

Jesus binds himself to his people. No expiration date. No end of the road.
Our side of the commitment will falter and stumble, but his never does.

—Dane Ortlund

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the
Riverside Baptist Church)

36. Q. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins (Rom. 3:24, 25; and 4:6, 7, 8), and accepteth us as righteous in his sight (2 Cor. 5:19, 21), only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Rom. 5:17-19), and received by faith alone (Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

37. Q. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace (1 John 3:1), whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God (John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-17).

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Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

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THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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ACCEPTANCE AND MEDITATION

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer. Psalms 19:14

There is a precious connection to our thoughts, our thinking, and our relationship to the Lord in true worship and praise. We are reminded of the fact that in regeneration we are said to have the mind of Christ implying both His nature and His knowledge. We are reminded of such thoughts from Paul as “Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus,” and we see also: *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:2)*. We note that the word “affection” is a reference to that which is thought upon in a way of devotion. Acceptable meditation is of necessity spiritual in both its content and implementation and involves a deep devotional connection with the Lord. “O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.”

Men tend to be concerned about their outward behavior in that it shapes the views of others toward them. Most want to appear favorable in the sight of friends and associates. There are those whose outward actions seem to intentionally create a bad image in the minds of their observers. The hypocrite will manipulate his outward appearance in ways that will bring profit, praise or acceptance to him. Yet the scripture cuts to the heart of the matter in declaring: *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. Proverbs 23:7*.

While the prayer of David here is for outward conduct that would honor God, he shows awareness that it is his heart that is most visible to God. He would have his heart so ordered that

the ponderings and wonderings of his heart would find a place of acceptance with God. He would have his innermost thinking to reflect those things that are pleasing in God’s sight. So it is that we are encouraged to meditate on things good and profitable and God-honoring in every way. Paul would submit a list of things that should be pleasant to the sanctified heart and then enjoin that we “...think on these things.” Philippians 4:8. Of the “Blessed Man it would be said: *But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. Psalms 1:2*.

The ability to meditate is a precious gift. It is not enough that we received the precious revelation of Jesus Christ to ourselves in salvation -- Ye must be born again! It is the further design of God that we should look upon Him and contemplate Him and wonder at the greatness of all that He is and all that He has done. Much of what is passed off as religious activity today only encourages a cursory glance and an empty claim to an interest in Him. But the true men of God took time to meditate. Consider Isaac as he anticipated his bride. *And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold, the camels were coming. Genesis 24:63*. As Paul would relate essential doctrinal truth to Timothy he placed stress upon their importance in this way: *Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 1 Timothy 4:15*. Thus, the Spirit of

David's prayer was directed to Timothy (and to us) in that by continual thinking on and review of the precious truths of the Gospel others would see it as well.

Elsewhere the Psalmist declared: *My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD. Psalms 104:34.* We are enjoined by the prophet that we should "consider our ways" with a view toward turning to the Lord. In those who have turned to the Lord the thoughts become most pleasant. The meditations of such hearts will certainly include all that is praiseworthy in Him. "Yea, He is altogether lovely." But such thoughts will also turn to what has been obtained by His grace and mercy. How easily the words "Christ died for my sin" roll off the lips of many. But, who of us considers what all His death entailed? Do we think of the depths of His redeeming love for His own that would move Him to suffer so intensely that we might have life and have it more abundantly? Do we think with wonder at the glorious discovery of His resurrection on the third day? Do we reflect on the greatness and completeness of His victory over death, hell, and the grave? Do we think longingly of things to come in our eternity with Him? Are these mere passing thoughts or do we take the time to mull them over and over again in our hearts as well as our minds?

Such meditations will invariably lead to an increased desire to be pleasing unto God. In thinking of Christ in us and us in Him we know of God's design that He would dwell with us and that we should be His people and He would be

our God indeed. Thus, our daily walk becomes a matter of careful thought. Again, we read of David, *My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes. Psalms 119:48.* The child of God recognizes the wisdom of God in all that is set before him. And, in that the love for God drives our thoughts there is no drudgery in those things. They two become a matter of meditation in that they display the holiness of God and the character of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Like so many other things related to the grace of God the flesh opposes true meditation. The "old man" will try to lay claim to our time and introduce whatever distractions he can. He would occupy our thoughts and our time with the things of this world. Paul taught us to redeem the time in that the days are evil. His meaning is that we should fill our time with the things of the Lord. A portion of this should be given to meditation. And meditation on the things of the Lord should accompany all that we do. It is important that we review all that we have in His hand over and over again. Our reflection should take us to His Word and remind us of such grace that brought salvation. We should delight in the knowledge of His power and relish the fact that He so tenderly attends our way. May we say with the Psalmist: *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. Psalms 143:5. bhs*

(This article was slightly modified from July 2012)

Psalm 19:14

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer." A sweet prayer, and so spiritual that it is almost as commonly used in Christian worship as the apostolic benediction. Words of the mouth are mockery if the heart does not meditate; the shell is nothing without the kernel; but both together are useless unless accepted; and even if accepted by man, it is all vanity if not acceptable in the sight of God. We must in prayer view Jehovah as our strength enabling, and our Redeemer saving, or we shall not pray aright, and it is well

to feel our personal interest so as to use the word my, or our prayers will be hindered. Our near Kinsman's name, our Goel or Redeemer, makes a blessed ending to the Psalm; it began with the heavens, but it ends with him whose glory fills heaven and earth. Blessed Kinsman, give us now to meditate acceptably upon thy most sweet love and tenderness.

– C. H. Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*

The Gospel to the Lost . . . Grace to the Saved" by Charles R. Swindoll

Want a wonderful paradigm for ministry? Paul's message emphasizes the gospel to the lost and grace to the saved. As I've studied the life of Paul, particularly in his later years, I find two prominent themes woven like threads through the tapestry of his ministry.

First, his message offers the gospel to the lost:

“Let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses” (Acts 13:38–39).

Imagine the impact our churches would have on our communities if each Christian committed to sharing the gospel once a week with someone who expresses a need.

Second, his message includes large doses of grace for the saved. Just as the lost don't understand the gospel, the saved rarely understand grace. There are few activities more exhausting and less rewarding than Christians attempting to please the people around them by maintaining impossible legalistic demands.

What a tragic trap, and thousands are caught in it. When will we ever learn? Grace has set us free! That message streams often through the sermons and personal testimonies of the apostle Paul.

The lost need to hear how they can cross the bridge from a life filled with emptiness and guilt to a life flowing with mercy and grace, peace and forgiveness.

We help build this bridge when we lovingly and patiently communicate the gospel. You don't need a seminary degree. You don't have to know a lot of the religious vocabulary.

In your own authentic, honest, and unguarded manner, share with people what Christ has done for you. Who knows?

It may not be long before you will know the joy of leading a lost sinner from the darkness of death's dungeon across the bridge to the liberating hope of new life in Christ.

Once they've arrived, please release them. Release them into the magnificent freedom that grace provides.

Don't smother them with a bunch of rules and regulations that put them on probation and keep them in that holding tank until they “get their lives straightened out.”

Making us holy is the Spirit's work, not ours. You be faithful to dispense the gospel to the lost and grace to the saved. Then leave the results in the Lord's hands.

That was Paul's paradigm.