

A woman in a white robe with a gold fringe, standing in a desert landscape with her hand outstretched. The background is a bright, hazy desert scene with mountains in the distance.

# 30

Tear-Away  
Scripture Cards Included

# Meditations on JESUS

Marilyn Hickey  
& Sarah Bowling

# Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

[FOREWORD](#)

[INTRODUCTION: Meditating: The #1 Key to Success](#)

[1. The “Who” of Meditation](#)

[2. The “What” of Meditation](#)

[3. The “When” of Meditation](#)

[4. The “Where” of Meditation](#)

[5. The “How” of Meditation](#)

[6. Walking with Jesus](#)

[7. Meditations on Jesus](#)

[About the Authors](#)

30  
Meditations  
on  
JESUS

Marilyn Hickey  
& Sarah Bowling



WHITAKER  
HOUSE

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## **30 Meditations on Jesus**

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ISBN: 978-1-60374-958-9  
eBook ISBN: 978-1-60374-982-4

Printed in the United States of America  
© 2014 by Marilyn Hickey Ministries

Whitaker House  
1030 Hunt Valley Circle  
New Kensington, PA 15068  
[www.whitakerhouse.com](http://www.whitakerhouse.com)

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# FOREWORD

In the twenty-first century, meditation has become a lost spiritual discipline.

During the time of Christ, some rabbinic schools required students to memorize the entire Torah, or at least the Pentateuch. In the Middle Ages, individuals memorized the entire book of Psalms. Jesus overcame temptation through memorized Scripture. The apostles quoted Scripture in their sermons and in their writings.

Today, many followers of Christ have electronic versions of the Bible loaded onto their phones, their iPads, and their computers, as well as dust-covered physical Bibles, stacked on bookshelves; but few followers of Christ systematically meditate upon the Word of God.

Marilyn Hickey has personally inspired me to meditate on the Word of God. I know her teachings will inspire you, too.

*—Dr. Darryl Wootton*  
Lead Pastor, First Assembly of God  
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

# INTRODUCTION

## MEDITATING: THE #1 KEY TO SUCCESS

Hide-and-seek was a fun game. I can hear the refrain: “Ready or not, here I come!” One child was “it,” and he would cover his eyes on home base as all the other children ran and hid. The object was for those who were hiding to get “home” before they were found.

It was great entertainment, and amusing, but there’s a “hiding” that is essential to our walk as Christians that I want to present here.

I’m referring to hiding the Word in our hearts, and the “who, what, when, where, and how” of doing this. The Bible says, “*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!*” (Psalm 119:11). When we hide the Word in our hearts, it not only keeps us from sin, as the psalmist said, but it also will bring success.

Most promises in the Bible relate to specific actions:

*“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”* (Ephesians 6:2–3)

The command (action) involves honoring your parents, and it is accompanied by a specific promise: that you may be well and “*live long on the earth.*”

God gave a command to Joshua. It was given because of God’s promise to lead Israel into the Promised Land. After forty years in the wilderness, Joshua was chosen to fulfill the hundreds-of-years-old pledge. In Joshua 1:8, he received a command to meditate. The instruction was for *all people*, as you’ll see from reading further Scriptures on meditation, and it carries a promise that goes with everything in your life. This Scripture enlightens us about hiding the Word. It says,

*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.* (Joshua 1:8)

God said, in effect, “If you meditate on My Word, day and night, and if you speak that Word and obey it, everything in your life will be prosperous and successful!”

I’ve discovered that God has a lot to say about meditating, and I’ve become excited about what meditating on His Word accomplishes. It is important that you understand what meditation is and what it will do for you. Meditating on God’s Word changes lives—in fact, it *is* life.

I’ve heard many testimonies regarding the effects of meditation. If you know me, I’m sure most of you know Sarah Bowling. She’s a wife, a mother, a teacher of the Word, a pastor, and my television cohost on *Today with Marilyn and Sarah*. And, if you did not know, she is my daughter. She ministers alongside Reece Bowling, her husband, who is senior pastor of Orchard Road Christian Center, in Greenwood, Colorado. The crux of her heart’s cry is a ministry she founded, called Saving Moses, which concentrates on saving young children, from newborns to the age of five.

Sarah’s life has been strongly affected by meditation. This is what she says:  
The most powerful experience I’ve had meditating on the Bible was when I was in my early twenties. I was spending the summer doing missions work in Hong Kong. At the time, I was a schoolteacher and had made some bad decisions in my personal life during the preceding school year. During my time there, I was not only involved in missions work but I also was trying to get past the dilemma created by those choices. Thankfully, I had supportive people around me and made great friendships.

Over the course of that summer, what helped my thinking the most was my experience with memorizing and meditating on Colossians 3. I found that the longer I memorized and meditated on those verses, the more



healthy my mind and thoughts became. As I continued to progress through the chapter, it felt as though the verses I memorized were figuratively washing out all the garbage those bad decisions had deposited in my mind.

Furthermore, it felt like those verses were not only cleaning my mind, but they also were replacing destructive mind-sets with more truth-oriented thoughts and convictions.

I've never forgotten that experience and the transforming power of meditating on the Bible. Subsequently, I've used the principles of meditating over the course of my life with equally powerful results and transformations.

I'm sure most of you are familiar with Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life*. Rick is the founder and senior pastor of Saddleback Church, in Forest Lake, California. This is what he said in his book about meditation:

Meditation is “thinking about God”—His essence, His desires, His plans, His mercy, etc.—throughout each day. And the only way a Christian can do this is by knowing God—and the only way a Christian can know God is through His Word. Meditation (similar to the process of “worrying”), which is only “focused thinking,” is accomplished when one mulls over (contemplates, ponders) God's Word continually during the day.

Meditation allows God to share His secrets (revelations) with His children—to speak to His children in a close and personal way. To properly meditate requires a life of

studying God's thoughts recorded in the Bible. It also means that a Christian should continuously review biblical truths when they are presented in sermons, radio broadcasts, Bible studies, etc."<sup>1</sup>

Meditation isn't always easy, and it's no small wonder the enemy has desperately tried to mask the topic of meditation on God's Word. He's brought in many counterfeits, such as transcendental meditation, and all kinds of distraction. Whenever you see the devil putting up a smokescreen, you can be sure he's counterfeiting something real. The devil never created anything. All he can do is falsify and imitate what already exists.

1. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 85.

## THE “WHO” OF MEDITATION

I mentioned earlier God’s promise for success in Joshua 1:8.

What is success? Let’s look at the Hebrew word for “*prosperous*”: *tsalach*.

It means:

1. to rush
2. to advance, prosper, make progress, succeed, be profitable
3. to make prosperous, bring to successful issue, cause to prosper
4. to show or experience prosperity, prosper

You see how success and prosperity go hand in hand? This Hebrew word has the correct signification. When I read “to advance,” I think of wading across a river or pushing forward toward a goal. Proverbs 13:19 says, “*A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul.*”

Another meaning of this word is “to fall upon.” Picture God’s riches falling upon you. Also hidden in this good word is the meaning “to finish well.” God’s Word has happy endings.

Lastly, it can be translated as “promote.” The Hebrew connotation means it brings promotion.

If you so desired, you could place meditate before each meaning and make an equation straight across the line. Do you want to prosper as a wife, a husband, a mother, an employer, an employee, a friend, a sweetheart, a neighbor, a minister, or as a Christian? Meditation on God’s Word is the unusual key that unlocks all of His success. It is the solution, and we need to know what it is and how to do

it.

Many will say that this passage was only written for Joshua. They may say, “Well, God gave Joshua success because he had to take the Promised Land.” But I want to tell you that God did more than tell us to take the Promised Land—He told us to take the world for Jesus.

Meditation can dramatically change your life. In this passage, God is talking about a “blessed man.” He says:

*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. (Psalm 1:1–3)*

If you meditate on the Word day and night, you’ll implement the key element of being blessed, prosperous, and successful in every area of your life.

“Oh,” you say, “there’s that ugly word *meditate*.” I think some Christians have this word confused with *medicate*. I think they associate it with a task that is time-consuming and difficult. However, meditation does not need to be drudgery. Rather, I have discovered that it adds a *refreshing* quality to my study of God’s Word. It is my desire for you to see transformation take place when you begin applying the principles of meditation to your own life. As Rick Warren suggested, if you know how to worry, you already know how to meditate!

In the passage above, we run into the same idea found in Joshua 1:8. “*Blessed is the man...*” The man who meditated on the Word will be prosperous and successful in all that he does. Shall we embrace the truth of meditating? Or shall we simply stand aside and, with words and acts, watch other Christians meditate? We are too busy, too old, or too “out of it” to be bothered.

However, you see, Psalm 1 whets every believer’s appetite for meditation. It states, “*Blessed is the man who...meditates*” (Psalm 1:1–2). The word *blessedness* is not found in the Hebrew text, because there is no such thing as a singular blessing, only plural blessings. Psalm 1 says that meditating will give you vitality “*like a tree*” (Psalm 1:3). It will give you security, for you will be “*planted*” (verse 3). Your capacity will be unlimited because His sources are “*the rivers [plural] of water*” (verse 3). You will be fertile, because meditating “*brings forth its fruit*” (verse 3). You will have seasons and perpetuate, because your “*leaf...shall not wither*” (verse 3). What prosperity! Everything you do

*“shall prosper”* (verse 3).

Can you look into the mirror of these words and see yourself?

Because of the blessings, successes, and revelations I’ve received, I’ve condensed hours of study, practical experience, and character studies on meditation, which I believe will compel you to meditate on His Word—letting it dominate and change your life for the better. I pray the Lord will throw open the shutters of your spiritual understanding so that you may receive all the blessings He has for you in the fullness of His Word.

Let this truth be gladly received in your mind and your will. Embrace this truth. There’s only one way to go—forward!

## THE “WHAT” OF MEDITATION

*“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”*

—Joshua 1:8

*Meditate*—a word abused, misused, and charged by Christians as an unscriptural principle. Yet God spoke to Joshua, saying that if he would not allow His Word to depart out of his mouth, but instead meditate on it day and night, observing to do it, He would make everything Joshua put his hands to prosper and be successful. It’s a simple thing for us to rationalize and simply pass off the strong admonition given to Joshua. It’s easy to insist that the command was for Joshua only. After all, he had a big Promised Land to conquer. However, lest we speak too lightly of such words, Jesus told us to conquer a gigantic world with His Word. If meditation on the Word conquered Canaan, a land of giants, as well as walled cities, and brought forth milk and honey, could it conquer our giants, bring down the walls of our opposition, and pour forth milk and honey into our daily lives? Could we, too, conquer a world of Canaanites, as Joshua did?

What is meditation? It is to chew, to mutter, to memorize, visualize, and personalize the Word of God. Meditation presents a zealous promise that is tremendous in scope.

Genesis 24:63 is the first reference to meditation recorded in the Bible: *“And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming.”*

It was the first time Isaac laid eyes on his beloved Rebekah, and it was love at first sight. And it happened as he was meditating.

What can we glean from this initial reference? It says, Isaac *“lifted his eyes.”* I’ve found lifting your eyes will help you to see Jesus in your circumstances. When Abraham *“lifted his eyes,”* he received a divine visitation. He also *“lifted his eyes”* (Genesis 22:13) when Isaac was delivered from being sacrificed on Mount Moriah.

God's promises were incubated with Abram (who later became Abraham). He spoke to Abram the first time and told him to do three things:

1. Leave the city of Ur.
2. Don't take relatives.
3. Go to the Promised Land.

God told Abram he would receive specific blessings for obeying. When he fully obeyed these three commands, he received the blessings (promises) the Lord set forth. Even though he didn't see them all come about in his lifetime, he received them nonetheless.

As we know, Abraham wanted Isaac to have a righteous wife. He didn't want him to marry any Canaanite women. We'll see why later. So, he called for his servant, who took a vow to find the right woman. He found Rebekah and brought her to meet Isaac.

As we read, the Bible tells us that Isaac was meditating in the field. Now this happened at night, mind you, when one wouldn't anticipate anyone coming to his home. Isaac lifted his eyes. What caused him to do this? It was dark, and he probably couldn't see very well. Don't you think his meditation had something to do with it?

The Hebrew word used here for *meditation* is used only once in the Bible: *suwach*. It means "to muse," which is to ponder, consider, or mull over. So here we have Isaac, at the end of the day, in the field by himself. What a lonely portrait. However, he was most likely ruminating on the promises God gave to his father, Abraham. God's pledge to him was,

*I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*  
(Genesis 12:2–3)

These promises included assurances of another land, another nation, and a spiritual blessing for generations to come. They were great and mighty promises, and they required that Isaac marry the right woman. No doubt, it weighed heavy on his shoulders as he deliberated. That evening, his answer came; God solved his dilemma.

