

DAY BY DAY WITH JESUS-INTRODUCTION

Day by Day with Jesus is a week-long introduction to healthy daily rhythms. Daily Rhythms occur multiple times a day as a way to simply be with God. The goal of Day by Day with Jesus is to be in communion with God throughout the entire day, allowing His constant presence to transform our being into the image of Christ. This is why Daily Rhythms occur multiple times throughout the day. They are designed in a way to remind us throughout the day that we should allow God's presence to influence our hearts all day instead of only during one specified time. There are many examples in Scripture of those who set time to seek the Lord multiple times throughout their day. King David practices set times of prayer seven times a day (Psalm 119:164). Daniel prayed three times a day (Daniel 6:10). Jews in the time of Christ prayed at fixed hours—morning, afternoon, and evening. These times served as an opportunity for Jews to center their lives upon God. Daily Rhythms consist of five practices.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING

Silence is a key aspect of Day by Day with Jesus. This is the opportunity to pause life and be with God. Scripture commands us to “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him” (Psalm 37:7), and “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). To enter the presence of God and rest can be more difficult than it sounds. Silence is the opportunity to center ourselves on God, letting go of the anxiety and distractions which keep us from hearing His voice in our lives.

Each Rhythm begins and ends with two minutes of silence. Many times we feel alone in silence; however, silence can be the time we are the most united with Christ. For this very reason, silence is arguably the most difficult and least experienced discipline practiced by Christians today. Do not become frustrated if you find this hard. Studies suggest that the average person or group can only handle fifteen seconds of silence. Find hope in the small steps. As you grow in this discipline, feel free to allow your time of silence to surpass two minutes if you feel that is where God is leading you.

SCRIPTURE

Scripture is intentionally not a large portion of our time. This is not a time to be overwhelmed by a large passage, but to focus in and listen to what God is speaking to you. Read slowly and aloud if possible—meditating on different words or phrases. If God leads you to stop on a specific verse or phrase, do so. Be aware of your heart - to what God is doing inside of you. You do not need to finish all the Scripture that is provided for each Rhythm. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you.

DEVOTIONAL/READING

The purpose of these devotionals is to stretch you in the journey. These devotionals are connected to the Scripture reading and are meant to be read slowly and prayerfully as well. Sometimes, the devotionals may speak directly to where you are, other times; you will gravitate to and focus on specific sentences or phrases. Maybe other times, you will want to skip the devotional. Remember, Daily Rhythms are a time to commune with God, not to complete a check-list of tasks.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Each devotion will end with a question to ponder. The questions are meant to be brief but also insightful. You may personally find it helpful to journal your answers to God. Your answers will most likely change overtime depending on where God has you and what He is doing in you. Or feel free to skip this section if certain questions are not helpful!

PRAYER

You can use the prayer as written or possibly use it as an inspiration and pray your own words. Again, only use them if they are helpful.

DAY ONE: MORNING/MIDDAY

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: MARK 11:15-17

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry the merchandise through the temple courts. And as He taught them He said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

Jesus' intense anger should cause us to gasp at His actions. He wanted us to understand that it is essential that we are able to reach God through our prayers. The temple courts with its buying and selling had become a barrier to people coming to God. The people were losing the space and the opportunity to speak to their Heavenly Father. In the process of buying and selling things, they lost the perspective about what was really important. We do the same as we focus on the things of this world instead of our time to be with the Father. We lose perspective, we lose compassion. We "gain the whole world, but lose our souls." (Mark 8:36-37)

QUESTION TO PONDER:

What "secondary" things in your life are blocking the way to experiencing God?

PRAYER:

Lord, change my perspective. Help me see what I lose when I lose you. Keep me from the desires of this world that distort my relationship with you. Your love is better than life itself. Help me to truly long for more of your love so that I can love self and others. In Jesus' name, Amen

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY ONE: MIDDAY/EVENING

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 SAMUEL 15:22-23

But Samuel replied:

Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you as King.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

Saul, like David, was gifted and anointed by God to be a King in Israel. But unlike David, he did not know much about listening to God. We never see him seeking to be with God. Saul performed religious acts (burnt offerings and sacrifice) but didn't practice quieting himself to listen ("to heed") to the voice of God. We all must take the time to be silent, to contemplate and to listen to the voice of God.

QUESTION TO PONDER:

How could you make more room in your life in order to listen to God?

PRAYER:

Lord, unclutter my mind and quiet my heart so that I am able to hear your voice. Help me to slow down, to listen, to wait, to be still, and to allow your presence to fill me. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY TWO: MORNING/MIDDAY

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 JOHN 2: 15-17

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

In the third century, Christian men and women did a radical thing. They left the cities and villages to pursue God in the desert because they realized that it was easy to lose one's soul in the entanglements of society. These were people who chose to intentionally pursue the things of God and not drift passively along in a mediocre faith.

QUESTION TO PONDER:

How do you hear the words of the apostle John today: "Do not love the world or anything in the world?"

