

# Daily Practices

Week of 7/12/21 - 7/16/21

## 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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

**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 6:1-4

<sup>1</sup>“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup>“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

**DEVOTIONAL:** When we act out of kindness toward someone else, but we actually are seeking praise from others, then it is not kindness from which we are acting at all. Doing good for the praise of others is actually doing good for oneself. It is acting out of selfishness, not generosity. But this is so hard to guard against. We all like to be recognized. We could even start with the most pure motives, and then have someone acknowledge your generosity, and you find yourself wanting more and more of it. So how can we guard against this? Jesus says that we should give in secret—giving in such a way that no one knows. This is the true test of our motives. Who could you show secret generosity to today?

**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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

**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 6:5-14

<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>7</sup> “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup> Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread, <sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup> but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**DEVOTIONAL:** Our prayer life is a deep relational encounter with the living God. We can pray with words or in silence, but our desire should be to communicate with God as if we were communicating to someone that we deeply love. Jesus encourages us to pray alone, without distraction, so that we are not tempted to pray in order to look spiritual in front of others. As you are doing this devotional, you are already spending some alone time with God, but how can you respond to the scripture by creating personal conversation with Jesus today? Do you need to spend more time being honest in prayer? Or possibly spend more time listening to his voice?

**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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

**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 6:16-18

<sup>16</sup> “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

**DEVOTIONAL:** Jesus doesn't say, “If you fast.” He says, “When you fast.” Meaning, Jesus expects us to fast because it is good for our spiritual soul. We don't fast as a diet or fast as a way to draw attention to our piety. We fast because it brings our attention to how much we need God to sustain us. Even more than our need for food, we need the presence of God to sustain us. Lacking other things that are necessary to our lives reminds us how much we need God. But the goal of fasting from something (food, technology, etc.), is not to work our way toward God. The goal is to open up space in our souls for God to meet us personally. What do you need to give up, for a time, in order to create some more space in your soul for God to meet 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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

**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 6:19-24

<sup>19</sup> “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. <sup>22</sup> “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, <sup>23</sup> but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! <sup>24</sup> “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

**DEVOTIONAL:** The theme of Matthew 6 replays again: avoid doing good works to be seen by others. If we do good works — or we could say spiritual disciplines — to be seen by others, then our hearts are actually trying to build our own kingdom. We aren’t seeking the kingdom of heaven. Jesus says that we can’t seek both kingdoms. We are either seeking one or the other. It may be painful to be honest with yourself, but which kingdom do you think you are seeking after? Are the things that you are doing actually for the approval and recognition of others? Or is the approval and recognition of God enough for you? It is okay to be recognized for things, but the motivation of our heart’s actions should come from the love and presence of God in us.

**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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

**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 6:25-34

<sup>25</sup> “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>28</sup> And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

**DEVOTIONAL:** It seems as if we are all anxious. The words of Jesus are almost unbearable here. It feels as if he is just telling us to “stop it,” and if you’ve ever suffered from anxiety, being told to stop doesn’t make things easier. Being anxious actually invites us to pay attention to what we are being anxious about. When we do the hard work of paying attention, then we can bring our deep pains to Jesus. And just as Jesus promises to provide in this passage, he will meet us in the deepest fears that our anxiety reveals. When you find yourself anxious, pay attention, and turn your deep emotions over to Jesus.

**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.