How is that going to help you? Lift up your eyes. The Lord knows the perfect one for you. You don't. Maybe you're already married, and you don't need a mate. Lift up your eyes and thank God for the mate you have. But know that as you meditate on His promises, He will bring them to pass. I love how God works.

To meditate gives forth the flavorful meaning of being separated, as the dross is separated from the silver. So, must a man separate himself from the crowd in order to help the crowd? Isn't that goofy? Proverbs 25:4 says, "*Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer*" (kjv).

Psalm 119:15 says, "*I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.*" It gives the idea of bowing down and musing. There is the idea of a pilgrimage in this word. Imagine, taking a trip into God's Word. Fantastic!

Lastly is the concept of Psalm 39:3, "*My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my tongue.*" It infers the focusing of the rays of God's love and power on a man's heart, which starts a fire, before the tongue begins to speak. This sums up the process of taking the Word, speaking it, walking with it, and allowing it to guide you.

Bill Gothard has stated that meditating is: (1) to memorize, (2) to personalize, and (3) to spiritualize. How precise and true.

As you see, to meditate is to walk and talk. Plan on becoming a spiritual "walkie-talkie."

Scriptures on meditation say that if you meditate on the Word, keeping it in your mind, letting it go from there to your mouth, and acting on it, you will be successful spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally. As a parent, a spouse, a child, a cook, or a student—no matter what you do—you will be prosperous if you obey the command in Joshua 1:8. This is a Scripture key in the Bible that carries tremendous impact.

## Three Components of Joshua 1:8

As we continue to look at what meditation is, we see three parts to Joshua 1:8.

Part one involves your mouth: "*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth.*"

*The Message* version reads, "*And don't for a minute let this Book of The Revelation be out of mind.*"

You have to spend time thinking the Word first, which, of course, comes by reading. Please realize that as you memorize a Scripture, it is for you. Visualize



it in your mind's eye. Part two involves the meditation itself: "*You shall meditate in it day and night.*" I mentioned *to mutter* earlier. The Hebrew word *meditate* translates as "to moan, growl, utter, muse, mutter, meditate, devise, plot, and speak." Remember that meditation involves "talking" God's Word, or muttering. By doing this, you will fulfill the first part of this command, and then you will not let it depart from your mouth. You may say, "Wait a minute. You're telling me to speak, but also that it won't depart from my mouth." Yes, when you mutter the word and speak it to yourself, it will become ingrained in your brain, rooted in your mind. It won't depart from you, I promise.

Part three brings in the action: "*...that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.*" Meditation not only involves thinking and talking, but it also involves walking. We are to be doers of God's Word, not hearers only. (See James 1:22.)

These three elements of meditation bring forth the promise, "*...then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*"

Many people say, "If only there was something that I could do about this terrible situation." What can you do? Meditate on the Word.

God did not say, "If you'll do this, I'll make your way prosperous." He said, in effect, "If you'll meditate, *you* will make your way prosperous." That is a big difference. You alone are the deciding factor. God will never force you to meditate on His Word; neither will He force prosperity on you. Meditation on God's Word is a consuming effort, not merely a pastime.

The word *meditate* in the above Scripture means to speak with oneself in a low voice, or to think aloud on the Word of God. This keeps the mind saturated with God's truth so that it can give a proper answer.

## Joshua Affected Three Ways

There's something interesting about the first chapter of the book of Joshua. There are three separate places in the chapter where God told Joshua to be strong and courageous.

The first instance is in Joshua 1:6:

*Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.*

This command appears in two other places:

*Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the*

*right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. (verse 7)*

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (verse 9)*

That bothered me at first. I wondered, *Why did God tell Joshua to be strong and courageous three times in the same chapter that He tells Joshua to meditate on the Word?* Then I looked carefully at those verses, and I realized that God wanted Joshua to be strong and courageous in three different ways:

1. In his body
2. In his spirit
3. In his soul (his mind, emotions, and will)

First, let's see how God wanted to strengthen Joshua physically. When the Lord told him to capture the Promised Land for his people, Joshua was more than eighty years old. He was going to need supernatural strength to take that land. And he received strength in his body; and you will, too.

Then, in Joshua 1:7, the Lord spoke about Joshua's spirit. He said, *"Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left."* Just stay with it, and receive it into your spirit. Joshua received strength and courage in his spirit. This Scripture pertains to all of us.

Finally, God spoke to Joshua about having strength and courage in his soul when he said, *"Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed"* (Joshua 1:9). God wanted to bind Joshua with the wonderful strength provided through His Word in every area of his life. Joshua received strength through meditation, and so can you.

## A Foundation

Since God told Joshua that meditation on the Word would make him prosperous and successful, I decided to study Joshua's life, and I saw that the "proof of the pudding is in the eating." After examining his life, I discovered that meditation had a definite impact on all that Joshua did. Before we look at how this occurred, I want you to understand what is involved.

## Changes in Your Life

Are there areas in your life that need changed or a refreshed? The Bible says if

you meditate on the Word of God day and night, you'll be prosperous and successful in every area of your life. The Word profited my very first meditation partner in the area of her personality, because she considered the Word, instead of her problems. It was tremendous to see the transformation that occurred in her life. I want to challenge you to meditate on the Word of God and see how it will change your life, too. Meditation isn't just for Joshua, and it isn't just for pastors—it's for you, too!

## Three Basic Steps

The three basic steps of meditation are:

1. Memorize
2. Personalize
3. Visualize

### Memorize

If you're like most people, you may get uptight as soon as you hear the word *memorize*. Some people say, "I'm beyond forty years old; I can't memorize anymore." Don't say that. The Bible says you have the mind of Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 2:16.) In John 14:26, Jesus promised, "*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*" This is very important: How can the Holy Spirit bring something to your remembrance if there is nothing to remember? You are to meditate God's Word so that He can make you remember.

### Personalize

As you meditate, don't just say, "This is God's Word to all Christians." You should say, "This is God's Word for *me!*" Some people read the Bible as though it's for everybody but them. God isn't a respecter of persons. (See Acts 10:34 kjv.) That means that He is not more interested in other people. His promises are for you.

### Visualize

You must see God's Word as finished. See His Word happening in your life, in

spite of what your circumstances may look like. I call visualization “faith sight.” Visualization is found in the life of Abraham:

*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. (Hebrews 11:17–19)*

When Abraham was on his way to offer Isaac to the Lord as a sacrifice of consecration, he told his servants, “*Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and **we will come back to you***” (Genesis 22:5). What was Abraham saying? He was visualizing God’s promise to bless his seed—Isaac, his son. He was seeing God’s Word as complete truth, and saying, in effect, “Even if I do sacrifice Isaac and God has to resurrect him from the ashes, He has made me a promise, and He will keep it.” Abraham was seeing God’s Word as complete, through visualization, which caused him to receive Isaac “in a figure.”

When you meditate on the Word, begin saying what God says; accept His Word as a reality in your life; visualize it happening.

Have you ever daydreamed? Everybody has. You can have a spiritual dream by visualizing God’s Word as if it were already accomplished in your life. This is the final step involved in the threefold process of meditation: first, you memorize; second, you personalize; and third, you visualize the results.

## Joshua’s Life of Meditation

Joshua’s life was a testimony of the power of meditation and the blessings that it brings. Even in his mistakes, he was still prosperous and successful.

One of his mistakes was allowing himself to be deceived by some Gibeonite people. Gibeonites came from the Hivite tribe. *Hivite* means “snake” or “serpent.” The Gibeonites were living in the land where the children of Israel were. It’s easy to see why Hivite means “snake,” because these people were crafty.

*But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. And they went to Joshua, to the*

*camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.” (Joshua 9:3–6)*

God distinctly warned Joshua not to make a covenant with the Gibeonites; but when they came to him, he didn't realize who they were, and he entered into a covenant with them.

*They said to Joshua, “We are your servants.” And Joshua said to them, “Who are you, and where do you come from?” So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the Lord your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan; to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth.” (Joshua 9:8–10)*

The Gibeonites were intimidated by the Israelites, having heard about their victories in past battles. They wanted to be assured of favor and protection, which they would be guaranteed through a covenant.

Joshua made a covenant with them, and three days later, he received news that made him angry:

*And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them. (Joshua 9:16)*

Now what would Joshua do? This did not look like a prosperous situation. The people said, “*We have sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them*” (Joshua 9:19). The Lord knew Joshua was a man of the Word. He had caused the Gibeonites to be their servants, and their descendants were a group of people called the Nethinims, meaning “devoted men of God.”

After the children of Israel made a league with the Gibeonites, a king of Jerusalem heard about the victories that the Lord had given the Israelites. He also heard that the Israelites had covenanted with the Gibeonites, and, because Gibeon was a great city, he felt threatened. He sent armies to make war against Gibeon, but the men of camp called on Joshua:

*Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us. (Joshua 10:6)*

What happened? God protected the Israelites and their servants. First, He sent hail that only hit the attacking army. Then, He sent confusion and ambush, which caused them to fight against each other. And something else happened that made this day unique to its kind:

*Then Joshua spoke to the Lord...and he said in the sight of Israel: “Sun, stand still over Gibeon; and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.” So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. (Joshua 10:12–13)*

When Joshua spoke, even the sun and the moon stood still. Here is a man who kept God’s powerful Word in his mouth all the time. Joshua meditated on the Word and moved in its authority.

Do you need the power and strength of God in your life? Do you want to be prosperous? The key is meditation.

Then I wondered, *What about Joshua’s financial statement? He was successful physically, because he led the Israelites to take the Promised Land, and it only took them six-and-a-half years to take it. Was Joshua financially successful?*

Many people imagine the children of Israel to be dressed in rags, owning next to nothing, as they wandered through the land. That is not so. When the Israelites cast lots to determine where people would settle, according to their tribes, Joshua did not choose some little old tent. No. He asked for the city Timnath Serah (see Joshua 19:50), which means “the city of the sun.” Joshua owned a whole mountain with a city on top of it. Some would say, “I’m going to be humble; just give me a little nest in the west.” Joshua received a double portion of wealth. Why? Because his priority was the Word of God.

If you are in the ministry, there are those who may wonder about your family. Once, when I was teaching in a church, a big, tall, Church-of-God minister stood up, turned to me and said, “I’d like to ask you, what does your husband think about you traveling all over the countryside?” I thought, *Oh, God, give me a good answer.* Then I asked him, “Which husband?” Everybody laughed, and that night, he came forward after the service and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. People always wonder about your family when you’re in the ministry, and I wondered the same thing about Joshua’s family. The Lord showed me the answer, too. It’s in Joshua 24:15–16:

*[Joshua said,] “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” So the people answered and said: “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods.”*

Joshua and his family served the Lord. And what happened? They inspired all of the people of Israel to serve the Lord, too. A family that diligently seeks after God will bring Him glory, and meditating on God’s Word will bring you total success in your family life.

Sometimes in my own life, when situations have appeared impossible, I've reminded the Lord, "You said that if I meditated on Your Word day and night, my way would be prosperous and successful. That includes my children."

## Meanings of Meditate

The word *meditate* is translated from three Hebrew words and two Greek words. One of the Hebrew words, *hagah*, found in both Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2, means "to speak to one's self in a low voice," "to think out loud the Word of God," and "to keep the mind saturated with truth for a proper answer." *Meditate* can also mean "to separate the dross from the silver," as used in Proverbs 25:4: "*Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.*"

Why separate the dross from the silver? To purify it. Meditation brings forth a cleansing; it is the washing of the water of the Word. How does a silversmith know that the silver is pure when he separates it from the dross? Because he can see his image reflected in it. Meditating on the Word of God will cleanse and purify you, so that His image will be reflected in all that you do. Your personality will be more like His than ever before, and you will be prosperous and successful in all that you do. You'll be "*a vessel for the finer.*"

There's a beautiful picture formed by the Hebrew word *hagah*. The first letter, as it's written in Hebrew, is He, which stands for grace. The second is Gimel, which means "camel," and the third is He again. The depiction we see is grace, a camel to travel, and another level of grace. You may say that God gives us the means (the camel) to travel from grace to grace. Remember Genesis 24:63, when Isaac was meditating in the field in the evening? He lifted his eyes and, behold, camels were coming.

Just as Isaac bowed in reverence to the Lord, you, too, can literally bow in holy reverence to Him as you meditate; this is a precious practice. If you are meditating in a place where bowing is impossible, I believe you can "bow in your spirit" unto Him. It is a state of giving Him total control, when your mind, spirit, and body are subject to the Lord.

In this verse of Scripture, Isaac bowed and mused over God's Word. As I said earlier, when he lifted his eyes, camels approached, bringing him his bride. How wonderful it must have been: The first time Rebekah ever saw her husband, he was meditating on the Word of God.

