

Daily Practices

Week of 1/4/21 - 1/8/21

DAY 1 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, as I look at my day, I know that you are the only thing that will ultimately fulfill the longings of my heart. May I slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 1:6-7

⁶“The Lord our God said to us in Horeb, ‘You have stayed long enough at this mountain.
⁷Turn and take your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country and in the lowland and in the Negeb and by the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.”

DEVOTIONAL: Normally, the journey from Horeb to the Promised Land took eleven days. However, instead of eleven, it took the people of Israel 14,600 days. Why did it take them so long? Instead of listening and believing what God said, they stayed in the desert for 40 years. Finally, God comes to them and tells them that they have stayed long enough there. We should learn from the people of Israel, and we need to see that God is a God of movement. He wants to move us from where we are into a life of discipleship. It would do us well to meditate on this question: “Where have I been for too long?”

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.

PRAYER: I love you, Lord; you are my strength, my rock, my fortress, and my savior. In you, O Lord, do I find protection. You are my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety. In you, do I rest. (Adapted from Psalm 18:1-2)

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SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 1:8

⁸“See, I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them.”

DEVOTIONAL: Erwin McManus says, “Courage isn’t the absence of fear. It is the absence of self.” God told the people of Israel to go into the land and take possession of it. But that meant they had to step out of their comfort zone. They had to change, and change is difficult. It is scary. But you see, life isn’t about us. We are called to love others and to remember that the movement of God is about God’s people, not just one person. God called the entirety of his people to move. Normally, we just look to see how God is asking each of us to move personally, but maybe we should listen to how he wants us to respond to others around us.

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SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 1:19

¹⁹“Then we set out from Horeb and went through all that great and terrifying wilderness that you saw, on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us. And we came to Kadesh-barnea.”

DEVOTIONAL: God led the people of Israel through the great and terrifying wilderness. But God was building their faith through this! This reminds us that there is no easy way to live the life God calls us to live. It will be a battle. Phoenix Suns coach, Monty Williams, has said “Everything you want is on the other side of hard.” It may be scary, but when God calls us to act, we need to follow him in obedience. We don’t obey God to stay in good graces with him, but we obey God because it is best for us. The ways of God will be difficult, but the ways of God lead you in the way of life.

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SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 1:20-22

²⁰“And I said to you, ‘You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us. ²¹See, the Lord your God has set the land before you. Go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has told you. Do not fear or be dismayed.’ ²²Then all of you came near me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, that they may explore the land for us and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up and the cities into which we shall come.’”

DEVOTIONAL: Moses reminds the people of Israel that the promise that God made to them is a promise they can count on presently. God told them to go into the land and he would give them the land in front of them. Throughout their journey, God was the one who provided for Israel. But when they got to the edge of the land, they had forgotten that they needed God. Sometimes, we use our own fear or doubt to allow us to slip into rebellion against God’s word. When God has clearly spoken on an issue, it is time to obey Him. An easy way for us to refrain from acting is to say that we need to pray about something to which God is calling us. We say that we can’t act, but “I can’t” is often best translated as “I won’t.” To move with him and to trust him, even when it is difficult, may not make sense to us, but God calls us to act.

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SCRIPTURE: Numbers 14:1-8

¹"Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. ²And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt." ⁵Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. ⁶And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes ⁷and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. ⁸If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey."

DEVOTIONAL: The people of Israel wanted to return to bondage in Egypt. When the journey with God gets hard, it can be tempting to return to the life that you had before. Forgetting what life was like without God, and thinking it will be better, means that we can fall prey to living a life of captivity and bondage instead of walking freely with Jesus. To what do you want to turn back? The enemy wants you to find that thing more desirable than God. You can be encouraged that the effort of man will never defeat the movement of God.

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