

Christian Meditation Isn't Just for Monks!

Winning the Battle of the Mind



By Rhonda Jones

www.thechristianmeditator.com

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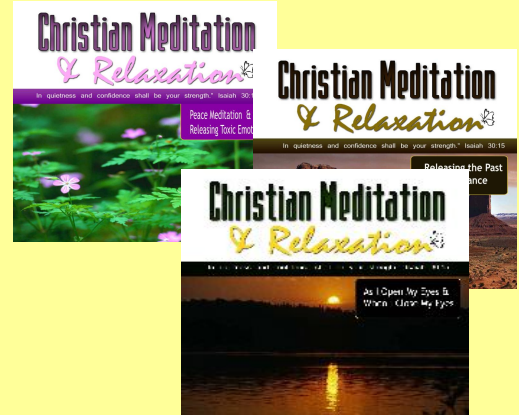
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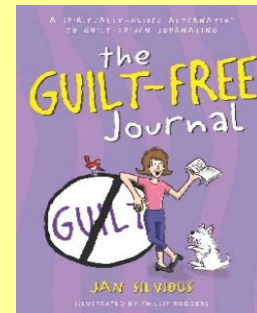
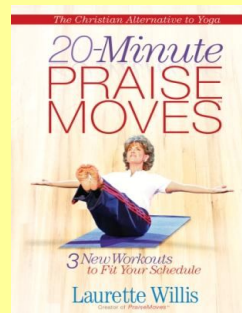
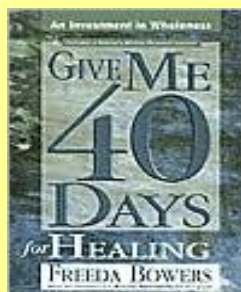
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Table of Contents:

1. Why I Became A Christian Meditator
2. What Does it Mean to Meditate on God?
3. The Greatest Battle of Every Believer
4. How Our Mind Interferes with Our Relationship with God
5. Why Just Hearing a Sermon or Lecture Isn't Enough
6. How Biblical Meditation Can Help You Win the Battle Over Your Mind
7. Isn't It Ungodly for Christians to Meditate?
8. Christian Meditation and Depression
9. Christian Affirmations Displace Unhealthy Thoughts
10. Hire a Mental Gatekeeper
11. 3a.m. Call from my Daughter
12. More Christians Turning to Biblical Meditation

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God bless, Rhonda Jones

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1. Why I became a Christian Meditator

Many years ago I suffered from a severe bout with depression. At that time I was a second grade teacher and sometimes I hurt so badly I would go into the bathroom stalls and just cry. I had done everything to find relief: counseling, medication, prayer, and more.

I had good and bad days, but it wasn't until I stumbled on Biblical meditation that my life turned completely around. When I began to become quiet before God and abide in His presence, an amazing thing happened. I began to hear God speaking to me. God told me that I was so depressed because of the chronically negative thoughts I was thinking. And oh boy, were they awful. I was constantly putting myself down. God then lead me through a healing process than ended my depression and later created a new ministry for me, Christian Meditation and Relaxation.

In addition to sharing the benefits of Biblical meditation, I love telling my Christian sisters (and brothers) about spiritual disciplines that will truly transform their life. Many of us who have spent years serving God sometimes come to a place in our Christian walk where we want more of God, and less of everything else. You know those things we "do" for God, but they don't help us to build relationship with Him. That comes from being still and getting to know Him in a personal way.

I want to share with you more about Biblical meditation and how it can change you life as well. Christian meditation is a spiritual discipline we can put into immediate practice to begin to experience our Lord in a new and exciting way!

2. What Does it Mean to Meditate on God!

If you are like most believers you might be thinking "meditate!," isn't that for monks and those associated with Eastern religions? The practice of Biblical meditation for many modern day believers is relatively unknown. Yet, thorough research will show that Christian meditation is nothing new. You can find numerous books, websites, and articles on this subject alone. However, our greatest incentive for Christ-centered meditation can be found right in the Bible. Joshua said in 1:8 that if we meditate on God day and night that we will have success and prosperity in life. Psalms 16: 11, tells us that in God's presence is fullness of joy. But what does it really mean to meditate on God?

