



COMMUNITY
PRAYER CENTER

LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER

RESOURCES FOR A PRESENCE BASED,
WELL CULTIVATED
LIFE WITH GOD



A Life of Prayer

What does that even mean?! Sometimes prayer can seem confusing and complicated. It can feel odd or forced, leaving us longing for the satisfaction, peace, and power the gospel promises. Many times this causes us to give up the pursuit of Jesus in the place of prayer. But what if it didn't have to be complicated? **What if prayer is the most simple practice or discipline we could engage in with God? What if you were literally made for this kind of relationship with God?**

Brother Lawrence was a 17th century Carmelite monk who wrote a book all about the simplicity of prayer, kindly demystifying Paul's words "*pray without ceasing*" in I Thess. 5:16-18. He writes...

"I have abandoned all particular forms of devotion, all prayer techniques. My only prayer practice is attention. I carry on a habitual, silent, and secret conversation with God that fills me with overwhelming joy."

- What would life look like if you began to simply give God your attention as often as possible?
- What if, in letting go of your current view of God and prayer, you simply began to ask to know Him more, to show Himself and the benefits of your salvation in His Word and in everyday life?
- Ask yourself this honest question: Am I willing to make room in my life - my heart, soul, and mind- for an ongoing conversation with God?

A Practice of Prayer

Establishing a practice of prayer is one of the most enriching and Christlike things we can do. It's truly the foundation for any kind of satisfying, Spirit-filled life. If this is a new endeavor for you or your family, don't fret or worry! Even the disciples asked Jesus, "teach us how to pray." If you are feeling shame or guilt- ask the Holy Spirit to liberate your mind and bring you peace as you pursue this practice of the Presence. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, comforter, and counselor- our helper or *Paraklētos* in the Greek- meaning the "*One who comes alongside*."

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? Psalm 42:2

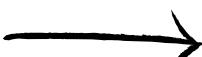
Ask the Holy Spirit to let you feel that nearness or "coming alongside" you with tenderness and with power! Ask for the courage to carve out time in your daily life to meet with God for the sake of meeting with Him, alone. Write that time here and make a Holy-Spirit-empowered commitment to *keep it*: _____.

A place to start:

Pray the Lord's Prayer (*on the next page*) out loud in the morning, before meals, or before bedtime. *Choose a time and stick to it!* Pray with the knowledge that you have God's Spirit coming alongside you to empower and teach you in this practice of prayer.

A resource we love:

The Practice of the Presence of God,
Brother Lawrence



scan QR code
for link to purchase



The Lord's Prayer

adapted

**“Our Father in heaven,
HOLY is Your name
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth, just as in heaven.
Give us everything we need for
today, and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin
against us. And lead us not into
temptation,
but free us from us from evil.
For Yours is the kingdom and
the power and the glory
forever, AMEN!**

More Practices of Prayer

Examen

Throughout the centuries prayerful people have found direction for their lives through the practice of the *examen* (also known as the “examination of consciousness”). The *examen* is a foundational aspect of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola (AD 1491–1556). Ignatius was concerned that the missionaries in his society would know how to detect the movement of God in their lives. He believed that discernment came out of awareness of how God moved uniquely in each soul. The *examen* provides a way of noticing where God shows up in our day. It is a practice that attends to what we might otherwise miss in the press of duties and busyness. The questions of the *examen* open our attention to how God’s internal movement is present in our external comings and goings. They lead us to listen deeply to the data of our lives. These questions help us pay attention to our mental state, our body responses and our emotional baggage. Our insomnia, nervous stomach, difficult interaction and headache can all take their place as a possible way of more deeply leaning into God. The *examen* helps us recognize the things that bring us death and life. Once these things are known, they become part of our ongoing interaction with God in prayer. The *examen* can open us to both the difficult and beautiful in our lives, relationships and profession. The *examen* is also a useful way of reflecting alone or with others on what God is saying to us through a meeting, a class, a meal, a service project, a relationship or a conflict.

Examen

Examen questions include:

- For what moment today am I most grateful?
- For what moment today am I least grateful?
- When did I give and receive the most love today?
- When did I give and receive the least love today?
- What was the most life-giving part of my day?
- What was the most life-thwarting part of my day?
- When today did I have the deepest sense of connection with God, others and myself ?
- When today did I have the least sense of connection?
- Where was I aware of living out of the fruit of the Spirit?
- Where was there an absence of the fruit of the Spirit?

