpersonal (e.g., family conflicts, more judgmental), and societal effects (e.g., increased alienation, discomfort with the real world).

It is interesting to note that respondents with the longest meditation practice history reported the highest rate of adverse effects at each time point.”<sup>[i]</sup>

<sup>[i]</sup> Hanley, et. al, “Mind the Gap: Are Conclusions about Mindfulness Entirely Conclusive?” Journal of Counseling & Development, January 2016, Volume 94

## Contrasting Biblical Meditation and New Age Meditation

### No, Buddhist-Based Mindfulness is Not the Same as Christian Meditation: Debunking the Unconstitutional and Unbiblical Fallacy in Schools

By Christina Stierhoff – Jan. 28, 2021

[https://aclj.org/religious-liberty/no-buddhist-based-mindfulness-is-not-the-same-as-christian-meditation-debunking-the-unconstitutional-and-unbiblical-fallacy-in-schools?utm\\_source=Facebook&utm\\_medium=Informational&utm\\_content=&sf114952925=1&fbclid=IwAR2Sdx9IdVh62zjUynGdZpIIxQ3AVDg5EAK8TB3V\\_MynuYnrM92rdW-24oI](https://aclj.org/religious-liberty/no-buddhist-based-mindfulness-is-not-the-same-as-christian-meditation-debunking-the-unconstitutional-and-unbiblical-fallacy-in-schools?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=Informational&utm_content=&sf114952925=1&fbclid=IwAR2Sdx9IdVh62zjUynGdZpIIxQ3AVDg5EAK8TB3V_MynuYnrM92rdW-24oI)

In our previous posts, we alerted you to the danger of mindfulness in schools, discussed the inherent Buddhist nature of mindfulness, and revealed the deception involved in getting these programs into schools. We thank you for rising to the challenge and partnering with us to eliminate this violation of the First Amendment in our schools.

Some of our clients have been told that school mindfulness programs can mesh with Christianity, or any religion, but this is simply false. **Christianity and Buddhism have opposing worldviews which influence how they both practice meditation.** With this post, we will provide some clarity about the differences between Buddhist meditation and Christian meditation. A helpful summary is provided in the chart below:

Attributes:	Mindfulness	Christian Devotional Meditation
Focus	Self	God, Scripture, & Self
Meditation Relational Context	Self-Awareness (+ Therapist Input in session)	Self-Awareness + God-Awareness (+ Therapist Input in session)
Key Attitudes	Acceptance & self-compassion	Trust, Confession, Surrender, & Grace

*(Courtesy of Dr. James Flynn of Regent University School of Divinity)*

Whereas Zen meditation promotes the idea “that <u>we are connected to the cosmos</u> in a holistic way and that meditation actuates that connectedness,” Christians believe that men and women are image bearers of God and individuals with souls that can be redeemed through Jesus.	Buddhists also believe that people need to <u>escape suffering via mindfulness</u> and that each person needs to find their own path for achieving enlightenment. In contrast, Christians believe that suffering brings us closer to God and that Christ is the only way to receive salvation.
<u>Finally, for Buddhists, love is</u> “an impersonal feeling of compassion,”	while love is – for Christians – “personal, individual and free-willed.”

These differing worldviews affect how both religions approach meditation. Given the Buddhist belief that suffering needs to be eliminated, the purpose of Zen meditation is finding internal peace, eliminating suffering and stress, and achieving enlightenment.

To achieve this goal, Buddhists empty their minds by focusing on an object, a mantra, or their breath to keep their minds from wandering. Likewise, “Eastern meditation focuses on man being in control,” where man can achieve an elevated state of being and save himself from his worries and circumstances by himself. When your children are exposed to Zen Buddhist mindfulness, they are being indoctrinated with the idea that they have the ability to save themselves from whatever ails them by emptying their minds or observing thoughts without judgment.



## Yip Kok Toh is now a 7th-day Adventist

Yip Kok Toh, a former Zen meditator, provides an insider view on the way Buddhist meditation works. He explains that Buddhists do not allow any thoughts in their heads and always return to their breaths to ensure that they empty their minds. Through this practice, meditators are physically altering their bodies. They move from active brain waves to alpha brain waves, and finally, to sleep waves.

