

How to Meditate on Scripture

Using 1 Corinthians 13 as a Template

**Question:** What does it mean to “meditate” on Scripture (see Josh 1:8; Psalm 119:97, 99)?

# Steps

**Step 1**: Read the passage in its entirety. On your first time through the passage, try your best to understand what it is saying, not getting bogged down in difficulty.   
On your second time through, try to discern the *limits* of the passage — is there a clear unit of thought? Should you take a paragraph? Or a whole chapter?  
For our purposes, we will take 1 Corinthians 12:31b–13:13 as a *unit of thought*.

**Step 2**: Make a list of questions you want to answer about the passage. Find any words or phrases that are confusing and mark them as “to investigate.” Best questions to ask are: “Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?” (5W’s and H)

**Step 3**: Divide the passage into clear subsections (if necessary). Look for change—change of perspective, change of topic, change of style, etc. Often, your English Bible will mark these changes as new paragraphs.

**Step 4**: Mark any repeating words or ideas (usually looking for repeated words that are somewhat unique to this passage — common words like “and” and “but” may repeat but may not be significant). See if these repeated ideas help form a *theme (main idea / big idea)* of the passage.

**Step 5**: Ask yourself: “is the Bible here trying to make me change 1) my behavior, 2) my thinking, or 3) both?

**Step 6**: Summarize/articulate the passage in your own words as clearly and thoroughly as possible with *action points* to clarify how I should personally respond to this text.

# Exercise: 1 Corinthians 12:31b–13:13 (NASB)

1 Corinthians 12:31b And I show you a still more excellent way. 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor,* and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered,* 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of* prophecy, they will be done away; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

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