The synonyms for meditate are: *reflect, pray, ponder, muse, ruminate, cogitate, study, think, and contemplate*. Therefore, when we integrate the word meditation with Christian, Biblical meditation is simply the practice of reflecting, musing, pondering, and contemplating God, his principles, his word, and his presence. It is generally referred to as a method used to quiet our minds so we can move from knowing about God to knowing and experience God in a personal way. One of the most common ways Christians meditate is to focusing on a scripture or biblical word that helps them to silence their thoughts, thus creating a greater opportunity to hear God and connect with the Holy Spirit living within them.

3. What Is the Greatest Battle of the Believer?

I began to study and see what the scriptures said about our minds. When we come to Christ, we think that we're going to be instantly transformed to this new creation in Christ. We believe that many of our habits and problems are going to just disappear. Well God does work miracles, but for many of us, once the excitement of accepting Christ wears off, we often find ourselves challenged by our same old habits, problems, and mindsets.

When we come to Christ, we are endowed with His Spirit, but our old degenerate mind continues to need a constant overall. Read what the Bibles says about our minds: Romans 1:28- "Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved **mind**, to do what ought not to be done." Ephesians 4:23 - "to be made new in the attitude of your **minds**." 2 Corinthians 11:3 - "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your **minds** may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ." Romans 12:2 - "Do not conform any longer to the pattern (conditioning) of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your **mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will." Paul said it best in Romans 7:21 when he stated that he knows what to do, but has trouble doing it. "When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22-For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23-but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my **mind** and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

From these scriptures, along with countless more, we see that the "Christian" mind really isn't so Christian at all. Unless our minds are renewed and subdued by God's spirit, it's most likely that our minds our controlling our behavior instead of the other way around. Unfortunately, it's the mind that is making most Christians mentally ill. Our mind causes us to worry, to fear, to doubt, and more. As Christians, or anyone for that matter, our mind is the

greatest battle that we will ever face. Joyce Meyers and other Christian leaders have devoted whole books to this topic alone. Thank God that we can conquer and take authority over our minds with the right knowledge and tools.

4. Our Mind Interferes with Our Relationship with God

Think about it! How often you just stop thinking? Try is for one minute. Even when we're trying to spend time with God, we're thinking about what we need to do next. These thoughts cause us to rush through our devotional time or scripture reading. Our mind has us convinced that we're going to miss out on something if we don't hurry it up. But just like we need to take time to relax our bodies, if we are to have continued mental health and well-being we need to spend time relaxing (and renewing) our minds as well.

According to many scriptures in the Bible, God speaks to his children with a still, small voice. God isn't going to scream at you or cause lightening to strike to make you listen to Him. No, instead, he's going to wait until you become still and quiet. Psalms 46: 10 tells us to "Be still and know God." It's implying that it's through our stillness that our relationship with God becomes more intimate.

Do you remember the story of Mary and Martha? In Luke 10, Jesus was invited to Martha's home for dinner. Martha had chosen to serve Jesus by busily preparing her home for his comfort, yet, her sister Mary sat as Jesus feet to learn from him. The text goes on to say that Martha got upset because Mary wasn't helping her and she wanted Jesus to scold her. However, Jesus reprimand Martha and said "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her. Most of us tend to be more like Martha than Mary. Marthas spend most of their time doing for Jesus (having meetings, attending services, singing in the choir, heading committees, making a living, etc) and not enough time just abiding (dwelling) in his presence, meditating, being still enough to listen, and being filled up by his words.

Jesus said it is only through abiding that we bear much fruit. Christian Meditation is a useful tool to assist believers in getting still before God so that they can build a relationship not based on doing, but on abiding. Abiding promotes intimacy. Intimacy involves time. It involves not only listening but getting to know the person for whom we have affections. Saint John 15: 4 declares, "abide in me and I will abide in you." Verse 7 says, "if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." That means we must integrate dwelling with Christ with

embracing his word. The abiding builds relationship and the Word of God brings transformation. It also brings blessings our way

Just imagine the effect on the world if Christians actually took the time to linger in God's presence!

5. Why Just Hearing a Sermon Isn't Enough

How many times have you heard an excellent sermon or message that inspired you to make some changes in your life, but within a matter of weeks you were back to your old habits and routine? Kind of like those New Year's Resolutions!

The Bible says, you can't put new wine into old wine bottles or you'll ruin the new wine! If you have corrupted thinking, you've got to get rid of it before you can embrace new truth. Here is another example. Remember the parable of the sower? Your mind is like the soil in a garden. Imagine a garden plot filled with weeds, worms, snails, and the like. You take a perfectly healthy plant and place it in the middle of that garden plot. What's going to happen to it? Is it going to continue to grow and thrive? Absolutely not! Before long the weeds and insects are going to devour it and suck out all its nutrients. That is the same thing that happens when we try and plant new truth, God's truth, in a mind that is tainted with faulty mindsets, past conditioning, and falsehoods. Eventually the weeds are going to take over again.

