

Daily Practices

Week of 9/6/21 - 9/10/21

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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

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 3:14-19

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, **16** that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

DEVOTIONAL: Paul stops in the middle of the whole book of Ephesians to pray. He prays that each of us would experience the love of God deep within our souls. Yes, the church matters. Yes, the community matters. But so do you. The life in your soul matters. In fact, God wants you personally to experience himself so deeply that Jesus came to earth to walk with us. But he also left earth so that we could all experience all of him at all times. He said it was better for us that he leaves so he could send his Spirit to live within each one of us. The power of the Spirit gives you access to God right now. In order to fully experience the benefits of God living within us, we have to order our lives to dwell with God. We have to open our inner life to him. When we turn to him, Jesus wants us to experience the fullness of the love of Christ. We can bring our doubts, our fears, our weakness; all of it. God. Just. Wants. Us.

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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

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

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 1:1-4

¹Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

DEVOTIONAL: It is so easy to allow all the other voices around us to be the voices that shape us. We let Netflix shape us. We let social media shape us. We let pop culture shape us. But how often do we let the words of God shape us? Do we really give his word the weight in our lives that it is due? The Psalmist says that he meditates on God's word day and night. But is that your experience? When we allow the words of God to shape us, then we are more likely to find that our lives are more stable. We will find that our hearts are more grounded in the promise of God's love. We can face the pain of life knowing that God is ever-present with us. We just may find that we feel more like a flourishing tree that is planted by streams of water, in the words of the Psalmist.

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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

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

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 4:4-8

⁴Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*

⁵Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord. ⁶There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!" ⁷You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. ⁸In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

DEVOTIONAL: David acknowledges the gamut of emotions here. He talks about anger, joy, and peace. All are appropriate in the kingdom of God. Sometimes we only think that emotions like joy and peace are the emotions that a Christian should feel. But both David and later, the apostle Paul, give us permission to feel other emotions like anger. Besides the fact that David models a healthy relationship with God by expressing himself to God, he actually commands us to be angry. There are some things that followers of Jesus should be angry about. For instance, we should be angry at injustice. We should be angry at abuse. But in the same breath David commands us to not sin with our anger. How can we be angry without sinning? By taking our anger into silent reflection with God. Before we react, we should align ourselves with the heart of God. Is this something that God would be angry about? Is this something that he wants me to respond to? If those answers are yes, then we should respond appropriately. In all things, we should bring our deep inner self to God. Whether we are experiencing high highs or low lows, God wants us to come to 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.

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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

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

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 6:6-9

⁶I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.
⁷My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes. ⁸Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. ⁹The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord accepts my prayer.

DEVOTIONAL: David's words in this Psalm may either encourage you or make you feel uncomfortable. He is clearly exhausted from weeping. He is filled with grief and doesn't feel like he has energy to carry on. Most of the time we don't give ourselves space to feel such emotion. But rather than stuffing it down or distracting himself with busyness, David let it all out. He cried out to God with a flood of grief and tears. What was he grieving about? We don't know. And that makes it all the more powerful that we don't know because the point is that God wants to hear from us. He wants the depths of our hearts to come out. In fact, David said that the Lord considered his tears as a form of prayer. When was the last time you considered a good cry as a form of prayer? If we just stuff down the painful emotions that we experience, then we will never allow God to meet us in the depths of our hearts. What do you need to let out to God?

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 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. Please open my heart to receive what you want me to hear; and please empower me by your Spirit to live the way that you are asking me to live.

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

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 103:1-5

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, **3** who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, **4** who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, **5** who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

DEVOTIONAL: David writes Psalm 103 and he offers up praise to God for all that he has done. David asks his own soul to remember the benefits of being in relationship with God. In a world that is tainted by sin, it is easy to forget that it is for our benefit to be in a relationship with him. Our relationship isn't another task to be mastered, but it is a deep, loving connection that needs to be cultivated, and God cultivates it by forgiving our sin, crowing us in faithful love and mercy, and by satisfying us with good. Take some time in our response time today to meditate on some ways that God has been a benefit to 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.