

# the IRRELIGIOUS LIFE

experiencing the inside-out spirituality of Jesus

## Week 9: *STAINED GLASS WINDOWS*

### INTRODUCTION – Life Under Pressure

The secret to life under pressure is equal but opposite pressure. Meditation equalizes the pressure.

#### Psalm 1

### JESUS SCENE – Going Beyond Scripture To Jesus

John 1:1-14; 5:39-40; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:8-11

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE #9 – Meditation

Isaiah 31:4; 38:14; Matthew 5:8; James 1:6-8; Psalm 46:10

*THINKING OF SCRIPTURE AS A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW,  
OUR MEDITATION MIGHT CONSIST OF...*

1. PREPARING – Time (30 min., each morning), Place, Posture (sitting comfortably)
2. BREATHING – Using your body to become a prayer, breathing deeply as a way of asking the Spirit fill you and guide you. Breath symbolizes the meeting place between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit, and between the conscious (voluntary) and the subconscious (involuntary). DEEP Breathing (from the belly) is the most natural way to breath (although Westerners tend to forget). It is how a baby breaths and how we breath when we are asleep. (**Acts 17:24-25**)
3. LOOKING AT THE WINDOW – Reading through the text, getting the big picture.
4. STARING AT THE DETAILS – Studying the text, noticing deeper realities, praying.
5. ENTERING THE PICTURE – “Getting lost” in the text through imagination.

6. FIXATING ON ONE PART – Ruminating over one word, phrase, or thought that stands out. Note: Some people use a focusing word or phrase to bring them back when their mind wanders (e.g., Maranatha; Yahweh; I Am; Yeshua; Hallelujah; etc.).
7. SEEING *THROUGH* THE WINDOW – Encountering God looking back at you with love. Become aware of his real presence with you in the moment.
8. FEELING THE SUN’S WARMTH ON YOUR FACE – Experiencing God’s love for you. Allow specific images to fade away and simply appreciate the reality of the moment – that you are being warmed by God’s infinite love for you. (**Psalm 42:7-8**) Let yourself fully experience the never-quite-this-way-before, never-quite-this-way-again present moment – the now, knowing that nothing that has happened to you or that you have done in the past and no worry about what might happen in the future has the power to define who you are. Say simply along with the Apostle Paul, “For what is life? To me, it is Christ.” (**Philippians 1:21**, TEV)

NOTE – We may sometimes experience God *beyond* our biblical descriptions of the roles he plays in our lives such as Shepherd, Father, Judge, Husband, etc.. Remember, God *became* these things in relation to us. But before we existed, he simple was – the Source of all life, pure energy, pure love. In this foundational sense, God identifies himself simply as “I am that I am” (**Exodus 3:14**), Yahweh. Sometime we might sense a union with him or a love coming from him in such a way that experience will be beyond the borders of any description in words. We are past images, past words, past thoughts. We simply know we are loved and this experience exhilarates us. This is a gift of grace. We cannot manufacture it, but we can, through meditation, make ourselves ready for it and open to it.

*READING NATURE, GOD’S “OTHER BIBLE”...*

**Romans 1:20; Psalms 19:1; 77:12; 143:5; 145:5; Proverbs 6:6; Matthew 6:26-29**

### CONCLUSION – Thriving Under Pressure

**Luke 21:12-15**

### HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

#### WARMING UP...

1. Learn from each other – Describe your experiences with meditation. What works or doesn’t work for you? What roadblocks or breakthroughs have you encountered in this area?
2. Have you ever had an experience of feeling united to something or someone much larger than yourself – perhaps feeling connected to the entire universe? How might this be an experience of “God” in his most basic form?
3. After briefly reviewing this week’s message, share one thing that most challenged, convicted, or encouraged you.

#### LOOK TO THE BOOK...

4. Take about 30 minutes to meditate on **Ephesians 3:14-19**, following the guidelines talked about on Sunday (and summarized in these notes). When the time is finished, come together and talk about your experience. a) What did you learn from the passage? b) What did you experience in your relationship with God?

#### SO WHAT?...

5. How, in what ways, do you think you would grow spiritually if you practiced biblical meditation on a regular basis? Will you try it on your own this week? Commit to asking each other about your experience this week at Home Church next week. Pray for each other’s face-to-face time with God this week.

**Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, March 19 / 26, 2006**