

Daily Practices

Week of 10/4/21 - 10/8/21

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: Proverbs 12:1-3

1Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid. **2** A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of evil devices he condemns. **3**No one is established by wickedness, but the root of the righteous will never be moved.

DEVOTIONAL: Being corrected or receiving feedback is a gift from God. It helps us learn and grow in wisdom. Left to our own devices we will grow, but we won't grow toward the fruit of righteousness. We will grow rooted in our own sinfulness. Much like a gardener who wants to protect his or her plants from root rot, God wants our roots to be healthy. With healthy roots, he wants our lives to flourish in the fruitfulness of righteousness. One of the best ways to learn and grow toward righteousness is to open oneself up for feedback from other healthy individuals. It's easy to get caught up with trying to display what we think is the best version of ourselves instead of humbly listening to how we are actually being experienced by others. In the words of Solomon, the one who is not humble enough to learn and grow is stupid. Who is someone that you can honestly ask for feedback 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.

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DAY 2 // DAILY PRACTICES

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SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 12:17-20

17 Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit. **18** There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. **19** Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment. **20** Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy.

DEVOTIONAL: Our words have deep impact. Unfortunately, the negative impact of our words can often bring more pain than the positive impact of our words. We need to be careful with the messages that people hear from us. This is the reason why James, Jesus' brother, said, "let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." We should be slow to speak so that we can measure the impact of our words on the ones that are receiving them. A helpful grid that we can pass our words through is to ask the questions: 1) Is it true? 2) Does it build up, even if it is difficult to hear? When we speak like this toward others it is as if we are speaking life to them. We can speak healing to the wounded. We can plan peace in the midst of chaos. So how can you speak life to someone else today?

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DAY 3 // DAILY PRACTICES

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SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 14:10-14

10 The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy. **11** The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish. **12** There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. **13** Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief. **14** The backslider in heart will be filled with the fruit of his ways, and a good man will be filled with the fruit of his ways

DEVOTIONAL: Our hearts can easily grow in bitterness. If we just stuff down our emotions toward others, then bitterness can easily grasp on to the life in our heart. Oftentimes, we think the right way is to act like everything is okay, but in fact when we don't acknowledge our feelings to God, then our souls start to shrivel up. As Solomon puts it, "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." If we constantly turn back and stuff our emotions down, then we will be filled with what we are stuffing down. The best way to process and handle our emotions is to express them to God and then express them to others if needed. Imagine what it could look like if you turn everything that you are feeling over to God and seek his help in processing. Then the fruit of your ways would be soaked in a God-centered response. What are you holding that you need to express to God today?

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SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 14:15-18

15 The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps. **16** One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless. **17** A man of quick temper acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated. **18** The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

DEVOTIONAL: “A fool is reckless and careless.” Solomon is expressing the importance of being prudent and thoughtful with our actions. Not only should we be slow to speak, as we saw yesterday, but we should also be prudent in our actions. Failure to do so leads to reckless or quick-tempered behavior. What are you characterized by? Are you slow to speak? Are you prudent in your actions? Or are you quick-tempered and reckless? Whatever characterizes your actions actually is coming from your heart. Jesus says that out of our hearts, the mouth speaks. He says that a “tree will be known by its fruit.” It may be difficult to look at the actions of your heart, but failure to be honest with yourself will only further perpetuate that behavior. Each one of us has areas where we need to have our sin revealed. Take a few moments and humbly sit in the presence of the Holy Spirit and ask him to reveal an area of your life where you need his conviction. And then in response, sit in the presence of his comforting love, knowing that he loves you despite your sin.

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SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 14:27-31

27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death. **28** In a multitude of people is the glory of a king, but without people a prince is ruined. **29** Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly. **30** A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot. **31** Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.

DEVOTIONAL: At the beginning of Proverbs, Solomon said that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. In today's passage, he says that the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life. God has the ultimate power to give and take away life. But he knows that true life is only found in him. Yet, we constantly find ourselves looking elsewhere for life. Solomon calls this a heart of envy and it makes our "bones rot" and causes us to take out our anger on others. Instead, we need to slow down and drink from the true fountain of life so that we can find internal peace and external generosity. In the next few minutes, just sit with the presence of God with you and imagine how his living water is refreshment for your bones.

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