E x a m e n

The examen is a wonderful tool for discerning the places you feel most alive, most grateful, most present to the fruit of the Spirit as well as the times and places where you do not. Those with melancholic tendencies may find that while the day's low points stand out clearly, they need the examen to help them recognize the life-giving moments the Spirit brings during the day. Those naturally inclined to optimism need the examen to help them name the difficult things in life. The examen invites attention to both low and high points, recognizing both of these as an invitation to prayer. Perspective and direction for the future happen through listening to where and how God shows up in your day and then interacting with God in prayer. Awareness of the Spirit's enlivening and enlightening presence puts you in touch with the kind of person God created you to be. When you begin to recognize who God created you to be, you have the raw material for discerning God's unique call and design for your life.

R e f l e c t i o n:

1. How do you tend to recognize God's presence in your day? How do you respond to God's presence?
2. How does the presence of the fruit of the Spirit in your life reveal God's presence and his will?
3. What has God been doing in your life in the past six months? What themes are emerging, and how will you attend to them?

The Practice of Examen:

1. Gather together the threads of your daily encounters and activities. Attending to them one at a time, ask yourself some of the examen questions: Where did I give or receive love in this activity or interaction? How did I withhold love in this activity or interaction? What activity gave me the greatest high? Which one made me feel low? Reflect on where God was in the highs and lows of the day. How is God inviting you to pray about these things before you nestle into his arms and fall asleep?
2. Make a list of feeling words. For example: accepted, anxious, apathetic, confused, defeated, disgusted, ecstatic, enraged, paranoid, weepy, undecided. Then begin to ask yourself the examen questions. Let these words help you articulate what drains or saps you and what gives you life. Let this knowing inform your choices.
3. Light a candle and become still in the presence of Christ. • Place your hand on your heart and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind the moment of the day you are most grateful for. When were you most able to give and receive love?

Examen:

4. Find a quiet moment to reflect on your day or week. Open your palms and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the moment for which you are least grateful. What made that moment difficult?

- Be with your feelings; don't try to change them or make them acceptable. Offer them up to God. Talk to him about them.
- Where was God in this moment? You may want to thank God that he is always ready to be with you and talk to you.

5. Look back over the past year. List the things that brought you life and the times you were able to truly give and receive love.

- Make another list of the life-thwarting moments.
- What do you discover about yourself ? How can this self-awareness help you choose a healthier, God-directed life?

6. Teach your children the practice of finding God in their daily lives. You can teach the examen by playing "I spy God." At the dinner table invite your children to tell you where they have spied God in their day.

Pray like Jesus:

prayers for the city/world
Hebrews 7:25; 1 Timothy 2:1-2:

Jesus intercedes for His friends
John 17:6-19

Jesus prays for Himself

John 17:1-5

Jesus prays for ALL believers
John 17:20-26

A Prayer of Identity

Knowing our identity in Christ as new creations is paramount to an enjoyable, sustainable, and effective prayer life. At salvation, when we were born again, our old self died with Christ and our new life in Christ began! Our minds, though, still retained the memories and imprint of the our old self and must be renewed by the Holy Spirit (Eps. 4:23, Romans 12:2)

Pray this prayer over yourself as often as you need to. Families can pray this over one another, or pray together!

Father In Heaven, thank You for making me Your child (John 1:12). Thank you that I have been justified (Romans 5:1). I speak over myself that I am Your friend (John 15:15), I belong to You (1 Corinthians 6:20), I am a member of Your body (1 Corinthians 12:27), I have been established, anointed, and sealed by You (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). I grab this truth with both hands: ***I am a citizen of heaven*** (Philippians 3:20), I am blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3), I am chosen before the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4, 11), I am holy and blameless in Your sight (Ephesians 1:4).

I rejoice because I am forgiven (Ephesians 1:8; Colossians 1:14) I am adopted as Your child (Galatians 4:1-7, Ephesians 1:5), I have purpose (Ephesians 1:9; 3:11), I have hope (Ephesians 1:12), I am included (Ephesians 1:13), I am an overcomer (1 John 4:4), I am protected (John 10:28), I am a **new creation** (2 Cor. 5:17).

