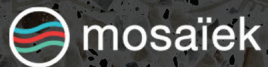




LENT
Van Minder na Meer





- 03** Inleiding
- 04** Gebruik van die gids
- 05** Voorbereidingsweek (26 Februarie – 29 Februarie)
- 11** Week 1: Minder van myself, meer van Hom – Aanbidding (1 Maart – 7 Maart)
- 21** Week 2: Minder skuldig, meer genade – Belydenis (8 Maart – 14 Maart)
- 31** Week 3: Minder goeters, meer vryheid – Eenvoud (15 Maart – 21 Maart)
- 41** Week 4: Minder onkunde, meer wysheid – Studie (22 Maart – 28 Maart)
- 51** Week 5: Minder geraas, meer vrede – Stilte (29 Maart – 4 April)
- 61** Hersieningsgebed: Lent oorsig



Welkom op die Lent-reis. Tydens hierdie ervaring word jy genooi na 'n paar bewegings. Die doel van die bewegings is om jou in staat te stel om 'n lewe van vryheid in te gaan deur van een plek na 'n ander te beweeg.

Om hierdie bewegings teweeg te bring, gaan jy elke week 'n ander geloofspraktyk beoefen. Volgens Dallas Willard is daar 2 soorte praktyke: onthouding en deelname.

"Abstinence and engagement are the outbreathing and the inbreathing of our spiritual lives and we require disciplines for both movements." Dallas Willard

Die praktyke van deelname waarop ons gaan fokus is: aanbidding, belydenis en studie. Die praktyke van onthouding is: eenvoud en stilte.

Om jou te help in die bewegings, het elke dag en elke week 'n spesifieke ritme waaraan jy deel kan neem soos wat jy kan. Daar is 'n ou gesegde wat sê: bid soos jy kan, nie soos wat jy nie kan nie. Eksperimenteer met die praktyke en vind jou eie weg.

Hoe om gebruik te maak van hierdie gids:

Die gids begin met 'n voorbereidingsweek wat op AsWoensdag 'n aanvang neem, en jou oriënteer vir die volgende 40 dae. Elke week begin op die Sondag, wat as Dag 1 benoem is. Aan die begin van die week is daar vier elemente: i) 'n gedig; ii) 'n skrif verwysing; iii) 'n omskrywing van die geloofspraktyk vir die week; en iv) 'n herhaalgebed¹ vir die week. Elke dag se begeleiding kan in die oggend gelees word, met 'n refleksiegebed² wat in die aand gedoen kan word. Aan die einde van die week – op die Saterdagoggend - word jy genooi om 'n repetisie van een van die dae van die week te doen, en 'n hersieningsgebed³ die Saterdagoggend te doen om te reflekteer oor jou ervaring.

Die gevaar met geloofspraktyke, is dat dit soos 'n swaar las word wat lewe uit ons neem. Dit is belangrik om nie na die geloofspraktyke te kyk as wette wat ons moet nakom nie, maar eerder as genade-middele waardeur Hy na ons toe kom. 'n Ingesteldheid van eksperimentasie en avontuur is gewoonlik baie meer konstruktief as rigiditeit.

Die doel van hierdie reis is nie om skuldig te voel wanneer jy nie alles kon doen wat voorgestel is nie. Indien jy 'n dag mis, gaan jy net die volgende dag weer aan. Die doel van hierdie reis is om hierdie bewegings in ons lewe mee te bring deur intensionele praktyke te oefen en daarvoor te reflekteer. Nie elke praktyk gaan integraal deel vorm van elkeen se lewe na hierdie reis nie. Dit kan tóg gebeur dat sekere van hierdie geloofspraktyke belangrik word vir jou en dat dit deel word van jou daaglikse lewe.

¹ Herhaalgebed: 'n kort gebed ('n woord of frase bv. *Jesus of Maranatha*) wat jy voortdurend kan bid; om jou in Hom te anker en jou gedagtes te stil.

² Refleksiegebed: dink terug aan die gebeure van die dag. Vra die Gees om jou hierin te lei.

Kies een of twee prominente gebeure wat positief of negatief was. Bedink hierdie prominente gebeure in die teenwoordigheid van God en praat met Hom daarvoor.

³ Hersieningsgebed: Hierdie gebed is presies wat die naam jou na nooi: om te “her”-“sien” wat jy in die week beleef het. Doen 'n oorsig oor jou week en staan stil by die oomblikke waar jy ervaringe gehad het wat jou aandag opneem. Reflekteer daarvoor met die begeleidende vrae aan die einde van elke week.



VOORBEREIDINGSWEEK

A S W O E N S D A G



ASWOENSDAG

Stof is jy, en jy sal weer stof word.” Genesis 3:19

Lent is nie net 'n tydperk om die lyding van Jesus te gedenk of net daarop te fokus nie, maar om 'n deelgenoot met Jesus te wees in sy lyding soos wat Paulus ons na nooi in 2 Korintiërs 1. Op AsWoensdag, die begin van Lent, kom ek in kontak met die lyding van menswees – dat ek stoflik is. Dat ek nietig is. Van die oomblik wat ons ons moeder se baarmoeder verlaat het, het ons die sterwensproses begin.

Die kwesbaarheid van my menslikheid – my verliese, die vlees, sonde – help my om agter te kom dat daar neurotiese lyding in my lewe is wat ek moet van ontslae raak. Maar daar is 'n lyding wat lei na groei en ek moet dit aanvaar. Dit is 'n groot beweging van die vlees na die gees en vra onderskeiding.

Op AsWoensdag laat mense 'n kruis van as op hulle voorkoppe maak, as 'n herinnering dat hulle skepsels, gemaak van stof, is. Ironies genoeg is hierdie simbool ook soveel meer, want gemerk met die kruis is ek ook soveel méér as stof. Ek is God se geliefde, en deur Jesus, kan niks – selfs nie die dood – my van God se liefde skei nie. Ek is geliefde stof.

Oefening:

Kom vandag in kontak met jou nietigheid. Dink aan hoe dit sal wees om op jou eie begrafnis te wees. Watter emosies ervaar jy wanneer jy na die pynlike realiteit van jou sterflikheid gaan?



