

Welcome to.....

Prayer, Meditation and Mindfulness

Introductory Session

“Richard has put together a very clear and insightful course which outlines the benefits of secular mindfulness for health, as well as introducing the spiritual dimension for Christians of mindfulness of God. I would recommend it highly.” Rev. Shaun Lambert, Author of A Book of Sparks: A Study in Christian MindFullness



Thank you



Mindfulness – An Introduction

- My own story – How I was introduced to Mindfulness.
- One word definition - “Awareness”
- “Paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally, with kindness, as if your life depended on it” Jon Kabat-Zinn
- A Christian working definition of mindfulness – “...the process of keeping one’s mind in the present moment, while staying non-judgementally detached from potentially destructive thoughts and feelings” (Symington & Symington)**
- “You can’t stop the birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from making a nest in your hair” Charles Spurgeon.
- If there are particularly difficult issues that arise for you during the course then it may be appropriate to speak to your GP or a trained counsellor.
- This course is not a substitute for taking medical advice or accessing professional counselling.
- In the past I have had both – Nothing to be ashamed of.



Some important points to note

- The course teaching will include a blend of psychology and psychiatry from a Christian perspective.
- The aim is to explore these disciplines while fully accepting that the Bible is the final authority for what we believe as Christians.
- Each session will include, teaching, meditation, prayer and discussion. Next week is the first week of an 8 week course.
- The meditations we will use from the book “Mindfulness” by Williams and Penman focus on various aspects of self awareness.
- In addition to this we will be exploring Christian Meditation and awareness of God.



Church History and Mindfulness

- Three examples from Church history (there are many more)
- John Calvin (1509-1564) "The knowledge of God and that of ourselves are connected. Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God. Without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self." Calvin's Institutes of Christian Religion.
- Here John Calvin makes a link between knowing self and knowing God. Part of Mindfulness relates to a development of self-awareness which can aid a deepening relationship with God.
- Jean Pierre de Caussade – French Jesuit Priest (1675-1751)
- In his book "Abandonment to Divine Providence" he wrote about "The Sacrament of the present moment"
- Brother Lawrence (1614-1691) Carmelite monk
- Wrote "Practicing the Presence of God"
- This moment is a gift from God. You can't live in the past because it has been and gone. You can't live in the future because it's not here yet.

The benefits of Mindfulness

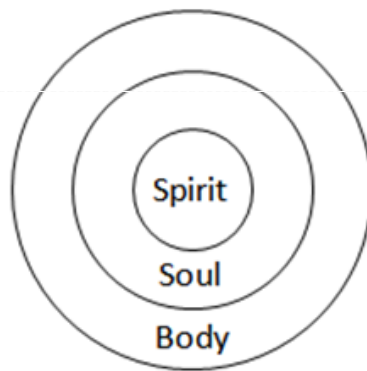
- Mindfulness and metanoia – Mindfulness enables detachment from harmful and negative thought patterns. (Nothing to do with being a detached person!)
- The Greek word in the NT “metanoia” translates to English as “repent”
- More literally the word “metanoia” means “Change your mind”
- At the point of awareness we have the opportunity to change our minds i.e. metanoia
- Mindfulness helps reduce worrying thoughts about the future. Jesus says “do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.” Matthew 6:34
- Mindfulness helps reduce rumination and regrets about the past – “One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13-14
- Mindfulness helps to cultivate an attitude of thankfulness. We are free to count our blessings and thank God because our minds are not crowded out with other thoughts or feelings. 1 Thess 5:18 – “Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”
- Mindful awareness can help in the process of transformation as we rely on and depend on God’s Spirit and God’s grace in the process of change.