In other words, they force their brains to stop being alert and to disengage with reality, as they move into a state of mind similar to falling asleep. Then, they end in a state of mind where their brains move so slowly that they begin to imagine things are very tranquil as if they have floating minds. In this altered state, their brains block incoming data and they lose the ability to feel where they are in three-dimensional space, such as where they are sitting in relation to the floor and other objects. This creates a simulation of being connected to the universe or “one with the universe,” – a core element of Buddhist thought.

When schools teach mindfulness to your children, they are endorsing this same idea of being one with the universe, while also teaching them to ignore their problems. Yip Kok Toh states that this process prevents people from confronting their problems. He explains how it is mere escapism because people feel euphoric due to their altered minds, essentially leading people to forget whatever problems they had before.

Finally, he warns that Zen meditation is addictive given that it releases brain chemicals that make participants want to obsessively continue their meditations. In some cases, children are being taught how to alter their brains in this same manner and to enter into a dangerous hallucinogenic state that manufactures a false reality.

**In sharp contrast to Buddhist mindfulness, the purpose of Christian meditation is to understand what the Bible says and turn away from evil by filling the mind with God’s truth.** Furthermore, Christian meditation focuses on growing your relationship with God and others, as well as growing in holiness and gaining the peace of Christ. In other words, “[w]e remain in the present not for the sake of the present, but for the sake of discovering the voice of God as He speaks to us in each moment of our day.” This highlights perhaps the key difference between Zen meditation and Christian mediation, where Zen empties the mind and Christian meditation fills the mind.

Christians approach meditation by focusing on God’s laws, God Himself, or heavenly things in general, rather than focusing on breathing and our own magnificence like Buddhists. Instead of attempting to alter the mind or reach a different state of consciousness, Christians engage in singing and prayer and use observations of the natural world to ponder spiritual realities. Unlike Buddhist mindfulness and its pursuit of reaching enlightenment, “[f]or the follower of Christ there is no place to ‘get to,’ no striving, no technique. The goal for the follower of Christ is not to relax; it’s to surrender.” **to God and His will**

This difference means Christians can meditate on God’s word regardless of their circumstances and their surroundings as they empty their minds of “ungodly and unbiblical thoughts, of desires for sin and resistance to the reign of God in our lives” and replace them with “the truth of Scripture.”

As they meditate on God’s word and allow Him to transform their lives with His truth, the outcome is confrontation of sins and weaknesses as God reveals them, much like how He did with King David in the Psalms. In other words, “Biblical meditation doesn’t give us an escape from reality, it gives us supernatural strength through the Holy Spirit” to fully address our sinfulness, fears, and problems.

Thus, while many argue that all meditation is the same and that it does not matter what religion someone practices or adheres to, the **Buddhist tenets in the mindfulness programs being rolled out in our public schools directly conflicts with the tenets of Christianity**. Buddhist meditation’s focus on the self, the emptying of the mind, and the belief that all people are one directly opposes Christian meditation’s focus on God, the filling of the mind with biblical thoughts, and reality that each person is an individual made in God’s image found in Christian meditation. Where Buddhist meditation practices relaxation, Christian meditation practices obedience and becoming more like Christ...

Part I – 2

# Biblical Meditation *versus* New Age Meditation



Paul Coneff: Author & Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

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We must **INDIVIDUALLY** hear Him speaking to the heart.

When every other voice is hushed, and in **quietness** we wait before Him, the **silence** of the soul makes **more distinct** the voice of God....

Here alone can true rest be found.  
Desire of Ages, page 363

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A Thoughtful, Contemplative Hour:

"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in **contemplation** of the life of Christ.

We should take it point by point, and let the **imagination** grasp each scene, especially the closing ones.

As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His Spirit." Desire of Ages, p. 83

What three things increase?   

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**Best article on the topic of Biblical meditation versus new age/eastern religion meditation:**

Pastor Mark Finley  
\* It is in your handouts

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**Biblical Meditation:** Ellen White uses...

