

Prayer Guide

April 16, 2024

TODAY'S FOCUS: PRESENCE

Consider the cliché that Jesus was never late or early, he was always right on time. Jesus never seems to be in a rush to get to the next thing. Jesus never seems to be talking about how he longs for the good old days or how things used to be. Jesus is always fully present wherever he is. His heart is not divided. Those who are with him receive the full presence of Jesus.

Consider our own hearts in contrast. We are often divided by thoughts of the past or future. Yet, when we linger in the past or long for a preferred future, we cannot fully live in the present. We're not even fully with ourselves then. Today's prayer guide is a call to bring us back to the present.

PAUSE

Take a few deep breaths and become aware of your surroundings. Become aware of your posture. Are you in pain somewhere? Is your body at ease? What do you smell? What do you taste in your mouth? How does your body feel?

As you consider these things, try to discern if you are currently lingering in the past, focused on events of yesterday, or consumed with events of later today or tomorrow. Maybe you're feeling pulled in both directions.

JOURNAL

Take a few moments and write down some shorthand notes of what is pulling you in either or both directions. Perhaps it is a name, or maybe it's a word that would represent an event.

PRAY

Over each of these things you have made a note about, use a simple phrase like this to surrender these distractions: Jesus, I cannot change [insert past situation] or change [insert future situation] at this moment. Help me to lay this down and be fully present with you and myself here and now.

Pray this over each individual situation.

CONSIDER

Have you ever listened to an orchestra before they begin their performance? Click [here](#) to listen to an example. Close your eyes as you listen. What do you hear?

What we hear is a single note ringing out. In technical terms, we hear A 440mhz. One note is played, and then, section by section, the orchestra tunes itself to this one note. In the same way, we can attune to the voice of Jesus that calls us to be present with him and our own souls.

READ

John 10:27 - My sheep recognize my voice. I know them, and they follow me.

Consider: It is sometimes difficult to hear Jesus's voice amidst the noise and distractions of everyday life. What does he say to us? Today, consider this one phrase that Jesus says, "I am with you."

Jesus doesn't say, "I was with you. Sorry, I have moved on." Jesus doesn't say, "One day I will be with you again, I look forward to it." All throughout Scripture,



there is a constant refrain, “I am with you.” This is the voice to which we need to attune our hearts. It calls our hearts to this present moment. When we are fully present with him, and ourselves, we can be fully present with others as well. What a gift!

PAUSE

Once more, take a few deep breaths and become aware of your surroundings. Become aware of your posture. Are you in pain somewhere? Is your body at ease? What do you smell? What do you taste in your mouth? How does your body feel?

PRAY

As your breath slows and you aim to be fully present in this moment, declare this as you breathe in: “You are with me.” As you breathe out, “I am with you.” Repeat this for a few moments and then sit in silence

and listen for what Jesus may want to say over you. If you find your thoughts being pulled away, begin this breath prayer again until your mind returns to the present, and you can listen again in silence.

CONSIDER

Whether you heard anything specific from Jesus or not, he has already told you that he is with you. Know that he enjoys your presence as much as you enjoy his.

Before you end your time today, pray for believers across our city. Imagine a city filled with his followers who are able to live at peace in every moment, being reminded of this simple prayer: You are with me, and I am with you.

Sing: Come Thou Fount

