

Spiritual Autobiographies

A Journey Into Personal Prayer, Relationship with Others, and Friendship with God

Over the next approximately 10 meetings (20 weeks), the content of our meetings together focuses on the sharing of Spiritual Autobiographies (with one or two people sharing their stories each week). As we listen to one another and share our own stories, we will also together work on developing patterns or habits that help us to pray more regularly and be even more attuned to how God is communicating with each of us personally. These next few months will aim at helping each of us to be more aware of how God is already present and active in our reality.

Generally for each 2 week period between small group meetings, we have chosen 4-6 Scripture passages and one other recommended practice or habit of prayer to help better attune each of us to the working of the Spirit in our daily life. *(We have provided prayer material for the first 10 weeks. Additional material for the remaining weeks will be available soon. Thank you for your patience!)*

Feel free to use your own method of praying, but for those who are new to praying with Scripture the following five steps may be helpful.

A suggestion for daily prayer/reflection:

1. Relax. Take 5 deep breaths. Become aware of God's presence.
2. Ask for the grace to listen.
3. Read the Scripture passage slowly and pay attention to what stirs within you.
4. Speak and listen to God about what is happening within, particularly using the habit or attitude for the week. .
5. Rest in God who rests in you. Express gratitude when you finish.

Accepting this invitation to grow together means:

1. Committing to 15-30 minutes of personal prayer and reflection at least 4x per week, particularly using the suggested passages as they are helpful.
2. Sharing our experiences of prayer (of how we are listening to our heart) every two weeks during check-in.

Weeks 1 & 2: Gratitude

Helpful Scripture Passages:

- Hosea 11:1-4 "I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love."
- John 15:9-11 "My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete."
- Psalm 139 "It was you who formed my inmost parts; you knit me together."
- Micah 6:8 "With what shall I come before the Lord?"

Habit to Cultivate Deeper Listening: Try to take 5 minutes at the end of each day to reflect in gratitude on how God has been present and working in my life. A gratitude journal or simply noting 3-5 things (people, events, gifts) for which I am grateful is a good beginning.

Weeks 3 & 4: Openness

Helpful Scripture Passages:

- Luke 8:4-15 “A sower went out to sow his seed... some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold.”
- Luke 5:4-10 “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.”
- Matt 6:9-13 The Lord’s Prayer
- John 20:25-28 “Do not doubt, but believe.”

Habit to Cultivate Deeper Listening: After looking at my day with gratitude, I spend a few moments simply noting where I felt a sense of freedom and peace, and where I felt unfree or like I was trying to make things happen.

Weeks 5 & 6: Looking with God

Helpful Scripture Passages:

- Luke 24: 18-27 “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?”
- Isaiah 43:1-4 “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.”
- John 5:20-21 “The Father loves the Son, and shows Him all He Himself is doing.”
- 2 Cor. 5:17-18 “Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”
- Eph 4:1-6 “I therefore...beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness...”

Habit to Cultivate Deeper Listening: I take 5-10 minutes at the end of the day to imagine walking through my day, hour by hour, with a trusted friend at my side. Without judging, I just try to become more aware of what moments filled me with greater life and what moments drained life and energy from me.

Weeks 7 & 8: Responding

Helpful Scripture Passages:

- Luke 5:1-11 “When they had brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.”
- Jer. 29:11-14 “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm.”
- Luke 9:23-25 “What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit

themselves?”

- 2 Cor. 12:9-10 “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.”
- John 17:20-24 “The glory that you have given me I have given them.”

Habit to Cultivate Deeper Listening: As I look over my day, do I notice occasions where I tried to be in control and make things happen, rather than embrace my life as a gift from God and allow things to happen through me? Am I invited to let go of a need to control in some way, and allow myself to be led by God more?

Weeks 9 & 10: Healing

Helpful Scripture Passages:

- Philippians 4:11-13 “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”
- Lamentations 3:21-28 “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases... they are new every morning.”
- John 20:19-22 “He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’.”
- 1 Peter 4:7-11 “Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another.”
- Colossians 3:9-17 “You have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourself with the new self.”

Habit to Cultivate Deeper Listening: I first spend time with the Lord looking over my day and what drained or filled me with life. I then ask of God what I might need to let go of (habits, people, commitments, or expectations) in order to entrust my day tomorrow more completely to God.