Also recall Psalm 39:3, which offers another concept of meditation: "*My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my*

*tongue.*” The word *muse* means to meditate, and it focuses on God’s love and power, starting a fire in a man’s heart, causing him to speak. Jeremiah once refused to speak the Word of God, but then he said, “*But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not*” (Jeremiah 20:9).

In Luke 24:32, the disciples saw Jesus after His ascension, and they said, “*Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?*”

The Word of God will start a spiritual fire within you, and then it will cause you to utter words and articulate sounds with your voice. Meditate on the Word of God, let it come out as fire, burning the chaff out of your life.

**Meditating is supremely the most important thing that you, as a Christian, can do.**



## THE “WHEN” OF MEDITATION

Meditation carries the highest level of importance. The following Scripture provides a key for *when* we should meditate:

*My son, keep your father’s command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you.* (Proverbs 6:20–22)

I memorize Scripture first thing in the morning, even before I brush my teeth. It’s the best time, because my mind is clear and fresh. I recall my Scriptures early in the afternoon, because God’s Word guides me. Then, the last thing I do before I go to sleep is say my Scriptures for the day aloud once again. You’ll read more about this in chapter 5—the “How” section.

That final time I speak the Scripture, it saturates my very being. Solomon spoke these words to his people: “*Let your heart therefore be loyal to the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day*” (1 Kings 8:61). You say this takes discipline. You are so right. Isn’t discipline worth it when it makes you prosperous and successful in all you do?

One night, a woman broke into our house when I was there alone. Actually, our toy poodle was with me, but that wasn’t going to be of much help. However, God delivered me.

Several passages in the Bible talk about deliverance from evil by the blood of Jesus. (See Hebrews 2:14; Colossians 1:13; 2:15; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:11.) I had memorized this verse: “*He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*” (Colossians 1:13). I spoke this Word and found that it kept me; and I was delivered, praise be to God.

There are days when Scripture memorization goes easily and every taste of His Word in my mouth is delicious. But then there are days when it’s hard; it feels drab and discouraging. There are times of tremendous pressure on my time and energy, and there are times when my mind is fuzzy with exhaustion. There are also times when the enemy whispers, *What is this proving?* However, beyond all of this is, “the entrance of His Word gives light” (see Psalm 119:130)—a light

I've never known before.

Job stored the Word, and it became gold in his heart:

*Receive, please, instruction from His mouth, and lay up His words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up; you will remove iniquity far from your tents. Then you will lay your gold in the dust, and the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks. (Job 22:22–24)*

David said, “*My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches*” (Psalm 63:5–6). He found that meditating at night brought richness to his soul. His meditation brought him through tremendous trials.

I once spoke with a lovely pastor's wife in Rapid City, South Dakota, and she told me, “I have started an ‘M&M Club’ in our church; it means *Memorize and Meditate*.” She said, “There are sixteen of us that meet once a week, and we have memory partners. We get together to encourage each other with revelations that we've received during the week.” She shared a lot of things about meditation with me that God had revealed to me, too. She spoke of how the Word of God had literally transformed them.

Meditating takes the Word and makes it glow within you; it puts fire in your mouth. It will put lightness in your steps and brightness in your eyes. The saturating of your spirit in the Word will conquer old problems and make new victories a reality. I've yet to meet one person who was sorry they memorized and meditated on the Word of God. You won't be sorry either.

## Key Moments

One time, I took a private plane to a seminar in Billings, Montana. We departed early in the morning and decided to return home late that night. That evening, the plane would not start. The pilot said, “Oh, it's the battery.” Someone was sent to recharge it, but when the plane finally rolled down the runway, one of the women onboard said, “The wheel on my side is on fire.”

I looked out the window on my side and confirmed that the wheel was indeed on fire, and I told the pilot.

“Oh,” the pilot responded, “the wheels aren't on fire; the brakes are.”

“Isn't that dangerous?”

“No,” he said. “We've just recharged the battery, and we're going against the wind. We'll taxi around, and the fire will go out.”

The pilot was calm, but I didn't feel very peaceful. Neither did the woman beside me. She said, "I think you should suggest that we stay in Billings tonight."

Trying to remain tactful, I said to the pilot, "Roger, do you think that it's safe for us to leave Billings tonight?"

"Don't you think that I know how to fly this plane?" he asked. "If I didn't think this was safe, I wouldn't be doing it."

I told the woman next to me, "Virginia, you ask the next time." Then, I said, "Let's pray that, if God doesn't want us to leave Billings tonight, He'll cause the plane to be unable to take off." We prayed.

I don't know how far we were from Billings when the pilot lifted the plane's wheels, but when he did, every light and electrical instrument in that plane went out. My only thought was, *The electricity took up the wheels, and we have no electricity to put them back down.* I'd never been in a plane that landed without wheels, and I really did not want to be in one. I was frightened.

The pilot asked, "Does anybody have a flashlight?"

I thought, *Who carries a flashlight around?* That's not something that I normally carry during my travels. Nobody had one. The pilot could not see the dials, and with the radio dead, he could not call in. It was raining, so there was no depth or speed perception at all. Then I heard the pilot say, "We'd better prepare for a crash landing."

At that moment, a thought struck me: *The Word will keep me.* The Lord brought to mind this precious Scripture:

*"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me," says the Lord. (Isaiah 54:17)*

You will find that when you meditate on the Word of God, He will bring Scriptures to your mind at key moments in your life. Some Scriptures that I memorize will not return to me until ten weeks later, but I've discovered that the Lord will bring them back when I really need them. He gave me that Scripture on the plane when I surely needed it.

*"Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom"* (Psalm 51:6). Truth is the Word of God. I had put truth into my spirit, and God activated it in my life, making it wisdom. If there had been nothing there to "activate," there wouldn't have been any wisdom; but that night in the plane, God's Word became wisdom and vibrant life to me.

I repeated the Scripture aloud. I said it again. What happened? The plane turned around and we landed in Billings without a problem. I saw the Word of God work with power that night.

Do you want the Word of God to work tangibly in your life? Do you want it to make you prosperous in every area of your life? Meditation is your key. Unless you commit yourself to God's answers, you cannot expect His results. You'll find His answer to whatever you need by meditating upon His Word.

## THE “WHERE” OF MEDITATION

One of the best things about the Bible is that it provides us with practical examples, and these examples are evidence that God’s Word works. I want you to see the importance of meditation and where it has been used. As we’ve seen, Joshua 1:8 proclaims that the key to all prosperity and success is not to let the Word depart out of your mouth, but to meditate on it, day and night, doing what it says. In fact, the history of the children of Israel is enveloped in meditation.

We tend to associate certain people with Scripture, by saying, “It is their ministry to study the Word.” God didn’t say studying the Word was a priority only for those in the ministry. He desires His Word to be the center of *everyone’s* life. Jesus emphasized this in His Word when He said, “*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:31–32).

What does it mean to “*abide*” in the Word of God? It is meditation—memorizing, personalizing, and visualizing the Word of God. You never have to worry about whether the sun will rise in the morning or whether the moon will shine at night. Do you realize God’s Word placed the sun and the moon where they are? It also keeps them there. Hebrews 1:3 says that God is “*upholding all things by the word of His power.*” Continuing in the Word is very important; meditating on the Word of God is extremely important. If it is powerful enough to uphold the sun and the moon, as it did for Joshua, then it is powerful enough to take care of you.

When I first read the book of Ezra, my immediate thought was: *This is a marvelous book. Why has it taken me so long to get into something this commanding and mighty?* It demonstrates the power of the Word in the lives of individuals and nations, and it has the ability to change the entire world.

The story opens in a part of Israel’s history that is critical. Before we can thoroughly understand it, however, we need to look at the events that preceded it. Joshua and his men took the Promised Land in only six-and-a-half years. Joshua was a man who meditated on the Word and didn’t let it depart from his mouth. He was obedient.

The book of Judges follows Joshua and describes the early government of Israel. Then, the Bible gives the history of kings—both good and bad—and the prophets' ministry to the kings.

As we read, we see that Israel consisted of two separate kingdoms: the northern and the southern kingdoms. During this period, the Israelites began to lean increasingly on the repulsive idols of the heathen people in the land. God repeatedly warned the people of Israel about this danger, before He finally decided that enough was enough. He led King Nebuchadnezzar and the Assyrian nation in battle against the northern kingdom of Israel, and they were taken captive.

Several years later, the southern kingdom was attacked by the Babylonians, and they, too, were taken into captivity. All of Israel had been taken captive, even though, years before, the prophet Jeremiah had warned them what would happen if they did not repent.

God had used Jeremiah to tell the Jews about the horrendous penalties of idolatry. He used a group of people called the Rechabites as a visual aid in His message of warning. The Rechabites were descendants of a man named Jonadab, who had lived two hundred years prior. God gave Jonadab specific orders:

1. Don't bow down to idols
2. Don't plant vineyards
3. Be nomadic and do not buy land
4. Don't drink of the vine

Jonadab taught these rule to his children, his children's children, and so on. The Rechabites never owned land. For two hundred years, they wandered the northern kingdom with their sheep and goats and never drank wine or planted vineyards.

When Assyria attacked Israel's northern kingdom, the Rechabites weren't there. Since the area had dried up, they had taken their flocks and wandered into the southern kingdom. By doing so, they avoided the Assyrian captivity. The prophet Jeremiah warned the southern kingdom that they would taken captive by the Babylonians if they did not obey God's commands.

Jeremiah set pots on a table and filled them with wine. Then he invited all of the Rechabite leaders living in Judah to join him. “Have a drink,” he told them. The Rechabites replied, “Jeremiah, you know we don’t drink. God spoke to Jonadab two hundred years ago and told us not to drink. Since that day, we have never tasted of the vine.” (See Jeremiah 35:5–6.)

God was using Jeremiah’s demonstration to mercifully warn the people of Judah. He was saying, in effect, “Do you see that the Rechabites have obeyed My Word for two hundred years? They have never tasted of the vine, never planted vineyards, and never bought land. Now, because they have obeyed the Word, it is going to profit them.”

Did you know that the Word of God is always profitable? This is right in line with the message of Joshua 1:8—the Word brings good success.

The Rechabites weren’t taken captive when King Nebuchadnezzar led the Babylonians into the southern kingdom. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded, he said, “Anybody who owns land goes into captivity. Anybody who doesn’t own land can stay here.” And the Rechabites stayed. What can we learn from the prophet Jeremiah’s message? “It pays to do what the Word says.”

The Israelites were captured, and so were the people of Judah. Many of them were slaves, but don’t get the idea that all of them were groveling in the ground. There were those who held esteemed positions. Ezra held a high court position, as did Nehemiah. During this same time, Esther was a queen. Notice that these Israelites were devoted servants of the Lord. When you are obedient to God, He can take care of you no matter where you are. Later, when the time came to return to Israel, many of the Jews in Babylon were so wealthy, they chose not to return. We see this in the New Testament, when the apostle Peter preached to the church at Babylon, to the Jews who had never returned to Israel.

## Meditation in Captivity

Before the Israelites were taken into captivity, Jeremiah prophesied that they would be captive for seventy years.

*“And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,” says the Lord; “and I will make it a perpetual desolation.”* (Jeremiah 25:11–12)

What were the Jews in Babylon thinking during all that time? For the most part,

they had their minds fastened on the Word of God. They remembered the words of the prophet: In seventy years, we get to go back. Jeremiah's prophecy was a hope, a strength, and a comfort to all those who were in captivity. We, too, have a hope, a strength, and a comfort; we can fasten our hearts on what the glorious Word has said about Jesus' return. That is a sustaining hope; and we are to comfort one another with the hope of Jesus' return. We don't know the day or the hour, but Jesus is coming back. The New Testament says that this hope is purifying. (See 1 John 3:3.)

When your thoughts are fastened to the Word of God, you are involved in a form of meditation, and the truth will both keep and sustain you.

In captivity, the children of Israel kept and obeyed God's Word to remain pure in their intent toward God. I'm sure that when the seventieth year arrived, many said, "What's going to happen? God said seventy years, and His Word cannot fail."

God had already started to prepare for the seventieth year, when His people would return to their Promised Land. I became excited when I saw how He had begun to prepare for this event one hundred fifty years earlier, through the prophet Isaiah:

*Who says of Cyrus, "He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built,' and to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'" Thus says the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held; to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut: "I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the Lord, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel." (Isaiah 44:28–45:3)*

In this prophecy, Isaiah prophesied about a man named Cyrus, a man chosen by God to set the Israelites free after their seventy-year captivity in Babylon. Before the kingdom of Babylon had ever been built, Isaiah prophesied in this passage that Cyrus would subdue that nation, which he did! Then Isaiah even described what Babylon would look like in a vision. Herodotus, supposedly the most credible historian of the Babylonian captivity, wrote that the city had two-leaved gates with bars of iron, as mentioned in the prophecy.

