

Quiet Time Thoughts - I

Biblical Meditations

SPIRITUAL SNACKS
FOR THE HUNGRY
SOUL



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BIBLICAL MEDITATIONS

Spiritual Snacks for the Hungry Soul

Dr. Samuel Sundar

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1. A Prayer

Prayer:

17 And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Promise & Praise:

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3

Paul's prayer for the Ephesian church teaches us the importance of

1. Getting rooted and established in love
2. May have power to grasp how much God loves us and has demonstrated his love for us.
3. Know this love that surpasses knowledge. This love of God is beyond knowledge. We cannot comprehend it fully. It is infinite. We are finite.

John Wesley expounds the 19th verse this way:

3:19 "And to know – But the apostle corrects himself, and immediately observes, it cannot be fully known. This only we know, that the love of Christ surpasses all knowledge. That ye may be filled – Which is the sum of all. With all the fulness of God – With all his light, love, wisdom, holiness, power, and glory. A perfection far beyond a bare freedom from sin."

We should be filled to measure of the 'all the fullness of Christ'. This is made possible by the power of God. He is able to make you, with his power be filled to the measure of 'all the fullness of Christ'. He is able to do more than we can ask or imagine. This becoming like Christ may appear an impossibility to you. But with God nothing is impossible. He can fill you to 'all the measure of Christ'. He can make you Christ like, though you may believe wrongly it is impossible while you are on earth.

He is able. He will fully fill you. That is the promise.

Do you believe in the power of God?

Are you willing to be filled to the measure of 'all the fullness of Christ'?

Are you established in love?

To be established in love is a prerequisite and the first step to be filled to the measure of 'all the fullness of Christ'.

Let the Lord be glorified for all generations for his beautiful plan of bestowing us with all the fullness of Christ.

Let this be our focus in life.

2. Anxiety as Affliction

Some people feel guilty about their anxieties and regard them as a defect of faith but they are afflictions, not sins. Like all afflictions, they are, if we can so take them, our share in the passion of Christ.

C. S. Lewis

Philippians 4: 6, 7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Even our Lord felt extreme anxiety that his sweat became tinged with blood, in Gethsemane, before the day of crucifixion. But he prayed and submitted himself to God's will.

Some not all anxieties are indeed afflictions through which we share in the divine life of Christ.

3. The Pursuit of Perfection

48 Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. — Jesus, Matthew 5

“THE life of a good religious ought to abound in every virtue so that he is interiorly what to others he appears to be. With good reason there ought to be much more within than appears on the outside, for He who sees within is God, whom we ought to reverence most highly wherever we are and in Whose sight we ought to walk pure as the angels.

Each day we ought to renew our resolutions and arouse ourselves to fervor as though it were the first day of our religious life. We ought to say: “Help me, O Lord God, in my good resolution and in Your holy service. Grant me now, this very day, to begin perfectly, for thus far I have done nothing.”

As our intention is, so will be our progress; and he who desires perfection must be very diligent. If the strong-willed man fails frequently, what of the man who makes up his mind seldom or half-heartedly? Many are the ways of failing in our resolutions; even a slight omission of religious practice entails a loss of some kind.

Just men depend on the grace of God rather than on their own wisdom in keeping their resolutions. In Him they confide every undertaking, for man, indeed, proposes but God disposes, and God’s way is not man’s. If a habitual exercise is sometimes omitted out of piety or in the interests of another, it can easily be resumed later. But if it be abandoned carelessly, through weariness or neglect, then the fault is great and will prove hurtful. Much as we try, we still fail too easily in many things. Yet we must always have some fixed purpose, especially against things which beset us the most. Our outward and inward lives alike must be closely watched and well ordered, for both are important to perfection. “

—The Imitation of Christ, Thomas a Kempis

Jesus calls us to pursue perfection, the way he taught. In our relationship with God, the pursuit of perfection translates into the pursuit of acquiring and living out virtues and weeding out vices by the grace of God.

4. The New Command

13:34 “I give you a new commandment – to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 13:35 Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples – if you have love for one another.”

Yes it was a new command. No one else had given it before Christ. No one could, because it was intrinsically associated with his love for them.

