

Daily Practices

Week of 2/1/21 - 2/5/21

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: Joel 1:4-5

⁴What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten. ⁵Awake, you drunkards, and weep, and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth.

DEVOTIONAL: The land of Israel was decimated. Locusts had destroyed everything. Yet, the people of God continued to be self-indulgent and they couldn't be concerned with the things of God. God wanted them to turn back to him. How true is this scene for us today! Most of the time, when we face catastrophe, we turn to our self-indulgences rather than turning to Jesus. Few things are more dishonoring to God and dangerous for us than half-hearted love of God. The things that we face in life may be acting as a wake-up call for you to see how God wants the full affections of your heart. Consider meditating on whether or not your heart is fully set on God himself.

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: Joel 1:13-16

¹³Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar. Go in, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God! Because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God. ¹⁴Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. ¹⁵Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes. ¹⁶Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

DEVOTIONAL: The day of the Lord refers to dramatic action by God either to judge or to save. Joel warns about the day of the Lord. He says that the day is “near.” On that day, God will vindicate his name and he will judge all of the nations. He alone will place a verdict upon all people. This might sound scary, but God has told us how we can avoid the judgment of God. God sent himself as Jesus to take the judgment of God on our behalf. We turn to God to escape the final judgement. But that’s not the only reason we should turn to God. What’s best for us is to continually walk in the ways of God. We need reminders to turn back to God. Joel is inviting us, as God’s people, to see where we need to turn our focus back to God.

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SCRIPTURE: Joel 2:12-14

¹²“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

DEVOTIONAL: Joel never views disaster as only a natural event or an accident. While disasters can be very painful and are a legitimate reason for mourning, they are always within the plan of God. We must recognize the paradox that the day of the Lord is at the same time both one event and many events. When we face disasters and calamities, we have an opportunity to turn to God or to turn to the pleasures of the world. The best choice for us is to turn to God because only he can meet us in the depths of our heart. Only God can meet us where we really need to be met. The more we find ourselves in God, the more we find ourselves.

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SCRIPTURE: Joel 2:26-27

²⁶ “You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. ²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

DEVOTIONAL: Joel calls the people of God to repentance. When we turn to God, then we will find that he will satisfy us; we will find that he is merciful; we will find that he is with us. God himself responded to Israel by saying “I am in the midst of Israel, and I am the Lord your God and there is none else.” Today, the same words ring true. God is with you and only God alone can satisfy you. Wherever you are looking for satisfaction today, it won’t truly satisfy unless it is God himself. He is the well that never runs dry. He will be enough.

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SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:17-21

17 “ ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; **18** even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. **19** And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; **20** the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. **21** And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

DEVOTIONAL: In this passage in Acts, Peter quotes Joel. We can know that, if our hearts wander from God, he will fight for us—and even against us—in order to bring us to repentance. God wants your full affection because he knows that he is best for you. God loves us so much that he sent his Spirit to live in all who call on his name. You have the power of God living within you right now if you have called on Jesus. You can experience the power and grace of God that Joel promises because of the work of God. He sought you out so that you can turn to him and be saved. He sought you out so that you can continually turn to him and flourish.

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