**“Bewaak jou hart meer as alles wat bewaar moet word, want daaruit is die oorsprong van die lewe.”
– Spreuke 4:23**

If you have a heart you can be saved. – Abba Pambo

Hierdie vreemde opmerking van Vader Pambo help my om bewus te raak van my hart. Almal het harte, maar so baie leef in hul kop. Ek is soms totaal oorgeneem of opgeneem deur my gedagtes. Só 'n lewe verhoed dat ek dinge direk en indirek ervaar. As ek byvoorbeeld in 'n gesprek is en ek begin dink oor hoe ek lyk en wat die persoon van my sê, is ek nie meer teenwoordig nie en is ek nie meer in die gesprek nie; is ek opgeneem in my kop.

My kop is wel 'n aspek en 'n deel van my hart, maar dit is nie my hart nie. My hart is ook nie my emosies nie – ek kan totaal oorweldig word deur my emosies en ek kan vóél sonder om enige denke daarby te sit. Ek kan ook té opgeneem word in dit wat ek moet doen. Henri Nouwen sê dat ons harte daardie plek in ons is waar ons hele wese bymekaarkom: ons liggaam, ons denke, ons gevoelens, ons intuïsie, ons verlange en ons begeertes. Dit is jou kern, dit is waar jy God kan ontmoet. Dit is waar jy kan verstaan, kan voel en kan besluit.

Die reis is nie om van alles tot niks te probeer leef nie – dit is nie om my kop leeg te maak sodat ek net op my hart kan fokus nie. Maar om eerder aandag te skenk aan dit wat my gedagtes opneem. Baie keer is die dinge wat my gedagtes opneem goed wat ek belangrik ag, maar wat nie noodwendig prioriteit is of wat vir my lewe bring nie. Baie mense besluit om op hul Lent reis iets op te gee – te vas – wat hul gedagtes opneem.

Oefening:

Neem 'n paar oomblikke om terug te dink aan jou dag. Was daar tye wat jy in die oomblik was en bewus was van jou hart, jou emosies, begeertes en verlange? Watter gedagtes het jou opgeneem of lewe van jou ontnem? Dalk is daar iets wat jy wil opgee of vervang wat aandag of gedagtes opneem tydens jou Lent reis. Praat met iemand daaroor.

**“Soos ’n hert wat smag na waterstrome, so smag my siel na U, o God!” Psalm 42:2 AOV**

Blaise Pascal het eens gesê, dat elke persoon ’n goddelike vakuum binne-in hulle het. Ons probeer regdeur ons lewe daardie leemte vul. As ek net daardie nuwe werk kan kry... As ek net ’n lewensmaat kan vind... As ek net daardie kar kan koop... As ek net kinders kan kry... As ek net my huis kan afbetaal... As ek net kan aftree...

Vir Jesus was dit belangrik dat mense in kontak kom met die begeertes waarmee hulle leef. In een van die saligspreuke sê Hy: *Geseënd is die wat honger en dors na wat reg is, want hulle sal versadig word.* Gelukkig is ek wanneer ek weet waarna ek smag... want, as hierdie begeertes reg is, dan gaan my honger en dors geles word.

Willem Nicol het ’n mooi metafoor wat hy gebruik. Op ’n plaas is ’n groot fontein, en uit hierdie fontein is daar baie sytakke. Maar jy moet oppas. As jy te veel water probeer pomp uit ’n sytak, dan raak dit modderwater. Vir baie water, vir die les van jou dors, kan jy net na die hoofbron toe gaan. God is die groot bron en Hy het baie sytakke. Hy gee vir my die lewe op baie maniere. Ek vind dit in vriendskappe, in diep liefde, in romantiese liefde, in dit wat ek het en ’n huis... maar jy moet oppas. As jy te veel water uit daardie sytak probeer pomp, dan drink jy modderwater. Jy kan net na die Hoofbron toe gaan vir dit.

Lent help ons om in kontak te kom met die begeertes van ons hart wat ons opvul met iets of iemand. Op hierdie reis word ek genooi om minder van die dinge op te neem wat my oppervlakkig vervul, en meer van Hom te ervaar wat my diepste behoeftes bevredig en vervul.

Oefening:

Wat is die groot begeerte waarmee jy die afgelope tyd leef? Na iets, iemand, ’n kind, sielsgenoot? Wat sal die vervulling van daardie begeerte jou bied? Watter tipe emosionele behoefte sal dit vervul as jy kry wat jy wil hê? Watter rol speel hierdie begeerte in jou lewe? Hoe beïnvloed dit jou lewe, jou denke, jou besluitneming en alles wat jy doen? Vra vir God om jou te wys of jou begeerte jou na Hom rig, of jou van Hom weerhou.

**Saterdagoggend:**

1. Vra die Here om jou te herinner aan die week se belewenisse. Reflekteer oor wat na jou toe gekom het. Vertrou jou ervaring.
2. Lees weer die teks van die week. Kyk deur jou notas. Gaan terug na die ervaring deur die week wat by jou bly of vir jou uitstaan. Lees weer deur die oordenking en oefening. Praat met God oor jou ervaring.

Saterdagagaand Hersieningsgebed:

- *Waar het ek God se teenwoordigheid ervaar?*
- *Hoe het ek konneksie met myself, met ander en met Hom verdiep as gevolg van my voorbereiding vir Lent?*



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WEEK 1

AANBIDDING

Minder van Myself, Meer van Hem



LATE HAVE I LOVED YOU – St Augustine

“Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient,
ever new, late have I loved you!
You were within me,
but I was outside,
and it was there that I searched for you.
In my unloveliness
I plunged into the lovely things which you created.
You were with me,
but I was not with you.
Created things kept me from you;
yet if they had not been in you
they would have not been at all.
You called, you shouted,
and you broke through my deafness.
You flashed, you shone,
and you dispelled my blindness.
You breathed your fragrance on me;
I drew in breath and now I pant for you.
I have tasted you,
now I hunger and thirst for more.
You touched me,
and I burned for your peace.”

