

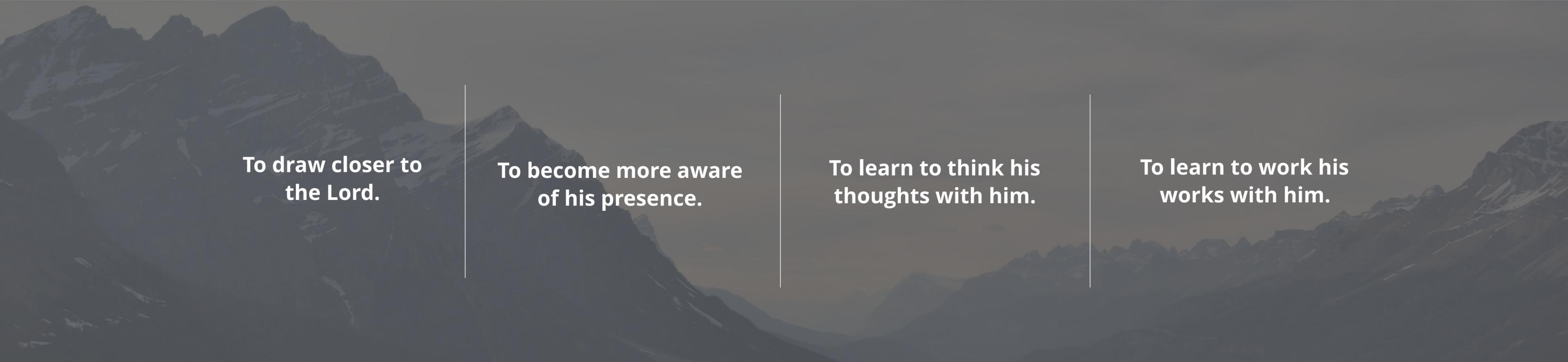
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The Power of Memorizing & Meditating on Scripture

Why Study the Bible?

Why do you want to study the bible at all? To satisfy your intellectual curiosity? To seek answers to your existential and/or philosophical questions? To try to satisfy your religious obligation as a Christian? None of these are great reasons for studying the bible. So what is a good reason?



