

Daily Practices

Week of 3/15/21 - 3/19/21

DAY 1 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with 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: Zechariah 1:1-4

¹In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, ²“The Lord was very angry with your fathers. ³Therefore say to them, Thus declares the Lord of hosts: Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. ⁴Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’ But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares the Lord.

DEVOTIONAL: Zechariah actually prophesied over a few years, starting in 520 BC. His target audience was a new generation of people who were returning to the Promised Land after their parents were exiled throughout the Babylonian empire. Their parents hadn't paid attention to God's warnings, so they were scattered throughout the Babylonian empire. But God wanted to bring this new generation home, so he sits them down and says (in so many words), “Hey remember, don't be like your parents because they didn't pay attention to me.” He was allowing them to start over. But it was really important that they didn't fall back into the same cycle as their parents. This is an important point. Sometimes we just want to push forward without reflecting on the past. But often, the healthiest way to move forward is to start by reflecting on where we've been.

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.

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, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with 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: Zechariah 7:8-13

⁸And the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying, ⁹“Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, ¹⁰do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.” ¹¹But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. ¹²They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the Lord of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the Lord of hosts. ¹³“As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear,” says the Lord of hosts,

DEVOTIONAL: There isn't much else that needs to be said. God was very clear how he wanted his people to pursue justice. But God said that they “refused to pay attention.” Many of us refuse to pay attention to the clear commands that God gives regarding justice. We tend to find ways to dismiss ourselves from God's call. But this wasn't just about issues of justice. As the new generation looked back, they saw that their parents refused to pay attention to God himself. We are too busy to pay attention to God because we give away our attention to everything else. If our attention is everywhere, then actually our attention is nowhere. And the things that are most important usually suffer most—our relationship with God, with family, or with close friends. By giving our attention to everything else, we are going to wake up someday to find that our hearts have been pressed, burned, and formed to be diamond-hard. Our souls feel dry and desolate because we aren't paying attention to the One who gives us 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.

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, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with 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: Zechariah 8:3-8

³ Thus says the Lord: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain. ⁴ Thus says the Lord of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. ⁵ And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. ⁶ Thus says the Lord of hosts: If it is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in my sight, declares the Lord of hosts? ⁷ Thus says the Lord of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country,⁸ and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.”

DEVOTIONAL: God moves into the land, and welcomes the people to join him. This whole book is an invitation back to God. It's an invitation to turn, slow down, and pay attention. God shares this beautiful vision of flourishing when we pay attention to him. But to be clear, this doesn't mean life is going to be easy. It doesn't mean that you will live longer or that all the pain is taken away. God is inviting our souls to find deep rest in him in spite of the difficult circumstances of life. God is welcoming us today with his arms wide open so we can daily enter into this vision of God and humanity sharing in life together. But this vision is only realized when we slow down enough to pay attention to the beauty around us. According to God in Zechariah, when we turn our attention toward God, then we hear from him, we learn from him, and we become more like him.

RESPONSE: Take a few 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.

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, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with 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: Zechariah 8:16-18

¹⁶ These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; ¹⁷ do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord...
¹⁸ Therefore love truth and peace."

DEVOTIONAL: God wants to dwell with us. He wants to live with us. He wants to unite our hearts together with him so that we would live as the people of God. Sounds like a great plan. Right? Except that we still won't pay attention. Even when it is for our own good. If we think that we can be any different from the people of Israel who walked away, who drifted away, or who turned their shoulders to God, then we are sadly mistaken. Over and over again, humanity has proven that we won't pay attention to God on our own. But the story doesn't end there. God doesn't give up on us. He goes a step further because he doesn't just welcome us, but he actually pursues us.

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.

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, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with 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: Zechariah 9:9-11

⁹“Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey...his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.”

DEVOTIONAL: What a beautiful foreshadowing of when king Jesus would ride into Jerusalem humbly on a donkey—on his way to pursue us. He’s coming to meet you where you are at. He wants to meet you right here and right now. He knew that the only way we’d really turn our love to him is if he loved us first. In other words, Jesus pursuing you with his affection and his attention. He is welcoming you and pursuing you. But what else are you letting take your attention?

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.

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