Augustine of Hippo was converted to Christianity late in life, and yet left a rich legacy for all who have come to faith in Christ since. Writing during the Patristic period of Christian History, he is counted as one of the most influential of the early Church Fathers. His works are considered invaluable resources even in our day, rediscovered in each generation as a deep spiritual resource. This excerpt from Confessions is Augustine’s passionate declaration of love to his Beloved.



Die vrou sê vir Hom: Here, ek sien dat U 'n profeet is. Ons vaders het op hierdie berg aanbid, en julle sê dat die plek waar ons behoort te aanbid, in Jerusalem is. Jesus sê vir haar: Vrou, glo My, daar kom 'n uur wanneer julle nie op hierdie berg en ook nie in Jerusalem die Vader sal aanbid nie. Julle aanbid wat julle nie weet nie; ons aanbid wat ons weet, want die saligheid is uit die Jode. Maar daar kom 'n uur, en dit is nou, wanneer die ware aanbidders die Vader in gees en waarheid sal aanbid; want die Vader soek ook mense wat Hom só aanbid. God is Gees; en die wat Hom aanbid, moet in gees en waarheid aanbid. Die vrou sê vir Hom: Ek weet dat die Messías kom, Hy wat Christus genoem word. Wanneer Hy kom, sal Hy ons alles verkondig. Jesus sê vir haar: Dit is Ek wat met jou spreek! *Johannes 4:19–26*

In Johannes 3 praat Jesus met 'n gelowige oor wedergeboorte, en in Johannes 4 met 'n sondaar oor aanbidding. Moet dit nie andersom wees nie? Wanneer ek die betekenis van aanbidding bedink, maak Jesus se optrede meer sin. Om te aanbid beteken om die hoogste waarde toe te skryf aan iets of iemand. Almal aanbid want almal heg waarde aan iets of iemand. Jesus nooi hierdie vrou uit om te ontdek wat dit is waaraan sy die meeste waarde heg en nooi haar om die hoogste waarde aan God toe te dien. Hy vat haar na haar verhoudings toe – die deel van haar lewe waaraan sy die meeste waarde geheg het. Sy het probeer om die lewe te vind in iemand wat haar lewe sal vervul, wat haar alles sal gee wat sy nodig het. Sy kon dit nie vind nie. Sy is al in die 5^{de} intieme verhouding en kan dit nie vind nie. Alhoewel sy glo in God, heg sy groter waarde aan romantiese verhoudings. Dit is dikwels ook hoe ek leef as ek met Hom te doen kry. Ek sê dat ek Hom ag, maar my optrede en my lewe wys iets anders. Om te aanbid is om bewus te raak van hierdie gaping, te draai na God toe en te sien wie Hy is, Hom te bewonder en te reageer. Jesus sê God soek mense wat Hom aanbid. Nie omdat Hy 'n narsis is nie, maar omdat Hy weet hoe nodig ons dit het om met die realiteit van wie Hy is in kontak te kom en so te leef. Ek het 'n groot behoefte om te aanbid. Alles in my lewe kom bymekaar as ek Hom kan aanbid. Ek moet leer om Hom te aanbid. Hierdie week se reis is minder van myself, meer van God (Joh 3:30) deur aanbidding.

Herhaalgebed:
Meer van U en minder van myself.



AANBID JY?

“Verder is die koninkryk van die hemele soos ’n koopman wat mooi pêrels soek; en toe hy een baie kosbare pêrel kry, gaan hy weg en verkoop alles wat hy het, en koop dit.” *Matteus 13:45,46*

Aanbidding kan beskryf word as die daad van groot waarde toeskryf aan iemand of iets. Ek heg die heelyd waarde aan alles waarmee ek te doen kry. Almal aanbid.

Byvoorbeeld: ’n vriend van my het ’n horlosie geërf en in sy kas gebêre. Eendag kom ’n ander vriend - wat ’n juwelier is - na die horlosie kyk en hy het lirie geraak. Dit was ’n besondere erfstuk. Die juwelier het dadelik geweet wie die horlosie gemaak het en waarvandaan die horlosie kom. My vriend het die juwelier geglo en anders begin dink oor hierdie horlosie wat 100 000’e rande werd is. My vriend het sy horlosie begin bewonder en besef dat die horlosie nou baie waardevol is vir hom. Hy het ook besef hoe sy lewe nou kan verander deur hierdie horlosie. Dit sou ’n paar duisend rand kos om die horlosie te diens, maar in die lig van die totale waarde van hierdie horlosie was dit ’n klein prys om te betaal.

Dit is ’n voorbeeld van die prosesse van aanbidding en waarvoor aanbidding gaan. Jesus sê ons moet God aanbid. Dallas Willard beskryf aanbidding as ’n *‘engagement with and to dwell upon and express the greatness, the goodness and the beauty of God.’* Wanneer ons deur ’n boodskapper – soos die juwelier in my vriend se geval - ingelig word en dinge vir ons van God uitgelig word, begin alles anders lyk. In die lig van wie Hy is, wat Hy het, vir ons gedoen het, en besig is om te doen, verander ons hele lewe. Ons het soveel en daar is soveel moontlikhede saam met die skat wat ons ontdek.

Oefening:

Reflekteer oor die persone of dinge waaraan jy waarde heg. Dink na oor hoe dit vir jou sal wees om dit te verloor, of as dit van jou weggeneem sou word. Praat met iemand vandag daaroor.

Herhaalgebed:

Meer van U en minder van myself.



KIES OM TE AANBID.