Why would God name Cyrus, long before his birth, and tell him that he would subdue the Babylonian kingdom? Why tell him that He would allow the temple



to be rebuilt in Jerusalem? The answer is in this Scripture:

*“...that you may know that I, the Lord, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. (Isaiah 45:3–4)*

God was saying, in effect, “Cyrus, I called you by name one hundred fifty years ago so that you would know that I ordained you to be the man who frees My people. You are going to free them after seventy years, according to what Jeremiah prophesied. Then you will let them rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.”

Cyrus was a Persian, not a Jew. Why would he want the Jewish temple to be rebuilt? Josephus, a Jewish historian, claimed that somebody brought the book of Isaiah to Cyrus and said, “Your name is in this book.”

Cyrus must have said, “Is it really? Let me see.” Then, the person showed Cyrus the Scriptures and said, “The seventy years are over; you’re supposed to let us return to Jerusalem and build the temple.” According to Josephus, Cyrus was impressed, and he allowed the Israelites to be freed.

Josephus stated,

For he stirred up the mind of Cyrus, and made him write this throughout all Asia: “Thus saith Cyrus the king: Since God Almighty hath appointed me to be king of the habitable earth, I believe that he is that God which the nation of the Israelites worship; for indeed he foretold my name by the prophets, and that I should build him a house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea.”<sup>2</sup>

The Bible concurs.

*Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. (Ezra 1:1–2)*

What stirred Cyrus’ heart? What motivated him to release the captive Israelites to return to Jerusalem? The Word of God moved Cyrus.

*Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel. (Ezra 1:3)*

Cyrus not only said, “Go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple”; he also

said, “Any remaining Jews will pay money to help those who are going.”

*King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. (Ezra 1:7–8)*

King Cyrus gave the Jews all sorts of wealth to take back to Judah with them. I think God must have been saying, in effect, “Ha, ha, ha. Persia is going to pay the expenses of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem.” It was just like the Egyptians paying for the tabernacle when the Israelites brought their gold from Egypt during their exodus.

Then, Ezra chapter 2 describes how all of the people prepared to go back to Judah. They divided the people by tribes, by priesthoods, and by cities, and if someone didn’t know quite where they belonged, they went in a special lot, too. When they were ready to go, there were about 300,000 of them.

This was a tremendous trip. For one thing, they had to travel way up north in order to follow the Euphrates River down through Syria and into Jerusalem. It was a journey of around one thousand miles; it took them four months to complete. Nebuchadnezzar had taken captive 600,000 Jews, and this did not include the people taken captive by the Assyrians in the northern kingdom. Certainly, people died during those seventy years; but babies were born. Still, many Jews chose not to leave Babylon, unwilling to start from scratch all over again.

When the Jews arrived in Judah, they encountered many enemies, people who had settled into the area. They were the Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, Egyptians, and mongrel Jews, who had intermarried with some of the Assyrians (this is how the Samaritan race began to emerge).

When the Jews arrived and found people living in their land, they were unhappy and felt threatened.

*Though fear had come upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and evening burnt offerings. (Ezra 3:3)*

Notice the Jews’ spiritual behavior after spending seventy years with their thoughts on the Word of God. The first thing they said was, “We need to build an altar, and God will protect us.” I love that. When I read it, I thought, *They are seeking first the kingdom of God.*

These people fastened their minds to the word that came through the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. As they travelled that arduous long distance, what had they been doing? Obeying and fulfilling the Word of God, which had stirred their hearts.

God stirred the heart of Cyrus, and He stirred the hearts of the Israelites—with His Word. Whenever the Word supports anything, you know the foundation is secure. The Israelites built an altar, demonstrating their trust in the Lord. They started building the foundation for the temple. After it was built, there were mixed reactions. The old men cried, “Oh, this isn’t the way that it used to be. It won’t be as gorgeous as Solomon’s temple was.” (See Ezra 3:12.) They remembered how things had been in the past. However, the young men shouted for joy. “We’re fulfilling the Word of God,” they cried out. (See Ezra 3:13.)

When I read this, I was reminded of something I’ve seen in church. I’ve heard older people say similar things: “These days just aren’t like the days when we tarried all night for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” “These people must not have what we received.” That really bugs me, because the Bible says we don’t receive anything through works, but only through faith. It is acting on the Word that brings anything from God. The older men were really saying, “This just isn’t like the good old days.” And the young men probably said, “Shut up. That’s not faith; stop looking back.”

It must have been an exciting adventure to be involved in the rebuilding of the temple. But then the enemy stepped in. After the temple’s foundation was laid, the idolatrous people said, “*Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do*” (Ezra 4:2). These were the mongrel Jews, along with the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Egyptians, none of whom were supposed to take any part in the work of God. These people were not just saying that they wanted to help; they also wanted to bring in all of their idols, and that scared the Jews. No Jew wanted these idolaters to help. They thought, *We were sent to Babylon for seventy years because of idolatry. We don’t want to go back.*

The Babylonian captivity did one thing in particular for the Jewish people. It cured them of idolatry forever, for they never involved themselves in it again. They told the people, “*You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us*” (Ezra 4:3).

The others were enraged, and the Bible says that they sat and wrote to the Persian king. The Persians tended to change kings like they changed clothes—there were three different rulers in the book of Ezra alone, and the time span

wasn't long.

*In the days of Artaxerxes also, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabel, and the rest of their companions wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the letter was written in Aramaic script, and translated into the Aramaic language. (Ezra 4:7)*

They were saying, "Dear King Artaxerxes, do you know what the Jews are doing down here? They are rebuilding their temple. The next thing you know, they'll rebuild the walls. After that, it'll be a fortress; and before you know it, they'll rebel against you. Have you looked at the Jews' history? They're a rebellious people!"

The letter never mentioned King Cyrus' decree for the temple's rebuilding, and Artaxerxes didn't look for it. Instead, he wrote back, saying,

*Now give the command to make these men cease, that this city may not be built until the command is given by me. Take heed now that you do not fail to do this. Why should damage increase to the hurt of the kings? Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease. (Ezra 4:21–23)*

In other words, Artaxerxes said, "Stop those Jews right now. Don't let them build one more thing. Nothing."

When the Israelites received the letter, they were discouraged and said, "Well, what's the use?" And they stopped building the temple. They were not standing on the Word at the time, and when that happens, people tend to look only at the circumstances, and they get in to trouble. They could have responded by saying, "Dear Artaxerxes, look up Cyrus's decree. We have permission to rebuild the temple." Instead, they fell apart.

That is bad news. Here's the good news: Although you may delay God's plan, you'll never do away with it. God's Word *will be* fulfilled.

For fifteen years, the Israelites stayed in Judah and had a pity party. Pity, by the way, is faith's worst enemy. They said, in effect, "We came all this distance with our children, and we can't build the temple."

Was God's Word going to get the temple built? As I read this, I thought, *If God called Cyrus by his name one hundred fifty years before he was born, His Word would complete the rebuilding of the temple. These people didn't stop God's plan; they only delayed it. And that wouldn't have happened if they had been meditating on His Word.*

During that time, God raised up two men to complete the task of rebuilding of

the temple. Their names were Haggai and Zechariah. The books of Haggai and Zechariah become easier to understand when you realize they were prophesying to the people about finishing the mission. Reading the prophetic books can confuse people because they don't know the timeline of events. That is why it is easier to understand the Bible by reading it chronologically rather than in the order they've been placed in the Old Testament.

The prophet Haggai was an older man who had seen Solomon's temple. He said, "You know God's Word told you to complete this temple." Haggai prophesied positive words and greatly stirred the peoples' hearts. Because Haggai was a contemporary of the older people, they could not say, "Well, these kids just want to do their own thing." They had to receive his prophecies. But look at God's provision: Had He raised up only an older prophet, the young people would have written him off as an old man, dreaming dreams. But they couldn't say that because God raised up another prophet, a younger man named Zechariah, who not only had prophecies, but who also had visions.

When Haggai and Zechariah prophesied together, the Word of God touched those people and stirred their hearts. They thought, *Why aren't we building the temple, as God commanded?*

What happens when the Word of God stirs you? It triggers faith, and faith brings action. When you have faith in the Word, there will be movement, because faith produces works.

By the time the prophesying through Haggai and Zechariah took place, Persia had another king, and the Israelites wrote him a letter saying, "We have permission to rebuild the temple." They explained,

*In the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God. Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple that was in Jerusalem and carried into the temple of Babylon; those King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon, and they were given to one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor. (Ezra 5:13–14)*

The letter said, "Dear King Darius, we're here in Israel, and King Cyrus told us to build this temple. He even gave us money for it. We laid the foundation. Even the mongrel Jews, Egyptians, Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites wanted to help build and bring in their idols, but we're not supposed to let them help. So, they told us to stop building and wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes, making us look bad. He told us not to build, but we already had a decree from King Cyrus.

Look it up, because we're going to obey King Cyrus."

Darius looked up the decree.

*Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. And at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record was written thus: in the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid." (Ezra 6:1-3)*

What happened when Darius finally found these instructions from King Cyrus? His heart was stirred. He wrote back and said,

*Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site. Moreover I issue a decree as to what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes on the region beyond the river; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered. And whatever they need; young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who are in Jerusalem; let it be given them day by day without fail, that they may offer sacrifices of sweet aroma to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons. (Ezra 6:7-10)*

He was asking all the non-Jews to start giving the Jews food and animals for their burnt offerings, that they might offer sacrifices unto God. Then, he even asked the Israelites to pray for him and his children.

*Also I issue a decree that whoever alters this edict, let a timber be pulled from his house and erected, and let him be hanged on it; and let his house be made a refuse heap because of this. (Ezra 6:11)*

Darius directed his attention to the enemies of the Jews, saying, "The rest of you down there, you'd better stop giving them trouble. We'll hang you if you don't stop."

When you put faith in God and His Word, circumstances will change. Haggai and Zechariah caused the Israelites to have active faith in the Word, so their circumstances had to line up accordingly. God will even move people around, if necessary. In fact, I am often shocked at how God moves people around. For instance, look at how He dealt with the heart of a young man named Ezra:

*For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and*

*to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel. This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of His statutes to Israel. (Ezra 7:10–11)*

Ezra was a priest, living in Babylon, who had never been in the temple; he had never made a sacrifice, and yet his first love was the law of the Lord. He must have thought, *If the Word isn't there, the people will return to idolatry.* Ezra prepared his heart to seek God through meditation, teaching, and obeying the Word of God. Then the Lord gave Ezra a burden for the hearts of the people who would worship there. He knew that the people had to be given the Word of God, or they would not endure against their enemies.

I examined historical accounts, because it often helps to make biblical stories more clear. I don't consider history to be divine; it isn't the Word of God, but it can provide helpful insights into the Bible. Historians say that when Nebuchadnezzar seized Judah, he took copies of the law, the Psalms, the Proverbs, and other poetical books, and burned them. He didn't want God's Word to enter Babylon.

But you can't destroy the Word of God, can you? One hundred years ago, someone said, "In twenty years, there won't be a Bible." You can't listen to such ridiculous talk. God knows how to protect His Word. There will always be people predicting kooky things like that, but the Bible is a worldwide best seller.

Though Nebuchadnezzar attempted to destroy God's Word, someone smuggled a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures into Babylon—it must have been a large portion of the Old Testament. It would not have contained the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, or Malachi, of course, but it probably contained three-fourths of our current Old Testament. Historic accounts tell us what the wonderful priest Ezra did. He *memorized* all of it.

Ezra had a tremendous devotion to the Word of God. His name means "help." (Anybody who is as full of the Word of God as Ezra was will always be a help in any situation.) Ezra was the first scribe of the Bible. Scribes were the people who copied down God's Word. It is said that Ezra memorized the Scriptures, wrote them all down, and divided it into the Pentateuch, the historical and poetical books, the prophetic books, and so on. Ezra was the first one to categorize the Word of God; he was stirred and motivated by the Word, and he wanted the rest of the Israelites to be stirred and motivated by it, too.

He talked to the king and requested permission to return to Judah to bring God's Word to the Israelites. The king granted his consent; but that's not all he gave

Ezra—he also gave him great wealth and gold to refurbish the temple. Ezra accepted these bountiful gifts, and he told the king, “There is no use in my returning to Jerusalem alone. The Word of God is in my heart, but I want to pour it into the hearts of the priests, so that they will pour it into the people’s hearts.”

