

# Small Group Guide: Preparing for Lent - The Discipline of Meditation

## Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to quiet your hearts and minds, and to help you be receptive to His Word and Spirit during this discussion.

## Ice Breaker

**Share with the group:** What's one thing that makes your life feel especially busy right now? If you had a "pause button" for real life, when would you most want to use it?

## Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Christian meditation is different from Eastern meditation** - It's not about emptying our minds, but filling them with God's Word and will.
2. **Meditation means placing God at the center** - Like the shift from earth-centered to sun-centered understanding of the universe, we must shift from self-centered to Son-centered living.
3. **The blessed life comes from delighting in God's instruction** - Those who meditate on God's Word are like trees planted by streams of water (Psalm 1).
4. **Transformation requires renewing our minds** - We must resist conforming to the world's patterns and instead allow God to transform us (Romans 12:1-2).
5. **Meditation isn't limited to "quiet time"** - We can practice God's presence throughout our daily activities, making all of life sacred.

## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Message

1. **What stood out to you most from this sermon?** Was there a particular phrase, scripture, or illustration that resonated with you?
2. **The pastor contrasted Eastern and Christian meditation.** In your own words, what makes Christian meditation unique? Why is this distinction important?

3. **Read Psalm 1:1-3 together.** What does it mean practically to "delight in the law of the Lord"? What does the tree imagery tell us about the results of meditation?

## Personal Reflection

4. **The sermon asks: "Who's at the center of your universe?"** How would you honestly answer that question about your own life right now?
5. **The pastor mentioned we're bombarded daily with voices trying to shape our thinking.** What "voices" or influences compete most for your attention and allegiance? (social media, news, advertising, work culture, etc.)
6. **Think about your current spiritual practices.** Do you tend to feel guilty about not having a consistent "quiet time," or have you found other rhythms that work for you? Share your experience.

## Going Deeper

7. **Romans 12:2 calls us to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind."** What would it look like for your mind to be "renewed" in a specific area of your life right now?
8. **The sermon emphasized that meditation can happen during daily activities, not just during designated "quiet time."** How does this perspective change the way you think about connecting with God throughout your day?
9. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer said we should accept Scripture's words "as they are said to you" like words from someone you love.** How is this different from how you typically read the Bible? What would change if you approached it this way?

## Application

10. **What is one practical step you can take this week to "press pause" and focus on God's Word?** Be specific.
11. **The pastor suggested writing a verse on a notecard and placing it where you'll see it multiple times daily.** What verse might God be calling you to meditate on this week? Where could you place it?
12. **How can we as a group practice the "communal nature of reading God's Word together"** that the sermon mentioned was central throughout Christian history?

## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge

Choose **at least one** of the following practices to try this week:

#### Option 1: Scripture Meditation Card

- Select one verse that speaks to a current need or area where you want to grow
- Write it on a notecard or make it your phone's lock screen
- Read it multiple times throughout each day
- Journal about what God reveals to you through this verse

#### Option 2: Contemplative Reading

- Choose a short passage (5-10 verses)
- Read it slowly three times
- Don't analyze it; simply listen for what God might be saying to you personally
- Sit in silence for 5 minutes afterward, pondering what you read

#### Option 3: Sacred Work Practice

- Choose one regular daily activity (washing dishes, commuting, exercising, etc.)
- Commit to being mindful of God's presence during that activity each day
- Use the time to pray, reflect on Scripture, or simply acknowledge God's presence
- Notice how this changes the activity

#### Option 4: Digital Detox Meditation

- Set aside 15-30 minutes each day with no devices
- Spend this time in God's Word and prayer
- Notice what competing "voices" you miss and what space this creates for God

### Accountability

- Share which practice you're committing to with at least one other group member
- Check in with each other during the week about how it's going
- Come prepared next week to share what you learned

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### Memory Verse

**Psalm 1:2-3** *"But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers."*

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## Reflection Questions for the Week

Journal or meditate on these questions throughout the week:

- What does my current daily rhythm reveal about what (or who) is at the center of my life?
- In what areas do I most need my mind to be "renewed" by God's truth?
- What would change in my life if I truly believed that everything I do can be sacred?
- How is God inviting me to "press pause" and draw near to Him?

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## Closing Prayer

Invite group members to share one specific prayer request related to developing a practice of meditation or placing God more fully at the center of their lives.

Close by praying for one another, asking God to:

- Help each person hear His voice clearly
- Give strength to resist the world's competing voices
- Transform minds and hearts through His Word
- Make each person like a tree planted by streams of water

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## Preparation for Next Week

The sermon series is "Preparing for Lent." Come ready to discuss how this week's meditation practice has prepared your heart for the Lenten season and what God might be calling you to focus on as you continue this journey.

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## Leader Notes

- **Encourage authenticity** - Create a safe space where people can honestly share their struggles with spiritual disciplines without judgment
- **Avoid legalism** - Emphasize that these practices are invitations to intimacy with God, not requirements for earning His love
- **Celebrate small steps** - Affirm any movement toward God, no matter how small
- **Model vulnerability** - Share your own struggles and victories with meditation practices
- **Keep it practical** - Help people identify realistic, sustainable practices that fit their actual lives