



MEDITATING THE WORD

Your Key to Successful Christian Living

KEITH A. BUTLER

**MEDITATING
THE WORD**

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Bishop Keith A. Butler, Founder & President

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Meditating the Word

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INTRODUCTION



I can't over-emphasize the importance of the topic we are about to discuss—especially now. Several years ago, the Lord spoke to me about an impending judgment. Years passed. The Holy Ghost sent warnings through me and others that some difficult times lay ahead, and now some of those things have begun to happen. As I was seeking God about what to minister recently, the Lord dealt with me and

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said, *“I want you to take them back to the basics because some heard it, but they didn’t receive it. Others heard it, but let it slip.”* Then, *Hebrews 2:1* came to mind. It says: *“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”*

God wants to take you back to the basics, and the Holy Ghost wants you to read, study, and listen as though you were a soldier about to go into combat. Anyone who’s seen action in battle will tell you that the level of concern and concentration is much higher among warriors in action than when they were in boot camp. (Although boot camp is not a piece of cake!)

Introduction

When soldiers hear, “*Now we are going to deploy your unit. We’re going to show you how to do such-and-such again,*” people who were laughing and joking a minute before become serious. They snap to attention. They take mental and written notes. They know their lives may depend on their thorough understanding of what they are about to be told.

God’s Word contains every effective spiritual weapon, but are you ready to wield your weapons at any moment—night or day? When the enemy attacks, do you have the Word of God in your heart and on your lips to beat him back, or do you have to call your pastor, minister, or someone you know who is always ready with the Word?

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They pull Scriptures out of their hearts, speaking them with their mouths like a gun-slinging sheriff in the Old West drew his six-shooter. Now is the time to get “locked and loaded” with God’s Word. But it won’t happen by casually sitting in a pew or watching preaching online. **You can be prepared to overcome any challenge, defeat any foe, and win any victory by meditating God’s Word.**

Chapter 1

UNDERSTANDING MEDITATION



How would you describe scriptural meditation? When asked that question, many Christians respond with a blank look on their faces because of the word *meditation*. They know it's a common practice of Buddhists and others who practice New Age religions. When they think of meditation, they picture someone in relaxed clothing sitting in the lotus position, most likely on a yoga mat. The goal

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in such meditation, which I will refer to as eastern meditation, is to empty one's mind. However, the purpose of scriptural mediation is the opposite. We meditate God's Word—not to empty our minds—but to fill them with God's Word. **If you want to live a victorious life, then you need to make meditating God's Word a daily habit.** Everyone has routines that ultimately shape their lives. **If you want to change your future, change your habits.** Stop and think about your daily habits.

Habitual Meditation

Do you have a cup of coffee every morning? I'm married to a coffee drinker. She has several plaques over the coffee machine at our house. One of them says, "*I drink coffee for your protection.*" Of course, we laugh about

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that, but I think most of us can relate. We do certain things daily. Some have a cup of coffee; others exercise or run a few miles. If we skip part of our routine, we feel out of sorts for the rest of the day.

Is meditating on the Word a habit you can't do without, or is it an item on your "to-do" list that you rarely achieve? Are you as addicted to reading the Word of God as you are to your daily coffee, tea, or workout?

The most effective thing you could do to improve your life is to add something to your morning routine: meditation of the Word of God. It's best to begin your day with God's Word. It will prepare you for what you will face as you walk out your door. Make it a habit.

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Meditating the Word should begin as soon as you get out of bed, and it should continue throughout the day. God's Word is the power of God unto salvation, as Paul wrote in *Romans 1:16*: "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*" Only an unwise person would ignore his Bible or relegate it to a five-minute cursory reading. **Meditating on the Word will protect and direct you as the world gets crazier, wilder, and darker in the Last Days.**

How I Meditate God's Word

We should see everything through God's Word. Don't merely read the Bible in the morning and let it go at that! Let's be like the psalmist who

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wrote, “*O how I love thy law [To-rah]! It is my meditation all the day*” (*Psalms 119:97*).

Let me share with you how I do it. If I’m taking classes, when I hear my instructor talk, I hear the Word. So I think about Scriptures that line up with what he is teaching. When I hear something reported by the media, I ask myself, “*What does the Scripture say about that?*” As I interact with ministry staff or family members, I want everything I say to be founded and supported by the Word of God!

Meditating the Word differs from *reading* the Word. The Hebrew word for *meditate* is *hagah*. It means *to murmur, mutter, ponder, imagine, speak, study, talk, or utter*. *Meditating* involves a deep dive into every word

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in a verse of Scripture. For example, if I wanted to meditate *Psalms 1:1* that says, “*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful,*” I would read the verse and then go back to the first word and roll it over in my mind, mouth, and heart. I would say, “*Blessed, blessed, blessed.*” I would ask myself what that word means. I would look it up in Strong’s Concordance—either online or the printed version. I’d find the Hebrew word that is translated *blessed*. I might look at other Scriptures that use the same original word. I’d think about what it means to be blessed by God. I might tell myself throughout the day, “*I am blessed.*” I will ask, “*What does this mean to me? What*

does this mean for my wife? How should this affect our decisions?"

Reading is Only the Beginning

If you aren't already in the habit of reading the Word, it will be difficult to meditate it. You need to know what the Bible says before you can think, mutter, and talk to yourself about it all day. There's nothing wrong with reading the Bible, but reading it is where you begin, not where you end. The goal should be to have the Word of God on your mind and in your mouth all day long! When you accomplish that, you will find that you are in the right places at the right times, equipped with exactly what you need. When Satan tries to make you a victim, you will be a victor. Meditating the Word will change your perspective, your motivation, and your entire life!

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I've read the Bible my entire life, and I've been a serious student of the Word for almost 50 years. But when I meditate on Scriptures, I still learn more and more about God's character. Knowing who He is will change your relationship with Him. It will develop your faith because there's a big difference between knowing about someone because you heard or read something and having a deep, intimate knowledge of the person.

For example, you can tell me all you want about my wife. You could say, "*Pastor Deborah is such-and-such-and-such.*" You could talk for hours about her, but I have been married to her for 47 years at the time of this writing. I know her better than any person on the earth, including her brothers and sisters. Nobody has been with

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her as much as I have or for as long as I have. Therefore, I have a deep knowledge about her that no one else shares. That's what happens when you habitually meditate the Word. **You develop an intimate knowledge of God—Who He is, how He operates, and why He tells us to do things.**

Not only will your understanding of God increase, but also it will change you. *Romans 12:2* reads: “*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*” Habitually meditating God's Word will renew your mind and transform your life! So decide today to be a person who habitually meditates on God's Word. You will never regret it.

Chapter 2

THE PERSON WHO MEDITATES GOD'S WORD



The first *Psalms* differentiates between the person who continually meditates (ponders, imagines, mutters, speaks, studies, talks, utters) God's Word and the one who doesn't. It highlights the fact that two people who treat God's Word in two ways will get two different results. "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the*

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seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psalm 1:1-6).

Let’s take a closer look at this *Psalm*. It begins with what the blessed person does not do. The word *blessed* can sound “churchy.” It’s one of those words Christians often use without

understanding what it really means. What does the Bible mean when it calls a person *blessed*? The Hebrew word for *blessed* in *Psalms 1:1* is *esher*. It means *how happy*. It describes someone so well off, whose life is so full of peace, prosperity, and health that others envy them.

I want you to notice the word *that*. It points to a list of things that we should endeavor to do every day. The person who is so blessed and happy that others envy him is the one that:

- walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly
- standeth not in the way of sinners
- sitteth not in the seat of the scornful

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So, we see that if we want to be blessed, we will not do the above three things. But, do you really understand what's involved in not doing those things?

The Counsel of the Ungodly

The first item on that list is don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly. The word *counsel* means *advice*. Where do you get your advice? It seems as if people in the world's system are always ready to tell others how to do things. However, their guidance runs opposite God's most (if not all) of the time!

The world's financial advice instructs people to hoard money rather than sow it. God's advice is to, "*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together,*

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and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

Their marital “wisdom” says it’s acceptable to seek pleasure above commitment. God’s wisdom says a man “*shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh*” (Genesis 2:24). The world’s advice on raising children is not to “force” your beliefs on them; let them find their own way. God’s Word says differently: “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*” (Proverbs 22:6).

In James’ epistle, we see a stark difference between wisdom from God and “wisdom” from the world. *James*

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3:15 describes the world's counsel. It says, "*This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*" The Word *sensual* is *psuche* in Greek. It means *it is of the soul, the mind, the will, and the emotions; it is not of the Spirit.* "*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*" (James 3:17).

I've often heard people say, "The experts say such-and-such." My reply to them is, "*What kind of expert? Are they an ungodly expert or a godly one?*" Guard yourself! According to *Psalms 1:1*, the blessed—or happy, fortunate, prosperous, and enviable person is the one who does not take advice from ungodly or wicked people!

The Way of Sinners

The second item on the list from *Psalms 1:1* is do not stand in the way of sinners. Let's break down what the Bible means when it uses the word way.

In *Genesis 6:5-6*, we read about the days of Noah. It says, "*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*" The entire earth was full of violence, so God allowed the great flood that wiped out all of humanity except Noah and his family. In *Genesis 6:12*, we find the word *way* used to describe what was happening at that time. It reads, "*And God looked upon the earth,*

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and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”

Proverbs 16:25 says, “*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*” The word *way* refers to *a system*; it also means *a course of life*. The kingdom of God is His system. It’s God’s way of doing things. It teaches a way to prosper, a way to be healthy, a way to raise children, and a way for marriage. God’s course of life is the path you want to follow!