Ezra made a call for the Jews to go back to Judah with him, and around five thousand made the journey. But among them were no priests. This disturbed Ezra. He wanted successors who would take hold of the Word. He told the people to rouse the priests, and, finally, about forty-five priests answered the call. Then Ezra said, “We will also need protection,” and he called the people to fast and pray.

Isaiah 58, one of the most well-known fasting chapters in the Bible, says that fasting brings a reward, “*The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard*” (Isaiah 58:8). Notice that it says that the glory of the Lord will be your *rear guard*; it protects the back of you. Ephesians chapter 6 tells Christians how to put on the armor of the Lord, a protection for the front of the body. But fasting brings protection from sneak attacks by covering the back. I believe strongly in regular weekly fasting; and I think Christians can take a lesson from Ezra’s steadfast faithfulness.

## Prayer Meditation

Meanwhile, Haggai and Zechariah were prophesying, and the people began to turn to the Word of God. While they were building the temple, they sang Psalm 136:1–3 as they worked:

*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.  
Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy endures forever. Oh, give  
thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever. (Psalm 136:1–3)*

The rest of Psalm 136 rehearses what God had done for the Israelites. They were singing that song as a way of saying, “God, You helped us then, and You are helping us now.” All the time they were building, the song went on, reminding them that God performed His Word in the past, and He was performing it in the present.

Again, here is prayer that says:

*To Him who laid out the earth above the waters, for His mercy endures forever; to Him who made great lights, for His mercy endures forever; the sun to rule by day, for His mercy endures forever; the moon and stars to rule by night, for His mercy endures forever. To Him who struck Egypt in their*



*firstborn, for His mercy endures forever; and brought out Israel from among them, for His mercy endures forever; with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, for His mercy endures forever; to Him who divided the Red Sea in two, for His mercy endures forever. (Psalm 136:6–13)*

That is an effective prayer. It's scriptural to pray the way the Israelites did. This type of prayer is another form of meditation.

## Meditating on What You Hear

When Ezra arrived in Judah with the Jews who traveled with him, he delivered treasures to the house of God. Then he gathered the people and started reading the Word to them. He made everybody stand while he read, and he continued for three hours. Do you think your preacher is longwinded? You wouldn't if you listened to Ezra. The listeners had not heard the Word of God for a many years. All the men, women, and children stood for hours, listening intently, as Ezra poured it into their hearts.

I have always been interested in the way priests and kings were instructed to handle the Word of God; God wants His people to have the same reverence for His Word.

First, priests were responsible to write down all of the Scriptures, as Ezra had done. Then, they were to carry the Word behind their breastplate, and when someone had a problem, they would pull out the Word and tell them what it said.

When kings were placed in office, they went to the priest and said, "Give me your copy of the Bible." (See Deuteronomy 17, 23, 31.) Then they would personally transcribe the Bible, making their own copy. The king was to read it every day, so he could judge the people appropriately. God always wanted to be the center of men's lives. He wanted His Word in a prevalent position, so the people would not get in to trouble.

Every seven years, the priest was supposed to stand before the people, as Ezra had done, and read all of the words that had been written. What was the seventh year? It was very special:

*So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing."*

(Deuteronomy 31:9–11)

Notice they read these Scriptures during the year of release. What did Jesus say? *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:31–32). That is exactly what Ezra was doing; he was releasing the people from bondage by reading them God’s Word.

As he read, the mongrel Jews were convicted. They said, “We’ve been doing some wrong things. We haven’t been living right; we’ve lived with these idolatrous women, and we want to separate ourselves from them.”

The Word of God does so many things, doesn’t it? What was happening here? It was the washing of the water of the Word. The Word began cleansing the people from sin, and a real revival started.

The Word of God brought the captives home and rebuilt their temple; the Word of God was their protection, their refreshing and cleansing. What happened? It released them.

Every time I see Ezra’s name, I think, “God bless you, Ezra.” He loved the Word of God so much that he memorized it so it couldn’t be destroyed. Then, he wrote it down and gave it to the people. It was passed on from generation to generation and was given to you and me.

## Where to Meditate for You and Me

I find that you can meditate in any place you set your heart to do so.

One time, I was on a very early flight to Casper, Wyoming. I was meditating on Proverbs 11:30, *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.”* As I was spiritually chewing on these words, the Lord spoke to my spirit, saying, *Wouldn’t you like to win a soul to Christ?*

I looked around the plane. At that early hour, almost every seat was vacant. I thought, *Who, Lord?*

His response to me was, *How about the flight attendant?*

As she served coffee, God opened her heart to the *Four Spiritual Laws* tract,<sup>3</sup> which I had studied earlier.

You may find that the same Scriptures you meditate on one day will be used in fantastic ways that same day. I’ve discovered that if you really desire something, you will whatever is required to attain it. If you want to be successful in every area of life, then you’d better meditate on the Word of God. Perhaps you can’t start out memorizing five verses a day; but you can learn one verse every other

day, can't you?

When God told Joshua to meditate on the Word, He was saying, "I want you to be saturated, completely soaked, with the Word of God: keep it in your mind, your mouth, and your actions." Joshua became an example of God's living Word in action—and so can you. Joshua was over eighty, and a very busy man, as we've seen. As I studied him, I thought, *I wonder what he meditated on. Did he pick Proverbs?*

The first year I began meditating God's Word, I memorized Proverbs. It was so exciting that I thought everybody should memorize them. I even made my children start memorizing the book. My son really complained, saying, "There isn't a mother in our church that's making her kids memorize the book of Proverbs." Then, he really started crying the blues. He said, "There isn't a mother in this city that makes her children memorize Proverbs. I doubt there's a mother in the nation!" I decided to stop him before he got to the world, so I said, "Oh, honey, how fortunate you are to have me for your mother. You have the only mother in the nation who makes you memorize. Aren't you pleased?"

The only books that were written when Joshua meditated on Scripture were the first five books of the Bible, or the Pentateuch (or Torah), which was written by Moses and consisted of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. How would you like to memorize Leviticus? Yet that is what Joshua meditated on, day and night.

Once when I was teaching on meditation, a man came up to me after the service and said, "Marilyn, I am eighty-three years old. I started meditating on God's Word when I was twenty-six." He started quoting chapter after chapter of the gospel of Matthew. I listened to him quoting the Word, and I cannot tell you what happened to me spiritually. It seemed as though my spirit jumped up and said, "Whee!" The Bible says that hearing the Word brings faith. My hearing of the meditated Word of God coming out of that man's mouth was "faith hearing."

I asked him, "Are you retired?"

"Retired? Do I look retired? I am a professor at a university, and I'll never retire. I'll teach until I die."

I thought, *Of course. All of the Word inside of him is filling him, jam-packed with God's life.* That man was also prosperous in every single area. I thought, *Oh God, I wish I'd started meditating at the age of twenty-six.* It's like exercise; it's never too late to begin.

The bathtub is a good place to say your Scriptures aloud.

Sometimes, I ride a bike and rehearse them. David meditated on his bed. (See Psalm 63:6.) Everyone has a perfect place.

2. Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Josephus, Complete and Unabridged* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 286.

3. Bill Bright, *The Four Spiritual Laws* (Peachtree City, GA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 2007).

## THE “HOW” OF MEDITATION

I want to share what I wrote about my method of meditation in my recent book *Your Pathway to Miracles*:

The following is the method I used. I took Proverbs 6:22 as my guide, which talks about taking the teachings of one’s parents to heart: “*When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you*” (niv).

I decided to begin in the morning, corresponding to the phrase, “*When you awake, they will speak to you.*” So, when I got up each day, I would say my memory verse ten times.

In the afternoon, I would say the verse one time, in conjunction with the phrase, “*When you walk, they will guide you.*”

Then, at night, I would recite my verse once before going to bed, and I would say the verse for the next day one time, in relation to the phrase, “*When you sleep, they will watch over you.*” It’s been said that the last thing you hear at night goes through your mind seven times.<sup>4</sup>

### The Absolute First

As I said earlier, as you get out of bed, your mind is at its freshest and cleanest.

It's like a blackboard without writing. Why waste it on anything other than God's Word? Even before I brush my teeth, I meditate on the Word. Because your mind is uncluttered with cares and thoughts, you'll find that you begin to grasp the Scriptures as never before.

Then, sometime during the day, review the Scriptures again and ponder them. Say them aloud, several times. Refresh your mind as to what you're memorizing.

Later, before you go to sleep, say them in bed. Say them several times. Let's review that passage from Proverbs that we read in chapter 2. These are precious verses that explain how the Scriptures will rule your spirit when you meditate on them:

*My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you. (Proverbs 6:20–22)*

The Word of God will keep you. I believe that when God's Word is continually fresh in your spirit through meditation, it will protect you throughout the day and during the night.

## Select the Material

The first step in getting started with meditation is to select the book of the Bible you want to study. Notice I said *book*, not *verse* or *chapter*. There are plenty of short books, if you don't want to tackle one of the longer ones. You might begin with Jude or Colossians.

For this book, I have included verses arranged by topic that can prepare you to memorize entire books of the Bible. I started memorizing by learning a verse each day. Even that small amount of Scripture quickened my mind, and I began increasing the amount I memorized. Eventually, I was up to fifteen verses each day. The Word of God will quicken you, so don't get discouraged. Start small, and you can be assured that your meditation will grow easier, if you stick with it. Think of it as a physical exercise. You begin with a few push-ups or a short jog, and then you gradually increase your workout each day until, before you know it, you are buff and running long distances.

After you've selected the material, choose the number of verses you want to learn for that day. Start with an amount that is comfortable for you, even if it's only a verse each day. Be sure to set a daily goal for yourself and consistently meet those goals.

## Choose a Partner

I think having a partner is wonderful. Lately, my busy travel schedule has made it hard for me to meditate with same partner, but I've had some great partners over the years. I would recommend that you choose one. You don't need to have long conversations each day, just go over your verses together. When you know that you have to call your partner in the morning with memorized Scripture, you'll be more diligent about it. Even when your mind is tired and fuzzy, you'll get those Scriptures in.

I won't kid you. There are times when you'll feel discouraged. Some days, the devil says to me, *Why are you going through all this effort? What are you trying to accomplish?* But if you have a partner, you will have someone to encourage you when your meditation becomes a struggle.

When I meditated on the book of Proverbs, I breezed through a few chapters. Then I got to a chapter that was a struggle to get through. I found the same thing happened when I read some of the psalms. Psalms 63 and 64 were easy, but another chapter made me wonder whether I'd ever get through it. A partner will help you keep the pace when you're discouraged. If you fall behind, that's okay. Fall behind. You have the rest of your life.

## A Chapter at a Time

I like to meditate on one chapter at a time before I go on to the next. I do not totally review a book. I'm not memorizing so that I can say, "I can quote thirty-one chapters of Proverbs, if you have enough time." The purpose of meditation is to get the Word into your spirit so that it can become wisdom in your life. If I'm learning four verses at a time, and the chapter has twelve verses, then I'll have memorized the whole chapter on the third day.

## Refresh Past Meditations

Wherever I happen to be meditating, I like to read a verse from books that I've meditated on previously. When you finish one book and move on to another, look back occasionally and review what you've meditated on in the past.

Why meditate on the Word? Because God said it would bring success into every area of your life. God's Word is going to dominate your thought life, your emotional responses, and your attitudes. You will be, as Joshua was, a living epistle to others. When someone talks with you, the Holy Spirit will begin quickening those memorized Scriptures to your mind, and you'll think, *He needs*

*this Scripture; it just fits him.*

## Keep a Notebook

This is another practice you'll find both helpful and encouraging. Carry around a small notebook and write down the revelations the Lord gives to you. If you don't write them down, you'll likely forget them. Through meditation, you'll discover that your spirit becomes more alive than ever before, and a notebook will come in handy to record those moments of fresh revelation. Because you are making the Word of God precious in your life, you'll find the Lord revealing more to you than ever before. If you're ever in a place of discouragement regarding your memorization, read your notebook past revelations, and let them be an encouragement.

## Prescription of Meditation

*My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. (Psalm 63:5–6)*

People will say to me, "I'm starving for the Word in my church. I get no spiritual food, and my pastor isn't much of a preacher." Psalm 63 says you are supposed to remember the Lord and meditate on *Him*; don't rely on your pastor for all of your spiritual food. This Scripture says your soul will get *fat* and your mouth will be *full of praise* when you meditate on the Lord.

Notice, too, that the psalmist's meditation was at night. Have you ever noticed that problems seem to loom ten times larger at night? I'm not one to wake up in the middle of the night, but when I do, it's usually because of a difficult circumstance. It's then that my problems look like mountains. That's the time to meditate on the Word of God.

