

# KNOWING GOD'S VOICE-PART IX



## The Process of Meditation

Since this is a very technical article-one designed to show you how to-it seems best to start with some definitions.

### **Meditation**

**Listening to God**

**Thinking His Thoughts with Him**

**Finding out God's Viewpoint**

**Giving God an Opportunity to Speak**

**Discovering the Truth**

**Truth**

**The Reality Behind Appearances**

**Appearances**

**Sensory Impressions**

**Process**

**A Method of Doing Something to Arrive at a Particular**

**Result**

**Habit**

**Something Done Naturally & Spontaneously Without  
Conscious Effort**

## Introduction

The Christian life is a life of doing God's will with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As believers, we are constantly faced with a multitude of decisions. Therefore, to make decisions and live in God's Will we need a simple method of finding out God's Will, and of thinking God's thoughts with Him.

We will define this method as **the process of meditation**. Finding out God's Will and Thinking God's thought with Him cannot be understood by merely looking at the concept. Meditation has to be experienced by a person seeking to know God. It is a **process** consciously and consistently repeated until it becomes a **habit**. And the habit of meditation is essential to a successful Christian life.

### Understanding the Process of Meditation

We saw in the last article that what we feel and do is determined by what we think. We are now going to examine the process whereby we can know God's thoughts on a given matter; so that we can do what He wants us to do. Understanding our thought life helps us understand the process of meditation, which begins when our attention is focused on a problem, person or condition.

Sometimes we choose what we are going to think about, what we will focus our attention on - watching a certain TV program reading the Bible, or writing to a friend.

Other times we are forced by the circumstances of life to think about certain things, and the focus of our thoughts is usually not one that we would have chosen for ourselves. Our attention is drawn and held by the situation at hand - a rebellious child, an angry boss, or a bounced check.

However they come to us, the thoughts in our mind affect the way we live. They come from one of three places:

1. Through the five senses, the eyes and ears in particular. That is, we see or hear something in the physical world.
2. From the subconscious mind, or reservoir of remembered experiences.
3. From the spiritual world.

How can we determine whether these thoughts are true or false? How can we find the truth?

Here is a process that I pray will become a lifestyle for you, as it has for me. To help you understand the process you go through in meditation, let's set up a situation that might occur in real life. We will observe and interpret the situation. Then we will stop during each step to check our progress.

### Step



### The Object of Your Attention - The Fact or Situation That is on Your Mind

Meditation begins with what you are currently thinking about, the "object of your attention," at the moment.

For our set-up situation, we will create a scenario in which your teenage daughter comes home two hours late. She was told to be home by midnight, but it is now 2:00 AM. You have waited up worrying about her. She becomes the "object of your attention." (Step 1)

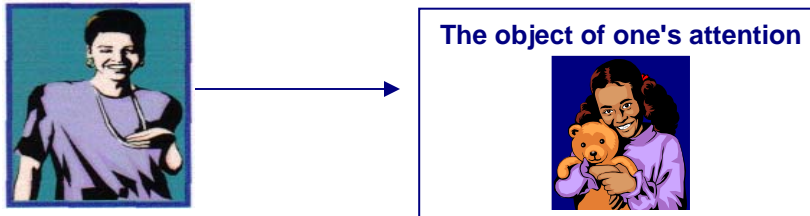
There are some important facts we must observe about any "object of our attention."

**A.** We have a very limited view of any situation. Regardless of how experienced or mature we may be, we 'see' only the outward appearance. This is a sensory view, only what we perceive through our biological senses. It is never the whole picture.

Let us take a biblical example. When God sent Samuel to anoint a king for Israel to replace Saul, He instructed Samuel not to consider physical appearance (Saul was tall and handsome, but had sinned and been rejected). "Man looks at

the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (I Samuel 16:7)

God not only looks at the heart of man, He sees beneath the outward appearance of circumstances and situations as well. Jesus said, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgement." (John 7:24)



