

Christian Mindfulness

Mindfulness isn't a strange, mystical concept. In fact, the opposite of mindfulness could be described as *mindlessness*. Becoming mindful includes paying attention to God, allowing His loving presence to transform us into His ambassadors (see 2 Corinthians 5:20). It is being intentional, living in the present moment.

When we focus on the past, we fuel depression. When we focus on the future, we generate anxiety. Mindfulness helps us notice God's goodness and care rather than focusing on negative circumstances, people or events. Mindfulness includes using all five senses to be fully engaged in the here and now. Whether we're at home, church, school, or work, it includes listening to each other, using eye contact, and seeking to truly understand the other person's concerns. It is noticing where we are and living fully for the glory of God *today*.

George Mueller's life demonstrated mindfulness. Known as a man of prayer, he was also a man of action, a pastor who preached in England three times a week, and a man who built orphanages without ever asking people for financial aid. Instead, he and his wife prayed—and waited on God to provide housing, food, and clothing for the 10,024 orphans in their care. This work inspired others to eventually provide help for 100,000 other orphans in England.

Mueller knew his purpose, stating, "I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man may be nourished...I saw that the most important thing I had to do was give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it."

Mueller didn't stop dreaming, living, and loving others. In fact, his single-hearted focus on God led him to fulfill a lifelong dream during the years when most people retire from active life. Instead, from ages 70 through 87, Mueller was a missionary, traveling to 42 countries, sharing God's love and hope with nearly three million people. Though Mueller lived over a century ago (from 1805 through 1898), his life continues to inspire people to make their lives count today. Because he meditated on God's Word throughout each day, he knew what to do and where to go. We can follow that example by choosing a verse in the morning to apply all day long.

Just take a moment and imagine truly loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Imagine allowing God to be your first thought in the morning and your last thought at night. Imagine praying throughout the day, trusting Him to pour His love through you! He wants to be original with His plan for your life, because you are an original. You were created in God's image to do the good works He created for you to do (see Ephesians 2:10).

To determine whether you're living in mindfulness, you could ask yourself:

1. Am I noticing where I am? (Am I using my five senses to simply enjoy this moment?)
2. Am I training myself to listen with reverent wonder to the Good Shepherd? (See Psalm 23 and John 10:1-15)
3. Am I confident my life has purpose and meaning because I matter to God?
4. Am I attentive to the people who are in my life at this moment?
5. Am I allowing God's Word to shape my hopes and dreams, or am I mindlessly allowing the culture to tell me how to live?
6. When I am suffering, do I unwisely focus on the pain and sorrows, or do I look to the God of all comfort for hope amidst suffering? (See Lam. 3:21-26)
7. Am I looking to the Creator to give me strength, wisdom, and creative ideas to make this moment count?