

Daily Practices

Week of 8/30/21 - 9/3/21

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 5:11-16

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. **13** “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. **14** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

DEVOTIONAL: When followers of Jesus live publicly in the world around them, they should expect to face persecution. Now that doesn’t mean all persecution is on account of Jesus. Sometimes Christians can just act plain mean and others are calling them out on it. This is not what Jesus is referring to here. Jesus is saying that we should expect persecution when we are living in the way of Jesus. That’s what he means when he says, “on my account.” The ways of Jesus will always be counter-cultural. When we live like Jesus, we will act like a preservative (salt) in culture. We get to preserve God’s design for humanity by imitating God’s vision for the flourishing life found in Jesus. We get to shine a light on this vision for humanity where everyone else is looking around in the dark. Jesus gives us a new way forward. When we have this new way forward, it would do a disservice to those around us if we kept it to ourselves. We have to live our life with Christ publicly. But it may not mean we are always using our words! Sometimes the greatest proclamation of Christ is when we live like him as an example. How can you live more like Jesus 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.

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SCRIPTURE: Acts 17:24-27

24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, **25** nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. **26** And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, **27** that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.

DEVOTIONAL: God is present everywhere and in everything. There isn't more of Jesus in a church building than there is in your home. Wherever you are reading this, God is fully present with you right now. In fact, not only is God with you, he has placed you there to reflect his image to others. While his presence is everywhere, most people lose sight of him. Part of what we get to do as followers of Jesus is to reflect the image of God back to others. Someone's first encounter with God may be in your actions. With that in mind, how is the Holy Spirit leading you to change your actions today in order to reflect 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.

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.

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SCRIPTURE: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

9 Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, **10** for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, **11** and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, **12** so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

DEVOTIONAL: Christians can be known for being loud and for what they are against. Paul says that this is not the way it should be. We should be known for being quiet citizens, peaceable, and full of love. Our actions should be appealing to those who are on the outside of the kingdom looking in. They should be attracted to kingdom living because kingdom living should reflect the flourishing design for humanity. When you look at the state of Christianity, it will never be perfect, but it should be filled with people who are secure in the love of Christ. Only his love will motivate us to live like this because it is only in his love where we know that we are truly safe. Wherever you are today, you can rest in the never-wavering love of Christ for you. He cares for you and will never let you go. Find your rest in his love.

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.

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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.

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SCRIPTURE: Colossians 3:22-24

22 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. **23** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

DEVOTIONAL: The Bible turns both the ancient and modern views of work on their heads. Ancients believed that work was a curse only reserved for the lower class. Moderns believe that work is just a necessary evil in order to make enough money to do what you want to do. But God designed work for humanity to partner with him in the flourishing of all things. In whatever we do for work, we need to find our connection to what God is doing to create and cultivate life in that space. When we connect what we are doing to what God is doing, then it should change the way that work. It should give us a deeper sense of purpose and meaning. In what do you find meaning and purpose at your work?

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.

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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.

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SCRIPTURE: Colossians 4:2-6

2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. **3** At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— **4** that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. **5** Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. **6** Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

DEVOTIONAL: Prayer is our lifeline to God. In prayer we are able to speak to him and hear from him. Paul regularly talks about praying steadfastly or continually. At first glance, it seems impossible. How could someone continually be in an attitude of prayer? On one hand, do not be discouraged. The Holy Spirit is praying right now on your behalf. But on the other hand, in order to be steadfast in prayer it takes practice. We need to make space for prayer in our day. We need to draw our attention to the Holy Spirit's presence with us even when we get busy. The more we practice the discipline of prayer, the more we find ourselves in an attitude of prayer. Whether you are new to the discipline of prayer or whether you have been practicing it for decades, we'd like to challenge you to set a couple strategic reminders in your phone today to enter into conversation with God. As you turn your attention to God more frequently, take note of how you respond to situations differently than if you didn't draw your attention 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.