

# Summer

## pathways of peace

### AIM

To provide some reflective bible based meditations on the theme of 'walking in God's ways of peace' for individual use. It can also be used with small groups.

### INTRODUCTION

This set of reflections has been written to help you focus on the priorities of your life as you take time to be with God. During these days allow God to touch your heart and position your feet on this path of peace. You need to make a decision that you will make time to eat the word of God and let it focus your life and your future. Maybe you have begun to feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life and you just need to stop, slow down and hear God. Perhaps life has just become frantic and so busy that you feel you are only just surviving and you are fearful that you will soon fall apart! Whatever the issue, you have a desire to connect with God again in a real way and find a new rhythm for your life. This set of meditations has been written especially for you and people who feel pressured and weary. These notes will encourage you to find that time to be still and refreshed in the presence of God.

Experts tell us that it takes 3 weeks of concerted effort to change a negative pattern of behaviour and a total of 6 weeks to establish a new positive alternative. So, this will be 40 days (6 weeks) of "medicine" from the word of God specifically designed to help you re-establish a more healthy rhythm of life and challenge your areas of stress. For many of us life has become so demanding that we forget how to still down in the presence of God and just listen and receive. As you spend time in the word of God I believe you can renew your mind and bring your life into alignment with the peace of God.

### PATHWAY OF PEACE

Luke 1:79 He will..... shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Pathway of peace and pools of reflection is 40 day guide to still your soul and refresh your spirit that is available in full from Monarch Books (see acknowledgements). This material acts as an introduction to the whole 40 day series but providing three sample days for you to use.

So what is the next step? These meditations have been written as a 40 day series, with a new focus for your meditation each week. Each of these topics is a pool of reflection along your journey of peace where God will touch and communicate with you about your life.

The six topics are as follows:

**Week 1 - Absorb His peace**

**Week 2 - Awaken to His voice**

**Week 3 - Avoid all distractions**

**Week 4 - Activate new thinking**

**Week 5 - Anchored in His love**

**Week 6 - Advance with new Strength**

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Each day we will read a portion of scripture, meditate on a thought for reflection and then focus and pray a prayer of confession. You should try to find a place where you can be alone and relax as you do this. If possible, first deal with any situation that could interrupt you, turn your phone off and give yourself a moment of unpressured time. Later in the week find time to read all the words for the complete topic at one time and let the revelation of the week saturate your spirit.

I believe that as you do this, you will watch the word of God begin to refresh your inner being and rejuvenate your capacity. The word will recover and take back what the enemy has stolen through your stress and anxiety. It will enable you to think clearly and you will walk out of this season feeling that your life has been revived!

So let us begin to walk on His path of peace for our lives...

### Prayer

So let us pray:

"Father, I believe that as I take time to be apart with you, you will reward me with your presence and peace. Teach me to listen and be still and not be anxious!

Father, I trust you to meet with me. I thank you that you are a talking God and you will meet with me as I take time to connect with you. Let me know you more deeply over these days as I start a new journey of discovery.

Thank you, Father, for the Pathway of Peace for my life – today I set my feet on this path and expect to find you!

Thank you, Father! Amen."

### 1. ABSORB HIS PEACE: DAY 7

Isa 32:16 -18 Justice will dwell in the desert and righteousness live in the fertile field. The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

(Psa 37:37 NIV) Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the man of peace.

### THOUGHT FOR REFLECTION

Often when we think about peace, we imagine a quiet lake in the early morning, where the water is as still as glass, the air is cool and the silence penetrating. There is no disturbance, no noise! So we feel that if we are to be people of peace we need to be very accepting of others and we should not be confrontational. As we live in today's culture we feel that we should toe the line, be politically correct and not cause conflict. After all, if we are Christians we should keep the peace! But here is the greatest danger! Many of us by our silence have begun to say with the false prophets of old – PEACE, PEACE where there is no peace. We have tried to be more sentimental than God. We need to realize that there is a sense that this is violence, not peace! We need to realize that peace ONLY exists within the boundaries of righteousness. So we have to confront wrong attitudes to

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bring people to peace! If we want to see true peace in people's lives then we have to be willing to confront – this peace is not passive - this peace is not soft and fluffy – this peace is not for the weak but the strong.

In these days there is such a cry for peace. People are terrified that they could lose their homes; they no longer feel secure in their jobs. So we must not let the spirit of our culture control our mindsets. We need to rest and think like God thinks! He says to you - *My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.* We do not have to live like everyone else – we can live in peaceful places and secure homes. I remember when we returned from Africa to live in the UK in 1990. The housing market was so expensive and we did not know how we would find a place to live in the area near our church. Soon the pressure of our circumstances began to ruin my peace, I felt overwhelmed and Gordon and I began to argue. Our lives lost their grace and our children were anxious. Then one day God spoke to me so clearly, "Be at peace!" I knew I must obey. I began to take time to pray and walk the dog and deal with my fears and anxiety. Soon, as I began to cry out for help, God heard my cry, then we were given significant gifts and the perfect house became available. We were able to buy my childhood home as my parents moved to the USA. God had it all in hand but I needed to learn the secret of living right first, for God always has a future for the person of peace.

### FOCUS FOR CONFESSION:

So, Father, I commit my life to the path of peace. I want to learn to walk in this attitude whatever my circumstances. I thank you that you love me and you are so good to me.