The disciples of Christ, the Christians are to love another. Love another like whom? Like Christ.

How did Christ love them?

1 John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

John 15:12 My commandment is this – to love one another just as I have loved you. 15:13 No one has greater love than this – that one lays down his life for his friends. 15:14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.

Jesus gave his life for us. We have to lay down our life for one another. Self-giving love is what Christ commands and demands from his disciples.

Now Jesus wants others unbelievers to recognize his disciples by the way they love one another. He wants the believers to reflect his love among themselves and show the world that they are his disciples.

How miserably have we failed! How unintentional we are about this command! Thus how irreverent towards the one who gave the command and laid down his life for us. We have failed him. We have not loved like Jesus. We are selfish. We are unloving. We are unconcerned as to how he wants us to live. We live our life our way, choosing the easy commandments and leaving off the harder and central ones. Who gave us the right to do it? We don't have the slightest desire or grievance over the lack of desire to love like Christ. That's not our focus. We are content with bible reading, praying and going to church. We are content with sharing the gospel and making converts who become exactly like us, unloving, irreverent and selfish. Yet before the getting arrested in the garden of gethsemane, Jesus wanted his disciples to know only this. He gave them the new command there. He disclosed his deepest desire for his disciples, as to how they should be. Such precious words, most important precepts for the Christian life has been neglected to the utmost. Many of us were ignorant that he even gave us this command. What darkness!! What ignorance!! What a great deception we have been living, without this love, without this focus in our life and church.

Let us repent. Let us confess to God almighty, we have failed. Let us ask him to forgive us. Let us ask him to teach us and empower us with his Holy Spirit to love like Jesus. That is the will of God for his disciples, his Church.

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us” – Ephesians 5:1, 2

5. Abounding Grace

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8 ESV)

Commentary:

Verse 8. How remarkable are these words! Each is loaded with matter and increases all the way it goes. All grace – Every kind of blessing. That ye may abound to every good work – God gives us everything, that we may do go...od therewith, and so receive more blessings. All things in this life, even rewards, are, to the faithful, seeds in order to a future harvest. Prov. xxii, 9 – Wesley's notes.

Verse 8. "God is able to make all grace abound" – We have already seen, chap. viii. 1 that the word cariv, in the connection in which the apostle uses it in these chapters, signifies a charitable gift; here it certainly has the same meaning: God is able to give you, in his mercy, abundance of temporal good; that, having a sufficiency, ye may abound in every good work. This refers to the sowing plenteously: those who do so shall reap plenteously-they shall have an abundance of God's blessings. Adam Clarke Abounding grace is all sufficient.

God wants to bless us so that being sufficient in all things at all times, we can do good works with them. Blessed to be blessing. God's will for us is to abound in all things at all times. God will not leave you in lack. He will bless you and make you into a blessing for others. This is accomplished by his abounding grace.

6. Wisdom Equation

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil;

Proverbs 1:7 Fearing the Lord is the beginning of moral knowledge (Wisdom),

Therefore,

Wisdom = To hate evil

Hate evil. Hold on to what is good. Romans 12:9

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” = WISDOM

Wisdom in the bible is a moral category, not an intellectual category. We love evil secretly and have no desire for many a good and holy idea. We need inner change , soul repair!

7. Soul Repair

All things have been created through him col 1:16

In him all things hold together col 1:17

Jesus is the creator. So he can repair my problem and remake me. He will teach me how to live life rightly. Think how different it would be to learn how to use ipad from Steve Jobs. Infinitely greater it is to learn how to live from Christ, our designer and maker.

Jesus is the sustainer, so he will take care of my needs. He will satisfy my longings .Submit to Christ, his law of love, his teachings from the Sermon on the Mount. These form the core of the manual according to which your life has to be operated. The Holy Spirit will help you. Depend on him and he will change your desires and affections and appetites and you will be free to operate according to the operation manual of Christ.

8. Christ is the revelation of God to Man

For ages saints, sadhus and sages were searching for God. Finally God came to meet them and everybody else in and through Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:15 -The Son (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God.