PRAYER:

Lord, in order to love you, I need you to show me how to "create a desert" in the midst of my full, active life. Create in me a heart that is free from the pressures, illusions, and pretenses that confront me today so that my life may serve as a gift to others around me. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY TWO: MIDDAY/EVENING

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: MATTHEW 16:21-23

From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. "Never, Lord!" he said, "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter. "Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

Peter was passionate and had a heart for God, but he was also proud, rash, impulsive, and immature. Yet, Jesus patiently led Peter to the cross where his self-will was crucified and he experienced the redemptive work of the cross. When I am still, the compulsion of busyness and anxiety of self-will are lost, where I protect myself is lost, and I am able to hear His word and am postured to listen.

QUESTION TO PONDER:

What might be one way that your busyness blocks you from listening and intimately living with Jesus?

PRAYER:

Lord, forgive me for running my life without you. Help me to be still, to surrender to your will, and to rest in your loving arms. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY THREE: MORNING/MIDDAY

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: PSALM 51:10-12

Create in me a pure heart, O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

This must be the cry of the empty soul, of the Christian who has nothing to give. How often do we try to pour out what we do not contain, and try to muster what is not inside of us? It is not in our own merit, but in God alone we are granted a steadfast and willing spirit.

Charles Spurgeon writes: "Let not the doctrine that you, unaided, can do nothing, make you sleep; but let it be a goad in your side to drive you with an awful earnestness to Israel's strong Helper. O that you may have grace to plead with God, as though you pleaded for your very life—"Lord, renew a steadfast spirit within me." He who sincerely prays to God to do this, will prove his honesty by using the means through which God works. Be much in prayer; live much upon the Word of God; kill the lusts which have driven your Lord from you; be careful to watch over the future uprisings of sin. The Lord has His own appointed ways; sit by the wayside and you will be ready when He passes by. Continue in all those blessed ordinances which will foster and nourish your dying graces; and, knowing that all the power must proceed from Him, cease not to cry, "Renew a steadfast spirit within me.""

QUESTION TO PONDER:

How do you personally wait upon the Lord?

PRAYER: Lord, renew a steadfast spirit within me. Help me to submit myself to your will and timing. Please fill my cup with your presence and peace. Grant me a willing spirit, sustaining me with your love, Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY THREE: MIDDAY/EVENING

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: PHILIPPIANS 2:4-11

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

It is not contradiction, but graceful irony that this is the answer to how we find life—whoever saves his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will find it (Matthew 16:25). This truth is best seen exemplified by Christ. Christ had every right to demand glory on earth. He is God, after all. But Christ did not do this. Instead, He became a servant, finding His life in humble obedience to God. How often do we act upon our prideful attitudes of entitlement? Instead, let us serve, putting Christ above every name, especially our own.

QUESTION TO PONDER:

Do I look more to be served by God or to serve Him instead?

PRAYER:

Lord, thank you for being worthy of praise. Please transform my heart to become more like yours. Help me to seek to serve out of a desire to make you greater and myself lesser. Focus my eyes on Christ above all things. Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY FOUR: MORNING/MIDDAY

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: PSALM 139:13-16

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

We have been created by our Father with tremendous care and chosen for a special purpose on earth. Yet at the same time, we are sinners in desperate need of a Savior. We need to be careful not to err on one side or the other as we live out God's calling on our lives. There is a Hasidic tale that reveals the universal tendency to be dissatisfied with self and want to be someone else, while revealing the importance of being who we are called to be. Rabbi Zusya, as an old man said, "In the coming world, I will not be asked: 'Why were you not Moses?' I will be asked, "Why were you not Zusya?"

QUESTION TO PONDER:

In what ways are you trying to be someone you're not? What must you do to be satisfied to be the person God has created you to be?

PRAYER:

Father, I come to you today inviting you to take away the deeply entrenched thoughts and attitudes that keep me from being faithful to my true self in Christ. In doing this, I ask that my life will be a blessing to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY FOUR: MIDDAY/EVENING

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: EPHESIANS 3:14-19

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide, and long, and high, and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the measure of the all the fullness of God.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

Bernard of Clairvaux described 4 degrees of love.

1. Loving ourselves for our own sake.
2. Loving God for His gifts and blessings.
3. Loving God for Himself alone.
4. Loving ourselves for the sake of God.

The highest degree of love is simply that we love ourselves the way God loves us. When we love ourselves in that manner, the self that is damaged by sin is redeemed and we are free to love others in the same way.

QUESTION TO PONDER:

Look at Bernard's list. How do you receive God's love for self? How do you give love to others?

PRAYER:

Lord, may I love you for you alone and grasp how wide, and deep, and long, and high is your love for me. And may I live in the deep experience of your tender love this day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY FIVE: MORNING/MIDDAY

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: MATTHEW 4: 1-3, 8-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting 40 days and 40 nights, He was hungry. The tempter came to Him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread. Again the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left Him, and the angels came and attended Him.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

"Solitude is the furnace of transformation." (Henri Nouwen) The enemy tempted Jesus with three desires that we face as well: to be relevant, to be outstanding (noticed), to be powerful. The struggles against the desires of the false self are defeated as we spend time in solitude and silence with our Father. It is our task to practice this discipline until the noisy voices of self and the world are quieted and I am able to hear the voice of the Spirit directing me into truth.