God’s way is always contrary to the world’s, so when you follow God’s way, you will always be going against the grain of the world’s way. People will say, “*Why are you doing this?*” But don’t let them turn you! The Bible

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tells us that “*wide is the way to hell, and many go there; narrow is the way to life, and few be that find it*” (See *Matthew 7:14*). I hope you're not the type of person whose priority is the approval of people! To be one who does not walk in the way of sinners, you must decide that the only opinion that really matters to you is God's! And always choose God's way—His kingdom principles—over the world's!

The Seat of the Scornful

The next item on our list from *Psalms 1:1* is do not sit in the seat of the scornful. The Hebrew word translated as *scornful* is *luwts*. It means *one who scoffs, has derision towards something or someone, or a mocker*. *Proverbs 14:6* uses the same word. It says, “*A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that*

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understandeth.” Do you know why scorners can’t find wisdom, although they act as if they want it? Scorners can’t find wisdom because they belittle it. You see, scorners want the results they see from others’ wisdom, but they reject wisdom principles.

How can you recognize a scornful person? They are the ones who scoff at your devotion to God and His Word. They say things like, *“Ah. It doesn’t take all that. You don’t have to read the Bible every day. And why do you pay your tithe every time you get paid? Just be a good person. Stop listening to your pastor and what the Bible says. It’s so old-fashioned.”* Why would a sincere believer in Jesus choose to spend a lot of time with people who try to pull them away from the things of God?

If you've got people like that in your life, you should do everything you can to separate yourself from them. Of course, I'm not talking about your spouse—but if you have a childhood friend who criticizes you for serving God, ask yourself why they are your friend. After all, people usually become friends because they have something in common. *Second Corinthians 6:14* applies to close friendships as well as to choosing a spouse. It reads, “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*”

What the Blessed Person Does and Gets

While *Psalms 1:1* lists what we should not do, *Psalms 1:2* begins the enumer-

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ation of what the blessed man does and what we should do if we want the same results. Instead of following the course or the way the universities, the news media, the entertainment industry, or social media propose, the blessed person finds their “*delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night*” (*Psalms 1:2*). For the psalmist, the law of the Lord was the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. For New Testament believers, the law of the Lord is His Word—both Old and New Testaments.

The Hebrew word for *meditate* means *to murmur*. In other words, blessed people are always speaking God’s Word to themselves. They say, “*This is what the Word says about this.*” *Meditate* also means *to imagine*. To be

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happy and blessed, you should imagine what God's Word says.

For example, *Philippians 4:19* says, “*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*” Therefore, you picture all your bills paid in full. You think about becoming a more generous giver, and you should never imagine the opposite of God's Word!

You can control your thoughts. Satan doesn't have access to your mind, but he can whisper ideas in your ear. So you've got to cast down his thoughts and replace them with higher thoughts from the Word. If you don't, Satan's fearful thoughts will plant themselves in your mind and continue to grow.

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Here is an important key—the most effective way to replace thoughts is not with other thoughts—but with spoken words—muttering or meditating God’s Word!

So, *Psalm 1:2* tells us that the people who delight in the Word of the Lord can always be positive in their thinking and their speaking because they talk to themselves! Do you think it’s odd for people to talk to themselves? You shouldn’t! Everyone talks to themselves. If you were honest, you’d admit that you also talk to inanimate objects like traffic lights, appliances, or computers that aren’t working correctly and many other things! Why not use your words to your advantage and talk to yourself about God’s Word? Then, when you do, you will be

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blessed, fortunate, prosperous, and enviable!

In New Testament terms, we would say that God's grace—His favor, graciousness, the divine influence upon your heart, benefit, joy, liberality, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost—will manifest on your behalf!

The End Game

Psalm 1:3 gives us the end game for people who do the list of things from *Psalm 1:1-2*, and it's very good!

Psalm 1:3

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

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Here's what will happen when you constantly meditate the Word—mutter it, talk it, imagine it, and focus on it day and night:

- You will always have plenty of water.
- You will never be spiritually dry.
- You will always have wisdom.
- You will be safe.
- You will prosper in everything you do.

Furthermore, you will not fear when judgment comes because you know judgment will be favorable for you. People often associate judgment with condemnation or punishment, but judgment means the rendering of a verdict. A judgment of not guilty in a criminal trial is a good judgment for the defendant. In a lawsuit, a judg-

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ment for the plaintiff can mean they will be awarded a large sum of cash or something else they sought. So, when you are walking closely with God, meditating His Word, and following His ways, judgment is a good thing!

Judgment for the ungodly will not be a good thing for them. When the ungodly are suffering because of judgment, you will be a light to the world, testifying to God's faithfulness! The key to being the type of blessed individual described in the first *Psalms* is meditating God's Word—not once a week or occasionally. **The blessed person meditates on God's Word day and night.**

Chapter 3

THE FATE OF THE UNGODLY



The first *Psalms* compares the decisions and judgment of the godly and the ungodly. Since our discussion is meditating God's Word, let me show you how I would meditate *Psalms 1:4*. It reads: "*The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.*" I would begin meditating this verse by asking myself, "*What does it mean to be ungodly?*" And "*What is chaff?*"

Meditating the Word May Require Some Study

Instead of assuming I know what the Scripture means by *ungodly*, I will go through a process using the Bible. This is how I get the messages I preach. If you thought preachers simply stand up and talk off the top of their heads, that is not the case—at least not with those who take their assignment seriously.

I may study a word, a topic, or a book of the Bible for months. For example, recently, the Lord had me in the book of Jeremiah, and I studied that one book for four months. To meditate on a word, phrase, or principle in the Bible, I run it through my mind and speak it to myself. Then I stop and think about it. I ask myself questions such as “*Does God still work this way?*”

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Does this fit today's system? Can I find the same principle, word, or phrase in any other place in the Bible?" Then I think and chew on what I've discovered. I may continue to ask myself questions about the word, phrase, or topic.

The Ungodly

The word *ungodly* in *Psalms 1:4* is the Hebrew word *rasha*. It means *morally wrong; a bad person; a condemned, guilty, wicked man; or a person who did wrong*. I would look for verses that used the same Hebrew word. For example, *Proverbs 13:17* that reads, "*A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.*" What does that tell me about ungodly people? It tells me not to trust them!

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The definition of the Hebrew word *ra-sha* describes a sinner, or we could say that it describes a person who has not accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Do you see why? It's not that everyone who has accepted Jesus is perfect; they may still do wrong, but God no longer labels them as guilty because of the blood of Jesus. Speaking of Jesus, Paul wrote, "*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*" (*Ephesians 1:7*). So, the ungodly are those whose sins have not been forgiven because they haven't accepted what Jesus has done for them.

The Chaff

What did the psalmist mean when he said the ungodly would be like the chaff that the wind blows away?

The Fate of the Ungodly

The psalmist's original readers were agricultural. They would have understood what the Lord meant by calling ungodly people chaff. *Chaff is the dry, brittle parts of plants that are worthless. It is garbage and of no use to anyone.* It can't feed or clothe or provide for any human needs. So, by calling the ungodly chaff, the psalmist was saying they are of no value.

When the psalmist added that the ungodly were dried up, it referred to the fact ungodly people are not watered by the Holy Ghost. Therefore, when life's winds or circumstances sweep by them, they don't have the roots to stand. The storm blows them down. Jesus discussed the same principle in the story of the wise and the foolish men.

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Matthew 7:24-27

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

The Fate of the Ungodly

Both the wise (godly) and the foolish (ungodly) man built houses. Both were subject to the same storm. However, the godly man built his house and his life upon the rock. The rock represents the Word of God. The wise man meditated Scripture; the foolish man did not. When the winds and rain of life came against them, one stood, and the other fell.

In the same way, the ungodly in *Psalm 1:4* are blown to bits when storms come, but the godly are not. Yes, both experience the same thing, but the one who meditates God's Word day and night will remain steady, safe, and secure. Decide to be that person—the one who builds their life on God's Word. Then, when crises hit the world, you will continue to stand firm.

Meditating the Word

As you commit to constantly meditating on the Word, it will amaze people with how you weather life's difficulties. Your life will be a shining example to them of the power of God's Word! They'll say, "*What is the matter with you? I saw what happened to you! How is it that you seem to be largely unaffected?*" You won't lose your mind. You won't lose your peace. You won't make poor decisions. You will not fall apart. I don't care how fierce the storm is! If you meditate, stay grounded, and focus on God's Word, you will bounce back from every attack!

Some Christians just fall apart—but if you are grounded in God's Word through continual meditation, you will not fall apart! Now, I'm not saying that Christians who fall apart under

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pressure are not saved. I'm not implying they're not good people or that they don't go to a wonderful church. However, if all they get of the Word is sitting in church on Sunday mornings, they will probably fall apart in life's storms.

Those who build their lives on the rock don't concentrate on the storms. They don't meditate on the problems or rehearse the offenses and hurts they've experienced. Instead, they habitually meditate on the Word of God! The Bible didn't tell you in the *23rd Psalm* that you wouldn't have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. None of us is immune from having bad things come our way. The issue is, what do you do when they arrive?

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Sometimes even the godly can't avoid negative situations. For example, when inflation comes to a nation, it affects everyone. Both the godly and the ungodly will get wet in a storm, but for those who have God's Word in their hearts and mouths, the problem quickly disperses with little or no repercussions.