I cannot see God. But in Christ, who is God in flesh, I can know about God by studying his character. I can in faith pray, obey and see him interact in my life. I can experience God. I can talk to God. I can know what he wants me to do, how he wants me to act and react. Jesus answers the question, "What is God like in his character, essence?"

By looking at Christ, I see that, God is sinless, deeply in love with his creation to the extent of coming down to die for us on the cross. So God cares. He is merciful, gracious and forgiving. I see that he is patient, infinitely patient.

Christ is the manifestation of the unseen god. The character of Christ reveals the character of god.

9. Peace and Unity

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians

Paul calls the believer to

1. Let the peace of Christ rule in their heart: Unity is the posture of the Church which God commands. We are called to peace. Are you at peace with all the believers?
2. Have an attitude of gratitude
3. Live as a community/family according to the Message of Christ. The teachings of Christ as crystallized in Matthew 5-7 and on various occasions as recorded in the gospels. To successfully accomplish this end we have to teach and correct each other, encourage each other through psalms, songs etc. with again gratitude
4. Do everything for God, in the way which will please him, righteously, lovingly with integrity, in the name of Christ and giving thanks to God the father who has given the ability and opportunity to do whatever we are doing. Doing everything for God, as opposed to doing everything or something for the self. Total self-denial with thankfulness!

10. Sync Aim with Christ

Aim of Christ: 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight. Colossians 1

Aim of Paul: 28 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. Colossians 1

Paul was working to fulfill CHRIST'S goal for the believer and Church. There was unity in purpose and unity in outcome between Christ and Paul. Paul did not have his own agenda for the church. Both of them were working towards perfecting the church in holiness.

How about you? Are you as a minister/servant working towards that end of presenting everyone fully mature in Christ? Are you as an individual submitting daily to the perfecting work of Christ through the Holy Spirit in your life?

11. Two Sides of A Coin

Many people think, faith is just believing. But faith has two sides like a coin. One side is belief and the other behavior. The one without the other is not faith.

The apostle James in his letter writes,

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my[b] works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. James 2.

This passage is quite clear, isn't it?

To escape the error of salvation by works we have fallen into the opposite error of salvation without obedience. -A.W .Tozer

Consider your idea of faith. Is it biblically accurate?

12. Come What May

One foot in and one foot out
I'm up for grabs, my future's in doubt
No more runnin round and playin this game
It's time for me to make a stand for your name

Enough, nuff, enough is enough
No more white lies it's time to hang tough
Enough, nuff, enough is enough
No more foolin with compromise. No! No! No!

Russian roulette a loaded gun
Shot in the dark the damage is done
I take my chances hope my aim is true
I know inside, what I'm missin is You

I can't pretend to walk in the light
While all the while I live for the night
And like a bullet between the eyes
It's time for my to realize

Enough, nuff, enough is enough
No more white lies it's time to hang tough
Enough, nuff, enough is enough
No more foolin with compromise. No! No! No!

I fell the heat inside, a burning fireball
It's time to choose a road, cause I'm heading for a fall
I will heed the Master
No more living with my back against the wall

This song sung by white cross, speaks about the compromising life many Christians live. One foot in the world and the other in the kingdom. Trying to serve both God and Satan, Kingdom and world, spirit and the flesh. Trying to please God as well as men. Living without any convictions. That's not God's will for anybody. You cannot serve both God and everything that opposed to him and his kingdom. You have to make your choice to take a stand for the Kingdom of God, choosing to live only by Kingdom values, whatever the cost, come what may!

Around 10 years back I had to make a choice. Having a compromising lifestyle as a Christian is the most torturous experience you can ever have. I knew the Lord, I was externally a very normal Christian. But inside there were there struggles, battles, constant defeats.

One of the compromises I had to deal with was cheating in exams I.E copying from others, helping other in the exam hall .etc. I did this in the first year of medical college and I flunked my first year. It was a big blow. But then God convicted me and helped me to make a stand in the examination hall. In the second year, i went to the exams after hearing this song multiple times the day before. I just wanted to do it right, that was and is success for me and God took/takes care of whatever happened . And I cleared the second year, though there were questions I did not write because I did not know and I came out of the exam hall earlier than any of my friends. Even though I did not write all the answers all the times, there was this strong confidence that I will pass all the exams as God is going to take care of that side of the happenings. I experienced God's providence in an amazing way and I still continue to do the same.

