



UPPER ROOM
FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

20/20: GO HIGHER

Teaching Letter

August 2020

Summer in the Psalms

(Getting to know God by Practicing His Presence)

I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways. Make me understand the way of Your precepts, So I will meditate on Your wonders.

— Psalm 119:15, 27

Introduction

As I asked you in July, I am asking again: How are you during these days of summer? Are you contemplating having some free time? Perhaps a long weekend away from home? Or maybe a week of vacation in a tropical location? There are many good options during the summer, like picking up a good book and just soaking in the sun on the deck, backyard, or nearby park. How about scheduling at least 15 minutes every day with the best book in the world—the Bible, and spending some intentional quality time with the best Person in the universe—the Holy Spirit?

For example, you can read a Psalm a day and meditate on one attribute of God. In a month, you can read 30 psalms and get more familiar with who God is. If you want, you can read five psalms every day; thus, you can finish all 150 psalms in one month. This is such special grace. The goal is to deepen your intimacy with the Heavenly Father. The point is to make the experience enjoyable and refreshing for your soul, not adding another chore to do during the summer. I assure you that it would be excellent for your entire being—spirit, soul, and body.

*I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all Your
doings; I muse on the work
of Your hands.*

— Psalm 143:5

*On the glorious splendor of
Your majesty And on Your
wonderful works, I will
meditate.*

— Psalm 145:5



Praying:

- For **INTIMACY** with **GOD**
- For **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**
- **KNOWLEDGE** of **GOD's WILL**

August around the corner. Why not try it before the summer is over? Go to www.urfm.org for additional instructions.

Spiritual Disciplines

The word disciple and discipline come from the same root word. In other words, we cannot discuss discipleship and leave out the concept of spiritual discipline. Of course, our focus should be on God, not on our efforts. I simply want to underline the connection that exists between discipleship and discipline.

Practices such as reading Scripture and praying are essential—not because they prove how spiritual we are—but because God can use them to lead us into life.

I like the way Henry Nouwen writes about spiritual discipline:

Discipline is the other side of discipleship. Discipleship without discipline is like waiting to run in the marathon without ever practicing. Discipline without discipleship is like always practicing for the marathon but never participating. However, it is important to realize that discipline in the spiritual life is not the same as discipline in sports. Discipline in sports is the concentrated effort to master the body so that it can obey the mind. Discipline in the spiritual life is the concentrated effort to create the space and time where God can become our master and where we can respond freely to God's guidance.

Thus, discipline is the creation of boundaries that keep time and space open for God. Solitude requires discipline; worship requires discipline, caring for others requires discipline. They all ask us to set apart a time and a place where God's gracious presence can be acknowledged and responded to.

The Bible compares running the Christian life with training for the Olympics' competition. (See 1 Corinthians 9:24-27). The Word of God instructs to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Timothy 4:7). Later in life, Paul urges Timothy, his son in faith and successor in ministry, to pay close attention to the lifestyle of soldiers, athletes, and farmers, learn from their discipline, and apply its principles in the discipleship ministry. (See 2 Timothy 2:2-7).

Christian Meditation

If we are serious about cultivating a genuine intimacy with the Holy Spirit, the spiritual discipline

of Christian meditation may help us. However, as with any discipline, we must set aside time for it; otherwise, it will not happen. Have you tried it before? Is it awesome?

Christian meditation should be an essential holy habit for Christ's disciples. God told Joshua that if he desires success, he must meditate day and night on His precepts (Joshua 1:8). Can we expect anything different? I don't think so.

Let us briefly look at this discipline and set our minds to start practicing it regularly in our walk as Christ's followers.

Christian meditation is meditation in a Christian context. I like Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's definition: "Meditation is a long, ardent gaze at God, His work and His Word." (1) Please do not confuse Christian mediation with transcendental meditation or other New Age practices.

James writes: "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8a). The keyword is—draw near. Do you see this? God, who is omnipresent, places the responsibility on us to "draw near" to Him. I believe that each disciple of Christ, in his or her spiritual transformation journey, is called to practice spiritual disciplines, not in a legalistic way, but under God's grace.

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with Me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. (2)

With these thoughts in mind, let us do some Christian meditation on the Book of Psalms and the attributes of God. Download additional instructions from to www.urfm.org.

With Love in Christ's Service,

Faly Faduma

Life Coach/Author/Spiritual Mentor

PS: I am constantly looking for believers who desire to be equipped for the Kingdom of God.

Question: Do you have a spiritual mentor? Are you looking for one? How may I assist you?

Notes:

- (1) Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, "Spiritual Disciplines Handbook." (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2005), 172.
 - (2) Eugene Peterson, Matthew 11:28-30, "The Message."
 - (3) John Ortberg, "The Life You've Always Wanted."
 - (4) Henri Nouwen, henrinouwen.org. Accessed on June 29, 2020. <https://henrinouwen.org/meditation/creating-space-god/>.
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