**To draw closer to
the Lord.**

**To become more aware
of his presence.**

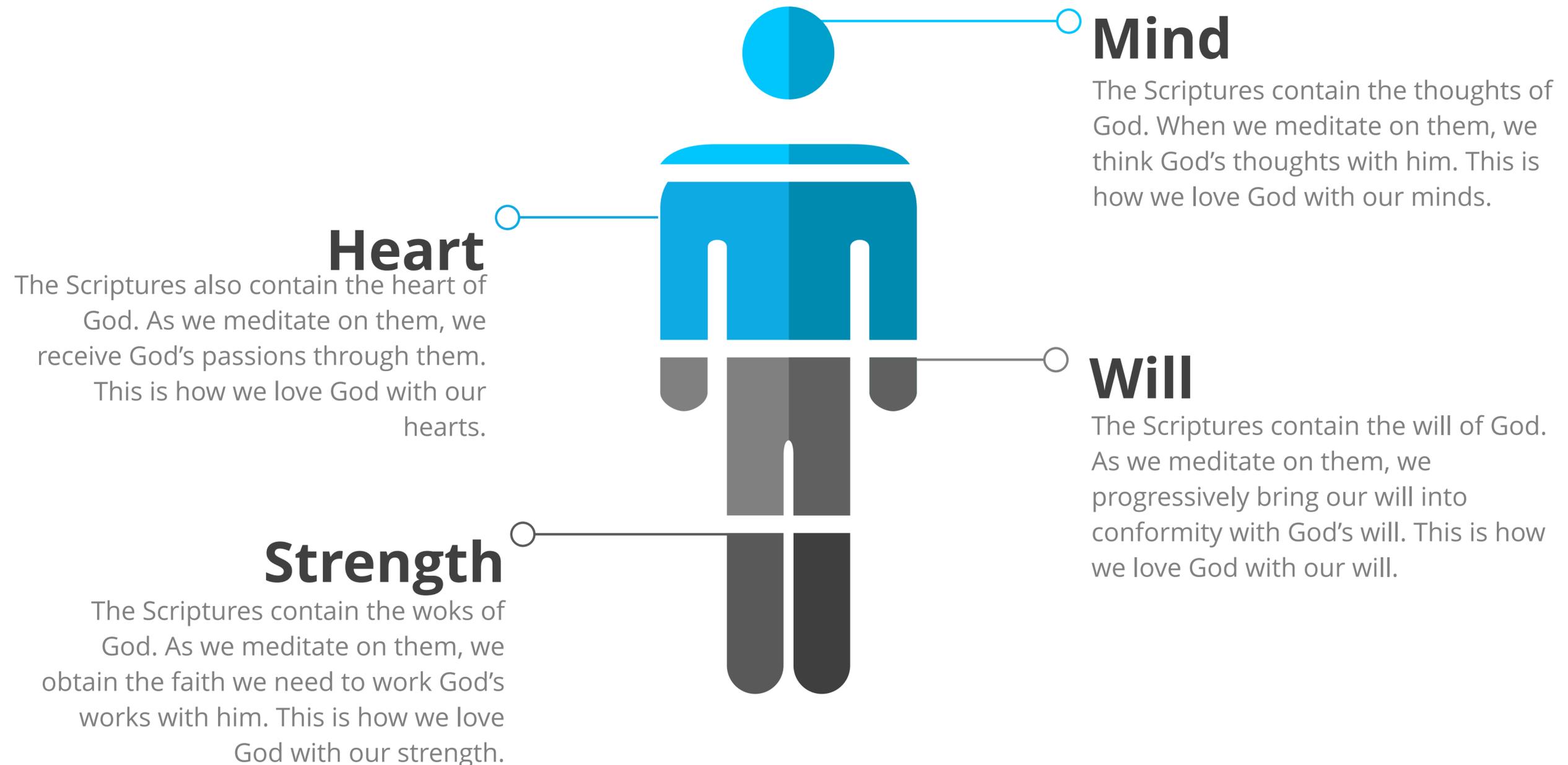
**To learn to think his
thoughts with him.**

**To learn to work his
works with him.**

The goal of studying Scripture is spiritual growth, not intellectual growth. Theology and doctrine are byproducts of spiritual growth, not replacements for them. In approaching the pages of Scripture, our objective is to approach God, to stand before him, and to hear a word from him that can change our lives.