When you meditate, think about, mutter, and imagine God's Word, you will *"be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit"* (Jeremiah 17:8). Even though everyone else is going through a drought, and even though there doesn't seem to be enough provision for everyone,

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you will have supernatural resources regardless of the economy. You will produce fruit to be a blessing to others! You will not be restricted by inflation, lay-offs, sickness, or disease. Instead, you will be well-watered and able to help others.

The Judgment

Psalm 1:5 says, “*Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*” The word *stand* means *able to perform*. So, if they cannot stand, they cannot perform. The ungodly will not have success in the time of judgment. Remember that *judgment* means *verdict*. As long as you live, you will have seasons of judgment. Satan will come against you, attacking the Word that is in you. His goal is to knock you out. He may

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leave you alone for a while, but he will return later. Often, he hits people with what I call a stack attack, which means that he stacks one attack on top of another. He'll hit you with one, then with two, and then with three. Satan attacks through any open door, and once he's in, he takes advantage of every opportunity to steal, kill, and destroy. He may even get his foot in your life through a tiny crack in your foundation.

Do you remember what he said to Eve? “...*Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden*” (*Genesis 3:1*)? Satan made Eve doubt God. **Doubting God is an open door to the devil.** However, the devil does not like to hear God's Word. He doesn't enjoy hearing about how Jesus rose from the dead and threw him

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and his cohorts off Him. He doesn't like to be reminded that in the end, we win, and he loses! So, the devil will try to cause problems for you. He will whisper things in your ear to create doubt. But when you refuse to compromise on God's Word, reject fear, and respond in faith, the devil will flee. As *James 4:7* says, "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" Then Satan and his demons will say, "*We are wasting our time here. Let's go find somebody else we can dominate!*"

Summary

In summary, the ungodly are those who are not saved. They are guilty of sin because they have not been washed in the blood of Jesus. As a result, they reject God's ways and elevate man's. The ungodly may seem

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to be doing well, but they will blow away one day because they are not rooted in God and watered by the Holy Ghost.

Godly people go through trials in life, as do the ungodly. However, the storms of life for the godly will be short-lived. This is because they have a protective shield around them when they continually meditate on God's Word. In times of judgment, rewards go to the godly, but not the ungodly.

Chapter 4

THE LORD KNOWS



The last verse of the first *Psalms* is a tremendous encouragement in difficult times for some people, but it is a harbinger of things to come for others. It reads, “*For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish*” (*Psalms 1:6*). Did you notice who the good news is addressed to in that verse? It is for the godly—those who meditate and do God’s Word. On the

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other hand, the fate of the ungodly individual is ultimately eternal death. Thank God for His great mercy! The ungodly can reverse course by repenting and accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord. But until we leave this earth, everyone will encounter problems. Satan is the god of this world system.

2 Corinthians 4:4

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Satan has a legal right to function here until his time is up, which I think is coming soon. In the meantime, he does everything he can to steal, and to kill, and to destroy (*John*

10:10). But those who meditate the Word can stop him in his tracks.

Coming Out of a Storm Blessed, Not Beaten

Don't be shocked when you experience difficulties in life. We'd like to think that the godly can live a care-free life, but none of us are immune from having bad things come our way. Even the Lord Jesus told us as much. He said the Father "*maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*" (Matthew 5:45).

The issue for God's people shouldn't be that storms happen; it is what to do when they come. Problems, distress, even sickness can come out of nowhere, like a tornado in summer. They can be quickly dispersed and

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defeated, or they can wipe people out, leaving a trail of damage in their path. Each person's response to the storm determines whether they come out of it blessed or beaten.

God Isn't Surprised

Think back to when you went through a completely unexpected challenge in life. It took you by surprise. You may have even experienced shock. It was something that you never saw coming, but it hit you like a ton of bricks one day! Although you, your family, friends, and associates were stunned by the bad news, God was not. He knew what was going to happen. Without getting into too much deep doctrine, let me clarify that although God knew it would happen, He didn't cause the problem. Knowing and

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causing are very different things. Let me illustrate what I mean.

Suppose your office was on the top floor of a skyscraper overlooking a busy city street. One day, you might look out your window and see two vehicles approaching the same intersection at break-neck speed. One is traveling north to south. The other is traveling east to west. You can tell that if one of them doesn't stop or make a course correction, there will be an accident with injuries, possibly even death! You may yell at the street, you could even wave your arms, but at 200 feet above street level, they don't hear or see you. Neither one responds to your cautionary shouts. Instead, they continue with the pedal to the metal and, sure enough, end up in a disastrous accident. You knew it was

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going to happen, didn't you? But you didn't cause it. You even tried to warn them, didn't you? But they couldn't hear you.

God knows everything that's going to happen—both good and bad. And for those who listen to Him and pay attention to His Word, He has provided everything they need.

2 Peter 1:3-4

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath call us to glory and virtue.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious

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promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Too many Christians think that God's blessings will fall on them like ripe cherries off a tree. Is that what Peter said? No, he said God has provided everything we need through our knowledge of Him. The more you meditate on God's Word, the more knowledge you will have of Him, and the more you will experience God's great and precious promises.

What to Do

When you go through major storms or minor difficulties, don't allow the shock and awe to move you. Don't be impressed with the problem. Instead,

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impress your problem with the Word! Here is what I do when I sense the devil is about to steal, kill, or destroy anything over which I have authority. I say, *“Oh, you’re coming my way today, huh, Mr. devil? Well, I want you to know I am already planted. My roots are deep in God’s Word. You’re just wasting your time.”*

Recently, as I was meditating on God’s Word, the Lord told me what was about to happen. He told me which direction the attack would come. God always knows, but we must listen and respond as He directs! He will tell you what to do to protect your finances, your family, or your health. Then, just do it and say, *“Thank You, Lord. You always give me victory.”*

Inflation

As I mentioned in the Introduction, God began warning me and some other men and women of God years ago about what is starting to happen now. **God always warns.** If you've been following my ministry for a long time, you know God warned about some situations that would affect our economy, and I passed that warning on to those who would listen. I have been telling my congregation to get out of debt for many years, and now we know why God gave us such a strong warning.

As I write this manuscript, inflation is over 5.6%. For comparison, a little over a year ago, inflation hovered just under 2%. Inflation has doubled! So, everything is going to cost more money. I filled up my motorcycle the other day, and it cost twice as much

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as it did a year ago. I can afford to pay the difference, but inflation is like a tax on poor people. They still get the same size paycheck, but now they must pay twice as much to get to work and keep food on the table. I've heard some people say it's getting to where they must choose between buying bread or buying gasoline.

You may not be able to stop the inflationary spiral personally, but you can live above it. When you meditate the Word, God will tell you how to prepare. He'll tell you to get out of debt, move your savings or investments or change jobs. He may tell you to store up some food or other items because a shortage might be down the road. He will also tell you what kind of financial seed to sow to offset any future economic problems. He will tell you,

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“Plant some seed here, right now. Give to this ministry. Give more.” Your head might question, *“Lord, do you know how much money that is?”* Our flesh wants to hoard, but holding onto something never creates more. Farmers know that seed in the storehouse won’t pay their bills. They must release seed and plant it in the ground if they want to prosper because God’s system is seed, time, and harvest. It works with everything—crops, cash, time, service, love, kindness—you name it. You’ve got to sow what you want to reap.

Luke 6:38

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same

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measure that ye mete withal it
shall be measured to you again.

Therefore, if you know you will need more money down the road, you'd better find out how much money God wants you to sow and where He wants you to sow it.

When God told me how much to sow, it seemed like too much! I came up with many reasons not to sow what God said, but He always knows what He's doing! He asked me to sow a hefty sum because He knew in advance how big of a harvest we were going to need. He's done that for me and our ministry. When the government was passing out money to churches during the COVID crisis, we didn't take any for two reasons. *First*, God told us what to do to prepare.

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Second, I teach people to trust God, not the government. What kind of example would be I setting if, as soon as things got tight, I ran to the people who were closing churches and restricting the preaching of the Gospel to get money from them? I told my finance people that we wouldn't touch any money from the government. We would believe God.

We obeyed God. We sowed extra seed. We continued to preach the Gospel. We not only survived the pandemic, but we thrived. It was one of the best years we have ever had. We paid everything off and still had enough cash to buy a jet that we needed to plant churches and preach the Gospel. The Word of God works when you meditate it.

The Most Crucial Thing to Know About God

Since God provides everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him, I want to discuss the most crucial understanding we should have about God. *First John 4:16-17* reveals the most important thing about knowing God. It reads, “*And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.*” When you know and believe the love that God has for you, you’ll trust Him when He tells you to give, and you won’t worry when the storms of life come along. Instead of fighting the

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winds and rain, you'll take shelter in His wings, as the psalmist wrote. "*He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust...*" (Psalm 91:4).

You can be confident through any of life's challenges when you know and believe God's love. John said that it would give you boldness. The word *boldness* is *parrhesia* in Greek. It means *to be bold and outspoken*. You will not cower and hide in troubled times, or the day of judgment as John described it. You can be just like Jesus and never succumb to the devil. The devil hit Jesus, but our Lord never gave in. He understood the power of the Father's love. After all, as the Apostle Paul wrote in the book of Romans, "...*If God be for us, who can be against us*" (Romans 8:31)?

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When troubles hit, you've got to be prepared. You should know how to respond so that you will walk through the problem with grace and come out of it on top! You may have just weathered a difficult storm, or perhaps you've just begun to see the clouds on the horizon with an approaching challenge. God knows what's about to hit. Meditate His Word; listen to Him and do what He says!

