



THE SECOND SUNDAY OF END TIME – VETERANS DAY MEDITATIONS

Rory Hoffman, Technical Sergeant of the United States Air Force, serving since 1999 to present.

Meditation #1 Basic (Rory Hoffman)

Basic training transforms a person from a civilian into military personnel. They teach you how to follow orders, teamwork, marksmanship, and more. They prepare you physically and mentally for your life in the military.

There is another kind of basic training that every single person needs – military or civilian. Every person needs the basic instruction of who God is and what he has done for you. God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Jesus, the Son of God and God himself, is the one who came to be lifted up on a cross to spare you from eternal death in hell and instead give you eternal life with him in heaven.

If you know only one thing about God, may it be this simple yet profound fact that he loved you so much that he sacrificed himself to save you. You have eternal life in him. Believe it. It's the most important basic training you will ever receive.

A reading from John 3:14-17: **Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

This is the Word of God. We sing **Hymn 391 stanzas 1 through 4.**

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Charles Kidd, Sergeant of the United States Army, having served from 1988 to 1996.

Meditation #2 The Do-er (Chuck Kidd)

Uncle Sam wants you! He wanted you to enlist when war was going on. He wants you now still to serve in the US Armed Forces to continually defend our nation. And if you can't do that, he wants you do something: buy war bonds, volunteer for the Red Cross, work in factories, plant a victory garden, ration, collect scrap copper and brass. Be a do-er!

So much of life is about what you do, what you accomplish: your recognition of distinguished service, your promotions, your commendations, your medals. This is what you did. You get the glory.

But when it comes to your relationship with God, how it is that you are made right in the eyes of the Almighty, how you are saved, you are told that you are dead in your transgressions. Not that you will be dead but that you are dead, that you can't do anything to make yourself right before God. You can't earn it. You can't rise up through the ranks. In fact, if you do anything, it will be something hostile to God, something to gratify your sinful nature, something in collaboration with Satan. You have a life built on accomplishments, and God says none of it helped your relationship with him.

Can you admit defeat when it comes to being right with God by your own life, your own works, your own merits, your life as a do-er? This is a tough truth to swallow. I've done so much, but none of it served to make me right before the Almighty.

But that is what you were. Past tense. God came along and made you alive. He brought you from spiritual death to spiritual life. Why? Not because of things you did, not your efforts, but by his grace. It was his undeserved love for you that motivated him to live for you, to sacrifice himself for you, to die for you. This is his gift to you. We can't claim any credit for the effort, but we get the full benefits from the service of our Great Soldier, Jesus Christ.

A reading from Ephesians 2:1-5, 8-10: As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

This is the Word of God. We sing **Hymn 399**.



THE SECOND SUNDAY OF END TIME – VETERANS DAY MEDITATIONS

Eric Meinzen, Master Sergeant of the United States Air Force, having served from 1984 to 2004.

Meditation #3 Line of Sight (Eric Meinzen)

To accomplish a task, a mission, you need to have a clear line of sight. You need to be able to see the target or know exactly where it is if you are ever going to hit it. You need to know the objective if you are going to accomplish it. Once these things are clear, then we get to work so that the mission gets accomplished.

When it comes to serving our God, the end goal is clear. Spread his Word. Spread the fact that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Spread his Word because it is through his Word that God brings people from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive. That's the mission. Shine God's Light into this world so that the Holy Spirit may enlighten others by bringing them to believe these awesome truths of what God has done for all people.

So many times in life, though, we lose sight of the target, the objective. Someone angers us when they speak against God's Word. We see red; we don't see the person in front of us who needs this message so desperately. Difficulties and complications cause us to struggle in life. We wonder how things can go so well for that other person but not for me. We lose sight of the riches that God has given us as he has made us alive and saved us so that we have eternal life with him in heaven.

Other times we are so focused on our own personal missions, on what we hope to accomplish, on our target goals of life, that we begrudge God when the mission doesn't go as planned - when there's another deployment, another TDY, a base assignment that was not what you put in for. And, of course, this is not just for military life; this is for everyone. You get it into your mind that you are going to reach certain goals in a certain way and in certain places, but then everything changes. Maybe it's a job change or a job loss. Maybe it's unexpected health issues. Maybe it's a death.

For these moments, God has given us his Word to get us through, to see the end goal clearly again. He has a clear line of sight for our lives, even when we don't. He tells us to trust even when we can't figure out how he is getting us there. We live by faith, not by sight.

Readings from Hebrews 11:1 and Proverbs 3:5: **Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

This is the Word of God. We sing **Hymn 431 stanzas 1, 2, 4, and 5.**

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF END TIME – VETERANS DAY MEDITATIONS

Gary Turck, First Lieutenant of the United States Army, having served from 1968 to 1982.

Meditation #4 Your Mighty Fortress of Refuge (Gary Turck)

A wet-behind-the-ears new recruit may think of life in the military as a glorious struggle that will prove his bravery and courage under fire while also seeing the world. Then he grows up. The grizzled veteran who has seen war may never talk about it, but you can see in their eyes a more somber, gritty realization that the price for freedom and safety can be disturbing and it haunts them. General William Sherman of the American Civil War wrote in his memoirs, “War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it.” You probably know one of his other quotes better, which is simply: “War is hell.”

You don’t need to be in war to think to yourself, “Is this hell? Can it get much worse?” The suffering and fear is too great. The danger is all too real. No matter if you have served in the military or have always been a civilian, you have had glimpses of hell. You have seen terrorist attacks and wars – if not personally, you have seen them through media and historical records. Personally, you have seen the cruelty of humans. You have lived through times when you feel forsaken by others when there is no one to help you, forsaken by God when you see evil people prospering and yet you, the Christian, is falling on harder and harder times. Life is often in chaos with too many glimpses of hell.

However, through all those glimpses of hell, there is a place to be protected from it. God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Glimpses of hell come and threaten to overtake us, but God is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress that nothing can penetrate. In the end, he makes wars cease to the end of the earth – he breaks the bow, shatters the spear. With the LORD Almighty, hell is not just kept at bay; hell is conquered.

So, in those glimpses of hell, remember who is with you. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Therefore we can be still knowing that our Mighty Fortress protects us from hell and has conquered it for us.

A reading from Psalm 46:1-11: **God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

This is the Word of God. We sing **Hymn 389 stanzas 1 and 3.**

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF END TIME – VETERANS DAY MEDITATIONS

Joe Davis, Petty Officer Third Class of the United States Navy, having served from 2000 to 2004.

Meditation #5 God Watches Over Your Comings and Goings Now and Forever (Joe Davis)

The LORD Almighty is our fortress, but he is also more than just a bunker used to weather the glimpses of hell in our lives. He is our leader, our general – if you will. He does not take a hands-off approach with us. No, he is leading every charge of you life, every conflict you encounter.

He does not order you to walk through the valley of the shadow of death on your own, but he walks in front of you with his rod and staff at the ready, weapons to protect you. He even goes to far as to prepare a table for you in the presence of your enemies. With him leading us, our enemies can be right next to us but no harm will befall us. Yes, our enemies will surround us, but our God is greater. His protection is greater than their attacks. We fear no evil because our God is with us.

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, protects us every step of the way throughout life. He watches over our comings and goings both now and forevermore. He will and does lead us to green pastures of peace to refresh and restore our souls. He leads us on to the ultimate peace of dwelling in the house of the LORD forever.

A reading from Psalm 23:1-6: The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

This is the Word of God. We sing **Hymn 374**.