At a seminar in Schenectady, New York, I remember thinking that every possible thing that could go wrong seemed to be hitting me all at once: finances, family, radio ministry, and so on. I also had a terrible pain and a swollen area, from which red streaks were starting to appear. I prayed, and said, "I am not going to be moved by those symptoms." I went through my memory verses, but I still could not sleep because of the pain.

When I travel, I carry audio versions of the New Testament with me, and I finally said, "All right, devil, you're going to be sorry for keeping me awake." After about an hour of listening to the Word, the soothing quality of it caused me to fall back asleep. I turned the cassette off and said, "Father, it's not my



problem. I cast my cares on You.”

In the morning, there weren't any red streaks, and two days later, the swelling was gone, too. The Word works.

As I noted in the beginning, Psalm 119:11 says, “*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!*” Fair enough. The action, *hiding the word*, and the reason, *so as not to sin against God*, are captured in this one short verse. How do we do this?

Again, here are a few simple tips:

1. Gather a collection of Scripture passages you desire to meditate upon. I would suggest the books Ephesians or Colossians. (I began with Proverbs and loved every minute spent there.) Or, as I stated, you can start with a few verses. I have included some examples for you later in the book.
2. Decide on a certain portion to memorize each day—one verse a day, one verse every other day, or two verses. Begin at a comfortable pace.
3. Select a partner, someone who desires to meditate on the same material. Call your partner daily and rehearse the Scripture. Keep your telephone conversation short.

I want to stop here and take a moment to share an experience about one of my previous prayer partners. When I started to meditate, I decided I needed to find a partner. I thought that in case I ever felt the urge to stop meditating, or I became discouraged, a partner would

keep me encouraged. It seemed like a good way to start; so I prayed, “Lord, who would You have me to be partners with?” The Lord spoke to me, and it was not the person I wanted Him to choose. It was a person who attended our church, who tended to gripe a lot. Whenever she came in the room, you felt like you wanted to be somewhere else, because if she got hold of you, it took half an hour for her to tell you all of her problems. Then she’d look you up later, because she hadn’t finished telling you about them.

The Lord said to me, *I want her to be your meditation partner.*

I thought, *Oh, Lord, anybody but her.* I thought she would spend the time griping, and we wouldn’t be able to get through the verses. Then I thought, *Oh, she’ll probably say no.* So, I called and said, “For the rest of my life, I’m going to meditate on the Word of God. I’ll start in Proverbs, and I would like you to be my partner for that book, if you will.”

“Yes,” she said. “I want to be your partner.”

I arranged to call her at seven each morning and told her I wouldn’t be able to talk for very long because my children had to go to school.

The next morning, when I called, she immediately started

gripping.

“Let’s go over our verses,” I said.

“No,” she answered. “I need to tell you this first. I am so depressed.”

“I don’t have time, because my children have to get to school,” I replied, and we proceeded to go over our Bible verses.

Over the next two weeks, every time I called this lady, she wanted to gripe, but I didn’t have time for gripping, so we would go over Scriptures we wanted to meditate on, and that’s all. By the third week, however, something had happened. I called her the first morning of the third week, and instead of gripping, this lady said, “I got the most marvelous thing out of this chapter. Did you get this?” Then she shared the revelation she received from the Word, and it was so exciting. From that day forward, her whole attitude had changed.

Some time afterward, my husband asked, “What happened to that woman? She used to be the most negative person I’ve ever seen.”

I said, “I can tell you what happened to her. The Word of God started coming out of her mouth through meditation—and it changed her.” And it can change you, too.

Okay, let's continue with tips on meditation:

1. Encourage one another—especially if you get behind.
2. Keep a notebook on the revelations you receive while meditating.
3. Be sure to memorize the chapter and verse of the book you're memorizing when studying verses alone. It's good to know where the Scripture is found.
4. Don't get discouraged.

Meditation is the way we hide the Word of God in our hearts and receive the benefits mentioned in Psalm 119:11, Joshua 1:8, and numerous other passages in the Bible.

You can hide the Word, and when you seek it, you'll find something rich and more rewarding than a child's game. You'll find the key to a blessed, prosperous, and successful life.

I'll be honest, when I began studying Joshua 1:8, I was troubled. I thought, *Lord, You are telling me here and in Psalm 1 to meditate on Your Word day and night—but have You seen my schedule? I'm busy. I'm a mother, a pastor's wife; and then there is the radio and television ministry, along with writing and traveling. How can I possibly meditate on Your Word day and night? You must not understand my schedule.* Then the Lord began dealing with me about Joshua's schedule. He said, *Did you know that Joshua was responsible for the food, water, clothing, and spiritual and military guidance for over a million people?* Think about that. While the Israelites had been in the wilderness, God provided everything: food (manna), clothing that didn't wear out, heat and air-conditioning (the pillar of cloud and fire), military protection, and water. God met every provision of the children of Israel while they were wandering in the wilderness. After they crossed the Jordan River, this provision was made

Joshua's responsibility.

Joshua had a tremendous sense of accountability and a very busy schedule. The Lord said to me, *You get nervous if ten people come over for dinner. What if you had a million people to feed every day?* That's a conservative figure. I thought, *Well, Lord, if You are telling me to meditate, I'd better find out more.*

4. Marilyn Hickey, *Your Pathway to Miracles* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2011), 76.

## WALKING WITH JESUS

Once upon a time, there was a master painter whose works were without equal. Whenever he had canvas and paint, he would create masterpieces of such magnificence that words could not describe their beauty, extravagance, grace, and splendor. He lived to paint, and anyone who had the privilege of seeing his work was immediately captivated by his craft and talent.

One day, he found himself thoroughly engrossed in one of his paintings, so much so that he imagined himself walking around *inside* the painting, interacting with the world he had created on canvas. As he strolled through his work, he met the various people he had imagined into being. They were dressed in fine clothes and had bright smiles; but as he talked with them, he came to see that they were broken and lacked the vibrant life the painter knew outside the created world. As he pondered this dilemma, he decided to go the extra mile and give them some of his life. As he breathed life on them, the individuals who received his gift became whole and well, even three dimensional! The painter was well-pleased that he could enjoy the company of his creation.

In many ways, that is exactly what Jesus did when He was born and lived among us. He created a beautiful world, full of wonder, awe, and amazement. But beyond that, Jesus facilitated a way for us to walk in close fellowship with Him through His death and resurrection!

In order for us to walk with Jesus in close fellowship, it is essential that we know a few key things about Jesus' character. I *strongly* encourage you to read the Gospels in the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They provide some amazing insights into the Person of Jesus—His values, methods, teachings, and interactions. These four books give us four different perspectives on who Jesus was when He walked the earth more than two thousand years ago. Among the many truths they convey, here are some amazing things to notice about Jesus:

- **Change:** When people hung out with Jesus, they were awakened to change. Frequently, they

experienced transformation just by being in His presence. Consider those whom Jesus healed—the blind, lame, deaf, sick, demon-possessed, impaired, and broken. In my thinking, wherever Jesus went, people got better.

- **People skills:** When we look at the various ways Jesus interacted with people, we can make two general observations: with the broken, outcast, and marginalized people, Jesus was warm, gracious, accepting, and redemptive; but with religious folks and temple leaders, Jesus was often confrontational, harsh, and even condemning. Being exclusive and elite didn't seem to be a good thing in Jesus' eyes.
- **Impossible:** In the Gospels, Jesus is often doing the impossible:
  - a. Multiplying bread and fish to feed thousands of people
  - b. Walking on water
  - c. Turning water into wine
  - d. Raising the dead
  - e. Forgiving sins

- **Death and resurrection:** Toward the end of Jesus' life, He spoke to His disciples about His death and resurrection. Even though they didn't understand what He shared with them, Jesus still conquered the ultimate foe—death.

Of course there is a lot more to learn about Jesus from the Gospels, but my goal here is to whet your appetite for reading them, whether for the first or the fiftieth time.

Perhaps the most important thing that we must consider about Jesus is that He is incarnate. *Incarnate* is a tricky word; we don't often hear it used in our daily lives. It comes from the Latin word *incarnatus*, which means "to make flesh." If you're familiar with Spanish, you might know the term *carne*, which means "meat." The Latin *carn-*, "flesh," is a root word of incarnate. So, when Jesus came to the earth, He was God in the flesh. Jesus was fully God and fully man.

To our limited minds, this seems impossible. How can someone be two things at once—both God and man? And yet, that is exactly who Jesus was and is, whether we understand it or agree with it or not. Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth as a man, dwelt among us, was crucified, and rose from the dead. He is fully God and fully human.

Consider what Isaiah prophesied about Jesus:

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* (Isaiah 9:6)

In this verse, we see some of what it means for Jesus to be incarnate, fully God and fully man. Let's take a closer look at this verse.

First, it speaks of a child—not a king, politician, military leader, philosopher, teacher, priest, or any other type of leader—being born to us. "*For unto us a Child is born.*" He does not magically appear. He is born into humanity, just like the rest of us. Mary was His mother; Joseph was His step-father. He grew up in a Jewish home and learned how to honor God, to assume responsibility, and to be a good Jewish man. If you'd like to know more about Jesus' upbringing, read Luke chapters 1–2, where you will see some fascinating stuff about the childhood of Jesus.

In Isaiah 9:6, we see a list of adjectives that gives us some helpful insights into



who Jesus is. The first description of Jesus that Isaiah gives us is that He will be called “*Wonderful, Counselor*.” Now, let’s say that “*Wonderful*” relates to Jesus’ divinity and that “*Counselor*” relates to His humanity.

As we think about this, recall the story at the beginning of this chapter. In it, the painter creates a *wonderful* creation, full of beauty, splendor, and glory. Then he becomes so enraptured with His painting that He soon finds himself walking around inside of it, conversing and interacting with the *wonderful* creatures he had made—all things *wonderful*! But to the painted creation, the painter is a wise *counselor* who seems to know more about the creation, or painting, than those in the painting. He seems to be full of wisdom and guidance. He is Jesus, our Wonderful Counselor.

The next description of Jesus in Isaiah 9:6 is “*Mighty God*.” Again, taking the premise that Jesus is both fully God and fully man in relation to His title “*Mighty God*,” it’s obvious that “*Mighty*” would be more descriptive of Jesus’ humanity and “*God*” more descriptive of His divinity. When you read about Jesus’ life in the Gospels, it is readily apparent that the majority of the people in His day thought He was an amazing person. Some people thought He was a prophet; others thought He was an illuminated teacher; still others thought He was a gifted healer. Then there were those who couldn’t get past their familiarity with Him, having seen Him grow up in their village. Many of the religious leaders in Jesus’ day knew Him to be “mighty,” but they firmly believed that equating a man with God was nothing short of blasphemy. Yet Jesus was mighty when He lived on the earth. He was the divine “*Mighty God*.”

The next name given of Jesus is “*Everlasting Father*.” “*Everlasting*” applies more to the divine nature of Jesus. In contrast, “*Father*” gives us insight into the human characteristics of Jesus. When we see these two words combined—“*Everlasting Father*”—it gives us a powerful image of Jesus. Additionally, when we see the word *father*, we all have different reactions to it, based on our experiences with our own fathers. Many people have grown up with wonderful fathers, while others haven’t had a very positive experience with their fathers. Let’s be careful that we ask for God’s help not to project our earthly perspectives onto our heavenly Father. Remember that our heavenly Father is perfect!

The final combination of words from Isaiah 9:6 tells us that Jesus is the “*Prince of Peace*.” With this arrangement, “*Peace*” relates to Jesus’ divine nature and “*Prince*” is associated with His humanity. One of the things I love about this last description is that it tells us that the authority of Jesus is a peaceful authority; He ruled with grace, poise, and serenity, rather than pain, confusion, and chaos. For

me, this is extremely significant, because we all need peace—peace in the world in which we live and peace in our hearts and daily lives. The peace of Jesus is a pervasive peace that supersedes chaos, anxiety, stress, and confusion. Jesus is our “*Prince of Peace*”!

So, given all of these descriptions of Jesus in Isaiah 9:6, let’s review the adjectives that relate to Jesus’ divinity. The words “*Wonderful*,” “*God*,” “*Everlasting*,” and “*Peace*” give us an amazing portrait of who Jesus is to us. He is wonderful, not awful or horrific. He is sovereign, or in ultimate control, not a human being hiding behind a curtain, manipulating events, and pretending to be divine, as in *The Wizard of Oz*. Jesus is eternal, meaning He isn’t confined or defined by the ticks of a clock or the pages in a calendar. Finally, Jesus is a God of peace, which means that stress, worry, anxiety, and all things that are “unpeaceful” must surrender and ultimately conform to God, who is peace.