A Prayer of Identity

continued

Thank you for sending Your Son, Jesus that I might share in Your inheritance (Colossians 1:12). I praise You for making me the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21), thank you that I am safe (1 John 5:18) and part of Your Kingdom (Revelation 1:6).

Continue to empower me, Holy Spirit, to know that I can understand what Your will is (Ephesians 5:17), I have God's power (Ephesians 6:10), and I am victorious through the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57). Let me hear You crying out, "ABBA FATHER!" and confirming my eternal identity.

I love You and give my life to You. Speak my eternal identity, my story of heavenly origin deep in my soul as I seek Your face and Your heart. In Jesus' name.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

by Son To

DAY 1

Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord & Savior? If you have, then Congratulations! Welcome to your new life in Christ. The Scripture teaches us that you are a "new creation," a new person. Your old self "has passed away", it's dead. Yes dead, but not forgotten. Don't mistake your memory of the old self to the idea that it's still alive. It's not. Let's begin to focus on your new life. There's much to understand and the new life has so much more to offer than you can imagine! So let's take this one step at a time.

Let's pray: Thank you Jesus for my new life in You. I am excited to discover all that You have for me. Jesus, here's my hand. Lead me on this journey that You have for me. Amen.

ESV 5:17 2 Corinthians

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 2

The beginning of your new life in Christ is akin to birth. Jesus called it "born again." This is God birthing you through the Holy Spirit. You had no part in your birth. All of this is through God's Spirit. Take time today and thank God for giving birth to you and for the gift of new life in Christ.

Let's pray: Thank you God for birthing me and giving me this new life in Your Son, Jesus Christ. God, I love You and I love my new life. Amen.

ESV7 -, 53:3 John

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God...”

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 3

Not only do we have no part in our spiritual birth, birth also convey a beginning. When we were "born again", something miraculous happened. New life came forth. Where there was nothing before, now there is life. Out from the darkness, light appears. Out from sinful flesh, weaknesses, and death, sprung forth life, energy, and spirit, Christ's spirit, Christ's life. Something miraculous happened when you believed in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. New life came forth.

Let's Pray: Thank you God for birthing me and giving me this new life in Your Son, Jesus Christ. There is so much to learn and experience with my new life in Christ. Help me to live my new life today.

13:12 John

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 4

Our identity in Christ rest on the fact that when we are born again, we are born into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). New life, Christ's life, is now alive in us. The old life has passed away. It's dead. Contrary to our thinking or how we feel, the Bible teaches that it's dead. We are now called to live by faith, standing on God's Word, and not by sight nor by our feelings or understanding.

Let's Pray: God, Your Word teaches me that I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live. The life I now live, I live by faith in Your Son, Jesus Christ. This revelation is beyond my understanding, but by faith, I am going to live my new life today.

2:20 Galatians

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 5

If God's Word teaches that my old self is dead, how come I still feel it? I still struggle with the same sinful weaknesses. Is it dead or not? God said it's dead, so the fact is, it's dead. However, we are creatures of habits, being conditioned by the memories of our life's experiences. When we were born again, God did not wipe away our memories. However, He gave us His Spirit, who is renewing our minds each day (Rom. 12:1-2). Don't confused the memories of our old self to the fact that it's still alive. Our Christian life is not a mixture of the old and the new. We are fully new.

Let's Pray: God, by faith I believe what the Bible teaches about my new life. I still struggles with my old ways, but I understand that it's temporary. Your Holy Spirit is renewing my mind each day. Thank you for Your patient and loving kindness in my life.

ESV 9:17 Matthew

Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 6

It feels as though that our Christian life is a mixture of the old and the new self. However, this is not so. It is not what the Bible teaches. Our life is more than what we perceived through our physical senses and more than what our wisdom or knowledge tells us. Our senses and minds cannot understand that we have been buried with Christ and we no longer live. Yet this is the Truth taught in the Bible. This is who we are. The body is physical and it is subject to time and corruption just as all of creation. Scripture teaches us that our mind is being renewed by the Holy Spirit (Ro. 12:2 & Eph. 4:22-23) and so is our physical body! Though it is subject to corruption, it does take part in the regeneration . The completion of this regeneration comes when we are clothed with the imperishable, but in the meantime, it is being regenerated as it is bearing the life of Christ (Romans 8:10-11 & 2 Cor. 4:11). The physical body that we have lived in for decades have been imprinted by the old nature. Regeneration for it is not instantaneous like our spirit. It's like jet lag. Jet lag happened because our bodies' internal clock has not yet caught up with our present time zone. It's the same with our bodies and our new Christ's identity, it hasn't caught up to our born again reality. Don't confuse the memories of our old self to the fact that it's still alive. Our Christian life is not a mixture of the old and the new. We are **fully new**.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 6