Therefore, before we can truly embrace God's truth we need to identify and get rid of the weeds planted in our minds: the negative thoughts and debilitating mind sets that we've accepted as truth. They are choking out the word of God and causing our Christian walk to be unfruitful.

If you don't do anything about your mental garden, your mind and spirit will continue to war against each other. This is usually an unconscious pattern. For example, God's word will tell you to give to receive, but your mind constantly tells you to hold on to everything you've got. Your mind tells you to always get the last word, but God says to turn the other cheek and a soft answer calms the situation. Again, your mind tells you to work hard and strive for success, yet the Bible says, seek God's kingdom first and everything you need will be added unto you.

If you don't address the false thinking that contradicts God's word, you'll

continue to be what the Bible calls "double-minded" and because we continue to waver in our desires and beliefs, we can't receive anything from God.

6. How to Win the Battle Over Your Mind

It was practicing meditation integrated with the scriptures that helped me to overcome years of depression. Christ-centered meditation helped me to become still enough so that I could observe what was really going on in my mind. Until then, my mind was controlling my thoughts and ultimately my behavior. It took me being still to even realize it. But once I recognized the thoughts I was thinking I was able to challenge, alter, or eliminate them altogether. Ongoing and consistent meditation taught me how to control my thoughts instead of allow them to control me. We can't change what we don't see or acknowledge. I call it unconscious living. It's when we continue to live on autopilot, doing the same things, the same ways without really considering whether these behaviors are working for us anymore.

Our greatest inspirations and truths come during times of quietness, stillness, openness, and reflection- all components of meditation.

Ten benefits of Biblical meditation:

- Relax and Quiet your Mind
- Turn off Compulsive Thinking
- Understand the Scriptures More Fully
- Live with More Balance in your Life Hear the Voice of God More Clearly
- Live in the Present Moment
- Abide in God's Presence
- Create a Greater Intimacy with God
- Reduce or Eliminate Toxic Emotions like Stress, Anger, and Worry.
- Observe the Thoughts You Think So You Can Challenge and Eliminate Them

7. Isn't It Ungodly for Christians to Meditate?

I believe that Christians who are opposed to Christ-centered meditation don't really understand the practice and its benefits. They also fail to acknowledge that meditating on Christ is encouraged in the Bible. Read the following scriptures:

Psalms chapter 46: 10 tells us to be still and know that I am God.

If I'm sleepless at midnight, I spend the hours in grateful meditation.-

Psalms 63:6

I'll ponder all the things you've accomplished, and give a long, loving look at your acts.- Psalms 77:12

Joshua chapter 1 verse 8, admonishes us to meditate on God's word day and night.

Psalms chapter 4: 4 persuades us, "When you are in your beds, search your hearts and be silent.

David desired in Psalms 104: 34, that his meditations be pleasing to the Lord.

Isaiah declared in Chapter 50:4, "He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.

Moses spent 40 days on the mountain abiding and learning from God (Exodus 34-35).

Paul received revelation and saw visions from heaven (2 Corinthians 12). John wrote visions that are recorded in the book of Revelations.

The Bible says even Jesus spent hours alone with God (Luke 5:16; Mark 1:35).

Our greatest inspirations and truths come during times of quietness, stillness, openness, and reflection- all components of meditation. Almost any activity can be abused and used for evil. Sometimes it's not what we do but our motivation for doing it. In the same light, the practice of meditation can be used to honor God or dishonor Him. Some forms of meditation encourage participants to empty their minds in an effort to connect with the supernatural world. That can be dangerous. However, Christian meditation encourages believers to be still before God so we can dwell in his presence, focus entirely on Him, and quiet our minds so we can fully embrace His Word.

8. Christian Meditation and Depression

Each year more than 21 million Americans, many of them Christians, are diagnosed with depression. If depression runs in your family tree, you have a greater tendency to experience depression at some time in your life.

Depression is generally triggered by a crisis or loss in our lives. Everyone gets down sometimes, but prolonged sadness begins to alter the functioning of our minds and may also create a chemical imbalance in our brains.

