



**DONATE**  
Strengthen families with  
your gift

**GIVE MONTHLY**  
Help fund our ministry  
programs

[MARRIAGE](#) [PARENTING](#) [FAITH](#) [PRO-LIFE](#) [CULTURE](#) [GET HELP](#) [SHOWS](#) [ABOUT](#) [Search...](#)

[Home](#) » [Family QAs](#) » [Get Help](#) » Mindfulness: A Christian Approach

# MINDFULNESS: A CHRISTIAN APPROACH



## What is mindfulness?

Some people say mindfulness is a positive form of meditation — and so I thought it might help me manage stress. But others believe it can negatively impact mental and spiritual health. As a Christian, I want to be sure I don't go down a wrong path.

### ANSWER:

Generally speaking, **mindfulness is a technique of deliberately focusing your attention on the present. You don't let yourself be distracted by other thoughts constantly running through your head; you clear "noise" from your mind.**

Mindfulness (some use the word *grounding*) is characterized by meditation and relaxation techniques. The idea is to become more self-aware. You pay attention to thoughts, feelings, and sensations in *that* moment — without purposefully deciding whether they're good or bad, and without becoming overwhelmed or overly reactive. In short, you tune in to *what's real right now*.

Like anything, mindfulness can be misused. However, it doesn't automatically contradict the Christian faith. We just need to make sure we approach it in a wise, biblical way.

## History and use of mindfulness

The concept of "mindfulness" is rooted in Zen Buddhist meditation, although it would be a mistake to classify this as a strictly Buddhist discipline. As we'll talk about shortly, there's strong support within the Judeo-Christian tradition and the pages of Scripture for the practice of meditation in general. For their part, Buddhists believe that awareness gained through meditation is a "power" that helps them reach nirvana: a state of enlightenment, peace, and happiness.

In recent years, mindfulness has gained traction in the West as a counseling and psychotherapy tool. Jon Kabat-Zinn is considered to be a major influencer in Western adoption of the practice. He created a program called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). Similar programs such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) treat depression and anxiety, and enhance mental health. Mindfulness is also used by employers and schools to handle stress and spark creativity.

## Can Christians safely practice mindfulness?

As you've discovered, opinions about mindfulness and its impact vary in the Christian community.

Folks who are skeptical about it often point out its Eastern origins. They might say that mindfulness:

- Is based on an unhealthy degree of self-focus.
- Promotes a *one-with-the-cosmos* worldview.
- Supports emptying the mind (which can leave people exposed to demonic influences).
- Encourages escape from reality.

These concerns are valid. Secular mindfulness is *horizontal*. In other words, you pay attention only to yourself. However, that approach contradicts Scripture's teaching to [have the mind of Christ](#) and evaluate everything in light of our *vertical relationship* with God and Jesus.

So, can mindfulness ever be a safe and positive option to manage stress and develop a healthier thought life?

Yes!

Christians and many faith-based counselors use mindfulness in a Christ-integrated way as a therapy tool. They believe mindfulness can be compatible with a biblical worldview — as long as it's rooted in Scripture and focuses on connecting with God.

## What does the Bible say about mindfulness?

Thankfully, the Bible has a lot to say about calming our minds and keeping a vertical focus on [the One who lovingly created us and knows us intimately](#). For example:

- The apostle Paul reminds Christians that they're called to be mindful and live with an awareness of the present ([Philippians 2:1-5](#)).
- Prayer is one very practical way Christians apply mindfulness to daily life ([1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)).
- Meditation appears in the Bible in the context of spending time studying the Word of God ([Psalm 48:9](#); [Psalm 63:6](#)).
- We should look to Jesus and think about true, admirable things ([Hebrews 12:2](#); [Philippians 4:8](#)).
- Christians shouldn't let themselves to be distracted by worry about the future ([Matthew 6:25-34](#)).
- Scripture teaches us to "take every thought captive" ([2 Corinthians 10:5](#)).
- Paul tells us to "be transformed" by renewing our minds ([Romans 12:2](#)) and to practice God-honoring thoughts ([Philippians 4:9](#)).

## Want to talk more?

In the end, you'll need to prayerfully decide for yourself whether to engage in mindfulness as a spiritual discipline or incorporate it into a counseling plan. But we know it's a complex topic. Would you let us come alongside you?

[Call us for a free over-the-phone consultation](#). Our licensed or pastoral counselors will be glad to help in any way they can. They might also be able to suggest referrals to specialized organizations, support groups, and [qualified counselors and Christian therapists](#) in your area.

### Resources

*If a title is currently unavailable through Focus on the Family, we encourage you to use another retailer.*

[Sacred Pathways](#)

[The Practice of the Presence of God](#)

[Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy With God](#)

[Experiencing God Day by Day](#)

[Understanding Spiritual Temperaments in Your Family](#)

### Referrals

[Christian Research Institute](#)

### Articles and Position Statements

[Intimacy With God: The Way to True Fulfillment](#)

[Should Christians Practice Mindfulness?](#)

[Questions and Concerns About Contemplative Prayer](#)

[Keller on Quiet Times, Mysticism, and the Priceless Payoff of Prayer](#)

[Focus on the Family Position Statement: Yoga](#)

*Copyright © 2019, Focus on the Family.*

SHARE:



## You May Also Like

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY™  
MARRIAGE  
PODCAST

**Developing a Strong Partnership**

AUGUST 23, 2022

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY™  
MARRIAGE  
PODCAST

**Porn Doesn't Mean Your Marriage is Over**

AUGUST 18, 2022

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY™  
MARRIAGE  
PODCAST

**Grace and Justice for a Porn Addict**

AUGUST 16, 2022

Have Focus on the Family resources helped you or your family? [Share your story here](#) and inspire others today!



*Helping Families Thrive™*



1-800-A-FAMILY (232-6459)



help@focusonthefamily.com



8605 Explorer Drive Colorado  
Springs, CO 80920-1051

#### ABOUT US

[Our Values](#)

[Visit Us](#)

[Jobs & Volunteering](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[Press Center](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Find a Counselor](#)

[Financials](#)

#### SHOWS & PODCASTS

[Daily Broadcast](#)

[The Boundless Show](#)

[Adventures in Odyssey](#)

[Radio Theatre](#)

[Focus on Marriage Podcast](#)

[Focus on Parenting Podcast](#)

[All Shows >>](#)

#### SHOP

[Adventures in Odyssey](#)

[Radio Theatre](#)

[That the World May Know](#)

[The Truth Project](#)

[Magazines](#)

[All Products >>](#)

#### DONATE

[Make a Donation](#)

[Planned Giving](#)

[Manage My Donor Account](#)

[Donor Tax Statements](#)

#### SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTERS

Get our updates straight to your inbox.



[Sign Up](#)

Copyright © 2022 Focus on the Family | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Permissions](#)