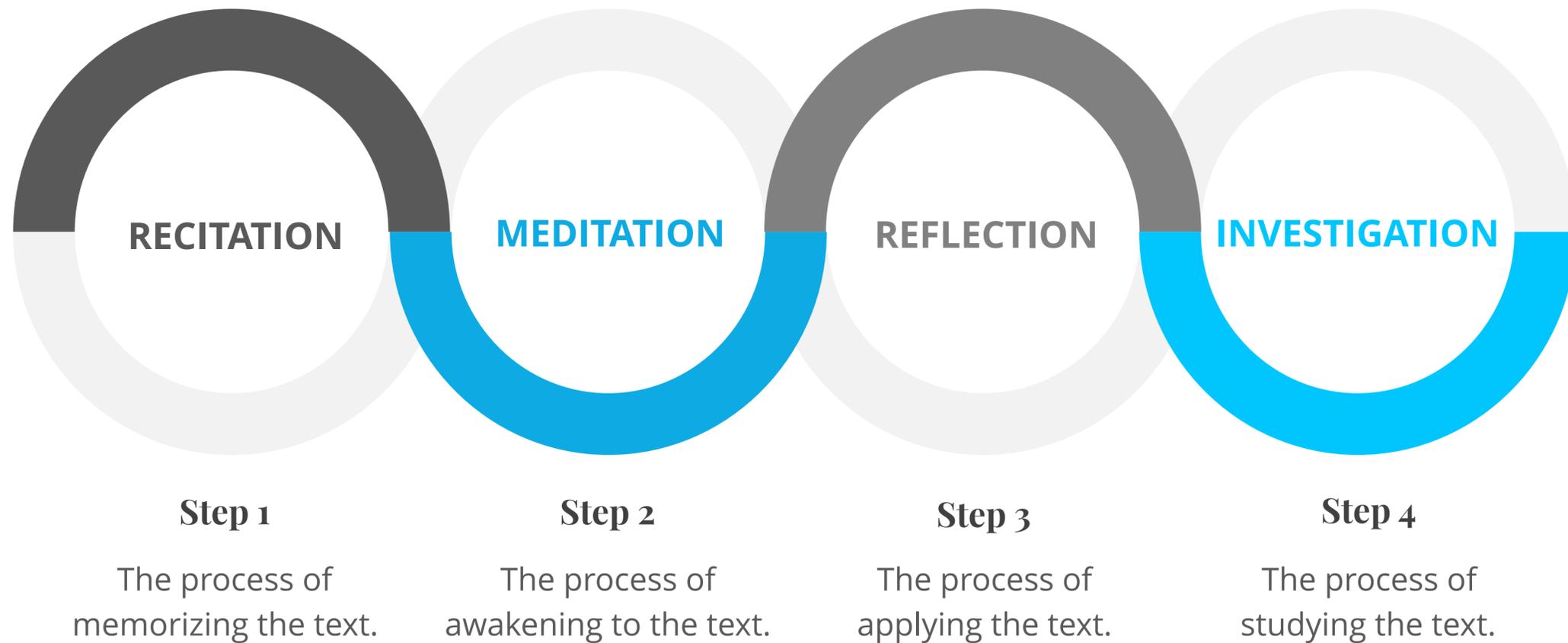
Loving God is the Goal

The goal is not to master the Scriptures; the goal is to fully allow the Scriptures to master us.



Delving Deeper

Growing deeper in Scripture is an intentional process comprised of four steps



The Process

Each one of these steps leads very naturally to the next, and without even one of them the result of your process will be shallow, unsupported, unclear, or spiritually irrelevant.

Recitation

This stage seems drab and powerless, but it is absolutely essential for cultivating spiritual depth through the Scriptures.

Meditation

At times meditation also seems drab and powerless, but it makes room in your heart for the revelation of God to unfold itself.

Reflection

Broadens your awareness of the whole counsel of God and how each verse of Scripture participates in the whole of revelational truth.

Investigation

Provides you with the opportunity to explore different hypotheses that emerge from reflection to see if they work biblically.

Selection

Your first step will be to select a passage of Scripture. While every verse of Scripture in the bible is equally inspired of the Holy Spirit, different types of verses function in different ways. For the purposes of meditation, it is best to hone in on three types of passages.



Prophetic Texts

Illuminate your present or future.



Didactic Texts

Correct your error or affirm your truth.



Covenantal Texts

Call for a higher level of devotion.



There are also historic, poetic, parabolic, and apocalyptic texts that are just as inspired, and thus provide the context within which prophetic, didactic, and covenantal texts reside.



Examples of Prophetic Texts

For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil.

—Jeremiah 29:11

Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you.

—Isaiah 41:10

Behold, he is coming with clouds, and every eye will see him, even they who pierced him.