“En die vier lewende wesens het elkeen vir homself ses vlerke gehad, en hulle was rondom en van binne vol oë; en hulle het sonder ophou dag en nag gesê: Heilig, heilig, heilig is die Here God, die Almagtige, wat was en wat is en wat kom! En elke keer as die lewende wesens heerlikheid en eer en danksegging gee aan Hom wat op die troon sit, wat tot in alle ewigheid lewe, val die vier-en-twintig ouderlinge neer voor Hom wat op die troon sit, en aanbid Hom wat tot in alle ewigheid lewe, en werp hulle krone voor die troon en sê: U is waardig, o Here, om te ontvang die heerlikheid en die eer en die krag, want u het alles geskape en deur u wil bestaan hulle en is hulle geskape.” *Openbaring 4:8-11*

Johannes sien die hemel as 'n plek van aanbidding. Deur metafore deel Johannes die idee dat almal en alles God aanbid: Wilde diere, mak diere, die skepping en al die mense wat daar is. Johannes wys egter daarop dat daar 'n verskil is tussen die aanbidding van mense en die aanbidding van die res van die skepping. Die lewende wesens sê: “Heilig, Heilig is die Here God, die Almagtige wat was, wat is en wat kom,” en elke keer as die lewende wesens eer en verheerliking en danksegging gee aan Hom wat op die troon sit, dan val die 24 ouderlinge – wat gesien is as die kerk; die mense – neer en hulle aanbid Hom: “U is waardig want U het alles geskape en deur U wil bestaan hulle.” Die mens vind 'n rede. Daar is 'n hoekom. Die mens kan reflekteer, iets verstaan, iets sien van wie God is en reageer dan daarop deur te sê: “Waardig. Ek ag U hoër en meer as enige iets anders in my lewe wat my teëgekome het.” Dit is aanbidding. Ek kan baie goed doen soos om te studeer, pyn te deel met ander, te luister na ander, te leer, te help, ensomeer. Maar daar is één ding waarheen ek uitgenooi word wat in die kern van my lê en waar die oorsprong is van waar alles vandaan moet kom, en dit is om te aanbid. Ons word uitgenooi om, in die woorde van Dallas Willard, te *“engage with, to dwell upon and to express the greatness and the goodness and the beauty of God. To worship.”*

Oefening:

Thomas Merton het gesê: *“a tree brings glory to God by being a tree.”* Gaan staan by 'n boom in die tuin en kyk vir 'n oomblik na die boom en besef dat hierdie boom op sy eie manier aan God eer bring. Raak bewus daarvan dat die hele skepping ingestel is op God, draai na God en Hom aanbid. Ek as mens het 'n keuse om dit ook te kan doen. Sê vir Hom wat jy dink en voel oor Hom.

Herhaalgebed:

Meer van U en minder van myself.



AANBIDDING AS 'N PRAKTYK.

“Wat ons gedurig deur Hom aan God ‘n loffer moet bring want dit is die vrug van die lippe wat Sy Naam bely.” *Hebreërs 13:15*

Aanbidding is om die hoogste waarde toe te skryf aan iets. As ons God aanbid dan sê ons dat daar niks mooier, niks beter, niks sterker as Hy is nie. Die waarheid is dat ons dikwels anders dink of voel. Ons heg soms groter waarde aan iets of iemand anders. Ek kuier nou die dag by mense en die seuntjie speel met 'n karretjie wat hy persent gekry het en daar is niks beter en groter as hierdie karretjie vir hierdie seuntjie nie. Een van die persone wat daar is, het baie kontant by hom en hy haal 'n paar duisend rand uit en sê vir die outjie: “Kan ek hierdie karretjie by jou koop vir hierdie geld?” en die kind begin huil en vat sy karretjie en hardloop weg, want hy dink daar is niks groter en beter as sy karretjie nie. Ek het gedink dit is hoe dit partykeer met ons gaan. Ons verloor perspektief as goed met ons gebeur. Ons dink dat die lewe op ander plekke lê. Ander dinge lyk sterker, mooier en beter as die Here. Ons is dikwels nie eers bewus daarvan dat ons so dink en voel nie. Dit is tyd om na Hom te draai en te aanbid. Dit is 'n keuse. Dit is 'n geloofspraktyk om te beoefen. Ek doen dit omdat dit die regte ding is om te doen. Ek kalibreer deur aanbidding, ek maak my lense skoon. Ek sê net weer vir myself – kyk na Hom – Hy is die grootste, die beste, die mooiste. Dit help my baie as ek dit saam met ander doen. My perspektief word herstel en ek en my dinge word minder en Hy word meer.

Oefening:

Reflekteer oor wat jy dink van aanbidding. Wanneer jy gaan om te aanbid, evalueer jy dit en sê jy dit was vir jou goed en lekker gewees? Kritiseer jy die musikante, teologie, die preek? Of is aanbidding 'n praktyk wat jy beoefen? Is dit iets wat belangrik is vir jou? Aanbidding help ons om vry te kom van ons selfgesentreerdheid, geabsorbeerdheid en om op God te fokus.

Herhaalgebed:

Meer van U en minder van myself.



AANBIDDING AS AANDAG SKENK.

“Die Here is die Gees en waar die Gees van die Here is, is daar vryheid en terwyl ons almal met n onbedekte gesig soos in n spieël die heerlikheid van die Here aanskou, word ons van gedaante verander na die dieselfde beeld van heerlikheid tot heerlikheid as deur die Here wat die Gees is.”

2 Korintiërs 3:17,18

Om te aanbid beteken letterlik om die hoogste waarde toe te skryf aan iets of iemand. As ek God aanbid, sê ek dat dit wat ek sien – die skoonheid, die goedheid, die krag; en alles wat Hy geskep het – die grootste en hoogste waarde het wat ek ken. Ek ag Hom en deur Hom te ag, aanbid ek Hom.

Dallas Willard het gesê: *‘In worship we focus our mind on God and engage ourselves, dwell upon and express the beauty and goodness of God.’* Aanbidding kan nie gebeur sonder om aandag te skenk nie. Dit vra tyd en intensionaliteit. Prakties kan ons aandag skenk aan God deur te fokus op die Skrif. Paulus skryf vir die Korinthiers en sê vir hulle dat as hulle in ’n spieël - dis die Skrifte (:16) – die heerlikheid, die skoonheid van God ontdek, gebeur iets met hulle – hulle sal verander. ’n Baie ou gebruik in die kerk is om, terwyl jy die Skrif aandagtig lees, te let op die bewegings wat in jou plaasvind en dit te oordink. Die Emmaus-gangers se belewenis was dat hulle harte begin brand het toe Jesus die Skrifte begin uitleë het. Ek kan ’n soortgelyke innerlike sensasie ervaar wanneer ek iets van God se karakter in die Skrif leer ken. Deur aandag te skenk aan Hom, deur te fokus op die Skrif, sien ek iets van Hom. Deur daaroor na te dink, gebeur iets in my. My denke verander. Respektief word herstel. Ek voel anders. Psalm 34:3 sê *“maak die Here saam met my groot.”* Ek kan Hom nie regtig groter maak nie, maar as ek aandag skenk saam met ander en praat oor Sy grootheid, goedheid en krag gebeur daar iets in my. Dit kan om my donker wees, maar wanneer ek aandag skenk aan Hom, kan dinge in my verander. Niks het dalk in my omstandighede verander nie, maar alles in my skuif.

