

## **MEDITATION: A List of Verses Used in this Study**

- Joshua 1:8; Job 15:4;
- Psalm 1:2; 19:14; 48:9; 49:3; 63:6; 77:12; 104:34
- Psalm 119:15,23,27,48,78,97,99,148
- Psalm 143:5; 145:5

Note that nearly every verse is from the Psalms. This is because the Psalms were originally *the words to songs*, and singing is a form of meditation! Every time you sing a song (especially if you sing it repeatedly) your mind is "meditating" on what it says - *even when you claim you aren't listening to the words!* (This is one of the reasons that the world - and the devil - uses music to promote its sinful values.)

# MEDITATION: How We Got this List of Verses

(Or: why you might get a slightly different list!)

**THIS PAGE IS OPTIONAL. YOU ARE WELCOME TO SKIP THIS SECTION!**

- Comparing the Old Testament Hebrew words with English translations.
- Verses based on the NOUN: "MEDITATION."
- Verses based on the VERB: "MEDITATE" (and the related verb forms).
- How often various translations use the words: MEDITATE, MEDITATION, etc.
- TECHNICAL NOTE about Psalm 145:5.

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## Comparing the Old Testament Hebrew words with English translations.

There are several Old Testament Hebrew words that can be translated as "meditation." Yet in this study, our focus is primarily on passages in which the *English* word "meditation" (and the related verb forms) occurs in one translation or another. You can do this study by simply looking up the English words (*meditate*, *meditation*, etc.) in a Bible concordance. (Note that some translations may use the word "think," instead.) I chose to examine the Old Testament Hebrew words - but that was just my personal preference. And so, I looked at the Hebrew words and examined the different verses where they occurred, to decide which I thought was appropriate for this study.

The same Hebrew word will be translated different ways in different contexts. The reason for this is that, just like with English words, the Hebrew words can have different meanings and uses. The same word might be used in a "positive" sense of *thinking* about God, or in a "negative" sense of *complaining* about something (perhaps a legitimate complaint). It might also be used in reference to *whispering* or *murmuring*. Some of the Hebrew words occasionally translated as "meditation" are also used as musical terms, perhaps describing the manner in which some musical instrument was to be played, or the way a tune was supposed to be sung.

This can be illustrated by looking at the word translated, "meditation" in Psalm 19:14. This Hebrew word occurs in four different verses. Once or twice is it translated as "meditation" (depending on translation), but only once is it applicable to this study. Strong's Concordance defines this word as: "*a murmuring sound, i.e. a musical notation (probably similar to the modern *affettuoso* to indicate solemnity of movement); by implication a machination.*" The King James Version translates this word in these ways: *device, Higgsion, meditation, solemn sound.*

Here are the four places this specific word occurs, along with the way it is translated:

- **Psalm 9:16** - Uncertain meaning. It may be a musical or literary comment in the psalm. Some translations use the word "meditation"; others simply transliterate the Hebrew word: Higgsaion. [This same practice (transliteration) is done with the word, "Selah," which might also be a musical term. Example - Psalm 3:2.]
- **Psalm 19:14** - "Meditation" - this verse is used in this study.
- **Psalm 92:3** - In this verse, it is definitely a musical term, describing the sound or melody of a lyre (or harp).
- **Lamentations 3:62** - The prophet Jeremiah uses the word to describe the "whispering" of their enemies. Though not directly applicable to this study, we can learn from this verse. Meditation can include the *quiet repetition* of things we are thinking about. (We just need to make sure they are *good* things!)

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## VERSES BASED ON THE NOUN: "MEDITATION"

The number of verses you found would vary, depending on which translation you used. Most of the following would be present in at least some of the "literal" translations (explained below). These are grouped according to the Hebrew words they come from.

- *haguth* - **Psalm 49:3** - Many translations use the word "meditation," but some may use other words that describe it as thoughts coming from the heart. Psalm 49:5-20 is the theme of this "meditation." This verse is used in the study.
- *hagig* - **Psalm 5:1** - A *sighing* or *groaning* (a "meditation"), describing the psalm, which is a prayer for help.
- *higgayon* - **Psalm 9:16** and **Psalm 19:14** - These are mentioned above. Only Psalm 19:14 will be part of the study. As mentioned previously, this Hebrew word occurs four times. The other two are *not* translated as "meditation" in any of the English translations I used.
- *shiggayon* - **Psalm 7:1** - This is probably a musical term.
- *siach* - Two related Hebrew words are transliterated into English the same way. This one is the noun form. (Strong's Concordance # 7879). It can be translated as "a musing" (something that is thought about) or "a complaint" - depending on the *content* of the thinking: **Psalm 64:1** ("complaint" in most translations); **Psalm 104:34**. Only Psalm 104:34 is used in this study.
- *sichah* - "A musing" (something thought about) or "a complaint." (Often the *content* of the thought - whether a problem or something pleasant - will determine which English word is used.) All of these are used in this study: **Job 15:4** ("devotion" or "reverence" - a reference to thinking about God); **Psalm 119:97**; **Psalm 119:99**.

