

# Joshua 1:8 Commentary

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Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Septuagint:** kai ouk (absolutely not) apothesetai (aphisthemi: 3SFMI: depart from, refrain from, withdraw oneself from, keep one's self from, refers to a purposeful, deliberate departure from a former position; forsake, desert, cease from) e biblos tou nomou toutou ek tou stomatos sou kai meletesis (meletao: 2SFAI: to care for, to attend; to practice, to exercise or train - used in 1Ti 4:15) en auto (literally = "in it") hemeras kai nuktos hina sunes (2SAAS: suniemi = bring together; with the attitude affecting ability to comprehend, understand thoroughly) poiein (present tense) panta ta gegrammena (RPPNPA) tote euodothese (Euodoo: 2SFPI from eu = good + hodos = way, journey > literally to lead along on a good path, guide well; figuratively in the passive voice as here = prosper, succeed) kai euodoseis (euodoo: 2SFAI) tas hodous sou kai tote suneseis (2SFAI: understanding)

**Brenton's Translation of Septuagint:** And the book of this law shall not depart out of thy mouth, and thou shalt meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest know how to do all the things that are written in it; then shalt thou prosper, and make thy ways prosperous, and then shalt thou be wise

**Amp:** This Book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe and do according to all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall deal wisely and have good success. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**BBE:** Let this book of the law be ever on your lips and in your thoughts day and night, so that you may keep with care everything in it; then a blessing will be on all your way, and you will do well.

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

**HCSB:** This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to recite it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.

**ICB:** Always remember what is written in the Book of the Teachings. Study it day and night. Then you will be sure to obey everything that is written there. If you do this, you will be wise and successful in everything. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

**KJV:** 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.

**NET:** This law scroll must not leave your lips! You must memorize it day and night so you can carefully obey all that is written in it. Then you will prosper and be successful.

**NLT:** Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

**Young's Literal:** the book of this law doth not depart out of thy mouth, and thou hast meditated in it by day and by night, so that thou dost observe to do according to all that is written in it, for then thou dost cause thy way to prosper, and then thou dost act wisely.

CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND		DIVISION OF THE LAND	END OF JOSHUA'S LIFE
ACTION		ALLOCATION	APPEAL
Joshua 1:1-5:15	Joshua 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:9	Joshua 22:10-24:33
Preparing for War	Campaigning for Conquest	Allotting Inheritances	Consecrating for Blessing
Entering Canaan	Conquering Canaan	Dividing Canaan	
Entering the Land	Overcoming the Land	Occupying the Land	
Preparation	Subjection	Possession	
~One Month	~7 Years	~18 Years	
Where? Jordan River	Canaan	2.5 Tribes = East of Jordan River 9.5 Tribes = West of Jordan River	
Conquest of the Land		Settlement in the Land	Joshua's Farewell
<a href="#">Click for a more detailed overview from Paul Bucknell</a>			

**DATE:** 1370-1400BC

**AUTHOR:** Probably Joshua (Joshua 24:26) (But not a consensus)

**KEY VERSE:** Joshua 1:8

**KEY THOUGHT:** Possession of God's Promises

**KEY WORDS:** Possess (possessed, possession) - 27x in 21v in **NAS** - Josh 1:6 11 15 8:7 12:1 6 7 13:1 17:12 18:3 19:47 21:12 41 43 22:4 7 9 19 23:5 24:4 8

**TYPE OF LITERATURE:** History ([1] Pentateuch - 5 books [2]) History - 12 books [3] Poetry, Ethics [4] Prophecy)

**THREE MAJOR "TYPES":** (See Caveats in Discussion of Biblical Types)

(1) **Joshua** ("Jehovah is Salvation) = type of Christ (cp **Rest** - Josh 11:23, 21:44 with Jesus - He 4:8 10 11 **Inheritance** - Josh 11:16, 14:13 Jesus - Ep 1:1, Ro 8:17) (Cp Ro 8:37; 2Co 1:10 2Co 2:14) (See **Robert Morgan's Glimpses of Jesus in Joshua**)

(2) **Crossing Jordan** = type of Christian's death with Christ (Ro 6:6-11; Ep 2:5 6; Col 3:1-3)

(3) Israel's conquest of Canaan = picture of Christian Victory over world, flesh, devil

ISRAEL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PROMISED LAND OF CANAAN		
TO THE LAND	IN THE LAND	FROM THE LAND
Promises of & journey to the land & Theocracy	Entry into & living in, the land & Theocracy	Taken from the land to captivity. Theocracy dissolved

William Orr writes that...

Joshua is a book of progress, conquest, possession, and systematic division of the land. With a new leader, there were new experiences, new victories, new attainments and new problems. But God's guidance, God's power, and God's encouragement were the same. Joshua is the chief personage.

Joshua is a book of action and corresponds to the challenges, victories and thrills of the Christian life. These events in Joshua demonstrate great principles: the rite of circumcision at Gilgal (Joshua 5), the necessity for separation; the memorials (Joshua 4), a sign of remembrance of GOD's miracles. Joshua's dependence upon the books of Moses was demonstrated: Compare Josh14:1-4 with Nu 34:13,14; Josh 13:11 with Nu 32:37; Josh 21 with Numbers 35. GOD's man, Moses, was gone, but GOD's work went on under GOD's new leader, Joshua. Here is a commander, Joshua, who was evidently reared in the brick factories, or iron foundries of Egypt.

**OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:** The fact that GOD goes before His people is demonstrated in the fear He had put into the hearts of the Canaanites preparatory to the conquest (Josh 2:10, 11). The unbelievable grace of GOD is shown in the inclusion of Rahab, a harlot, into the Messianic line of CHRIST (Mt 1:5). While the land had been already "given" to Israel (Ge 15:18 19 20 21), still it was necessary that they go in and possess it. As they did GOD gave the victory. The slaughter of the Canaanites (Josh 6:21 10:28) was by GOD's direct command. This was absolutely necessary to cleanse the land for the occupation of GOD's chosen people, and entirely justifiable, for GOD had given 400 extra years for their repentance. (Ge 15:16). Victory at Jericho was by complete observance of GOD's directions, defeat at Ai due to disobedience, and that of one man. The Tabernacle was set up at Shiloh for the gathering place of the Tribes to worship the LORD. Later, David made Jerusalem the religious center of the people. The vindication of the minority report of the spies (Nu 14:6 7 8 9 10) was amply demonstrated in the complete conquest of the land. The distribution "by lot" (Nu 33:54) evidently allowed GOD's hand to be present and recognized in the tribal divisions. The miracle of the sun standing still, and of the great hailstones in the battle of Gibeon was entirely in keeping with the events which had been happening since Israel left Egypt.

**INTERESTING FEATURES:** Three campaigns result in seven nations with 31 kings defeated by Israel and Joshua (Joshua 12). Joshua's name appears in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets found in Egypt. JESUS was baptized 1400 years later, probably near where Joshua crossed the Jordan.

**KEY TO UNDERSTANDING:** GOD's people made great advances under the leadership of a man named Joshua. GOD's people today may do the same under our Joshua (Jesus). Take this book literally, but do not fail to apply its spiritual lessons to your own life. ([Keys to Joshua](#))

Sidlow Baxter summarizes the key thought of Joshua...

Entering, overcoming, occupying! - if these are the three movements recorded in Joshua, then there can be no doubt as to what is its key thought, or central message. Clearly, it is the victory of faith. In this, the Book of Joshua stands in sharp contrast to the Book of Numbers where we see the failure of unbelief - failure to enter (Nu 14:2 3 4), failure to overcome (Nu 14:44,45), failure to occupy (Nu 14:28-34). Spiritually interpreted, the exploits of Israel under Joshua proclaim the great New Testament truth - "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1Jn 5:4). Each of the victories in the program of conquest was ordered so as to exhibit that victory was due to faith in God, not to the arm of man. To quailing unbelief, the overthrow of giants and great cities was an impasse, but to the eye of faith it was a fait accompli. (J. Sidlow Baxter. Explore the Book)

**Related Resources:**

- Primer On Biblical Meditation

- Mediation - Application of Inductive Bible Study.

## THE CONTEXT OF THE TEXT

### JOSHUA 1:1-9

First let's establish the **context** by reading Joshua 1:1-9:

**Joshua 1:1** Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying,

**Comment:** God's work is not affected by the death of His servants. Here we see God Himself verbally passing the leadership baton to Joshua who had been prepared for this good work (Nu 27:15-23 Dt 3:28; 31:1-8). Only at the end of his life was Joshua honored with the title "servant of the Lord" (Josh 24:29).

**Our Daily Bread Devotional - [On Shoulders Of Giants](#)** - A good example is someone who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.

**Joshua 1:2** "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. (See [Map of Land Promised to Abraham](#))

**Comment:** Even as Israel's crossing the Red Sea had marked their departure from Egypt, now their crossing of the Jordan marked their entrance to the Promised Land

God's pattern for using a man: God chooses a man who he has made plans for even before he was born (Jn15:16 Eph 2:10). God issues a call to the man, an invitation to join Him in touching a people in need. God prepares and fashions the man into the vessel that can best accomplish His will. God uses the man. Through the man's faithfulness, God entrusts greater responsibilities. We are not called to a task or ministry but we are called to a relationship with God. God is looking for men of integrity who will stand in the gap so God will not have to destroy the land (Ezek 22:30). God is looking for men like Joshua who will serve Him "fully" (cp Da 1:8). Will you take your relationship seriously enough to purify your heart and renew your commitment to serve Him w/o reservation? (2Chr 16:9) will then apply to your life. Each time the man God uses is obedient to his encounter with God it prepares him for the next task. God often builds on previous tasks, increasing responsibility & importance.

**F B Meyer applies the truth of this passage to the NT believer's blessed life:** Victory assured: — There is no foe to your growth in grace, no enemy in your Christian work, no dreaded form of evil dominating and cursing the souls of men, which was not included in your Saviour's conquests. You need not be afraid of them. When you touch them, they will flee before you. God has promised to deliver them up before you. There shall no man of them be able to stand before you. Neither Anakim nor fenced cities need daunt you. You are one of the conquering legion. Claim (**Ed**: Not just with your voice but by Spirit enabled obedience!) your share in the Saviour's victory.

**Sermon by C H Spurgeon - [Joshua 1:2,3 Taking Possession of Our Inheritance](#)** - "First, let us take a survey of the inheritance; secondly, let us glance at the title deeds; and thirdly, let us make a move towards taking immediate possession. For all this may the Holy Spirit. make us sufficient!"

**Our Daily Bread Devotional - [The Apprentice](#)** - A person who is not willing to follow is not prepared to lead.

People who become great leaders  
Sometimes need to learn  
How to serve and follow others—  
Then they'll get their turn.  
—Sper

**William Newell applies this text to NT believer's life comment:** In the *therefore* of Joshua 1:2, we see that legality or our own efforts (represented by Moses) must die in us ere we can possess the inheritance that is ours (He 4:10-note). The reason why many Christians do not get into the **fulness of their inheritance in Christ** is because, in some way or other, they are still looking to Moses, that is, to their own fair doings to get them in. But Moses could not even enter Canaan himself, to say nothing of bringing in anyone else. And Israel had to wait till Moses was out of the way, ere they could enter the land, under their new leader. Moses stands to us for the law, Joshua for Christ, when we consider this matter of entering upon our promised possession. It

may be that we are still trusting to our good resolves or to our consecration, to get us into the enjoyment of what we see some Christians experience—if so, Moses is yet alive with us: we cannot "go over Jordan". It may be that we are still thinking of our prayers, our earnestness, our Bible study, our faith, our zeal—it is all Moses, Moses, with us yet. Let us mark well these opening verses of this great book which is to bring the people into Canaan: "Now it came to pass after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun. saying Moses My servant is dead; now Therefore, arise, go over this Jordan. thou ad all this people." Now this is the first great lesson we must learn, that Joshua, not Moses, leads the the people into the land. Joshua's name means, Salvation of Jehovah or "Jehovah Salvation" and its New Testament form is Jesus (Mt 1:21). Oh, that all Christians would simply trust their faithful Joshua leaning only upon Him, following only Him! How quickly would He lead them all into the full realization in experience of what He has so vvorondrously purchased for us by His cross! May Moses die now with each of us that we may know none else hereafter as our Leader but Joshua (Jesus)! ([Lessons from Joshua - The Book of Possession](#))

**Joshua 1:3** "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.

**Comment:** This verse emphasizes the importance of Man's Responsibility in laying hold ("claiming") God's Sovereign Promises. God in His omnipotence and goodness and grace has already given them the land, but it is their responsibility now to put one foot in front of the other and begin possessing their possessions (See **Pastor Chuck Smith** - [Possessing Our Possessions](#) ), stepping out in faith (and obedience) and claiming what is theirs by divine order. When Abraham first came into the land, the same dynamic was called for. See God's word to him in (Ge 13:14 15, 17). There is an important lesson for us today in all of this and it is that God has blessed us with "every spiritual blessing" in Christ Jesus (Ep 1:3-note), and yet we like the tribes of Israel must step out by faith (and obedience) to lay hold of God's precious and magnificent promises (2Pe 1:4). The Lord has set before each of us an open door that no one can shut (Rev 3:7). We are called to walk through that door by faith, to claim our possessions for the glory of the Lord and for ourselves, possessions that are ours because of Christ's victory on the Cross! Perhaps it's in a tough family situation that you have to claim new territory. Maybe it's in the workplace---an especially difficult relationship that you need to face or a challenge that you've been given that you don't feel capable of meeting. Maybe it's something at school, if you're a student, etc, etc.

God gives, but man still must "lay hold of" what God gives. How do we lay hold of God's promises? By faith (Col 2:6, 2Co 5:7). It's the idea of "possessing in reality the possessions that are already yours because Christ's victory at Calvary". So on one hand we are "filled with the fruit of righteousness" (Php 1:11) yet we still must "work our our salvation in fear & trembling" (Php 2:12).

#### **A LAND IN THE OT A LIFE IN THE NT**

An abundant **land** was given to the people of Israel, just as an abundant **life** in Christ is made available to believers (Jn 10:10b), not based on any merit but on God's sovereign gracious pleasure. And just as the land that had been given needed to be possessed, so too believers today must lay hold of God's precious and magnificent promises by faith. This is not simply "name it, claim it" but specifically is a faith that shows itself genuine by obedience, for faith without works (of obedience) is dead (non-working) faith. The title deed to the **Land** and to the **Life** (every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ - Eph 1:3) is the gracious bountiful gift of God, while the possession of His promises is the result of our obedient walk (albeit a walk empowered by His Spirit and His strengthening, grace 2Ti 2:1 1Co 15:10).

The idea is that you can possess all that you will take. You can have every aspect of the spiritual life in Christ that you desire. God however will not give you more than you are ready to take. So if you are not satisfied with the degree of your real experience of victory, it is because you haven't really wanted more or you have fallen short of in the area of obedience (e.g., unconfessed sin, etc). We can have all that we want because God says to all NT believers in essence "Every place where the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you."

**Joshua 1:4** "From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun, will be your territory.

**Comment:** Joshua 1:3-5 are almost identical to the wording is found in Deut 11:24 25a.

**Joshua 1:5** "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.

I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord,

O'er mountain or plain or sea;  
I'll say what You want me to say, dear Lord,  
I'll be what You want me to be.

—Brown

**Jensen comments:** A lifetime of continuous victory over all enemies was assured Joshua (and therefore the people) through faith and courage on the basis of the unfailing presence and miraculous help of God (Jensen, I. L. Joshua: Rest-Land Won. Chicago, IL: Moody Press)

**Sermon by C H Spurgeon - [Joshua 1:5 Strengthening Medicine for God's Servants](#)** - Here are a few excerpts from this sermon on "what this promise (Josh 1:5) does not preclude"...

This promise does not exclude effort... Neither does this promise preclude occasional disaster... Nor, again, does this promise preclude frequent tribulations and testings of faith... this promise does not preclude our suffering very greatly."

**Our Daily Bread Devotional - [His Part; Our Part](#)** - Where God guides, God provides!

**Dr Thomas Constable ([Joshua Notes](#))** points out the chiasmic structure of Jehovah's charge to Joshua...

**A** I will be with you (Josh 1:5).

**B** Be strong and courageous (Josh 1:6, 7).

**C** That you may have success (Josh 1:7).

**D** This book of the law (Josh 1:8).

**C'** Then you will have success (Josh 1:8).

**B'** Be strong and courageous (Josh 1:9).

**A'** The Lord your God is with you (Josh 1:9).

**Joshua 1:6** "**Be strong and courageous**, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

**Comment:** "Be strong and courageous" is a "double command" which is mentioned 3 times in this brief introductory chapter (Josh 1:6 7 9) and is thus a **key phrase**. And remember that what God commands, He always enables.

**Joshua 1:7** "Only **be strong** and very **courageous**; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.

**Plumptre:** Only when thine arm In sense of weakness reaches forth to God, Wilt thou be strong to suffer and to do.

**Sermon by C H Spurgeon - [Joshua 1:7 Joshua's Obedience](#)**

**Joshua 1:8** "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

**Comment:** The key to spiritual success is **eating** His Word and **doing** His Word.

**Keathley remarks:** The victory and possession of the land which follows is a direct result of the Word of God and of man, in this case Joshua, hearing and responding to His Word. This should illustrate for us that there is absolutely no victory or chance for us to experience the blessings of our new life in Christ apart from the Word of God. Whenever any believer begins to turn away from the Word through indifference or apathy for whatever reason, he is turning away from the Lord and into defeat. ([The Commissioning of Joshua -- Joshua 1:1-18](#))

**Joshua 1:9** "Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous!** Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Though I know not what awaits me—  
What the future has in store,  
Yet I know that God is faithful,

For I've proved Him oft before.

—Anon.

**Comment:** The Lord promises Joshua a provision, His protection, and His presence.

**Our Daily Bread devotional** - [Equipped For The Task](#) - God's call to a task includes His strength to complete it

The Lord will give you help and strength

For work He bids You do:

To serve Him from a heart of love

Is all He asks of you.

—Fasick

**Paul Apple** has some good words of warning regarding the reading and interpretation of Joshua...

## 2 TRAPS TO AVOID in Studying the Book of Joshua:

**Trap #1 – Confusion about identification of Joshua** – Joshua is not a type of Pastor John MacArthur (or name any radio personality you listen to). The people of God today want a human Joshua to follow rather than the invisible Lord Jesus Himself who is the Captain of our Salvation (Josh 5:14, 15). That is why we must have a plurality of under shepherds...no one leader can bring to the table all that we need; Joshua is not a type of some super single pastor model of leadership...but spiritual leaders do need to pattern themselves after Joshua in many important respects (so there are many leadership lessons...and lessons as well for those who are called to submit to our spiritual leaders)

Joshua (means "Yahweh is salvation") is a type of Christ who leads us to spiritual victory and into His rest – not in heaven – but on earth as we submit fully to Him, trust in His power and come to experience the abundant life He desires for us.

**Trap #2 – Confusion about Identification of Canaan** – Thinking that crossing the Jordan represents a transition from this life through death into the joys of heaven is a mistaken interpretation/application. Canaan was a place of conflict and conquest! God's people must take responsibility to be strong and courageous and fight the good fight of faith (1Ti 6:12). Don't wait for victory in heaven for God wants us to experience victory now in the midst of our enemies today (world, flesh and devil). ([Joshua](#))

## THIS BOOK OF THE LAW SHALL NOT DEPART FROM YOUR MOUTH:

- **Book:** Dt 6:6 7 8 9 11:18,19 17:18,19 30:14 31:11 Ps 37:30,31 40:10 Ps 119:42,43 Isa 59:21 Mt 12:35 Eph 4:29)

## SCRIPTURE SATURATED SAINTS

**In Joshua 1:8 Observe:** Who is speaking to Joshua (See **interrogation of the text with the 5W'S & H**)? Why? When? What has transpired? What is Jehovah's command? What is the land like into which Joshua is to lead the people? What is Joshua's mindset to be (note what is repeated three times!). If you have time you can do a simple observation with the class asking these type of questions.

God Himself is addressing Joshua because Israel's leader Moses has died and the mantle of leadership is being passed to this new leader. Joshua is to lead Israel into the "promised land" filled with adversaries and pagan idolatry. Temptation and Warfare will occur. So what does God tell Joshua he must do? Does He tell him to make sure the soldiers have their weapons and are in good shape? No. God tells Joshua to make sure that the "Sword of the Word of God" is to be his focus and will provide all that he needs in order to assure success.

A number of commentaries refer to **Joshua 1:8** as the key or theme verse in the entire book of Joshua, so it certainly behooves the serious student of the Scriptures to meditate on this verse referring to meditation on God's Word!

Below is Joshua 1:8 "structured" to help you see the pattern...

