

Daily Practices

Week of 10/11/21 - 10/15/21

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 15:1-5

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.

DEVOTIONAL: One of the greatest pieces of wisdom that we can receive is found in these verses: a harsh response escalates the situation and attacks the life in the other person's soul. Solomon proposes an alternative response. He encourages us to respond gently and softly in order to turn away wrath and speak life into another's soul. But don't be mistaken, a soft response doesn't mean that we respond passively. In the same breath, Solomon also encourages correction and reproof. This means that we should give and receive correction, but gently and in a way that builds another up in love. Of course this sounds easier than it is to live out, but it should be our goal. What is your typical reaction to confrontation? Spend a few minutes assessing how your reactions could look more gentle and soft, yet honest.

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: Proverbs 15:16-18

16 Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it. **17** Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it. **18** A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

DEVOTIONAL: Having money isn't wrong. Solomon himself was one of the richest people to ever live. But riches aren't the fulfillment of life. It cannot bring ultimate satisfaction. This is why people who pursue riches without the fear of the Lord will always try to get more. Instead of fearing the Lord, who gives and takes away, people fear not having enough and they stop at nothing to get more. This is not the way of wisdom. The way of wisdom is to look for fulfillment in God alone. According to Solomon, it is better to barely make ends meet, and yet live in integrity, than to be well off through sinful gain. God doesn't measure our lives by the amount of money we have. He measures our lives by how we rest in him alone. God completely reframes wealth. In fact, this is why Jesus can say, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom." Those who find their wealth in Christ are eternally rich. Those who find their wealth in money may lose it all at any moment. How are you defining your wealth?

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: Proverbs 15:22-25

22 Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed. **23** To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is! **24** The path of life leads upward for the prudent, that he may turn away from Sheol beneath. **25** The Lord tears down the house of the proud but maintains the widow's boundaries.

DEVOTIONAL: Solomon was the wisest man to ever live and even he acknowledges how helpful it is to seek the counsel of others. We were not meant to do life alone. We were not meant to make plans by ourselves. Part of living with prudence is to look to others for advice and counsel. Failure to do so shows a level of pride and arrogance, which God opposes. Solomon goes as far as to say that God tears down the house of the proud. But what do we do when our experience doesn't always see that? Many times it seems as if the proud continue to oppress and succeed. So how do we reconcile our experience with the words of Solomon? Remember, God has redefined wealth. Wealth is actually found in him. Through our humility we can find the riches of God's intended life for us. And sometimes, though that humility, God answers us through the counsel of others. Who do you need to bring into the plans of your life to show humility?

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: Proverbs 16:1-5

1 The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. **2** All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit. **3** Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established. **4** The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. **5** Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished.

DEVOTIONAL: We can make all the plans in the world, but ultimately God wants our hearts. He wants us to humbly come to him for rest. Whether we find ourselves at the heights of success or the pit of despair, God wants our hearts to turn to him where we can find a deep sense of fortitude. Our plans may fail, and our work may crumble, but our hearts can find safety in God's love for us. Nothing else can sustain our souls and give us the life that we need. Sure, other things may give us a taste of fulfillment, but they don't satisfy our deep hunger for life with God. So how do we move toward life with God? We need to reframe the temptation that we face. Rather than beating yourself up when you crave something else that can't sustain you, look at it like your body is seeking nourishment. But rather than giving it a cheap substitute, turn to God's life-giving Spirit instead of the temptation. Where do you especially need to commit yourself to God rather than committing yourself to other things?

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: Proverbs 16:18-24

18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. **19** It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud. **20** Whoever gives thought to the word will discover good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. **21** The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness... **24** Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

DEVOTIONAL: Once again, Solomon warns of pride. If pride leads you to success, then woe to you. But if humility leads you to success, then praise God. Our goal shouldn't be continually gain more material things. Our goal should be to trust in the work of God and allow him to form and shape our character. Then with how God is forming us, we can use our character to build others up. This is why Solomon says that "gracious words" are sweet to the soul and "health to the body." If our entire life is centered on ourselves—which is another way to say "prideful"—then we are missing out. We are missing out on trusting in God. We are missing out on experiencing "sweetness to the soul." We are missing out on "health to the body." Yes, our humble and gracious disposition benefits others, but it also benefits ourselves. Notice that Solomon did delineate who experiences the sweetness and health. In what ways may you be missing out on the blessing of God by withholding yourself from blessing others?

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.