

**Russell Kelfer**

# **The Miracle of Meditation**

**(Part 2)**

**514-A**

**Series: Promises and God's Word**

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Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

# The Miracle of Meditation

## (Part 2)

In the past few lessons, we have been dealing with the book of Joshua chapter 1, verses 8 and 9. In that passage we have seen a pattern for the walk of the Christian. The method of transformation expressed in that passage is this: this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth. This means that the Word of God should be engraved permanently in your heart. It should be literally on the tip of your tongue. The way we do that is by memorizing Scripture.

Memorization is not an end within itself because the verse goes on to say that the reason you memorize or engrave the Word on your heart is that you might meditate therein day and night. You memorize it so that you will have it available on the tip of your tongue, not departing from your mouth. As you drive, as you walk, as you pray, as you study or whatever you are doing, you can meditate on it. It can become part and parcel of your life.

The reason we meditate on it is not an end within itself either because the verse goes on to say that the goal of meditation is obedience, that you may observe to do all that is written therein. Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, then thou shalt have good success. In other words, this verse is saying that the method is to memorize the Word, but the reason to memorize the Word is to meditate on it. The reason for meditating is so that you and I will become perfectly obedient to the will of God.

Then He promises us some results. He says it will make your way prosperous. You will have good success. You will have strength and courage. No man will be able to stand before you. You will have victory over the enemy. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. Those are the promises from the Word all wrapped up in that one passage. The criteria for receiving these spiritual benefits is to engrave the Word, that is to have it on the tip of your tongue, and by doing so you will have it available to meditate on day and night.

In the last lesson we studied that the concept of meditation

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has to do with programming the computer of the brain. In the same way you program, store and recall data on a computer; you memorize, review and meditate on the Word. It becomes your life. We also looked at the goals of meditation. Why do we meditate? How does it work? As you meditate on any given passage, you look for man's characteristics personally. Then, in the light of the Word, you see God's character perfectly. Meditation is the process of being transformed from one degree of glory to the other through the Word, from the character weaknesses we have to the character qualities God has, as we meditate on the Word. The sin is purged from our lives. We appropriate the promises of the Word and we then begin to grow and continue to grow.

We also studied four aspects of meditation. We concentrate, evaluate, reiterate and then appropriate. We won't review those for the sake of time, but you will remember that we looked at Jeremiah 12:5.

"If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you,  
Then how can you contend with horses?  
And if in the land of peace,  
In which you trusted, they wearied you,  
Then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?"

(NKJV)

In other words, if you are plowing along in life with no real problems and are unable to handle the loads that come your way, what will you do when the pressure is on? That is what the Spirit is saying in this passage. In other words, the human weakness was weariness. The quality of God was strength. Through meditating on that verse, we began to appropriate other passages such as Isaiah 40:28-31 and Psalm 27:14. We began to see the strength of God through those passages.

We then looked at Philippians 4:6-7, which deals with worry, another of man's weaknesses, in contrast to the character of God which is perfect peace. In the process of meditating, we remembered Isaiah 26:3, John 14:27 and John 16:33. We began to see that the peace of God that passes all understanding is a necessary ingredient to the Christian walk. It is available on a continuous basis to all of us if we will meet the qualifications. This means that every time we begin to worry, we simply turn to God and pray.

Before we go into the more academic aspects of meditation, I want to ask you to meditate with me on one more passage.

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Once again, I am going to pick a verse that perhaps is not very familiar to you. I believe that those are the verses from which we glean the most. We are less likely in those situations to run over certain words without really digging into them. The Spirit has to really motivate us and work in our lives in order for us to get the message. Turn to Isaiah 42:8-15 which is leading up to verse 16, which is the verse that we will meditate on. If you want an outline in your mind, this first passage is divided into three categories. They all point to God. Verses 8-9 talk about His glory. Verses 10-12 talk about His praise. Verses 13-15 talk about His power. Having exalted God, they all lead to verse 16 where the exalted God relates to the needs of fallen man.

I am the Lord, that is My name;  
And My glory I will not give to another,  
Nor My praise to carved images.

Behold, the former things have come to pass,  
And new things I declare;  
Before they spring forth I tell you of them

Sing to the Lord a new song,  
And His praise from the ends of the earth,  
You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it,  
You coastlands and you inhabitants of them!

Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice,  
The villages that Kedar inhabits.  
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing,  
Let them shout from the top of the mountains.

Let them give glory to the Lord,  
And declare His praise in the coastlands.

