

30  
Meditations  
on  
JESUS



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Marilyn Hickey  
& Sarah Bowling



WHITAKER  
HOUSE

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### 30 MEDITATIONS ON JESUS

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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  
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# 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.

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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!