

There are some things that you just can't do in a hurry.

You can't raise a child in a hurry and get it done... – it takes years (**child to adult image**)

You can't plant a garden in a hurry – it takes months (**plant image**)

You can't do a jigsaw puzzle in a hurry – this is a huge process of sorting and matching and fitting things together (**puzzle image**)

And you can't eat a piece of hard candy in a hurry either– you can't just gulp it down. (**hard candy**)

Well you could I guess. Take it like an aspirin...but what's the point? You'd miss all the flavor, all the richness, the fun of experiencing the taste of the candy.

You are all going to get a candy this AM.

They are coming around now. And even if you don't like candy, or you are on a diet, just please just take a candy anyway and look at it.

If you can, open up the candy and pop it into your mouth.

Notice the flavor, the richness, the texture.

This candy takes awhile to let its flavor out. You might not taste anything at first.

There's a certain melting process that happens in your mouth before the candy can become slowly ingested into your system.

You might turn the candy over, let it dissolve somewhere in the dark recesses of your mouth, or play with it on your tongue...

You can't eat and absorb this candy quickly...if you want to experience the flavor

That's what the Psalmist is getting at in Psalm 1..when he talks about meditation.

You can't absorb God's word unless you take time with it...rest in it... allow the flavor and the impact of the words to grab hold of you...sink down deep into your soul...allow God's word to become a part of who you are...it all TAKES TIME

Anyone here have a slow cooker? (**slow cooker image**) I love mine! I can dump all the ingredients into it, and not worry about it...ALL DAY. Sometimes I cook all of the ingredients in it for ten hours. But during the day, as it slowly simmers, the flavors meld together and the result is

delicious...far better than if I had just warmed everything up in a microwave 2 minutes before I ate it..

In the same way...

Meditation on God's word takes time.

It is not a quick fix.

Just reading a quick passage and slamming the Bible shut to get a thought for the day....as you dash out the door...it is OK...but it is not meditation and it doesn't transform us.

This isn't a way that God's truth gets embedded in our soul

There is so much richness to the word of God, so much to learn and to know; you are missing the flavor, the texture, the actual treasure that is in scripture by doing a fly by.

Its like popping a hard candy like an aspirin. Not experiencing the flavor, the texture, the joy.

It says in the psalm that the righteous take time in God's word...they savor it...mull it over...examine it....and let it sink down into their heart. In fact, the scripture says in psalm 1 that the righteous meditate on God's law day and night. Imagine that!

Now the word law might be a bit off-putting. Who wants to spend a lot of time in a law book...but as Christians we can remember what Jesus said... that the whole law is summed up in the **Shema**...known to us as the part of scripture that reads...

"Hear O Israel the Lord your God is one God. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind."

Then we might get a little bit more interested.

Maybe this whole meditation process is about sinking deeper into a love relationship with Jesus Christ.

And if meditation can help us with that...then maybe its worth it...right

The Hebrew word "to meditate" is the word hagah.

There's this really interesting verse in

Isaiah 31:4. It says, "**As a lion growls, a great lion over his prey...**"
What's interesting about this verse is that **the word translated as growl is the Hebrew word hagah.**

Now this doesn't mean we growl over scripture. We aren't vicious about it...we aren't going to bite somebody's hand off if they touch our Bible. Think about it this way...Have you ever seen a lion bent over its prey? It's very similar to watching a dog with a nice big bone.

When I give my dog Snowy a bone, she is overwhelmed with joy. She treats this bone like it is the greatest treasure ever known. (**image of border collie and bone – or any dog with bone**)

Sometimes she doesn't even pick it up in her teeth right away.

Often, after I put the bone on the floor, she looks at it with awe. Sometimes she circles around it.

Then, she might turn the bone over a couple of times.

She has been known to make grunting noises, lick it tentatively and then gingerly she carries it to an out of the way place where she can savor every morsel.

She chews, and gnaws, and seems to delight in getting every last ounce of flavor out of the bone that she can.

(Now of course, I usually step on these bones with bare feet months later in the dark somewhere, the closest thing to the pain of childbirth that I have come across ... these bones have been licked clean and because of that they are very sharp!)