### 2. AVOID ALL DISTRACTIONS: DAY 15

(Luke 10:40 NIV) But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

### THOUGHT FOR REFLECTION

Good intentions need to be followed by decisive actions! So let us make a definite choice to find time alone and seek God. Praying time is never convenient time but always necessary. We must actively carve time out of our busy schedules. We should take time to relax, listen and wait for God to speak and deeply desire this intimacy but it is amazing how even when we make the time our minds will not let our spirits rest. Our lives are so demanding these days and most of us are balancing a hundred different tasks at any one time. So when we do finally sit down we find our minds keep racing with all the jobs we need to remember. Martha was the hospitality queen! She liked things to be perfect for her guests, so she was thinking about the meals that needed to be prepared and what she should cook. Even though Jesus was with her in the house she could not relax and listen. Martha was aware that she was not coping with all the pressure and she needed help. But, interestingly, rather than ask Jesus to help her focus and get rid of all the distractions, she asked Him to tell Mary to leave the intimate place and help her in the busy place!

So often we can be the same! We get irritated by people who take time in their schedule to ensure they connect with Jesus. We have even heard the comment, "they are SO heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good!", implying that they are always praying and never taking their responsibilities seriously! We can all relate to the cry of Martha, "Don't you care that I am alone and doing all the work!" But Jesus is calling us to alter our priorities, first give Him time in the secret place and then He will empower us in the public place. So do not let the pressure of all your jobs distract you from the place of seeking Him.

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Today make an active decision to make the MAIN thing, the MAIN thing in your life. As you give this time to God He will multiply your productivity. You will be more effective and have a greater focus. Do not let the pressure of the everyday demands of life rob and distract you from the secret place. Make a choice today to focus on having time to listen, reflect and be filled and then go out and live life, knowing that you have increased capacity and strength as you have been in the secret place with Him.

### FOCUS FOR CONFESSION:

Father, I want to learn to sit, relax and spend time with you without feeling distracted or guilty. Please give me the grace to fulfil my responsibilities. Whether it is what I do in the home or in my office, as I give you time, increase my capacity and help me work quickly and efficiently. Father, let me learn and practise being in the presence of Jesus. Help me focus my thinking and not be distracted with constant busyness as I spend time with you. Keep me from all resentment as I watch other people who seem to have less work and more time with you. Teach me to love this secret place.

### 3. ADVANCE WITH NEW STRENGTH: DAY 35

(Josh 1:7 - 9 NIV) Be 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. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

### THOUGHT FOR REFLECTION

If God meant us to have courage, why did He give us legs?! For many of us our natural response to a new challenge is to run! But in order to inherit our promises we need to stand up with a new confidence and know that God will strengthen us to accomplish our calling. It is time to live a new lifestyle where we hold our promises in our hands not just in our dreams. This takes courage! Here God challenges Joshua to walk into the next season of his destiny but tells him to step forward with courage. Recently my daughter gave birth to her first baby. I watched her prepare her body and emotions for this time of birthing. Suddenly the day of the contractions arrived and we knew this baby was coming. I watched a sense of purpose grip Nicola as she knew the time of waiting had ended and now she had to find strength and courage for birthing. Before she got into the car to leave for the hospital she looked at me with determined eyes, "Mum, I can do this, I know I can, I was made for this!" This is the cry that needs to awaken in our spirits; we need to press into the next season with a determined courage that will birth our promises.

Mark Twain made this statement many years ago, *"It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare."* We need to take this challenge! This is the time for the church to identify the areas where moral courage has been lacking, and it is essential that we receive fresh courage if we are going to take back our ground! We are living in a season when everything that can be shaken is being shaken. The legislative structure of our nations is being changed as we yield to the pressure of a sexually promiscuous society. But we need courage to stake our ground and speak out with wisdom and courage. Joshua was promised that, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you". In the same way we need to hold fast to our confidence and believe we can make kingdom footprints in the land! It is time for a new generation of courageous people who believe they have been made to break through!

Of course we immediately recognize that this type of courage is not natural. We need to take this courage from Jesus. Remember when the disciples were in the boat terrified,

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Jesus spoke to them and we read in Matthew chapter fourteen and verse twenty seven, "But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid". So today whatever situation you are facing, hear the sound of the voice of Jesus. He is speaking with you; He says to you: "Do not fear – TAKE courage!" Right now receive this strength from Him and know you can stand not run!

### FOCUS FOR CONFESSION:

Father, enable me to be strong and courageous in this next season. I thank you that I do not have to find this strength from my own resources. I take courage from you! Let your word equip me and enable me to be strong and courageous. Father, I know that as I am obedient and just do what the Holy Spirit tells me to do, I am able to fulfil what you have purposed for me. I thank you that I do not need to feel discouraged because you are with me. Let me have such a sense of the power and the presence of God walking with me wherever I go. Thank you that I can stand in strength in these days.

### EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

### THE NEXT STEP

If you want more summer items please revisit the website.

### Acknowledgements

This material is ©Rachel Hickson and Monarch Books 2010

These meditations are excerpts from Rachel Hickson's new book *Pathway of Peace* published by Monarch. To obtain a copy of the book at a special discount please go to [www.heartcry.co.uk](http://www.heartcry.co.uk)

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