When we experience depression, healthy thoughts are replaced by negative and debilitating thoughts which start to affect our moods. These destructive thoughts become so embedded in our thinking that they cripple us. The longer depression goes untreated the more debilitating our lives become. One key to overcoming depression is reprogramming your thinking (renewing your mind), but that can be difficult to do when you can hardly get yourself out of the bed.

How can Biblical meditation help? Christian meditation is like the wheel chair that picks you up off the floor and gets you moving in the direction of recovery. Consistent Christian meditation will help you to control your thoughts and renew your mind with God's word. Worry is fear and comes from not trusting God to meet your needs.

Most therapists agree that a combination of counseling and medication is needed to treat depression. The medication plays the same role as the wheel chair. It picks you up off the ground and assists you in moving in the direction of recovery. Without the medication, patients often aren't able to elevate their mood enough to start the healing process. The counseling aspect of treatment helps patients to alter or reprogram their thinking. Christian meditation can assist in the healing process and reinforce your therapist's treatment plan or it may replace the need for anti-depressants, counseling or both. It's a natural way to recovery and worth a try.

9. Christian Affirmations Help to Displace Unhealthy Thoughts and Habits!

If you find yourself battling with the same old bad habits or unhealthy behaviors chances are your mental script needs an overall. If our thoughts control our behavior, then we need to replace unhealthy thoughts with healthy thoughts by focusing on what we want to achieve instead of what we lack. Focusing on lack produces more lack. Therefore, if you are in debt, think about God's abundance and overflowing blessings in your life. If you are fearful, fill your mind with scriptures or affirmations regarding God's protection and safety. If you are doubtful, build up your most wholly faith with scriptures attesting to God's faithfulness. If you are having problems in your marriage, instead of belaboring what your partner doesn't do, meditate

on thoughts that will create a healthy and loving relationship. It will change the way you see your mate. Affirmations, if listened to consistently for a period of time, will help you to change the way you think resulting in a change of behavior.

In her book, *Discovering Your Purpose*, author Ivy Haley states,

"It's difficult to change your behavior unless you change the inner picture. Here you must be diligent and watchful: watchful by staying aware of what's going on in your mind and diligent to deal with negative thoughts by scuttling them and consciously turning your mind to something else. It's possible to change your attitude by refocusing your mind."

Your successes in life all begin with what you believe. There is a phrase that goes something like, "if you think can, you're right. If you think you can't, you're still right."

The logical conclusion is to just stop thinking about what we don't want to create. Right! Well yes, but for most people, it's not quite so simple because these thoughts are not passing fancies, they're actually embedded into our subconscious mind. They have become a part of our mental script. A genuine prayer or conscious act to change may work for a brief moment (remember those New Year's Resolutions), but within several hours or days the old tape starts running again.

According to Haley, we make unconscious beliefs and assumptions about ourselves all the time: This is who I am. I can do this. I can't do this. People think this about me. This will work. This won't. Our beliefs are the soil in which we plant the seeds that manifest into our lives. Unhealthy soil creates thwarted seeds and stifled plants. "Give yourself a target and program your mind everyday through explicit, visual messages that this is your actuality," states Haley. "Our subconscious mind can't tell the difference between a real experience and one that has been vividly imagined," she declares.

10. Hire a Mental Gatekeeper!

Do you battle with negative thoughts or just can't turn off the dialogue in your head? Do you find yourself having conversations with people who aren't even there? Many people suffer from compulsive thinking, but you can learn to stop these voices in your head by creating a mental gatekeeper. A mental gatekeeper is an imaginary guard that you create to stop unwanted, worrisome, or crippling thoughts from gaining entrance mind and planting an

orchard of negativity, depression, or self-doubt. It can be in the form of a guard, a bouncer, a mighty angel, or a goalie, just pick something you identify with. I like to use a batter at a baseball game because I envision the way the pitcher throws the baseball as the way negative thoughts of doubt, discouragement, fear and every other destructive thought are thrown our way.

Worry Doesn't Solve Problems

Acknowledge right now that worry will never change the outcome of a situation. Worry only makes you feel sick inside, takes away your joy, and makes you unpleasant to be around. If you could have fixed your problem or changed the behavior of a specific individual, you would have done so already. Worry won't pay your bills, make your spouse or children act differently, change your boss, make you feel better about yourself, change your bad habits or find you a job. Worry is just a useless waste of your time and energy. Worry is the opposite of faith and an enemy to the believer. So beginning today, I want you to make a choice and commitment that you will not worry about anything any longer. If you have done everything you know to do and everything God has told you to do, you can't do anymore and it's time to turn that situation over to God once and for all. You need to let it go until God gives you clear direction on what to do next or He changes the circumstances. That means no direction, no action!

