

“Getting Started” and “Concluding Thoughts”

(God’s Battle Plan for the Mind chapter 12, Conclusion)

2024.02.11 Hopewell ARP Sabbath School

“Getting Started”

1. Pray for Help

1. Going without God is proud folly. It treats an impossibility as if we have the power to do it in ourselves.
2. Going without prayer is going without God. Prayer must drive out pride.

2. Prepare your Heart

1. Count the cost. Expect it to be difficult, and resolve to do it anyway.
2. Expect spiritual opposition, due to the value of the exercise. But precisely due to that same value, fortify your heart to endure and overcome that opposition.
3. Receive the humblings that come with difficulty. As you are attacked, or fail, learn more lowliness

3. Persevere in the Habit

1. Don’t give up when it gets difficult (cf. Pr 24:10)
2. It will be more difficult at the beginning. Therefore, without perseverance, you will never make a real start.
3. Stick to it, even if you don’t experience the desired benefit or comfort every time, or the first time.
4. Christ will persevere in strengthening us; we ought to persevere by His strength (cf. Php 4:13)

“Concluding Thoughts”

1. Growing in Holiness

1. It is through the renewing of the mind that growth comes (cf. Eph 4:23 –24, Rom 12:2)
2. Trying to do this without exercising the mind on Scripture, before the Lord, is folly

3. Without meditation, then, we can expect to be soundly whipped, repeatedly, in the battle to grow in holy living
2. **Growing in Love of Christ**
 1. Love of the world has always threatened to suffocate love of Christ (cf. Jam 4:3–4; Luk 8:14)
 2. Love of the world cannot be eliminated except by being expelled by a superior love of the Lord and His glory
 3. Love of the Lord and His glory must be built up through experience of that glory, through dwelling upon that glory
3. **Growing in Enjoyment of meditation**
 1. If meditation is approached as a burden, or a misery by which we may purchase some other pleasure, we will never begin to do it rightly
 2. Yet, the enjoyment will not be so natural, easy, or great at first. Even enjoyment of meditation is something in which we must grow by meditation.
 3. We should expect and seek an increasing enjoyment of other-worldly sweetness
4. **Prioritizing meditation**
 1. Without it, we cannot honestly say/think that we are putting Christ first
 2. We cannot hope to approach life with a heavenly mindset, if we have not first been engaged in heavenly exercise
 3. We ought to make this our most important daily duty and our most highly anticipated daily delight

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

So, the beginning of this chapter, Uh, says To the beginning, the habit of meditation. Um, One of the points that is made. Over and over in the book, is that in order to Do meditation. Well, it should be very well bathed in prayer. If we seek to meditate without prayer, Um, It will be such a difficult task, that it's not something that we're going to be able to continue.

So one of the points is to Oh, strengthen our walk and to be able to continue. In meditation, you know, all throughout our lives.

So, The next part of The prayer is. We are dependent upon Christ or depend upon God to Remove the Myriad of barriers. If we're not dependent on God, we we really have nothing.

Uh, in Hebrews 4 16. She calls us to come boldly unto, the throne of grace that we may obtain Mercy. And band Grace in our time of need. So someone who wishes to regularly meditate Um, it's not a pass to be accomplished or even attempted in our own strength.

Well, I think he points that out very well in the book that everything we do, should be great of bathed in prayer. And the reason for that is prayer draws strength from God and he is our strength. He is the only strength we have Pretty sure we each one of us know that without him we had no strings.

I got ahead of my notes, I don't have to catch myself back up. Um, The. One of the things that keeps coming out over and over, as we read through is how many Distractions. There are how many things that we have in the world around us that keep us from meditating?

And uh, So, one of the questions is In particular, as why is it so difficult?

So, I'm going to read this part out. And Paul wrote in second Corinthians 3 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves. But our sufficiency is of God.

And spiritual medication meditation is a work of God's. The believer in and of himself, is not capable of this. So again, it goes back to while we bathed all of this in prayer. Our deceitful Hearts seek to convince us that we have the innate ability to live a Christian Life.

In our own power. And so only humble prayer can drive out that equal spirit

And he points out that the task and the duty of meditation may seem daunting to us, but we are not in this battle alone. Uh, the Lord Jesus himself promised to give us sufficient Grace, Deliver the way that pleases him with all our actions and thoughts. One of the things that, We have to be able to do is to willingly accept the difficulties of meditation.

I can attest to the fact that I have It is a difficult past at the same time. You know, the offset is it's a very rewarding task. And again, that's the way. One of the reasons that we wanted to do this series is to help each one, you know, grow in Grace and grow in their spiritual life.

As we seek to be more like him, each day.

Some of the reasons that meditation is difficult, is That the lack of visible accountability. And I was thinking about that. And um, because it is something that you do, you know, in your mind Um, you know, your husband or wife can help you with, it can help your children.

But again, it is your mind. And, You know, we all know that. Satan attacks us at our weakest points and so it's I was thinking about that. That is an interesting thought that that is very much of an impediment. Um, He says. Visible accountability. The slipperiness of the mind.