The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man;  
He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war.  
He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud;  
He shall prevail against His enemies.

"I have held My peace a long time,  
I have been still and restrained Myself.  
Now I will cry like a woman in labor,  
I will pant and gasp at once.

I will lay waste the mountains and hills,  
And dry up all their vegetation;  
I will make the rivers coastlands,  
And I will dry up the pools."

(Isaiah 42:8-15 NKJV)

These verses have shown us the power, the glory and the

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praise of God. In verse 16 He speaks. Now let's meditate quietly and softly on this one verse. Then take this verse with you through the next seven days. The human weakness is waywardness. The godly quality is perfect direction.

I will bring the blind by a way they did not know;  
I will lead them in paths they have not known.  
I will make darkness light before them,  
And crooked places straight.  
These things I will do for them,  
And not forsake them.

(Isaiah 42:16 NKJV)

Let's go before the Lord as we meditate on it.

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*We pray now that this verse which is such a vital part of Your Living Word would come alive in our hearts. We realize, Father, that apart from Your Spirit, we do not have the ability to meditate and have fruit borne in our lives. But we do know that Your desire for our hearts is that we meditate day and night so that we might observe to do all that You have in mind for us to do. Father, open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of Thy Word. May Your Spirit be our intercessor, teaching and exposing and revealing the truth in these moments that we share this Word. In the name of Jesus now, Father, we claim that promise.*

*Amen.*

Let the Word, in a relaxed spirit, flow through your mind. I am going to help lead you through this verse and ask you to please work with me through it in your own minds.

He gives us two promises: I will bring, and I will lead. What comes to your mind with the word "bring."? Imagine we are going to have a sandwich social, and you are to bring the sandwiches. What comes to mind? You take the responsibility for those, don't you? In your mind, visualize that God is going to bring you. That is one of His promises. He is going to take the responsibility for your life. Take a deep breath. Remember that we appropriate as we evaluate and reiterate. Take a deep breath and say, "Lord, it's been a long week. It has even been a hectic morning. But, Lord, You promise to bring me into the land and provide all I need. Lord, would you just take command of my life again? I keep relinquishing and then I take it up again. Would you just let me

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release into Your hands once again the responsibility for my life?”

The second thing He promises to do in this passage is, “I will lead you in a way that you have not known.” It means that not only is He taking responsibility, but He is going to give direction. He is not just responsible for you to only turn you loose. He says, “Relax. That decision you’ve got to make, I will make for you. I will give you the insight to make it. That problem you are facing, I will give you direction to the solution. The crisis that you are in, I will lead you through it. That is My job. That is My business. That is what I want to do with your life. I want to be in charge. I want to take command.”

What does it say in Psalm 23? It says:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me [that is He takes responsibility, He requires me] to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters. (NKJV)

Psalm 32:8 tells us:

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

I will guide you with My eye. (NKJV)

Imagine the pilgrimage that you have to make in the next seven days. You don’t know what it holds. You don’t know what your business holds, your family holds, your personal life holds or your health holds. Just imagine now that the Spirit of God is saying very gently in this passage, “Let me have your hand. I want you to get wrapped up in Jesus. I want to lead you in the paths of righteousness.” Relax in the arms of Christ as you meditate on that passage.

This verse goes on to say: I will promise to bring you by a way you do not know, and I will promise to lead you. What does He promise to lead? It says: I will bring and lead the blind. The blind. What does Revelation 3:17 say?

Because you say, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing”—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—” (NKJV)

This passage is saying that the Spirit of God is saying, “I will bring you and I will lead you if you know that you are blind.”

Have you ever pretended you were blind? Have you ever taken an hour out of your life and taped both eyes shut and required somebody to lead you in everything you do? Do it for just one

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hour. You cannot imagine the spirit of dependence that settles on your heart. Suddenly you have no ability to be your own god, your own leader, and your own authority. All of a sudden, you are meekly dependent upon another. This is a project that some of us need to do. In the process, we will learn something. What the Spirit is saying is that He will bring us and lead us if we recognize that we are dependent upon Him as a blind person. We must recognize our total dependence to be led.

How many of you wear glasses? How many of you have ever tried to drive without your glasses? I have. If I were totally blind, I would not have tried that, but sometimes I will leave my glasses at home. I can't see without them. I can see just enough to see the edge of the hood. Nevertheless, if I need to go somewhere and I can't find my glasses, I say, "Lord, protect the world." I get in and I begin to drive. What is the problem? I don't recognize my blindness. I have partial vision so I try to drive myself without vision. That is what we do. We are unwilling to recognize that we are poor and wretched and naked and blind apart from Jesus Christ. We think that there is some inherent good in us. We can see a little, and we try to drive ourselves as we run over curbs and people and other cars.

