

HE IS!



KNOWING GOD THROUGH FIFTY
SCRIPTURAL MEDITATIONS

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CONTENTS

Preface.....	xiii
Introduction.....	xxi
1. He Is	1
2. He Is Beyond Us	6
3. He Is Knowable.....	11
4. He Is Light	16
5. He Is One Yet Triune.....	22
6. He Is All-Present.....	29
7. He Is All-Knowing	34
8. He Is All-Powerful.....	40
9. He Is Eternal.....	46
10. He Is Love	51
11. He Is Slow to Anger.....	58
12. He Is Merciful	65
13. He Is Gracious.....	71
14. He Is Faithful	79
15. He Is Holy.....	84
16. He Is the Creator.....	89
17. He Is Good	93
18. He Is Kind	97
19. He Is Forbearing.....	102
20. He Is Patient	106
21. He Is Near.....	109
22. He Is Spirit.....	113
23. He Is Not a Man.....	117

24. He Is Unchanging.....	120
25. He Is Wise.....	124
26. He Is King.....	129
27. He Is Sovereign	133
28. He Is Judge.....	137
29. He Is the Lawgiver	141
30. He Is Perfect in Justice	145
31. He Is Righteous.....	149
32. He Is a Consuming Fire.....	153
33. He Is Jealous	158
34. He Is the Giver of Life	162
35. He Is the True God.....	166
36. He Is True to His Word	170
37. He Is Not Partial.....	174
38. He Is Our Witness.....	179
39. He Is Our Shepherd.....	183
40. He Is Our Guide	187
41. He Is Our Provider.....	190
42. He Is Our Physician	194
43. He Is Our Peace	198
44. He Is Our Banner	202
45. He Is Our Comforter	205
46. He Is Our Shield	209
47. He Is Our Father	213
48. He Is Our Salvation.....	219
49. He Is a Rewarder.....	223
50. He Is Gloriously Great	227
Appendix.....	231
About the Author	233

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is filled with verses and passages that tell us about who God is and how we can relate with him. The theme verse for the devotional meditations is Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*: for he who comes to God must believe that *He is*, and *that He is* a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (NKJV; emphasis added).

Will you join me in a diligent quest to know God more fully and intimately through prayerful meditation on the scriptures that reveal who *He is*? God’s Spirit will illuminate us as we ask for his help. You and I can find our greatest satisfaction, pleasure, and fulfillment in him and him alone! May “grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (2 Peter 1:2).

You are certainly free to read this devotional theology book in any manner you choose. God has given each of us a free will. However, please allow me to suggest how I envision its use:

1. An important reminder: no chapter is considered exhaustive. I have searched scripture for truth about God and have tried to relate that truth through my life experiences in hope that you will think more deeply about God and that your unique relationship with him will grow. It is a lifetime and eternal pursuit to know God.
2. An important tool: I suggest you use a blank notebook to respond in writing as you ponder the reflection questions and read in your own Bible the suggested scriptures for meditation. It is often helpful to read the verses in context to more fully understand passages I have selected. Write out your

own questions, thoughts, doubts, feelings, and prayers as you commune with God. Writing it out is amazing! It helps me think more deeply.

3. An important routine: We are encouraged in scripture to be still and know that God is God. Find a time that works for you to read a chapter at the beginning of the week. Prayerfully ask God to reveal himself to you in a more intimate way as you think about each *He is* statement throughout the week. Think and respond to the reflection questions as you read the suggested meditation passages. Reread the chapter at the end of the week. Only God knows what you will learn about him and yourself in one year. Share what you are learning about God with someone else.

In rewriting the meditations, I was able to read most of them to a small men's group that I have been a part of for a number of years. It helped us to focus on God and have some wonderful conversations and prayer times. So, I encourage you to consider these devotionals for a group study. I would love to hear how God ministered to you through these meditations; you can contact me through the *He Is* ministries webpage: <https://heisministries.net>

1

HE IS



“But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*:
for he who comes to God must believe that *He is*,
and *that He is* a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

—HEBREWS 11:6 (NKJV; EMPHASIS ADDED)

Have you ever heard someone testify about that God moment when they realized God was real? I recently heard a testimony at church when a young woman said with conviction and passion, “God is actually there, and he will help you with everything.” It was clear that she had a newfound peace with God and herself as she shared what God was doing in her life. This was a fruit of her having taken the first step in knowing God, which is acknowledging that *He is*. For truly, the fact that God is has profound ramifications in not only discovering more about God but in realizing who we truly are as God’s children. The tone of awe and wonder in her voice spoke even more powerfully than her words. God exists, and *He is* at work; it is marvelous to see it in others and experience it for ourselves.

A number of years ago, I was holding my youngest grandson on my lap during worship as we sang about God. He realized we were singing to God and said rather loudly, “Grandpa, where is God? I can’t see him.”