Chapter 5

JOSEPH HANDLED INJUSTICES BY MEDITATING



If anyone was ever treated unfairly, unkindly, and unjustly, it was Joseph of the Old Testament. He was just a kid when he told his brothers a dream he had. It wasn't his fault. He didn't create the dream; it came from God! His brothers didn't respond well to hearing his dream because they bowed to him in it! Furthermore, they were jealous that he was their father's favorite—also not Joseph's fault!

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Joseph's brothers decided to kill him, but Reuben had another idea. He figured they could make some money from Joseph's misfortune. So let's read from *Genesis chapter 37*. Remember, Joseph was just a boy.

Genesis 37:20-28

Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that

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he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the

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Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Don't Get Bitter; Get Better

Joseph, the favored son of a rich man, became a slave! Can you imagine the shock he must have felt at the change in his circumstances? How do you think he felt about his brothers, with whom he shared his dream, selling him into slavery? The Midianites sold Joseph to one of Pharaoh's officers named Potiphar. Joseph could have gotten bitter, but instead, he got

better. He served with excellence, God blessed him, and his master promoted him.

Genesis 39:2-6

And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that

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the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

Sometimes the Pressure Gets Worse Before it Gets Better

Joseph's problems were only beginning when his brothers threw him in the pit. He served Potiphar with excellence and quality, but instead of his situation getting better, it got worse. In *Genesis 39:7*, Potiphar's wife began pressuring Joseph to lie with her. You've got to admit that many, if not most, young, healthy men would have

been tempted to accept her proposal, but Joseph held himself to a higher standard—God’s standard. He refused her request. He would not get sexually involved with a woman to whom he wasn’t married, especially not with his master’s wife! However, she didn’t give up. Joseph refused her advances several times, but she continued to entice him.

Genesis 39:10-12

And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.

And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, say-

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ing, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

Joseph still didn't give in to her request for sin! He did what we all should do when the devil is tempting us. James wrote to, "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7). Joseph submitted himself to God. He served with honor. He remembered the covenant. He most likely replayed the dream God gave him in his mind. Because of submitting to God, he also resisted the devil. Joseph ran from Potiphar's wife, but she falsely accused him of attempting to rape her. It doesn't get much more unjust than that! Joseph honored God, respected his master, and ran from Potiphar's wife, and instead of being rewarded,

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they threw him in jail! What do you think Joseph meditated on during his ordeal?

While many people would have stewed about the injustice of their situation, I believe Joseph meditated on God's Word. The pressure to give up his dream must have intensified in that dark and dank prison, but Joseph reminded himself of the future God had shown him. He believed God could still do it, although I am sure he didn't know how! He remembered the covenant promise God made to his great-grandfather, Abraham.

You probably know how Joseph's story ends—he became the second in charge in Egypt. He saved his family and the entire nation of Israel. I call that a “splashing out” blessing; it fills you up,

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and then it runs over and blesses others! But that never would have happened had Joseph constantly thought about how unjust his situation was. He might have forgotten his dream if he had spent all his mental energy on how he could get revenge.

Even if life has thrown you a curve ball, you can have a victory that splashes out when you constantly meditate on the Word and guard your thoughts. Your faith will have a residual effect on those within your sphere of influence!

One Meditation Method

Meditating the Word includes reading and thinking, but it also includes speaking and muttering. We all talk to ourselves all day long. Have you ever noticed how often you talk to

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yourself? For example, have you ever dropped something and said, “*I’m so clumsy?*” Or have you made a mistake and said to yourself, “*You dummy?*” If you’ve been saying negative things to yourself, you need to stop! **Don’t stop talking to yourself, but stop saying things that disagree with God’s Word!** Decide to meditate—thinking and muttering to yourself only in agreement with God’s Word! Begin with reminding yourself of who you are in Christ.

For example, you could take *Ephesians 2:10* and talk to yourself about it for hours and days, even weeks and months! It says, “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” Take that verse and look at it from

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every side; talk about it, sing about it, and write yourself notes about it. Make it personal by changing pronouns or other words. For example, you could say, *“I am God’s workmanship. I am God’s unique fabrication-made to His specifications and design. God created me in Christ Jesus as a brand-new being. He called me and saved me and welcomed me into His family because He has things for me to do. I will accomplish all that God has called me to do! I will walk in the power of God. I am God’s workmanship. I am God’s creation. God made me just the way He wanted me!”*

You could also meditate a Scripture like *Philippians 4:19*. It says, *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* Your private monologue might

sound something like this: *“The Scripture says that He is my God—my, my, my. This is personal. He is my God. He is my Father. He is my God, and He shall supply. Shall means it absolutely will happen. He shall supply all my needs. All means all. Nothing is left after all. My God will most certainly provide everything—every little thing—that I need!”*

Do you know what I would do? I would look up the meaning of every word in this Scripture in the Greek, Hebrew, and Webster’s 1828 dictionary of the English language. By the time I’ve looked at every word in that verse, spoke it, and chewed on it in my mind, I know that I know that I know I have what the Word says!

Continual Water Flowing

Joseph stood firm despite temptation and injustice. He was solid and steadfast in rough times because he was planted by rivers of water, as *Psalms* 1:3 says. When you encounter difficulties, remember the troubles Joseph endured! He could have gotten bitter, angry, and vindictive, but he didn't because he remembered God's promises. Instead, Joseph meditated on what God told him! He probably talked to himself about God's covenant with Abraham. He went from the pit to the prison to the palace by keeping his mind on God's Word!

As New Testament believers, we have an advantage over Joseph because we can drink from the constant rivers of water of the Holy Ghost. So

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keep God's Word in your heart and on your lips and let the river of the Holy Ghost flow. He will see that you remain strong even in the most challenging times.

Chapter 6

MEDITATING THE WORD BRINGS HOPE



Meditation of the Word brings hope, and if there is anything Christians and the world need today, it is hope.

Psalm 119:49 says, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.”

Hope and Meditation of the Word

What is hope? It is more than a wish or a good thought. *Bible hope* is a *confident expectation of the future*. As

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you meditate on the Word, you will be able to refocus. Instead of concentrating on current problems around you, you will begin to confidently expect God's best for your future, even in the darkest times. So, don't worry about what is ahead. God has a confident expectation for your future!

Meditation of the Word is more than quickly skimming over a few verses. It begins with reading Scripture (since you must know it to meditate), but meditation involves much more. The Hebrew word for *meditate* means *to murmur, mutter, speak, study, talk, or utter*.

We should never come to the place where we think we've reached the pinnacle of revelation of the knowledge of God. I've been reading the

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Bible my entire life. I've been a serious student of the Word for almost 50 years, and yet, I continue to learn more about God's character as I meditate on His Word.

The God of Hope

You are probably familiar with some of the Old Testament names of God, like *Jehovah Jireh* (the Lord who provides), *Jehovah Tsidkenu* (the Lord our Righteousness), and *Jehovah Rapha* (the Lord who heals). Did you know that one of the New Testament names of God is the God of hope? You can find it in *Romans 15:13*. It says, “*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*” God's names describe His attributes.

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“*Oh, I’m a faith person,*” some say, as if they don’t need hope. **We should all be faith people, but faith won’t work without hope.** *Hebrews 11:1* says, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” Hope begins the process, but faith finishes it.

Faith gives hopeful dreams reality, and we have a better hope than Moses, Abraham, David, Elijah, Elisha, and all the Old Testament faithful! *Hebrews 7:19* says, “*For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.*”

Having Hope is Critical

Doctors say a person can live 30 days without food and three days without water, but I believe we need hope

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every day—not hope in humanity, government, or money! The hope that sustains us is hope in God and His Word; it connects with faith, making the impossible possible and unseen seen. The Lord has shown me seven vital things about Bible hope and why it is such a necessary commodity for people today.

Hope is an Anchor for the Soul

We need Bible hope today because it is an anchor for the soul. *Hebrews 6:17-19* tells us, “*Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs [that’s us] of promise the immutability [unchangeableness of His purpose or counsel] of his counsel [purpose] confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things [the Word and the Blood] in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong*

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consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”

Hope, or confident expectation, is an anchor. So what does an anchor do? Why do boater or ship captains toss an anchor overboard? They do it because the anchor grabs hold to the bottom of the seafloor and keeps the ship in place. The water and waves continue to push, but the vessel remains steady.

Hope is an anchor for your soul—your mind, will, and emotions. Hope that comes from meditating God’s Word will keep you from becoming overly

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angry. It can protect you from up and down emotional cycles and get you off mood-altering drugs. The war that causes stress and worry is in the mind, the will, and the emotions. That is where Satan attacks. But when you meditate on the Word and hope rises in your heart, you stop the devil's assault!

Hope Allows Your Flesh to Rest

In a frantic world, hope allows our flesh to rest. *Galatians 5:25* says, “*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*” However, while we live in this world, the Holy Spirit lives in our spirits, housed in physical bodies that requires proper maintenance, including sufficient rest. Paul reminded us of this reality when he wrote, “*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the*

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power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Doctors say that most Americans do not get enough rest. One of the biggest reasons is stress, worry, and anxiety. But biblical hope counteracts those fearful emotions and thoughts. *Acts 2:26* puts it this way: “*Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover, also my flesh shall rest in hope.*” Hope helps your body as well as your mind and emotions.