Meditate/Meditation: 569x

Contemplation: 580x

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**Part 1 - 2** **Biblical Meditation**  
*versus*  
**New Age Meditation**

Paul Coneff: Author & Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

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**A 6-Part Series To Develop  
An Intelligent, Proactive Faith  
Based on God's Word...  
Instead of a Fear-Based Faith**



Paul Coneff: Author & Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

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**Two Ditches the Devil Wants Us  
To Fall Into With Biblical Meditation:**

<p><b>Fear-Based Ditch:</b></p> <p>Afraid of being deceived</p> <p>Throw out any and all prayer connected to the word "meditate" or meditation</p>	<p><b>Faith-Based Discernment:</b></p> <p><b>Prove ALL things, hold fast to that which is true</b></p> <p><b>Wise virgins faith</b></p>	<p><b>No-Fear/No Discernment Ditch:</b></p> <p>Accept ALL the different ways religions "meditate"</p> <p>Presumptive faith</p>
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Jesus' went through negative experiences so He could suffer as He was tempted with all of our negative thoughts – without giving in to them. Heb. 4:15

<p><b>ID My Thoughts:</b></p> <p>I'm Alone I'm Abused I'm Betrayed I'm Tempted I'm Rejected I'm Forsaken Not Good Enough</p> 	<p><b>ID With Jesus:</b></p> <p><b>Alone</b> <b>Abused</b> <b>Betrayed</b> <b>TEMPTED</b> <b>Rejected</b> <b>Forsaken</b> <b>Not Good Enough</b></p> 
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**How do I know that what I am hearing is from God?**

What is the spiritual fruit?

Does it align with God's Word?

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**Biblical Meditation: Section I** | **What does it focus on?**

What Biblical meditation is...

What Jesus said about praying...

What God said about His "still small voice"

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"Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be YOUR name..."

**THY** will be done on earth as it is in heaven..." Matt. 6:9-10

What did it cost your Heavenly Father (\* besides Jesus) to make heaven safe:

1. For eternity? **One Key Rule**

2. For you?

Thinking About Scripture = New Neurological Pathways  Hebrews 10:7-10

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"Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be YOUR name..."

**THY will** be done on earth as it is in heaven..." Matt. 6:9-10

**What did it cost your Heavenly Father (\*besides Jesus) to make heaven safe:**

If you know the answer...  
Ask questions

1. For eternity?
2. For you?

Thinking About Scripture = New Neurological Pathways

**One rule for this discussion:**

You **cannot** include the words:

Jesus  
Savior  
Calvary  
Messiah  
The Cross  
Son of Man  
Son of God  
Jesus Christ

NO references to Jesus at this time...  
**What did it cost God besides Jesus?**

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"Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be YOUR name..."

**THY will** be done on earth as it is in heaven..." Matt. 6:9-10

**What did it cost your Heavenly Father (\*besides Jesus) to make heaven safe:**

3 Minutes  
Groups of 2-3

1. For eternity?
2. For you?

Thinking About Scripture = New Neurological Pathways

**Discussing God's Word in small groups offers the opportunity to:**

1. Talk about scripture instead of just reading the scripture and moving to the next verse (*beyond the surface*)
2. Interact with scripture/talking about what it means to me – with others so that I am actively, mentally and relationally engaged with God, with His Word and with others

**What difference does it make to think about God losing 1/3 of His first family to make heaven safe for you?**

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Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for choosing to give free will to Your family, risking the loss of 1/3 of Your family choosing to reject You:

1. To have Your will done in heaven
2. To make heaven safe for me for eternity

**Biblical Mediation Is:**

1. Thinking about scripture
2. Personalizing it to my life
3. Applying it to my life
4. Praying scripture into my life

**Move into groups of 2-3 to share prayer of thanks**

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<p><b>Vain Repetition:</b></p> <p>Repeating words in a prayer for myself...</p> <p>To try and change God with my many words, which really means that <b>I am playing "god"</b></p> <p>Repetition for the sake of learning is good.</p> <p>Repetition for the sake of trying to change God by repetitive words and/or avoid pain is not good – it opposes Jesus' words.</p>	<p><b>Healthy Repetition:</b></p> <p>Author's <b>repeat</b> themes in their book for the purpose of teaching</p> <p>Teachers <b>repeat</b> themes in their classrooms, Zoom meetings, conferences etc.</p> <p>Pastors preach sermon series where they <b>repeat</b> themes over 3–4 weeks to reinforce truths</p> <p>Straight 2 the Heart repeats truths</p>
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<p><b>Biblical Meditation:</b> Section I</p>	<p>God's still small voice</p>
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<p><b>God &amp; Elijah:</b></p> <p>The LORD passed by, and a great and strong <b>wind</b> tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before The LORD, but the Lord was <b>not</b> in the wind; and after the wind an <b>earthquake</b>, but the LORD was <b>not</b> in the earthquake; (1 Kings 19:11)</p>	
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**God & Elijah:**

And after the earthquake, a fire but the LORD was **not** in the fire; and after the fire, a still small voice.