This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth,

but (**See** term of contrast)

you shall meditate on it day and night,

so that (**See** term of result/purpose)

you may be careful to do

according to all that is written in it;

for (**See** term of explanation)

**then** (When?) you will make your way prosperous,

and

**then** (When?) you will have success.

**What is the "key word" of Joshua 1:8?** Book of the law = "it" = "it"

**What are the key actions?** Meditate and Do

**Book of the law** (19x in the **NAS** = Deut 29:21; 30:10; 31:26; Josh 1:8; 8:31, 34; 23:6; 24:26; 2Ki 14:6; 22:8, 11; 2Chr 17:9; 34:14, 15; Neh 8:1, 3, 18; 9:3; Gal 3:10) A reference to Scripture, specifically Genesis through Deuteronomy (Pentateuch from *penta* = five), written by Moses.

**Deuteronomy 31** talks about Moses' completing the book and committing it to the care of the priests...

Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, "Take this **book of the law** and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you." (Deuteronomy 31:25, 26+)

Note that it was not enough that the priests carried and protected the book of the Law. Nor would it be adequate for Joshua to protect it but not let it "protect" him! No, Joshua had to read it and heed it daily, making the Book part of his innermost being by meditating on it.

### [Precious Bible What a Treasure](#)

John Newton

Precious Bible! what a treasure  
Does the Word of God afford?  
All I want for life or pleasure,  
Food and tonic, shield and sword:  
Let the world account me poor,  
Having this I need no more.

Food to which the world's a stranger,  
Here my hungry soul enjoys;  
Of excess there is no danger,  
Though it fills, it never cloy:  
On a dying Christ I feed,  
He is meat and drink indeed.

When my faith is faint and sickly,  
Or when Satan wounds my mind,  
Tonics, to revive me quickly,  
Healing medicines here I find:  
To the promises I flee,  
Each affords a remedy.  
Precious Bible! what a treasure  
Spirit's power set me free?

In the hour of dark temptation  
Satan cannot make me yield;  
For the Word of consolation  
Is to me a mighty shield



While the Scripture truths are sure,  
From his malice I'm secure.

Vain his threats to overcome me,  
When I take the Spirit's sword;  
Then with ease I drive him from me.  
Satan trembles at the Word:  
'Tis a sword for conquest made,  
Keen the edge, and strong the blade.  
Precious Bible in my hand  
I'm not afraid.

Gill writes that **Joshua** was

often to read it, frequently repeat it, and speak of it, to refresh his own memory with it, and the memory of those about him. ([Joshua 1: 8 - The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible](#))

**Book** ([05612](#)) (**cepher**) refers to writing (as of a document) and then to evidence, letter, register, scroll, book; document; writing.

**Law** ([08451](#)) (**torah**) derives from a word that means to shoot an arrow, for a teacher aims to hit the target and achieve specific goals in the lives of the students.

**Shall not depart from your mouth** - Joshua fulfilled Jehovah's instructions to not let the Word depart from his mouth. How do we know? Because God blessed his leadership with prosperity and success.

The **NET Bible** renders it "This law scroll must not leave your lips!" noting that "The ancient practice of reading aloud to oneself as an aid to memorization is in view here."

**Dwight Pentecost** writes Jehovah's instructions to Joshua meant "that the Law should never depart from Joshua as the dominant influence in everything that came from his mouth. God was not just instructing him to live by it, but to administer it so that the entire nation would be brought under its control, that the Law might do its intended work. This was a large part of Joshua's work as the theocratic administrator.

With one half of Israel before Mount Gerizim and the other half before Mount Ebal **Joshua**...

read all the words of the law (**How** many of the words?), the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the **book of the law**. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel (Note the repetition which serves to emphasize the vital importance of this endeavor) with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them. (Joshua 8:34,35+)

**Joshua** remained faithful to carry out this practice even unto his dying day. Knowing that he would soon fall asleep (die) he instructs the people of Israel...

Be very firm, then, to **keep** and **do** all that is written in the **book of the law** of Moses, (Why?) so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, (Why?) in order that you may not associate with these nations (**Ed**: Referring to the Gentiles with their defiling pagan practices to evil to even mention!), these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods, or make anyone swear by them, or serve them, or bow down to them. But you are to cling to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. (Joshua 23:6-8+)

The last mention of the **book of the law** is in Joshua 24 just before Joshua passes off the scene...

And Joshua wrote these words in the **book of the law** of God; and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, lest you deny your God." Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to his inheritance. And it came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old. (Joshua 24:26-29+)

**Shall not depart from your mouth** means that **this book of the law** should be the constant topic of your conversation. Why? "Because you shall meditate on it day and night." Now whatever you're thinking about all day and thinking about all night will show up in your conversation. So Jehovah (the Author of this Word) is saying Joshua should saturate himself with the Word of God. It was to be the dominant thing in him life. He meditates on it, talks about it and naturally (better supernaturally) begins to live it out.

**THOUGHT** - By way of application NT believers will make their way spiritually prosperous and have spiritual success if they do (enabled by the Spirit) according to all that is written in it. There are many believers who can not do according to all that is written in it because they do not understand all that is written. And so it is incumbent upon believers to diligently study the Scripture so that they can understand it so that they can obey it so that they can be blessed and prosperous and have success! The idea is that the law of God (the Word of God) so saturates a person, that it exerts a controlling influence on one's thoughts and one's actions.

**Depart** ([04185](#)) (**mush**) means to be taken away, removed. Joshua did not depart from tabernacle while Moses went into camp (Ex 33:11) When Israel attempted to enter Canaan presumptuously, after having accepted the unbelieving majority report of the spies, the ark of the covenant of the Lord did not depart from the camp (Nu 14:44). Men who trust in the Lord will be like trees planted by a river; they will not cease yielding fruit (Jer 17:8).

**Mush** - 20x in 19v in **NAS** - Ex 13:22; 33:11; Nu 14:44; Josh 1:8; Jdg 6:18; Job 23:12; Ps 55:11; Pr 17:13; Isa 22:25; 46:7; 54:10; 59:21; Jer 17:8; 31:36; Mic 2:3 4; Nah 3:1; Zech 3:9; 14:4. **NAS** = cease(1), depart(6), departed(1), departs(2), give way(1), left(1), move(2), remove(2), removed(2), removes(1), take away(1).

[W. H. Griffith-Thomas](#) has a word from Andrew Murray on the place of "good books" as related to the "Good Book" (the Best Book)

...

Andrew Murray has reminded us in one of his books that milk represents food which has already passed through digestive processes before it is taken by us. And so we may say that all the little books of devotion, the helps to holiness, the series of manuals of thought and teaching, however valuable, represent food that has passed through the spiritual digestion of others before it comes to us, and it has to be used as such. Do we then decry all these? Far from it; yea, we establish them, but only in their place and for their purpose. If they are put first, to the exclusion of the Bible alone, and the Bible day by day, they become dangerous and disastrous, crutches that prevent vigorous exercise, and lead to spiritual senility. If they are put second, they become delightful and valuable, inspirations to further thought and pathways to deeper blessings. When we have had our own meditation of the Word we are the better able to enjoy what God teaches us through others of His children, and especially those whom God honours with special gifts of teaching. So it must be first, foremost and constantly, "MY meditation of HIM." ([Methods of Bible Study by W. H. Griffith-Thomas 1903](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - Any work of God that isn't built on the Word of God will never prosper. Moses' success as the leader of Israel came from his faith in and obedience to God's Word (Deut. 4:10). Joshua's success in conquering the enemy in Canaan was based on his devotion to the Word of God (Josh. 1:8). When we obey God's Word, we can expect "great reward" (Ps. 19:11). If we want to know the power of God, we must also know the Word of God (Matt. 22:29)... God's heroes spend time fellowshiping with God and meditating on His Word (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3). They can face any enemy because they know and trust the promises of God. (Wiersbe, W. W. Be Heroic)

**From your mouth** - The picture is that of vocalizing the Words of God which is related to the idea of meditating on it (see below). In addition, as leader Joshua had to speak to Israel and if the Bible filled his mouth and heart, that is what would come forth.

Someone once quipped...

*If you don't talk to your Bible,  
your Bible isn't likely to talk to you!*

#### **BUT YOU SHALL MEDITATE ON IT DAY AND NIGHT:**

- **You shall:** Ps 1:2,3 19:14 119:11,15,97,99 Pr 2:1 Pr 2:2 3 4 5 3:1 Col 3:16 1Ti 4:14 15 16

#### **Related Resources:**

- Primer On Biblical Meditation - Definitions, Devotionals, Quotations, etc
- Mediation - Application of Inductive Bible Study
- Thomas Watson's Treatise on Meditation
- [The Duty of Meditation](#) - John Angell James
- Quiet Musing - Recommended Sermon on meditation by C H Spurgeon in which he says...

**But -term of contrast** - What's he contrasting? See discussion below.

Although the NT does not use the word **meditate**, clearly the principle is taught in passages such as Colossians 3:16 and 1Timothy 4:15...

**Let** the word of Christ richly **dwell** (present imperative = calls for this to be our habitual practice) within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Col 3:16-note)

**Comment:** Observe how the effects or "fruit" of "meditating" in Colossians are virtually identical to the effects/fruit seen in one who is filled with the Spirit in Eph 5:18, 19, 20-note! Surely one of the benefits of meditating on the Word is to be filled with/controlled by the Spirit! **How can we not seriously consider instituting the daily practice of meditating on His life giving Word!**

**Do not neglect** (present imperative = with negative = stop doing this!) the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. **Take pains** (present imperative = do this as your lifestyle, your habitual practice) with these things; **be** absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. **Pay** close attention (present imperative = habitual practice) to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. (1Ti 4:14, 15, 16)

**Comment:** The verb **take pains** in 1Ti 4:15 is **meletao** (3191) ([See more complete word study on meletao below](#)) which is used in the **Septuagint** to translate **meditate** in Joshua 1:8, Ps 1:2, Ps 63:6 Ps 77:12 Ps 119:148 (elsewhere in Ps 119 meletao translates "delight" which would seem to include the nuance of meditation upon, for that which we delight in is not usually far removed from our mind!), Ps 143:5; Isa 33:18. In Ps 77:5 "*consider*" in context conveys the sense of meditate.

**Meletao** (from **melete** = care, practice, meditation) means to care for, to attend carefully, to give careful thought to, to meditate on, think about. The only other NT use is used in a negative sense meaning to **premeditate**, to contrive, to devise [plan to bring about] = Acts 4:25 ("*devised*").

The **NET Bible** translates **meditate on it** as "**You must memorize it**" and notes that the Hebrew means to "read it in undertones" or "recite it quietly."

**You must, by the feet of meditation,  
tread the clusters of truth,  
would you get the wine of consolation there from.**

**But** (See discussion of observing and interrogating **contrasts**) - Always stop and ask "What is being contrasted?" and even this simple maneuver will begin to help you "meditate" on the Scriptures. In our fast paced society, the temptation is to speed read the Scripture, but that is exactly what Joshua 1:8 advises against! Meditation is not magic and does not happen in a moment but takes time, time to engage our minds so that we are reading the text actively rather than passively, consciously making the effort to interact with the living Word which causes us to interact with the Living Lord, which is the ultimate goal of all Bible study -- To Know God = Jn 17:3 and To Grow in Christlikeness = 2Pe 3:18-note.

**You shall meditate on it day and night** - It's one thing to say to a leader, "**Be strong and courageous.**" It's quite something else to enable him or her to do it. Joshua's strength and courage was to come from meditating on the Word of God, from believing the promises in it, and from living in obedience to its precepts. Moses gave very similar counsel to the entire nation in Deuteronomy 11 (cp Dt 11:18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24), but now God is speaking this principle specifically to Israel's new leader, Joshua.

To be sure, meditation requires the personal investment of some time and mental energy. However, even as God feeds the birds, He doesn't throw the food into their nests. The birds are still required to go forth and bring in the food God provides. In the same way, the Bible is like a table filled with food necessary for daily living (Mt 4:4, Lk 4:4). And God invites all to "Come and eat!" But too often believers fail to heed His gracious invitation. Instead, we depend on substitutes (devotionals, Christian music, fellowship groups, etc. Compare "Mary's secret" of devotion to "one thing necessary" - Lk 10:38 39 40 41 42). And yet we still wonder why our faith is feeble (Ro 10:17)!

**Meditate** (01897)(**hagah** pronounced "*haw-gaw*") conveys the basic meaning of a low sound and so as used in the OT means to groan, to sigh or to mutter. Figuratively **hagah** refers to inward utterance, the words a man speaks to himself. And so **hagah** means to **meditate** (give serious thought and consideration to selected information implying a definite focusing of one's thoughts on something so as to understand it deeply), to **ponder** (to carefully weigh in the mind, to appraise), to **ruminare** (literally to chew repeatedly for an extended period and figuratively to go over in the mind repeatedly and often casually or slowly).

**Hagah** can also refer to giving and open and loud expression to one's thoughts. When **hagah** is used in the sense of "to mourn," (Jer 48:31) it apparently emphasizes the sorrowful sounds of mourning.

**Vine** comments that **hagah** "seems to be an onomatopoeic term (word whose sound suggests the sense), reflecting the sighing and low sounds one may make while musing, at least as the ancients practiced it." This meaning is seen in its first occurrence in the text (Josh 1:8)... When the word is used in the sense of "to mourn," it apparently emphasizes the sorrowful sounds of mourning... The idea that mental exercise, planning, often is accompanied by low talking seems to be reflected by Pr 24:1 2. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Be not envious of evil men, And desire not to be with them. For destruction doth their heart **meditate** (hagah), and perverseness do their lips speak." (Pr 24:1-2 Young's Literal)

**Hagah** can refer to the mutterings of mediums and wizards (Isa 8:19), the moans of grief (Isa 16:7), the growl of a lion (Isa 31:4) or the coos of a dove (Isa 38:14).

In the biblical world **hagah** conveys a somewhat different picture than does the English word "meditation," which conveys the idea of a silent mental exercise only. In contrast, in Hebrew thought, to **meditate** upon the Scriptures was not necessarily a silent practice but meant to quietly repeat them in a soft, droning sound, while utterly abandoning outside distractions. From this tradition comes a specialized type of Jewish prayer called "davening," that is, reciting texts, praying intense prayers, or getting lost in communion with God while bowing or rocking back and forth. Evidently this dynamic form of meditation-prayer goes back to David's time.

**Meditation** is the act of focusing one's thoughts, of pondering, of reflecting, and of reviewing various thoughts by mulling them over in the mind and heart. The picture is one of "**chewing**" upon a thought, deliberately and thoroughly, providing a vital link between theory and action. Meditation consists of reflective thinking, rumination or contemplation, usually on a specific subject with the purpose of discerning its meaning or significance or a plan of action. What metabolism is to the physical body of the cow, meditation is to a saint's mental and spiritual life.

"We are to "meditate" on it. That is, we are to go over and over and over God's truth in our minds to deepen its impression on us and to set it in our hearts. The word meditate indicates that Scripture is to be like a tune that we cannot get out of our minds. It just permeates our thinking processes. Living out the Joshua Code involves constant practice." ([The Joshua Devotional](#))

**Hagah** - 24x in 24v - **NAS** translates **hagah** - declare(1), devise(2), devising(1), growls(1), make a sound(1), meditate(5), meditates(1), moan(3), moan sadly(1), mutter(2), mutters(1), ponders(1), utter(2), uttering(1), utters(1).

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Job 27:4 My lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Nor will my tongue **mutter** deceit.

Psalm 1:2-**in depth note** But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he **meditates** day and night.

**C H Spurgeon writes that the godly man's delight** Is the the law of the Lord. He is not under the law as a curse and condemnation, but he is in it, and he delights to be in it as his rule of life; he delights, moreover, to meditate in it, to read it by day and think upon it by night. He takes a text and carries it with him all day long; and in the night-watches, when sleep forsakes his eyelids, he muses upon the Word of God. In the day of his prosperity he sings psalms out of the Word of God, and in the night of his affliction he comforts himself with promises out of the same book. The law of the Lord is the daily bread of the true believer. And yet, in David's day, how small was the volume of inspiration, for they had scarcely anything save the first five books of Moses! How much more, then, should we prize the whole written Word which it is our privilege to have in all our houses! But, alas, what ill-treatment is given to this angel from heaven! We are not all Berean searchers of the Scriptures. How few among us can lay claim to the benediction of the text! Perhaps some of you can claim a sort of negative purity, because you do not walk in the way of the ungodly; but let me ask you—**Is your delight in the law of God? Do you study God's Word? Do you make it the man of your right hand—your best companion and hourly guide? If not, this blessing does not belong to you.**

Psalm 2:1 Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples **devising** a vain thing?

Psalm 35:28 And my tongue shall **declare** Your righteousness And Your praise all day long.

Psalm 37:30 The mouth of the righteous **utters** wisdom, And his tongue speaks justice.

Psalm 38:12 Those who seek my life lay snares for me; And those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction, And they **devise** treachery all day long.

Psalm 63:6 When I **remember** You on my bed, I **meditate** on You in the night watches,

**Comment:** Notice that meditation is intimately associated with remembering. We see this association in other psalms...Psalm 77:6 I will **remember** my song in the night; I will **meditate** with my heart, And my spirit ponders: and Psalm 143:5 I **remember** the days of old; I **meditate** on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands.

In David's day the night was divided into three watch periods and his use of the plural ("night watches") suggests that in his intense devotion, he meditated upon Jehovah all through the night. If we (enabled by grace not law) were to practice this discipline, how might it affect our communion with the Living God? In the next verse (Ps 63:7) David explains why he **remembers** and **meditates** ("**for**" or "**because**" introduces an explanation - see terms of explanation) writing "for Thou hast been my Help... " where "Help" is the Hebrew '**ezra** (one who assists, supplies or serves another with what is needed)

**Spurgeon comments (Note):** **When I remember thee upon my bed.** Lying awake, the good man betook himself to meditation, and then began to sing. He had a feast in the night, and a song in the night. He turned his bedchamber into an oratory, he consecrated his pillow, his praise anticipated the place of which it is written, "There is no night there." Perhaps the wilderness helped to keep him awake, and if so, all the ages are debtors to it for this delightful hymn. If day's cares tempt us to forget God, it is well that night's quiet should lead us to remember him. We see best in the dark if we there see God best.

**And meditate on thee in the night watches.** Keeping up sacred worship in my heart as the priests and Levites celebrated it in the sanctuary. Perhaps David had formerly united with those "who by night stand in the house of the Lord," and now as he could not be with them in person, he remembers the hours as they pass, and unites with the choristers in spirit, blessing Jehovah as they did. It may be, moreover, that the king heard the voices of the sentries as they relieved guard, and each time he returned with renewed solemnity to his meditations upon his God. Night is congenial, in its silence and darkness, to a soul which would forget the world, and rise into a higher sphere. Absorption in the most hallowed of all themes makes watches, which else would be weary, glide away all too rapidly; it causes the lonely and hard couch to yield the most delightful repose -- repose more restful than even sleep itself. We read of beds of ivory, but beds of piety are better far. Some revel in the night, but they are not a tithe so happy as those who meditate in God

**J Vernon McGee** in his inimitable style writes that: David thought about God—**meditated** upon Him—during the night when he couldn't sleep. My friend, meditating upon God's goodness is a lot better than counting sheep!" ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Psalm 71:24 My tongue also will **utter** Your righteousness all day long; For they are ashamed, for they are humiliated who seek my hurt.

Psalm 77:12 I will **meditate** on all Your work And **muse** (**siach**) on Your deeds.

**Comment:** This Hebrew verb **siach** is translated meditate in 8 of the 20 uses in the NAS - Jdg 5:10; 1 Chr 16:9; Job 7:11; 12:8; Ps 55:17; 69:12; 77:3, Ps 77:6 (**meditate**), Ps 77:12 (**meditate**); Ps 105:2; Ps 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148 (All the uses in Ps 119 are translated **meditate**); Ps 143:5 (muse); 145:5; Pr 6:22; Isa 53:8

Psalm 115:7 They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot **make a sound** with their throat.

Psalm 143:5 I **remember** the days of old; I **meditate** on all Your doings; I muse (**siach**) on the work of Your hands.

**Spurgeon comments (Note):** I remember the days of old. When we see nothing new which can cheer us, let us think upon old things. We once had merry days, days of deliverance, and joy and thanksgiving; why not again? Jehovah rescued his people in the ages which lie back, centuries ago; wily should he not do the like again? We ourselves have a rich past to look back upon; we have sunny memories, sacred memories, satisfactory memories, and these are as flowers for the bees of faith to visit, from whence they may make honey for present use. I meditate on all thy works. When my own works reproach me, thy works refresh me. If at the first view the deeds of the Lord do not encourage us, let us think them over again, ruminating and considering the histories of divine providence. We ought to take a wide and large view of all God's works; for as a whole they work together for good, and in each part they are worthy of reverent study. I muse on the work of thy hands. This he had done in former days, even in his most trying hours. Creation had been the book in which he read of the wisdom and goodness of the Lord. He repeats his perusal of the page of nature, and

counts it a balm for his wounds, a cordial for his cares, to see what the Lord has made by his skilful hands. When the work of our own hand grieves us, let us look to the work of God's hands.

