

Daily Practices

Week of 1/18/21 - 1/27/21

DAY 1 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

"¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit."

DEVOTIONAL: Paul commands us to rejoice always—to give thanks in all circumstances. This may seem like an impossible task, especially coming off such a difficult year. Paul is NOT telling us to ignore pain. In fact, Scripture encourages the people of God to lament both sin and pain. We have a whole book of the Bible called Lamentations, which models this for us. What Paul is encouraging us to do in this passage is to remember that the Spirit of God is with each of us regardless of the circumstances in which we are in. Even if the whole world may feel like it is crushing you, God is with you and he loves you. Nothing can separate you from the love of God. How can you rejoice today? How can you be thankful? By knowing that God is with you regardless of what today looks like.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Pray for gratitude.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 2 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷ And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." ²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

DEVOTIONAL: "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus told us to "go and do likewise." In this parable, Jesus shows us that we have opportunities to treat others with mercy whenever we cross paths with people. Too often, we ask God to reveal some big moment where we can act like the hands and feet of Jesus to someone. However, Jesus really just wants us to treat the people he brings into our life with love and mercy. As you pray for someone today, remember that your actions may be God's answer to that prayer.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Pray for a friend, family member or neighbor.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 3 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 103:6,8

6 The Lord works righteousness
and justice for all who are oppressed.

8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

DEVOTIONAL: Every human to ever live has been created by God with God's image imprinted upon him or her. Unfortunately, the effects of sin have led us to mistreat each other. This is injustice, and it could not be any further from the heart of God. As a part of his character, God is just. He pursues justice for the oppressed, so much so that Jesus came to earth and willingly allowed himself to be oppressed on our behalf. God understands what it is like to be oppressed. Yet the way Jesus shows up is full of mercy and steadfast love to both the oppressed and the oppressor. God's love is just and he will not stand idle while people being oppressed. He will act, but one of the ways that he acts is by acting on behalf of his people so that they will act on behalf of others. How has God called you to act in justice toward those who are oppressed?

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Pray for justice for all people.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 4 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: James 1:26-27

²⁶If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

DEVOTIONAL: James warns of religion that has a lot of talking and deception. The more talking that we do, the greater the chance of deception. In actuality, the religion that Jesus seeks from us is a religion that seeks the Father and then acts. Moments like this moment right now are extremely important to seek the Father and listen to his will for us. We need to slow our minds and bodies down enough to remove the distractions, in order to sit present with God. That's often too difficult for us though. We would rather be busy and distracted so that we don't have to change. Sitting with God, without distractions, will move you to change or to act.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Pray for the vulnerable children without families.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 5 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 11:17-20

“Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. ¹⁸ And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. ¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

DEVOTIONAL: God desires for his people to come to him. He wants to gather us to himself. He wants us to be close to him, to seek him, to learn from him. When we do, our hearts move from being a heart of stone to a heart of flesh. God’s Spirit revives our dead and lifeless hearts into hearts that are beating and filled with life. God’s Spirit makes us new—each of us that turn to him. This is why one of the markers that shows us whether or not our hearts have been revived is our love for all people. When God breathes his Spirit into us, he personally shows us his power over death through love. He shows us that no one is beyond God’s love. The life that we experience should open our hearts to desire all people to experience the same life.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit’s prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Ask God to give you His heart for all people.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 6 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:1-2

“¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

DEVOTIONAL: The Spirit of God comes into our lives seeking to transform us by convicting us and comforting us. In this passage, the apostle Paul is encouraging us to allow the Holy Spirit to transform us in all of life. Many times, we turn to God when we make big decisions. And we should do that! We should seek God's will when we change jobs or move. But God doesn't just want to transform a small portion of your life. He wants to see you flourish in everything when you follow him. God wants your character to change and be transformed. He wants your heart to align with him in all of life, not just to align with him for big changes. So as you seek God's will for you today in work or school, remember that God's will may be for your character to change more than for your circumstances to change.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Ask God to show you His plan for your work or school life.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 7 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 5:20–33

²⁰ Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

DEVOTIONAL: God cares for the family unit. He created it and he designed it to mold us into the people that we are today. Families should seek Jesus because the enemy wants to break them apart. That may be your experience with family. Whatever your experience is, God cares about your upbringing; but ultimately he wants to move you into the new family that he is building. God places a lot of importance on the family, but remember that God is uniting his people into a new family—a family filled with diversity united by his perfect love as perfect Father.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Pray for families.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 8 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 16:18-19

18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. **19** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

DEVOTIONAL: The Church has been around since Jesus physically left earth. It has experienced both flourishing and persecution. Yet, it still continues—not because of the efforts of humans. The Church goes forward because Jesus is building his Church. He is the foundation and he is the one building it. We can trust, that despite any circumstance, he will continue to build. But this truth doesn't give us a way out of responsibility within the Church. Jesus calls us, as people within the Church, to bear witness about him. As the people of God, we need to allow God to lead us into the life that he calls us to so that we can bear a faithful witness to who Jesus is. As we have focused on a few times this week, that means that we need to spend time in God's word and allow God to speak to us through his Spirit.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Thank God for his Church and pray for the global Church.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 9 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 2:9-12

"⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

DEVOTIONAL: God is building a global Church, but he is also building a local expression of that Church through New City Church. The apostle Peter encouraged the local expressions of church to live in a way that those within the city are able to see God through their actions. As people within Phoenix, we are what the city around us sees as the people of God. That means we should be concerned with whether or not the city around us can see God through our actions. As the local church, we should be concerned with our lives and our actions. We should seek God in all that we do.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Pray for New City Church and our part of God's plan for Phoenix.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 10 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: John 3:16-17

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

DEVOTIONAL: You are loved. Not with an obscure love, but with a real, active, sacrificial love. Jesus came to you when you were his enemy. He broke down the wall of hostility by crossing into your life and taking all of your sin onto himself. Chances are, if you are reading this—which you are—you know that about Jesus. But when was the last time you sat and meditated on how big of a deal that is? God had every right to condemn you for you just existing. But he did the opposite of condemning you. He liberated you by condemning himself in your place instead. Yet, too many times we don't accept God's love. We don't accept his liberation because we don't believe that we deserve it. You'd be right. We didn't deserve it, but he did it any way. If God didn't condemn you, then why should you condemn yourself? Today, we really encourage you to spend some time sitting in the liberating love of Jesus. Your heart needs it. Don't move on in your day too quickly. Remember, you are loved.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

PRAYER: Thank God for Jesus.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.