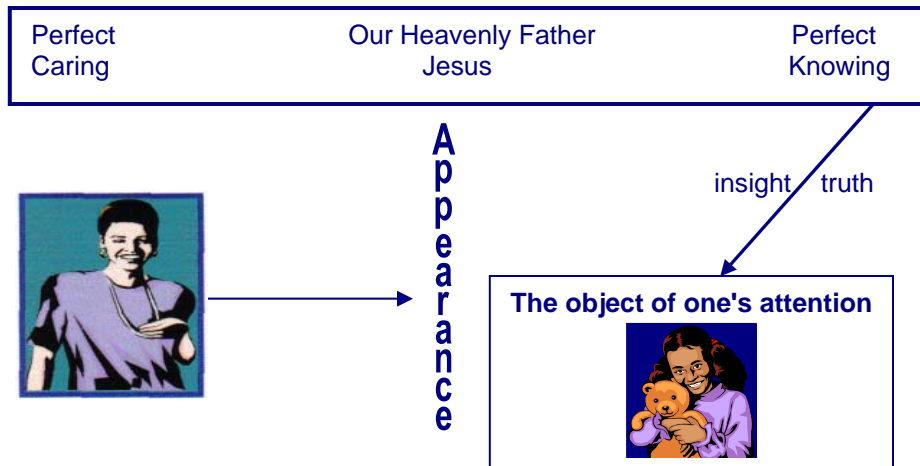
Trying to help the Corinthians understand that the outward view is not always God's perspective, Paul writes, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." (II Corinthians 4:18)

- B. We are not able to fully interpret the situation. Since our facts are obtained from our sensory view, what we see, hear and feel, the whole truth is simply not available to us through our sensory faculties.**

In addition, we have the problem that the devil, the deceiver, is waiting to mislead and delude us. He takes sensory perceptions and twists them to his purposes through our thought life.

- C. We have a loving heavenly Father who has promised to lead us into all truth. That truth is the reality that lies behind appearances. In spite of our sensory or human shortcomings, meditation is possible because you and I as individuals hold certain fundamental, Scripture based beliefs. We also have the experience of obedience to God, and we have His Spirit of truth residing in us.**

Our heavenly Father knows the truth about the "object of our attention." He has complete insight into the matter. He knows the best way to handle the situation.



In summary, Step 1 of the meditation process involves focusing on the "object of our attention", remembering that truth is the reality that lies beyond appearance. Disregard the appearance!

Step

2A

Reasoning in Your Mind and the Actions that Result

In our scenario, when the teenager comes in late, she appears to be okay.

Now lets move from Step 1 to Step 2A. After meeting her at the door, once you are assured she is okay, your anxiety turns to anger, frustration and worry. You interpret your observation of her disobedience, or lateness. The reasoning in your mind might be as follows:

"What will she do next?"

"I am a failure as a parent."

"There is just not any hope for her! This is the tenth time she's been late."

Your anger, frustration and worry cause you to (a) overreact and falsely accuse the teenager, often making exaggerated statements, (b) punish inappropriately, and/or (c) condemn yourself.

What alternative is there to these actions? The alternative is

**Step 2B.** Instead of taking Step 2A (reasoning in your mind on the facts as they appear, you can move immediately from Step 1 to Step 2B.

Step

2B

**You Turn to God and Seek His Truth and Direction**

If you choose Step 2B, you have begun the meditation process. In this step, you get God's viewpoint, His truth, His love and care.

Meditation involves going to our heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ to receive their input, their outlook, and their guidance on the matter at hand. Our confidence in asking God for His truth is based on Scriptures. The Word is an open invitation to us. He invites us to come to Him for guidance, for help and encouragement. He has given us exhortation, commands, promises and examples throughout His Word.

Step

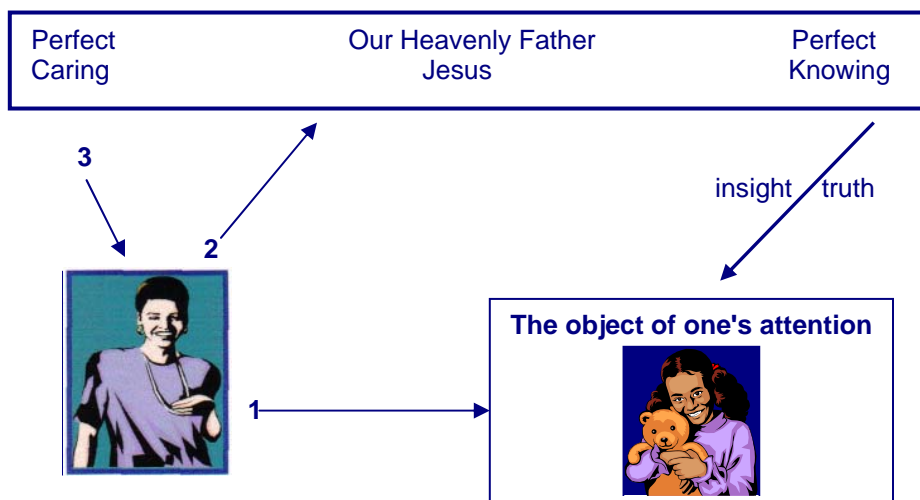
3

**You Stop Your Way of Thinking and Listen to God's Truth**

This step involves allowing God to speak to us and then reasoning on the basis of what He says. We stop our own way of thinking. We ask God, what is the reality that lies behind the appearance?