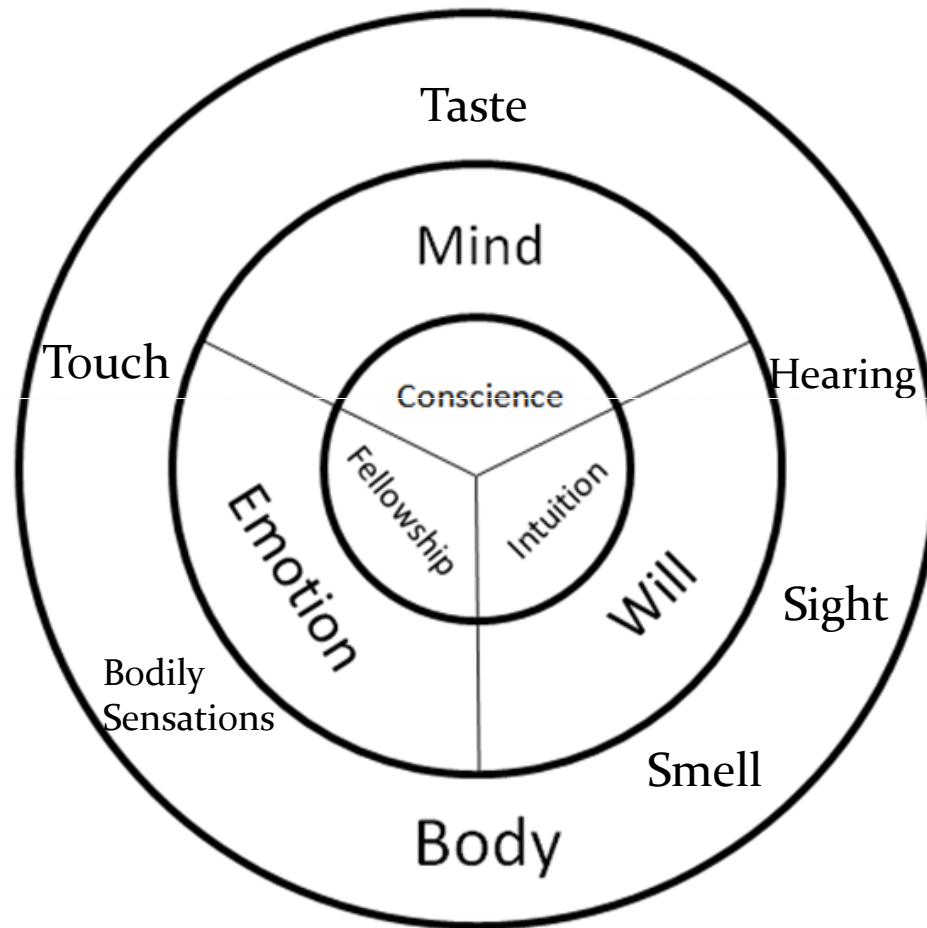
Mindfulness is a characteristic of God

- God is Omnipresent and Omniscient i.e. All-present and All-knowing. He pays attention all the time. He is aware of all things.
- Although we cannot be All-present as finite beings we can imitate God and seek to be aware of each moment in our own lives.
- Psalm 8 says - ³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?
- Psalm 26:3 – The psalmist says “I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness.”
- Jesus’ words to Peter when Peter tried to persuade him that the cross was not necessary.
- But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not **mindful** of the things of God, but the things of men.” Mark 8:33