Many medical studies have proven that anxiety, fear, anger, and other negative emotions open the door for cancer and just about every different type of sickness and disease. Hope protects your—spirit, soul, and body!

Hope Helps You to Wait so Your Faith Can Work

Romans chapter five tells us about the role of hope in developing Christian character.

Romans 5:2-5

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Paul wrote we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. The Greek word for

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glory is *doxa*. It means *that which is praiseworthy and upstanding*. In other words, we can celebrate and give thanks because we confidently expect to experience God's glory! Paul went on to say we not only celebrate God's glory, but we also glory in tribulations. *Tribulations* means *tests, trials, and problems*. Do you see what Paul was saying? We shouldn't whine and complain when we go through tough times. Instead, we should praise God. As we choose to glorify God rather than our problems, we develop patience.

Bible patience is more than gritting your teeth and grudgingly putting up with a situation. *Bible patience* means *cheerful endurance*, and when we express cheerful endurance, we see results. Paul said patience leads

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to experience; the word *experience* means *proof*.

Hope helps us to be patient, so our faith can work. I like to say that faith and patience are the power twins. *Hebrews 6:12* tells us, “*That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*”

In the parable of the sower, Jesus taught that when the Word of God is sown on good ground, it will produce. However, He didn't say the harvest would spring up overnight. What farmer plants his seeds one day and expects to reap the next day? You may see nothing happening, but if you confess God's Word and continue to meditate on it, you won't be tempted to dig up your seed. Unfortunately,

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too many Christians stop believing too soon! They say, *“I see nothing happening. It’s been two days (or weeks or months). It’s been so long. I don’t think God’s Word is working for me!”*

Meditating the Word will give you hope that God’s Word always works. You may not see it yet, but it is taking root and about to spring forth like a seed underground!

Paul connected hope and patience again in his first letter to the Thessalonians. He wrote that he constantly remembered their work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. Those Thessalonians must have made quite an impression on Paul! Imagine if a visiting preacher wrote to your pastor and said he couldn’t stop thinking

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about how your church functioned in love, patience, faith, and hope! Faith and patience inherit the promise, but love and hope make faith work.

Hope Helps You Praise More and More

Remember, hope comes from meditating on the Word. *Psalm 71:14* tells us, “*But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.*”

The more the psalmist meditated the Word through his praise, the more hope he had. The more hope he had, the louder and bigger his praise became! The more you believe you have the victory and the more you believe you conquer, *the more you will want to praise God!*

Praise is a hallmark of faith. When you believe God’s Word, you will

praise, and when your hope increases, you will praise more and more!

Hope Helps You Fight Discouragement

David wrote in *Psalms* 42:5: “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*” David was feeling depressed. He felt as if he would never fulfill God’s plans for his life. However, he wisely questioned his soul—his mind, will, and emotions. David reminded himself of what God had already done for him. He remembered the victories God gave the people of Israel. He remembered the times he killed the lion, the bear, and the giant!

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What should we learn from David's example? If God has ever done anything good for you—remember it. Hold on! If you're thinking, "*I can't think of anything God has done for me,*" I'll help you remember! God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for you! Jesus took stripes on His back for your healing! God gave us His precious Word so we can know Him and His ways! Do you know people died to get the Bible into your hands? You woke up this morning! You have breath in your lungs! You can praise the Lord!

Faith is not denial. I know that depression is real, and it's a big problem—but it's easy to solve. Depression comes from meditating on the wrong things. Whatever you constantly think about will affect you. The key

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is learning to control your mind. Yes, you can control your mind!

2 Corinthians 10:5

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

How do you cast down thoughts? You have to say what God says. Then, flip the switch on the enemy. When he says, *“What will you do if God’s Word doesn’t work this time?”* You answer loud and strong: *“What will you do when it does, devil?”* Too many people sit around thinking about this negative situation, how someone hurt them in the past—and what terrible thing the media says is about to hap-

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pen. If that's what you're meditating on, Satan will accommodate you and help you imagine worst-case scenarios all day long! You'll get angry at people who have done nothing to hurt you because you're meditating on the wrong things.

Depression comes from meditating opposite of God's Word, and if you continue along those lines, you will end up in fear instead of faith. Fear opens the door to Satan just as faith opens the door to God. Don't let your mind wander! Control your thoughts by controlling your words! Say what God says. God says you are saved, healed, prosperous, joyful, and blessed to be a blessing! Let hope from God's Word set you free from discouragement and depression.

Hope Reminds You of the Anointing Inside of You

Look at what *Colossians 1:27* says:

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Remember, *Christ* is not Jesus’ last name. It means *the Anointed One and His Anointing*. He is in you, and because of that, you have the hope—confident expectation—of glory! As we read in *Romans 5:2*, *glory is doxa* in Greek. It means *all that is honorable, praiseworthy, and heavy with the goodness of God!*

Hope reminds you that *“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome the them: because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world”* (1 *John 4:4*). Hope also reminds you that

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you can do all things through Christ, the Anointed One, the anointing, which strengthens you. (*See Philip-
pians 4:13.*) Christ's anointing has made you strong and is inside you.

Hope Reminds You that Jesus is Coming

First John 3:3 says, “*And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*” John was talking about the coming of Jesus. *Titus 2:13* says, “*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” The blessed hope—that Jesus is coming again—helps us stay pure. It reminds us that in the end, WE WIN!

Meditating the Word will fill you with the precious spiritual commodity of hope. Hope will steady your emotions

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and thoughts during troubled times. You'll be able to endure cheerfully while waiting for the manifestations of God's promises, and hope will remind you that anything you're enduring will one day end because Jesus is coming soon.

Chapter 7

JOSHUA'S THREE DIRECTIVES FOR PUSHING FORWARD



We've all have a past, and we've all have a future. Even if your past was riddled with sin and sorrow, when you give your life to Jesus, He gives you a future. You become a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (*See 2 Corinthians 5:17*). Then, as you faithfully serve God, He promotes you. I strongly suggest that believers begin to serve God and watch what He will

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do for them. They may begin serving in the parking lot but end up in the pulpit.

For example, let's consider Joshua. Before God appointed Joshua to lead Israel into the Promised Land, he served Moses—no “average” prophet. *Deuteronomy 34:10* says of Moses: “*And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.*” Joshua's first assignment from Moses was in *Exodus chapter 17*, when Moses appointed him to lead the war against the Amalakites.

Exodus 17:8-10

Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight

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with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, Joshua stayed with him for seven days.

Exodus 24:13-16

And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. And Moses

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went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

When Moses broke the tablets with the Ten Commandments, Joshua remained faithful. He didn't leave or tarnish Moses' reputation because his leader exhibited some righteous anger. In *Exodus 33:9-11*, we see Joshua in the tabernacle as God spoke to Moses in a cloud of glory. It reads, "*And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle*

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door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.”

Preparation is Never Lost Time

Joshua served Moses for about 40 years, and not a moment of that time was wasted because preparation is never lost time. Instead, God used that time to prepare Joshua for the monumental task He announced in the first chapter of the book of Joshua.

Joshua 1:7

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all

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the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

God reminded Joshua to remain courageous, and He also told him not to turn away from His Word. God admonished him, *“Don’t turn from My Word to the right or the left. Then you will prosper.”* The Hebrew word that is translated *prosper* means *to push forward, break out, and be good*. Joshua needed to break out from the wilderness and into the Promised Land, but he couldn’t accomplish that without doing God’s Word.

Meditate and Observe

In the next verse, God continued with

the same theme: push forward and succeed by meditating the Word and doing it. *Joshua 1:8* says, “*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*”

As mentioned in chapter one, the Hebrew word *hagah* is the word for *meditate*. It means *to meditate, murmur, imagine, speak, study, talk about, ponder*, and that's what God told Joshua to do constantly. So, what God was telling Joshua was, “*When you think about the task in front of you, and it seems impossible, don't talk about the seven armies you have to defeat or how few fighting men and weap-*

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ons you have. Instead, speak what I said to you. Talk under your breath and study what I told Moses. Think of My Word, not the challenges that lie ahead!" God knew that if Joshua meditated on the obstacles in front of him, his head would go tilt. God gave Joshua an enormous task, and the bigger your assignment, the more you must meditate on God's Word.

Furthermore, God told Joshua to observe His Word. *Observe* is *shamar* in Hebrew. It means *to protect, guard, attend, and take heed*. Jesus taught the same principle in the New Testament when He said, *"Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given"* (Mark 4:24).

In some of His last instructions to His disciples, Jesus also mentioned the importance of observing.

Matthew 28:19-20

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Jesus wants us to take the Word to the world and not only preach it, but to teach them to observe all that is written in it. When believers observe God's Word constantly, circumstances won't drive their actions; they won't lose focus on God's Word, become dis-

couraged, full of fear, or question how they can do what God called them to do.

Good Success

When we hear the phrase “*good success*,” it sounds redundant in English, but the Hebrew word for that phrase means *to be able to operate in a wise fashion*. So, when God used those words with Joshua, He was saying, “*Joshua, when Moses laid his hands on you, he imparted anointing and wisdom to lead. Now that it’s your time to step into Moses’ shoes, that wisdom is being activated.*” Good success, as God promised Joshua, doesn’t require years of formal education because it comes from wisdom, not knowledge. *Wisdom is the ability to use knowledge correctly*. I heard someone define the difference between

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wisdom and knowledge by saying,
“Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad.”

A person with wisdom will always beat one who only has knowledge. For example, when a person learns martial arts, they learn the same fundamentals, but a 12th-degree black belt will always beat a beginner because of their wisdom and experience.