(1 Kings 19:12)

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<p><b>God's Voice Was <u>NOT</u> In:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The wind</li> <li>* The earthquake</li> <li>* The fire</li> </ul>	<p><b>God's Voice <u>WAS</u> In:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* His "still small voice"</li> </ul> <p>(1 Kings 19:11-12)</p>
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<p><b>Be still and know that I am God.</b></p> <p><b>Psalm 46:10</b></p> <p><b>Not:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intellectual</li> <li>2. Impersonal</li> <li>3. Theological</li> </ol>	<p><b>God wants His relationship with us to be:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal</li> <li>2. Relational</li> <li>3. Meaningful</li> </ol>
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We must **INDIVIDUALLY** hear Him speaking to the heart.

When every other voice is hushed, and in **quietness** we wait before Him, the **silence** of the soul makes **more distinct** the voice of God...

Here alone can true rest be found.  
Desire of Ages, page 363

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**Adverse Effects of Eastern religion meditation**

**Studies on the Damage Done To Us**

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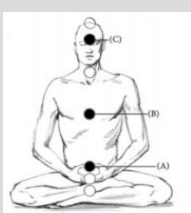
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**"Be still and KNOW God"**  
Psalm 46:10

**Knowing God *versus* Emptying our minds:**

Knowing =  
Being relational  
Activating frontal lobe  
Activating thought process  
Interactive *versus* Passive

**Naturally Induced Altered States Through Meditation**



Chanting is naturally altering my state of mind in a way that is:

- Self-centered
- Self-powered
- Self-willed
- Self-Manufactured

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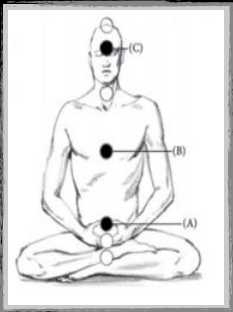
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**The study, published in January in The Journal of Counseling and Development, says:**

"Adverse effects were reported in three major domains: **intrapersonal** (e.g., increased negativity, disorientation, addiction to meditation, boredom, pain), **interpersonal** (e.g., family conflicts, more judgmental), and **social** effects (e.g., increased alienation, discomfort with the real world).

It is interesting to note that respondents with the longest meditation practice history reported the highest rate of adverse effects at each time point."<sup>[1]</sup>

[1] Hanley, et. al, "Mind the Gap: Are Conclusions about Mindfulness Entirely Conclusive?" Journal of Counseling & Development, January 2016, Volume 94



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**The study, published in January in The Journal of Counseling and Development, says:**

**Longest meditation practice =**



**Highest rates of adverse effects**

[1] Hanley, et. al, "Mind the Gap: Are Conclusions about Mindfulness Entirely Conclusive?" Journal of Counseling & Development, January 2016, Volume 94

**Increase in these Negative Effects:**

- \* Negativity
- \* Disorientation
- \* Addiction to medication
- \* Boredom & Pain
- \* Family conflicts
- \* More judgmental
- \* Alienation
- \* Discomfort with real world

32

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**Biblical Meditation versus New Age Meditation:**

Seeking to know God in the context of **His will** – as it is revealed in His Word or...

Seeking to have God do **my will** and/or to avoid my pain

Remove or change scripture = Changing God's Word...

= Removing our names from the Book of Life (Rev. 22:19)

33

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**Biblical Meditation versus New Age Meditation:** Page 41

God's Word tells His children to "meditate" on HIS Word and on HIS law many times in HIS Word – so we need to choose one of two options:

1. Remove these scriptures from God's Word, which is changing God's Word with a **fear-based faith** which also **removes our name from the book of life** (Rev. 22:19) or we can...
2. Discover the difference between:
  - a. God's definition of meditation based on His Word, leading us to develop an intelligent faith in agreement with His Word...
  - b. New age/eastern religion meditation that is based on repeating/chanting mantras, going against God's Word

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**Biblical Meditation: Section 1** | **End of Section 1**

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**Biblical Meditation: Section 2** | **What does God want for us?**

Does God want to bless us with His Holy Spirit so we can hear His "still small voice?"

How does God want to respond to our prayers?