Oefening:

Neem die teks van die dag, lees dit ’n paar keer deur en kyk wat na jou toe kom. Let op die bewegings, dink daaroor na en vra Hom om in jou te werk. Praat met Hom daaroor.

Herhaalgebed:

Meer van U en minder van myself.



AANBIDDINGS PRAKTYKE

“Laat die Woord van Christus ryklik in julle woon in alle wysheid. Leer en vermaan mekaar met psalms en lofsange en geestelike liedere en sing in julle hart met dankbaarheid tot eer van die Here.”

Kolossense 3:16

Aanbidding beteken om die hoogste waarde toe te skryf aan iets of iemand. Die uitnodiging is om te leer om aan God die hoogste waarde toe te skryf in my lewe. Ek kan 'n geloofspraktyk van aanbidding ontwikkel. Hier is 'n paar konsepte wat kan help om 'n praktyk van aanbidding te ontwikkel:

1. Ritme – die vroeë kerk het besluit om op Opstandingsondag bymekaar te kom om te aanbid. Daar is ook aanbeveel om gedurende die week op sekere tye op jou eie te aanbid. Dit blyk of daar 'n daaglikse, weeklikse en jaarlikse besondere tyd van die jaar soos bv. Paasfees eenkant gesit is om te aanbid.
2. Voorbereiding – In Matt 5 sê Jesus, as jy na die tempel gaan om te aanbid, let op die onvoltooide sake in jou lewe en handel dit af voor jy gaan om te aanbid. Hoe sal dit wees om, voordat jy ingaan by die plek van aanbidding – op jou eie of saam met ander - eers te reflekteer oor wat nodig is om gedoen te word, voordat jy begin aanbid?
3. Alleen of met ander – daar is 'n verskil in die dinamika tussen aanbidding alleen, met jou gesin en met die geloofsgemeenskap. Verskillende goed gebeur met jou in die verskillende spasies. Is dit moontlik dat ons al hierdie spasies nodig het om ons in 'n groter belewenis van aanbidding in te vat nie?
4. Offer – beteken ook om 'n opoffering te maak. Soms is dit nodig om teen my gevoel op te tree en net te aanbid omdat dit die regte ding is om te doen.
5. Sang – Liedere, gedigte, ander kunsvorme. Ons het nodig om verby woorde te beweeg na aanvoeling, 'n intuïsie en verbeelding van God se skoonheid, goedheid en krag. Ons het nodig om verby ons beperkte verstaan na bewondering te beweeg.
6. Reageer – die vrou by die put in Johannes 4 het gereageer deur te gaan om almal te vertel wat met haar gebeur het. Aanbidding is nie net om te sien en te bewonder nie, maar ook om te reageer op dit wat jy gesien het en dit te integreer in jou lewe. Dit is wat die vrou gedoen het deur vir ander te vertel wie sy nou aanbid.

Oefening:

Begin met eerste tree, soos om 'n aspek van aanbidding te kies, of 'n praktyk van aanbidding te kies wat jou aantrek. Sit 'n paar oomblikke vandag eenkant en kyk op watter manier jy hierdie aspek kan beoefen.

Herhaalgebed:

Meer van U en minder van myself.



TERUGBLIK OP DIE WEEK

Saterdagoggend:

1. Vra die Here om jou te herinner aan die week se belewenisse. Reflekteer oor wat na jou toe gekom het. Vertrou jou ervaring.
2. Lees weer die teks van die week. Kyk deur jou notas. Gaan terug na die ervaring deur die week wat by jou bly of vir jou uitstaan. Lees weer deur die oordenking en oefening. Praat met God oor jou ervaring.

Saterdagagaand Hersieningsgebed:

- *Waar het ek God se teenwoordigheid ervaar?*
- *Hoe het ek konneksie met myself, met ander en met Hom verdiep as gevolg van my beoefening van die praktyk van aanbidding?*
- *Wat van hierdie praktyk sal ek wil opneem as 'n lewenswyse?*



NOTAS

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WEEK 2

B E L Y D E N I S

Minder Skuldig. Meer Genade



I AM NOT – DH Lawrence

“I am not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections.
and it is not because the mechanism is working wrongly, that I am ill.
I am ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional self,
and the wounds to the soul take a long, long time, only time can help
and patience, and a certain difficult repentance
long difficult repentance, realization of life’s mistake, and the freeing oneself
from the endless repetition of the mistake
which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify.”

