

Both "meditation" and "Bible" are in again, but hardly in together. Bible types "study" the Bible, and "meditators" are Bible-turned-off Eastern-hemisphere-oriented types. This thinksheet has a few suggestions toward one's experimenting with a very ancient Christian discipline, viz. "biblical meditation." (Other thinksheets tangential to this are #24 (a self-examination-in-group meditation on Is.61.104), #16 (Action Bible/Theology on L.15.11-32), #5 ("The Use of the Bible in the New Age"), #27 ("Interpretation"), #49 ("Inductive Bible Study"), #227 ("Inductive Bible Study as Discernment"), #402 ("Interpretation, Biblical"), #531 ("Action Bible Study: A Group-Process Method"), #548 ("...and the Human Potential Movement"), #545 ("Ways of Being Religious: A Visualization").)

A GENERAL CLUE: MORON SPEED

All meditation on sacred texts is super-slow, with speed-of-reading and brain-waves speed decreasing as the meditation deepens (penetrates to sub-daily-levels of memory-feeling-hope) and widens (becomes drag-net inclusive). (Compare, in Action Bible Study, "Depth of Thought" and "Grasp of Thought.") Read the passage over several times, decreasing the speed each time till you're reading so slowly it bores you. The fruits of profound meditation lie, all of them, on the other side of boredom. Don't miss any opportunity to malingering, sit down and rest (though alertly) on a word or phrase or image or idea or person or event....Back in seminary, summer of '37, under NYTS' Howard Tillman Kuist, I learned the mnemonic device, for biblical meditation, "P-TIE-P": ask yourself, in the presence of passage/Spirit/world, What's in play here of persons, times, images/ideas, events, places? and what is the overall consequent feel of the passage? and what's my dominant feeling in response to the passage? and what are the meanings of my feelings here and now as I meditate on this passage—any clues to action? (Admittedly, in the light of the subsequent decades I've expanded on Kuist's device, but he was headed in this direction.)

THE VERBAL GANGLION

Does the passage have a word or phrase that both controls the passage's content and illumines the author's intent in the passage? If you cannot find this nodal point in the passage, is it in the larger context (just before or after the passage)? As you read and reread the passage, let your attention develop from a circle ("studying" the passage) to an ellipse (incorporating, in oscillating dialectic, a second focus, viz. what the word or phrase means in your life, the images juicy for you, the guiding ideas, the feelings you're proud/ashamed of).

POSITIVE SBVR WORDS/PHRASES

On some words/phrases you'll have heavy turn-ons (positive "significant basic visceral responses"). In each case, why? Close your eyes and let some image swim to inner attention as you silently repeat the word/phrase as a mantra. Does the image give any clue to an experience/fear/hope which the word/phrase speaks to? Especially if the image is a human face, stay with it prayerfully: lift up that person, and your concern for illumination, into the light of God, who wants to speak to you far more than you want to listen.

NEGATIVE SBVR WORDS/PHRASES

Trickier! We think we're masochists if we want to hang in with negative consciousness...but what else is "repentance" and "remorse" leading toward "reparation" and "restitution" and, above all, moral-political-spiritual "faith" in action toward justice, peace, and joy? Use the same process as in the paragraph immediately above.