

POSTURE PRAYER | *Holding Joy & Pain*

I want to ask you a question. How are things going these days? Are you feeling like life is filled with good, hopeful, thriving kind of stuff? Are you seeing ‘lots of sunshine’, so to speak? **OR**. Are the clouds feeling kind of heavy? Is there frustration or disappointment in the air? If you’re anything like me, the answer is... just **Yes!** Yes to both. And even if I try to measure: which one is more? Which one is *truer*? Which one is gaining? There’s often no clear answer! Not if I’m being honest.

I want to invite you into a “Posture Prayer” with me – which is just a really simple way of using our bodies in prayer to help bring more focus and more of our full selves to the experience. So even if this feels a little awkward, try to give it a try.

To start, maybe just sit up a little straighter. Lengthen your spine, as Jade taught us last month. Ground your feet intentionally on the floor. Maybe take a deep breath, let it out slowly; just try to bring some stillness to both your body and your mind right now.

And then take one of your hands and hold it out, palm up, like you’re ready to hold something. And picture in that hand, some of the **things** that **are** bringing joy right now. To you. Whether they’re simple things, or big things. Just picture little mini-versions of them in your hand.

I picture some of my friendships, I see sunsets and sunrises, great songs, good food. All the little ways I’m finding God around me these days. You don’t need to super-spiritualize it, just think of whatever real things are bringing you **light** these days. Imagine feeling the weight of them, there in your hand. Let them be real for a minute. Let your mind savour them. Take a minute to prayerfully think about that right now.

[30 seconds] ONSCREEN: What things are bringing you joy? Picture them in your hand.

Now keep that hand open (& holding). Don’t “put it” down. But now also open up your other hand. And in that one, go ahead and picture the things that are bringing the yucky stuff; grief, pain, sadness, frustration. What is just not as it should be, these days? I see relationships that are broken. A body that’s broken. I see frustrated plans, unanswered prayers. Often the kind of stuff we’d rather **not** look at... but for just a minute, do, see it; feel *that* weight also, and hold it. Knowing that God is right there holding it with you to. Take another minute now with that one.

[30 seconds] ONSCREEN: What things are bringing you sadness? Picture them in your hand.

Now, rather than feeling like we have to choose one of these, to hold onto, or let go... instead I want us to bring them together **[demonstrate]** right up close against each other (let ‘em kiss). Because this *is* how they exist in our lives, right? Joy and pain, constantly colliding. *And* you might notice, this is also a traditional posture for prayer too.

The Bible says that Jesus himself is constantly praying for us, in both our joys and our sorrows. So as our final movement, let's just practice absorbing/resting in that reality for a minute – embracing the idea of holding both joy and pain together – knowing that the prayers of Christ are holding US, in that.

[30 seconds] ONSCREEN: Embrace joy & pain together; Rest in Christ praying for you

It's such a healthy practice to learn how to hold both joy and pain at the same time. If this posture practice can help you embrace that, then experiment with it, and feel free to use it as often as you need.

God we thank that in you, all things can work together for good. Would you give us eyes to see, and hearts that trust, and spirits that are willing to live in the fullness of both joy and sorrow, as you do. In Jesus we pray, Amen.