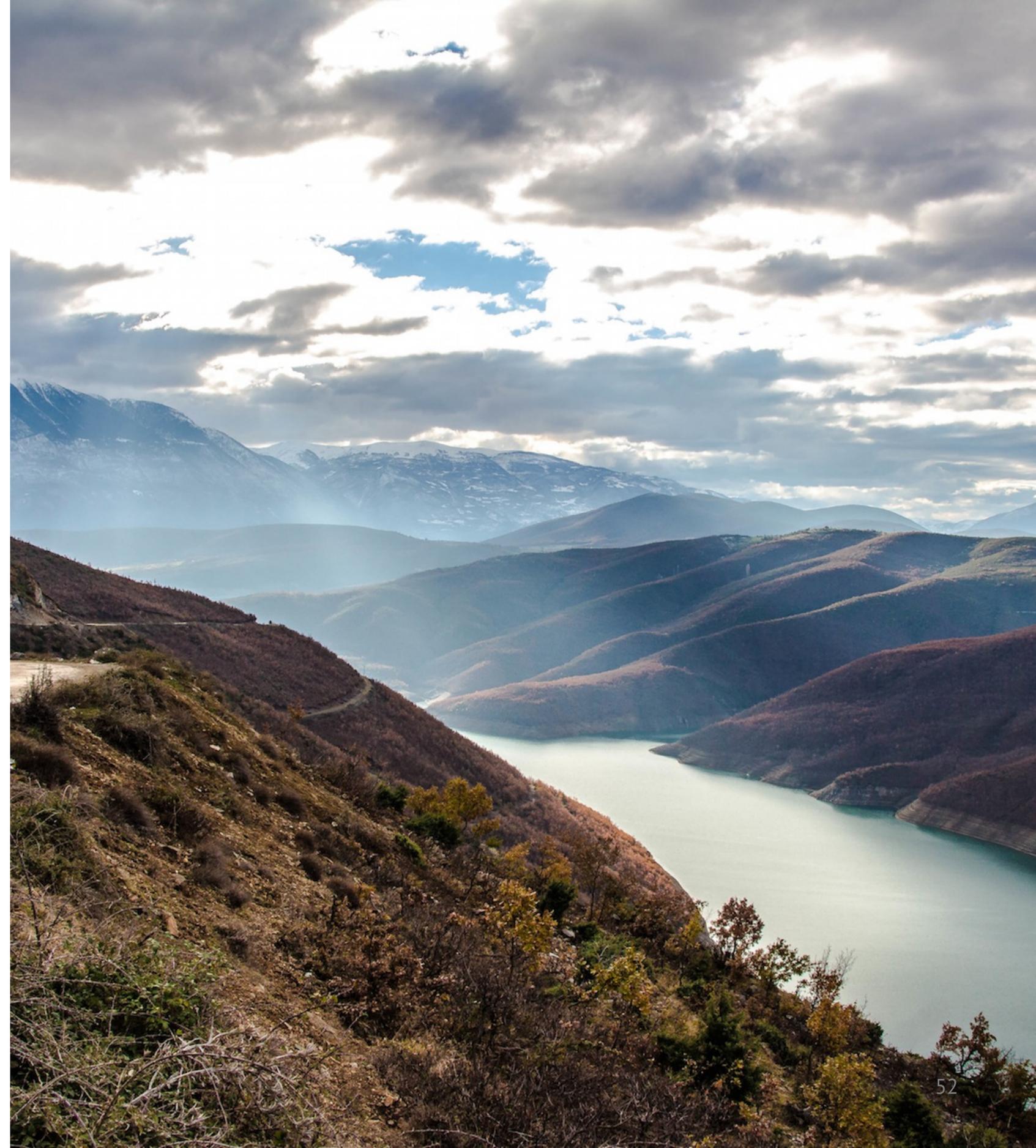
—Revelation 1:7

Examples of Didactic Texts

*God is not a man, that he should lie,
nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.*
—Numbers 23:19

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace
with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
—Romans 5:1

*He is the image of the invisible God;
the firstborn over all creation.*
—Colossians 1:15





Examples of Covenantal Texts

And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . .

—Joshua 24:15

*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!
For his mercy endures forever.*

—Psalm 106:1

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk . . .

—Ephesians 4:17

Recitation

Recitation is the act of repeatedly vocalizing the text of Scripture. The purpose of this act is to cultivate a renewed sense of intimacy with the text.

From Familiarity to Intimacy

Familiarity is the enemy of intimacy. The greatest hindrance to biblical insight is the assumption that you know what the text says, what it means, and how it applies. Recitation is a defamiliarizing act that makes intimacy possible.



Divide

Divide the text into two or three digestible sections.

Repeat

Recite each section 8 times without looking at the text.

Combine

Put the parts together and recite the whole verse.

