

**“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”**

(James 1:22)

## **PRACTICE THIS WEEK**

### **Monday – Spiritual Practice: Reflection – Spiritual Nourishment**

***From Sunday: “Without an ongoing effervescent, fervent nourishment coming up on the inside of you, you will not be able to have the sustained hope and peace and joy and contentment and grace and fulfilment that you are going to require when the atmosphere of drought swirls all around you.”***

On Sunday Priscilla Shirer talked about the incredibly challenging season we’ve been through this year, and how deeply we need something on the inside of us that isn’t dependent on positive external circumstances to keep it steady and strong – we need a faith that flows like a natural spring-fed pond.

#### **Reflect:**

- 1. To what degree does your personal spiritual life feel like an ongoing effervescent, fervent spring-fed pond bubbling up from within you?** How much of your faith feels like it is dependent upon external things/circumstances, rather than springing up naturally from within?
- 2. What happens to your internal sense of strength and steadiness when outside circumstances turn difficult?** How easily do you feel like you lose your footing when life gets hard or disappointing? Do you feel like you are growing in this area lately, or losing ground?
- 3. How do you actively nourish your spiritual life?** What are your personal relationship practices with Jesus? Are you able to make space in the noisiness of life to seek out God’s presence and love? What kind of activities help you connect most deeply? What stops you from creating more space for these kinds of activities? (If you’re looking for a great resource to help you explore and discover some personalized relationship practices, Gary Thomas’s book Sacred Pathways is a great place to start.)

#### **Embody:**

Experiment with finding 30 mins to carve out of today to escape the demands of “life” and simply nourish your spirit with God’s presence and love. This could be something like a walk in nature, reading a favourite poem or passage of scripture, throwing on some worship tunes, journaling or painting a picture, etc. Consider what tends to connect you best with a sense of God’s presence... and then DO IT!

### **Tuesday – Spiritual Practice: Bible Study: Abiding In Jesus**

#### **Abiding In Jesus**

Take a few minutes to engage with God’s word today through the **SOAP** method of Bible Study.

**Scripture:** [Click Here](#) to read John 15:1-17 (**MSG**) Read the passage over slowly, prayerfully and attentively a few times. As you do, allow God to highlight a word, phrase or verse – something that jumps out at you personally.

**Observations:** Think about what is being said, by who, and why they might be saying it the way they are. What is the surrounding context? What other background information do you have? How and where do you see the heart of Jesus in this? Don’t make conclusions or applications yet, just observe everything you can.

**Application:** Now consider how this passage might apply personally to your life. In what way does it speak to your own circumstances? How can it help you? How does it challenge you? How does it call you to love both God and others better? How does this word from God apply directly to your day-to-day life and how you are learning to follow Jesus?

**Prayer:** Now that you’ve read and reflected on God’s word and begun the process of application to your life, simply talk to God about it all. Share what’s swirling in your head and heart, allow space to listen for what the Holy Spirit is wanting to say to you in return as well.

### Wednesday – Spiritual Practice: Prayer As A State Of Communion

Is prayer mainly a verbal practice to you? If so, then how are we to make sense of the Bible’s repeated instructions to “pray always” and “pray without ceasing”? What if prayer is actually meant to be as much a state of consciousness (a constant posture of heart and life) as an activity one engages in – and then disengages from – at specific moments in time?

Take 3 minutes to watch the video below, considering what Father Richard Rohr has to say about prayer as a state of communion. After you’ve done that, take some time to imagine what prayer might look like for you in the day set before you today.

[Click Here](#) for “Prayer: A State of Communion” by Richard Rohr

### Thursday – Spiritual Practice: Listening

**Last Sunday** Tim Day led us through an excellent teaching & practice of Listening Prayer ([Click Here](#) to catch up if you missed it.)

Today consider extending that practice of listening by continuing to intentionally quiet the noise of your own mind and life, so you can better tune both your ear and heart to what’s around you instead:

- **What do you notice about the natural sounds around you?** When you walk outside, can you hear birds? Wind in the trees? The crunch of gravel under your feet as you walk? Allow yourself to become attentive to the world around you, listening for the peace and beauty of God within.
- **Practice not interrupting.** Can you go an entire day without interrupting or speaking overtop of another person *even one single time!*? Simply listen, as others speak. Make eye contact. Pause and take time to absorb every word said before responding with any of your own thoughts. What might you learn about the people around you by listening more deeply than usual?
- **Continue to practice listening prayer.** As you go about your day, whether in open-ended communion (as suggested yesterday) or in devoted full-attention-on-God time, rather than fill the space with your requests, worries and words, simply listen for the nudges God might want to ‘speak’ to you – and ***trust yourself*** to hear them!

## Friday – Spiritual Practice: Worship: How He Loves

### How He Loves: A Song + A Story

Today we want to invite you into the practice of worship with a perhaps-familiar song: “How He Loves.” It’s a powerful tune filled with imagery of the depth of God’s great big, ever-present, inexhaustible and tender love for each of us. It might surprise you to know that this song was ***not*** created in the midst of a season of sunshine, joy and lightness, but rather one of intense personal pain, turmoil, loss, and deep inner questioning by the author.

Take a few extra minutes today to hear John Mark McMillan tell the story behind “How He Loves” before joining your heart with his as you offer both your sorrow and your joy, your doubts and your trust up to the God who does indeed love you more than you can even comprehend.

[Click Here](#) for “How He Loves (A Story)” by John Mark McMillan