**Memory, meditation, and musing** are here set together as the three graces, ministering grace to a mind depressed and likely to be diseased. As David with his harp played away the evil spirit from Saul, so does he hero chase away gloom from his own soul by holy communion with God.

**See related topics:**

- Memorizing His Word;
- Memory Verses by Topic

**William Gurnall adds** - Meditation is prayer's handmaid to wait on it, both before and after the performance of supplication. It is as the plough before the sower, to prepare the heart for the duty of prayer; and as the harrow after the sower, to cover the seed when 'tis sown. As the hopper feeds the mill with grist, so does meditation supply the heart with matter for prayer.

**David's method.**

He gathered materials; facts and evidence concerning God: "**I remember.**"

He thought out his subject and arranged his matter: "**I meditate.**"

He discoursed thereon, and was brought nearer to God: "**I muse**" -- discourse.

Let us close by viewing all this as an example for preachers and others. W B H.

Proverbs 8:7 "For my mouth will **utter** truth; And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous **ponders** how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

Proverbs 24:2 For their minds **devise** violence, And their lips talk of trouble.

Isaiah 8:19 When they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and **mutter**," should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?

Isaiah 16:7 Therefore Moab will wail; everyone of Moab will wail. You will **moan** for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth As those who are utterly stricken.

Isaiah 31:4 For thus says the LORD to me, "As the lion or the young lion **growls** over his prey, Against which a band of shepherds is called out, And he will not be terrified at their voice nor disturbed at their noise, So will the LORD of hosts come down to wage war on Mount Zion and on its hill."

Isaiah 33:18 Your heart will **meditate** on terror: "Where is he who counts? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?"

Isaiah 38:14 "Like a swallow, like a crane, so I twitter; **I moan** like a dove; My eyes look wistfully to the heights; O Lord, I am oppressed, be my security.

Isaiah 59:3 For your hands are defiled with blood And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken falsehood, Your tongue **mutters** wickedness.

Isaiah 59:11 All of us growl like bears, And **moan** sadly like doves; We hope for justice, but there is none, For salvation, but it is far from us.

Isaiah 59:13 Transgressing and denying the LORD, And turning away from our God, Speaking oppression and revolt, Conceiving in and **uttering** from the heart lying words.

Jeremiah 48:31 "Therefore I will wail for Moab, Even for all Moab will I cry out; I will **moan** for the men of Kir-heres.

Webster says that **meditate** means to focus one's thoughts on, to reflect on, to muse, to mull over or to ponder over and calls for a definite focusing of one's thoughts on something so as to understand it deeply. It means to engage in contemplation or reflection, focusing one's thoughts on some truth, reflecting and pondering that truth.

Eastern meditation calls for the subject to "empty" the mind, whereas Biblical meditation calls for the filling of one's mind with God's Word of truth and life.

**Meditation** is the picture of a cow masticating or ruminating – bringing up previously digested food for renewed grinding and preparation for assimilation.

**Andrew Harper** notes that "This habit of meditation on the law which Joshua was instructed to practice (**Ed**: I agree - Meditation does take "practice") was of great value to one who was to lead a busy life. No mere cursory perusal of the book of the Law can secure the ends for which it is given (**Ed**: So much for the "One Minute Bible"!). The memory is treacherous, the heart is careless and the power of worldly objects to withdraw attention (from the eternal) is proverbial. We must be continually in contact with the Book of God (**Ed**: And even more importantly with the God of the Book!)... There can be no spiritual prosperity and progress without daily meditation on the Word of God... And wherever an eminent degree of piety has been attained, we will find that an eminently close study of the Word has been practiced. Where the habit is perfunctory, the tendency is to omit the meditation and to be content with the reading. Even in pious families there is a risk that the reading of the Scriptures morning and evening may push the duty of meditation aside, though even then we are not to despise the benefit that arises from the familiarity gained with their contents. ([The Expositor's Bible - Commentary on Joshua](#))

**Dawson Trotman** illustrated **Biblical meditation** by comparing the way cows get the cud on which they chew "A cow eats grass as it grazes early in the morning. When the sun gets hot (**Ed**: Compare to times when we are tempted, when we experience unexpected trials, etc), it will lie in the shade of a tree, and through the use of a unique elevator system it will bring up the grass from one stomach (**Ed**: The verses we have memorized. The passages we read that morning. The Scriptures in the sermon we heard on Sunday, etc.) and thoroughly masticate it (**Ed**: We "chew the cud" of the Scriptures the Spirit brings to our mind). When this is finished, it will put it into another stomach, having gotten from it everything possible in the way of nutrients.

**Nelson's New Christian Dictionary** has a picturesque definition of **meditation** as "Quiet time spent in contemplating the Word of God and in fumigating (**Ed**: fumigate = to apply smoke, vapor, or gas to especially for the purpose of disinfecting or of destroying pests) the mind of the toxic thoughts and ideas that infiltrate it every day. ([Nelson's New Christian Dictionary](#))

**Unger** says that **meditation** is "A private devotional act, consisting in deliberate reflection upon some spiritual truth or mystery, accompanied by mental prayer and by acts of the affection and of the will, especially formation of resolutions as to future conduct... **Meditation** is a duty that ought to be attended to by all who wish well to their spiritual interests. It should be deliberate, close, and continuous. ([The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary** says **meditation** is concept found primarily in the Old Testament and is "the practice of reflection or contemplation. The word "meditation" or its verb form, "to meditate," is found mainly in the Old Testament. The Hebrew words behind this concept mean "to murmur," "a murmuring," "sighing," or "moaning"... **Meditation** is a lost art for many Christians, but the practice needs to be cultivated again." ([Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#))

You may be saying "But I don't know how to meditate." I beg to differ because...

If you know how to worry,  
then you know how to meditate.

Worry is when you take a negative idea and continue to think on it over and over, and it will usually start to affect you negatively. When you take a Truth from Scripture and think on it over and over, we call that meditation. There is nothing mystical or magical about meditation. Meditation just means you focus your attention over and over on the Word of God. When one continually mutters God's Word to himself, he is constantly thinking about it. The benefits will be a blessing. God promises in Psalm 1 (Ps 1:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-see notes) that all who delight in and meditate on His Law will prosper like a flourishing fruit tree and their fruit will appear at the proper time, and their general spiritual health, represented by the leaves, will be good.

**John Piper** gives an interesting word picture of **meditation** writing

that if you want to be filled with the Spirit of passion and exultation over the great things of God, you must fill your mind day and night with the Word of God. Pour over it. Memorize it. Chew it. Put it like a lozenge under the tongue of your soul and let it flavor your affections day and night. (**Trinity Journal Volume 16. Page 44**)

Memorizing and reading slowly with pen in hand are ways of making meditation possible. And meditation is crucial in the fight for joy. God commanded Joshua that a leader must be ever musing on the Word of God: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night" (Josh 1:8). The scroll was rare and precious. Joshua did not have a "pocket scroll" to carry around. This means that God made memory and meditation part of what it took to lead his people. The same is true today...

So meditating on the Word of God day and night means to speak to yourself the Word of God day and night and to speak to yourself about it—to mull it over, to ask questions about it and answer them from the Scripture itself, to ask yourself how this might apply to you and others, and to ponder its implications for life and church and culture and missions.

## HOW TO MUSE OVER THE SCRIPTURES

One simple way to do this is to memorize a verse or two and then say them to yourself once, emphasizing the first word. Then say them to yourself again, emphasizing the second word. Then say them a third time, emphasizing the third word. And so on, over and over again, until you have meditated on the reason why each word is there. Then you can start asking relational questions. If this word is used, why is that word used? The possibilities of musing and pondering and meditating are endless. And always we pray as we ponder, asking for God's help and light. ([Page 124 from Piper's book - When I Don't Desire God How to Fight for Joy - Online and free to Download](#))

**Matthew Henry** - If we willingly banish holy meditations in our solitary hours, Satan will soon occupy our minds with sinful imaginations

**Madvig** notes that **Meditation** "does not mean theoretical speculation about the law, such as the Pharisees indulged in, but a practical study of the law, for the purpose of observing it in thought and action, or carrying it out with the heart, the mouth, and the hand. Such a mode of employing it would be sure to be followed by blessings.

**Marston** writes of the Book of the Law "was to be the subject of his diligent study, his mind must dwell upon its provisions. He must see in it, not simply the production of the great mind of Moses, but the inspired code which Jehovah, the King of Israel, had given for the government of His people. For himself, in all his private life and public duties; for the people, in all that might concern their individual and social welfare, here was the rule, the standard, the directory. Joshua, therefore, was to meditate day and night on the revealed will of God; that his heart being full of it, his life might proclaim it, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth might speak. So with ourselves. No one can truly value the Word of God who does not study it and meditate upon it; none can be prepared to defend it who have not experienced its preciousness. If we would really be courageous as regards the Bible, and its teachings and requirements, we must have learned how all-sufficient it is under the operations of the Holy Spirit to direct and animate the soul. ([Marston](#))

**Spurgeon** - The man who reads but one book, and that book his Bible, and then muses (meditates, ponders) much upon it, will be a better scholar in Christ's school than he who merely reads hundreds of books, and muses not at all. (from his sermon Quiet Musing)

**Howard Hendricks** commenting on Joshua 1:8 writes "That verse shows that there is a close connection between **meditating** on God's Word and **acting** on it. That's going to be key when we get to Step Three (**Ed**: "Application" in inductive Bible study), Application. ([Living By The Book](#) - Recommended)

### Related Resources from Howard Hendricks:

- [Living by the Book](#) by Howard G. Hendricks - This is the revised book (2000) in pdf
- [Living by the Book Workbook](#) by Howard G. Hendricks - supplements the preceding materials with hands on lessons - while it cannot be printed out or copied, it would be a great way to supplement the video tutorials listed below.
- [Youtube short course on Living by the Book](#) - takes about 90 minutes - if you have never been taught how to read the Bible, this is a good introduction. Then you could view the full course in the free videos below.
- [Youtube long course on Living by the Book -click here for all 19 sessions](#) of about 20-25 minute each -- this is highly recommended - I viewed it 30 years ago and it radically transformed by Bible reading!

**W B Sprague** - Of pious MEDITATION, considered as a means of growth in grace, it may be remarked that it is not merely a speculative—but practical exercise: the object of it is, not merely to discover truth—but when discovered, to turn it to some practical advantage. If, for instance, the mind dwells on the infinite greatness and majesty of God—the heart kindles with a sentiment of holy admiration. If the mind contemplates the unparalleled love and mercy of God—the heart glows with a spirit of devout gratitude. If the mind contemplates the depravity and ruin of man, and particularly if it turns its eye inward on personal guilt—the bosom heaves with emotions of godly sorrow. And so in respect to every other subject to which the thoughts may be directed—the mind contemplates them not as subjects of abstract speculation—but of personal interest. (Excerpt [click for full discussion] from [Lectures to Young People](#))

**J. Vernon McGee** has sage advice regarding Biblical meditation writing that "**Meditate** is a very figurative word. It pictures a cow chewing her cud. I'm told that the cow has several compartments in her tummy. She can go out in the morning, graze on the grass when the dew is on it in the cool of the day. Then when it gets hot in the middle of the day, she lies down under a tree and begins to chew the cud. She moves the grass she had in the morning back up and now she masticates it, she goes over it again. That is what we do when we **meditate**. We go over what we have read. Way back in 1688 Bartholomew Ashwood said, '**Meditation** chews the



cul.” My, how that is needed today in the lives of believers. Remember that James spoke of the man who beholds his natural face in a mirror, then “... immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.” (Jas 1:24-note). We are to **meditate** on the Word of God (which is God’s mirror that shows us what we really are). We are to allow the Word to shape our lives. My friend, God has no plan or program by which you are to grow and develop as a believer apart from His Word. You can become as busy as a termite in your church (and possibly with the same effect as a termite), but you won’t grow by means of activity. You will grow by **meditating** upon the Word of God—that is, by going over it again and again in your thinking until it becomes a part of your life. This is the practice of the happy (blessed) man (Psalm 1:1-2).”

**David Jeremiah** - "Most of us read the Bible casually and carelessly. We read the Word of God and it has no effect on us. That’s why the Word of God has become so insipid in our lives; it has no power over us. The greatest thing we can do in reading God’s Word is to understand that the Lord has given the book to us as our marching orders. We are to read it, study it, and then do it. Our prayer before reading the Bible should be, “Lord, show me in Your Word today what You want me to do! Show me the things in my life that are not in conformity with Your will, for I commit myself as I open this book that whatever You say to me here, I’ll do it.” With Jesus with us we can go anywhere—into Canaan with its walled cities and giants everywhere, and into the days of the year ahead, where every day poses a mystery and a challenge. We all will face giants in our futures, but know this: If He is with us, we are sufficient to win in the power of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." (Sanctuary: finding moments of refuge in the presence of God.

*Reading the Bible without meditating on it  
is like eating without chewing.*

To meditate means to “turn over” God’s Word in the mind and heart, to examine it, to compare Scripture with Scripture, to “feed on” its wonderful truths. In this day of noise and confusion, such meditation is rare but so needful. Meditation is facilitated by memorization (See related topics: Memorizing His Word; Memory Verses by Topic), for when we memorize His Word, we are able to open the page” to that verse any time of the night or day and allow the Lord to speak to us as we ponder the passage! Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like eating without chewing! Meditation is to the inner man what digestion is to the outer man. If you did not digest your food, you would sicken and die.

We must read Scripture every day  
And meditate on what God said  
To fight temptation from the world  
And live a life that's Spirit led.  
-Sper

**Warren Wiersbe** - The believer’s mind should become like a “spiritual computer.” It should be so saturated with Scripture that when he faces a decision or a temptation, he automatically remembers the Scriptures that relate to that particular situation. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring God’s Word to our minds when we need it. (Jn 14:26) But the Spirit of God cannot remind you of something that you have not learned! You must first let him teach you the Word. You must memorize the Scripture that he opens up to you. Then the Spirit of God will be able to remind you of what you have learned, and you can use that truth to battle Satan. Please keep in mind that Satan knows the Bible far better than we do! And he is able to quote it! (BORROW [The Strategy of Satan : How to Detect and Defeat Him](#))

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**A W Tozer** on "**The Devotional Mood**" - "Maintenance of the devotional mood is indispensable to success in the Christian life. Holiness and power are not qualities that can be once received and thereafter forgotten as one might wind a clock or take a vitamin pill. The world is too much with us, not to mention the flesh and the devil, and every advance in the spiritual life must be made against the determined resistance of this trinity of evil. Gains made must be consolidated and held with a resolution equal to that of an army in the field. To establish our hearts in the devotional mood we must abide in Christ, walk in the Spirit, pray without ceasing and meditate on the Word of God day and night. Of course this implies separation from the world, renunciation of the flesh and obedience to the will of God as we are able to understand it. And what is the devotional mood? It is nothing else than constant awareness of God’s enfolding presence, the holding of inward conversations with Christ and private worship of God in spirit and in truth. Lord, keep me constantly aware of Your presence as I meditate on Your Word. I abide in You today. Amen." (Tozer on the Almighty God : A 366-day devotional)

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**I Will Meditate on Thy Precepts** - Devotional from **C H Spurgeon's Morning and Evening...**

There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through **meditation** on his Word spiritual strength for labour in his service. We ought to **muse** (to consider or examine attentively or deliberately by

becoming absorbed in thought; especially turning something over in one's mind meditatively) upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them.

Truth is something like the cluster of the vine: if we would have wine from it, we must bruise it; we must press and squeeze it many times. The bruiser's feet must come down joyfully upon the bunches, or else the juice will not flow; and they must well tread the grapes, or else much of the precious liquid will be wasted.

So we must, by **meditation**, tread the clusters of truth, if we would get the wine of consolation there from. Our bodies are not supported by merely taking food into the mouth, but the process which really supplies the muscle, and the nerve, and the sinew, and the bone, is the process of digestion. It is by digestion that the outward food becomes assimilated with the inner life.

Our souls are not nourished merely by listening awhile to this, and then to that, and then to the other part of divine truth. Hearing, reading, marking, and learning, all require inwardly digesting to complete their usefulness, and the inward digesting of the truth lies for the most part in **meditating** upon it.

Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not **thoughtfully meditate** on God's Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it.

From such folly deliver us, O Lord, and be this our resolve this morning, "I will meditate in Thy precepts."

#### **Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah**

**Musing\*\*** on my habitation,  
**Musing** on my heav'nly home,  
Fills my soul with holy longings:  
Come, my Jesus, quickly come;  
Vanity is all I see;  
Lord, I long to be with Thee!  
Lord, I long to be with Thee!

**\*\*Muse** is from the Greek verb *muzo* which signifies to press, or utter sound with the lips compressed. The idea of muse is to ponder, to think deeply or closely, to study in silence. The idea is to become absorbed in thought especially turn something over one's mind meditatively. What greater thought to be absorbed in than the goodness and greatness of God as revealed in His Word!

#### **Alexander Maclaren...**

For the Christian soldier, then, God's law is his marching orders. The written word, and especially the Incarnate Word, are our law of conduct. The whole science of our warfare and plan of campaign are there. We have not to take our orders from men's lips, but we must often disregard them, that we may listen to the 'Captain of our salvation.' The soldier stands where his officer has posted him, and does what he was bid, no matter what may happen. Only one voice can relieve him. Though a thousand should bid him flee, and his heart should echo their advices, he is recreant if he deserts his post at the command of any but him who set him there. Obedience to others is mutiny. Nor does the Christian need another law to supplement that which Christ has given him in His pattern and teaching. Men have appended huge comments to it, and have softened some of its plain precepts which bear hard on popular sins. But the Lawgiver's law is one thing, and the lawyers' explanations which explain it away or darken what was clear enough, however unwelcome, are quite another. Christ has given us Himself, and therein has given a sufficient directory for conduct and conflict which fits close to all our needs, and will prove definite and practical enough if we honestly try to apply it.

The application of Christ's law to daily life takes some courage, and is the proper field for the exercise of Christian strength. 'Be very courageous that thou mayest observe.' If you are not a bold Christian you will very soon get frightened out of obedience to your Master's commandments. Courage, springing from the realization of God's helping strength, is indispensable to make any man, in any age, live out thoroughly and consistently the principles of the law of Jesus Christ. No man in this generation will work out a punctual obedience to what he knows to be the will of God, without finding out that all the 'Canaanites' are not dead yet; but that there are enough of them left to make a very thorny life for the persistent follower of Jesus Christ.

**And not only is there courage needed for the application of the principles of conduct which God has given us, but you will never have them handy for swift application unless, in many a quiet hour of silent, solitary, patient meditation you have become familiar with them.** The recruit that has to learn on

the battle-field how to use his rifle has a good chance of being dead before he has mastered the mysteries of firing. And Christian people that have their Christian principles to dig out of the Bible when the necessity comes, will likely find that the necessity is past before they have completed the excavation. The actual battle-field is no place to learn drill. If a soldier does not know how his sword hangs, and cannot get at it in a moment, he will probably draw it too late.

### **MEDITATION: A DYING ART**

I am afraid that the practice of such meditation as is meant here has come to be, like the art of making ecclesiastical stained glass, almost extinct in modern times. You have so many newspapers and magazines to read that the Bible has a chance of being shoved out of sight, except on Sundays and in chapels.

The '**meditating**' that is enjoined in my text is no mere intellectual study of Scripture, either from an antiquarian or a literary or a theological point of view, but it is the mastering of the principles of conduct as laid down there, and the appropriating of all the power for guidance and for sustaining which that word of the Lord gives.

**Meditation**, the familiarizing ourselves with the ethics of Scripture, and with the hopes and powers that are treasured in Jesus Christ, so that our minds are made up upon a great many thorny questions as to what we ought to do, and that when crises or dangers come, as they have a knack of coming, very suddenly, and are sprung upon us unexpectedly, we shall be able, without much difficulty, or much time spent in perplexed searching, to fall back upon the principles that decide our conduct—that is essential to all successful and victorious Christian life.

### **THE SECRET OF THE BLESSED LIFE**

**And it is the secret of all blessed Christian life.** For there is a lovely echo of these vigorous words of command to Joshua in a very much more peaceful form in the 1st Psalm: 'Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, ... but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night' (Ps 1:1, 2)—the very words that are employed in the text to describe the duty of the soldier—therefore 'all that he doeth shall prosper.'

#### **III. That leads to the last thought here—the sure victory of such bold obedience.**

'Thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest'; 'Thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success,' or, as the last word might be rendered, 'then shalt thou act wisely '

You may not get victory from an earthly point of view, for many a man that lives strong and courageous and joyfully obeying God's law, as far as he knows it and because he loves the Lawgiver, goes through life, and finds that, as far as the world's estimate is concerned, there is nothing but failure as his portion. **Ah I but the world's way is not the true way of estimating victory.**

'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,' said Jesus Christ when within arm's-length of the Cross (Jn 16:33). And His way is the way in which we must conquer the world, if we conquer it at all (Gal 6:14).

