Life in the Name of Jesus

Keeping Company with Jesus, Everywhere All the Time

Practice 1

We want to learn to live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and was raised for us, as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:15.

Of first importance is intimate, interactive relationship with the Father, through Jesus the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Such a relationship is the root and all else is fruit of that relationship or it is nothing. Those who would substitute ministry for relationship may be very surprised at the words of Jesus on that day." Matthew 7:21-23.

In this week's practice, we ask that Jesus would know us and lead us by praying Psalm 139:24-25 and Psalm 23:2-3. Then we seek to know him more fully by sitting in silence for a few minutes, listening for the still small voice of God.

Here is what to do.

Several times this week (once a day if that works for you), find a place where you can be alone for 20 -30 minutes. Pray these words:

> ***Search me, O GOD, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.***
>
> ***See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.***
>
> ***Make me lie down in green pastures; lead me beside still waters; restore my soul, and lead me in paths of righteousness for your name's sake.***

Then sit in silence for a few minutes listening for the still small voice of God to speak to you through your thoughts.

Not every thought that enters our mind is the voice of God. The voice of God draws, assures, and encourages. That inner voice that condemns, belittles, drives and demands is not God. Even with the convicting voice of God, there is compassion and the invitation to be restored.

When the mind wanders, repeat our four-line prayer and resume silent listening. There is no need to be heroic. With those of us for whom this is a new way of devotion, 5 to 7 minutes may be more than we can comfortably manage in the beginning. What matters is our consent to be fully known by God and our desire to know God more fully.

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Practice 2

The cost of discipleship is the self-directed life. As we come to Jesus, we must come with the settled intention to live no longer for human desire but by the will of God. We must die to the self-directed life. Then, but only then, can we follow Jesus through death into resurrection life. As he promised: Those who lose their life for my sake and the sake of the Gospel will find it. To do this is an expression of agape. For if a seed falls into the ground and dies, it bears much fruit.

This week the invitation is to practice the Prayer of Relinquishment. See Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home by Richard Foster from which what appears below has been adapted. The prayer of relinquishment is combines five different prayers: self-emptying; surrender; abandonment; release; and resurrection.

Here is what to do.

Several times this week (once a day if you can manage it), find a place where you can be alone for 20 to 30 minutes. Pray in the way suggested below. Be specific according to how this prayer applies to you in your life. Take time to pause, reflect, and listen.

> ***Lord Jesus Christ, I renounce my sinful desires and habits and ask for grace to put them to death. I subordinate to you even my good desires. Please help me see how this prayer of emptying applies to the specifics of my life and to pour out what I want as an offering to you.***
>
> ***I surrender, not my will but yours be done. Please show me specifically where in my family, in my work, in all my life, I must turn always from what I want and do your will. And as I do so, please give me grace to obey.***
>
> ***Sovereign Lord, I abandon myself to you. Do with me according to what you know is best for all concerned. I do so in much fear and trembling, trusting in your mercy and loving kindness. Help me know you better so that I am not afraid.***
>
> ***Now I release into your care everyone and everything that is dear to me. My spouse, my children, my family, my friends, my past, my future, this present moment and all my ensuing present moments, and all that I will own or possess. also, my enemies, my hurts, my angers, my desire for retaliation, my disappointments, I give into your hands.***
>
> ***Lord, resurrect and bring to new life in your kingdom any and all of what I relinquish to you this day according to what would please you. Amen and Amen.***

Another approach is to pray a single section of the prayer each day, covering the entire prayer in five days. However you choose to go about it, the truth is that the Prayer of Relinquishment takes a lifetime to pray.

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Practice 3

This week the invitation is to spend an entire day (at least one day) with Jesus. This will take all of your time and none of your time. To do this, it will not be necessary to make plans to change your plans. The idea is to spend one day of your real life, the one that is going to happen, ready or not, with Jesus.

Here is what to do.

Begin in that place where you can be alone for 20 to 30 minutes. Pray Ephesians 3:16-19:

> ***Father, according to the riches of your glory, grant that I may be strengthened in my inner being with power through your Spirit. Grant that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith, rooting and grounding me in love.***
>
> ***Grant me the power to comprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that I am filled with all the fulness of God.***

Then wait in stillness before the LORD, as seems right.

Close this time with a prayer request:

> ***Lord Jesus, I confess that you are with me always, just as you promised. Enable me to live present to you this day, and to do whatever I do in word or deed, with you, in your power, and for your purposes, giving thanks to the Father through you. Amen.***

Then just live your real life, trusting that Jesus is with you and attentive to him.

Talk to him about what is going on.

Ask for what you want. Ask Jesus what he wants.

Ask: Do I have any part in what you want done?

Is there something helpful that I can do in this situation?

Is there a word that I can speak that would help?

Is there a way that I could pray that would be effective?

And as you hear the still small voice of God, act on what you are hearing.

Then at the end of the day, take a few minutes to think about how Jesus is with you and give thanks to the Father through him.

Justin Campbell