

# Daily Practices

Week of 1/31/22 - 2/4/22

## 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:** Psalm 56:1-7

<sup>1</sup>Be gracious to me, O God, for people trample on me; all day long foes oppress me; <sup>2</sup>my enemies trample on me all day long, for many fight against me. O Most High, <sup>3</sup>when I am afraid, I put my trust in you. <sup>4</sup>In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid; what can flesh do to me? <sup>5</sup>All day long they seek to injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil. <sup>6</sup>They stir up strife, they lurk, they watch my steps. As they hoped to have my life, <sup>7</sup>so repay them for their crime; in wrath cast down the peoples, O God!

**DEVOTIONAL:** Sin runs rampant all around us. We hurt others and others hurt us. The writers of scripture are no exception. In the life of David, we can see abuse interwoven into his story. He experienced abuse and he abused others. In this psalm, he is writing from a place of being oppressed. He knew what it was like to have people out to get him. He knew what it was like to experience pain at the hand of someone else. He knew what it was like to be afraid and to be injured. Multiple times in his life, people wanted him dead. What immense pressure to be under! What did David do with all the intense emotions that must have been going on inside of him? He turned to God. He pleaded with God for grace and he expressed his anger and fear to God. It may come as a surprise to us, but he even went as far as to ask for the downfall of his enemies. There is only one object that can take the full intensity of our emotions; and that object is God himself. Wherever your story has you, you can go to God with your full self.

**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:** Psalm 56:8-13

<sup>8</sup> You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your record? <sup>9</sup> Then my enemies will retreat in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me. <sup>10</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise, <sup>11</sup> in God I trust; I am not afraid. What can a mere mortal do to me? <sup>12</sup> My vows to you I must perform, O God; I will render thank offerings to you. <sup>13</sup> For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life.

**DEVOTIONAL:** We can take our full self to God, trusting him to care for us. God's care may look different for each story or each situation, but he wants to hear from us. As David says, "God is for me." He is not against you and he promises to be with you. This is incredibly difficult for us to wrap our minds around because, remember, David was on both sides of the spectrum of oppression. He oppressed and he was oppressed. Yet, God was with him and for him. Wherever we are in our journey, God is with you and for you. His presence may illuminate sin in your life that you need to repent from. Or his presence may be comforting, like a warm spring day, warming the depths of your soul. How is God showing up for you in your current season of life? Is he convicting you? Is he illuminating a new path for you? Or is he tenderly caring for you like a mother cares for her newborn? Spend some time in silence receiving God's "for-ness" toward 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 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:** Luke 19:41-44

<sup>41</sup> As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup> They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.”

**DEVOTIONAL:** Jesus knows that the best thing for us is to be in relationship with him. He knows that we were meant to live the life of wholeness found in our creator. Yet, much like the people of Jerusalem, we don't receive Jesus as he is. We have a pre-conceived idea of Jesus. This is why it is so important to get to know the real Jesus—why we spend time in his word and listening to his Spirit. Because if we don't then we start to form Jesus in our own image, rather than to be formed into his image. Jesus made himself known, but humanity rejected him. He visited us in the flesh, but people didn't recognize him. They were too caught up in themselves. Don't miss out on God's visit to you. Don't be too caught up in your own desires that you miss out on Jesus. Because what will happen is that you will miss out on becoming your true self. The best way to become fully you is to form your life in the image of God.

**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:** Acts 9:19b-25

<sup>19</sup> For several days [Saul] was with the disciples in Damascus, <sup>20</sup> and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” <sup>21</sup> All who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?” <sup>22</sup> Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah. <sup>23</sup> After some time had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, <sup>24</sup> but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him; <sup>25</sup> but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

**DEVOTIONAL:** Saul ravaged the church. He severely persecuted people who placed their faith in Jesus. He was involved in plots to kill Christians. The early church was afraid of Saul—rightfully so. Yet, Jesus stopped Saul in his tracks, uniquely meeting him in a way that Saul needed. This one moment radically changed his identity, so much so that Jesus changed his name to Paul. He went from persecuting the church to becoming a leader in it. He went from plotting against Christians to being plotted against for being a Christian. One, the conversion of Saul to Paul is miraculous. God’s people are a people transformed. How is God transforming you in his image? How is he molding you to be more like him?

**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:** Acts 9:26-31

<sup>26</sup> When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup> So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup> He spoke and argued with the Hellenists; but they were attempting to kill him. <sup>30</sup> When the believers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. <sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

**DEVOTIONAL:** There is something else that is astounding about this story. The Christians received Saul/ Paul with open arms as soon as God showed them how Paul was a new man with a new identity. The early church saw many overnight transformations like this. But there is something lost on us as we read today. Yes, the church was exploding, but God's slow, transformational work of discipleship was at work. People were living at peace with each other. They built each other up to live in love and good works. The explosive growth of the church wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't built on individual acts of love and peace toward each other. We can talk about the Church doing this or that, but the reality is that the Church is made up of individuals. The Church grew—and still grows—through individuals experiencing the transforming love of Christ and then living with the transforming love of Christ. Where is God's love transforming you 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.