

Daily Practices

Week of 5/17/21 - 5/21/21

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: John 10:1-5

1 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. **2** But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. **3** To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. **5** A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

DEVOTIONAL: Especially in times of discernment, who doesn't want to hear the voice of God? Most people hope that God tells them to choose "option A" over "option B." We want to do God's will, but we want him to tell us clearly. The good news is that Jesus knows this about us and he tells us that it is possible to hear the voice of God as the Good Shepherd. But the bad news is that sometimes it is difficult to discern whether the voice we hear is the voice of God or the voice of someone else. God wants to speak; but we often have to discern the source of what we hear. This week we will explore some principles that can help us discern. Firstly, when we are discerning the voice of God, we must turn to the Scripture to test what we are hearing. We need to remember that God's will is not a tight rope where we will fall from God's approval if we make the wrong choice. His will often is about our character formation over our daily decisions. Whether you choose one option over another may not actually be a big deal to God. But who you are becoming in your choices is what ultimately matters to God. This is why so much of the Scripture points to our character formation rather than making choices. Does it form us to be more like Jesus? Does it align with what God has already revealed in Scripture?

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.

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SCRIPTURE: Luke 6:12-19

12 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. **13** And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: **14** Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, **15** and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, **16** and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. **17** And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, **18** who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. **19** And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

DEVOTIONAL: When we are discerning the voice of God, another way that we can test what we are hearing, sensing, or feeling is by comparing it to the example of Jesus. We are called to follow the life of Jesus as an example for our own lives, so anything that we think might be the voice of God should align with the life of Jesus. But that means that we should be consistently familiarizing ourselves with Jesus by reading the Gospels. We should see how Jesus interacted with others, how he found silence and solitude to pray, and how he was a loving presence for those who were outcast from society. However God may be leading you, it probably will be something consistent with the life of Christ. This means that even some of Jesus's life practices could help us in our discernment process. John 15 says that Jesus had to discern the will of the Father while on earth. Jesus is our ultimate example of seeking the Father's will because Jesus always did what the Father wanted him to do. Today's reading is a perfect example of Jesus seeking God's will in prayer before he acted.

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.

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SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **3** If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

DEVOTIONAL: When discerning whether or not we are hearing the voice of God, it is important to appeal to God's own character. He will never call us to do something that is outside of his character. Now, God's character is multifaceted, and he lives out his character perfectly. We will never be able to perfectly follow him. However, we are still called to try because it is what's best for us. The apostle Paul takes one aspect of God's character and shows us how it is important to imitate God in love. In today's passage, Paul tells us that we could do great things for God, but if we aren't doing said acts out of love, then they mean nothing. God's character is fully love: meaning, that everything God does is out of love. If God's voice is speaking to you, then it will be calling you into a greater love for him and for others. How is God moving you toward love today?

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: Proverbs 15:21-24

- 21** Folly is a joy to him who lacks sense, but a man of understanding walks straight ahead.
- 22** Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.
- 23** To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!
- 24** The path of life leads upward for the prudent, that he may turn away from Sheol beneath.

DEVOTIONAL: The people around us should confirm to us what God is speaking. This may not always be the case; however, the trusted community that God has placed in your life are also hearing from God, and they can be extremely helpful in the discernment process. The writer of Proverbs 15 says that our plans often fall without counsel, "but with many advisers they succeed." We should not make our decisions without trusted input for others. Maybe they are able to look at your situation differently, or maybe the Lord is speaking to them on your behalf. Whatever the case may be, God wants to use others to speak to us, so it is best to seek counsel in your discernment process.

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 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.

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SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 2:12-16

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. **13** And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. **14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. **15** The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. **16** "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

DEVOTIONAL: When Jesus physically left earth, he sent his Spirit to indwell us. Jesus promises that this Spirit will lead us and guide us. We can trust that the Spirit wants to do these things. It may take time, or we may not receive the answer that we expect, but God does want to answer us. Sometimes the Spirit may be giving you a sense that he wants you to act. It may not make sense, but if it aligns with scripture, the life of Christ, and the character of God, then the Holy Spirit may be asking you to do something that wouldn't normally make sense to you. You see, the Spirit has the mind of Christ, and sometimes Christ calls us to things that don't make sense. This is consistent with the life of Jesus. Jesus's disciples expected Jesus to set up his kingdom very differently than the way Jesus ultimately ushered in the kingdom. God may be asking you to do something that you don't understand. If his peace is overwhelming you about this decision, then act on it knowing that you are God's child, fully loved in Christ.

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.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

“My sheep hear my voice...”

John 10

What does scripture say?

Rom 10:17

2 Tim 3:16-17

Psalms 119: 105

What does the life of Jesus say?

John 5:19

Matthew 4

Matthew 14:23

Mark 1:35

Luke 6:12

Matthew 19:13, 26:36

Mark 4:6, 6:46, 14:32

Luke 5:16, 9:28, 11:1

What does the character of God say?

Love: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Just: Micah 6:8, Matthew 23:23

Holy: Isaiah 6:3, 1 Peter 1:14-16

What do other believers say?

Proverbs 13:20

Proverbs 15:22

What does the Holy Spirit say?

John 14

1 Corinthians 2:12-16

Romans 8

God's will is about character over place

Philippians 4:5-7

Galatians 5:18-26

God redirects those who move with him

Acts 16:6-10

Be prepared to do hard things

2 Timothy 3:12

Acts 20:22, 21:4, 21:12

Acts 9