

One Thing Necessary

Reflective Adult Christian Colouring In

*Blessed is the one
whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.*
Psalm 1:1-2

This book has been prepared to provide adults with a practical avenue of reflection, or meditation, while being mindfully engaged in the enjoyable task of colouring in. There is a popular belief that meditation involves emptying the mind of all thought and many Christians are suspicious about the idea of meditation, believing that it originated in eastern philosophies. However, the Christian scriptures exhort us to meditate on God's law, His handiwork, His statutes, precepts and ordinances. Furthermore, a dictionary search into the meaning of meditation reveals alternative words for meditation such as: contemplation, thinking, pondering, consideration, musing, rumination, mulling over, or prayer. Yes, meditation involves both the use of the mind and being intentional about paying attention.

In recent years, many scientific studies have found conclusive evidence of the health benefits associated with the practices such as reflection, meditation, mindfulness and prayer. The key to reaping the benefits of meditation lies in the skill of learning to pay attention to one thing at a time. Multitasking is a myth, because contrary to the belief that one can attend to many things at once, attention is actually being bounced between a variety of tasks in quick succession. This often leads to feeling frazzled or stressed. Not attending to the subject at hand is also associated with poor memory.

Our increased use of technology, the internet and social media has lured us away from paying attention to any one thing for more than a few seconds, and the consequence is that when we are not paying attention we tend to be less content, more anxious, restless, and more worried – things that are all associated with depression.¹ A study conducted by Harvard University showed that people are happiest when they are not being distracted from what they are doing.² The good news is that our brains are constantly able to be rewired by slowing down, being calm and reflective, and expressing our creativity. We can learn and practice skills that will assist us in this, for example, colouring in while meditating on some encouraging words. In meditation, one's attention is focused on one thing for a substantial period of time. This book is designed to develop the skill of paying attention through slowing down and colouring in.

The hand drawn images presented are intentionally made up of imperfect patterns which do not necessarily resemble anything. This is in order to free your mind to focus, and reflect on the words offered from scripture. Some will find this aspect an uncomfortable challenge as it stretches the ability to be flexible and content with what is in front of you, in the here and now. The main idea is to focus your attention on the words in the image you are colouring. If your mind wonders, as it probably will, bring it back gently, without judgment, to the words in the image. Enjoy with freedom!

I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.
Psalm 143:5



About the Author

I am a registered clinical counsellor with counselling, psychology and Christian ministry qualifications, working in private practice on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, where I live with my husband of 43 years. I get really excited when science 'catches up' with God's word, and scientific research provides conclusive evidence that validates the wisdom of old. This is especially true regarding recent findings in the areas of neuroscience, neuroplasticity, and mental health, which have all acknowledged the health benefits of practices such as meditation, paying attention (mindfulness), noticing nature, and cultivating attitudes such as gratitude and thankfulness.

My hope is that this book provides a simple, easy and enjoyable way of slowing down, being calm, and thinking about 'whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy' (Philippians 4:8 NIV), for in the end, as men or women think in their hearts, so are they (see Proverbs 23:7 KJV). Our thinking, and what we choose to meditate on, have the power to renew our minds and so to transform us (see Romans 12:4).

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Tips and techniques

Colouring in can be done anywhere and anytime for a few minutes or for hours on end. However, to get the best out of the experience, choose a place that is comfortable to the task and set aside half an hour or longer.

Print the image on 220 gsm or thicker for best results.

Have some fun choosing coloured pens or pencils. The enjoyment is in the process, not so much in the end result, so do not worry about what the picture is going to look like at the end. You can print it off again and redo it in different colours at a later point if you want to.

Try using fine liners to outline, and coloured pencils to fill in. Some coloured pencils are able to be mixed with water to give a water colour effect, and others can be blended by rubbing over them with a tissue. Experiment with blending colours and shading – play!

Don't be afraid to modify the image if you want to – let your creative juices flow and express yourself freely. Add bits; fill bits in with curls or patterns using fine liners. There is no right or wrong.

Getting started

- Look at the image you want to colour in and decide on your palette.
- Have your chosen pens and pencils ready.
- Notice your body and what you can feel – the chair, the floor under your feet...
- Read the words in the image, then reread them.
- Read them aloud a couple of times.
- Pick up your pen or pencil and start colouring.
- Let the words marinate with you.
- Without judgment, notice the effect they have on you and the thoughts they evoke.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring it back, non-judgmentally, to the words in front of you.
- Keep coming back to the words. Pray as you go.
- Listen for what He may impress upon your heart through the words. Later, note this either on the flip side of your page, or in a journal.

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