

Daily Practices

Week of 5/10/21 - 5/14/21

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 1:13-14

13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

DEVOTIONAL: If you have placed your faith in Jesus, something mysterious has happened in your life. It's hard to explain because we can't physically see what happened and we can't fully grasp the enormity of it. The Holy Spirit moved into your body and sealed your salvation. The same God who created the universe and raised Jesus from the dead now lives inside of you. His presence is a guarantee that we've experienced the salvation to new life. As a result, the Holy Spirit living within you wants to help you and guide you toward this new life. We won't fully experience this new life yet, but we can start to experience the promise of this new life. The promise is that, if you have placed your faith in Jesus, you will experience this new life—maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow; but you will. You can trust that you will experience it because the Holy Spirit, God himself, is protecting your salvation.

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: Romans 8:21-25

21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. **22** For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, **23** but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. **24** Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? **25** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

DEVOTIONAL: Placing your faith in Jesus—even deeply and inwardly delighting in the ways of God—doesn't mean that you will stop struggling with sin. The apostle Paul, who wrote this passage, openly shares about his own struggle. Despite longing to do what is right, he still finds himself doing the very things that he hates. In complete exasperation, he cries out "Wretched man that I am!" Most of us probably share this sentiment with the apostle. We have moments where we just want to cry out: "Why! Why do I keep doing this!" Our experiences highlight how deeply sin is formed within us. It is alive and it's working to kill and destroy us. Only something more powerful could rescue us from the grips that sin has on our lives. "Thanks be to God!" Jesus has broken the power of sin, and he sent his Spirit to empower us. This indwell Spirit is alive and active in you. He wants to take those deeply formed places of your life, where sin has its grip, and he wants to form you with love and grace and mercy. Will you allow him to do his work and deeply form you?

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: Galatians 5:18-21

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **19** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, **21** envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

DEVOTIONAL: While we wait for the fullness of the inheritance that Jesus earned for us, we still live on this earth. We still live in this body that has inherited sin. The Holy Spirit wants to free us from the power that sin has over us. He wants to lead us toward the new life that God intends for us. But that means that there will be a struggle between living under the works of the flesh, where we struggle with our sinful tendencies, and living in the fruit of the Spirit, where we live in the evidence of our attachment to Christ. Paul contrasts both types of living, but today we are sitting in the reality of the works of the flesh in our lives. We will struggle. Sin controls and it destroys. Even if it feels good for a moment, sin always hurts you and the people around you. Out of this list, there is something that God wants to work out of you because it has control over you. You have to acknowledge this reality though. If you don't acknowledge the reality that you are enslaved to sexual immorality, or fits of anger, or jealousy, or drunkenness, then you won't allow the Holy Spirit to lead you toward wholeness. Take the response time this morning to ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of ways that you need to see your sinfulness.

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: Galatians 5:22-25

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **24** And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. **26** Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

DEVOTIONAL: The contrast to the works of the flesh is the fruit of the Spirit. Literally, the fruit of the Spirit is what blossoms from a life that rests in Christ. During Jesus' last supper, he told his disciples to rest in his love. When they do, he promises that they would bear fruit. The fruit to which he was alluding was the fruit of God himself. Today's passage gives us a clear view of what God's fruit is—the fruit of the Spirit. When we rest in the love of Jesus, we submit our lives to God's leading. We don't have to submit to the ways of sin any longer. We can live free and whole, walking in the ways of God, which is the way God designed us to live. Rather than trying to conjure up love, joy, peace, patience, etc., you can just sit and rest in the loving presence of Jesus' nonjudgmental and limitless mercy.

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.

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

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

12 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. **13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

DEVOTIONAL: God is faithful to you. His mercy is new every morning. Even though we will struggle with sin on this side of eternity, God is faithful to help you live in the ways of Jesus. He knows that we will need help, so he has given us a Helper. This Helper is the Holy Spirit that strengthens you to be able to say no to sin. When you feel overwhelmed, when you feel discouraged, remember—you are not alone. God did not leave you alone to try to live in this new life by yourself. The very power that raised Jesus from the dead now lives in you to empower you to say no to sin. He is empowering you to live more fully whole. This ideal life sounds so appealing to many; but with this ideal life, come people's expectation of perfection. That can cause feelings of shame when we don't match up to it. Remember, you won't be perfect. God's standard of perfection was met in Jesus. The way we receive that perfection is attach ourselves to him. Once again, that leaves us to rest in Jesus. Take a deep breath and rest in the perfect work of Jesus, allowing the fruit of his life to blossom in you as the fruit of the Spirit.

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.