The success which my text means is the carrying out of conscientious convictions of God's will into practice. That is the only success that is worth talking about or looking for. The man that succeeds in obeying and translating God's will into conduct is the victor, whatever be the outward fruits of his life. He may go out of the field beaten, according to the estimate of men that can see no higher than their own height, and little further than their own finger tips can reach; he may himself feel that the world has gone past him, and that he has not made much of it; he may have to lie down at last unknown, poor, with all his bright hopes that danced before him in childhood gone, and sore beaten by the enemies; but if he is able to say in the strength that Christ gives, 'I have finished my course; I have kept the faith,' (2Ti 4:8) his 'way has prospered,' and he has had 'good success.' 'We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.' (**Maclaren on Joshua**)

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**F B Meyer** writes...

**THE INDWELLING OF THE WORD OF GOD.** Coal contains within its texture the strength absorbed from the sun in bygone ages; so words will pass on to men the heroic thoughts which thrilled the souls of those who spake them first. There are words, as there are strains of music, which cannot be uttered without nerving men to dare and do, to attempt and achieve. A woman will be strong to wait and suffer for long years in the strength

of a sentence spoken by her lover as he parted from her: An army has before now forgot sleepless nights and hungry marches in the stirring harangue of its general. And is not this what the prophet meant, when he said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy words were unto me a joy, and the rejoicing of my heart"? (Jer 15:16) and what Jesus meant when He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"? (Jn 6:63) We can do all things when Christ is in us in unthwarted power (Php 4:13). The only limit lies in our faith and capacity, or, in other words, in our absolute submission to His indwelling. Little children can overcome when there is within them a Stronger than their foes (cp Mt 17:20, Mk 9:24!). Weaklings may do exploits when the Mighty Conqueror who travels in the greatness of His strength makes them the vehicle of His progress.

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**A good working Bible:** — Rare botanical specimens are found by diligent searching. It is by earnest and prayerful study of the Bible that we discover truths that we may call our own. We have a brother who has been working in the gold mines of California for many years. He has a watch-chain that he greatly values because the gold in it is what he searched and dug out of the mountain himself by hard labour and much sacrifice. Truths discovered as the result of hard study are very precious to us. The Bible should be an every-day book to us. A very handsome and expensive Bible on the parlour stand, covered with a bric-a-brac, is of little value as compared with a good working Bible. A well-known Sunday-school worker tells of going into a house in North Wales. As he sat by a table talking with a little girl, he picked up a Bible, when she instantly said, "That's my mother's every-day Bible, sir; I'll give you the Sunday Bible if you want to read." We all need an every-day Bible, one that can be handled easily and conveniently — a Bible with every precious promise and every verse that has been especially helpful to us marked. The Jews were commanded to read the Scripture all the time, to write it upon the door-posts; to have it as frontiers between their eyes; to talk of it by the way, and teach it to their children and children's children. (Home Messenger.)

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**F B Meyer** in the second chapter entitled [The Divine Commission](#) writes that...

Words pass on to men the heroic thoughts which thrilled the souls of those who spoke them first. There are words, as there are strains of music, which cannot be uttered without nerving men to dare and do, to attempt and achieve.

- A woman will be strong to wait and suffer for long years in the strength of a sentence spoken by her lover as he parted from her.

- An army has before now forgotten sleepless nights and hungry marches in the stirring harangue of its general.

And is not this what the prophet meant, when he said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart": and what Jesus meant when he said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"?

We must meditate on the words of God, because it is through the Word of God that the Spirit of God comes in fullness to be the mighty occupant of our inner man. This, after all, is the secret of strength to be possessed of the strong Son of God, strengthened by his indwelling might, and filled by his Spirit.

We can do all things when Christ is in us in unthwarted power.

The only limit lies in our faith and capacity; or, in other words, in our absolute submission to his indwelling. Little children can overcome when there is within them a Stronger than their foes. Weaklings may do exploits when the Mighty Conqueror who travels in the greatness of his strength makes them the vehicle of his progress. Nobodies, nonentities, broken reeds, bleached jaw-bones, quills plucked from the wild-fowl, and arrows that a babe could snap, accomplish marvels, because they are the channels through which the mysterious current of divine power and Godhead flows forth to the world.

Our risen Lord is charged with power.

It is stored in him as in a cistern for us. As the force of the brain is communicated to the members by the energy of the vital current flashing along the nerves, so does the power of Jesus come to us, his members, by the Holy Ghost. And if we would have that blessed Spirit, we must seek him, not only in the fervid meeting or in the great convocation, but through the Word, wherein his force is stored. Meditate on it day and night, till it yield to thee strength and good courage, drawn from the nature of the glorified Redeemer. Thy God hath

commanded thy strength: claim it from Jesus, through faith, by his Spirit, and in his Word. Be strong in your weakness through the strengthening might of Christ. Take weakness, weariness, faint-heartedness, and difficulty, into his presence; they will melt as hoar-frost in sunbeams. Give yourself wholly up to him, to do or die, as he shall choose. Then anoint your head, and wash your face. You shall have your inheritance in Timnath-heres (the portion of the sun); you shall make your way prosperous, and have good success; and you shall lead a nation to inherit the Land of Promise. ([Joshua and the Land of Promise](#))

In regard to this "book of the law" **A W Tozer** said...

Read it much, read it often, brood over it, think over it, meditate over it—meditate on the Word of God day and night. When you are awake at night, think of a helpful verse. When you get up in the morning, no matter how you feel, think of a verse and make the Word of God the important element in your day. The Holy Ghost wrote the Word, and if you make much of the Word, He will make much of you. It is through the Word that He reveals Himself. Between those covers is a living Book. God wrote it and it is still vital and effective and alive. God is in this Book, the Holy Ghost is in this Book, and if you want to find Him, go into this Book.

**Dr. Denis Burkitt** achieved fame for discovering the cause and cure of a disease named after him-- Burkitt's lymphoma. He also received widespread acclaim for demonstrating the benefits of a fiber-rich diet, which earned him the amusing nickname "Fiber Man."

What many people don't know, however, is that Dr. Burkitt was not merely a great medical pioneer; he was a dedicated servant of God who daily spent much time in prayer and meditation on God's Word. He observed,

I am convinced that a downgrading in priority of...**prayer and biblical meditation** is a major cause of weakness in many Christian communities... Bible study demands pondering deeply on a short passage, like a cow chewing her cud. It is better to read a little and ponder a lot than to read a lot and ponder a little.

Dr. Burkitt didn't leave just a great legacy of healing; he left an example of personal holiness and closeness with the Lord. The secret was his lifelong habit of setting aside a specific time for prayer and reflection on God's Word. Few of us will ever enjoy accomplishments like his, but by following the prescription of Psalm 1:2-note we can attain the same spiritual health that he did.

In the stillness of the morning,

Before a busy day of care,

How sweet to be alone with God

Through His holy Word and prayer! --Anderson

**God speaks to those who take the time to listen.**

**Prayer** is talking with God.

**Meditation** is listening to God.

If you have an hour set aside to read the Scriptures, try reading the first half hour and then using the second half hour to reflect or meditate on what you read. Applying the guidelines for careful **observation** and **interpretation** can objectively aid your efforts to meditate on the Word. Watch the difference it makes. You're reading too much if you have no time to genuinely meditate on what you read. If you keep a devotional notebook, jot down your thoughts inspired by observing, interpreting and meditating on the passage.

**Meditation** on the Person and works of God can bring refreshment and invigoration to any believer (cp "rest for your souls" - Mt 11:28, 29, 30).

**Meditation** on God fills a basic need in the heart of every person, as basic a need as food and drink (Mt 4:4). It not only satisfies the believer but overflows in praise making him or her a blessing to others.

## DAY AND NIGHT:

- Ps 63:6, Ps 119:148 Ps 139:17 18 Lam 2:19 Lk 6:12

## MEDITATING WITHOUT CEASING

**Day and night** - A Hebraism or Hebraic way of saying *continually*. Meditation was to be Joshua's continual practice. Why? Because sustenance from the living Word was his constant need! Beloved, we are no different. Do not try to fight the good fight today without first "easting" the "breakfast of champions", the living and active Word, taking time to "chew" your food (Little children continually need to be told "Now, Johnny, chew your food!"). Even as the children of Israel depended on the daily deliverance of manna in the wilderness, Joshua and you and I also need to go out each morning and gather the manna of God's Word.

**Howard Hendricks** - I want to point out the frequency with which biblical truth should percolate through your mind: "**day and night.**" That leads me to ask, What portion of Scripture was I thinking about this morning as I started my day? While I was at work? As I made my way home? For that matter, when was the last time I consciously reflected on biblical truths and principles? ([Living By The Book by Howard Hendricks, William Hendricks](#) - **Recommended**)

### SO THAT YOU MAY BE CAREFUL TO DO ACCORDING TO ALL THAT IS WRITTEN IN IT:

- **Careful to do:** Dt 5:29,32,33 6:1-3 Mt 7:21,24 28:20 Lk 11:28 Jn 13:17 14:21 Jas 1:22 23 24 25 Rev 22:14)

## HEARING & HEEDING

**So that** - Always pause to ponder this **term of purpose or result**. Sometimes the Spirit will use your willingness to slow down and "chew on" the passage to give you some wonderful observations that you had never seen before.

**Be careful to do** - "can carefully obey" (NET), "so that you will faithfully do everything written in them" (GW) Lxx translates **'be careful'** with **suniami** which conveys the idea of "understand" - understand that hearing without heeding is vain!

Joshua 1:8 lays down the immutable principle which is the key to the "victorious Christian life"...

### Obey God's Word ~ Victory & Blessing Disobey God's Word ~ Defeat & Trial

**Meditation** must be accompanied by **doing!** If meditation does not affect our behavior, we are deluding ourselves. **James** in the New Testament counterpart of Joshua 1:8 made this important principle clear, cautioning his readers...

**But (term of contrast** - always **pause to ponder** what is being contrasted, why it is being contrasted, etc? See James 1:21-note) **prove** (present imperative = make this your habitual practice) yourselves **doers** (**poietes**) of the word, and not merely **hearers** (**akroates**) who **delude** (**paralogizomai** in the **present tense** = continually delude) themselves. (**Why** is adherence to this command so critical?) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **But (What** is the refreshing **contrast?**) one who looks intently (**parakupto** = bend one's head forward to look into carefully) at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed (**makarios**) in what he does. (Jas 1:22, 23, 24-note; Jas 1:25-note)

**Comment:** The phrase "**doer of the Word**" does not refer to the person who obeys periodically, but the one who habitually and characteristically obeys. It's one thing to run in a race; it's something else to be a runner. It's one thing to teach a class; it's something else to be a teacher. Runners are known for running; teachers are known for teaching--it's characteristic of their lives. Similarly, doers of the Word are known for their obedience!" (John MacArthur - Drawing Near).

## KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT APPLICATION IS USELESS!

The great Puritan writer **Thomas Manton** said that "Meditation is in order **to practice**; and if it be right, it will beget a respect to the ways of God. We do not meditate that we may rest in contemplation, but in order **to obedience**."

**Be careful** (08104) (**shamar**) is used 431x in the OT and means to watch, to keep, to preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch

over, to watch carefully over, to be on one's guard. **Shamar** is often translated in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** with the verb **phulasso (see word study)**. However **phulasso** is not used to translate **shamar** in Joshua 1:8. Instead the Lxx uses the verb **sunieimi** (aorist active subjunctive) which conveys the idea of putting together the "pieces of a puzzle" (so to speak) and as a result to be able to experience quick comprehension.

The first use of **shamar** in Scripture gives us a good sense of the intended meaning of this common Hebrew verb -- God instructed Adam to **shamar** or to keep and watch over and care for the Garden of Eden (Ge 2:15). Since Adam proved to be a hearer and not a doer of the Word of the clear warning (Ge 2:16,17), God sent His angels to **shamar** "the way to the tree of life!" (Ge 3:24) Abel asked God "Am I my brother's keeper (**shamar**)?" (Ge 4:9)

**Wiersbe** rightly observes that "the secret of Joshua's victories was not his skill with the sword but his submission to the Word of God (Josh 1:8) and to the God of the Word (Joshua 5:13, 14, 15)." (Wiersbe, W. W. . Be Strong. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books)

**To do (06213)** (**asah**) is used over 2000x in the OT and means to do or make in a general sense. To accomplish.

**F B Meyer** wrote that all through the Scriptures...

We are taught, not for our pleasure only, but that we may **do**. If we will turn each holy precept or command into instant **obedience**, through the dear grace of Jesus Christ our Lord, God will keep nothing back from us; He will open to us His deepest and sweetest thoughts. But so long as we refuse **obedience** to even the least command, we shall find that the light will fade from the page of Scripture, and the zest will die down quickly in our own hearts.

**Spurgeon** comments that...

Yes, the Lord will be with us in our holy war, but He demands of us that we strictly follow His rules.

1. Our victories will very much depend upon our obeying Him with all our heart, throwing strength and courage into the actions of our faith. If we are half-hearted, we cannot expect more than half a blessing.
2. We must obey the Lord with care and thoughtfulness.
3. We must obey with universal readiness. We may not pick and choose, but must take all the Lord's commands as they come.
4. In all this we must go on with exactness and constancy. Ours is to be a straightforward courage, which bends neither to the right nor to the left.

**All** - Means just that - all without exception. Thus everything written must be observed, because partial obedience is really no obedience. As someone has well said, when we study the Bible "hit or miss," we MISS more than we HIT!

Moses records God's formula for **success**...

So **keep (shamar)** the words of this covenant to **do** them, that you may prosper (**sakal** - see below) in all that you do. (Dt 29:9)

Compare similar statement in **First Kings** and **First Chronicles**...

And **keep (shamar)** the charge of the LORD your God, to **walk** (obey) in His ways, to **keep (shamar; Lxx = phulasso)** His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the law of Moses, that you **may succeed** (**sakal** - see below) in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' (1Ki 2:3,4)

Then you **shall prosper** (**tsalach** = same word translated prosperous in Josh 1:8; see below), if you **are careful (shamar; Lxx = phulasso)** to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel. **Be strong** and **courageous** (both commands), do not fear nor be dismayed. (1Chr 22:13)

**William Newell** - Concerning the **possession of Canaan**, note the authority for it (**God's command** - Josh 1:2), the attitude for it (**arise** - Josh 1:2), the path to it (**over Jordan** - Josh 1:2), the extent of it (**all the land** - Josh 1:4), the method of it (**occupation** - Josh 1:3), the encouragement for it (**invincibility** - Josh 1:5), the incitement to it (**the promise of success** - Joshua 1:6), the great 'double secret' of it (**constant use of and literal obedience to the Word of God** - Josh 1:7-8), the all inclusive pledge of possession (**the constant presence of God** - Josh 1:9) Apply all these things to yourself, in view of Ep 1:3. ([Lessons from Joshua](#))

## [- The Book of Possession](#)

**A W Tozer - Bible: neglect of; Meditation; Distractions** - The present neglect of the inspired Scriptures by civilized man is a shame and a scandal; for those same Scriptures tell him all he wants to know, or should want to know, about God, his own soul and human destiny...Whatever keeps me from the Bible is my enemy, however harmless it may appear to be. Whatever engages my attention when I should be meditating on God and things eternal does injury to my soul. Let the cares of life crowd out the Scriptures from my mind and I have suffered loss where I can least afford it. Let me accept anything else instead of the Scriptures and I have been cheated and robbed to my eternal confusion. (The Tozer Topical Reader 1:21. Camp Hill, PA)

**FOR THEN YOU WILL MAKE YOUR WAY PROSPEROUS, AND THEN YOU WILL HAVE SUCCESS:**

### **THE END RESULT: SPIRITUALLY PROSPEROUS**

**Beware of misinterpretation of Joshua 1:8** - This verse is **NOT** a promise of material or financial success and should not be "used" as a proof text to defend such false teaching (aka the seductive "[Prosperity Gospel](#)"). In the immediate context of the conquest of Canaan by Israel, the promise to Joshua is for military success, not financial success. In fact there is no mention of finances in the entire first chapter of Joshua. This verse then serves as an excellent illustration of the importance of never interpreting a single verse outside of its context (See discussion of **Keeping Context King** when interpreting Scripture). And don't take a single verse and use it as a proof text as some false teachers do.

**For then** - This is a **term of explanation**. Whenever you encounter one in Scripture (and the chances are great because there are 9500 "fors" in the NAS - now not every one is actually used as a term of explanation but many are), pause and ask what is being concluded or explained (in so doing you will be in a sense "meditating" on the passage!). When will Joshua make his way prosperous and have success? When he meditates and heeds the Word. Obedience is the gateway to material blessing for Joshua (who without doubt was also spiritual blessed by meditation and obedience) and for spiritual blessing in the case of NT believers.

**For then you will make your way prosperous** - This Hebrew word (**tsalach/salah**) generally expresses the idea of a successful venture, as contrasted with failure. The source of such success is God: "... as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (2 Chr 26:5). The root means to accomplish satisfactorily what is intended. In our lives as Christians, success and prosperity are not to be measured by the physical, material standards of the world. The issue for us is spiritual blessing; spiritual prosperity. We can choose to set out on our own to become materially successful. In the words of our text, that would be turning to the right hand or to the left. But the reality is that we can achieve the goal and live to regret it. There are some famous words by George MacDonald, the Scottish novelist and Christian apologist: "In whatever a man does without God, he must fail miserably or succeed more miserably." It is possible to know physical and material success and yet be an absolute failure spiritually. Meditating on the Scriptures will help us evaluate our motives in decision-making with regard to success and prosperity. We will learn to ask ourselves the right questions out of the word of God.

**Warren Wiersbe** - In the life of the Christian believer, prosperity and success aren't to be measured by the standards of the world. These blessings are the by-products of a life devoted to God and His Word. If you set out on your own to become prosperous and successful, you may achieve your goal and live to regret it. "In whatever man does without God," wrote Scottish novelist George MacDonald, "he must fail miserably, or succeed more miserably." The questions God's people need to ask are: Did we obey the will of God? Were we empowered by the Spirit of God? Did we serve to the glory of God? If we can answer yes to these questions, then our ministry has been successful in God's eyes, no matter what people may think. (Be Strong. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books)

**Way** ([01870](#))(**derek**) means way, road, journey, manner, work. In this context it refers to one's actions and/or behavior. Not someone else's way but "**your** (own, personal) **way**," your life.

**Prosperous** ([06743](#)) (**tsalach/salah**) conveys the root idea of accomplishing satisfactorily what is intended. This Hebrew word generally expresses idea of a successful venture, as contrasted with failure.

It is fascinating to observe the positive and negative aspects of this verb in Ps 1:3-note and Joshua 1:8 to convey the idea of prospering and in Pr 28:13 of not prospering. What's the determining factor whether one experiences spiritual prosperity or poverty? In the context of these verses, meditation (Joshua 1:8, Ps 1:2-note) is clearly associated with prosperity and failure to confess and repent of our sins is just as clearly associated with failure to prosper (Pr 28:13-note) And you might ask, well this is OT, but does the NT say anything similar? And the answer is yes, for Paul commands Timothy to "**discipline**" (present imperative) himself for godliness and clearly one of the disciplines that "feeds and fertilizes" godliness is meditation on the Word of God! (1Ti 4:7-note) Paul goes on to explain the spiritual prosperity that accrues from disciplining ourselves, writing that "bodily discipline is only of little profit,



but godliness is **profitable** for all things, since it **holds promise for the present life** and also **for the life to come.**" (1Ti 4:8-note) While meditation, like all spiritual disciplines, calls for us to exert some effort (as enabled by the Spirit - e.g., we need to die to our selfish interests and our right to "our time" and give some of "our time" to God's interest), Paul says the "benefits" are literally "out of this world!" While I don't know exactly what this eternal profit/prosperity entails, rest assure it is going to be good and perfect for that is the character of our Great Father of lights (James 1:17-note).

**Tsalach/salah** is translated as to **succeed** (or some variation) 20 times in the NAS. It is translated as to **prosper** (or some variation) 27 times in the NAS.

**Prosperous** (English definition) - successful; flourishing; favorable; promising; thriving. **1828 Webster** = "Advancing in the pursuit of any thing desirable; making gain or increase; thriving; successful; as a prosperous trade; a prosperous voyage; a prosperous expedition or undertaking; a prosperous man, family or nation; a prosperous war. The seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit. Zech. 8. 2. Favorable; favoring success; as a prosperous wind. Denham."

**Successful** (English definition) - resulting in or having gained success (a favorable or desired outcome); one of the synonyms for is **prosperous**. accomplishing an aim or purpose; marked by a favorable outcome. **1828 Webster** = Terminating in accomplishing what is wished or intended; having the desired effect; hence, in a good sense, prosperous; fortunate; happy; as a successful application of medicine; a successful experiment in chemistry or in agriculture; a successful enterprise.

