

Toward a More Meditative Life (Barry York)

Quiet.

No, that's not an exclamated command of "Quiet!" at you. Rather, it is an offer, a place noun, hopefully an expression of a desire that you have. You need, and I need, quiet in our lives.

We do not live in a time that encourages quietness and meditation. As Thomas Friedman, columnist for The New York Times, said, "We have gone from the Iron Age to the Industrial Age to the Information Age to the Age of Interruption. "Indeed, we live with the constant interruptions of beeps, blinks, and buzzes. They tell us now the average American spends more than half their days in front of a screen. We are not just interrupted; we are self-interrupted.

As you read the Scriptures, you find that the life of the believer is described typically as one that is peaceful and meditative (see Psalms 1:1-3; 4:8; 85:8 for a few examples). The frantic rush and distraction of the modern age is contrary to the single-minded devotion the Lord encourages in the life of his followers.

So how do we create a meditative life? Mark describes our Lord's life during a busy ministry period in this way: "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolated place, and there He prayed" (Mark 1:35). Based on His example, here are five one-word suggestions, whispered quietly into your ear to encourage you in this direction.

Schedule. The Lord made it a point to get up early and start the day speaking with His Father. In the same way, if we want time with the Lord we need to put it on the calendar. Just like advertisers know that "white space sells", so we need "quiet space" in our scheduling.

Morning. Certainly we are to meditate "day and night" (Joshua 1:8), and anytime is better than no time. Yet note that Jesus, again after a busy day of ministry that went well into the night (Mark 1:32-34), arose "very early in the morning, while it was still dark." Giving the early time of your day to the Lord, before other activities, interactions, and correspondence, has a way like no other of sensing His Spirit's presence and getting your sails set in the right direction for that day.

Location. Jesus went to a lonely place. No crowds. No sounds. No distractions. Now eventually His disciples searched for Him, found Him, and called Him back to work (Mark 1:36-37). But they had to work at it to do it! So where is your lonely place where you can go and not be easily found or distracted? You need to identify it. I would especially encourage having one place to go that is outside. Being out in the creation can help restore you.

Plan. Jesus went to pray. He had a purpose to His solitude. Similarly, you need to decide what you are going to do during your time of quiet by planning. Christians are not to practice Transcendental Meditation, where one seeks to transcend thought through repeating a mantra or prayer (Matt. 6:7). Rather, we are to fill our minds with thoughts of God. What will you read? What will you pray? What will you write down?

Minimize. Finally, note again that the place Jesus went to is described as desolate. That means there was not much there to distract Him. Ever notice how antsy you can become in unanticipated silence? If no one is home, you turn on the TV. If in the car by yourself, the music comes on. If a few moments of inactivity occur while standing in line or waiting somewhere, out comes the smartphone. Manage your lonely place so it is free of gadgets that distract. In order to truly meditate, put away all the items that can become idols and hinder you.

(As a follow up, read this article on Christian 'meditation': <https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/meditation-on-the-scriptures-the-key-to-personal-transformation/>)



3 February 2019 | Service Times: 9am & 11:30am

Welcome, we're glad you're here!

We are a church family committed to following Jesus Christ as Lord. We do this by getting to know him through his living Word, the Bible, which is why the sermon is the key part of our Sunday services. Find out more about us at www.slechurch.org.au.

This Week: Encounters with Jesus—The Stranger on the Road

Understanding why Jesus had to suffer and die is revealed to us through every page of the Bible, and its meaning is grasped joyfully when we believe that Jesus has been raised from the dead.



Next Week: Encounters with Jesus—Restoration after Failure

Today's Service

Welcome and Singing	Man of Sorrows In Christ Alone See the Man
Holy Communion	
Offering	
Community News	
Bible Reading	Luke 24:13-35
Sermon	By Pastor Steven Tran
Song of Response	Glorious Day

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The Stranger on the Road [Luke 24:13-35]

Intro:

1. On the road

a. The “stranger” (24:13-18)

b. Sad retelling of the story so far (24:19-24)

c. Alternative facts (24:25-27)

2. That evening

a. Revelation (24:28-31)

b. Response (24:32-35)

So what?