DH Lawrence

Geofig



En die Fariseër het gaan staan en by homself so gebid: O God, ek dank U dat ek nie soos die ander mense is nie – rowers, onregverdiges, egbrekers, of ook soos hierdie tollenaar nie. Ek vas twee keer in die week, ek gee tiendes van alles wat ek kry. En die tollenaar het ver weg gestaan en wou selfs nie sy oë na die hemel ophef nie, maar het op sy bors geslaan en gesê: O God, wees my, sondaar, genadig! Ek sê vir julle, hierdie laaste een het geregverdig na sy huis gegaan eerder as die eerste een; want elkeen wat homself verhoog sal verneder word, en hy wat homself verneder, sal verhoog word. *Lukas 18:9–14*

Ons almal vind een of ander tyd uit dat daar iets fout is met ons. Ek doen dinge wat vir my reg lyk in die oomblik, maar glad nie goed is vir myself of vir ander nie. Ek doen dinge wat ek nie wil doen nie en ek benadeel myself. Wat noem ek hierdie dinge? Ek kan dit my swakhede, gebrokenheid, kleinlikheid, neurose, verwondheid of onvolwassenheid noem. Wat doen ek met hierdie dinge? Ek kan gaan vir terapie, leer om daarmee saam te leef, dit ignoreer, of net aangaan en verwag ander moet daarmee saam leef. Ek kan verwag dat ander my moet aanvaar soos ek is. Die Bybel het 'n ander manier van kyk daarna. Die Bybel noem dit sonde, en die manier waarmee ek daarmee kan werk is deur belydenis. In hierdie gelykenis (Luk 18:9–14) leer Jesus ons iets van die bewuswording van ons sonde en wat ons daarmee kan doen. Dit is wanneer ek bely dat ek vergifnis kan ervaar. Belydenis gee my 'n nuwe begin en geleentheid om te kan verander.

Dit is nie iets wat net een keer in my lewe moet gebeur nie – alhoewel daar die eerste groot keer is wat ek besef wie ek is en wat ek gedoen het met my lewe. Soos ek groei in my lewe met Hom sal ek agterkom dat ek gereeld moet bely en na Hom toe draai as deel van my genesing en groei.

Hierdie week se reis is rondom die geloofspraktyk van belydenis om met minder skuld en meer genade te leef.

Herhaalgebed:
Jesus Christus, Seun van God, wees my genadig.



GELIEFDE SONDAAR.

Vir 'n oomblik leef ek myself in hierdie woorde van Jesus in. Soos die Fariseër was ek dalk godsdienstig. Ek het gedink ek is okay en nie so sleg nie. Ek gaan kerk toe, glo in die Here en doen goeie goed en my bedoeling is baie opreg. Totdat ek tot 'n diepe besef kom dat alles nie reg is in my nie en dat ek eintlik sondig is. Soos die sondaar het ek na God gedraai en Hom gevra dat Hy my moet vergewe. Ek het gevoel ek is nou Sy kind, ek is vergewe, ek het tot wedergeboorte gekom. Toe hoor ek ek is 'n nuwe mens. Ek is nou 'n heilige, ek is nou die geregtigheid van God. Ek het 'n heel nuwe identiteit ontvang maar ek het na 'n rukkie besef dat ek nog dinge doen wat nie reg is nie.

Wie is ek nou eintlik? Is ek 'n sondaar? Is ek 'n heilige? Daar is 'n gevaar om eensydig na enige van die 2 kante toe te gaan. Die een lei tot 'n sonde bewussyn en kan tot 'n swak selfbeeld lei, 'n gevoel dat ek nie regtig goed is nie, nie deur God aanvaar word nie en nie kan verander nie. Aan die ander kant kan dit lei tot ontkenning wat my afsny van die realiteit dat ek nog sonde doen. Die probleem is dat ek dikwels met 'n gesplete identiteit en 'n gesplete spiritualiteit sit omdat ek sukkel met die spanning tussen die twee. Ek ry wipplank in die lewe en ek sukkel om hierdie twee waarhede bymekaar uit te bring. Ignatius het so 500 jaar gelede voorgestel dat ons onself moet sien as geliefde sondaars. Hy het gevoel dat voordat jy met jou sondigheid en sonde deel, jy eers diep in die liefde van God gewortel moet wees. Eers wanneer ek weet en voel dat ek geliefd is, kan ek werk met dit wat verkeerd is. Hy het geglo dat ons met 'n diepe bewussyn moet leef dat God ons nie minder of meer kan liefhê as wat Hy ons nou liefhet nie. Hy het ons lief met 'n ewige liefde, 'n volmaakte liefde. Niks kan hierdie liefde ooit verander nie. Dit maak nie saak wat ek gedoen het of wat ek nou doen nie. Hy bly lief vir my en is daar vir my.

Oefening:

Dink oor sy groot Liefde vir jou. Dink aan alles wat Hy vir jou doen. Wat doen Hy nou vir jou?

Herhaalgebed:

Jesus Christus, Seun van God, wees my genadig.



MY GENEIGDHEID.

Dit lyk of die mens dit baie moeilik vind om vandag oor sonde te praat. Ons verwys dikwels daarna op 'n sistemiese of korporatiewe manier, wanneer daar dinge gebeur wat duidelik vir almal sleg of wreed is. Wanneer dit kom by onself lyk dit of ons wegstrem en huiwerig is om enige daad sonde te noem. Selde sal iemand opstaan en sê: “Ek is verkeerd, ek het gesondig.” Dis jammer want ons praat baie gemaklik van ons neurose, ons onvolwassenheid, ons kinderagtigheid, ons verwondheid en ons genetiese disposisie, maar 'n diagnose wat sosiologies, fisiologies of psigologies van aard is, is beperk. Wanneer ek na my daede en denke kan kyk en sê: “dis sonde,” dan kan ek erken dit is verkeerd. Ek erken ek het dit gedoen en vat so verantwoordelikheid daarvoor. Ek erken dat ek eintlik niks daaraan kan doen nie, maar dat ek oorgelewer is om vergewe te word. Dit is daarom eintlik 'n wonderlike ding om iets sonde te noem wat sonde is. Dit maak my oop vir Liefde, dit maak my oop vir vergifnis, dit maak my oop vir genade, dit maak my oop vir 'n ander krag wat buite myself is wat ek nie het nie.

Ek sien dit in die storie van Adam en Eva. Nadat hulle gesondig het, het hulle gaan wegkruip vir God en nie erken dat hulle gesondig het nie. Adam sê dadelik dat dit Eva is en Eva sê dit is die slang in plaas daarvan om net te erken en uit te reik vir hulp en genade en redding ontvang. Die effek is dat hulle hulself dieper verweef in hul sonde. Dit is presies wat met ons gebeur elke keer wat ons rasionaliseer, ontken of blameer. Ek maak myself nie oop vir genade, vir Liefde, vir vergifnis wat na my toe kan kom om my te verander nie. Ek moet baie moed hê om te sê ek het gesondig, want ek gee myself oor en ek hoop en vertrou daar is Liefde. Ek hoop daar is krag en vergifnis en iets goeds wat aan my gegee word wat ek nie verdien nie.

