

# THE M.A.P. METHOD OF MEDITATION

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Select a portion of Scripture relevant to a spiritual problem you are facing or one that deals with a Bible principle or truth you wish to master. Always meditate on Scripture that God's Spirit "highlights" as you are reading the Word.

Keep in mind that you probably will not complete all three of these steps in one day. In fact, it is probably wiser to spend 2-3 days on your passage and take your time with it working it through the grid of this method. For example, you may spend the first day reading your passage and analyzing it intensively. On the second day, you might simply analyze it extensively by looking at a commentary, Study Bible notes, and cross-references. Finally, day three may be spent mulling over applications of the passage to your life. I would suggest setting a daily time frame (e.g., 20 minutes) for you to do your study, and then take as many days as it takes you to complete these three steps.

## **Memorize the Passage**

This often occurs automatically if the passage is studied intensely enough in the next step. It is important when facing difficult times or temptation to know exactly what God has said. It is also important to memorize promises of God in Scripture so that we can exercise our faith by recalling them to mind at appropriate and necessary times. A man who cannot remember God's words is in danger of "leaning to his own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Many people find writing the first letter of every word in a verse a helpful way of prompting them as they memorize. For example, Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Using the first letters, this passage becomes: T W i a l u m f, a a l u m p. You may also want to consider writing the verse out on a 3x5 card to carry with you throughout the day so that you can continue memorizing and meditating on it.

## **Analyze the Passage**

Study the passage, asking the Holy Spirit to give you a thorough understanding of its message.

### **1. Intensive Focus: study of the words in the passage**

List the major words in the passage and use an English dictionary to find out the meaning of each word. Figure out to whom the prepositions refer. Then, rewrite the passage in your own words (i.e., paraphrase it).

### **2. Extensive Focus: study of the passage as a whole and its purpose and context**

Read a simple commentary (e.g., Bible Knowledge Commentary; a devotional book-specific commentary) on the section or paragraph in which your passage is located. Study the notes of a good study Bible (e.g., Ryrie, Life Application, MacArthur, etc.). Of the verse or passage,

ask yourself these questions: what? where? when? how? why? who? Examine the cross-references and trace these several levels deep. Consider outlining the passage or summarizing it with a few sentences in your own words. Keep a journal of your findings.

Keep in mind, however, that you are not just looking for a neat truth or verse for the day. You are looking for a Person—your Heavenly Father. Therefore, those commands, examples, promises, prohibitions, exhortations, and truths are means to an end—getting to better know your God (Jeremiah 9:23-24; Philippians 3:10; II Peter 1:2-5; 3:18). Ask the following questions of the passage in order to help you see God in the text and grow to know Him from the text:

- What does this say about the personality of God/Christ?
- How does it describe Him?
- What actions has He done?
- How does this affect mankind?
- How does it affect me? ...OR...  
What does it say about me?
- How does God view me in light of this?
- Is there something I should rejoice over and praise God for?

### **Personalize the Passage**

Consider and write down two *specific* applications of the passage to your life. Be very specific, mentioning certain times, places, struggles, etc. in your application. General applications will go unheeded and will be useless to your practice of meditation or growth in Christlikeness. Do the hard thing and pinpoint specific things in your life that need to change in light of the passage upon which you are meditating.

If doing a study on God's attributes, your application can take a two-fold approach. First, consider where you have been failing to act according to that characteristic in your own life (e.g., although God is love, you haven't been showing love to your roommate; instead you've been arguing with him). Secondly, consider how this attribute of God applies directly to your life circumstances (e.g., because God is faithful, you may need to prayerfully and consistently trust God to heal your very sick mom or trust Him that His was *is* best).

If you are simply studying a didactic passage of Scripture, plan out concrete ways for change in your life that are consistent with your understanding of the passage you just studied. Plans include schedules, details, techniques, steps, and procedures. Ask yourself, "When have I failed to do this in the past? When am I likely to meet it again? What will be my response the next time I meet this?" Think through the "game plan" *thoroughly* and *in advance* of the next temptation and actually write it out. The following questions, when asked in light of what you learned about God in step 2 (e.g., analyzing the passage), may help you with your application:

- Is there a sin/error to avoid?
- Is there a promise to claim?

- Is there a command/principle to obey?
- Is there an example to follow?
- Is there a condition to meet?
- Is there a challenge to face?
- Is there an attitude to change?
- Is there a character trait to change?
- Is there a sin to confess?
- Is there something to praise/thank God for?
- Is there a prayer to pray/repeat?
- Is there a verse to memorize?

Also, consider using the passage in personal prayer to God. For example, a person meditating on James 4:1-11 may begin a prayer like this: “Lord, you tell me here in James 4:1 that the conflict I’m having with John is the result of my own lusts, my own desires to have something my way. I know that isn’t pleasing to You. Instead of responding in anger to John, I need Your help and grace which You promised in James 4:6 when You said that You resist the proud but give grace to the humble. Help me to humble myself instead of proudly insisting on my way and to allow You to lift me up in Your time.”

Remember, “fullness of joy” and “pleasures forevermore” are only found in a relationship with God (Psalm 16:11). Let us, then, “follow hard” (Psalms 63:8) after our God. Remember the promise of your initiative-taking, gracious heavenly Daddy in James 4:8: “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.”

“And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.”  
 ~ Jeremiah 29:13 ~

**STRIVING TOGETHER FOR  
 THE SCRIPTURAL STRENGTH  
 TO SUCCEED IN OUR  
 SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE  
 (1 JOHN 2:14)**

