

Daily Practices

Week of 2/7/22 - 2/11/22

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: Isaiah 11:1-9

1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. **2** And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. **3** And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, **4** but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. **5** Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. **6** The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them... **9** They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

DEVOTIONAL: The never-ending loyal love of Jesus is not based off the behavior that he sees in us. His love is based upon his own character. When Jesus came in the flesh, he revealed the character of God to us by walking on the earth as one of us. His delight was to do the will of the Father in spite of how the world received him. This never-ending, faithful character is the foundation to which we can look forward when we wait for his second coming. The kingdom of God is based upon the character of God as its foundation. This gives us stability right now and it gives us hope for a just and equitable future. The foundation of Jesus' love for you today is not based on your love for him. It isn't based on your right actions. It is based on his never-changing 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.

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 28:23-28

23 When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. **24** And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. **25** And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: **26** “Go to this people, and say, “You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.” **27** For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’ **28** Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.”

DEVOTIONAL: When Jesus came into the world, the world did not receive him. As we see in this passage, for millennia, humanity has not received God as he is. Our propensity is to turn to ourselves for our definition of life. Yet even at the end of the most successful pursuit to find life, our hearts become dull, our ears can barely hear, and our eyes cannot see. God knows that our hearts were created to beat with his, our ears were meant to hear his words of love, and our eyes were meant to connect to his life-giving gaze. Turning our pursuit to him allows us to rest in his healing power—which is available to anyone who would turn to him.

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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: Luke 7:31-35

31 “To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? **32** They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, “ ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.’ **33** For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ **34** The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ **35** Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

DEVOTIONAL: Jesus is speaking in this passage. He looked around at humanity and felt deep frustration and compassion. They had the God of the universe in their midst but they wouldn't believe him. They wanted signs to prove Jesus' existence as God, but they refused to see the signs that he gave them. We have 20/20 vision to look back and believe Jesus was who he said he was; but even still, we miss the ways God works right in front of us. We don't see the ways that he wants to give us life through the power of his Spirit. We don't believe that our hearts come alive through living out the character prescribed in the fruit of the Spirit. Honestly, we are no different from the generation that watched Jesus walk in front of them. We quickly forget who Jesus is and what he's done for us. He went so far as to prove his love for us by giving up his life, yet we want immediate proof that God loves us. Thankfully, God is patient toward us and his love is not based on our reception of him. He loves us in spite of ourselves.

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.

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SCRIPTURE: Luke 6:32-36

32 “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. **33** And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. **34** And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. **35** But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. **36** Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

DEVOTIONAL: This week’s devotionals have built up on themselves to make today’s and tomorrow’s point all the more powerful. So far we’ve seen how we, as humanity, do not receive God for his love. We constantly fall into the trap of believing that God doesn’t love us. But thankfully, his love for us is not based upon what we do. Jesus said that God’s love for humanity is true because he loves us even when we don’t love him in return. This is the example that we’ve experienced from him as the source of love. Because of that, Jesus says that we should love others whether or not they love us in return. Anyone can love when the object of their love loves them in return. But those who have been loved by God have the source of God as their love. We don’t need the love of others to extend true love to them. Who is someone that God is calling you to love despite whether they return that love to you? What could love look like toward that person?

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: Romans 12:18-21

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. **19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” **20** To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

DEVOTIONAL: God’s love is faithful despite our lack of faithfulness. This is why God calls us to love even though someone may not love us in return. The apostle Paul picks up the same theme that we see all through the scripture. We should seek to extend love, kindness, and peace toward everyone. Not just those whom we like, but even to our enemies. As far as we are able to go (because healthy boundaries could also be important), we should seek to live peaceably with all. God’s character will ultimately win out in the end. As we looked at on day one, there will be a day when his character so permeates all of creation that even the most brutal of enemies in nature will live with the character of God overflowing from their being. God’s character is at work. How is he molding your life into his image and character this week?

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