While it’s powerful to consider Jesus’ divinity, let’s also take a quick look at these words and how they relate to Jesus’ humanity. Remember that Jesus is fully God, as in not man, but He also fully man, as in not God. Considering Jesus’ humanity, He is our Counselor. He is the One to whom we can bring our questions, problems, challenges, and difficulties, and in return, He will give us healthy and constructive counsel. Jesus knows what it means to be human. He has lived in our shoes, so to speak, so His counsel in our lives is without parallel.

He is mighty, as opposed to wimpy, weak, ineffective, or frail. All around us, and even inside of us, we see and feel weakness. But it is not so with Jesus; He is mighty!

Furthermore, Jesus is a father who understands what it takes to be a parent. In my thinking, besides being a fully devoted follower of Jesus, my second-most important role as a woman of God is to be a great mom to my children, and Jesus appreciates and values this role.

Finally, Jesus is our Prince. He is the final authority and ruler. His Word is the culmination and conclusion of all words and input spoken into our lives. Jesus is our Prince. Isaiah 9:6 tells us that Jesus, as a man, is mighty. He is our Counselor, Father, and Prince. But Jesus is also divine. He is God—wonderful, everlasting, and the essence of peace. All of these adjectives can help us better connect with Jesus, not only in worship and adoration, but also in living our daily lives, inviting His participation in our day-to-day routines, without boundaries or limits. Jesus is our all in all.

This is vitally important to us today. In Isaiah 53:2–3, we read some interesting things about Jesus:

*For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

From these verses, we see that Jesus was a regular guy, without any physical characteristics that would attract us to Him. He looked like an average guy. Jesus is well-acquainted with what it means to be a human. He understands what it means to be tempted. (See Matthew 4:1.) If you don't think that Jesus knows what it means to suffer, to be distraught, or unsettled, and to struggle, read about what He said and did in the garden of Gethsemane. (See Matthew 26:36–56; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46.)

Furthermore, consider that Jesus knew what it was like to experience family conflict, as we see when Mary, Jesus' mother, petitioned Him to provide more wine at a wedding in Cana. (See John 2:1–12.) Jesus' reply to His mother suggests that they weren't on the same page. Additionally, in Matthew 12:46–50, Jesus' mother and brother were trying to see Him, but it seems as though He pushed them aside. Jesus understands what it feels like to be popular and then to be betrayed, rejected, abandoned, shunned, isolated, shamed, and vilified. Jesus lived on earth for more than thirty years, experiencing the same things we do. Jesus is completely familiar with what it means to be human.

Yet, equally so, Jesus is completely divine. He was with God the Father at the creation of the world, as described in John chapter 1. He died, descended into hell, and ascended to heaven, as Paul writes in Ephesians 4:7–10. Finally, Jesus is seated at the right hand of our heavenly Father, ruling with all power and sovereignty.

My prayer for you is that as you meditate and reflect on Jesus throughout this book, you will experience a deeper connection with Him than you've ever experienced before. Jesus is nothing less than totally irresistible. He is:

- the answer to all my questions,
- the solution to all my problems,
- the provision for all my needs,

- the light for any darkness,
- the wisdom for my stupidity,
- the endurance for my quitting,
- the peace for my anxiety,
- the power for my weaknesses,
- the cure for all my sickness,
- and the redemption for all my brokenness.

Jesus is nothing less than my all in all!

# MEDITATIONS ON JESUS

## 1. More Than a Principle

All religions have sound moral principles at their core. Christianity is the Word of God made flesh. Jesus is not a principle but God's living Word. (See John 1:14.) When you look at Jesus, you know you are not alone. When you look at Him, you know you are loved. Jesus is much more than a principle. He is a relationship.

### Scripture Memorization #1

“How will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?” —2 Corinthians 3:8

## 2. Sweet Surrender

When we know Jesus as the Way, we find truth and life. Jesus fulfills our total being. He is the way for our will, the truth for our intellect, and the life for our emotions. Life surrendered to Him is abundant life.

Surrender helps us to overcome fear. Jesus struggled in great agony when faced with the cross. He knew He could walk away from it all, leaving you and me behind. However, He conquered His fear and surrendered to the Father's will. He said, “*Not My will, but Yours, be done*” (Luke 22:42). How was Jesus able to face the cross? He surrendered to the Father because the Father's will was best.

Surrendering our bitterness and resentment to God is the only way to overcome it. When we are bitter, we must examine the reasons why we feel that way so we can get rid of it by laying it at Jesus' feet. If we don't allow grief to follow its natural course, taking our pain to the Lord and allowing ourselves to feel it, we will become angry and discontent. We must turn to God so that He can move in our situations and heal our attitudes.

Finally, surrendering to God can help us defeat depression in our lives. Depression causes us to feel burdened, gloomy, and sad. The root of most depression is disobedience and rebellion against God. Bad circumstances in our

lives can also cause depression. But we can fight sadness and depression with the joy of the Lord. Cast your depression on Him and begin to worship Him. “*The joy of the Lord is your strength*” (Nehemiah 8:10). Rejoicing in the Lord will elevate you above the situation and enable you to maintain a childlike faith.

Sometimes, surrender is needed hour by hour or minute by minute. But I have found that surrendering to Him brings great peace.

## Scripture Memorization #2

“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

—Colossians 1:27

## 3. Your Built-in Repair Shop

Jesus in your heart is a built-in repair shop. He is always there to build us and repair us. In the book of Acts, we read that the apostle Paul was nearly killed in Lystra.

*They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. (Acts 14:19–20)*

The very next day, Paul walked twenty-five miles to Derbe. How was he able to do that? I believe he had Jesus in his heart. This was a result of Paul’s built-in repair shop. He suffered many things in his walk with Jesus. However, he ran the race and finished the course. (See 1 Corinthians 9:24.)

If God can *give* life, He also can *heal* life. Surely He can repair and maintain what He has made! Jesus can repair you as you go.

## Scripture Memorization #3

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

—John 15:16

## 4. Taste and See

Psalm 34:8 says, “*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*” But too often, people live off of everything else on the menu rather than feasting on the meat that is Jesus. That is, they know about Jesus but don’t partake of His presence.

In Luke 17, we read of Jesus meeting ten lepers who cried out to Him, “*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!*” (Luke 17:13). Jesus told them to show themselves to the local priests. At this point, no healing had taken place; He gave only the promise of healing. Then we read, “*As they went [to the local priests], they were cleansed*” (Luke 17:14). As they obeyed Jesus’ words, they were healed. They ate the meat.

We have the promise to “*taste and see that the Lord is good.*” Take five minutes. Be quiet and listen to His still voice in your heart.

### Scripture Memorization #4

“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good;  
blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”

—Psalm 34:8

## 5. In Him

I can conquer because He has conquered. The footprints of Jesus are on everything, including me. Everything I have met, He has already met.

The greatest outpouring of God’s miracle-working power was unleashed at the moment Jesus was raised from the dead—when life conquered death. Jesus gives that same resurrection power to believers when they are baptized with the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 1:8.)

The Christian life is not a struggle but a surrender. It is receiving and appropriating what He has purchased for us with His death and resurrection and being aware that we are in Him. Knowledge and formula are not enough; we must be *in* Him.

Each day, look to Him and say, “I’m wholly Yours, Lord: my spirit, my soul, and my body are Yours.” If one day brings a defeat or a disappointment, use it as an opportunity to gain another victory that will glorify the Lord. After a while, this way of life becomes a habit. It’s not a struggle; instead, it’s spontaneous living! Then, you will realize you are every bit whole in Him—spirit, soul, and body. You are no longer living life under the sun. Now, you are living life under

the Son! This is God's victorious lifestyle for those who are wholly committed to Him.

### Scripture Memorization #5

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

—John 16:33

## 6. The Light of Men

*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. (John 8:12)*

If Jesus isn't the Way, there is no way. He is the true light that illuminates a path for every soul that enters the world. He gave us His heart; now we can give Him ours.

Jesus is the door to Himself. When we turn away from Him, we travel on a dead-end road. Likewise, it is futile to try to climb the ladder to reach Him. Jesus has already come down the ladder to reach us.

What a Savior!

### Scripture Memorization #6

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

—John 1:4

## 7. Things Present

Jesus lifts us up and keeps us lifted up. Nothing can separate us from Christ's love, not “*things present nor things to come*” (Romans 8:38).

Sometimes, “*things present*” weigh us down. We can become “things possessed” instead of “life possessed.” There are times when we have to stop and ask Jesus, “What do You want?” I find this practice especially helpful when the plans I have made fall apart. It helps me to look for His direction instead of merely relying on my own.

Also, we must know that He still loves us even when I miss His direction.



## Scripture Memorization #7

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

—Romans 8:2

## 8. Dead-end Fears

The first words Jesus spoke after the resurrection were “*Do not be afraid*” (Matthew 28:10). The road that leads to fear is a dead-end road. Sometimes, fear can be constructive and beneficial. When I was growing up, my parents set rules for us in our home. If we broke them, there were consequences. I had a healthy fear of disobeying them. Likewise, we can have a healthy fear of God. But when fear becomes our master, it produces dead-end results.

Fear comes into your life when you focus more on your circumstances than on Jesus. It will torment your soul and your body. The spirit of fear will move into all areas of your life, hindering you and hurting you, and when you give in to them, they will grow until they become bondages. When a fear is not surrendered to God, it will become a phobia that will envelop your mind and make you paranoid. Many diseases are rooted in fear.

Jesus fashioned us for faith and confidence. When you are afraid, be honest with the Lord. Tell Him that you are afraid, that you don’t want to be afraid, because you know it’s the opposite of faith, and that you’re sorry for it. Then repent, saying, “Lord, I’m going to trust You to take care of me in this matter.” Saturate yourself in God’s love. He cares for you and wants to take away your fears. “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*” (2 Timothy 1:7).

## Scripture Memorization #8

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors; not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

—Romans 8:12–13

## 9. Keep It Simple

*Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:3)*

Jesus encouraged His followers to be simple in spirit and to “*become as little children.*”

Often, I have to surrender complicated areas of my life to Christ. You can be rich in the abundance of your possessions or in the lack of wants. Stop thinking about what you don’t have and what you do have. Instead, think about your one responsibility—to live in union with Christ.

The simplicity of this revelation of life will keep you satisfied.

### Scripture Memorization #9

“For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.”  
—2 Corinthians 13:4

## 10. Dealing with Reality

We don’t need to escape life, but to enjoy it.

There are three ways we can approach life: 1) we do all we can to escape reality; 2) we constantly rebel against reality; or 3) we hand over our realities to Jesus and let Him develop us.

Too often, people turn to alcohol or narcotics to escape the weight of life. As they keep facing the same harsh realities, they soon discover that they can’t escape them. Christ came to set us free *in* our realities, not *from* our realities.

In real life, I am a woman. In our culture, there are certain negative stereotypes associated with my gender: lack of intelligence, lack of leadership abilities, lack of toughness, and many other falsehoods, which can limit me if I let them. But I have found the exact opposite to be true in Christ. God did not make a mistake when He made woman. I have experienced abundant favor. I have lived in His ability to develop daily miracles. And He can do the same for you, too!

### Scripture Memorization #10

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and

appointed you that you should go and bear fruit,  
and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask  
the Father in My name He may give you.”

—John 15:16

## 11. The Ongoing Work of Christ

In the opening chapter of Acts, Luke gives an account “*of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen*” (Acts 1:1–2). But Jesus was not finished with His apostles. He was sending them the Holy Spirit, who would empower them to do all that they were called to do. (See John 14:26.)

To me, this suggests that as long as I have breath, Jesus is still working in me. Christ in us is a constant hope of glory. (See Colossians 1:27.) Jesus came to give us abundant life. (See John 10:10.) I have found new abundances in my eighties.

*Behold, I make all things new.* (Revelation 21:5)

Jesus makes new beginnings. What He begins in your life, He wants to continue. Keep your eyes open for daily miracles. He is “*the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End*” (Revelation 22:13).

## Scripture Memorization #11

“...which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

—Ephesians 1:23

## 12. The Fruit of Wisdom

Wisdom is justified by her children. (Matthew 11:19)

God’s wisdom is proved by its fruit.

*Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”* (John 12:20–21)

The Greeks came and asked Jesus to come to Athens and become a great philosopher. Jesus could become the Word made word. However, Jesus knew that His duty was to go to Jerusalem and become the Redeemer. He was to be a grain of wheat that would die to bear much fruit. (See John 12:24–26.)

Like Jesus, we have the choice to be a single grain of wheat or to die to ourselves to bear much fruit.

## Scripture Memorization #12

“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

—John 14:14

## 13. Accepted in the Beloved

Without love, there is no progress. Jesus is love revealed in the flesh. He demonstrated the highest expression of love.

*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*  
(John 15:13)

Many times, it may seem as though we are not accepted. But Jesus is the Father's Beloved, and we are accepted in the Beloved.