God is saying, "I will bring you by a way you do not know. I will lead you if you recognize your blindness." The interesting part of the passage as you continue to meditate is: He says, "I will do this in a method you have never heard of before. I will lead you and I will guide you in a way you have not known and a way you knew not."

Meditate on that for a moment. Close your eyes and meditate on the way God has worked in your life in the last year. Has He done things the way you planned? In trying to be god would you give Him the prescription He followed? Or, did God in His grace and mercy make a way for you that you had not known? As you meditate on this, do you remember Deuteronomy 9 where He told the children of Israel, "I took your food away from you in order to give you manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy father know."

Why did He give them something they had never seen before? Why didn't He give them mashed potatoes? McDonalds? Whatever. He gave them something unexpected for three reasons. When God does things in a way we have not known, it creates a



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dependence upon Him. There is glory that can be shared with no one. There is spiritual truth exposed as reality. This happens because He does it in a way we have not known. Watch Him lead the children of Israel. Nothing is ever done according to the ways of man because His ways are higher than our ways.

Let's pause now in the midst of this verse and thank the Lord that His ways are different than ours. Father, we want to thank You now as we meditate on this verse that You have agreed to assume responsibility for us and agreed to lead us every step of the way. But, Father, we recognize that we do not accept our blindness. We try to see enough to lead ourselves. We don't want You to guide us with Your eye. We want to use our own. Father, may we today accept our spiritual blindness so that we may behold the beauty of Your spiritual vision. But, dear Lord, we realize that the ways You will for us are not the ways of men. Help us to relax in that and to get excited about Your methods of accomplishing Your purposes. In Jesus' name.

Just as a little background so that you can meditate on the rest of the verse this week, we are told that as we do this, He will give us direction based upon turning darkness to light and making the crooked path to be straight. Then He says that He will promise to do what He has said, and He will not forsake us. If we take each of those words and cross reference them through the Scripture and meditate on them, we will begin to get a concept of the direction of God in a Christian's life that is even deeper than what we have now. He will direct and guide us in the way that we should go. He will guide us with His eye.

I want to now deal with the more practical aspects of meditation. When do you meditate? Why do you meditate? On what do you meditate? I took a concordance and simply went through different translations to try to find the word meditate along with the parallel words to find out from the Scriptures when believers either meditated or were instructed to meditate. I looked at what they were told to meditate on, and what the circumstances were, that led them to do it. I did this in order to find any patterns that developed. I want to give you the pattern that I saw so that you can meditate on it. You can come up with your own conclusions. The key is not any kind of formula. The key is Jesus. He reveals Himself through the Word of God. The Word of God works through meditation. It isn't the process we worship, it is Him, but the process is a means to an end.

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These were the patterns of meditation I found. The first category was in times of worship. I found five instances in Scripture where believers were told to meditate on the Word in specific times of worship. It appeared to surface that in every occasion, or nearly every occasion, there was a worship experience involved. The believer was told to meditate on the worth of God, or His person in times of worship.

The second category seemed to be in times of study or times of receiving from the Word. It seemed to me that the focus was on the Word, what God says. In other words, they were meditating on His promises.

The third area seemed to be meditation in times of warfare. In almost every case where warfare was involved, the believer was told to meditate on the works of God that is, what He has done. They were to focus on His past performances.

Lastly, believers were told to meditate in times when a decision was to be made or when they needed direction. It seems like on every one of those occasions, the believer was told to meditate on the ways of God. That is to focus on His perspective.

So we have at least four basic times in our lives to meditate on the worth, the Word, the works and the ways of God. We are to meditate on His person, His promises, His past performances and His perspective. I want to ask you to go with me through these verses and perhaps we can cover some of the times in Scripture that we are told to meditate. First of all, we are to meditate during times of worship.

The first time I found was when you first awake in the morning. Turn to Psalm 5:1-3. Everybody has to wake up somehow, not that we enjoy it. My daughter is home for the summer. She has an alarm clock that is very loud. It is a clock radio. The sound of that alarm is hard to describe. Have you ever heard a tugboat in a harbor? That is what it sounds like. It goes on and on. It is an endless sound. I think that my neighbors can hear it on that side of the house. I heard it this morning and started hitting the walls because I thought the air conditioner had broken. I looked to see if there was a pipe that was broken. I ran all over the house trying to find the noise when I finally realized it was this tugboat that had gone off in my daughter's room.