Let's Pray: God, it's hard to fully understand the Truth that I read in Your Word about my identity in Your Son, Jesus Christ, because I still struggles with the imprint left by my old self. Jesus, help me to live my new life, Your life in me today. Holy Spirit, I will continue to let Your Truth renew my mind and regenerate my body. Amen.

11 ESV-Romans 8:10

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 7

After understanding how the Bible teaches that our old self is dead, let's focus on our new self. What does it mean to be born of God?

When we were born into this world, we inherited our parent's DNA. Their biological traits, both good and bad, were passed down to us. Likewise, when we were born again, we inherited God's spiritual DNA, His holy traits and characters.

Take time this week to meditate on 1 John 3:9. Reflect on the teaching that God's seed is in you. What traits does God have? Reflect on the fact that those traits have been passed down to you.

Let's Pray: Holy God, it's hard for me to understand that I am carrying Your traits and characters in this mortal body. Father, I do not seek to understand. I desire to live out Your holiness. Help me to live my new life, live Christ, today.

ESV 3:9 1 John

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 8

Our new life in Christ can be confusing to understand due to the fact that we have been taught for so long that we are a mixture of the old and the new self. To put everything back into the correct perspective, we need to adopt the Biblical model of maturity. It is analogous to our physical growth pattern: infant, children, young men, manhood, father.

When we were born into this world, did we come out of our mother's womb a mature adult? No. Likewise, when we were born again, we enter into God's family as an infant. So see yourself as an infant in Christ, not as an adult. God doesn't expect instant maturity in us, He wants us to grow up into maturity. Growth is a process that starts from infancy. Through out this week, think about how God doesn't expect instant maturity in us. What do God see when He looks at you?

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 8

Let's Pray: Father, thank you for not expecting me to be an adult in Christ. Show me what You see when You look at me. I want to live up to the image that You see in me. Help me to live Christ in me today. Amen.

15 ESV-Ephesians 4:13

Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves...Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 9

Picture in your mind an image of an infant. That's who you are in Christ. When a baby is born, he doesn't know to do anything except cry. He cries when he wakes up, when he is cold, when he is hungry, when his bottom is wet. But as he grows into his human identity, he begins to understand that crying is not always the best solution.

As a new Christ-person, we don't know any better, so we will follow our old, imprinted ways, which is to sin. We sin because we don't know any better, just like an infant cry because he doesn't know any better. But as we grow into our new Christ's identity, we began to see that sin doesn't bring us the satisfaction that we desire. We began to walk according to the Spirit and then gradually, we began to cry less, and less. As we grow into the Christ's identity, we began to not gratify the desire of the flesh.

Let's Pray: Heavily Father, forgive me of all my sins and help me to forgive those who have sinned against me. Help me to live Christ today with the help of the Holy Spirit in me. Amen.

Galatians 5:16 ESV

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 10

Life is most meaningful when we become an adult. As an adult, we have the opportunity to live out our full potential that God has given us. Spiritual adulthood is the same. Our job is to grow up so that we can live our full Christ's identity, the full potential that God has given us in Christ.

How do we grow in our Christ identity? Picture the infant in your mind again. How does he grow? He grows physically by eating, mentally by learning. He develops motor skills by practicing and exerting effort. That spiritual infant is us. We grow physically by feeding on the Word of God, mentally by learning from teachers in the faith and ultimately, the greatest Teacher of all, the Holy Spirit. We take what we learn mentally and put it into practice to develop our faith skills. Peter says to make every effort to supplement our faith with virtue. What have you learned from reading God's Word? Find ways to put it into practice. That's how we flex your spiritual muscles and grow.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 10

Let's Pray: Thank you, Jesus for giving me Your identity. Help me to grow in it daily by putting into practice what I learned from reading Your Words. Amen.