*...to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.* (Ephesians 1:6)

There have been many times in my life when I haven't felt accepted: not enough education, not attractive enough, not a man, and so on. Nevertheless, I confess daily that I am “*accepted in the Beloved.*” And God has opened doors for me to meet kings and presidents.

You are His beloved, and He will open doors for you, too—way beyond your own abilities.

## Scripture Memorization #13

“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

—Luke 10:19

## 14. Love Unlimited

Jesus challenged social norms. He told us we should not only to love ourselves but love others. (See Mark 12:31.) Then, He went as far as to say that we should love our enemies. (See Matthew 5:44.) What is this? It is love unlimited.

God loves with unlimited love. He “*sends rain on the just and on the unjust*” (Matthew 5:45). This is who God is and what He does. We usually love only those who return our love. But God loved us even when we were sinners; His greatest gift of love to us is Jesus. (See Romans 5:8.) When we love without limits, as Jesus did, we become *unlimited*. Jesus, who is inside of us, can love through us.

### Scripture Memorization #14

“And He said to them,  
‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’”

—Luke 12:15

### 15. No Longer Condemned

When we look at the example of Jesus, we must acknowledge that He became sin. (See 2 Corinthians 5:21.) There is no sin of ours that He did not bear. When He identified with our sin, He also identified with our death. He went to hell in our place. His complete identification brought our complete transformation.

Are you identifying with Christ? He is your glory. This is a big truth to take hold of. We must remind ourselves that because of what Jesus did, we are no longer condemned. Please, please memorize Romans 8:2.

### Scripture Memorization #15

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

—Romans 8:2

### 16. Complete Dominion

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and

that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. (Colossians 1:16)

All material was prepared by Jesus. He is the Creator of all things. All of creation was prepared by Him and for Him. The seed was made for the soil, and the soil was made for seed. Jesus turned water into wine and walked on water. He multiplied five loaves of bread to feed a multitude. He is the Word made flesh.

Scripture says that nature will also share in our redemption. (See Romans 8:19–21.) Jesus is life to our physical nature. Many times, I have prayed over the weather and seen it change.

All of creation responds to His name.

## Scripture Memorization #16

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth.”

—Philippians 2:9–10

## 17. The Multiplier

Christians should not to be deceived by material things but should surrender all things to Christ and use everything that comes from His hand.

The rich young ruler would never have left sorrowful if he had surrendered everything to Jesus. (See Luke 18:18–23.) Zacchaeus is a good example to follow. He surrendered all things to God and was filled with joy. (See Luke 19:1–10.) He did not become poor after his encounter with Jesus but became richer in all things.

Put Jesus in charge of all your material things. In His hands, all things multiply. At the beginning of my ministry, our promotional media budget was only sixty dollars a month. Now it is over one million dollars a month.

Jesus always multiplies.

## Scripture Memorization #17

“And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”  
—John 6:35

## 18. The Most Important Thing

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:35–39)

Jesus picked love as the greatest commandment of all. Love is the most important thing to God and the greatest need of man.

*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)*

We are called to love one another as Jesus loved us. (See John 13:34.) To love others like He loved others puts gives a richer meaning to the rather vague word *love*.

Jesus’ love is more than mere support or cooperation; it is a sacrificial lifestyle. His love gives life to everything. It does more than reform; it regenerates.

I have tried to show Jesus that I love Him, but Jesus showed me that I don’t have to perform. He loves me far beyond my meager attempts to please.

## Scripture Memorization #18

“...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at

the right hand of the throne of God.”  
—Hebrews 12:2

## 19. New Life

Jesus didn't come to bring us good news; He *is* our good news. Likewise, He did not come to bring life; He *is the* Life. New life is imparted into life.

When people saw the boldness of Peter and John, they knew that they had been with Jesus. (See Acts 4:13.) You can look for life as you tour the sites of famous gurus and mullahs, but you will be sorely disappointed. Their life is merely remembered.

As believers, we can experience the life that Jesus gives now, and we can share it with others.

### Scripture Memorization #19

“Behold, I make all things new.”  
—Revelation 21:5

## 20. Life Through Death

Someone had to suffer in order to redeem us. Jesus, the Incarnation, had to effect *reincarnation* in His followers. The Word became flesh in other flesh. When God's love came into contact with our sin, it became sacrifice. Because of this, we don't just remember Jesus, we realize Him. We become Jesus for others. He lives in us.

Our redemption could have come only through a cross. However, God's last word is not a cross but resurrection. There is no tomb or corpse in our faith. There is only life. Jesus is alive!

### Scripture Memorization #20

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.’”  
—John 11:25

## 21. Wholeness



Some people want to be *well* but not *whole*.

Jesus asked the man at the pool of Bethesda, “*Wilt thou be made whole?*” (John 5:6 kjv). It is possible to be made whole but still keep to your old selfish ways. Jesus wants us to be made whole—well in body, soul, and spirit. The beatitudes, or “be-attitudes,” are not “do-attitudes.” *Being* in Christ is allowing Jesus to *be* what you need Him to be.

Galatians 2:20 has helped me crucify my flesh and let Christ live in me. He has faith for me. His faith comes out of His love for me.

To experience wholeness is to experience His life in every part of our lives.

## Scripture Memorization #21

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

—Galatians 2:20

## 22. “Follow Me”

All of Jesus’ teachings were backed up by the way He lived His life. Many teachers instruct you on ways to live but prefer you didn’t see how they live their own lives.

Jesus never said, “Listen to Me.” Instead, He said,

***Follow Me***, and I will make you *fishers of men*. (Matthew 4:19; see Mark 1:17)

*And he who does not take his cross and **follow after Me** is not worthy of Me.* (Matthew 10:38)

*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they **follow Me**.* (John 10:27)

*If anyone serves Me, let him **follow Me**.* (John 12:26)

Jesus only did things that He saw His Father do. (See John 5:19.) Following Jesus will take us beyond our wildest dreams and imaginations. It reveals to us how much He loves us. It is too good to be true.

## Scripture Memorization #22

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and

conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”  
—Colossians 1:13

### 23. Free from Mammon

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Matthew 6:19–20)

Can we lay up treasures on earth? Yes, we can. But we are not called to do so. We are called to “*lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven.*” But how do we do that? One of the biggest ways to lay up treasures in heaven is by serving others. We are called to serve others who are in need.

So how many possessions can we have on earth? The question is, Can we listen to need and not greed?

Jesus said, “*You cannot serve God and mammon*” (Matthew 6:24). We can serve God *with* mammon but not God *and* mammon. Seeking first God’s kingdom and His righteousness brings freedom.

### Scripture Memorization #23

“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

—Matthew 6:33

### 24. Living for Today

When we try to live for yesterday, today, and tomorrow at the same time, we get confused. If you try to go in three directions, you will get nothing but dizzy. Be a *today* person. If you carry all the worries of the past, present, and future, they will weigh you down and overwhelm you.

*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.* (Matthew 6:34)

Jesus wants you to live in the present. When you try to live in the past and

future, you cut off the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Often, I have wasted hours worrying about some event in future, and, when that time came, the things I feared never occurred. What a waste of time that was.

Enjoy every good thing today. Cast your cares on Him.

## Scripture Memorization #24

“[Cast] all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

—1 Peter 5:7

## 25. Kingdom Reality

Did Jesus ignore reality?

The raising of Jairus' daughter is told in three of the four Gospels. (See Mark 5:21–43; Matthew 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56.) Jairus asked Jesus to heal his dying daughter. In Matthew's account, as Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jairus' house, a sick woman in the crowd reached out and touched Jesus' cloak, and she received healing for an issue of blood. While Jesus was talking to the woman, Jairus's servants arrived with news that his daughter had died. Was Jesus unable to juggle the two realities? And if so, why was He sidetracked with the case of this woman?

Jesus knew that there was a higher set of facts at play—kingdom facts. There is always a higher level of realism than what we see before us.

Jesus lived in two worlds—earth and heaven. This story demonstrates how choosing the higher way of heaven can affect the lower way of earth.

*When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him. But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. (Matthew 9:23–25)*

Jairus' daughter lived, showing us that the kingdom of God runs on faith. Is anything impossible with God?

## Scripture Memorization #25

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

—Luke 11:9

## 26. Divine Demonstration

Jesus has a divine impact.

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.* (John 1:14)

The gospel of John begins with Jesus becoming flesh. Then, it proceeds to reveal Jesus' teachings through His deeds.

He turned water into wine. (See John 2:1–12.) Then, in John 15:1, He said, *“I am the true vine.”* He multiplied the loaves (see John 6:1–14) and then said, *“I am the bread of life”* (John 6:35).

Part of the good news of the gospel is that it works today, demonstrating God's power and directing people to Him.

At the pool at Bethesda, a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years waited patiently for his miracle. It was believed that when an angel stirred the waters from time to time, the first person in the pool would receive healing. But Jesus demonstrated that He was the Healer when he said to the sick man, *“Rise, take up your bed and walk”* (John 5:8).

Later, Jesus said, *“I am the door”* (John 10:9). Through His life and actions, Jesus demonstrated that He is the door to the miraculous.

### Scripture Memorization #26

“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.”

—Mark 11:23

## 27. No Creeds Without Deeds

In Scripture, the Gospels are followed by the Acts of the Apostles. Notice that this book is not called “The Words of the Apostles” or “The Philosophies of the Apostles” but “The Acts of the Apostles.”

Acts are not about dogmas but deeds. When the Word of God manifests—when it is displayed or demonstrated—it brings revolution. We cannot have creeds without deeds. Jesus' teachings were almost always preceded or followed by action.

The Acts of the Apostles should really be called “The Acts of the Christians.”

Thank God that miracles are not only for a chosen few but are for *all* believers. All believers can lay hands on the sick and see healing.

Right now, there are miracles in your hands and in your mouth.

### Scripture Memorization #27

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

—John 14:12

## 28. The Right Reaction

Reactions can cause actions that produce wrongs. Your reactions are more important than your brother’s actions.

*But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. (Mark 13:9)*

You can use your suffering as a witness for Christ. Don’t just bear your suffering; turn it around and use it for good. Every injustice can become an open door for the gospel to be shared. The Word can become flesh in you when your opponents see how you react to wrong. When it looks like you are losing, you are actually winning. In Jesus, everything becomes an opportunity.

Who is bugging you? Could this nuisance be an opportunity?

### Scripture Memorization #28

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’  
Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

—2 Corinthians 12:9

## 29. Conflict

Miracles are for every Christian. Everyone who believes in Jesus is an apostle, or a “sent one.” It was Ananias—an apostle, not a disciple—who laid hands on

Paul. In Acts chapter 8, it was the disciples who were scattered, not the apostles. The disciples were the conflict.

Jesus said, “*You will be hated by all for My name’s sake*” (Matthew 10:22). When the kingdom is preached in heaven, there is no conflict. However, when the kingdom is preached on earth, conflict is bound to come.

This is the Word of God made flesh. Let Jesus reveal his miraculous love to you and through you, no matter how it is received in the world.

### Scripture Memorization #29

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”

—John 15:11

### 30. Beloved

Jesus did not die in the privacy of a closed room but in public under an open sky. The entire universe saw Him die. His cross bears the marks of cosmic struggle. The people standing by the cross said, “*He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God*” (Luke 23:35).

They were right. In order to save you and me, Jesus was not able to save Himself. The death and resurrection of Christ is the most important event in history. The cross of Jesus reveals God’s greatest love. It is in Christ’s sacrifice that we see God’s love.

He calls you His beloved, and He means it.

### Scripture Memorization #30

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering....”

—Colossians 3:12

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

## Marilyn Hickey

As founder and president of Marilyn Hickey Ministries, Marilyn is being used by God to help cover the earth with the Word. Her Bible teaching ministry is an international outreach via television, satellite, books, CDs, DVDs, and healing meetings. Marilyn has established an international program of Bible and food distribution, and she is committed to overseas ministry, often bringing the gospel to people who have never heard it before.

Marilyn's message of encouragement to all believers emphasizes the fact that today can be the best day of your life if Jesus Christ is living in you.

Marilyn, along with her late husband, Wallace Hickey, founded the Orchard Road Christian Center in Greenwood Village, Colorado. She has two grown children, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

## Sarah Bowling

Sarah Bowling, the daughter of Marilyn Hickey, is vice president of Marilyn Hickey Ministries and cohost of the internationally broadcast television program *Today with Marilyn and Sarah*. She is the founder of Saving Moses, a humanitarian initiative dedicated to reducing infant mortality throughout the world. She is also a guest speaker at seminars, conferences, and college campuses worldwide. Sarah and her husband, Reece, are senior pastors of Orchard Road Christian Center. They have three children and live in the Denver area.