Oefening:

Begin jou stiltetyd deur Hom te vra om enige sonde in jou gedagtes na vore te laat kom. As daar iets, hoe gering ookal – bely dit en dank Hom vir Sy vergifnis en genade.

Dink na oor die oefening...

Hoe is dit vir jou om die oefening te doen? Kom jy agter wat jou geneigdheid romdom sonde is?

Herhaalgebed:

Jesus Christus, Seun van God, wees my genadig.



DIE NOODSAAKLIKHEID VAN BELYDENIS.

Daar word gesê dat belydenis goed is vir die siel. Ons leer dit by die terapeutiese gemeenskap wat sê dat jy nie gehelp kan word met jou verslawing en daar kan geen genesing kom tensy jy erken en bely nie. Daar is 'n gesegde wat sê '*you are as sick as your deepest secrets*' wat beteken dat jou verslawing meer te doen het met jok as wat dit te doen het met verdowingsmiddels, seks, alkohol of enige iets anders waaraan jy verknog is. Dit is wanneer ek eerlik is met myself, myself nie mislei of vir myself jok nie, dat ek genees kan word en vryheid ervaar. Jakobus sê dat as ons ons misdade bely teenoor mekaar, kan ons gesond word (Jakobus 5:17). In die hart van genesing en bevryding lê die praktyk van belydenis. Dit beteken dat ek nie deur my wilskrag of deur skuld gemotiveer kan word om te verander nie.

Dit help nie net om harder te probeer nie, dit help nie om net al hoe meer skuldig te voel daarvoor nie. Dit bring my nie by genade uit nie, dit bring my nie by die krag wat my in staat stel om te verander en vry te wees nie. Dis net wanneer ek bely. Dit is iets wat soms nie net in my hart saggies by myself of alleen tussen my en God moet geskied nie. Jakobus sê dit moet ook teenoor ander geskied. Ek het die genade van God en ander mense nodig om vry te raak.

Die gesondheid van my siel is op die spel. Dit lyk asof dit is wat Jesus sê in Johannes 9. Daar word nie verwag dat ek sondeloos moet wees of alles moet verstaan nie, maar dat ek eerlik moet wees en nie myself moet mislei nie. As ek dit doen, sal die waarheid, die lewe en die lig van Christus my vind.

Oefening:

Kom in kontak met jou gevoel oor belydenis. Voel jy dat dit negatief is? Voel jy dat dit 'n sonde bewussyn bevorder wat negatief is op jou gemoed en selfbeeld? Of is dit iets wat lei tot vrede, vryheid en geluk? Praat met Hom daarvoor en vra Hom om jou te lei oor die saak.

Herhaalgebed:

Jesus Christus, Seun van God, wees my genadig.



“*SIN BRAVELY*”.

Sin bravely is 'n stelling wat aan Luther toegeskryf word. Daar is heelwat kommentaar op hierdie uitspraak gelewer. Daar word beweer dat Luther bedoel het, dat jy kan doen net wat jy wil, solank jy eerlik is daaroor, en met iemand daaroor praat. Kan jy jok? Iemand indoen? Ontrou wees in die huwelik? Skinder? Dan moet jy met iemand anders praat daaroor. Dis dalk die laaste ding wat ons wil doen as ons iets gedoen het wat ons weet nie reg is nie... met iemand praat daaroor. Ons wil dit vermy, blameer, rasionaliseer – net soos in die tuin met Adam en Eva. Hierdie uitspraak van Luther gaan teen hierdie neiging en sê dat dit eintlik 'n groot skadelike ding is wat ons met sonde doen. Dit is nie soseer wat ek gedoen het nie, maar wat ek doen met my sonde wat die probleem is. Meer as die daad self is die feit dat ek nie braaf genoeg is om daaroor te praat nie, wat skadelik is. Daar word beweer dat die sonde teen die Heilige Gees (Mark 3:22–30) die volgehoue oneerlikheid en rasionalisering van sonde is. Ek kom uiteindelik op 'n plek, waar my hart verhard en dat ek nie meer die waarheid kan sien en enige berou daaroor kan hê nie. Dis dalk die rede waarom ons vandag sien dat mense selfs kan spog oor hul sondes. Ons is almal swak en sondig en het guts nodig om dit te erken en met iemand daaroor te praat.

Henry Nouwen het besluit om op 'n tyd toe hy baie uitnodigings ontvang het en baie gereis het met iemand van die gemeenskap saam met hom te vat as hy gaan optree. Sy rede was dat hy gevoel het dat hy groter versoekings het wanneer hy reis op sy eie. 'n Ander rede is dat hy agtergekem het dat hy geneig is om te vergroot as hy praat op ander plekke oor sy lewe. Deur iemand by hom te hê wat saam met hom leef, het hy gevind dat hy in minder versoekings val en meer getrou bly aan die waarheid.

Oefening:

Reflektee oor wat en hoe jy bely het teenoor die Here.

Hoe sal dit vir jou wees om dit te deel met 'n vertroueling? Word jy dalk uitgenooi om jou lewe te deel met iemand anders?

Herhaalgebed:

Jesus Christus, Seun van God, wees my genadig.



DIE JESUS GEBED.

Een van die grootste geskenke wat ek nog by iemand ontvang het, was die Jesus gebed. Dis 'n manier van bid in die Oosterse Ortodokse tradisie. Die gebed is baie eenvoudig: “Jesus Christus, Seun van God, wees my genadig.” Dis 'n gebed wat 'n paar keer in die Nuwe Testament voorkom. Van die mense wat dit gebed het, het fisiese, psigiese en ander sosiale behoeftes gehad. Jesus het elke keer hierdie gebed verhoor. Dit is 'n paar woorde wat die hele Christen geloof opsom. Baie is al geskryf oor die baie eenvoudige gebed. Dit is nie so maklik om dit te bid nie. Daar word voorgestel dat die gebed met asemhaling geskied: Jesus Christus Seun van God – asem in, wees my genadig – asem uit. Kortere weergawes kan ook gebed word soos: “Jesus Christus wees my genadig.”