Dividing the Text

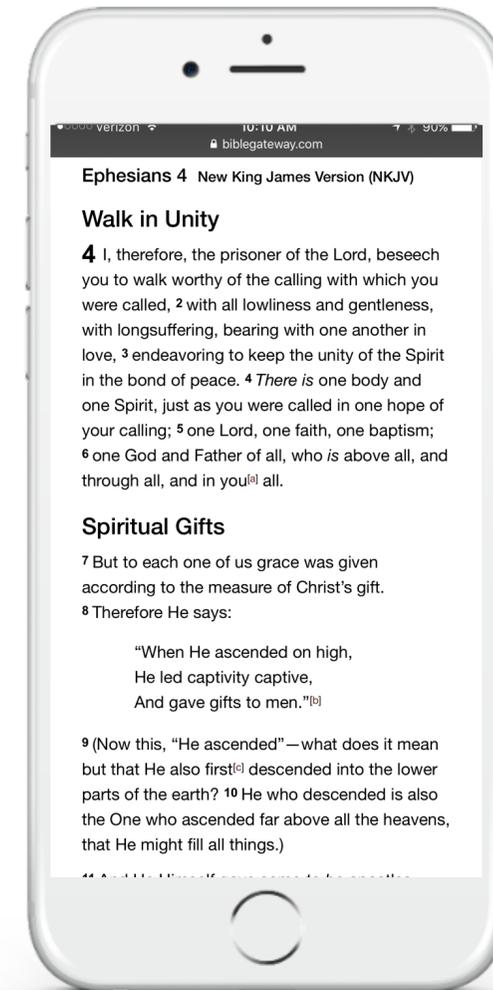
Most verses of Scripture can be divided into between 2 and 4 parts. The first step for meditating on a verse of Scripture is to divide it into sections that are both natural to the text and digestible for your mind. Here are a couple of examples from Ephesians 4:1-2.

Part One

- 4:1 *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord,*
- 4:2 *with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering,*

Part Two

- beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,*
- bearing with one another in love,*



Repeating the Text

Now its time to commit the text to memory. This is easier than you may think; most people think they are terrible at memorizing Scripture. Nothing could be further than the truth. Now that you have divided the text, follow this simple procedure to memorize it.

Recite Part One 8x

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord,

Recite Part Two 8x

beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

Recite Parts One & Two 8x

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

Recite Part One 8x

with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering,

Recite Part Two 8x

bearing with one another in love.

Recite Parts One & Two 8x

with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love.

Combining the Text

After memorizing each verse I find it best to put verses together two at a time before moving on to the next verse. You can do this by following the same procedure you followed to memorize individual verses, only now the parts will be whole verses, rather than half verses.

Recite Verse One 8x

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

Recite Verse Two 8x

with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love.

Recite Verses One & Two 8x

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love.

Meditation

Now that you have memorized the text, you are ready to meditate on it. Meditation goes beyond memorization; if the goal is memorization, you'll stop after you've committed the text to memory. But if the goal is meditation, memorization is just the beginning.

Memorization is the Foundation

But meditation means giving the text your undivided attention for a specific period of time. This may sound easy, but it is actually very mentally taxing at first because it engages three of the five major functions of conscious thought.



Recalling

Bringing the text back into the present of conscious thought.

Memorizing

Depositing the text into the basil ganglia for long-term memory.

Inhibiting

Intentionally restricting the mind from wandering away from the text.

Meditation & Scripture

While there are many types of meditation, from a Christian perspective, the meditation upon Scripture has always been the paradigmatic and foundational form of meditation.

*... but his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law
he meditates day and night.*
-Psalm 1:2

*My heart grew hot within me, as I meditated, the fire
burned; then I spoke with my tongue.*
-Psalm 39:2

*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever
things are noble ... meditate on these things.*
-Philippians 4:8

Both Testaments Agree

Meditating on Scripture is a practice that pleases God, renews the mind, aligns the heart, and empowers the will to make decisions that agree with God's good, perfect, and acceptable will.

Meditation has to do with the state of your heart and mind, not the location of your body. You don't have to be in a particular place or assume a particular position to do it. All you have to do is take the time to intentionally focus your heart and mind on the word of God as it comes to us through the pages of holy Scripture.