So another one is Satan's hatred of it. So why does Satan heat? Meditation. Why would he say that? He wants to do anything to hinder our walk with God. Exactly. Or because if you meditate on scripture and God long enough, the only logical conclusion is to worship God and it's pretty anti-safety.

Very good. Well, that's what I was looking for. That is It is interesting that I don't think in our culture for sure. And even in most of the cult, the church culture, Well, very few people have any regard for Satan. If you don't think of him as being the enemy, they don't think of him as being a skilled.

Uh, Warrior. So to speak. And so I think that it does, it helps us to consider that He is the one behind the fact that our mind is not Focused on Christ as it should be.

Another one is a mental laziness. And the ever pressing burdens of life, I think that we all probably in our modern culture have a certain amount of mental laziness, I think I've even thought of it in the past just kicking my mind out of gear. But, you know, when you, when you consider this book and consider the things that we know from scripture, um, that in and of itself does become a lazy, a lazy man.

And so, Instead of kicking my mind out of here, I need to be focused upon Christ. In the scripture that he has given us.

So, we must resolve to be like a soldier. Working continually. To push back against all of the Hostile enemies. Again, that's why I named the Battle of God's battle plan for the man.

So, The next question I have for y'all. Is what do you think is the number one impediment? To meditation. What what, what is? Of all of the things in your life. I feel like this will be an answer, that'll be different for different people. Uh, certainly know my answer.

Then there's some that'll be at the very top so just like to ask y'all what you think. You know, in your life, life of your family. What, what wouldn't eat? You the most. Okay, arrogance. Something that I don't need it. Um, which Uh, intellectually assent to the information. So I've got it.

And spending time in community forward, Is not efficient to me. Um, and Mmm, only so many different directions with the arrogance down there. Finally placed. Can come up with any number of excuses, like I don't know. I think there's a good answer. Make one quick comment on it. It's possible that that is the underlying part to almost all of the other things that are probably going to come out here.

Mr. Russ, I was gonna say dizziness And and distractions tie into that. We're so busy. We put so much stuff to do. That we think we have to do.

We put it all we're so busy that we'll get to it in a little bit, you know? Oh yeah. Well as an occur encouragement against that because I had thought about that. Some one of the things that uh, About when I think about that is 10 years ago, I was as busy as I am now.

Do I remember what I did? And did it have any impact? Oh my spiritual life. So that might give us a little bit of a thought of Knocking back that business. Anyone else?

I don't want to ask this table. Over here, put them on the spot a little bit. Tell me, okay devices. Talk about a lawnmower. Picking up. Hey, Anything like that. It seems to draw you in. Right. I think we all know that one that's a big one and that for me I think probably the hardest one is in any form of entertainment.

Uh, probably for me it's just Sorry about Mr. I said with distractions, not just not making time fermentation but uh, Just having other things going on in mind, that make it hard to really focus for not used to do, carry it off in something else. So does that tie back into what Mr?

David said about arrogance. Would that be that maybe? We don't think we need it. I don't know, or is it just more of a? Maybe I just have to think about that one but I don't know that I would say, that's the reason. Okay. Yes, Liz, maybe it like, part of it's obviously a priority thing.

Maybe not, not necessarily bringing back to air against directly but moving back to what our priorities are. What seems up the most head spaces. Very good. That's a very good answer. All right, Thomas I know for me a lot of my thought like I've always kind of had this inbred theory of everyone's, my monkey and everything is my circus, which is not the healthiest Theory.

But So I know a lot of my thought life goes to okay. This person has this problem. How can I fix it for them? And what often happens is I forget to think about scripture or prayer or my own sin because I'm focusing so hard on how to fix 50 different problems for 50 different people.

You know, I'm sure. Yes. Miss Heather. Say I'm I'm out here, I'm sitting there trying to put everything on the word and all these things, probably behave. So, all the things and before you'll forget later, I can kind of like help it down to the age of thirty walking the doors, you know?

So sometimes is and those things pop into my head, I write it down and they say, oh, look at that later. I'll get to that later right now, I'm focusing out the word and I don't need to worry about that. Okay? To any more. Fuck on that. Not that I'm not arrogant.

I'm just certainly have those mornings. You know, you have those moments your carpets in and you have to discipline that too. Okay.

Thank you for pointing out that out because I I totally agree with you. I've experienced the same thing, okay, John I've been thinking. As a homeschool mother James pointed this out poorly, maybe years ago but certainly months ago but you give up and you get strangers and mad and straight into chemistry or whatever you think your hardest thing is because you want them to be at your best when they're doing part of the subject but the pastor pointed out that you need to get your guests Christ.

And so the first thing we had we do is to do personal devotion. We're at our best at that nearest.

Our subject is always not wrong. Yes, Mrs. Graham For me, it seems like As I'm reading, and I'm trying to meditate on the word. I'll get kind of a rabbit Trail. And I'll be thinking about it. But then, as I plan to apply it or whatever, I kind of go down this and I realize, you know, I've just spent 15, 20 minutes, you know?

And I haven't finished what I, you know, was thinking of me, you know, get through anyway, so it's time sometimes gets away from me, you know, thinking about one particular aspect So I think I guess that's self-control. I mean controlling What you're doing and and as you point out at the very beginning prayer and relying on the Lord, Strengthen you and helping with your Christmas deep.

