

Daily Practices

Week of 4/12/21 - 4/16/21

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. May I become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from 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: Ephesians 2:1–3

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

DEVOTIONAL: We enter this life dead spiritually. Our spirit was not connected to God. We had no relationship to God—we were separated from him. Sure, we may have been breathing, walking, talking—alive physically. But spiritually, our lives told a different story. Without God, we place ourselves in the center of our universe. We chase after things that we hope fulfill the deep longing in our heart to find significance. And while there are many things that are good substitutes (meaning, they can even be good things), they don't ultimately fulfill the desires within. We call this sin—anything that takes the place of God at the center of our lives. What is honestly at the center of your life?

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. May I become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from 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: Isaiah 44:3-4

³ For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. ⁴ They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams.

DEVOTIONAL: Our spiritual "dead-ness" needed to be addressed. Isaiah looks toward a day when God's Spirit would come upon his people and lead them toward living whole lives. We can see this vision when Isaiah describes a life that is like flourishing grass beside a flowing stream. He envisions a life that is fully alive. You see, God's Spirit brings life because he is life. But the problem that we face is that we always look for life in our external circumstances, and when we do that, we are once again placing something other than God at the center of our lives. That's how we defined sin yesterday. The life that God wants to give to us through his Spirit is the kind of life that breathes into our souls. How do we do that? We have to open our hearts up to allow that Spirit to come in and reorder our desires. The imagery of the Spirit being placed upon our hearts is helpful because it requires us to open our hearts for the Spirit to move in. How are you opening your heart to God's Spirit 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.

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. May I become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from 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: Ezekiel 36:24-24

²⁴I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

DEVOTIONAL: Yesterday, we saw how God used the imagery of placing the Spirit upon his people. However, Scripture shows us over and over again that people do not open their hearts to things of God. God changed his approach and promised a day when his Spirit wouldn't just rest upon us, but that it would actually come into our hearts and give us a new heart. God promises a day when we will be completely given a new heart because he promises to cleanse us. Obviously, he isn't referring to a new physical heart, but a new spiritual heart. He wants to take our heart of stone, which constantly places ourselves at the center of our life, and give us a new, beating heart of flesh. This new heart has the life in the Spirit breathing God's life into our souls. But God's life doesn't leave us to turn back to our sinful ways. God's life breathed into our souls transforms us from the inside out. How is God's breath in your heart transforming you on the inside?

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 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. May I become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from 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: John 3:3-6

³ Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

DEVOTIONAL: Just like yesterday, Jesus uses physical language to illustrate our spiritual reality. We saw that God wants to give us a new heart. Today, we see that Jesus wants us to be "born again"—not physically, but spiritually. It's clear that God wants to transform us. He wants us to move from death to life. This is a process that theologians call "regeneration." Just as water brings life to plants and trees, the Spirit brings life to spiritually dead people need. Only God can give us this life. We can't do this for us ourselves, just like we didn't choose to be born physically—it was done for us. This spiritual birth is not simply a do-over in life. It doesn't mean that you are going to stop doing all of that bad stuff and turn over a new leaf. It is a work of God—it is spiritual, it is supernatural, and it is a bit mysterious. But God doesn't leave us to just passively receive it either. He invites us into the process. He asks us to open our hearts to the Spirit's work. How can you open your heart to the Spirit 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.

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. May I become more aware of your Spirit's presence with me right now. Please open my heart to receive from 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: John 3:7-8

⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

DEVOTIONAL: The Spirit is like the wind or breath. We don't always know where it comes from or where it is going, but we can see the effects—leaves blowing, the sound of a low howl, or our allergies might act up. The same is true of the Spirit. There is some mystery. We can't see the Spirit, but we do see His effect on our lives—or at least we should! The Spirit's work has an ongoing effect on our lives. As we move in our day, the Spirit is constantly at work. He is constantly trying to teach us, lead us, and guide us. He wants to simultaneously convict us and comfort us. But are we willing to slow down enough to pay attention? Are we willing to quiet our hearts long enough to listen for him?

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.