



## *Is Your Mind Sabotaging Your Relationship with God?*

Think about it! How often you just stop thinking? Try is for one minute. Even when we're trying to spend time with God, we're thinking about what we need to do next. These thoughts cause us to rush through our devotional time or scripture reading. Our mind has us convinced that we're going to miss out on something if we don't hurry it up. But just like we need to take time to relax our bodies, if we are to have continued mental health and well-being we need to spend time relaxing (and renewing) our minds as well.

According to many scriptures in the Bible, God speaks to his children with a still, small voice. God isn't going to scream at you or cause lightening to strike to make you listen to Him. No, instead, he's going to wait until you become still and quiet. Psalms 46:10 tells us to "Be still and know God." It's implying that it's through our stillness that our relationship with God becomes more intimate.

Do you remember the story of Mary and Martha? In Luke 10, Yeshua was invited to Martha's home for dinner. Martha had chosen to serve Yeshua by busily preparing her home for his comfort, yet, her sister Mary sat as Yeshua feet to learn from him. The text goes on to say that Martha got upset because Mary wasn't helping her and she wanted Yeshua to scold her. However, Yeshua reprimand Martha and said "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her. Most of us tend to be more like Martha than Mary. Martha's spend most of their time doing for Yeshua (having meetings, attending services, singing in the choir, heading committees, making a living, etc) and not enough time just abiding (dwelling) in his presence, meditating, being still enough to listen, and being filled up by his words.

Yeshua said it is only through abiding that we bear much fruit. Christian Meditation is a useful tool to assist believers in getting still before God so that they can build a relationship not based on doing, but on abiding. Abiding promotes intimacy. Intimacy involves time. It involves not only listening but getting to know the person for whom we have affections. John 15:4 declares, "abide in me and I will abide in you." Verse 7 says, "if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." That means we must integrate dwelling with Christ with embracing his word. The abiding builds relationship and the Word of God brings transformation. It also brings blessings our way Just imagine the effect on the world if Christians actually took the time to linger in God's presence!

### **Isn't Bible Study or Church Enough?**

How many times have you heard an excellent sermon or message that inspired you to make some changes in your life, but within a matter of weeks you were back to your old habits and routine? Kind of like those New Year's Resolutions!

The Bible says, you can't put new wine into old wine bottles or you'll ruin the new wine! If you have corrupted thinking, you've got to get rid of it before you can embrace new truth. Here is another example. Remember the parable of the sower? Your mind is like the soil in

a garden. Imagine a garden plot filled with weeds, worms, snails, and the like. You take a perfectly healthy plant and place it in the middle of that garden plot. What's going to happen to it? Is it going to continue to grow and thrive? Absolutely not! Before long the weeds and insects are going to devour it and suck out all its nutrients. That is the same thing that happens when we try and plant new truth, God's truth, in a mind that is tainted with faulty mindsets, past conditioning, and falsehoods. Eventually the weeds are going to take over again.

Therefore, before we can truly embrace God's truth we need to identify and get rid of the weeds planted in our minds: the negative thoughts and debilitating mind sets that we've accepted as truth. They are choking out the word of God and causing our Christian walk to be unfruitful.

If you don't do anything about your mental garden, your mind and spirit will continue to war against each other. This is usually an unconscious pattern. For example, God's word will tell you to give to receive, but your mind constantly tells you to hold on to everything you've got. Your mind tells you to always get the last word, but God says to turn the other cheek and a soft answer calms the situation. Again, your mind tells you to work hard and strive for success, yet the Bible says, seek God's kingdom first and everything you need will be added unto you.

If you don't address the false thinking that contradicts God's word, you'll continue to be what the Bible calls "double-minded" and because we continue to waver in our desires and beliefs, we can't receive anything from God.

### **How to Win the Battle Over Your Mind**

It was practicing meditation integrated with the scriptures that helped me to overcome years of depression. Christ-centered meditation helped me to become still enough so that I could observe what was really going on in my mind. Until then, my mind was controlling my thoughts and ultimately my behavior. It took me being still to even realize it. But once I recognized the thoughts I was thinking I was able to challenge, alter, or eliminate them altogether. Ongoing and consistent meditation taught me how to control my thoughts instead of allow them to control me. We can't change what we don't see or acknowledge. I call it unconscious living. It's when we continue to live on autopilot, doing the same things, the same ways without really considering whether these behaviors are working for us anymore.

Our greatest inspirations and truths come during times of quietness, stillness, openness, and reflection- all components of meditation.

### **Ten benefits of Biblical meditation:**

1. Relax and Quiet your Mind
2. Turn off Compulsive Thinking
3. Understand the Scriptures More Fully
4. Live with More Balance in your Life.
5. Hear the Voice of God More Clearly
6. Live in the Present Moment
7. Abide in God's Presence
8. Create a Greater Intimacy with God
9. Reduce or Eliminate Toxic Emotions like Stress, Anger, and Worry.
10. Observe the Thoughts You Think So You Can Challenge and Eliminate Them

### ***His Shalom***