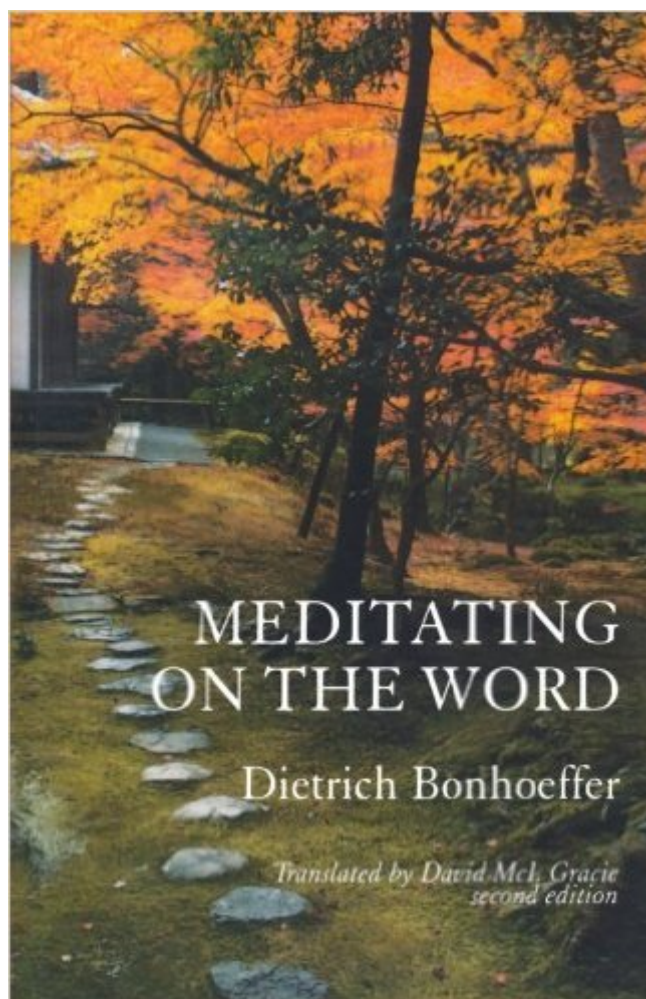


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# Meditating On The Word



## Synopsis

“Daily, quiet reflection on the Word of God as it applies to me becomes for me a point of crystallization for everything that gives interior and exterior order to my life,” wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer to his colleagues at the warfront in the winter of 1942. Now back in print after a decade, this collection of Bonhoeffer’s writings, sermons, and letters on meditation—including his unfinished meditation on Psalm 119—reveals his deep love for the Bible as a focus for his prayer life and a support in his courageous political life. “Why do I meditate?” asks Bonhoeffer. “Because I am a Christian. Therefore, every day in which I do not penetrate more deeply into the knowledge of God’s Word in Holy Scripture is a lost day for me.”

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Despite what others have said, I’m pretty sure that Dietrich Bonhoeffer did write the materials in this book. It has been translated from German into English and edited by David Mcl. Gracie. The translation/editing has introduced some alterations to the text of Bonhoeffer’s writings. Most noticeably Gracie takes on the often laudable task of inclusivity by changing Bonhoeffer’s exclusively masculine pronouns through the introduction of feminine pronouns in an alternating pattern with the masculine ones. The way that this change was made, however, is questionable. Changing back and forth from masculine to feminine pronouns in a single reading is very distracting, even annoying. I would have found it more helpful if either masculine or feminine pronouns had been used in entire readings/sections of the text. This way of doing things would not eliminate all

distraction (which draws the reader's attention away from Bonhoeffer's text and to the editorial changes), but it would have achieved both inclusivity and a coherence in each reading.

