

Daily Practices

Week of 6/14/21 - 6/18/21

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 become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from 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 3:1-5

1Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. **2**For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. **3**If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. **4**Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. **5**So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

DEVOTIONAL: Words are a serious matter. James tells us that if we can master our words, then we can master the whole body. But how many of us have mastered words? None of us—except Jesus, of course. It's no wonder why James cautions us about how we use our words. Yet, over and over again we seem to fail. It can feel exhausting and a little hopeless. But the good news is that Jesus wants to transform us down to the very core of who we are, including the ways that we speak. He has sent to us his Spirit to live within us to convict us, comfort us, and strengthen us. As we start this week examining the weight of our words, take a moment to invite the Holy Spirit to do his work in you this week. Ask for that conviction and strength. Ask for his comfort. God is with you and he has not left you alone to do the work that he wants to do in you.

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 become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from you.

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SCRIPTURE: James 3:6-10

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. **7** For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, **8** but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. **10** From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

DEVOTIONAL: Our words can be used powerfully for beautiful things, but they can also be used for very destructive things. Whether we hold our tongues when we are supposed speak, or whether we speak when we are should stay silent, it can be easy to find regret in ways that we've acted with our speech. To put matters further, Jesus goes as far as to say that, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." (Luke 6:45). In other words, while we might find regret in how we've used our words, our internal character is still revealed by how we speak. What do your words reveal about your character? If you avoid taking an honest inventory of how you speak, then you will never seek to change. Even still, maybe honest reflection is difficult for you. If so, try asking yourself this: how would the people around you say that they experience your words? Is your speech life-giving or is it destructive?

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 become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from 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 34:4-6; 11-14

- 4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.
- 5 Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.
- 6 This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.
- 11 Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
- 12 What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?
- 13 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.
- 14 Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

DEVOTIONAL: Multiple times the Proverbs tell us that the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Here in Psalm 34, David links the fear of the Lord with living a life that is filled with goodness. But at the center point of that goodness, we see the importance of the tongue. David warns us to keep our tongue away from evil and to pursue peace. The problem is that most of us have been injured by someone else's words and we don't have internal peace. Again, the words of Jesus says that “out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” Most of us have internal chaos from the things that we've heard or experienced. But there is something special to how David started this Psalm. David turned to the Lord to find that God delivered him, and as a part of that deliverance, God reflected a beautiful radiance upon David. God wants to deliver you and lift your face up. We are able to pursue life and peace because God loves us deeply and speaks words of life and deliverance over us. Today, your words that you speak to yourself don't have to reflect the painful things others have said. Your words can reflect what God says about you.

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 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 become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from 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: Proverbs 15:1-7

- 1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- 2 The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.
- 3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.
- 4 A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.
- 5 A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.
- 6 In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.
- 7 The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools.

DEVOTIONAL: Over and over we see the importance of our words. There are multiple principles here that you can inject life into your words. Below are some of the principles from above (with a few that are added). With which of these do you most want to work?

- Do not grumble or complain.
- Do not boast about anything.
- Do not gossip or repeat bad information.
- Do not run somebody down, even a little bit.
- Do not excuse yourself.
- Do always affirm other people (not in their sin).

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 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 become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from 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: Proverbs 16:21-24

- 21** The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.
- 22** Good sense is a fountain of life to him who has it, but the instruction of fools is folly.
- 23** The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- 24** Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

DEVOTIONAL: When our hearts are being transformed by Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, he will give us a sense of discernment to our hearts and minds. Another way to put this is that we will be led by the Holy Spirit even in our speech. Our words will overflow with the fruit of the Spirit (found in Galatians 5 as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control"). Can you imagine? What if your words overflowed with the transforming fruit of the Spirit? Your words would be "sweetness to the soul and health to the body." As followers of Jesus, we should be building each other up with words that flow from the Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to impress upon your heart someone (or someones) who you can bless with words that are like sweetness to their soul.

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.