The Word of God gives layers of wisdom to those who meditate on it. God will make you smart, but more than that, He will teach you how to hear from Him and how to do things His way. I can tell you from years of experience when God calls you to do something extraordinary as He did with Joshua, your mind won't intel-

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lectually grasp it, but your spirit will, and God's wisdom will show you what to do.

Three Directives to Push Forward

God gave Joshua three directives that he needed to follow to fulfill God's will. *First*, be strong and courageous. *Second*, observe and do the Word of God. *Third*, meditate on God's Word continually. Joshua couldn't have taken on such a massive assignment without knowing God's will about the matter. Jericho was considered an impregnable city. No one had ever gotten through their gigantic wall structure, but Joshua had a *rhema* from God. *Rhema* means *the spoken word of God* in Greek. God gave Joshua clear and specific instructions, which he dutifully followed.

What a Rhema Will Do for You

Romans 1:16 tells us the Word of God is God's power for any kind of deliverance! It reads, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*" When God said, "*Light be,*" light was. God's Word never fails, so even when He asks you to do something that makes no sense in the natural, you can do His will because if God said it, He will do it.

I left my job at IBM with a 12-month-old son and another baby in my wife's belly. I left all I had and was head over heels in debt. In the natural, it sounds crazy, but I had a rhema Word from God! Now, had I packed up and done that without a Word from God, I might have blown up my marriage,

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children, and my entire life. We trusted God and had good success. That included miracle after miracle because I got a Word from the Lord, and we followed it.

Our beautiful, current church location became ours because I got a rhema Word from God. I wasn't even thinking about buying the historic 110-acre site. My church had just gotten what we thought we wanted! We had no more money to buy another property, but the Lord said, "*You come over here and do it without money.*" It sounds crazy to those who don't understand the power of a rhema Word, but I followed God's instructions, and the rest is history. Today, my church owns the most beautiful property in Southfield, Michigan, and now every piece of dirt is paid in full! It all happened

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because I got a rhema Word from God, and I obeyed it.

God always keeps His Word. God told Joshua that He was giving the Hebrews the Promised Land because He swore to give it to their fathers. (*See Joshua 1:6.*) In other words, God made a covenant or a promise, and He always keeps His promises! If God's Word said you're healed, then you are. If God's Word said He would meet your financial needs, stop worrying, and simply follow the same directives He gave Joshua.

Directive One

The first directive God gave Joshua was to be strong and courageous. In other words, to do something God tells us to do, especially something that is out-of-the-ordinary, you must

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have that attitude of, *“If God’s Word says it, I’m going to do it. If God’s Word says it, I believe it. If God’s Word says it, that settles it.”*

Directive Two

The second directive God gave Joshua was to observe to do according to all the law. Joshua lived under the Old Testament, and all the Law encompassed over 600 moral, ceremonial, and civil laws. Some of them were pretty detailed. God gave the Law to prove the need for a Savior. *Romans 3:20* put it this way: *“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”* Joshua lived under the Old Covenant, and God’s second directive was only possible if he followed the first directive. It took strength and courage to observe to

do according to all the Law. Thank God that today we live in the New Covenant! We don't have a list of over 600 rules and regulations. We can observe to do according to all the law by following one law—the law of love. *Romans 13:10* says, “*Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*” Joshua had to observe to do what God said, and so do we. We can't acknowledge the law of love and not do it if we want to push forward into all God has for us. We've got to know and do God's Word, as *James 1:22* tells us, “*Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*”

Directive Three

The third directive on our list is the foundation of everything, and it is the title of this book—meditating the Word.

Meditating the Word

God told Joshua, *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night”* (Joshua 1:8). As discussed earlier, Joshua’s assignment was monumental, and the bigger the challenge, the more you will need to focus your attention on God’s Word. In these last days, Christians will face more enormous mountains, and the more significant the obstacle, the more they will need to fix their minds, mouths, and eyes on God’s Word. When popular opinion says, *“You’re in trouble. You’ve got to die—the pressure is on you. You’re going to lose everything you’ve got,”* you need to unplug from every opinion except God’s if you’re going to push forward. Resistance to God’s plans is increasing today, but the resistance against Joshua was also quite fierce. Whatever we need is

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available through the power of God's Word, and to win hard victories as Joshua did, we can't be casual observers of the Word. We must do as Joshua did and meditate (mutter, speak, murmur, ponder, study, talk, utter) constantly.

Remember that Joshua saw and heard a lot of doubt from the other ten spies. He watched as his entire nation cried in fear and unbelief. He knew the odds against Israel taking the Promised Land were stacked against him—in the natural. Even God told him the people they'd encounter were tough. *Deuteronomy 7:1* describes the tough battle Joshua would face. It reads, "*When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee,*

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the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou.”

Think about that for a moment. When God says, “*These people are greater and mightier than you,*” you’re in trouble if you don’t follow God’s instructions for the battle! God gave similar warnings in *Deuteronomy 9:1-2*. It reads, “*Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!*”

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Getting through the massive wall of Jericho was one thing. But then, Joshua and his army had to take on some very rough and tough warriors—the same kind that frightened 10 of the 12 spies who went ahead of them forty years before. Yes, the odds were against Joshua in the natural, but when he got up, took his place as the leader, and meditated on God's Word constantly, he led the nation of Israel to complete victory!

Joshua 23:1-3

And it came to pass a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.

And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their

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heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age: And ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you.

Joshua chapter 24 further describes Joshua's battle and tremendous victory.

Joshua 24:11-14

And you went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand.

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And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

Stay Out of God's Way

Joshua didn't take the land because of his 40,000 troops, his tactical or military brilliance, or the force they

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brought to the fight. Instead, he had victory because, one way or the other way, he was determined to stay out of God's way.

Joshua followed God's instructions perfectly. He didn't add to them or subtract from them. Joshua and his men were not the ones who defeated seven armies of giant warriors; God defeated them. Unfortunately, many people get in God's way and add their own methods that go beyond His instructions. Then they lose the battle and question, "*Why, God?*"

The odds may be against you. You may not have the resources, equipment, or connections that others have, but it doesn't matter! You can still win! Determine to do what God says and stay out of His way. Push forward.

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Go on with God. Don't let the giants intimidate you! Meditate on the Word constantly. Pray in the Spirit until you get a rhema from God; when you get it, meditate on it. Speak the Word aloud and under your breath throughout the day. You will have victory. Do not fear. Only be strong and courageous!

Chapter 8

RESULTS BEYOND YOUR ABILITY



Meditating God's Word keeps you in the Word so God can work. Meditating the Word keeps you in God's principles so He can work. Meditating the Word reminds you of what God said, and it allows God to handle your seemingly impregnable circumstance. God will take care of that issue, problem, or attack that even with all your mental gymnastics, you can't figure how to

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handle. Meditating God's Word will give you results beyond your ability.

We Don't Have the Ability

God's Word reminds us that we don't have the ability in our flesh or minds, and today, God is telling His church, *"You are not confined to your ability. My ability will destroy your enemies and make a way where there seems to be no way. Nothing can stand before My ability!"* In Deuteronomy chapter 11, God prophesied that if His people closely followed His Word, He (not they) would drive the inhabitants out of the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 11:22-23

For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk

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in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; Then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

Again, in *Deuteronomy chapter 12*, the Lord emphasized He would take out His people's enemies if they heard and followed His Word.

Deuteronomy 12:28-32

Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God. When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee,

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whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.

Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Don't Follow Their Ways

If we read the verses in *Deuteronomy chapter 12* carefully, we see that God issued a warning along with His promise. The promise was that if they followed His Word, He would fight their battles and give them victory. The warning was not to get involved with the sinful ways of the people they were dispossessing. They were so evil that they sacrificed their children in the fire. God warned His people, *“Do not follow their ways! Don't do it! Don't bow down to their gods!”* I cannot imagine taking one of my children and burning them as a sacrifice, but some Israelites eventually fell into the evil practice.

Most people today would agree with me. They would never throw their baby into a burning fire, yet

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they don't think about what happens during an abortion. Different methods are used. Sometimes saline solution is inserted into the baby in the mother's womb. That saline burns their innocent bodies. Another way is to take suction instruments and pull the baby's limbs apart, then remove them from the mother's womb piece by piece. You may ask, "*What does abortion have to do with God's warnings about worshipping other gods?*" Unfortunately, the god people worship when they decide to end the life of an innocent baby is the god of convenience or the god of self.

God's Got Help in Place

Joshua's victory was supernatural, but God used someone Jews could not associate with to assist Joshua in his

battle. Let's read about the unlikely help God had in place for Joshua and His people.

Joshua 2:1-11

And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.

And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to

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search out all the country. And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate. And before they were laid

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down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God

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in heaven above, and in earth
beneath.

God had pre-positioned in advance a woman who would help them. But what an unlikely candidate to be used for God! Rahab was a prostitute who lived inside the top level of Jericho's wall. She acknowledged that the God of the Hebrews was the One, True God. She knew He had given them victory over other kings and nations, and she knew God had given them the land of Canaan. Yes, Rahab was a prostitute, but I believe her faith in God and her willingness to help His people changed her life. After all, she is listed in Jesus' genealogy. (*See Matthew 1:5.*)

Malachi 3:6 says "I am the Lord, I change not." What does that mean

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for you when you are facing your own wall of Jericho? It means that God will do for you what He did for Joshua. He has someone placed in advance right where you need who will help you! He has somebody some place, some people, or some situations already waiting to help you do what He's called you to do.