5 ESV-2 Peter 1:4

...He has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge...

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 10

Stop living life base on our feelings. Act like the Christ-person that you are. The fullness of Christ is in us. The full fruit of the Holy Spirit is in us. Start living life base on faith and our Christ's identity. Again, let's picture in your mind an infant. If you have children, picture in your mind one of your child when he or she was just an infant. Was this child any less of a human being, though he or she is an infant? Of course not. Children, even in infancy, carries the fullness of a human being in them. That fullness is in their DNA. When we were born again by God, His seed, His spiritual DNA, was given to us. The fullness of Christ's identity is in us.

Galatians 5:22-23 teaches us that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is in us. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." Notice that the word fruit is singular. The fruit of the Holy Spirit, every aspects of it: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, is in us. This week take time to reflect on the fact that the fullness of Christ's identity is in you along with all the aspects of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. List out Christ's characters and the fruit of the Holy Spirit and keep it near you and reflect on them every day.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 10

Let's Pray: Thank you Jesus for sharing Your holy characters with me. Help me to live out everyone of them in my life. Help me to live You today. Amen.

23 ESV-Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 11

Sanctification is God's work in us. Sanctification does not require any effort from us. On the contrary, our part in sanctification is to enjoy it. Picture it this way. Sanctification is a new suit that God had tailored and gifted us. Our part is not to do anymore sewing to the already finished work. Our part is to enjoy the new suit that God had put on us.

When we were born, we had no part in choosing our hair or skin color. Our looks, even our physical & personality characteristics, were given to us by our parents. What we did was learn to enjoy who we are. We learn to grow into the person that we were born to be.

Likewise, when we were born again, we were given Christ's likeness and identity. That identity encompasses His righteousness and holiness. Our God given righteousness and holiness is something for us to enjoy, to grow into, not for us to try to achieve. Stop trying to obtain holiness. Grow into God's holiness. Enjoy living out His holiness in you.

Let's Pray: Thank you God for Your righteousness and holiness in me. Help me to grow into Your holiness and enjoy living it out today. Amen.

24 ESV-Ephesians 4:23

[and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness]

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 12

You may be thinking that it's blasphemous to say sanctification doesn't require anything from us. Don't we have to live a holy, perfect, life? The answer is yes.

We are commanded to "be perfect for your Heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5:48)." Be is a state of being or existence, but we have turned it into the act of "trying to achieve holiness." When we tell someone to "be yourself", what do we mean? What we are saying is to "be who you are." "The person that you are is already there inside you, so just let it out." When Jesus commands us to "be perfect," He is saying "be the perfect person that you are, full of righteousness and holiness."

Jesus also called out: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest (Matt11:28)." There is no rest if we are striving to be perfect. You either are in a state of striving or in a state of rest. Jesus wants us to be at rest. God wants us to enter into the Sabbath rest. "So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest...(Hebrews 4:9-11)." Notice that rest is define here as no more working. "For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works."

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 12

This week as you meditate on rest and just be, identify areas where you are still striving to achieve. Identify areas where you have failed to be perfect. Voice them before God in prayer and release them to Jesus.

Let's Pray: Jesus, I give you my all my achievements and failures. (Feel free to name them off.) Please give me rest. Help me to take up Your yoke. Help me to live You in me today. Amen

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 15

Holiness is who we are because of our rebirth. When we were born again, we were given Christ's likeness and identity. That identity consists of His righteousness and holiness. Our Christian life is no longer define by our striving to be holy. God had prepared a Sabbath rest for us to enjoy. Reading this far, many of you may be asking: "What then is my purpose in life, if not to try to achieve holiness?"

What is the purpose of our Christian life on earth? Protestant Theologians and church leaders in centuries past have pondered this question and given us the answer. The very first question of the Westminster Catechism states: What is the chief end of man? Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

Our first purpose in life is to glorify God in everything that we do. When we live out Christ's identity in us, we bring glory to God. The problem with many Christians trying to achieve holiness, in and of themselves, is that all of their achievements bring glory to themselves, not God. Their achievements becomes their badges of pride. This is not what God has intended for His people. Picture the Pharisees and the Sadducees of Jesus' time. Self obtained holiness can only produce white washed tombs.