We all have to wake up somehow. The Psalmist gives us an idea at how to wake up when in Psalm 5 he says:

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Give ear to my words, O Lord,  
Consider my meditation

Give heed to the voice of my cry,  
My King and my God,  
For to You I will pray

My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord;  
In the morning I will direct it to You,  
And I will look up. (Psalm 5:1-3 NKJV)

I don't know how many of you wake up to the Word. There are a lot of ways that you can do it. You can have a tape recorder that plays music that praises the Lord through the Scriptures. You can have a verse taped by the side of your bed. You can tape a verse by the mirror in your bathroom. Instead of looking upon our homeliness, we can look at His holiness. It doesn't need to be wasted time. It can be a glorious time if we use it to worship.

One interesting fact is found in Psalm 139. When we wake up, our first thoughts ought to be of the Lord because Psalm 139 tells us that when we wake up His first thoughts are of us. It says that He has been sitting there thinking of us. When we wake in the morning, He is still thinking of us. So the first thoughts in our minds in the morning ought not to be, "Oh, what do I have to do today? Oh, I wish I didn't have to go to work. I'm so tired."

Have you ever talked yourself into being tired? Have you ever talked yourself into being sick? Have you ever talked yourself into being excited about Jesus? There is a difference. When you begin to focus on Him the first thing in the morning, it is amazing how these other things begin to at least descend into relative nothingness. We need to think of the Word when we first get up in the morning.

We need to think of the Word at bedtime. Psalm 4:4 is a good verse for this. How many of you go to sleep at night meditating on the Word? It is a fantastic way to go to sleep. How many of you go to sleep at night meditating on your worries? It is a fantastic way to toss and turn all night.

Stand in awe and sin not: commune with your own heart  
upon your bed and be still. (Psalm 4:4 KJV)

The Living Bible says:

Stand before the Lord in awe, and do not sin against him.  
Lie quietly on your bed in silent meditation.

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What a beautiful way to go to sleep. Some of you have an easy time going to sleep. As soon as your head hits the pillow, you are asleep. But there are others who try to go to sleep and sometimes it takes a little while to drop off to sleep. What a beautiful time, when you are quiet and relaxed, to meditate on the Word. When you wake up in the morning, the first thought that comes to your mind is that passage of Scripture you were meditating on the night before.

Psalm 119:147-148 in the Berkley Translation says:

I was up before dawn and cried, "I'm trusting in thy promise."

My eyes waited for the night watches so that I might meditate on thy word.

In other words, "I got excited about nighttime because I would have a chance to mediate on Your Word."

Then Psalm 63:6 tells us of a third time to mediate on the Word. It is in the middle of the night. How many of you have ever awakened in the middle of the night and sat bolt upright in bed, and you don't know why. Sometimes you do know why. The dog barked. The baby cried. The roof leaked. But you woke up in the middle of the night and sat bolt upright in bed. You said, "I can't go to back to sleep. Everybody else in the house is asleep. This Psalm gives us an idea.

When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. (Psalm 63:6 NKJV)

When you wake up in the middle of the night and don't have anything else to do, begin to meditate on the Word that you have been memorizing. Begin to let it drift through your mind. Begin to relax in the Lord and pray. It is a great experience. Most of us suffer from the ZB syndrome. This is Zombie Behavior. We wake up in the middle of the night with our eyes bugged out. I believe that this is an opportunity to meditate on the Word.

Another time to meditate is at church. While you are waiting for Sunday school or church to start, spend that time meditating on the Word. Psalm 48:9 says:

We have thought, O God, on Your lovingkindness,  
In the midst of Your temple. (NKJV)

In other words, here is a beautiful time to take advantage of the presence of God among the people of God and meditate on the Word of God. It is a preparation for worship. How many of us

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truly prepare our hearts for worship when we come to church? Most of the time we gulp down our breakfast. We come running in. We couldn't find a parking place. We ended up parking a long way from the building. We start to walk to church then it starts raining. We are all excited and begin to praise the Lord. We get into the building late. The service hasn't started but we get there just in time to get a seat on the back row. We sit there all hot and bothered. The song director stands up to begin the singing. We dare the Lord to get through and minister to our lives. The pastor then gets up, and we don't like the color of his suit. We are not ready to listen. With a tense spirit we begin to listen or not listen to the message.