I have experienced the blessing of God's pre-positioned help many times as I've followed Him. For example, the day I walked into the property we now own, it was a Catholic friary called Duns Scotus. I went to the upstairs office of the senior priest, and when I walked through the door, he acknowledged me, saying, "*You are Keith Butler. You're the man I am supposed to sell this to.*" And I replied, "*I'm the man!*" He didn't know; howev-

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er, I was the man without money. God had him pre-positioned to fulfill His plans for our ministry. The Catholic leadership had 17 other offers from various corporations—all willing to pay cash. However, the decision-maker said, “*No; I am supposed to sell it to Keith Butler, and I’m going to help him do it.*” He was willing to sell it to me for a lower price.

God has somebody pre-positioned for you, too. Favor will go before you and prosper you one way or another if you are strong and courageous and meditate on the Word to keep you on track. Don’t move to the left or the right. Say what God’s Word says day in and day out. Think about what His Word says. Imagine the victory.

Details Matter

God told Joshua He had given him Jericho, but Joshua had to heed God's instructions carefully. When you get a rhema Word from God, details matter. If He says to give \$500, giving \$100 won't cut it. If God says to call or email about a prospective job today, don't expect things to go smoothly if you wait ten days to act. God gave Joshua specific and rather odd directions. Let's read them from the *sixth chapter of Joshua*.

Joshua 6:1-17

Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of

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valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

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And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord. And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord.

And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward

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came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually,

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and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the reward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for

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the Lord hath given you the city.
And the city shall be accursed,
even it, and all that are to the
Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall
live, she and all that are with her
in the house, because she hid
the messengers that we sent.

As Joshua was looking at the impregnable walls of Jericho, God told him He had already given him the land. Joshua, a man of war, may have wanted to arm his troops immediately, but God told him they were to walk silently around the city once a day for six days. No one was to speak or shout. God didn't want the people to be speaking words of doubt and unbelief as many would have. I can imagine what they would have said had they been allowed to speak: *"This is the craziest idea! No one has ever*

breached this wall. My feet hurt!”

God told Joshua precisely how many priests were to accompany the ark and how many trumpets were to be in the march. On the seventh day, they were to walk around the city seven times and then make a long blast—not a short one—of the ram’s horn. Details matter.

Joshua and those following him may have thought God’s instructions were odd, but their job was not to adjust the plan; their job was to do it. On the seventh day, after following every detail of God’s instructions, Joshua commanded the people to shout; the walls fell flat, and Joshua’s generals were ready to charge. Thus, the Israelites received their Promised Land, and they utterly destroyed

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every living thing according to God's instructions.

Historical Miracles

The battle of Jericho was historic. No one has ever brought down such a fortress simply by walking around it for seven days, then blowing some trumpets and shouting. Yet, we still talk about the miracle of the falling of the wall 3,000 years later. And how did it happen? It happened because Joshua obeyed God's instructions to meditate on the Word day and night and be strong and courageous.

Earlier, we discussed that God doesn't change. The same God who brought down the walls of Jericho will defeat sin, sickness, lack, and opposition to God's will in your life. If you don't think you can handle the situation,

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you may be right where you need to be. Meditate on God's Word, and He will give you results way beyond your ability!

Chapter 9

VICTORY OR DEFEAT IS UP TO YOU



Joshua experienced the thrill of victory at Jericho, but soon after that, he suffered the agony of defeat. Let's read about it in the *seventh chapter of Joshua*.

Joshua 7:1-5

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi,

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the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

So there went up thither of the people about three thousand

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men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

Sin Affects the Community

Wait a minute! How could they have done so well against a powerful place like Jericho surrounded by an impregnable wall but then go to a pipsqueak place like Ai and get their tails kicked? Joshua lost 36 of his men. Was it God's will to kill those men? The answer to that question is "No." They died because one man, Achan, didn't obey God's instructions. The men who died in Ai weren't the ones

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who sinned, but they paid the price for Achan's sin. This is a vital point to remember today—sin affects the transgressor and the community.

When people face a loss after a big win in life, they may question God, and Joshua was no different. In his grief over their routing, he essentially asked God, *“Why did you bring us this far to destroy us?”*

Joshua 7:6-13

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the

Victory or Defeat is Up to You

hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed

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thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

Victory or Defeat is Up to You

If you study the above verses, you'll notice that Joshua was simultaneously mourning and complaining, as most people do when they think God has abandoned them. "*How could you have let this happen?*" They implore of the Lord, failing to look in the mirror and see what they may have done out of God's will or direction that opened the door to the devil and his destruction.

Finally, God told Joshua that his entire nation suffered loss because someone disobeyed God's command. No one was supposed to take any spoils from the routing of Canaan. Before they went in, God gave them instructions.

Joshua 6:18-19

And ye, in any wise keep your-

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selves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.

But now, as Joshua lay prostrate on the ground, God told him to get up. Then God told Joshua why they lost the battle with the tiny town of Ai.

Joshua 7:11-12

Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also

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stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Isn't it interesting that God told Joshua about the sin, but not the sinner, at least not at first? God told Joshua He would show who the culprit was through a process that is one of the more dramatic scenes in the Old Testament. God told Joshua to gather Israel tribe by tribe, and God would point out which tribe the offending party belonged to.

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Can you imagine how the guilty party felt while every tribe presented themselves before the Lord? If others in the camp were guilty of other sins, don't you think they were quaking with concern as they waited for God to choose the tribe?

God pointed out the tribe of Judah. Then each family of the tribe of Judah had to stand before God until He named the family of the offender—the Zarhite family was singled out; then the Zabdi family was selected, and finally, the man, Achan, was found to be the perpetrator.

God told the Israelites not to take any of the spoils from Jericho except for things that would go to the Temple. The lust of other things (*See Mark 4:19*) got hold of Achan, and like most

people when they rob others, he probably felt justified in helping himself to what he took. He explained to Joshua: *“When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it”* (Joshua 7:21).

Achan’s sin affected the community, and it killed his wife and children because they were stoned along with him.

Joshua 7:22-26

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And

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they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great

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heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

There is no such thing as a sin that doesn't affect others.

Back on Track

After the sin was out of the camp, God told Joshua to go back to Ai. God told him that He had given him Ai, the people, and the land there. When Joshua went to Ai on God's schedule and followed God's directives, Israel took Ai with no casualties. Joshua paid the price for moving ahead of God. You might ask, "*But I thought the defeat was because of Achan's sin?*" Yes, and had Joshua sought the Lord

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before moving to take Ai, God would have revealed the sin that needed to be addressed so Joshua could have dealt with it before going to battle. Joshua and the nation of Israel were back on track. As they followed God, they were rewarded. However, when they didn't, they paid the price.

When we go outside of the parameters of what God says is right, we open the door to defeat and death as Achan did. **And just like his transgression, our mess-ups affect other people; we don't live in a vacuum.** If you want your family blessed, then choose to do things God's way. Stay in the Word. **The closer we get to the end of days, the more critical meditation of the Word will be.**

Victory or Defeat is Up to You

After the devastating defeat at Ai, Joshua got back to doing what God told him before he took Jericho. He was strong and courageous, and he meditated the Word day and night for the rest of his life. Historians believe Joshua lived to be about 110 years old, and as long as Joshua led Israel, they enjoyed peace and prosperity. The blessing on Joshua spilled over to his entire nation.

God is not the God of not enough or the God of just enough. **He is El Shaddai—the God that is more than enough!** Our God is the God of good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over blessing, but only for those who follow His way. As we approach the end of days, more and more people will choose not to do things God's way. Many will fall away

Meditating the Word

from God, dividing churches and friends, and even families. But understand that the division in the last days isn't about political positions, social standing, racial background, or sexual orientation. The dividing line will be the Word of God. On one side will stand those like Joshua who meditate the Word day and night. They will order their lives according to God's ways. On the other side will be those who disregard or even deny God's Word. It's happening now. When the dividing line comes into your workplace, school, church, or home, make sure you are standing on the right side—God's side!

PROLOGUE



There has been a change in the wind. We have entered a new era; it's another season, a different time in history.

What was acceptable before is no longer acceptable. Right has become wrong, and wrong has become right. Now is the time for Christians to up their game when it comes to meditating the Word. Doing so will require cutting off some other time consumers. After all, we only have 24 hours

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each day. It won't be enough to try to squeeze a few minutes in to study and meditate God's Word. It must become a priority. Don't allow hobbies, athletics, friends, or family to crowd out your time with God.

The first *Psalms* tells us that the person who meditates God's Word day and night will be like "*a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper*" (*Psalms 1:3*).

How applicable is this *Psalms* to us today? Let's say you get forced out of your job for one reason or another. You must pay your rent or mortgage, keep the power on and feed your family. What are you going to do? If you meditate the Word, don't think that God

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won't supply for a minute. He already knew what was going to happen, and He already had a plan in place. God will have something else for you, or He will supernaturally provide. The Word that you have meditated about God's provisions will rise inside your spirit and soul, and blessings will come from places you never expected.

We live in a time that requires us to walk by faith. We can no longer live by what we see, feel, or hear because deception will be so strong in the last days. Jesus mentioned deception four times in His prophetic Olivet discourse:

- *Matthew 24:4: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you."*
- *Matthew 24:5: "For many shall*

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come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”

- *Matthew 24:11: “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”*
- *Matthew 24:24: “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*

The only way we will be able to discern truth from lies in these last days is by knowing the Word of God. So, when you hear about a new law, opinion, or social custom, go to God’s Word, and find what He says about it. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the answers in God’s Word, then read and meditate on it. You may be very surprised to find a solution to every issue

Prologue

in God's Word. Meditating God's Word will change situations, defeat enemies, convict of sin, and bring down walls of opposition.