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**Trusting our heavenly Father to be true to HIS Word:**

If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone?  
Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts [blessings] to your children, **how much more** will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" **Luke 10:11-13**

**Asking for blessings from our heavenly Father means that God:**

Will let me be deceived?	<b>X</b>	Will <b>NOT</b> let me be deceived?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**Trusting our heavenly Father to be true to HIS Word:**

If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone?  
Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts [blessings] to your children, **how much more** will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" **Luke 10:11-13**

**When it comes to hearing God's "still small voice:"**

God does <b>NOT</b> want me to hear Him?	<b>X</b>	Wants me to hear Him?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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John 10:3, 27

The sheep hear **HIS** voice; and **HE** calls **HIS** own sheep by name and leads them out...

[Jesus] **MY** sheep hear **MY** voice, and **I** know them, and they follow **ME**.

**When it comes to hearing God's "still small voice:"**

God does <b>NOT</b> want me to hear Him?	<b>X</b>	God <b>DOES</b> want me to hear Him?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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John 8:47

He who is of God, hears God's Word; therefore you do **NOT** hear because you are **NOT** of God.

*\* Am I seeking to know God in the context of His will?*

When it comes to hearing God's "still small voice:"

God does <b>NOT</b> want me to hear Him?	<b>X</b>	Wants me to hear Him?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Romans 8:26-27

God knows our weakness – that we do not know how to pray.

So the Holy Spirit prays for us in groans that are deeper than words and the Holy Spirit translates our prayers into perfect prayers before God.

When it comes to God hearing our prayers:

God does <b>NOT</b> want to hear my prayers?	<b>X</b>	God <b>DOES</b> want to hear my prayers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**Biblical Meditation: Section 2** | **End of Section 2**

God's "still small voice"

Biblical Meditation versus Eastern Religion/New Age Meditation

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Part 3 – 4

## Biblical Meditation versus New Age Meditation



Paul Coneff: Author & Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

43

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### Biblical Meditation: Section 3

### Changing Scripture = Losing

If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of life, from the holy city...

Rev. 22:19 (NKJV)

**What do we do with the word “meditate” when it is in the Bible many times?**

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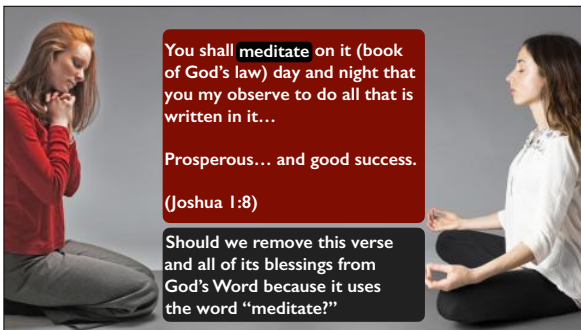
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You shall meditate on it (book of God's law) day and night that you may observe to do all that is written in it...

Prosperous... and good success.

(Joshua 1:8)

Should we remove this verse and all of its blessings from God's Word because it uses the word “meditate?”

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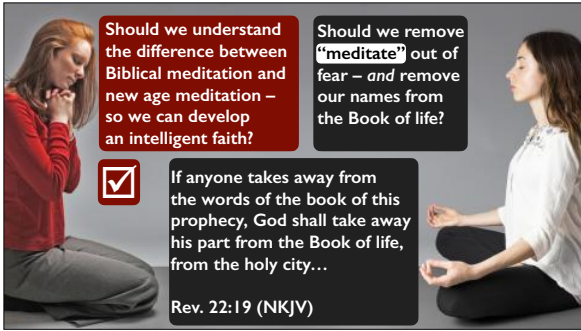
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Should we understand the difference between Biblical meditation and new age meditation – so we can develop an intelligent faith?

Should we remove **"meditate"** out of fear – *and* remove our names from the Book of life?

If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of life, from the holy city...

Rev. 22:19 (NKJV)

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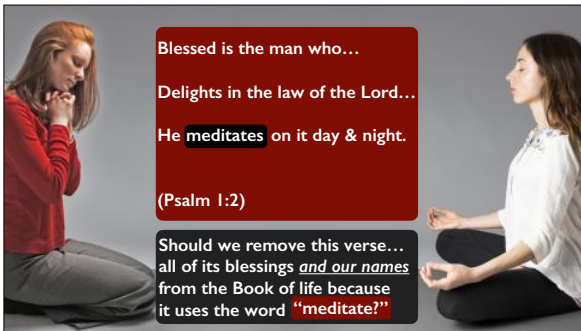
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Blessed is the man who...  
Delights in the law of the Lord...  
He **meditates** on it day & night.