I whispered to him, “We don’t see God with our human eyes because *He is* a Spirit; we sense him in our spirits.”

Apparently, that made no sense to him, and he said again even more loudly, “Where is God? I can’t see him.”

He accepted my next response, “Listen to the worship music; we will talk about it later.” Which we did.

In my experience, there seems to be primarily three groupings of people in the world: those who believe in God, those who don’t know if there is a God, and those who deny that God exists. Over the course of my life, I have been a part of each group. I realize now, like a water droplet falling on the Continental Divide in the mountains of Montana, that what side of the ridge you fall on will lead you in completely different directions—whether unbelief, indifference, or belief—and ultimately into oceans of different beliefs about yourself and life.

I still remember what it was like not to believe in God. As a teenager, I tried to convince myself that there was no such thing as a god. Therefore, I was very willing to embrace evolution as an explanation for the origin of life. However, to be honest, deep in my being or God-given soul, I knew that an all-powerful Creator God existed and I was accountable to him. I tried to suppress that truth because I wanted to rule my own world. I desired to call the shots of my own life. The truth that “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19) was certainly true of me. Thankfully, God worked in powerful ways and brought me to a point where I willingly conceded to his awesome existence.

God’s existence is where people have to start with God, as Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) indicates: “But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*: for he who comes to God must believe that *He is*, and *that He is* a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (emphasis added).

Have you come to the point in your life where you believe that God is? Let’s consider some scripture passages that testify to the fact that God exists.

In the first sentences of the Bible, we are introduced to God as the Creator who spoke, and light was made as well as everything else. God’s existence is assumed as fact. No proofs for God’s existence are offered in the chapter besides the self-evident testimony of creation itself. The inherent design in this world begs for the conclusion that an all-powerful and all-knowing Designer-Creator exists. You would

think me strange if I told you that the painting on the wall did not have a painter. The fact of the painting presupposes the fact of the painter. Much like the artist's signature on a painting, God has left his unique signature all over his creation. Sadly, those who have chosen not to believe in God refuse to recognize his verifying signatures. The apostle Paul explained this clearly when he wrote, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19–20).

Sometimes God has chosen to speak directly to people in audible words. Many of these occasions are recorded in the testimony of the Bible, which we can read for ourselves. If you have never read the Bible through from Genesis to Revelation, I encourage you to do so at least once in your life, regardless of how long it takes you. If you can't keep up with a reading schedule, forget the reading plan and just read it for yourself on your own schedule. As you read, remember to pray that God will reveal himself in clear and definite ways.

Presently, I call your attention to the time God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and spoke directly to him. Let the following words from God to Moses about his eternal existence speak to your heart:

And he said, "*I am* the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "*I AM WHO I AM.*" And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, '*I AM* has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. (Exodus 3:6, 13–15; emphasis added)

Furthermore, the statements “I am” or “God is” are complete thoughts. God is the eternally self-existing one. He has always existed and will always exist. *He is* eternal and never came into being or was created. *He is* the Creator and Sustainer of everyone and everything! Paul revealed this person as none other than the Lord Jesus Christ when he wrote, “*He is* the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And *he is* before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15–17).

In the Gospels, it is recorded that Jesus claimed to be the “I am,” and the religious leaders wanted to stone him for blasphemy. Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58), and in the book of Revelation, Jesus is called “the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8).

In the Old Testament song book, the testimony of God’s existence is poetically and beautifully described by King David in Psalm 19:1: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” Faith and belief in not only the existence of God, but the possibility and reality of a personal relationship with God is a safe and logical supposition to make when you look at his creation with an open heart and mind. It is rather a mysterious journey that is unique to each of us when God brings us to have faith in him. I would encourage you to read Psalm 19 over and over again and ask yourself the following questions:

- Can I believe what David believed and testified about God in Psalm 19?
- If or since God exists, what can I believe about myself?
- What role does the testimony of the biblical scriptures have in knowing God?
- What rewards are promised to those who seek God?

Reflection:

- How did you come to believe in the existence of God, or what are your obstacles to believing?
- In what ways are you in awe of God and how will you express this in worship?

Scripture Meditation: God Is!

- Psalm 90:1–2
- Isaiah 44:6
- John 8:54–59
- Revelation 1:4–8

Notes:

APPENDIX

Methodology: In writing the devotional meditations, I did not try to start with an idea about God. I did word and phrase searches within a Bible search program to see what the Bible itself said about who God is. Those searches helped me find the many *God is* statements, where I read about each quality or work of God in context. With a list of every verse and passage I could find on a particular *God is* statement, I meditated and wrote a devotional with the goal of letting God's Word speak for itself about who *He is*. I incorporated stories from my life as a grandpa would tell to his grandchildren. The Master Teacher, Jesus Christ, is my example in using stories to teach lessons and using common experiences to teach spiritual truth. I have tried to do so in a way that would honor Jesus and only shed a good light on others, but sometimes they reveal our humanity and sinful tendencies, mostly my own. Any reflection on my family, friends, or people who personally know me is done with love and grace. I have a profound appreciation for those who have spoken into my life through the years of my life. I thank God for how he has used each person to influence me. We grow best in community, as we are like iron sharpening iron for the glory of God.