DEVOTIONALS ON IDENTITY

DAY 15

Meditate on the first question of the Westminster Catechism this week. We are called to enjoy God and to bring glory to Him in everything that we do. Does your actions, how you treat others in your daily activities, bring glory to God? Christ's holiness and righteousness is in you. Ask Jesus to help you live His identity daily.

Let's Pray: Jesus, I want to bring glory to God in my daily living. I can only do this by living You in me. Help me to live out Your DNA, Your identity in me today. Amen.

A Life of Prayer

In Matthew 5, Jesus teaches about the Kingdom of Heaven and what it looks to live a life pleasing to God. He explains further in chapter 6 *how to go about living that life*. He shares in verse 6, “*But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*” He then goes on to teach the same prayer from Luke 11 (The Lord’s Prayer.)

The things we *do* to please God must *be* about pleasing God first and foremost. It requires humility to recognize that our motivation for “*doing for*” God, is utterly dependent on our “*being with*” God, enjoying what CS Lewis called a “*robust inner life*” with Him. The inner life we nurture and cultivate with God is the single most important thing we will do upon the earth. It influences every relationship, every circumstance, and every season of life. If we want His rewards more than the fleeting rewards of this world, we must ***lay down*** our devotion to human attention, human praise, or public accolades that eventually lead to pride. We must ***pick up*** a practice of the secret place.

A place to start:

Read through The Sermon the Mount this week (Matthew 5,6,7). Review the questions from the previous page before you begin your readings. When something stands out to you, or grabs your attention, or makes you scratch your head!, write it down on then next page to ponder, talk to God, and ***listen*** to what He is sharing with you.

Scan the QR code to access a 20 minute audio version. Listen and share what stands out, pray for one another to go to the secret place and talk/listen to God about these points.



A Life of Prayer

When your heart is set on the secret pace - *cultivating your inner life with God* - you are free to explore the unique way God communicates with you AND how you were made to communicate with Him. Author Gary Thomas calls this discovering our “Sacred Pathways.” He gives helpful and broad categories in his book:

Naturalists Enjoy God in the midst of creation and discover spiritual truths in nature

Sensates Enjoy God through sensual experiences; sights (like art), sounds (music), smells, and more

Traditionalists Enjoy God Through Ritual and Symbol

Ascetics Enjoy God in Solitude and Simplicity

Activists Enjoy God Through Confrontation & “love in action”

Enthusiasts Enjoy God with Mystery, Wonder, and Celebration

Contemplatives Enjoy God Through Adoration

Intellectuals Enjoy God with the Mind

A place to start:

Ask yourself, “how do I enjoy God, and experience Him enjoying me?” Really give it some thought!

Read through this list and select a few ways you enjoy being with God. **Remember:** We rarely rely on a single approach to connect with God every time. Your life of prayer will evolve and grow, like any healthy relationship, over time.

Resource We Love: Simple study guide on Sacred Pathways by Adalee Lewis that helps you go on a journey of discovering your unique, enjoyable practice of prayer. →



Praying Scripture

One of the most effective ways to pray is by sitting with God in His Word, by the power of the Holy Spirit, for revelation of Jesus (*the Word made flesh*)! When we pray using Scripture, we can be sure that we are on the right track. When we ask the Holy Spirit to **show us** the heart of our Father and the ways of our Savior within the pages, He is faithful, *even delighted!* to do so.

A place to start:

Ask the Lord to walk with you through these verses about prayer. There is no rush! Ask/write down any questions you might have...linger, wait, listen, breathe...

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16 – 18)

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

At all times, pray by the power of the Spirit. Pray all kinds of prayers. Be watchful, so that you can pray. Always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. (Ephesians 6:18)

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

Praying Scripture

A simple method for praying through any Scripture:

- Spend some time quieting your mind and directing your heart, in love, towards the Holy Spirit.
- Choose a passage in scripture, begin to read it and pray it back to God silently. Focus your prayer on/with the Holy Spirit within you.
- Don't forget this is *a conversation* with God about His word!
- It can be helpful to make a list of questions about the passage or verses. Ask Him about the “who, what and how.”
- Remain on a phrase as long as you want to with the Lord- there is no rush! Stay with what the Holy Spirit is revealing to you. You can write it down or even record a voice memo.
- As the Holy Spirit moves, move slowly through the passage and enjoy with curiosity and wonder as the Lord teaches you through His word.



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