In our set-up situation, God might say to you, "Your daughter is unsure of herself and is trying to be accepted by her peers."

God then would give you steps to take to build her confidence. He may say, "Spend more time with her, take her to lunch tomorrow." Another time He might suggest, "Share in the things she enjoys doing." "Love her and show her that God loves her." You're now building a foundation of love in her with which she can face the world.



**Meditate and continue to listen to everything God has to say. He resides in our minds (thoughts). The Holy Spirit lives inside of us and guides us into all truths. We learn to stop our train of thought, our way of thinking, and find out from God what we are supposed to do to rectify or remedy any situation. Eventually listening to what He says becomes habitual.**

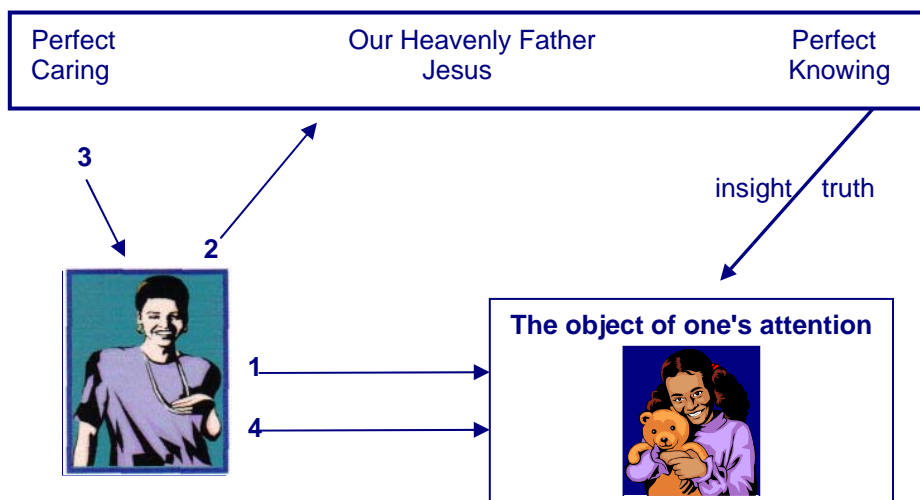
### Step

**4**

**Your Response: The Actions that Follow the Revelation of God's Truth and Direction**

**Now comes that very important step, your response to God's insight and truth. You must give the appropriate response to what God says. It is not enough to hear Him, you must respond in an appropriate way.**

**Meditation so far has involved facing a situation or person (Step 1), asking our heavenly Father for insight and truth (Step 2B), stopping your way of thinking and listening to God's truth (Step 3). The next step centers on your response to what He has shown you.**



It is automatic in human thinking to reason out the things we observe. How we interpret these situations is the secret ingredient. As we have seen, there is a wrong way and a right way (God's way). Look again at the four powerful steps in the meditation process.

**Step 1 - The object of our attention. Our mind is focused on a fact or situation**

**Step 2B - Turn to God and seek His truth. Stop trying to reason it out by yourself, act according to your own thought process, but asking our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ for insight and truth**

**Step 3 - Listen and Hear God's truth**

**Step 4 - Respond appropriately to what God has shown you**

Remember that our confidence in asking God for His truth is based on Scriptures that are full of His invitations to come to Him for guidance, help and encouragement. We have looked together at some of the exhortations, commands, promises and examples He has given us.

Let us consider these three important facts:



1. God loves us as a father loves a child and wishes to commune with us.
2. God has sent His Spirit to live in us in order that this communion takes place.
3. God has given us the mind of Christ - the ability and capacity of Christ, the anointed one, had on earth - to be able to communicate with the Father.

Looking objectively at our set-up situation, we realize how important it is to use the right reasoning process. There are Scriptural truths that can help us, truths we need to recognize. The apostle Paul writes:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them....."(I Corinthians 2:12-14).

How do you know God's voice? How can you tell what thoughts are from yourself, from the devil, or from God?

You know God's voice because you know God. You know how He acts, how He thinks, what He wants. You instantly recognize His voice because you know Him. Remember the Scripture that states, "My sheep know my voice..." We recognize His voice by the approach He takes, by the relevance of His actions, by the content of what He says and by the results His words produce in us. This is what meditation is all about.

My prayer is that today, you will begin to put the four steps of meditation into practice and that you will begin to think God's thoughts with Him. Glory!