Bat Your Way to Peace of Mind

Now that you've made the decision not to worry, how do you stop the thoughts from taking over once again? Let's go back to gatekeeper. When wanting to stop negative thoughts right in their track of my favorite terms is the word "Bam." When I say BAM, I see the batter slamming a baseball, or in my case, a worrisome thought right out of the field (my mind). For example, when those fiery darts come like "you'll never...BAM "your daughter... BAM, "that house"... BAM, "you should"...BAM, "no one will ever... BAM, "your bills... BAM. I try to BAM every negative thought the enemy throws at me before he can even get it into the net!

If your gatekeeper is an angel, see this mighty being intercepting every thought before it reaches your mind. The angel might say as it collects each thought, "NO ENTRANCE, NOT OF GOD! Your bouncer might say, REJECTED IN NAME OF JESUS! If you have a strong Christian Role Model in your life, you can envision them saying, TALK TO THE HAND, I'M NOT RECEIVING IT!

You can also back up each rejection with a scripture that not only stops the thought but extinguishes it.

When Jesus was being tempted of the devil, he came against every suggestion of Satan by saying, "it is written...followed by scripture. So your dialogue might look something like this. "Your husband...BAM IN THE NAME OF JESUS...the scripture says, forgive as God as forgiven me. "I hate... REJECTED IN JESUS NAME...Jesus said, love your enemies and do good to those who wrongfully use you. "I can't pay...TALK TO THE HAND...it is written, my God shall supply all my needs according to his riches in glory. I'm going to trust him. "I'm so"...ENTRANCE DENIED...for my God shall never leave me or forsake me and He knows what I need before I even ask. "My boss never..." ACCESS DENIED...the bible says do everything as unto the Lord.

Once you let the thought in, it's much more difficult to get rid of it, but not impossible.

It's usually the very first thoughts you have in the morning that set the tone for your entire day. If you can start your day denying entrance to worrisome thoughts, it's a lot easier to maintain your peace of mind. But what about when your gatekeeper's snoozing on the job or isn't quite so alert, and before you realize it you're starting to dwell upon a bothersome thought again. Once you realize you're beginning to entertain the thought, you may say, STOP, I REJECT YOU IN JESUS NAME! Whatever you do, don't reason with the thought or don't have a mental conversation with it, instead, knock it right out of the court! It's your ENEMY, not your friend, so kick that intruder right to the curb!

If you are a person who is plagued with troublesome thoughts as I once was, you may be hockey pucking or rejecting thoughts almost constantly for the first several days, but as you proceed, the thoughts will diminish and your peace of mind will be restored.

Jesus said we can't make one hair turn another color, so stop worrying about things you can't control. Be obedient to God's word and voice. After you have done all you can do, fight the good fight of faith. The rest is in God's hands. He will make provision for you.

Incorporating Christian Meditation and Relaxation will help you to transform your mind and build your relationship with God even further. Once you stop those fiery darts, you want to plant good seeds into your mind that will help you to live a more fruitful and genuine Christian walk.

In the name of Jesus, I pray for you deliverance over negative thoughts from the enemy and that victory is yours today and forevermore. Now hire that gatekeeper!

11. My Daughter's 3 a.m. Call (testimony)

I am the blessed parent of three wonderful daughters and a grandson. Even though they are all in their early to mid-twenties, it doesn't feel like much has changed except their size and problems.

About 3 a.m. her time, (she lives in NY) I get a call from my oldest. I've learned over the years that early morning calls aren't social but calls for help. You never know what you're going to hear on the other line.

After the initial, "Hi Mom" that woke me from a deep sleep, the whimpering begins, "Mom, I can't sleep and I haven't been able to sleep all week and I have to go to work in the morning and I'm so tired and I don't know what's wrong." After spending the next 10 minutes trying to discover what could be the cause of her insomnia, we prayed for God's peace and protection and I emailed her an mp3 download of one of my favorite meditations, "When I Close My Eyes to Sleep."

The next morning, or at daybreak, calling her to find out how the rest of her night went, I was greeted with a cheery hello. "Well, were you able to fall asleep?" I asked. "Did you listen to the meditation I sent you?"

"Yes, mom and within 15 minutes of listening to it I fell asleep."