Meditating on the Word by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Book Reaction) I picked up this book in hopes for a simple guidance from a trusted source. Like he mentioned of students in a letter to Karl Barth, Bonhoeffer said, "The kind of questions serious young theologians put to us are: 'How can I learn to pray? How can I learn to read the Bible? Either we can help them do this, or we can't help them at all.'" I felt like a young student of Bonhoeffer as I read along, eating up his simple answers. The little section I resonated most with was written like a short catechism in question and answer. 1.) Why do I meditate? Because I am a Christian. Because I am a preacher of the word. I cannot expound on the Scripture for others if I do not let it speak daily to me. Because I need a firm discipline of prayer. ... Prayer is not a free will offering to God; it is an obligatory service, something which he requires. We are not free to engage in it according to our own wishes. Because I need help against the ungodly haste and unrest which threaten my work as a pastor. 2.) What do I want from my meditation? We want to meet Christ in his word. We turn to the text in our desire to hear what it is that he wants to give us and teach us today through his Word. Meet him first in the day before you meet other people. Every morning lay upon him everything that preoccupies you and weighs you down, before new burdens are laid upon you. Ask yourself what still hinders you from following him completely and let him take charge of that, before new hindrances are placed in your way. His fellowship, his help, his guidance for the day through his Word - that is the goal. 3.) How shall I meditate? [Meditating on Scripture is preferable to free meditation.] Just as you would not dissect and analyze the word spoken by someone dear to you, but would accept it just as it was said, so you should accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart as Mary did. Do not look for new thoughts and interconnections in the text as you would a sermon! Do not ask how you should tell it to others, but ask what it tells you! Then ponder this word in your heart at length, until it is entirely within you and has taken possession of you. This is not the place for the Greek New Testament, but for the familiar Luther text. We begin our meditations with the prayer for the Holy Spirit, asking for proper concentration for ourselves and for all who we know are also meditating. Then we turn to the text. At the close of the meditation we want to be truly able to say a prayer of thanksgiving from a heart that is full. What text, and how long should the text be? 10-15 verses and meditate on it over a period of a week. Whatever you do, don't take the sermon text for the next Sunday! The time of meditation is in the morning before the beginning of our work. A half hour is the minimum amount of time which a proper meditation requires. It is, of course, necessary that there be complete quiet, and

that we intend to allow nothing to divert us, no matter how important it may seem.4.) How do we overcome the problems of meditation?The first rule is to not become impatient with yourself. Just sit down again every day and wait very patiently. Incorporate thoughts that come at you into your prayer later on; connect them to the text.Read the same passage again and again, write down your thoughts, learn the verse by heart. ...recognize the danger of fleeing once again from meditation to Bible scholarship and the like. Behind all our uncertainties and needs stands our great need to pray...On Morning Prayer in CommunityBefore our daily bread should be the daily Word....an hour of quiet time and common devotion.Although we are often not "in the mood" for it, such devotion is an obligatory serve to the One who desires our praises and prayers, and who will not otherwise bless our day but through His Word and our prayers....Grounded in the Scripture, we learn to speak to God in the language which God has spoken to us. We learn to speak to God as the child speaks to its mother....Above all, we should read the Psalms together. Then a not-too-modest portion of the Old and New Testaments should be read in series. The songs of the Church will place us in the great congregation of the present and the past. The prayer which one person speaks for the whole fellowship will bring the common concerns of the little congregation before God.[Quotes, some modified and shortened, but meaning retained, are taken from *Meditating on the Word* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, p. 29-41]

This book is a collections of Bonhoeffer's writings, edited and translated by David Gracie, related to Bonhoeffer's practice of daily meditation on a portion of Scripture. It contains the instructions Bonhoeffer provided to his seminary students on the importance of individual mediation and guidance for how to do it. The book also includes a few of Bonhoeffer letters and sermons that in some way illustrate how he put meditation on the Word into practice in his own life. I have read the book and sought to implement this practice in my personal life for the past six weeks. I have found that it has allowed me to stay focused during each day on what is truly important, and that has been life changing for me, especially since I am at a very stressful place in my life. I highly recommend this book.

Great book, but difficult to read. You must learn how to read this style of writing. Perhaps I am the one that needs to grow. Bonhoeffer has much wisdom to share with our generation.

How can I add anything that could describe the words and works of this man of God

Excellent. One of the most life changing books I've read outside of The Bible.

Bonhoeffer always thought provoking

Outstanding author.

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