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## VERSES BASED ON THE VERB: "MEDITATE" (and any related verb forms)

This list is based on the English verb "meditate," as used in various translations. Some of these verses may have also been listed in the "noun" list, because of the way the passage was translated into English. The message, of course, is still the same, even though the different translators performed their duties in slightly different ways. The following is just one example of this, using **Psalm 119:97**. (In the Hebrew, it is a noun; but in English, it can be translated as a verb, and still accurately communicate the message.)

- Some translations will say something like: "**I think about** (or 'meditate on') **it all day long**" - translating it as a VERB.
- Others will say something like: "**It is my meditation all day long**" - translating it as a NOUN.

As before, references will be grouped according to the Hebrew words. Those used in this study are designated.

- *amar* - **Psalm 4:4** - Having a talk with one's own heart, when tempted to be angry: most translations, "search your heart."
- *baqar* - **Psalm 27:4** - The psalmist wants to "seek" or "inquire of" God at the temple. This is also a good verse, but "seeking" is not quite what this study is focusing on.
- *damah* - **Psalm 48:9** - To "think about" (meditate on) God's unfailing love - used in this study.
- *hagah* - The following seven verses are from one Hebrew word, often translated as "meditate." It can also mean, *mutter, ponder, groan, muse, devise* (think about how to do something), etc. These five verses are used in this study: **Joshua 1:8** (command to meditate); **Psalm 1:2** (the blessed one *does* meditate); **Psalm 63:6** (meditating on God); **Psalm 77:12** and **Psalm 143:5** (both referring to meditating on God's works). [The word is found in the *first* line of 77:12 and 143:5. A different word sometimes translated as "meditate" is found in the *second* line of these verses.] The following two verses are *not* used: **Psalm 38:12** (thinking about, or planning, how to do evil); **Isaiah 33:18** (a prophetic passage about people who would one day ponder - think about - the terrifying things that occurred in their past).
- *hagig* - **Psalm 39:3** - The psalmist "kept quiet," thinking about something that was bothering him.
- *chashab* - **Malachi 3:16** - To meditate on God's name - most translations have: "to revere," or "to esteem" God's name. This is a good verse, but I didn't think it quite meant what I was focusing on.

- *suach* - **Genesis 24:63** - A word of uncertain meaning; it *might* have reference to meditation (used only here in the Old Testament).
- *siach* (verb form, Strong's Concordance # 7878) - The following verses can also be translated as: *muse, complain, or talk*. These verses are used in this study: **Psalm 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 148** (all these focus on meditating on God's word); **Psalm 119:27** (meditation on God's wonders); **Psalm 145:5** (meditation on God's works). It is found in the *second* line of **Psalm 77:12** and **Psalm 143:5** (both referring to meditating on God's works) - sometimes translated as "consider" or "muse." The following two verses are *not* used: **Psalm 77:3, 6** (the thoughts of a troubled soul - thinking about many things). [Note that in verse 12 of this psalm, the psalmist turns his focus to God, so that he can "meditate" on God's works.]
- *siach* (noun form, Strong's Concordance # 7879) - **1 Kings 18:27** - Elijah mocks Baal's prophets, and asks if Baal is "deep in thought" (meditating) so he doesn't hear their cries.
- *sichah* - **Psalm 119:97, 99**. These verses are also listed in the NOUN section (above), because of the different ways that the word can be translated into the English language. Both are used in this study.

## How often various translations use the words: MEDITATE, MEDITATION, etc.

Some translations use these words more than others. Those which seem to be more "literal" (translating "word for word" instead of "concept for concept"), or more patterned after the King James Version, seem to use these words more often - 20 to 30 times. Others use these words less than 10 times, or not at all. (This is not necessarily bad. Today, many people misunderstand the word "meditation," because of the influences that various false religions have had on the definition of that concept. These translations will use other acceptable words or phrases, instead.)

The following list shows how often these words are found in various translations of the Old and New Testaments. (Nearly *all* instances occur in the Old Testament.)

- New International Version - 18
- New American Standard - 23
- King James Version - 20 (2 of these are in the New Testament)
- New King James Version - 30 (3 of these are in the New Testament)
- New Revised Standard Version - 22
- New Literal Translation - 14
- New American Bible - 3
- New Jerusalem Bible - 5
- New Century Version - 0
- God's Word Translation - 3

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## A TECHNICAL NOTE ABOUT: Psalm 145:5

There is a small textual variation at the beginning of this verse. The New Living Translation reads:

### Psalm 145:5

**I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor  
and your wonderful miracles.**

In a footnote it says:

*\*Some manuscripts read They will speak.*

The issue is whether the first line connects with the word "*they*" in the previous verse, or the word "*I*" in the second half of verse 5 (implied in this translation). There is no serious problem with interpreting it either way, for it is obvious that both "they" (of verse 4) and the psalmist would be eager to speak about the glorious splendor of God's majesty! It's just a technical detail of trying to decide (if we think we need to) which idea the psalmist had in mind at this specific time. Either way, it will not have a negative impact on our study.

It is nice to know that almost every "variation" among manuscripts is as insignificant as this. And among the few variations that are more significant, *no* serious doctrinal issue is involved. God has made sure that, even through centuries of hand-copying of Bible manuscripts, *no* significant problems exist in the text. Though there may be some question as to the *specific wording* in some places, *there is no question as to the message!!*