13. Why do I Sin?

John Piper: "The only reason we sin is because we want to."

St. Paul:7:18 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I want to do the good, but I cannot do it. 24 7:19 For I do not do the good I want, but I do the very evil I do not want! 7:20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer me doing it but sin that lives in me. Romans

So sin even when we don't want to. The only reason we sin is not because we want to as Mr.Piper says. Because we are born with a sinful nature in us and have practiced sin over the years and have become slaves of sin.

Therefore St.Paul is right and Mr.Piper wrong!

Solution to the problem of "Slavery to Sin"

JESUS :

8:31 Then Jesus said to those Judeans 65 who had believed him, "If you continue to follow my teaching, 66 you are really 67 my disciples 8:32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 8:33 "We are descendants of Abraham," they replied, "and have never been anyone's slaves! How can you say, 'You will become free'?" 8:34 Jesus answered them, "I tell you the solemn truth, everyone who practices sin is a slave of sin. 8:35 The slave does not remain in the family forever, but the son remains forever. 8:36 So if the son, sets you free, you will be really free. John

St.Paul: 6:17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves to sin, you obeyed 16 from the heart that pattern 17 of teaching you were entrusted to, 6:18 and having been freed from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness. 6:19 (I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.) 18 For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. 6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with regard to righteousness .Romans 6

The reality of becoming a slave of righteousness depends on your submission to live by the teachings of Christ.

14. Vanishing Love

“O Israel and Judah, what should I do with you?” asks the LORD. “For your love vanishes like the morning mist and disappears like dew in the sunlight”. Hosea 6:4

God’s love for us never changes. It never ends.

But what is our response to his love?

Is it like the morning mist which melts at the appearance of the first rays of sun?
Or is it like the dew which can be seen in the morning hours but subsequently disappears?

Is your Love for God based on situation? Do you love God the same way during difficult times as you do when everything is going good?

Jesus said in John 14, “The one who keeps my commandments is the one who loves me...”

Do you love God i.e obey God with wavering Or does your love and obedience vanish and depreciate with the onslaught of difficulties?

And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised. 2 cor 5:15

15. How should I Love?

It's simple but very hard to execute. The problem is same as that of Saul, who did not obey the lord as he was told. The problem with our obedience is that it is partial, incomplete and thus disobedience i.e. we've still missed the mark.

Take for example the command to Love God. Jesus does not just tell us that we should love God but also the extent to which he deserves to be loved. Most of you reading this do love God. But is the extent of love as God wants it to be?

Do we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength?

Many times we don't. We don't know how one can love God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. If we had known, we would still be struggling to live it out.

But it is possible at a given point in time with the power of the Holy Spirit to Love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, for nothing is impossible with God. Do you believe that?

Now many think, love for God means, reading his word, prayer and going to Church. It definitely includes these. But the problem is that it does not stop there and our obedience many times stops here. If that is the case with you, then you have mistaken the means for the end. Scripture, prayer (fellowship with God) and Church (fellowship with one another/not the building where we meet) are means of Grace. They are the means by which we obtain grace to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

John 14:21 "The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him."

We thought we can know God by reading the bible prayerfully. Sorry! We can only know ABOUT God by reading the bible prayerfully. But if you really want to know God, then he has to reveal himself to you. That according to Jesus happens only when you love him by obeying his commands. So don't be misled.

When Jesus says to love him, it means, "Obey me". Love and obedience

synonymously used by Jesus.

So when your obedience is partial i.e. disobedience, then in what sense are we loving him? If you don't love him then he will not disclose himself to us.

This I see is the problem.

I will help you focus on the new command of Jesus. John chapters 13, 14 and 15 revolve around this theme.

John 13:34 "I give you a new commandment – to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.³⁵ Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples – if you have love for one another."

Again let me remind you. We have to look at the extent of what is commanded. It is NOT love one another as much as you can, which is what we do. When we do this we are still disobeying and living in self-deception. It is precisely what it says. It is "love one another as I (JESUS) have loved you".