In the **Septuagint (Lxx)**, **tsalach/salah** is most frequently translated by the verb **euodoo** (or the cognate **kateuodoo**) which is a combination of **eu** = good + **hodos** = way and which literally means to have a good journey with the following nuances - (a) of removal of difficulties in the way (Ro 1:10) (b) of material prosperity in daily avocation (1Co 16:2) (c) of physical health (3Jn 2) (d) of spiritual health. The exact sense in a specific verse needs to be determined from the context. Here in Joshua 1 the source of such success is presence of God (Joshua 1:9) and the purposeful intake of His Word (Joshua 1:8) Clearly, in the overall context of Joshua (military conquest of the promised land), **tsalach/salah** has a material nuance (victory, possession of the land), but one cannot separate the material from the spiritual. In other words, if material prosperity is dangerous if it causes one to lose sight of the Giver Who bestows the good gift. Does that make sense? To help gain a sense of this association, take some time to study the uses of **tsalach/salah** below. Notice, for example, in Genesis 39 the Hebrew verb describes the success of Joseph. While Joseph's success was evident to his master as "material" success, it was clearly not dissociated from Joseph's spiritual growth. In other words, Joseph's material success did not cause him to be spiritual failure, as it does far too often in many men's lives!

**NIDOTTE - Tsalach/salah** refers to successful activities in different areas of life, usually in the sense of accomplishing effectively what is intended. Besides describing a human or divine action, the verb is also used with various subjects: a tree (thrives, Ezek 17:9), a weapon (prosper, Isa 54:17), a journey (succeeds, Jdg 18:5), a waistcloth (is useful, Jer 13:7)... The verb is often followed by **וַיִּשְׁלַח**, way (8x), to describe making successful a journey or career. Theologically, **tsalach/salah** emphasizes that God alone is the One Who gives success, an emphasis well summarized in Neh 2:20. He gives success to those who obey his law (Josh 1:8; 1Chr 22:13; Ps 1:3) and promises that his word will not return empty but what he desires will succeed (Isa 55:11). His will succeeds in the hand of the Suffering Servant (Isa 53:10). Though the wicked may also prosper (Ps 37:7; Jer 5:28; 12:1; Dan 11:27), their success is temporary and will be destroyed in time. It is important to note that success is often stated as merely God's grace, e.g., the reason for Joseph's success was simply stated as "the Lord was with Joseph" (Ge 39:2-3). God grants success to those who seek him diligently (2Chr 26:5), to those who depend on his mercy and pray to him e.g., Abraham's servant (Ge 24:21, 40), Nehemiah (Neh 1:11), and the psalmist in Ps 118:25.

**Tsalach/salah**- 54v in **NAS** - NAS = advanced(1), give us success(1), made his successful(1), make his successful(1), make your prosperous(1), make your successful(1), prosper(16), prospered(7), prosperous(1), prospers(2), send prosperity(1), succeed(10), succeeding(1), successful(4), successfully completed(1), thrive(2), useful(1), victoriously(1), worthless\*(2).

Genesis 24:21 Meanwhile, the man was gazing at her in silence, to know whether the LORD had **made** his journey **successful** or not... **40** "He said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you to **make** your journey **successful**, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father's house;

Genesis 24:42 "So I came today to the spring, and said, 'O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now You will **make** my journey on which I go **successful**;... 56 He said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD **has prospered** my way. Send me away that I may go to my master."

Genesis 39:2 The LORD was with Joseph, so he **became a successful** (Lxx epitugchano = to be successful in achieving or gaining what one seeks, obtain, attain to, reach) man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. 3 Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD **caused** all that he did **to**

**prosper** (Lxx = euodoo in the present tense = continually succeed or prosper) in his hand.

Genesis 39:23 The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD **made to prosper**. (Lxx = euodoo i)

Numbers 14:41 But Moses said, "Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the LORD, when **it will** not **succeed**?"

**Comment:** Success in this context would have been defeat of their enemies and conquering the promised land. Clearly the meaning of success here is more in the material than the spiritual realm.

Deuteronomy 28:29 and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you **will** not **prosper** in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you.

**Comment:** In this context prosperity is contrasted with oppression and robbery.

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Judges 18:5 They said to him, "Inquire of God, please, that we may know whether our way on which we are going **will be prosperous**."

**Comment:** This request for prosperity bordered on "superstition" and ultimately was motivated by selfish fleshly desires, not godly spiritual desires.

1 Kings 22:12 All the prophets were prophesying thus, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and **prosper**, for the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."

**Comment: Prosper** here (and 1Ki 22:15) spoke of success or victory in battle, but again notice the association with spirituality, in this case pseudo-spirituality (false prophets)!

1 Kings 22:15 When he came to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?" And he answered him, "Go up and **succeed**, and the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."

1 Chronicles 22:11 "Now, my son, the LORD be with you that you may be **successful**, and build the house of the LORD your God just as He has spoken concerning you.

1 Chronicles 22:13 "**Then** (What precedes "**then**?" - see 1Chr 22:12b) you **will prosper**, if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel (**Note** repetition of obedience as the vital condition for prospering). Be strong and courageous, do not fear nor be dismayed.

1 Chronicles 29:23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father; and he **prospered**, and all Israel obeyed him.

**Comment:** How did Solomon prosper? Clearly material but at least for a time spiritually, for he was the main author of the Proverbs. However his prosperity was not coupled with obedience as he married many foreign wives who stole his heart and caused him to worship idols.

2 Chronicles 7:11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's palace, and **successfully** completed all that he had planned on doing in the house of the LORD and in his palace.

**Comment:** Speaks primarily of material success, although even here it is difficult to divorce the spiritual component given that that he had built the Temple where God would be worshipped by himself and the nation of Israel.

2 Chronicles 13:12 "Now behold, God is with us at our head and His priests with the signal trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O sons of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you **will** not **succeed**."

**Comment:** Fighting against good never leads to success!

2 Chronicles 14:7 For he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and **prospered**.

2 Chronicles 18:11 All the prophets were prophesying thus, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and **succeed**, for

the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."

14 When he came to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?" He said, "Go up and **succeed**, for they will be given into your hand."

2 Chronicles 20:20 ¶ They rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the LORD your God and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and **succeed**."

**Comment:** While the context is military victory, the implication is clearly that of spiritual success, especially in view of the fact that it was faith in God's Word ("His prophets") which would bring that success. Faith is integrally coupled with obedience. So if they trusted God's Word and obeyed God's Word, they would experience success. This is similar to the principle in Joshua 1:8, where Joshua's act of meditation implied a growing trust and a humble obedience to God's Word.

2 Chronicles 24:20 Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and **do not prosper**? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.'"

**Comment:** Clear link between knowing God's Word and doing God's Word and experiencing success.

2 Chronicles 26:5 He (**King Uzziah**) continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God **prospered** him.

**Comment:** Seeking God is associated with success, in context primarily referring to material success but also including spiritual success.

2 Chronicles 31:21 Every work which he (**King Hezekiah**) began in the service of the house of God in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and **prospered**.

2 Chronicles 32:30 It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah **prospered** in all that he did.

Nehemiah 1:11 "O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and **make** Your servant **successful** today and grant him compassion before this man." Now I was the cupbearer to the king.

Nehemiah 2:20 So I answered them and said to them, "The God of heaven will **give** us **success**; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no portion, right or memorial in Jerusalem."

Psalms 1:3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he **prosper**.

**Comment:** **Tsalach/salah** is used here to describe the man who meditates on the Law of the LORD in Ps 1:2. The psalmist says that as a result of his continual meditation, "he **prosper** (Lxx = kateuodoo = have a prosperous journey)." While material prosperity cannot be excluded, it would seem that in the context of all of Scripture, the more significant prospering or success would be in the spiritual realm.

Psalms 37:7 Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.

**Comment:** Here **tsalach/salah** is used to describe what the child of God should not desire, specifically the prosperity of the wicked. The implication here is that their prosperity is more in the material realm and not the spiritual realm.

Psalms 45:4 And in Your majesty ride on victoriously, For the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; Let Your right hand teach You awesome things.

Psalms 118:25 O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send **prosperity!**

Proverbs 28:13 He who conceals his transgressions will not **prosper**, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

Isaiah 48:15 "I, even I, have spoken; indeed I have called him, I have brought him, and He will **make** his ways **successful**.

Isaiah 53:10 But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will

**prosper** in His hand.

Isaiah 54:17 "No weapon that is formed against you **will prosper**; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD.

Isaiah 55:11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without **succeeding** in the matter for which I sent it.

Jeremiah 2:37 "From this place also you will go out With your hands on your head; For the LORD has rejected those in whom you trust, And you will not **prosper** with them."

Jeremiah 5:28 'They are fat, they are sleek, They also excel in deeds of wickedness; They do not plead the cause, The cause of the orphan, that they **may prosper**; And they do not defend the rights of the poor.

Jeremiah 12:1 Righteous are You, O LORD, that I would plead my case with You; Indeed I would discuss matters of justice with You: Why has the way of the wicked **prospered**? Why are all those who deal in treachery at ease?

Jeremiah 13:7 Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the waistband from the place where I had hidden it; and lo, the waistband was ruined, it was totally **worthless**. (not prosper)

10 'This wicked people, who refuse to listen to My words, who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts and have gone after other gods to serve them and to bow down to them, let them be just like this waistband which is totally **worthless**. (not prosper)

Jeremiah 22:30 "Thus says the LORD, 'Write this man down childless, A man who **will not prosper** in his days; For no man of his descendants **will prosper** Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.'"

Jeremiah 32:5 and he will take Zedekiah to Babylon, and he will be there until I visit him," declares the LORD. "If you fight against the Chaldeans, you **will not succeed** ""?"

Ezekiel 15:4 "If it has been put into the fire for fuel, and the fire has consumed both of its ends and its middle part has been charred, **is** it then **useful** for anything?

Ezekiel 16:13 "Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and **advanced** to royalty. (**Literally** - And dost go prosperously to the kingdom.)

Ezekiel 17:9 "Say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Will it **thrive**? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, so that it withers-- so that all its sprouting leaves wither? And neither by great strength nor by many people can it be raised from its roots again.

10 "Behold, though it is planted, will it **thrive**? Will it not completely wither as soon as the east wind strikes it-- wither on the beds where it grew?""

15 'But he rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt that they might give him horses and many troops. Will he **succeed**? Will he who does such things escape? Can he indeed break the covenant and escape?

Daniel 8:12 And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and **prosper**.

24 "His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And **prosper** and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.

25 "And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to **succeed** by his influence; And he will magnify himself in his heart, And he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency.

Daniel 11:27 "As for both kings, their hearts will be intent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table; but it **will not succeed**, for the end is still to come at the appointed time (**Why?** Because God is sovereign!).

36 "Then the king (**The Antichrist**) will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he **will prosper** until (marks time when his "prosperity" will cease!) the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

**Make your way prosperous** (successful)... **have success** - While at first glance it looks as if this is saying the same thing, the Hebrew verbs for *make... prosperous* and *have success* are distinctly different. **Young's Literal** is one of the few English translations that maintains the distinction, rendering it "*then thou dost cause thy way to prosper, and then thou dost act wisely.*"

Notice that **Young's** has "*act wisely*" instead of "*have success.*" The (expanded or amplified) idea is "*then (after you meditate and obey) you will be more likely to prosper and to think wisely which in turn will lead to success.*" Stated another way, the Hebrew word (*sakal/sākhāl*) translated "*success*" in most versions more accurately means to act with insight and then by **Metonymy** is translated "be successful". In other words "success" is a metonymy, a figure of speech for prudent living, because prudent living leads to "success."

**Success** (07919) (*sakal/sākhāl*) primarily means to act with insight, to be prudent, to give insight, to teach, to prosper, to consider, to ponder, to understand, to act prudently, to act with devotion. The primary sense of *sakal/sākhāl* is to be **prudent**, which means "marked by wisdom or judiciousness, shrewd in the management of practical affairs, marked by circumspection." One who manifests prudence is more likely to have success.

The **Septuagint (LXX)** translates *sakal/sākhāl* with Greek verb "**sunieimi [see word study]** meaning **to understand**, the idea being that one is able to "put together the pieces" (so to speak) and make sense out of a set of facts presented to one's mind. In simple terms, *sunieimi* conveys the idea of putting "2" and "2" together. In other words, one has the ability to assess a situation and decide what practical course of action is necessary. This is a quality which was especially valuable for Joshua who was daily faced with decisions as he led Israel into enemy territory where the nation might possess their (divinely given) possessions.

**THOUGHT -Observe how anyone can experience the LORD being with them...YOU WILL DISCERN A CLEAR PATTERN! NOW WALK ON THIS ROAD ALL THE REST OF THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE EMPOWERED BY HIS WORD AND HIS SPIRIT....**

Deuteronomy 29:9 "So keep the words of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper (*sakal*; Lxx - *sunieimi*) in all that you do. (OBEDIENCE)

Joshua 1:7 "Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success (*sakal*; Lxx - *sunieimi*) wherever you go. (OBEDIENCE)

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success (*sakal*; Lxx - *sunieimi*). (WORD IN HEART & OBEDIENCE)

1 Kings 2:3 "Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed (*sakal*; Lxx - *sunieimi*) in all that you do and wherever you turn, (OBEDIENCE)

**Gregory Lint** (editor) - The noun from this root is used of "understanding," "wisdom," "insight," "good sense" and even "shrewdness." Thus, the basic idea of this verb seems to be to have the know-how to succeed in an endeavor and to obtain a desired result. *Sākhāl* is an important wisdom word dealing with good sense for living (cf. Dt. 32:29; Pr. 21:16). The opposite of this idea is not only to be foolish, but to be shameful (Pr 10:5). Some contexts emphasize wise action (e.g., Ps 36:3; Pr 19:14), while others emphasize the product or good results of the wise action (Dt. 29:9; 1Sa. 18:30; Pr. 17:8). Several times, **sākhāl** refers to having understanding on a subject, insight or discernment into events or the way a situation should be handled (cf. 1Chr. 28:19, of God giving David the plans for the Temple; Isa 41:20, realizing the Lord was doing his judging/restoring work in what they were to see; Isa 44:18, not understanding the foolishness of idolatry; Da 1:4, having ability to understand and use all kinds of wisdom and knowledge; Da 9:25, understanding what God was saying about the future troubles and deliverance of his people). **Sākhāl** can refer to having a certain skill as the Levites showed (2Chr 30:22). In one place, the verb refers to understanding the meaning of the Scriptures (Neh 8:13). The participle is used to describe a wise person (cf. Job 22:2; Ps 2:10; 14:2, for references to those who really understand and behave accordingly). Also, **sākhāl** is used in the context of when Eve saw that the fruit was desirable "to make [her] wise" (Ge 3:6). **When a person is the object of the verb, sākhāl** means "to cause to understand," "to give insight," "to cause to succeed," "to instruct" the person, often by God, (Neh 9:20, God's good Spirit instructed Israel in the wilderness; Ps 32:8, God gives guidance in the way people should go; Pr 16:23, the heart of the wise instructs his mouth so that what he says is persuasive, accomplishing its goal; cf. also 1Chr. 28:19; Da 1:4, 17). **When focused on a thing or situation, sākhāl** has the idea of considering thoughtfully or giving attention to, often with the sense of wisely valuing it enough to seek to understand it and respond appropriately, aiding people to live more effectively (Job 34:27, to God's ways; Ps. 64:9, to God's deeds; Ps 106:7, to God's miracles; Pr. 16:20, to a word or matter; Pr 21:12, to the life and outcome of the wicked; Da 9:13, to God's truth). (The Complete Biblical Library)

**Sakal** (Note: Lxx uses **suniami** in the following 31 Scriptures in **bold**) - 61v in **NAS** - Gen 3:6; **Deut 29:9; 32:29; Josh 1:7, 8; 1Sa 18:5, 1Sa 18:14, 15, 1Sa 18:30; 1Ki 2:3; 2Ki 18:7; 1Chr 28:19; 2Chr 30:22; Neh 8:13; 9:20; Job 22:2; 34:27, 35; Ps 2:10; Ps 14:2; Ps 32:8; 36:3; Ps 41:1; Ps 53:2; Ps 64:9; Ps 94:8; Ps 101:2; Ps 106:7; 119:99; Pr 1:3; 10:5, 19; 14:35; 15:24; 16:20, 23; 17:2, 8; 19:14; Pr 21:11, 12, Pr 21:16; Isa 41:20; 44:18; Isa 52:13; Jer 3:15; Jer 9:24; Jer 10:21; 20:11; Jer 23:5; 50:9; Dan 1:4, 17; Da 9:13, Da 9:22, Da 9:25; Da 11:33, 35; Da 12:3, 10; Amos 5:13.**

**NAS** translates **sakal** = act wisely(1), acts wisely(3), behaved himself wisely(1), comprehend(1), consider(1), considers(2), discern(1), expert(1), failed\*(1), gain insight(2), give you insight(1), give heed(1), gives attention(1), giving attention(1), had... regard(1), have insight(4), have success(2), insight(1), instruct(2), instructed(1), instructs(1), intelligence(1), prosper(2), prospered(3), prospering(2), prospers(1), prudent(2), show discernment(1), showed(1), showing intelligence(1), succeed(1), understand(4), understanding(2), understands(2), understood(1), wisdom(1), wise(6), wise behavior(1).

In the context of this verse Joshua's "ability" to lead with understanding was integrally related to his steady "diet" of the pure milk of God's Word.

Am I totally committed to the Word of God and the will of God in this action, this choice, this endeavor, etc?  
Am I relying completely on the Spirit of God to empower me or am I trusting my own resources? Am I doing so ultimately that I might display the glory of God?

If I can answer those questions with a yes, then my ministry, my activity, my relationships will be successful in God's eyes, no matter what people think and no matter what the physical, material outcome is.

Joshua 1:8 by way of application is calling all believers to learn to think "Biblically", saturating ourselves with the Word of God, so that we live "Biblically" in all our thoughts, words and actions. This is surely the "abundant" life to which Jesus referred (Jn 10:10b)! The prosperity and success includes a transformed increasingly Christlike character (cp the fruit of the Spirit = Gal 5:22-note, Gal 5:23-note)

**Wiersbe** - Victorious Christians are people who know the promises of God, because they spend time meditating on God's Word (Josh 1:8); they believe the promises of God, because the Word of God generates faith in their hearts (Ro 10:17); and they reckon on these promises and obey what God tells them to do. To "reckon" means to count as true in your life what God says about you in His Word. (Ibid)

**Hudson Taylor**, founder of China Inland Mission (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) made a similar statement

**God's work done in God's way  
will not lack God's supply.**

Not only are God's presence and power essential for success in His work, but we must also work according to God's revealed will. It is easy to fall into the trap of substituting human wisdom and understanding for obedience to God's Word.

Joshua 1:8 - This book of the law. The law was, therefore, embodied in a written document when the Book of Joshua was written; and as the antiquity of this Book may be regarded as proved, we may quote thus an early authority for the genuineness of at least some portions of the Pentateuch. There was a "book of the law" in Joshua's time, according to this early testimony, and we may conclude from verses 3-7 that Deuteronomy formed a part of it (see also Deuteronomy 17:19 for a similar precept. And for the fact see Deuteronomy 31:24-26). Meditate therein (cf. Psalms 1:2, Psalms 63:7, Psalms 143:5, in the original. Also Deuteronomy 31:26). Observe to do. Literally, keep to do, thus impressing on us the care necessary in deciding on our actions. All that is written therein (cf. for the expression Deuteronomy 28:58, Deuteronomy 28:61; Deuteronomy 29:19, Deuteronomy 29:20, Deuteronomy 29:26; Deuteronomy 30:10). Shall have good success. The word is the same as is translated "prosper" above, and not the same as that rendered "prosperous" in this verse. "Men," says Calvin, "never act skilfully, except in so far as they allow themselves to be ruled by the Word of God." Have I not commanded thee? "An emphatic inquiry is a stronger form of affirmation, and is generally employed by those who wish to infuse into another courage and alacrity" (Michaelis). Moreover repetition is a remarkable feature of Hebrew composition, as we may observe from the second chapter of Genesis onward, and is designed to give emphasis to what is commanded or related. Calvin would lay stress on I: "Have not I commanded thee?" But this is not borne out by the Hebrew. (Pulpit Commentary)

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**Alan Redpath - The Man God Uses** – A faithful past, a sound vocation, a filling with the Word of God – what can we do to prove worthy of Him? Let us take our weakness, and our trembling, and our fears before Him; let there be an absolute submission to the indwelling power of His blessed Spirit. Let us ask that all these qualities that were revealed in Christ be imparted to us, that they may be real in your life and mine. There is a price to be paid. Are you willing to pay it? Cancel every responsibility in your life other than what you believe to be God's will for you. Deliberately refuse any engagement which will keep you from meditation on His

Word. We are living in an age which has lost the art of being silent with an open Bible and waiting for God to speak.