QUESTION TO PONDER:

In what ways are you tempted to fulfill the desires of the false self and succumb to the subtle, but very real, voices of the world?

PRAYER:

Lord, Help me shut out the voices that tell me I have little worth unless I have material wealth, influence, and popularity. Grant me the grace to experience your voice which tells me I am your beloved child. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY FIVE: MIDDAY/EVENING

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: ISAIAH 40:28-31

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary and His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

The story is told of a man who found an eagle's egg and put it in the nest of a barnyard chicken. The eaglet hatched and grew up with the chickens, scratching for food, clucking and cackling, and flying only a few feet above the ground. One day he looked up and saw an eagle soaring high in the sky. "What is that?" he asked. "That's an eagle-king of the birds. He belongs to the sky. We are chickens-we belong to the earth," was the reply. And so the eagle lived and died as a chicken, for that's what he thought he was.

QUESTION TO PONDER:

How are you living as a chicken instead of remembering you are a child of God and with His strength, you will soar as the eagle?

PRAYER:

Father, Help me to live with the richness of the eagle. Fill me, Spirit with your truth and set me free to be the unique person you have made me to be. Give me strength to live my life as your child impacting others with your truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY SIX: MORNING/MIDDAY

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 KINGS 19:11-12

The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

Elijah was tired; he was spent, depressed and running for his life. He was ready to give up when the Lord said He was going to pass by. God revealed Himself to Elijah in a gentle whisper which can also be translated, "in a sound of sheer silence." The silence after, or in the middle of chaos, is full of the presence of God. God invites you to wait like Elijah and experience Him in the "sound of sheer silence."

QUESTION TO PONDER:

How will you set aside times each day to "hear God in the sheer silence?" When will you set aside time for extended and interrupted times of silence to hear the voice of God?

PRAYER:

Lord, it's hard for me to be silent before you and shut out the demands and anxieties of my life. Most times it feels impossible to shut out the distractions and noise all around me. I invite you to lead me to a place of quiet and stillness, to hear you as Elijah did. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY SIX: MIDDAY/EVENING

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 15:4-6

Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

Busyness is the enemy of remaining in God. To remain, to be with Jesus, requires our time and focus. Thomas Merton said, "There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence...activity and overwork." Living a hurried lifestyle robs us of the opportunity to be loved by the Father and to love others as we are called to do. Remain in the vine, receive strength from Jesus who gives us life in abundance.

QUESTION TO PONDER:

In what ways is your life busier, more hurried than God requires?

PRAYER:

Father, I know that too many times I am carried away by the many concerns, demands, and projects in my life. I have felt the violence to my soul. Help me, keep me, deliver me from this whirlwind around me and in me. Heal my tired and weary spirit and give me the wisdom that comes from a deep and abiding presence with you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

DAY SEVEN AND BEYOND....

Your Turn: Use the following guidelines to continue the practice of Day by Day with Jesus Rhythm

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING:

Choose a verse or passage of Scripture and reflect on it for a few minutes. Ask the Spirit to direct your thoughts and actions after reading the passage.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

Think about or write down your thoughts about the impact of this passage on your life.

QUESTION TO PONDER:

Think about or write a question that was prompted from your reading.

PRAYER:

Take time to respond in prayer seeking God and asking Him for His help as you allow the passage to impact you.

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SPIRITUAL RHYTHMS THAT PROMOTE LISTENING TO GOD

You are encouraged to choose a rhythm and practice it as a part of your day-to-day life with Jesus. Continue the rhythm(s) that you already do and slowly add other practices as you are led to do so. Remember that spiritual rhythms help arrange our lives for God's transforming work.

Morning Contemplation: Start the day by inviting God into my daily activities.

Confession: Submit my weaknesses and faults to the forgiving love of Christ.

Scripture Reflection: Read a verse of scripture and listen to what God is saying to me about that verse.

Solitude: Spend time without distractions. No noise or conversation; just me and God.

Journaling: Become aware of God's activity in and around me and write about what He is doing.

Slowing: Curb my need for busyness and hurry in order to be fully present in the moment.

Examine: Invite the Spirit into my evening thoughts to examine how I've interacted during the day.

Praying Scripture: Allow God to shape my prayer life through the words of Scripture.

GIVE IT A TRY...

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING:

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

QUESTION TO PONDER:

PRAYER:

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD(2 MINUTES)

GIVE IT A TRY...

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD (2 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE READING:

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:

QUESTION TO PONDER:

PRAYER:

SILENCE, STILLNESS, AND CENTERING BEFORE GOD(2 MINUTES)

DAY BY DAY WITH JESUS



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**A WEEK LONG
PRACTICE OF DAILY
RHYTHMS**