Have you ever even thought about loving someone like Jesus?

Now this is how apostle John (not I) thinks it works out.

1John 3:16 We have come to know love by this: ⁵⁶ that Jesus ⁵⁷ laid down ⁵⁸ his life for us; thus we ought to lay down our lives for our fellow Christians.

Now how much do we love God?

Lord, teach us to love. Sorry! Lord, teach us to love like Jesus. Amen!

17. Being and Becoming

1:15 but, like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all of your conduct, 1:16 for it is written, “You shall be holy, because I am holy.” 1 Peter.

God is a necessary being .He is necessary for everything else to exist but he himself does not need anyone or anything else for him to exist. He is immutable. He does not “become” anything. He “is”. There is no becoming for him. He is HOLY, which means he is set apart, unlike us. God has only being, no becoming.

We, humans on the other hand are contingent beings. We need God. We are dependent. Without him nothing would be there. He is the creator and we are his creation. Contingent beings can change for better or for worse. We are NOT Holy, but sinful in every way. Throughout life we go through the process of “becoming” someone good or bad. We have both being and becoming.

In the passage quoted above Peter says that God is Holy and we should become holy in all our conduct and behavior. God’s will is that we must “become” like him, Holy, in ALL our conduct.

What are you “becoming”? Are you “becoming” more and more holy, more like Jesus, as you continue in your Christian life? Is that your aim, intent? Are you aiming for Holiness in all you say and do?

May God help you to aim to become holy in everything!

18. Cultivate Contentment

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Hebrews 13

Contentment is rarely preached from the pulpits and rarely practiced in the pews.

This passage pitches contentment against love for money. It assumes God as the provider who provides everyone of his children with the necessary or needed money through various means.

It connects a command with a promise. The command says, "keep yourself free from the love of money" and the basis for this command is the promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you".

In other words, since God will never leave you nor forsake you , but will take care of you under all circumstances, you should be content with his providence and not lead a life in pursuit of money.

What best describes your life? Contentment? Or love for money?

Keep yourself free from the love of money and be content because God will never leave you nor forsake you.

19. I am Born Again. What Next?

1. You have purified your souls by obeying the truth in order to show sincere mutual love. So love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

1 Peter 1:22

Here the obedience to truth which Peter is talking about is the Gospel truth.

The argument is presented like this. You have been purified by obeying the Gospel truth so that you can live the born again life which is nothing but showing sincere brotherly love from a purified or born again heart. This is the positive side of the equation as to what you should do after accepting Christ and becoming a born again Christian.

2. You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. 1 Peter 1:23

For all flesh is like grass

and all its glory like the flower of the grass;

the grass withers and the flower falls off,

but the word of the Lord endures forever.

And this is the word that was proclaimed to you.

So get rid of all evil and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

And yearn like newborn infants for pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation,

1 Peter 1:23 – 2:1-2

The second argument which follows the first can be paraphrased like this

You are born again by the eternal word of God. So get rid of the following

1. All evil
2. All deceit and
3. All hypocrisy
4. All slander

This is the negative or the negations which should be accomplished

3. Yearn for pure spiritual milk 1 Peter 2:3

This is nothing but the basic truth of the Christian faith like repentance, confession, holiness, prayer, giving, forgiving, brotherly love etc.

In other words hunger and thirst after learning to live these basic spiritual truths in your life.

Now you've got a good scriptural teaching on what a new born again Christian should be focusing in his spiritual infancy.

May God open your eyes to see the truth? Amen

20. Spiritual Wellness

When does the bible say a believer in Christ is doing well spiritually?

I once thought if I had my quiet time and prayer, I am doing well spiritually.

Some of you may think you are doing well spiritually because you are doing the ministry given to you successfully ,use your spiritual gifts, fulfill responsibilities given in fellowship sincerely, just attend Sunday service, not smoke and drink and conform yourself to some standard of pagan morality .

But the bible teaches differently. All the above are needed but not enough to be spiritually doing well.

What more?

'If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.'

James 2:8

So how are you spiritually? Doing well? Really?

CONTACT

samuelinba2@gmail.com