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**GAYLORD KAMBARAMI** worked for the American Bible Society in Zimbabwe, distributing Bibles to the locals. But one day he ran across a man who refused to take one. The man was extremely hostile toward Christians. "I'll only roll the pages and use them to make cigarettes," the man told him. But Kambarami was a persistent man. "I understand that," he told the man, "but at least promise to read the page of the New Testament before you smoke it." The man agreed, somewhat confused, and the two parted ways. Fifteen years passed, and Kambarami didn't think much more about the incident until by coincidence he ran across the man again—this time at a Methodist convention in Zimbabwe. The man was now a full-time evangelist and one of the speakers at the gathering. During his speech the man gave his personal testimony, recalling for the audience the day that Kambarami gave him his first New Testament. He told the audience, "I smoked Matthew and I smoked Mark and I smoked Luke, but when I got to John 3:16, I couldn't smoke anymore. My life was changed from that moment." There is power in the Word of God far beyond what you and I can comprehend. The mere words elicit a level of authority and muscle that no other text can possess. Just reading what the Creator has written brings supernatural insight and wisdom to the mind of the reader. The Lord tells Joshua, "Study this Book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed" (Joshua 1:8). One key to following God is to meditate on Scripture and then to let those words flow from your mouth at every occasion. To let the promises of God seep into the pores of your heart and mind. To drink of God's wisdom by devouring his Word. Maybe our friend from Zimbabwe was on to something. Maybe you and I should get into the practice of smoking God's Word—not literally, but spiritually. We should first read it and then sit back and savor the flavor, allowing the aroma to linger around us and within us. Let's do more than read God's Word; let's inhale it. (LaHaye, Tim and Jenkins, Jerry and Martin, Frank, Embracing Eternity)

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## **F B Meyer - The Sources of Joshua's Strength**

**I. A faithful past** - The aloe blooms but once in a hundred years, but every hour of all that century is needed to produce the delicate texture and resplendent beauty of the flower. The deed of a Grace Darling is not the sudden outburst of the moment that gives it birth, but the result of long years of self-discipline, courage, and ministry to others. And this summons of Joshua to the leader's place in Israel was the guerdon of more than eighty years of faithful service. None of us can tell for what God is educating us. We fret and murmur at the narrow round and daily task of ordinary life, not realizing that it is only thus that we can be prepared for the high and holy office which awaits us. We must descend before we can ascend. God's will comes to thee and me in daily circumstances, in little things equally as in great; meet them bravely; be at your best always, though the occasion be one of the very least; dignify the smallest summons by the greatness of your response; so the call will come to you as to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' minister.

**II. A distinct call** - The supreme inquiry for each of us, when summoned to a new work, is not whether we possess sufficient strength or qualification for it, but if we have been called to it of God; and when that is so there is no further cause for anxiety. If it is in His plan that we should march through a river, or attack a walled town, or turn to flight an army, we have simply to go forward. Rivers will dry up, walls will fall down, armies shall be scattered as snow in summer. There is no such thing as impossibility when God says, "Forward, soul, arise, go over this Jordan!"

**III. The sense of the presence of God.** There have been generals whose presence on the field of battle has been the presage and guarantee of victory. Not only have they inspired the soldiers with a sense of confidence in their leadership, but they have encouraged them by their personal prowess and bravery. There is a marvelous sense of security and courage when a Christiana, a Mr. Fearing, or a Miss Much-Afraid is assured of the presence of a Greatheart, who has never turned his back on a foe. And a lonely, trembling soul dares to step bravely across the margin of life into the unknown beyond: to go down unabashed into the chill waters of death, because it can sing, "Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

**IV. The indwelling of the Word of God.** Coal contains within its texture the strength absorbed from the sun in bygone ages; so words will pass on to men the heroic thoughts which thrilled the souls of those who spake them first. There are words, as there are strains of music, which cannot be uttered without nerving men to dare and do, to attempt and achieve. A woman will be strong to wait and suffer for long years in the strength of a sentence spoken by her lover as he parted from her: An army has before now forgot sleepless nights and hungry marches in the stirring harangue of its general. And is not this what the prophet meant, when he said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy words were unto me a joy, and the rejoicing of my heart"? (Jer 15:16) and what Jesus meant when He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"? (Jn 6:63) We can do all things when Christ is in us in unthwarted power. The only limit lies in our faith and capacity, or, in other words, in our absolute submission to His indwelling. Little children can overcome when there is within them a Stronger than their foes. Weaklings may do exploits when the Mighty Conqueror who travels in the greatness of His strength makes them the vehicle of His progress.

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**William Newell** has these encouraging introductory thoughts on the Book of Joshua...

**The Book of Possession** - We have before us now a book of great delight to the spiritual Christian. All through the Christian centuries Joshua has yielded priceless treasures to those saints who have been "overcomers" (Rev. 2, 3). For those who have been content merely to "get to heaven," this book has not, perhaps, presented any special attractions; but those who have been warrior-saints, who were determined to "reign with Christ" at whatever cost (Ro 8:17; 2Ti 2:12; Rev 2:26, Rev 2:27), have ever found a very fortress of strength in this wonderful book. No book is more full of encouragement, wisdom and invigoration for the spiritual soldier. This land to be possessed, these deadly enemies the conditions of successful occupation, the Jordan-crossing, the successive conflicts, the division of the land—all these things are of intense interest to the instructed Christian mind. New and deeper meanings are ever unfolded from these simple stories to those who have learned their true position in the risen Christ (**Cp Related Resource = in Christ**), and what their own real conflict is and feel their need of instruction and equipment for it. It is our humble hope that some may be led through these lessons to recognize these spiritual treasures in the book of Joshua, and to enter upon their appropriation... The key-word of Deuteronomy is **obedience**. Its great object is to be the preparation of the chosen, redeemed and disciplined people of God to enter upon their inheritance, to conquer it and, through constant faithfulness, to hold it perpetually as the head of the nations. (Dt 26:18 19 11:8 22 23 24 25; 28:1-14 32:46, 47)... The first five books see the people chosen and established (Dt 29: 13, 13) as the people of God: outwardly on the basis of the legal covenant, but really on the basis of God's covenant of promise with Abraham. (Ge. 15:11 12 13 14 15 16 and Ge 17:7 8 9 10; cf. Dt 29:13, and Gal 3:15 16 17 18). Under the second great division of the Bible, which includes the twelve books following Deuteronomy, the trial of Israel in the land under the legal covenant is given, with its result—utter failure... In Joshua we shall find the nation on the whole obedient to God, though the seeds of the failure so apparent in Judges will be discovered. Israel, as one has said, must be shown to be not only ungodly, as in Ex. 32, but without strength (Ro 5:6); not only guilty, but helpless, unable to obey God's holy law in their own power. Till man learns both these lessons, God cannot come to him in grace.

**BOOK OF JOSHUA**  
**PARALLELS**  
**BOOK OF EPHESIANS**

The book of Joshua will be found very rich in spiritual and typical truth, because there is a realm of promise granted to the Christian corresponding to the land of Canaan as given to Israel. In the book of Ephesians, which sets forth the church's inheritance, and corresponds to the book of Joshua, this realm is called "the heavenly places." (Ep 1:20 2:5, 6) To be **in Christ** is to be in this realm: that is, every real believer now is already in "the heavenly places." In Ep 1:3 are seen our possessions there—that which is already ours and is to be entered on by faith. Compare 2Pe 1:3, 4. and Josh 1:3. The law of possession is seen in Mt 9:29—"According to your faith be it unto you." The secret of getting these wonderful things into our experience is to believe that they all are already ours in fact, in the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom, we are. When, as did Israel, we fully believe that our Canaan really belongs to us—**hath** been (past tense!) granted to us, not will be (future tense!) granted to us, we are ready to march forward with victorious faith to take possession.

The knowledge and constant realization in experience of this our standing in Christ, is absolutely necessary, if we would have any real liberty or joy in the study of these Old Testament Scriptures.. It is, alas, rather the exception than the rule, in these days to find Christians whose lives fit the heavenly places where God puts them, Ep 2:6. Not that their failure to realize their **position, possessions, and privileges**, changes at all these blessed facts. Thank God, no! Christ has forever secured all things for us by His own finished work. But it is to be feared that Paul would class most of the Church today as Galatians and say. "**I am perplexed about you.**" (Gal 4:20). Whence all this observing of "days, months, seasons, years" (Gal 4:10), in modern Christendom, if this be not true, that they are desiring to be "again under bondage" (Gal. 4:9, 21)... It is to be gravely doubted if the many of Christians today know experimentally what that word grace (**charis**) means. **And yet it is the key-word of Church truth..**

The separate and distinct callings of Israel and the Church must be thoroughly apprehended, in order to our right application of the different parts of Scripture (especially of the Old Testament) and our definite grasping, by appropriating faith, of those things given peculiarly to believers of the present dispensation.

In 1Co 10:11 is set forth a great principle of Biblical interpretation, which, though ignored by many, and even ridiculed by others, has, nevertheless, furnished untold riches to those who have humbly and believingly approached, by its direction, the examination of the material of the Old Testament. The passage is:

**Now all these things happened unto them for types [literal margin]; and they were written for our**



## admonition.

To one who, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, is willing to lay aside all prejudice on the one hand, and all fantastic imaginings on the other, the study of the types of Scripture yields unspeakable delight and profit. (**See Caveats in Discussion of Biblical Types**) Israel are the earthly people of God, and the Church of the present dispensation His heavenly people. We might expect to find much in the inheritance and history of the former typical of those of the latter. Such is, without doubt, the case... Nothing, moreover, I believe, so wakens and holds the interest of Christians in the Old Testament as the personal discovery of the riches placed there for them in the form of type and shadow.

As we have above stated, the Epistle to the Ephesians is to the Church what the book of Joshua was to Israel. The Church, the body of Christ (Ep 1:23, Ep 5:30), has been brought up out of its Egypt, the world (Ep 2:1 2 3), having been quickened in Christ, its Head (Ep 2:5) It has been brought up through and out of its Jordan (the grave of Christ, Ro 6:3, 4) and has been raised up with Christ (Ep 2:6) into that realm of spiritual life and power described five times in Ephesians as "the heavenly places" (Ep 1:3 20 2:6 3:10 4:12). This is the Christian's Canaan of inheritance; his proper sphere (Ep 2 6), where his Joshua or Princely Leader is (Ep 1:20 21 22 23; He 12:2), where his present real possessions are (Ep 1:3); where his desperate enemies are (Ep 6:12), and in which sphere God has determined through His dealings with the Church to make known His wisdom to those high ones of evil who are yet allowed the freedom of the same realm, and the dominion in it under Satan its prince and theirs, over all but the trusting saints. (Ep 2:1 6:12; Jn 14:30; Mt 12:24 25 26) How alone the saints are able to resist their domination is seen in Ep 6:10-20. These hosts of darkness are the real Canaanites to the Christian (Ed: I would add **world**, and the worst [because it's inside the "castle gates" so to speak] the **flesh**). But just as faith conquers the world (1Jn 5:4), because it enters into the victory Jesus gained for us (Jn 16:33), and looking on ahead sees the world condemned in the judgment and punished: so also it is faith that gets the victory over the legions of Satan (1Pe 5:8 9 Jas 4:7), that faith which, without presuming to attempt personal battle simply enters into the victory Christ has secured for us—first, through His wilderness victory (Mt 4:1-11, etc.); then through His cross (He 2:14 15 Col. 2:15)—using Goliath's own sword to vanquish him (see 1Sa 17:51); and, finally, through His ascension. His seating (Ep 1:21 22 and likely Ps 68:17, 18) and His watchful and effective intercession (He 7:25 cp Lk 22:31 32). Into all this faith triumphantly enters, and of course, gets the victory everywhere and it keeps looking on expectantly to the final complete overthrow of its enemies, and their expulsion from the heavenly places, in the tribulation period to come (Rev 12:7 8 9 10; Is 24:22); and to their binding in the abyss at the inauguration of the millennium (Rev. 20 : 1-3; Isa. 24 :22); and on to their final and eternal relegation to the place prepared for them (Re 20:10: Mt 25:41) (Click for all Newell's Notes on Joshua - [Joshua - Lessons from Union Bible Classes](#))

## DEVOTIONALS RELATED TO JOSHUA 1:8

**The Way To Success** - During the Chinese New Year it is customary for hongbaos (small red envelopes containing money) to be given away. When parents give hongbaos to their children, it is also to wish them prosperity and success. Knowing that this sincere wish is insufficient, however, they also remind their children to study hard. Chinese people generally believe that a good education is the key to one's success in life.

In Joshua 1, God told Joshua that his ways could prosper as he assumed Moses' leadership role. But he and the people needed to display courage in the face of stiff opposition as they entered the Promised Land (Josh 1:6). God promised to give them success if they heeded His "Book of the Law" (Josh 1:8).

Believers today also need to live according to God's Word if we are to enjoy success in our spiritual walk. The Bible contains not only the do's and don'ts for living but also records the life experiences of those who pleased or displeased God.

We, like Joshua, have God's promise that He will be with us always (Josh 1:9; Matt. 28:20). That should give us strength to face the challenges and difficulties that inevitably arise as we seek to please Him.

Be strong! It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,  
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;  
Faint not—fight on!

Tomorrow comes the song.  
—Babcock

**When facing a crisis,  
trust God and move forward.**

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### **Thomas Watson - Live Your Meditation**

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. Joshua 1:8

Live out your meditation. “Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Josh. 1:8). Meditation and practice, like two sisters, must go hand in hand. Cassian says that “the contemplative life cannot be perfected without the practice.” We read that the angels had wings, and hands under their wings (Ezek. 1:8). It may be an emblem of this truth; Christians must not only fly upon the wing of meditation—but they must be active in obedience, they must have hands under their wings! The end of meditation is action. We must not only meditate in God’s law—but walk in His law (Deut. 28:9). Without this, we are like those Gnostics, who had much knowledge—but were licentious in their lives. Christians must be like the sun, which does not only send forth heat—but goes its circuit round the world. It is not enough that the affections are heated by meditation—but we must go our circuit too, that is, move regularly in the sphere of obedience. After warming at the fire of meditation, we must be fitter for work. Meditation is the life of piety; and practice is the life of meditation. It is said in the honor of Gregory Nazianzen, that he lived out his own sermons. So a godly Christian must live out his own meditations.

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**Recipe For Success** - Wrinkled noses and puckered lips—sometimes this is my family’s reaction to my cooking, especially when I’m trying something new in the kitchen. Recently, I had a breakthrough with a unique version of macaroni and cheese. I jotted down the ingredients and tucked the recipe away for future reference. Without that set of instructions, I knew the next batch would be a flop.

Without God’s instructions, Joshua would have failed at leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. The first step was to “be strong and of good courage” (Josh. 1:6). Next, he was to continually meditate on the Book of the Law, and finally, he was to do everything it said. As long as Joshua followed the directions, God promised him “good success” (v.8).

God’s “recipe for success” can work for us too, but His idea of success has little to do with money, popularity, or even good health. In the original Hebrew, “then you will have good success” means “then you will act wisely.” Just as God called Joshua to walk in wisdom, He wants us to “walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise” (Eph. 5:15).

As we take courage in the Lord, feast on His Word, and obey Him, we have a recipe for godly success that’s better than anything we could cook up on our own.

You will surely find at the journey’s end,  
Whatever the world may afford,  
That things fade away, and success is seen  
In the life that has served the Lord.  
—Anon.

**Obedience to God’s Word  
is the recipe for spiritual success.**

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An old sailor repeatedly got lost at sea, so his friends gave him a compass and urged him to use it. The next time he went out in his boat, he followed their advice and took the compass with him. But as usual he became hopelessly confused and was unable to find his way back. Finally he was rescued by his friends.

Disgusted and impatient with him, they asked, “Why didn’t you use that compass we gave you? You could have saved us a lot of trouble!”

The sailor responded, “I didn’t dare to! I wanted to go north, but as hard as I tried to make the needle aim in that direction, it just kept pointing southeast.” He was so certain he knew which way was north that he stubbornly tried to force his own personal conviction on

his compass.

After the death of Moses, God spoke to Joshua just before he led Israel into the Promised Land. The Lord reminded Joshua of His law and told him, "Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go" (Josh. 1:7).

Those who follow God's instructions and warnings are spared the waste of foolish wandering and the heartache of shipwreck and ruin. We must ask God to point the way. Then let's trust the compass of His Word.

All the way my Savior leads me—  
What have I to ask beside?  
Can I doubt His tender mercy,  
Who through life has been my Guide?  
—Crosby

**To know God's will, trust His Word.**

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**Woodrow Kroll** has the following devotional on Lessons on Living...

The Key to Good Success - My local newspaper reported that a man and woman who tried to hop a Union Pacific train from North Platte, Nebraska, to Omaha were being held in Dawson County jail on trespass charges. But the couple wouldn't have gotten to Omaha even if they hadn't been apprehended; the train was headed to Kansas City.

Many people who think they're on the train headed for success are really going in the opposite direction. History is awash with examples of men and women who found a form of success, but lived to regret it. It was not what the Bible calls "good" success. Lord Byron, who achieved fame both as a poet and a libertine, wrote at the age of 35:

My days are in the yellow leaf,  
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;  
The worm, the canker, and the grief  
Are mine alone.

God's success is far different; it's always headed in the right direction. Joshua was assured that if he lived consistent with what was written in God's Word, he would achieve success--but not just any success. God's promise to Joshua, as well as to you and me, is that if we live by all that is written in the Bible, we will achieve "good" success. The key to good success is obedience to God's Word. If you conform your life to God's will, as it is revealed in His Word, you'll experience the kind of success that will be a blessing rather than a burden. Only a good God can give good success. ([Back to the Bible](#))

## **Rob Morgan - Glimpses Of Jesus In Joshua (August 19, 2001)**

One of my goals in preaching is to one day complete thirty-nine messages or series of messages on the subject of Glimpses of Jesus in each of the Old Testament books. I've already preached a series of messages called "Glimpses of Jesus in Genesis," and another on "Glimpses of Jesus in Exodus." Next year I'd like to devote a more extensive series of messages to how Jesus is portrayed in the tabernacle in the wilderness which is described in the final chapters of Exodus. This morning, I'd like to skip ahead of Joshua, and show you three portraits of Christ that we have in that ancient book.

Why Joshua? Well, I've been studying Joshua in preparation for a series of sermons on leadership. That series has been frustratingly slow to come together, but in the process I've been deeply impressed at how Jesus is portrayed in this book. We have three wonderful glimpses of Jesus within the 24 chapters of Joshua.

So will you turn with me please to Joshua, chapter 1.

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.

From time to time, most Christians are plagued with little arrows of doubt about the truthfulness and veracity of their faith. How do we know the Bible is true? How do we know that Jesus Christ is God made flesh? What proof do we have?

Jesus said, "If you want evidence that I'm who I claim to be, search the Scriptures." And by "Scriptures," He meant the Old Testament, for those were the only Scriptures of His day. On the Emmaus Road in Luke 24, he said to the doubting disciples, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Someone said that Jesus Christ pervades the Old Testament the way salt pervades the ocean. If so, we should be able to get a glimpse of Jesus in the book of Joshua. And we do, in three ways.

In Joshua Himself

First, we see Jesus in Joshua Himself, who was a type of Christ. How do we know? Because our Lord Jesus Christ was named the same name as this great Old Testament leader. The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua.

Now, Joshua was not Joshua's original name. Look with me at Numbers 13. In this chapter, Moses selected twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan in preparation for the Israelite invasion. The names of the twelve men are listed.

The Lord said to Moses, "Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders." So at the Lord's command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites. These are their names... from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea son of Nun..."

Now, verse 16: These are the names of the men Moses sent to explore the land. Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.

Why did he do that? Most commentators are mystified. The two names are very similar. Hoshea in the Hebrew means May Jehovah Save. Joshua means Jehovah Is Salvation. It seems to me that Moses was led by God to strengthen Hoshea's name to make it more solid, more durable, more certain, more dogmatic, as a personal name for the coming Messiah: Jehovah Is Salvation. Here is one who is God Himself who has come to save His people.

And these two men not only share the same name, but a similar task. Joshua took over after the giver of the law had died, and he led the people into the future that God had planned and designed for them. The Bible teacher Paul Van Gorder points out,

The book begins with the words, "Now after the death of Moses..." Moses represented the law. The people could not enter the land of Canaan until Moses was dead. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit (Rom 8:3,4).... Joshua led the children of Israel to victory after crossing the Jordan. He was their advocate in time of defeat. It was Joshua who allotted them their portions within the land. All of this beautifully pictures the work of the Lord.

Rahab's Crimson Cord

Now, there is a second picture of Jesus in the book of Joshua, and it is found in a coil of scarlet roping that plays a prominent role in the story of Rahab the prostitute in Joshua 2. In this passage, the children of Israel, still on the east bank of the Jordan, are massing for the invasion; but Joshua, being a shrewd and wise general, still needed some advance military intelligence. So he secretly sent two spies on a three-day mission into the Promised Land. They secretly entered the city of Jericho, but something went badly wrong and their covers were blown. The city authorities mobilized to track them down and kill them, but a prostitute named Rahab took them in and hid them. Her heart was hungry for God, and she recognized these men as representatives of God.

She had a crimson cord which she tied to the window of her house, which was attached to the city wall, so that the men could rappel down the wall and escape. She said to them, "I know that you are going to capture this city. I know that God is with you. When you do, I beg that you'll spare me, my father and mother, my brothers and sisters and all who belong to them. Save us from death."