"Praise God, I told you they work!" I replied.

This is probably the first time my daughter has listened to even "one" of my meditations. You know the scripture, a prophet is without honor only in his own community. Although I'm not happy that my daughter could not sleep all week, I am thankful that God used this opportunity to demonstrate his love and power in a real and practical way.

Well, another testimony to the wonderful benefits of Biblical meditation and relaxation right out of my "own" household!

12. Christians Turning to Christ-Centered Meditation for Peace, Stillness, and Intimacy with God

The desire for greater intimacy with God is what led Carmen Goudie to seek out Christian meditation and relaxation. "Being a Christian for 22 years, the intimacy was never there until I started meditating," said Goudie. "Prior to that, I thought or was led to believe that meditation was only for the Eastern culture and Christians were not supposed to meditate." She believed that by meditating "other spirits lurking in the spiritual realm would somehow attack me, or invade my life," said Goudie.

Then one morning during an early devotion, she found Psalms 46:10 that encouraged Christians to "be still and know that I am God". That scripture led Goudie on a search for meditation in the Bible. "I was naïve about how many times the Bible mentioned the word 'meditate'," she expressed. After a thorough research of the word, Goudie learned that meditation was simply the practice of quieting her mind and controlling her thoughts. "I thought it would be easy, but found it to be one of the hardest disciplines I had to accomplished," she expressed.

Two years later, Goudie and her husband meditate every morning and formed a weekly Christian meditation group. "This experience has given us a depth of God's presence that we have never had in 22 years of being Christians," shared Goudie. "We are living in complete faith allowing Him to guide us, and have seen his provision in every area of our life."

"More and more Christians are turning to meditation to enhance their relationship with God, restore their peace of mind, and maintain their mental and emotional health," says Rhonda Jones, founder of Serenity Enterprises, and author of series of Christian meditation and relaxations CDs geared to help believers overcome common struggles like worry, stress, fear, or anxiety. Jones was inspired to create the CDs after a long bout of depression in which counseling and medication offered little relief. "It was meditation combined with the scriptures, deep breathing and relaxation that helped me to conquer my negatives thoughts and restore my joy," stated Jones. Her website, www.thechristianmeditator.com provides Christians with a wealth of knowledge on Christian meditation. She also writes a monthly newsletter titled, "**Christian Meditation and Inner Peace**," that contains articles on spiritual growth and promotes her CDs.

"By the time I was in my forties I was completely exhausted with myself and my life," said Lillie Sayles. Her family life had begun to unravel and her carnal walk with Christ was the only thing holding her together. "My constant

negative thinking began to move to a darker side," said Sayles. They were coming uncontrollably and she was stressed to the max.

"I noticed people who meditated seemed to be relaxed and confident," said Sayles. "I wanted what they had **but not** at the expense of my faith in Jesus. I began looking on-line to see if a thing called Christian Meditation even existed. She then purchased several guided Christian meditation Cds. After using the Cds only one time, Sayles stated that she felt so calm and relaxed and has since shared the Cds with her family. "I have seen a remarkable change in our home," she expressed gratefully.

Sue DeVecka suffers from fibromyalgia, chronic myofascial pain, osteoarthritis, IBS, and asthma, all of which get much worse during times of stress. She developed an interest in Christian meditation after working with a Christian psychologist who used hypnotherapy with Christian imagery to help her cope with the pain. Later she developed her own meditations by putting on a CD of the ocean sounds as she visualized herself on the beach with Christ with his arms stretched to her. "I would breathe in his healing love and breathe out all stress and worry," said DeVecka.

A search on internet for "Guided-Christian Meditation" lead her to purchase Jones' Christian meditation CD, "Eliminating Stress and Toxic Emotions. "I love the imagery in it and it lowered my stress levels which helped lower my pain levels. I also love the one on the morning meditation (Morning Devotion) with all the positive reinforcements," declared DeVecka.

Valder Beebe, spiritual host of the Valderbee Show, has been meditating for over 10 years. Beebe says she exclusively uses the Christian Meditation CD's, her favorite being *Divine Delay*. "I have deeply connected with the message and the voice of Rhonda Jones," expressed Beebe. "I use guided and self inspiration mediation on a daily basis. Mediation relieves the energy build up from life for me," she said.

Want to learn more about Biblical meditation? Please visit my website at www.thechristianmeditator.com for additional articles and resources. Also, visit, www.spirit-filledliving.com and click on Christian Meditation topic link.

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