

Meditation

Meditation is God's direct, unmediated word to the meditator. In contrast to this, the thoughts and feelings from devotional reading are mediated through printed materials. Or in prayer it can be said that we speak to God, while in meditation we listen as God speaks to us.

In both classical and contemporary discussions, two major types of meditation can be distinguished. The first may be called discursive meditation. This is thought-full and problem solving. It proceeds by gathering relevant data in the mind and organizing that data by logical thought. The second type may be designated contemplative meditation. This involves emptying the mind of logical thought in favor of spontaneous feeling and intuitive insight. We call the first type meditation and the second type contemplation. We will postpone discussion of contemplation to the next section.

Meditation can be described as thinking in the frame of reference of God. That is, meditating on a problem or subject or situation within a God-frame reference: You the problem/subject/situation and God.

Practice

Prepare for meditation. Relax the body and mind. Consciously recognize the presence of God as the central, creative power in all reality without whom the fullest truth cannot be seen.

Identify a subject that is important to you at the moment. Meditation stops the meandering of the mind in order to concentrate on a single topic.

Concentrate thinking on the subject selected.

This suggestion immediately raises the ever-present problem of distractions during meditation. The problem is not so much disturbances around us as it is noise within us. Perhaps most often applicable is the suggestion that we simply acknowledge the distraction and quietly lay it aside.

To concentrate thinking is not only to exclude the irrelevant, but also to try to call to mind everything that is pertinent to the subject.

Recall God's purposes and guidelines. This is actually not a separate step in the sequence of meditation. Instead it is a continuous aspect during the entire meditation time. We select a subject with the intentions of God in mind. We collect data in the light of what is ultimately important. We compare possible solutions with the goals to which God calls us.

When we have continued the process long enough, illumination will come.

Plan application of the new insight. Fruitful meditation always leads to changes in belief or action which are to be incorporated into total life-style. We cannot expect to be ready for more advanced guidance until we have appropriated what was previously received.

A meditation time may close with a prayer of thanksgiving for God's gracious gifts of insight and petition for God's sustaining guidance in carrying out commitments we have just made.