God's Word Takes Down Walls

You're probably familiar with the story about Joshua and the walls of Jericho; nearly everyone knows the song. "*Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho. Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, and the walls came a tumbling down.*" But before those walls came tumbling down, God spoke to Joshua.

Joshua 1:1-6

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my

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servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not

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fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

Did you notice how God spoke to Joshua? He was very blunt but also full of faith! He didn't sugarcoat it; God told Joshua: Moses is dead. Then God said, "*Go over this Jordan, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them.*" God didn't say He was going to give them the land. As far as God was concerned, the Israelites already possessed it. So God was doing *Romans 4:17*. It tells us, "*God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*"

Meditating the Word

Then, in *Joshua 1:4*, God laid out the boundaries for the nation of Israel. If you look at them on a map, you'll notice that the land God gave them is much more extensive than the current nation of Israel.

A Man of War

Have you ever wondered why God spoke to Joshua the way He did? God spoke to him as a Commander-in-Chief would speak to his top Generals. Christians often speak of God as a loving Father, but they rarely think of God as a military commander. Yet, *Exodus 15:3* says, "*The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name.*"

Joshua was a man of war. He was anointed to lead an army into battle. Although God had given them the ter-

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ritory, they still had to show up, conquer, and destroy those who possessed it before them. God told Joshua to kill all the inhabitants of Canaan, and he obeyed. *Joshua 10:40* tells us, “*So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded.*” Only Rahab and her family got out of Canaan alive. (It’s interesting to note that Rahab is in Jesus’ genealogy).

Warriors to Rid the Land of Evil

Why did God command Joshua and his army to kill every inhabitant of the land? The practices of the people there were horribly evil. They sacrificed their children in the fire. God did not want any part of the evil to

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remain because He knew it would influence His people. In *Deuteronomy chapter 12*, we read God's command about this issue.

Deuteronomy 12:30-31

Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

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That God would kill evildoers may be a hard concept to understand for those who don't know the whole counsel of Scripture. But God Himself killed every person in the flood except Noah and his family because God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (*See Genesis 6:5.*) Furthermore, the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

Genesis 6:11-12

The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

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Those who unilaterally oppose war, self-defense with a weapon, or the death penalty today often quote the Bible, saying, “*God commanded, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’*” They assume we should never use violence for any purpose. However, their position is based on a misreading of Scripture. The word in the original language is murder, which means taking the life of an innocent person. The Law of Moses also put restrictions on imposing the death penalty. It also made allowances for anyone who would accidentally kill another. God is just and wise. He sent Joshua to war for His purpose, and He directed Joshua’s battles.

Joshua’s First Battle

Before any sword was thrown, Joshua had to win the battle in his mind. Remember that forty years before,

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Joshua was one of the spies Moses sent to inspect the territory. Ten of the twelve returned with such a doubt-filled description the Bible called it “an evil” report. Did they lie? No. They described what they saw.

Numbers 13:27-33

We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains:

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and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which

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come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Joshua was one of the twelve spies, but he and Caleb brought back the minority report. They were the only two that said the Israelites could take the land. Although the two believed God, they watched the entire nation of Israel weep in unbelief. God had delivered them from Egypt and kept them through the desert, but the Israelites didn't believe He would defeat a nation full of giants for them. Faith pleases God, but unbelief does not please Him! God was so unhappy with their lack of faith that He was ready to wipe them all out and start over with only Moses. However, Moses interceded, and God relented.

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Numbers 14:26-30

And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward which have murmured against me. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

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Joshua witnessed all this, so he had some preconceived notions about what it would be like to lead his people into the Promised Land. However, as a servant of Moses, Joshua was in the position to receive something that would help him (*See Numbers 11:28*).

Deuteronomy 34:9

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.

Since the anointing is transferable, Moses laid his hands on Joshua, imparting anointing to him. The anointing that was on Moses by the Spirit of God came upon Joshua. The same thing happens when I lay hands

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on people and dedicate them to the ministry. It's not merely a formality; the new ministers are endowed with the anointing that flows from me as the head of their oversight ministry. Moses didn't leave Joshua with spears, shields, and arrows to win the war. Instead, he equipped him with anointing and the spirit of wisdom.

So, Joshua had some unbelief sown into his mind by his contemporaries forty years before. Then, he had to fill Moses' shoes. If you think God has called you to do something difficult, think about how Joshua must have felt. Can you imagine what it would be like to fill Moses' shoes? Joshua took over after Moses stood bravely before Egypt's mighty Pharaoh, led Israel out of slavery, parted the Red Sea, prayed, and received food and

Prologue

water in the desert for 40 years. God assigned Joshua, not Moses, to lead the people into the Promised Land. Therefore, Joshua had to meditate on the words God spoke to him to overcome doubt and intimidation.

The Odds Were Against Him

Joshua was anointed and full of wisdom, but things didn't look good in the natural. His men weren't giants like Goliath, and he had a small army of only 40,000. That may sound like a large number, but it's not. Joshua was coming against the armies from seven nations with less than half the number of people who fit in The Big House—the renowned football stadium at the University of Michigan! So you can see that 40,000 is not a large battle contingent. Moreover, as the Military Commander, Joshua knew to

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expect some casualties, further diminishing his troops. So what did God do to help his man, Joshua, prepare for the battle? Did God give Joshua weapons training? Did He send more troops to help him? Did God outline tactical plans or offer strategic maneuvers? No, God didn't do any natural things that we assume would help His people win a war.

God is so unique, loving, and wise! He knew exactly what Joshua needed—and it wasn't more swords or shields. Instead, he needed the Word of faith in his heart and his mouth. Where does faith come from? It comes "*by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (*Romans 10:17*).

God didn't give Joshua armaments; He spoke to him. Joshua, then,

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meditated on God's Word, and it became his primary weapon.

We already read *Joshua 1:1-6* where God told Joshua to face the truth: Moses was dead. Then God told Joshua to arise: *"Get up. Stop mourning. Moses did what I called him to do. Now, it's your turn!"*

Meditate God's Word day and night. Meditate on healing. Meditate on love. Meditate on sowing. Meditate on relationships and peace. Meditate on keeping your body strong. If you meditate on God's Word day and night, you will be like a tree planted by streams of water. You will not miss your season of blessing. God will use you to bring down walls the enemy has constructed, or He may use you to build protective walls around His

Meditating the Word

people. God has called you for such a time as this. We live in tumultuous times, but for those who continually meditate God's Word, the storm will not take them out.

God told Joshua Moses was dead. In other words, he couldn't turn back time and undo what had been done. But by meditating God's Word and obeying His precepts, Joshua could change the future for his family and his nation. **So can you.**

PRAYER OF SALVATION

Heavenly Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus. Your Word says, *“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21)*. It also says that *“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9)*. You said salvation would be the result of your Holy Spirit giving me new birth by coming to live in me. I take you at your Word. Lord Jesus, come into my heart now and be the Lord of my life. I believe that you died for me at Calvary, that you rose from the dead, and are alive forevermore. I receive you as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank you Lord for saving me. I am now born-again.

If you prayed this prayer, please contact us and let us know. We have a free booklet, *Where Do I Go From Here*, that we would like to send to you. Please call us at 888.909.9673.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bishop Keith A. Butler is the Founder and Senior Pastor of *Word of Faith International Christian Center in Southfield, Michigan*. He is also the Founder and President of *Keith Butler Ministries (KBM)*. Bishop Butler pastors Word of Faith with the support of his lovely wife, Pastor Deborah L. Butler. They have three children: *Pastor André Butler*, his wife, Cheri Butler. Pastor André has three daughters: Alexis, Angela, & April; *Pastor MiChelle Ferguson*, her husband, Pastor Lee Ferguson and their son, Lucas; and *Minister Kristina Jenkins*, her husband, Pastor Joel Jenkins and their children Andrew, Austin, and daughter Alyssa.

Bishop Butler continues to plant churches worldwide. He ministers extensively in churches, conferences, and seminars throughout the United States and abroad with an emphasis on instructions, line-by-line teaching and no-nonsense, practical application of God's Word.



Keith Butler Ministries (KBM) is dedicated to taking faith in God and His Word to the nations. In *Matthew 28:18-20*, our Lord Jesus command us to, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you....” And that is what we are doing! We are working across the United States and Canada; the United Kingdom, Greece and France; Poland, Bulgaria, and Belgium; and throughout the continent of Africa. We are seeing people saved and lives changed by the power of God’s Word!

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MEDITATING THE WORD

Your Key to Successful Christian Living

Have you noticed? There has been a change in the wind. We have entered a new era; it's another season, and it's not all good in the natural. What should Christians do when they hear sickness is spreading, inflation is rising, and news reports are disconcerting? Now is the time for Christians to up their game when it comes to meditating the Word.

Psalm 1:3 says the person who meditates God's Word day and night "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." In other words, those who continually meditate God's Word will prosper in their health, relationships, finances, families, and in their spheres of influence.

Keith Butler's book, *Meditating the Word*, is a timely narrative full of God's Word and practical applications. As you read it and do what it says, you'll find that the pressures of today's headlines won't worry you at all. Instead, you'll be prepared to overcome any challenge, defeat any foe, and win any victory by meditating God's Word. Say Amen somebody!



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