

**Xenos Christian Fellowship**  
**Christian Ministry Unit 2**  
**Using Your Bible**  
**Week 1 – Introduction to Inspiration**

**Introduction to Christian Ministry 2**

The focus of this unit is the Bible itself: why to trust it, how to navigate your way through the various books, and how to apply it in your life and ministry.

The central importance of God’s Word in a home group-based church

(David Garrison) “Missionaries experienced in Church Planting Movements would never admit to sacrificing orthodoxy (sound Bible teaching) for the sake of rapid reproduction. Instead they have learned to build the theological controls into the DNA of each church rather than trying to continually reinforce them from the outside.”<sup>1</sup>

(Acts 20:20) “...I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house . . . 27 I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.”

(2 Timothy 4:2) . . . preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

What kind of response unleashes the power of God’s Word?

- A humble and teachable heart that seeks to OBEY what is learned.

(James 1:22) And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don’t obey, you are only fooling yourself.

- A heart that regularly MEDITATES on God’s Word.

(Psalm 1:1) How blessed is the man (whose) 2 . . . . delight is in the law (instruction) of the Lord, and in His law (instruction) he *meditates* day and night. 3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and its leaf does not wither; in whatever he does, he prospers.

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<sup>1</sup> David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements* (Midlothian, Virginia: WIGTake Resources, 2004), p. 196.

(Joshua 1:8) But this book of the law (instruction) shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall *meditate* on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

## Biblical Meditation

What is biblical meditation?

- The Hebrew word (*hagah*) means literally to “mutter” to oneself. The idea is to linger over a truth—to ponder, muse, ruminate, obsess on, ingest it—so that it gets down into your soul and profoundly changes your deepest beliefs and values and affections.

J. I. Packer: “What is meditation? Well may we ask, for meditation is a lost art today, and Christian people suffer grievously from their ignorance of the practice. Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God . . . Its purpose is to clear one’s mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let his truth make its full and proper impact on one’s mind and heart. It is a matter of talking to oneself about God and oneself; it is, indeed, often a matter of arguing with oneself, reasoning oneself out of moods of doubt and unbelief in to a clear apprehension of God’s power and grace.”<sup>2</sup>

- Our choice is not *whether* we will meditate, but *what* we will meditate on.

Why is biblical meditation so important?

- Because of the *positive reward* promised in Ps. 1:3!

George Mueller was a faithful Christian worker until he died in his nineties. At the age of seventy, after many years of ministry in England, he became a world-wide evangelist until he was 87. When he was asked the secret of his long, faithful life, one of the three reasons he gave was “the love he felt for the Scriptures and the constant recuperative power they exercised on his whole being.”<sup>3</sup> Mueller described how he was strengthened by the Bible in these words:

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<sup>2</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 23

<sup>3</sup> *George Mueller: Man of Faith*, ed. A. Sims (privately published in Singapore by Warren Myers), p. 52.

“I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord . . . I saw that the most important thing I had to do was give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to *meditation* on it . . . What is the food of the inner man? . . . The Word of God; and . . . not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts.”<sup>4</sup>

- Because of the *negative alternative* promised in Ps. 1:1,4,5!
- WARNING: Christian workers often neglect meditation because they are busy, and think that preparing for teachings is sufficient.

#### How to get started in biblical meditation

- METHOD #1: Take a very small passage (i.e., one or two verses), memorize it, and “chew” on it for one or more days. Speak it to God as a prayer when you wake up, during the “seams” of the day, before you go to sleep, etc. Emphasize different parts of the verse (e.g., Ps. 118:24). Ask God to show you how to apply it to your life—and take whatever steps He shows you. After you have “chewed” the life out of it (for now), go on to another small passage.
- METHOD #2: Memorize a small psalm (e.g., Ps. 131), a part of a larger psalm (e.g., Ps. 73:23-28), or a several-verse New Testament passage (e.g., Rom. 5:1-5). Pray it to God verse by verse or point by point, pondering and personalizing it as you go. Use these passages this way to get your prayer time off to a good start before going on to petition, intercession, etc.
- METHOD #3: Write a small (e.g., one paragraph) passage out long-hand. This will help you slow down and notice things you may otherwise skip over. Notice especially what part of the passage “lights up.” Write down any musings on this – why you think God is emphasizing this now, how your life would be different if you believed this, what step God is asking you to take, etc. This is an excellent way to gradually go through whole New Testament letters. (Use this method for your homework assignments.)

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<sup>4</sup> George Mueller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord’s Dealing with George Mueller*, 2 vols. (Muskegon, Mich.: Dust and Ashes, 2003), 1:272-273.

## Introduction to the Inspiration of Scripture

OBJECTION: “The Bible is true in passages relating to human salvation, but we should not expect total accuracy from the Bible in other matters (e.g., history, geography, science).”

(1 Peter 3:15) . . . but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence . . .

### Revelation

General revelation

Special revelation

(1 Cor. 2:9-13) “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.” 10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

### Speculation

Definition:

(Isaiah 55:7-9) “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

## What about you?

Do you rely on revelation or speculation in the following areas:

- How to handle a recent conflict
- Determining what constitutes a problem and what we should do about it
- How we should interact with co-workers
- Where to live and what kind of home to buy
- What kinds of activities to direct our children to pursue

## Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI)

Definition of *Verbal* (the words are inspired) *Plenary* (all of the Bible is inspired) *Inspiration* (God-breathed):

*God so moved the human authors of scripture that the resulting product was the Word of God, written totally without error in all that it affirms in the original autographs, in every area including theology, history, geography and science.*

Why must the definition include accuracy in things like history, geography and science?  
Why not just theology?

"Inspiration" does NOT mean:

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(2 Tim. 3:16\*) All Scripture is *inspired* by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

"Inspiration" = *theopneustos*: literally "God-breathed."

(2 Pet. 1:20,21\*) But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Two important qualifications to this definition:

- "*in the original autographs*"

- "in all that it affirms"

Figures of speech

Precision

Narration does not equal affirmation

Literary genres

Selective history does not equal errant history

Topical arrangement

Irregularities of grammar and spelling

"Why does it matter that we have a high view of scripture?"

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### **Memory Verses & Assignment**

2 Timothy 3:16,17\* - All scripture is "God-breathed."

2 Peter 1:20,21\* - All scripture has its origin in God rather than in humans.

### **Assignment**

Read chapters 1-5 of *Does Inerrancy Matter* (see handout). Write a one-paragraph summary of each chapter.