(Psalm 1:2)

Should we remove this verse... all of its blessings *and our names* from the Book of life because it uses the word **"meditate?"**

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I will meditate on Your precepts... on Your statutes..

I shall **meditate** on Your wonderful works...

Psalm 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148

Should we remove these verses... all of the blessings *and our names* from the Book of life because it uses the word **"meditate?"**

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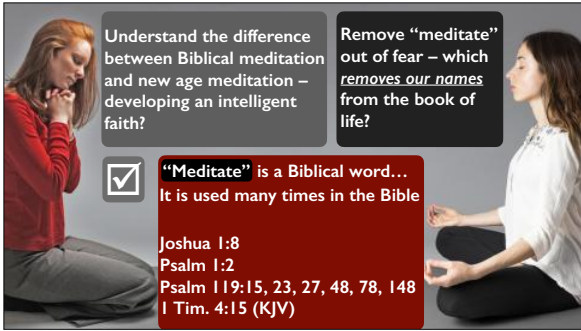
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Understand the difference between Biblical meditation and new age meditation – developing an intelligent faith?

Remove “meditate” out of fear – which *removes our names* from the book of life?

“Meditate” is a Biblical word... It is used many times in the Bible

Joshua 1:8  
Psalm 1:2  
Psalm 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148  
1 Tim. 4:15 (KJV)

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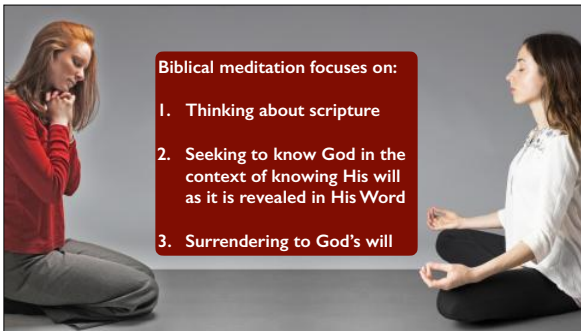
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Biblical meditation focuses on:

1. Thinking about scripture
2. Seeking to know God in the context of knowing His will as it is revealed in His Word
3. Surrendering to God's will

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**Biblical Meditation: Section 4** | **Praying versus Chanting**

Do **not** use vain repetitions as the heathens do.

For **they** think that **they** will be heard for **their** many words... Matt. 6:7

Self-Manufactured & Self-Powered & Self-Centered

51

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Communion with God, thinking His thoughts, sensing His presence, and seeking His will.

Relaxation through escapism techniques.

Praying *versus* Chanting

**Biblical Meditation** **Eastern Meditation**

58

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Logically process and resolve negative thoughts and feelings through God's truth and surrender.

Temporarily flush negative feelings without processing them.

Praying *versus* Chanting

**Biblical Meditation** **Eastern Meditation**

59

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Stimulate Frontal Lobe by prayer and reflection.

Sedate Frontal Lobe by fixating on one phrase, word or object.

Praying *versus* Chanting

**Biblical Meditation** **Eastern Meditation**

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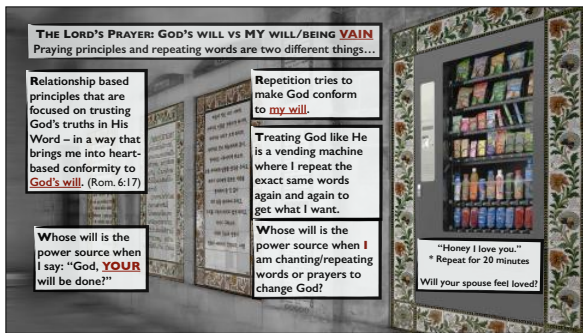
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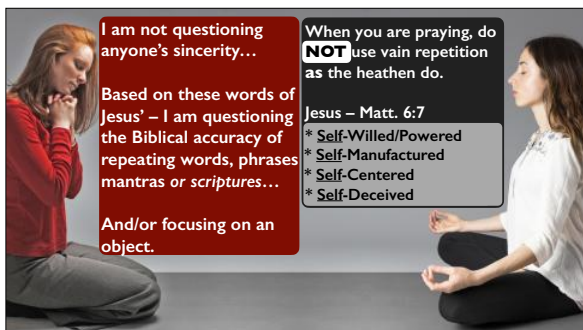
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