Their response is in verse 14: "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land." So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. Now she had said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way." The men said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him.

Verse 21: "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

What a picture of Christ. Judgment is coming. The Bible says that the world is about to be invaded by the judgment of God. Acts 17:30-31 says that God "now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained."

There is only one place where we may find safety and deliverance. Just as the Israelites were told to remain in their houses with the crimson blood of the Lamb painted on the door posts, just as Rahab was told to remain in her room with the crimson cord tied to the window, so we must be under the protecting, saving power of the crimson blood of Christ.

There's an old song that says:

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh! Precious is the flow that makes me white as snow;

No other fount I know, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Now, can you imagine how diligently Rahab sought to get her loved ones into that room? The invasion was imminent, and nothing else mattered to her except to get her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and their children into that upper room. It's the same sort of diligence we see in the apostle Paul as he scurried about the Roman Empire, begging everyone he met to come to Christ for salvation. It's a picture of the burden we should have for our own loved ones who know not Christ.

The Captain of the Lord's Host

We also see Jesus in what I believe is a special pre-incarnate appearance in Joshua 5. This is one of the most unusual scenes in the Old Testament. After the Israelites crossed the Jordan River and prepared to fight for the city of Jericho, the Lord Jesus Himself—God the Son—left the throne of heaven for a few moments to impress something on the one who would later be His earthly namesake. Look at Joshua 5:13ff:

Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua went up to Him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

"Nether," He replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown on the ground in reverence and asked Him, "What message does my Lord have for His servant."

The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

There are two things to notice here. First, the identity of this strange commander. Why do I say that this is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ? By pre-incarnate appearance, I mean that Jesus came down to earth in the form of a human being before He actually became a human being at Bethlehem. Jesus Christ, being God, has always existed as God. He existed in Old Testament days. The prophet Micah tells us that His comings and goings are from old, even from eternity. We're also given the indication in the Bible that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit remain invisible, but it is one of the jobs of God the Son to manifest the presence of God to His creation. John 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only (Son), who is at the Father's side, has made Him known."

So there are several times in the Old Testament when we get glimpses of the physical, literal appearance of Jesus Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and theologians call these sightings under a special name—Christophonies.

But notice in this passage the strange message. When Joshua realized that He was speaking with the Lord Himself, he asked, "What message to you have for me? What do I need to know?"

We would have thought that the Commander of the Lord's Hosts would give him some military instruction or some spiritual insight. Instead the only message is: "Take off your shoes. The place where you are standing is holy."

What can we glean from that? Look back at chapter 1. In the introduction of the book, in the initial set of instructions that God gives to Joshua, He reminds him of His constant, abiding Presence:

No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you—verse 5

The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go—verse 9

The pillar of cloud may have vanished. The column of fire may no longer be seen. Moses is dead. But I have not gone anywhere. My presence is just as real and just as near and just as powerful as it ever was. The angelic armies are hovering unseen over your head. Wherever you are is holy, because I am with you.

The Lord Jesus wants us to regard wherever we are as a holy place, because He is with us. Your living room is holy ground, for when you are there, Jesus is there. Your bedroom is holy ground. Your office at work is a holy place when you are there, for Christ is there with you.

Brother Lawrence, the Carmelite mystic, was assigned to the monastery kitchen, and he was unhappy there until he realized one day that even the most menial tasks, if undertaken for God's glory, are holy; and wherever the Christian stands—even in a hot, thankless kitchen—is holy ground, for the Lord is there, too.

It was said about Brother Lawrence that in the great hurry of business in the kitchen he still preserved his recollection and heavenly-mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each thing in its season, with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquility of spirit.

"The time of business," said the Brother, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."

And Joshua went forth with a newfound confidence, knowing that even if he could not see the Lord, the Lord was there, present, hovering near with His divine armies, ready to fight on his behalf, even as our Lord Jesus Christ said as He ascended into heaven, Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

And so we see Jesus in Joshua...

Through the man Joshua himself whose name made him a prototype of the Coming Messiah: Jehovah is Salvation;

Through the scarlet cord signifying the saving power of the blood of Christ;

Through the mysterious Captain of the armies of God whose presence is near us. Whenever Jesus is with us wherever we are standing is holy ground.

These three glimpses of Jesus in Joshua are given to us over a thousand years before our Lord's birth in Bethlehem. Today I'm going to ask you to put your trust in Jesus Christ. His name, His blood, and His presence are available to you right now.

## **Rob Morgan** **JOSHUA 1:8 SERMON**

One of my earliest memories goes back to when I was four or five years old. Either my dad or mom came to have a talk with me, telling me they were enrolling me in the kindergarten program at the First Methodist Church. In those days, the school system in my hometown of Elizabethton didn't offer kindergarten, but some of the churches did. My memory of this conversation is not distinct; I simply recall feeling very unhappy about the news. My entire life to that point had been within the security of the four walls of my own home and with my two parents, and I wasn't ready to be thrust out of the nest, so to speak. They told me that another little boy down the street was also going into the program, and that signaled an adjustment, too, because I had never really had a buddy. It was just hearth and home. Not even my sister had yet been born. Well, I did attend kindergarten at the First Methodist Church, and I did eventually adjust to it barely. But it's interesting to me that one of my first memories is the fear and insecurity that I felt at an impending change in my young life.

From time to time, we all have to start new chapters in our lives. I don't like reading a book that doesn't divide into chapters, or that has chapters that are so long that it takes forever to get to the end of them. I think the great Russian novels like those of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy would be easier to read if the chapters were a little shorter. But in life, we don't always want to start new chapters. Some of these chapters are dreaded; others are welcomed. But they all involve change.

When we get married or have a child or get a new job or when our children leave home, that's opening a new chapter.

When we lose our job or have to relocate or suffer a major loss in life like the death of a spouse... those things, too, open a new chapter.

Our lives are divided into chapters. Well, there's a passage in the Bible devoted to this very thing, to starting new chapters. It is a chapter about chapters. It's found at the beginning of the book of Joshua.

## Background

Perhaps you know the story behind the book of Joshua. If you don't, I can give you the sixty-second summary. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, ends with the descendants of Abraham migrating down to Egypt because of a severe famine. In the book of Exodus, these descendants grow large in number, but they became an enslaved nation under the tyranny of Egyptian Pharaohs. Moses instigated a rebellion and led them out of Egypt. Because of their grumbling and unbelief, they wandered in the Arabian Desert for forty years until a new and more obedient generation arose. This story is told in the book of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Finally this vast migration of people came to the edge of the Promised Land, to the banks of the Jordan River, and their longtime leader, Moses, died. He had led Israel for four decades. But now a new leader named Joshua took over. In the next book of the Bible, here in Joshua 1, the people of Israel prepared to cross the Jordan, to conquer the land, and to begin a new chapter in the history of the Jewish people. Big changes were coming. A new epoch was beginning. A new era was at hand. Joshua 1 was given to help prepare these people for the new change that was coming, and as we read this chapter—and especially these first nine verses—we can find three great patterns for handling chapter-changes in our lives, too.

If anyone here today is at a chapter-change in your life, this is the passage for you.

### 1. The Future Belongs to God (vv. 1-5)

First, realize that the future belongs to God. Someone said, "I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future." That's the message of verses 1-5: After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you."

The first thing these people needed to realize is that the Lord (being eternal) was already in the future, and that He was literally going to lead them step by step. When you're in God's will, He will lead you step by step and day by day. The Bible says, "The steps of a good man (or woman) are ordered by the Lord" (Psalm 37:23, NKJV).

The book of Isaiah is full of this emphasis and of similar promises. Let me show you some examples from several consecutive chapters in Isaiah. Look at Isaiah 42, 43, 44, 45, and 46:

- I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them—Isaiah 42:16

- But now, this is what the Lord says—He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior—Isaiah 43:1-3

- This is what the Lord says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from Me there is no God. Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come—yes, let him foretell what is to come. Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me? No, there is no other Rock; I know of not one.—Isaiah 44:6-8

- I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name—Isaiah 45:2-3

- Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, all you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs, I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you—Isaiah 46:3-4

Our Heavenly Father has given us many promises in the Bible regarding the chapter changes in life. He knows the future. He promises to lead us, to go before us, to be with us, to make a way for us, to carry us, to sustain us, to rescue us. The future belongs to Him, and He leads His children step by step through all the chapter changes of life.

One of my favorite old hymns says:

In heavenly love abiding no change my heart shall fear,

For safe is such confiding and nothing changes here.

The storm may rage without me; my heart may low be laid;

But God is round about me, and can I be dismayed.

Wherever He may guide me, no want shall turn me back.

My Savior is beside me and nothing can I lack.

His wisdom ever waketh, His sight is never dim.

He knows the way He's taking, and I will walk with Him.

The Lord said, "I will give you every place where you set your foot... I will be with you... I will never leave you or forsake you."

## 2. We Must Trust Him and Obey (vv. 6-7)

Now, that leads to the second emphasis in this passage. Since the future belongs to God, we must trust Him fully and obey Him completely. Look at verses 6-7: Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be very strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

The implication is that when we set out to do what God calls us to do, we'll run into pressures, problems, and even enemies. But we must trust God, summon our strength, determine to press on, and obey Him as carefully as we know how.

This is a great passage for teenagers. I read this week about a teenager in California—he is fifteen—who got tired of hearing so much profanity at school. So he started what he called a "No Cussing Club." He suggested using words like "Pickles" and "Sassafras" instead of profane or obscene terms. A lot of people have agreed with him, and his club has grown to over 20,000 members.

But he apparently has an equal number of enemies. He can't believe the rage people are exhibiting. Students are going out of their way to cuss at him in school, and on the internet, and on the telephone. People have sent him pornographic magazine subscriptions. And the FBI is currently investigating death threats against his life.

For some reason, the world cannot stand it when we live a life of faith and obedience. Just as the Israelites had enemies in the mountains of Canaan, we'll have opposition in life. But we're to trust God anyway, and we're to obey Him anyway. We're to be strong and careful to obey. So we'll trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

## 3. Success Depends on Meditating on God's Unchanging Word (vv. 8-9)

And that brings us to the third pattern for handling change. We can deal with changes in our lives so much better if we learn to meditate on God's Unchanging Word. Verse 8 is our specific memory verse for today, and it's one of my favorite verses in the Bible. So let's take a moment to dissect it.

The first phrase is a little awkward when it's translated into English: Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth.

Now, I believe this is referring to what our Jewish friends call the Torah—the first five books of Moses, the first five books of the Bible. There were still 61 books to go—Joshua himself would write one of them that bears his name. But the foundation of the Bible was in his hands.

The first phrase is a little awkward when it's translated into English: Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth. That means keep speaking it, keep reading it, keep repeating it, keep hearing it. But don't stop there. As you read and hear it, think about it constantly. Meditate on it.

The Hebrew word for "meditate" is from the same Hebrew verb that literally means to mutter, to read in a low voice. It's the idea of muttering it to yourself.

I had two experiences during my college years that made an impression on me. The first was during my freshman year at KingCollege in Bristol, Tennessee. It was announced with great excitement that the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was going to visit our campus and lecture about meditation—specifically Transcendental Meditation. (I think I'm recalling this correctly, but it could have



been one of the Maharishi's associates). At any rate, I went to the lecture. The premise was, as I understood it at the time, that I as the practitioner should use some specific word or sound that had no meaning, a mantra. And I should find a comfortable place to sit and then repeat that mantra over and over again, until basically all my other thoughts had drained away and I was left with this sound which, in itself, had no thought content either. And then my near-empty mind could transcend itself and get in touch with the transcendent being, whoever or whatever that might be to me. That, as I understood it at the time, was Transcendental Meditation. Well, some of the students really liked these ideas and they followed the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, but I confess that I wasn't one of them. At that point in my life, I was empty-minded enough to begin with, and the last thing I needed was to empty my mind further than it already was.

The next year, 1971, I transferred to another college and I came in contact with another group call the Navigators. These were Christian young people, and I started studying the Bible in this group. Someone gave me a little booklet published by the Navigators and it was entitled "A Primer of Meditation." But as I read this book, it took exactly the opposite approach to the Maharishi. Instead of meditating to empty our minds, it said, we should meditate to fill our minds—and to fill our minds with God's Word. This little booklet said:

Meditation is the skeleton key that unlocks the greatest storeroom in the house of God's provision for the Christian.... (It is) holding the Word of God in your heart until it has affected every phase of your life.... Beware of getting alone with your own thoughts. Get alone with God's thoughts. There is danger in rummaging through waste and barren desert-thoughts that can be labeled daydreaming or worse. Don't meditate upon yourself but dwell upon God.... Make this a built-in habit of daily living...("A Primer on Meditation" is a 9-page booklet that published by the Navigators, no author is given and no date is cited. The quotes are from pages 2, 4, and 5.)

Well, this made a good deal more sense to me, and I began to discover a very powerful technique that really makes the Scriptures come alive. If I take a verse or a passage and I study it very carefully at my desk, then I come to understand something of its meaning. But if I memorize it or internalize it as best I can and then think about it while I'm driving down the road or taking a shower or going to sleep at night, I begin to develop fresh and exciting insights about that verse or passage. And I learned that it's virtually impossible to teach or preach on a passage if you bypass the process of meditation. It is by meditation that the Word of God is broken down, digested, and assimilated in our minds and souls and spirits.

One day shortly afterward, while I was in college, I studied the first chapter of the prophet Jeremiah. I was impressed with this chapter and wanted to prepare a sermon, but I could not figure out how to develop the outline. I read the passage over and over and over. I can't say that I had it memorized exactly, but I became very familiar with it. But I could not come up with a way to present it in a lesson or sermon. I thought about it day and night. One day I went for a walk in the woods, and suddenly while I was walking a perfect outline formed in my mind. I ran back to my dormitory room and wrote it down, and to this day if I'm in a real pinch I pull out this old outline and preach from it.

There is in the natural world, in the world of zoology, a perfect metaphor for meditation. I've shared this before, but I just can't think of a better analogy, and it's the picture of a sheep chewing her cud. We had a small flock of sheep that were our pets when the children were younger. One day I went down into the field and our daughter Hannah was sitting there beside the sheep just laughing and laughing. I asked what she was laughing at, and she was laughing at the sheep. The old sheep (it might have been Lucy) was laying there on the grass chewing and chewing, just as if she had a wad of bubblegum in her mouth. And then she would swallow it all. But in just a moment she would kind of burp and she'd start chewing again.

I explained to Hannah that Lucy had two sections in their stomach. She would graze in the field all morning and swallow all that grass more-or-less whole and it went down into one section of her stomach. And then she would find a shady spot during the afternoon, and she would regurgitate it one mouthful at a time and chew it up. And this time when she swallowed it, it would go into another part of her stomach and be digested and assimilated to all parts of her body.

When we read and study the Bible, we're putting information into one part of our brain. We store the information there. But later we recall it, we chew on it, we roll it around in our brain, we meditate on it, and it becomes digested and assimilated to every part of our body and soul.

And that leads to obedience: Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it.

When we learn to meditate on God's Word, our minds are improved. They are God-conditioned. They are Jesus-conditioned. They are transformed by the renewing of our thoughts. And we become more obedient people. And that leads to success in life.

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

This means succeeding in life's most important endeavors, in life's proper pursuits, in those things that God Himself calls you to do. And God will bless us even during the change-chapters of life. If you are facing a transition in your life, remember: The future belongs to God, you must trust Him fully and obey Him completely, and success depends on meditating on the wonders of God's Word.

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

**Rob Morgan -  
Insoluble Problems  
Joshua 6  
July 28, 2002**

What To Do With Insoluble Problems

Topics: Morgan; Jericho; Problems; Difficulties; Prayer; Faith; Perseverance; Praise

It seems very often true that as we grow older, our problems grow worse. I'm not sure what that is, except that life just becomes more and more complicated the older we become. And from time to time, we run into problems that are insoluble. I remember very clearly that it came as quick to shock to me about a dozen years ago when I suddenly realized that there are some problems in life that we just cannot solve. Until then, I had always assumed that with enough energy and creativity, I would never face any problem I couldn't solve. I had been taught, "Where there's a will, there's a way." I had heard that phrase almost from infancy. And it was a terrible blow to realize that some problems exist that we can never solve, that there are some situations we can never change.

What do we do in such cases?

Well, today, I'd like to take a break from our series of sermons on the Tabernacle to show you another Old Testament story that perfectly illustrates something for us along these lines. It's the story of the city of Jericho in Joshua 6.

Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him" (Joshua 6:1-6, NKJV).

The city of Jericho is the oldest known inhabited city in the world. It's about twenty miles from Jerusalem, but in driving from Jerusalem to Jericho you drop over 3000 feet in elevation, Jerusalem being 2500 feet above sea level, and Jericho being 800 feet below sea level.

I've visited Jericho many times, most recently in the year 2000, and I always enjoyed it. It is literally an oasis in the desert, fed by several abundant springs, and very verdant. There's a special kind of orange you can purchase in Israel called "The Jericho Orange," that has a sweetness you'll not find in any other citrus.

But Jericho wasn't a welcome sight for the children of Israel. It represented an insoluble problem. It was a powerful, well-armed city, sitting squarely in the middle of the route into the Promised Land. And the Israelites had no way to defeat it. They had no canons, no battering rams, and few weapons of war. The children of Israel, marching to Zion, had literally run up against a wall.

Now, let me ask you, what is your Jericho? Your insoluble problem, securely shut up? Recently a gentleman in Missouri told me of a problem that was so great and so hard that I wondered if it could ever be resolved. I told him, "Don't give up!" but he replied, "Sometimes it's hard not to give up." And I had to agree with him.

A few weeks ago, a young lady came to see me, and by the time she had described her problem, I was almost too depressed to give any counsel. I wondered how in the world people can end up in such perplexing and paralyzing situations.

What is your Jericho? Do you have one? What do you do about it?

## Encompass the Problem with Prayer

First, we must learn to encompass our problem with prayer. This is what the Israelites did. For six days they silently encircled the city one time, and on the seventh day they encircled the city seven times. What were they doing as they silently walked around in this large circle? I'm sure that many of them, the spiritually-minded among them, were praying. They were literally encircling their problem in prayer.

Joy Ridderhof, born in 1903, started an organization called Gospel Recordings, Inc. to record the gospel for every language group on earth. It is now approaching five thousand languages, and millions around the world have heard of Christ through GR recordings. But it wasn't easy. Joy, a single career woman, faced loneliness, sickness, dangerous travels, foreign intrigue, and financial crises at every step. One year, Gospel Recordings badly needed more room at its Los Angeles base. Joy and her staff prayed about it for months, and suddenly a large site became available. It seemed ideal, and the board authorized a \$6,000 deposit. The property cost ten times that much, but Joy refused to publicly appeal for funds.

She was in Wheaton, Illinois, as the deadline approached. If \$60,000 didn't materialize within a week, the property would be lost along with the \$6,000 deposit. Only half the amount was on hand, and Joy's staff called her in crisis. Her laconic instructions were to claim Joshua 3:5 and to follow the Jericho pattern for the remaining seven days. And cable the branch offices to join us.

No other explanation was given, but none was needed. The staff understood. Cables flew around the world : BUILDING DEADLINE OCTOBER NINTH FOLLOW JERICOH PATTERN NEXT SEVEN DAYS JOSHUA 3:5.

The walls of Jericho had fallen after the Israelites had circled them for seven days. In the same way, the staff of Gospel Recordings encircled the problem with prayer, two hours a day for seven days.

The walls fell. In an overseas call from London, a British GR staffer announced an unexpected legacy had just arrived for the ministry, and it was exactly enough to complete the building's purchase. The home staff burst into the Doxology, and Joy Ridderhof continued her speaking tour through Illinois with a new story of God's faithfulness.

This is the pattern we see throughout the Scripture.

- When King Hezekiah's city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the invading troops of the Assyrian King Sennacherib, he took the threatening letter from the Assyrian ruler to the temple and spread it out before the Lord, praying for deliverance.
- When Daniel was up against the stone wall of death in the lions' den because of the political machinations of his enemies, he went to his upper room, knelt, prayed, and gave thanks as he had done from the days of his youth.
- When Peter was imprisoned and scheduled for execution, the early church gathered at the home of John Mark's mother and prayed without ceasing for him.

Learn to encompass your problems in prayer. Encircle them. Surround them. Pray without ceasing, and don't get discouraged. Jesus said, "We should always pray and not give up."

## Encompass the Problem with Faith

Second, we must also encompass our problem with faith. Sometimes we use the term "walking by faith" in a figurative sense, but here these Israelites were doing it literally.

I've been impressed recently at the way the Bible assures us that God responds to faith, and at the same time, I've been convicted about my lack of faith.

Recently as I was reading in the Bible, I was stuck by what the shepherd boy David said when confronted with the gigantic problem of Goliath. He said simply, "The Battle is the Lord's." I began checking the cross-references to that statement, and I was shocked and greatly encouraged at how often the heroes of the Bible used statements like that. I'd like to share with you a medley of Scripture readings I put together based on this concept. I don't have time to give you all the chapter-and-verse references or to share the context and circumstances around all the statements. But just listen:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies.