One of the things that I have been on when I'm reading description, is that God points out sin And that was something pointed out the reality is we don't want to talk about. So I'm ready to teach that from happening is not to be. And so, What would be pointed away?

Are the three saving yourself. Another thing that but the good thing about that is that he does pronounce him and that's in the forwelling for comes with six shot Friday. And flowing across, I don't know.

Very good. Okay. Peter Okay, but then it's not necessarily the immediate hindrance of getting some meditation, but Setting up your next meditations, and your application of Your current or previous one. Just give a point where basically skimming over repeating what you've already read and you're not Getting deep enough.

You're not bathing it with prayer. It's just kind of Introductory prayer reading what you want to read? Think of it for 20 seconds and you go on and that just gets shallower and shallower and shallower to where you're not, you don't get Which I'm good. You're not like all the God's blessings for your current Meditation and you're not setting yourself up for your next one.

So everything just becomes a skimming off the top and cutting by into where it's not just injuring you from getting to one meditation. But you're basically just robbing yourself of a death of God's critics for many many days. Very good. Okay. Nathan. Oh, one thing is we put distractions is our setting or our place of meditation and that can be in a room.

You might see something that you put up for something that we need to do. And I just feel like if you go to a place where, you know that you can like, focus on my scripture and Help. It's like this. I think it needs a lot of practice before you just do it anywhere.

Yes, I think that again goes back to prayer and you know being in a private place with few distractions. So, thank you all. I appreciate the input and I'm glad that you have thought about that. Certainly think that it will, Serve us. Well, as we consider. Um, meditation. Um, Remember that.

Just because a task is difficult. Doesn't mean that it doesn't contain Joy. So contemplating upon the reflection of Jesus in any scripture that we're reading, always should bring joy to our hearts. Another thing about difficult task is, It has the added benefit. Of the Thorns in the flesh. Because that keeps us humble.

Um, not spending time in quality or not spending quality time in meditation. Uh, can be a form of self-indulgence. Well, that can promote God to give us up. Uh, to be buffeted about by Satan. Uh, to teach us humility. And loneliness. That's uh, certainly something that

The men that he used in these, in this meditation. Um, for the Puritans understood that. Well, I think it would do us. We're all to consider that.

So, Perseverance in the habit of meditation. The believer's character. Is tested by what stops him. From doing what is right. So I'm sure you all have all seen it. What a lovely bride because she knows I know that I can't write very well for everybody to see it. She came over here yesterday to put that up for that.

Could be a backdrop for us to think about it. If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. So I think I've been convicted by that a number of times throughout my life and uh, do you think that it helps to meditate upon that in itself?

Because, It does teach us to persevere in our task even when the going gets tough. And it will get tough. I think we all understand and know that one And particularly in the beginning, if this is something that is new for you, Or your family. That that I'm pretty certain will be the hardest part so if you can If you can remember that, that is certainly the way that one of the ways that the Lord grows us and strengthens us.

As we seek to work out our sanctification before him.

So now as we go into the conclusion,

Basically, I just said, put my next point was, and that is meditation is essential for Progressive, sanctification.

Catch back up to myself again.

Paul describes this process of ever-growing change in Ephesians. 4, 23 and 24. Says, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true Holiness. So, this passage reminds us, That a Believer grows into the likeness of God by replacing.

Our sinful attitudes with a renewed perspective. In the spirit of our mind. This battle. Against sin starts in the mind. The thoughts or what one, dwells upon. This is why meditation is so important? It is God's ordered plan for biblical thinking. Renewing the mind. Overcoming sin. And thus growing in Greater christlikeness.

This next one is in my mind, one of the bigger ones because we're going back to entertainment. It says meditation. Replaces the love of entertainment with love of Christ.

So he says, perhaps the best advice I could offer someone who desires to become a stable. Godly person of meditation is to this. Turn off the television. And that goes with all the devices also. And fight the temptation to be an entertainment dominated person. One of the last thoughts here is to learn to enjoy meditation.

Just like anything else, the Lord truly as we meditate upon him as we seek him He does. Give. The joy that meditation gives because we're we're meditating upon him. He is our strength.

One of the last things that he says here that I thought was good. Um, The believer that knows meditation is a scriptural command and Duty should not ignore, its delightful status as his privilege of a child of God. And he says the reality is that the greatest gifts of God to his people Will do no good.

If they are not unwrapped and enjoyed So, I would urge each of you to unwrap this good gift of meditation that the Lord has given us. I know that we will each one receive great benefit from Any other questions or comments?

If not let us pray. Father God, we do uh thank you for giving us this time. This book. The efforts that went into writing it. The efforts of your people to seek to read and understand. Put into practice. The. Habit of the art of meditation. Father, we pray that you would give us the grace From Beyond ourselves to be able to implement this into our daily lives.

As we do seek to, In the light of Jesus. We thank you for this. We pray that you would go with us as we Come before you for public public worship. That you would give your grace to us as we seek to worship you with all of our hearts and minds.

Is in Jesus name I pray. Amen.