A Biblical understanding of body, soul and spirit - 1



²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Thessalonians 5:23

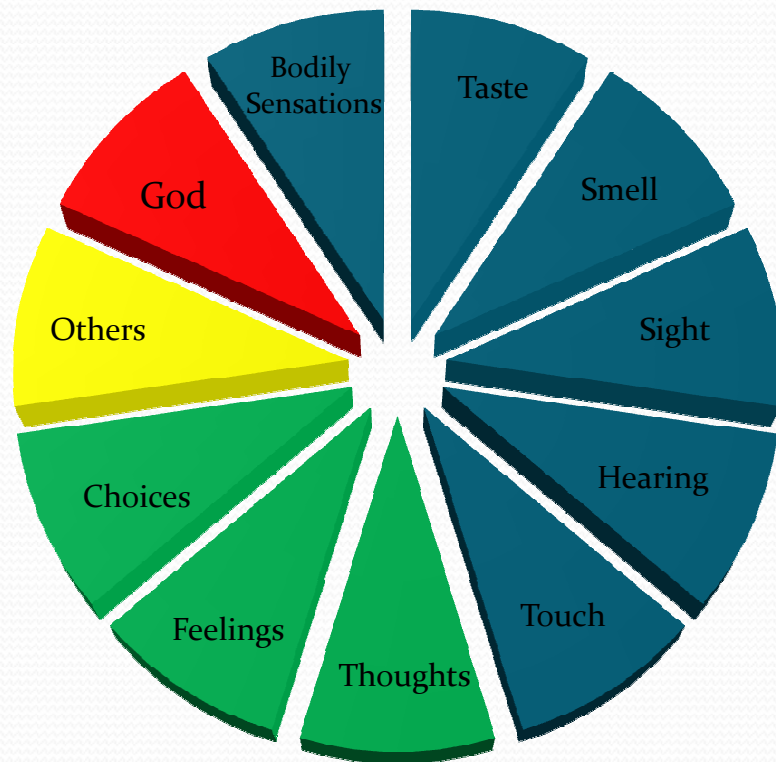




A Biblical understanding of body, soul and spirit - 2

- Before the new birth your spirit is dead in sin (Read Ephesians 2:1)
- When you believe in Jesus you are born again – your spirit comes alive (John 3:7-8)
- The process of sanctification begins whereby your soul comes under the rule of your spirit.
- This involves brokenness.
- Our mind, will and emotions can come under the Lordship of Jesus
- We seek to live a life of obedience to God and his word, the Bible.
- Mindfulness without the Lordship of Jesus is limited.
- Mindfulness helps you to regulate your thoughts and feelings.
- However, Christian discipleship and spiritual growth involves walking in the Spirit (i.e. From the place of Wisdom, Communion and Conscience – in relationship with the person of the Holy Spirit)
- A Christian understanding of Mindfulness also includes spiritual awareness. This aspect will also be included in the 8 week course.
- Through the power of the Cross and the power of the Holy Spirit we can live in obedience to God.

In which areas can Mindfulness be beneficial?



•**BODY**

•**SOUL**

•**IN RELATIONSHIP
WITH OTHERS**

•**Spirit (your human spirit)
in relationship with God**



Meditation – Video Clip and Exercise

- Watch Video clip 1 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ghm8J7LSlQ>
- We are going to have a brief discussion time in a few minutes.
- Before we do that we are going to try out the first mindfulness meditation from the book “Mindfulness” by Mark Williams and Danny Penman.
- Mark Williams is an ordained Church of England Minister and also a Professor in Clinical Psychology at Oxford University.
- The following meditation is designed to help you develop self awareness.

Meditation 1

Mindfulness of Body and Breath

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEyaQ_iTBcs



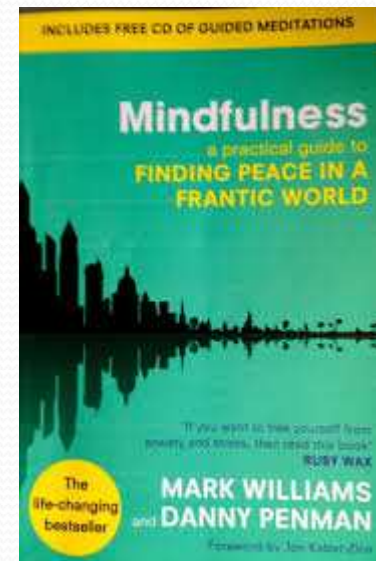


Discussion (No more than 15 mins)

- What do you think of when you hear the word “Meditation”
- What is your experience of Meditation?
- What do you think the value of Mindfulness is?
- What did you think about the Meditation we did earlier?
- Scientific evidence now supports the benefits of Mindfulness, Meditation and Prayer. How should we respond to this as Christians?

Mindfulness – An Eight Week Programme

- The next session will be the beginning of an 8 week programme.
- Mindfulness by Mark Williams and Danny Penman is the recommended text.
- The book comes with a free meditation CD. All the meditations are also available on YouTube.
- It's not specifically a Christian book but it is compatible with the Christian faith.
- We will also be including Bible meditation and meditation on Christian music, songs and hymns.
- Please contact me on the email address below for more details.





Mindfulness Eight Week Course – Content

- Week 1 – Waking Up to the Autopilot
- Week 2 – Keeping the Body in Mind
- Week 3 – The Mouse in the Maze
- Week 4 – Moving Beyond the Rumour Mill
- Week 5 – Turning Towards Difficulties
- Week 6 – Trapped in the Past or Living in the Present?
- Week 7 – When did you stop dancing?
- Week 8 – Your Wild and Precious Life
- Recommended Exercises for Homework each week
- If you would be interested in hosting or running a course please contact me.
- Finish with a Worship Meditation.



A Prayer of Accepted Tenderness

Today, O Lord, I accept your acceptance of me,
I confess that you are always with me and always for me,
I receive into my spirit your grace, your mercy, your care,
I rest in your love, O Lord,
I rest in your Love.

Amen.