Scriptural quotations: For the most part, I have quoted from the English Standard Version of the Bible (ESV) approximately eight hundred verses, with about six verse quotations from the King James Version (KJV), eight from the New King James Version (NKJV), and six verses from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). In some instances, I have noted that any italics type was my way of adding emphasis to the subject at hand in a particular devotional. Furthermore, in passages of scriptures quoted, I sometimes arranged the verses in a more poetic

format. I also on purpose left out the verse markings in all passages quoted. I have found that sometimes the breaking up of the text by verse notations can get in the way of understanding. I first experienced the concept of removing the verse notations at a Bible Study Dig-In Retreat hosted by Intervarsity Campus Fellowship at Cannon Beach, Oregon, in 1980, while a student at Umpqua Community College. That weekend of study and fellowship set a fire in me to know Jesus better through the reading of God's Word. It was after this intensive Bible study weekend that my desire to enroll in a Bible college grew exponentially.

A challenge to those in ministry: I once attended a pastor's retreat at a beautiful Bible camp in the mountains of Wyoming. The speaker challenged us pastors to have a God-focused ministry as opposed to a man-focused ministry. This is the admonishment that I recall, "I know you all think your ministry is God focused. Please go back and look over your sermons and Bible lessons for the past year and ask yourselves, 'Is this Bible teaching God focused or man focused?' If your ministry is not God focused, please ask God to help you to become more focused on him personally and in your teaching. People's lives are transformed by getting to know God personally through God-focused teaching from right out of the Bible." That challenge changed the direction of my ministry for good in my life and in the lives of others. If you have a calling to teach the Word of God, I hope that you will consider this challenge for yourself. Preach the Word (2 Timothy 4:2)! Help others to seek God in their lives through his natural revelation and the words of the Bible because *He is!*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

One of the first things we often do when meeting someone is ask, “What do you do?” Presently, I prefer to start my answer by pointing out that I have had the responsibilities and privilege of *being* a son, sibling, husband, father, grandpa of four wonderful grandchildren, and a friend. Unfortunately, in the past, *doing* was sometime more important than *being*. God created us for relationship with him and others, which unfortunately sometimes got lost in my *doing*.

I have put on many hats through life in my *doing*: long-distance runner; mountain climber; Oregon logger; carpenter; undergraduate Bible school graduate; youth pastor; missionary and professor at a Bible Institute in Manaus, Brazil; tradesman; graduate school graduate; pastor; hunter; fisherman; and self-employed as a handyman, Montana-licensed property manager, and fishing guide. Jesus has helped me to do all this better than I would have done it without him. In fact, a lot of this I would have never done without him. He has given me purpose and joy through his grace beyond measure and deepening healing from life’s traumas and forgiveness of sin. I have much for which to give thanks and glorify God!

Life is a gift; I am trying to use that gift by lovingly serving God and others as I grow through the adventures, hardships, trials, sufferings, and victories with the people God brings into my life. It is during and through the hard times of life that I have felt God’s presence most. I have asked God to help me grow better and not bitter through life’s disappointments and failures. He has come beside me and held me up. *He is faithful!*

I am totally humbled to have written about God and shared some of

my stories in the writing of a book that has been a part of God's healing process in my own life. *He is* not finished with me yet (Philippians 1:6). For this, I am thankful. I look forward in faith to what he has for me in the future. Presently, I live in Dillon, Montana, which I regard as my deepening "backside of the desert" period of life. I have always hoped to move back to Roseburg, Oregon, where my spiritual journey began. Presently, I have plans to downsize, sell my home and a business, and live out of an RV, where I can spend winters in Oregon and summers in Montana as a fly-fishing guide. I want to be with people in both states and am open to having more of a traveling ministry of helps as God directs with divine appointments.

I am constantly learning that what is most important is not what I do but what I am in relation to the great I AM. More *being* while I am *doing* is my present goal. I am trying to be freed from the thinking that my acceptance with God is based upon my performance. That brings freedom and peace! I am looking forward to a new heaven and new earth someday.

You can contact me and find more resources for spiritual growth at the *He Is* ministries webpage: <https://heisministries.net>. I hope you have been blessed as much or more than I have in thinking about God. Blessings to you and your family as you seek him because *He is!*