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Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, because the battle is not yours, but God's. You will not need to fight

in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord...!

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You must not fear... for the Lord your God Himself fights for you. You will not need to fight in this battle.... The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is His name. With (our enemy) is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

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We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

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You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world... And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.... Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit... (Ephesians 6:12; Deuteronomy 20:3-4; 2 Chronicles 20:15, 17; Deuteronomy 3:22; Exodus 15:3; 2 Chronicles 32:8; Psalm 24:8; Romans 8:37; 1 John 4:4, 5:4; Zechariah 5:6)

The hymn writer said:

O, for a faith that will not shrink,

Though pressed by every foe,

That will not tremble on the brink

Of any earthly woe!

A faith that shines more bright and clear

When tempests rage without;

That when in danger knows no fear,

In darkness feels no doubt.

Encircle the Problem with Perseverance

Third, we must encircle our problem with perseverance. Let me ask you a question. Why seven days? The Lord could have delivered the city on the first day, or on the second. But why an entire week, day after day after day, trampling around in circles, praying, believing, but seeing nothing happen, seeing no progress, for seven days?

One of the reasons was undoubtedly to teach the Israelites the quality of perseverance—the ability to keep on going in the face of difficulty. I don't know why the Lord values this quality so much, but He does. Look at the way it's put in these verses:

Romans 5:1ff says: Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

James 1 says: Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (NIV).

In Ephesians 6, Paul instructs us to pray "always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

Most of us give up praying too soon. Some prayer-battles requires years of faithfulness before the walls fall down, but we mustn't give up.

Encircle the Problem With Praise

Fourth, we must encircle our problem with praise. Now, we very often praise the Lord after the deliverance has been gained. The great song of the Israelites in Exodus 15 was an eruption of praise that occurred after they had all passed through the Red Sea. But in this case, it was an even greater form of praise, because the shout of joy went up before the wall fell down.

Have you ever noticed this? Their shouts of joy, praise, and thanksgiving didn't come after the victory, but before. Look at verse 15ff:

But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to his people: "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!..." So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."

They were praising the Lord—not for what He had done—but for what He was going to do. It reminds me of the prayer of praise at the end of the book of Habakkuk, when Habakkuk said, in effect, even if it appears that everything is going wrong, I am going to praise the Lord."

Recently we had a delegation of South Korean businessmen who visited our church, and afterward I quizzed them a great deal about the conditions Christians are facing in North Korea. They told me terrible stories of suffering and martyrdom. But perhaps the thing that moved me most was when they said that when little groups of Christians—churches—meet in North Korea it is under the greatest cloak of secrecy. They gather together, open their hymnbooks, and they sing praises in unison. But because of fear of detection, they sing silently. And so you have a room full of Christians, all with their hymnbooks, all singing in unity. Their mouths are moving, but they are unable sing audibly. They are singing in unison in their hearts. But they are praising the Lord.

Isn't it terrible that we have the opportunity of voicing our praises to God, and so many of us just don't do it.

When I was in college, I learned a simple hymn which has come to us from the German Catholic Church. The author is unknown, but whoever that German Catholic was, he or she knew how to praise the Lord, because the words say:

When morning gilds the skies my heart awaking cries:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Alike at work and prayer, to Jesus I repair:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

I didn't realize until recently that this song has fifteen verses! The other morning, I sang all fifteen in my devotions. I'm not going to quote all fifteen now, but listen to just a few of them:

When you begin the day, O never fail to say,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

And at your work rejoice, to sing with heart and voice,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Whene'er the sweet church bell peals over hill and dell,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

O hark to what it sings, as joyously it rings,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

My tongue shall never tire of chanting with the choir,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

This song of sacred joy, no power can destroy,,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Does sadness fill my mind? A solace here I find,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Or fades my earthly bliss? My comfort still is this,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Be this at meals your grace, in every time and place;

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Be this, when day is past, of all your thoughts the last

May Jesus Christ be praised!

When sleep her balm denies, my silent spirit sighs,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

When evil thoughts molest, with this I shield my breast,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

The night becomes as day when from the heart we say:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

The powers of darkness fear when this sweet chant they hear:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Do you have an insolvable problem? Encompass it with prayer, faith, perseverance, and praise. And either those walls will fall down in God's good timing....

Or at just the right moment He will airlift you over them. Either way, the battle is the Lord's. And as He goes out to fight for us, may our constant cry be: May Jesus Christ be praised!

## Greek Verb: Meletao

**Meletao** (from **melete** = care, meditation, which is from **mélō** = to be of interest, to concern oneself) [3191](#) means to continue to perform certain activities with care (root word = melete = care) and concern and thus to practice, to continue to do, to cultivate. It means to give careful thought to (to think about, to meditate upon) which is the primary sense in 1 Ti 4:15. **Meletao** is used in a negative sense in Acts 4:25 where it is used with the adjective kenos meaning vain or empty and thus means to think vain thoughts or to conspire in vain (quoting the Septuagint of Psalm 2:1, cp similar use in Ps 38:12). **Meletao** is used 34x in the Septuagint compared to only 2 times in the NT and often conveys the idea of to meditate (or to delight in) the Word of God (or some synonym) or upon God Himself (Ps 63:6). The derivative in Lk 21:14 promeletáō (4304) means to premeditate.

**Gilbrant on meletao** - In **classical Greek** the primary meaning of the verb **meletaō** is "to take thought for, attend to, care for." It can also mean "to exercise" or "to practice," for example, an orator who practices speaking or reviews a speech in his mind before addressing an audience. The **Septuagint** uses meletaō mainly to translate hāghāh which means "to meditate" or "ponder" on something by talking to oneself. The Lord spoke to Joshua and advised him to meditate on the Book (the Torah) day and night (Joshua 1:8). The same is said of the righteous man (Psalm 1:2). The Psalmist meditated on the precepts, decrees, and promises of the Lord (Psalm 119:15,48,148 [LXX 118:15,48,148]). Meletaō occurs only three times in the New Testament (Gilbrant is counting the use in Mk 13:11 which other manuscripts do not have). In Mark 13:11 the King James Version translates meletaō with "premeditate." The idea is that the disciples should not "rack their brains" when they are brought to trial because the Holy Spirit will give them wisdom and words to say. Acts 4:25 is a literal quotation of Psalm 2:1 from the Septuagint. In this place it is best rendered by "plan" or "plot." Timothy was exhorted to meditate on a number of things including the public reading of Scripture, preaching, and teaching (1 Timothy 4:15). Following the use of meletaō in some papyri, it would be preferable to translate the passage, "Exercise yourself in (practice, cultivate) these things" (*Moulton-Milligan*). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Meletao** - to care for [τινι] Isa 16,7; to meditate, to think about [abs.] Ps 77,6; id. [τι] Job 6,30; to meditate on, to study [ν τινι] Jos 1,8; to meditate on [ες τινα] Ps 63,7; id. [τι] Job 27,4; to plot to [+inf.] Isa 27,8; to heed, to pay attention to [τι] Pr 19,27; to mutter, to mourn Is 38,14 (Greek-English Lexicon)

**Meletao** - used only in Acts 4:25 and 1 Ti 4:5. KJV has another use translated "premeditate" in Mark 13:11, but the Greek phrase "mede meletate" is not found in the newer Greek manuscripts.

Acts 4:25 who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?'

1 Timothy 4:15 **Take pains** ([present imperative](#) = make this your habitual practice) with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

**Other translations** - Meditate upon these things, *KJV*: Care about these things, *SEB*... Think about all this, *NLT*... Attend to your duties, *NAB*... Practise these things, *TCNT*... Continue cultivating these things; be devoted to them, *Williams*.

**Comment** - This summary verse refers to what Paul had just written in 1 Ti 4:13, 14. This sense is given in the NIV: "Be diligent in these matters." The next clause, "give thyself wholly to them," is literally "be in them." The purpose for Timothy's diligent and wholehearted involvement was to be an effective witness to everyone, thus giving no one grounds for "despising" or looking down upon him because of his youth.

**Meletao** - 34 uses of meletao in 33 verses in the Septuagint.

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Job 6:30 "Is there injustice on my tongue? Cannot my palate discern calamities?"

Job 27:4 My lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Nor will my tongue mutter deceit.

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he **meditates (Lxx = meletao)** day and night.

Psalm 2:1 Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples **devising (Lxx = meletao)** a vain thing?

**Comment:** Quoted by Luke in Acts 4:25 in a prayer by the disciples just released by the Jewish authorities. Note that they based their petition on the inspired Word of God, spoken by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of King David

Psalm 35:28 And my tongue shall declare Your righteousness And Your praise all day long.

Psalm 37:30 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, And his tongue speaks justice.

Psalm 38:12 Those who seek my life lay snares for me; And those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction, And they **devise** treachery all day long.

Psalm 63:6 When I remember You on my bed, I **meditate (Lxx = meletao)** on You in the night watches,

**Spurgeon:** **When I remember thee upon my bed.** Lying awake, the good man betook himself to meditation, and then began to sing. He had a feast in the night, and a song in the night. He turned his bedchamber into an oratory, he consecrated his pillow, his praise anticipated the place of which it is written, "There is no night there." Perhaps the wilderness helped to keep him awake, and if so, all the ages are debtors to it for this delightful hymn. If day's cares tempt us to forget God, it is well that night's quiet should lead us to remember him. We see best in the dark if we there see God best.

**And meditate on thee in the night watches.** Keeping up sacred worship in my heart as the priests and Levites celebrated it in the sanctuary. Perhaps David had formerly united with those "who by night stand in the house of the Lord, "and now as he could not be with them in person, he remembers the hours as they pass, and unites with the choristers in spirit, blessing Jehovah as they did. It may be, moreover, that the king heard the voices of the sentries as they relieved guard, and each time he returned with renewed solemnity to his meditations upon his God. Night is congenial, in its silence and darkness, to a soul which would forget the world, and rise into a higher sphere. Absorption in the most hallowed of all themes makes watches, which else would be weary, glide away all too rapidly; it causes the lonely and hard couch to yield the most delightful repose --repose more restful than even sleep itself. We read of beds of ivory, but beds of piety are better far. Some revel in the night, but they are not a tithe so happy as those who meditate in God.

Psalm 71:24 My tongue also will **utter (Lxx = meletao)** Your righteousness all day long; For they are ashamed, for they are humiliated who seek my hurt.

Psalm 77:5 I have **considered (Lxx = meletao)** the days of old, The years of long ago.

**Spurgeon - I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times** If no good was in the

present, memory ransacked the past to find consolation. She fain would borrow a light from the altars of yesterday to light the gloom of today. It is our duty to search for comfort, and not in sullen indolence yield to despair; in quiet contemplation topics may occur to us which will prove the means of raising our spirits, and there is scarcely any theme more likely to prove consolatory than that which deals with the days of yore, the years of the olden time, when the Lord's faithfulness was tried and proven by hosts of his people. Yet it seems that even this consideration created depression rather than delight in the good man's soul, for he contrasted his own mournful condition with all that was bright in the venerable experiences of ancient saints, and so complained the more. Ah, sad calamity of a jaundiced mind, to see nothing as it should be seen, but everything as through a veil of mist.

Psalms 77:12 I will **meditate** (Lxx = **meletao**) on all Your work And muse on Your deeds.

**Spurgeon - I will meditate also of all thy work.** Sweet work to enter into Jehovah's work of grace, and there to lie down and [ruminate](#), every thought being absorbed in the one precious subject.

**And talk of thy doings.** It is well that the overflow of the mouth should indicate the good matter which fills the heart. Meditation makes rich talking; it is to be lamented that so much of the conversation of professors is utterly barren, because they take no time for contemplation. A meditative man should be a talker, otherwise he is a mental miser, a mill which grinds corn only for the miller. The subject of our meditation should be choice, and then our task will be edifying; if we meditate on folly and affect to speak wisdom, our double mindedness will soon be known unto all men. Holy talk following upon meditation has a consoling power in it for ourselves as well as for those who listen, hence its value in the connection in which we find it in this passage.

Psalms 90:9 For all our days have declined in Your fury; We have finished our years like a sigh.

Psalms 119:16 I shall **delight** (Lxx = **meletao**) in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word. Gimel.

**Spurgeon - I will delight myself in thy statutes.** In this verse delight follows meditation, of which it is the true flower and outgrowth. When we have no other solace, but are quite alone, it will be a glad thing for the heart to turn upon itself, and sweetly whisper, "I will delight myself. What if no minstrel sings in the hall, I will delight myself. If the time of the singing of birds has not yet arrived, and the voice of the turtle is not heard in our land, yet I will delight myself." This is the choicest and noblest of all rejoicing; in fact, it is the good part which can never be taken from us; but there is no delighting ourselves with anything below that which God intended to be the soul's eternal satisfaction. The statute book is intended to be the joy of every loyal subject. When the believer once peruses the sacred pages his soul burns within him as he turns first to one and then to another of the royal words of the great King, words full and firm, immutable and divine.

**I will not forget thy word.** Men do not readily forget that which they have treasured up, that which they have meditated on (Psalms 119:15), and that which they have often spoken of (Psalms 119:13). Yet since we have treacherous memories it is well to bind them well with the knotted cord of "I will not forget."

Note how two "I wills" follow upon two "I haves." We may not promise for the future if we have altogether failed in the past; but where grace has enabled us to accomplish something, we may hopefully expect that it will enable us to do more.

It is curious to observe how this verse is moulded upon Psalms 119:8 : the changes are rung on the same words, but the meaning is quite different, and there is no suspicion of a vain repetition. The same thought is never given over again in this Psalm; they are dullards who think so. Something in the position of each verse affects its meaning, so that even where its words are almost identical with those of another the sense is delightfully varied. If we do not see an infinite variety of fine shades of thought in this Psalm we may conclude that we are colour blind; if we do not hear many sweet harmonies, we may judge our ears to be dull of hearing, but we may not suspect the Spirit of God of monotony.

Psalms 119:47 I shall **delight** (Lxx = **meletao**) in Your commandments, Which I love.

**Spurgeon - And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.** Next to liberty and courage comes delight. When we have done our duty, we find a great reward in it. If David had not spoken for his Master before kings, he would have been afraid to think of the law which he had neglected; but after speaking up for his Lord he feels a sweet serenity of heart when musing upon the word. Obey the command, and you will love it; carry the yoke, and it will be easy, and rest will come by it. After speaking of the law the Psalmist was not wearied of his theme, but he retired to meditate upon it; he discoursed and then he delighted, he preached and then repaired to his study to renew his strength by feeding yet again



upon the precious truth. Whether he delighted others or not when he was speaking, he never failed to delight himself when he was musing on the word of the Lord. He declares that he loved the Lord's commands, and by this avowal he unveils the reason for his delight in them: where our love is, there is our delight. David did not delight in the courts of kings, for there he found places of temptation to shame, but in the Scriptures he found himself at home; his heart was in them, and they yielded him supreme pleasure. No wonder that he spoke of keeping the law, which he loved; Jesus says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." No wonder that he spoke of walking at liberty, and speaking boldly, for true love is ever free and fearless. Love is the fulfilling of the law; where love to the law of God reigns in the heart the life must be full of blessedness. Lord, let thy mercies come to us that we may love thy word and way, and find our whole delight therein.

Psalm 119:70 Their heart is covered with fat, But I **delight (Lxx = meletao** in Your law.

**Spurgeon** - But I delight in thy law. How much better is it to joy in the law of the Lord than to joy in sensual indulgences! This makes the heart healthy, and keeps the mind lowly. No one who loves holiness has the slightest cause to envy the prosperity of the worldling. Delight in the law elevates and ennobles, while carnal pleasure clogs the intellect and degrades the affections. There is and always ought to be a vivid contrast between the believer and the sensualist, and that contrast is as much seen in the affections of the heart as in the actions of the life: their heart is as fat as grease, and our heart is delighted with the law of the Lord. Our delights are a better test of our character than anything else: as a man's heart is, so is the man. David oiled the wheels of life with his delight in God's law, and not with the fat of sensuality. He had his relishes and dainties, his festivals and delights, and all these he found in doing the will of the Lord his God. When law becomes delight, obedience is bliss. Holiness in the heart causes the soul to eat the fat of the land. To have the law for our delight will breed in our hearts the very opposite of the effects of pride; deadness, sensuality, and obstinacy will be cured, and we shall become teachable, sensitive, and spiritual. How careful should we be to live under the influence of the divine law that we fall not under the law of sin and death.

Psalm 119:117 Uphold me that I may be safe, That I **may have regard (Lxx = meletao** for Your statutes continually.

**Spurgeon** - And I will have respect unto thy statutes continually. In obedience is safety; in being held up is obedience. No man will outwardly keep the Lord's statutes for long together unless he has an inward respect for them, and this will never be unless the hand of the Lord perpetually upholds the heart in holy love. Perseverance to the end, obedience continually, comes only through the divine power; we start aside as a deceitful bow unless we are kept right by him that first gave us grace. Happy is the man who realizes this verse in his life: upheld through his whole life in a course of unswerving integrity, he becomes a safe and trusted man, and maintains a sacred delicacy of conscience which is unknown to others. He feels a tender respect for the statutes of the Lord, which keeps him clear of inconsistencies and conformities to the world that are so common among others, and hence he is a pillar in the house of the Lord. Alas, we know some professors who are not upright, and therefore they lean to sin till they fall over, and though they are restored they are never safe or reliable, neither have they that sweet purity of soul which is the charm of the more sanctified who have been kept from falling into the mire.

Psalm 119:148 My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may **meditate (Lxx = meletao** on Your word.

**Spurgeon** - **Mine eyes prevent the night watches.** Or rather, the watches. Before the watchman cried the hour, he was crying to God. He did not need to be informed as to how the hours were flying, for every hour his heart was flying towards heaven. He began the day with prayer, and he continued in prayer through the watches of the day, and the watches of the night. The soldiers changed guard, but David did not change his holy occupation. Specially, however, at night did he keep his eyes open, and drive away sleep, that he might maintain communion with his God. He worshipped on from watch to watch as travellers journey from stage to stage.

**That I might meditate in thy word.** This had become meat and drink to him. Meditation was the food of his hope, and the solace of his sorrow: the one theme upon which his thoughts ran was that blessed "word" which he continually mentions, and in which his heart rejoices. He preferred study to slumber; and he learned to forego his necessary sleep for much more necessary devotion. It is instructive to find meditation so constantly connected with fervent prayer: it is the fuel which sustains the flame. How rare an article is it in these days.

Psalm 143:5 I remember the days of old; I **meditate (Lxx = meletao** on all Your doings; I muse on the work of

Your hands.

**Spurgeon - I remember the days of old.** When we see nothing new which can cheer us, let us think upon old things. We once had merry days, days of deliverance, and joy and thanksgiving; why not again? Jehovah rescued his people in the ages which lie back, centuries ago; wily should he not do the like again? We ourselves have a rich past to look back upon; we have sunny memories, sacred memories, satisfactory memories, and these are as flowers for the bees of faith to visit, from whence they may make honey for present use.

**I meditate on all thy works.** When my own works reproach me, thy works refresh me. If at the first view the deeds of the Lord do not encourage us, let us think them over again, ruminating and considering the histories of divine providence. We ought to take a wide and large view of *all* God's works; for as a whole they work together for good, and in each part they are worthy of reverent study. I muse on the work of thy hands. This he had done in former days, even in his most trying hours. Creation had been the book in which he read of the wisdom and goodness of the Lord. He repeats his perusal of the page of nature, and counts it a balm for his wounds, a cordial for his cares, to see what the Lord has made by his skilful hands. When the work of our own hand grieves us, let us look to the work of God's hands. Memory, meditation, and musing are here set together as the three graces, ministering grace to a mind depressed and likely to be diseased. As David with his harp played away the evil spirit from Saul, so does he hero chase away gloom from his own soul by holy communion with God.

Proverbs 8:7 "For my mouth will utter truth; And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.

Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

Proverbs 19:27 Cease listening, my son, to discipline, And you will stray from the words of knowledge.

Proverbs 24:2 For their minds **devise (Lxx = meletao** violence, And their lips talk of trouble.

Isaiah 16:7 Therefore Moab will wail; everyone of Moab will wail. You will moan for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth As those who are utterly stricken.

Isaiah 27:8 You contended with them by banishing them, by driving them away. With His fierce wind He has expelled them on the day of the east wind.

Isaiah 33:18 Your heart will **meditate (Lxx = meletao** on terror: "Where is he who counts? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?"

Isaiah 38:14 "Like a swallow, like a crane, so I twitter; I moan like a dove; My eyes look wistfully to the heights; O Lord, I am oppressed, be my security.

Isaiah 59:3 For your hands are defiled with blood And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken falsehood, Your tongue mutters wickedness.

Isaiah 59:13 Transgressing and denying the LORD, And turning away from our God, Speaking oppression and revolt, Conceiving in and uttering from the heart lying words.