The purpose of a message in church is that God might speak to the needs of our lives. Meditation is to prepare us for that purpose. I wonder if all of us might be more conscious when we go into a worship service to stop and say, "Lord, I don't know what You are going to say to me today, but if You are going to speak through the speaker, it is going to be great. Lord, in the name of Jesus, I want to give myself up to Thee for this hour to change my life. I know, Father, it doesn't matter what the text is. It doesn't matter what the outline is. It doesn't matter what the examples are. It matters only that Your Spirit wants to use that Word to change my life. Now, Lord, in the name of Jesus, I just want to ask you to take me and make the soil of my heart ready to receive the seed. Take out the rocks. Pull up the weeds. Plow some deep soil. Give me the ability to receive the Word."

You will be amazed how much better the preacher is on that Sunday. He has great power and freedom. He just happened to address exactly the problems you had been going through that week. Somebody told him. Why? Because your heart was ready to worship. Why? Because you had been meditating on the Word and seeking the Spirit's direction for transformation.

Lastly, Psalm 145:4b,5 says:

And shall declare Your mighty acts.

I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,  
And on Your wondrous works. (NKJV)

When you are having your own quiet time or prayer time, begin with a time of meditation. One of the things I would encourage you to meditate on during times of worship is who God is. We have covered this before, but I want to say it again. How much

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time do you and I spend just meditating on the qualities of God? The song says, "The things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." But we don't really meditate on who God is most of the time because we are so wrapped up in our own problems. Turn to Psalm 29. This gives us a quick illustration. I want to read a paraphrase of Psalm 29. Ask the Spirit of God to give you a vision of God as you hear the Word of God.

Praise the Lord, you angels of his; praise his glory and his strength.

Praise him for his majestic glory, the glory of his name. Come before him clothed in sacred garments.

The voice of the Lord echoes from the clouds. The God of glory thunders through the skies.

So powerful is his voice; so full of majesty.

It breaks down the cedars. It splits the giant trees of Lebanon. It shakes Mount Lebanon and Mount Sirion. They leap and skip before Him like young calves!

The voice of the Lord thunders through the lightning.

It resounds through the desert and shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord spins and topples the mighty oaks. It strips the forest bare. They whirl and sway beneath the blast. But in his Temple all are praising, "Glory, glory to the Lord."

At the Flood the Lord showed his control of all creation. Now he continues to unveil his power.

He will give his people strength. He will bless them with peace. (LB)

Do you visualize God in the midst of the storm, revealing the strength that He wants to give us as Christians to endure the storms of life? The lightning shows that He gives the direction. The thunder shows that He has the power to accomplish all the He needs to do. The rain that comes down shows the refreshment of His Spirit and the power of His Word. The next time there is a physical storm in your life, stand in awe and worship God. Worship God every time you hear the thunder roll. The Psalmist did. Worship God every time the lightning flashes. There is no fear there. It is a time of excitement. He is revealing His power so the world will know who He is, and so that Christians will rejoice that this same power that raised Jesus from the dead is now

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available to you and to me to walk the Christian life.

Meditate on who God is. Meditate on His power. Meditate on His strength.

A similar passage is Psalm 96.

For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised

For all the gods of the nations are idols but the Lord made the heavens. He is to be feared above all gods.

Honor and majesty are before Him;  
Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,  
Give to the LORD glory and strength,

Give to the LORD the glory due His name;  
Bring an offering, and come into His courts

Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!  
Tremble before Him, all the earth.

(NKJV)

We won't try to go into the next part, which is the concept of meditating on the Word, the works and the ways of God. The point, if we are honest with ourselves, is that we are told in Joshua to saturate our lives with the Word of God. We were not told to make the Word of God an important part of our lives. We were told to make God the *center* of our lives. There is a lot of difference.

We are told in Deuteronomy 11 that when we walk by the gates of our house, when we sit down and when we stand up, when we go to bed at night and when we get up in the morning, we are to be meditating and focusing on the Living Word of God.

You may say that there are besetting sins in your life that you never seem to get beyond. The Word says that there is an answer. The answer is the Word. Saturate yourself with the Word of God. Meditate on it day and night. Meditate on it while you drive to work. Meditate on it as you wait in line. Meditate on it while you prepare supper. Sing unto the Lord a new song and meditate therein. Think about who He is. Think about what He has done. Think about what He has said. Think about how He works. Meditate, reiterate, appropriate. Ask God personally to make His qualities replace the characteristics of man in your life. The key is that He will. He delights to do it. He will make our ways prosperous, and He will give us good success.

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