That's hagah – the word for meditation.

That's how psalm 1 tells us we are to meditate...we are to take time with scripture, ponder the words ...injest them in slowly... talk to ourselves and others about their meaning ...we muse on them, we mutter, murmuring, growling, chewing, tasting.....marinating in the truth of it . Letting it form us, get down inside of us and transform us from the inside out.

Believe me...scripture never loses its flavor, its texture, its depth.

if you let yourself go there...

Of course, you have to make intentional time to do this...

This process is one of our five core values here at West Valley Presbyterian Church

“Intentional Faith Development”

Why do we use the word intentional? Why don't we just say “faith

development”.

Because if we are not systematic, and make the time for this kind of meditation, it just isn't going to happen.

There are too many things that are going to rob us of our time.

You know that...and I know that.

Now let me just clarify something. The word meditation can sometimes be troubling for folks. They think immediately about Eastern meditation or something like that.

But, unlike transcendental meditation or a lot of Eastern forms of meditation, the person in this psalm isn't just meditating on anything they want; the person is meditating on the law of the Lord, the Word of God, the love of Jesus

This psalm tells us that meditation is prayerful reflection on what God is telling you about himself in scripture.

Meditation is responding thoughtfully, to a God who has sent us a love letter of 66 books in the Bible, that is all about himself and his desire to be in love relationship with us.

1. Meditation is saying I am not going to take your love letter to me, lightly.

If you, the God of the universe, the God of all creation (who created me) sought fit to write me a love letter in the pages of this book, I am going to spend some time with it.

I am going to get to know it. I am going to mull it over, turn it over in my mind, think about it, wrestle with it, marinate in it, assimilate it, and get the full flavor of your love for me, out of it.

And when it comes to the love of Jesus, Brennan Manning always says it best,

“ We should be astonished at the goodness of God, stunned that He should bother to call us by name, our mouths wide open at His love, bewildered that at this very moment we are standing on holy ground.”

– [Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel: Good News for the Bedraggled, Beat-Up, and Burnt Out*](#)

This is what happens when we meditate on God's word. Sort of makes you want to read God's love letter to you, doesn't it?

2. Meditation changes our heart. This psalm says that **The blessed person delights in the law of the Lord.** And the keyword here is delight. This tells us that the person who “gets “ meditation actually loves to read scripture... as a swooning teenager would love to open a letter from his or her lover.

Then they might read it over and over and over again...that's the delight part..they love to read it. And as they read the letter, they think...this person really does love me, Wow! I am that special, that important, that valuable.

So you can see how this does not just involve the head, but involves the heart. *The process of meditation, chewing on things, working things through, changes us.* Once the word of God gets down inside of us we begin to experience God's love in a deeply personal way. We begin to fall in love with Jesus Christ...

Someone once said this. I think this is a great definition of meditation. Someone said,
"Meditation is the mind descending into the heart."

3. Meditation involves asking a series of questions as we come to Scripture.

Martin Luther actually put these questions to his people when he was teaching them to meditate on God's word and they are still so relevant for us today. If you don't know how to meditate here is a place to start...Ask these questions as you enter into scripture...Here they are...

Questions Luther asked that teach us how to meditate on Gods word

- 1.How can I adore God for what scripture is telling me? How can I worship God for what this means?**
- 2. How can I confess a sin to God on the basis of what this is telling me?**
- 3. How can I thank God for how this scripture sheds light on the person**

and work of Jesus?

4. How can I petition (ask God for something) on the basis of what this says?

5. How would my life look different if I really believed this?

6. Why would God be sending this to me now?

Luther would say to think through those questions. Mull them over. Mutter to yourself, ponder, chew, marinate and let the Holy Spirit work in and through scripture to illuminate their meaning to you.

And if you start to ask those questions of the Bible as you're reading it, as you're studying it, you're going to start to meditate, and you're going to start to delight. Your heart is going to be shaped, and you're going to start to change.

I always like it when there is a story. We all love stories the best. Everyone listens when there's a story. Today I've asked Kendra to share her story about how meditating on God's word changed her...