Die voorstel is dat jy begin met 10-minute net saggies die woorde herhaal sonder om enige woord te beklemtoon terwyl jy konsentreer op die woorde wat jy bid. Daar is baie getuienisse oor wat met jou gebeur as jy die gebed bid. Een van die groot beskouinge is dat dit 'n tyd van goddelike terapie is. Daar word beweer dat die siel gesalf word en die genade en vergifnis van God deur hierdie gebed ervaar word. Daar vind ook 'n reiniging van die hart plaas. Een van die groot effekte van die gebed is dat daar innerlike stilte te weeg gebring word in jou. Ander effek is dat jy die gebed van die hart begin bid wat beteken dat jy deur die verloop van die dag in jou hart aanhou om hierdie gebed te bid al is jy besig met ander dinge. Wat die voordele ookal is, is die groot rede van die gebed vereniging met God. Om saam met Hom te wees en Hom te ervaar en te verander in jou binneste.

Oefening:

Bid die Jesus gebed vir 10 minute.

Herhaalgebed:

Jesus Christus, Seun van God, wees my genadig.



TERUGBLIK OP DIE WEEK

Saterdagoggend:

1. Vra die Here om jou te herinner aan die week se belewenisse. Reflekteer oor wat na jou toe gekom het. Vertrou jou ervaring.
2. Lees weer die teks van die week. Kyk deur jou notas. Gaan terug na die ervaring deur die week wat by jou bly of vir jou uitstaan. Lees weer deur die oordenking en oefening. Praat met God oor jou ervaring.

Saterdagagaand Hersieningsgebed:

- *Het ek al ooit die krag van vergifnis van God deur ander ervaar?*
- *Wat leer ek van myself deur die ervaring van belydenis?*
- *Hoe het ek konneksie met myself, met ander, met God verdiep deur die praktyk?*
- *Wat van die praktyk wil ek deel maak van my lewe?*



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WEEK 3

EENVOUD
Minder Goeters, Meer Vryheid



SIMPLE GIFTS

Tis the gift to be simple,
Tis the gift to be free
Tis the gift to come down
Where we ought to be
And when we find ourselves
In the place just right
Twill be in the valley
Of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend
We shall not be ashamed
To turn, turn
Will be our delight
Till by turning, turning
We come around right.

Geofig



“Daarom sê Ek vir julle: Moet julle nie bekommer oor julle lewe, oor wat julle moet eet of drink nie, of oor julle liggaam, oor wat julle moet aantrek nie. Is die lewe nie belangriker as kos en die liggaam as klere nie? Kyk na die wilde voëls: hulle saai nie en hulle oes nie en hulle maak nie in skure bymekaar nie; julle hemelse Vader sorg vir hulle. Is julle nie baie meer werd as hulle nie? Trouens, wie van julle kan deur hom te bekommer sy lewe met een enkele uur verleng? En wat bekommer julle julle oor klere? Let op hoe groei die veldlelies: hulle swoeg nie en hulle maak nie klere nie. Maar Ek sê vir julle: Selfs Salomo in al sy prag was nie geklee soos een van hulle nie. As God dan die gras van die veld, wat vandag nog daar is en môre verbrand word, so versier, hoeveel te meer sal Hy dan nie vir julle sorg nie, julle kleingelowiges? “Julle moet julle dus nie bekommer en vra: ‘Wat moet ons eet of wat moet ons drink of wat moet ons aantrek?’ nie. Dit is alles dinge waaroor die ongelowiges begaan is. Julle hemelse Vader weet tog dat julle dit alles nodig het. Nee, beywer julle allereers vir die koninkryk van God en vir die wil van God, dan sal Hy julle ook al hierdie dinge gee. “Moet julle dus nie oor môre bekommer nie, want môre bring sy eie bekommernis. Elke dag bring genoeg moeilikheid van sy eie.” *Matteus 6:25–34*

Verlede jaar is ek in die East Rand Mall om Kersgeskenke te koop. Terwyl ek in die tou wag om te betaal, sien ek 'n paartjie wat ek ken verbyloop. Hul trollie was vol produkte wat hulle net gekoop het. Met die idee dat hul klaar is met hul inkopies sê ek vir hulle: “Julle moet seker bly wees om te kan huistoe gaan!” Ek onthou nou nog hul antwoord: “Nee, ons het nog nie gevind waarna ons soek nie.”

Hierdie ontmoeting was soos 'n gelykenis. Ons spandeer ons lewe opsoek na meer en meer goed. Ons is konstant op soek na iets wat ons kan koop om ons te help om gelukkiger, voller en vryer lewens te leef. Ons lewens is 'n spieël van die paartjie in die winkelsentrum. Ons loop op en af in die gange van die sentrums van ons lewe, terwyl ons trollies stoot wat ootvoel is met goed, maar weet in ons binneste dat ons nogsteeds nie gevind het waarna ons soek nie. Ons voel moeg, gestres en uitgebrand.

Eenvoud help ons op die reis van minder goeters na meer vryheid. Een van die kragtigste boodskappe in die Nuwe Testament is Jesus se woorde waar hy sy volgelinge belowe dat daar aan hulle voorsien sal word (Matteus 6:33). Hierdie lering beteken nie dat ons net kan terugsit en niks hoef te doen nie. Ons werk om te oorleef – soos die voëls – maar ons werk met 'n vertroue dat God oor ons kyk, dat Hy vir ons sorg net soos vir die voëls in die lug en die lelies in die veld. Dit is waar die reis tot eenvoud begin.

Herhaalgebed:

Here, help my om na vryheid en eenvoud te beweeg.



EENVOUD VAN HART.

Ons vereenvoudig ons hart deur te oefen om 'eers die koninkryk van God te soek'. (Matteus 6:33). As ons belangrikste lewensfokus is om God te ken en om met God te wandel, word ons hart baie vryer. Dit beteken nie dat ander dinge soos om geld te verdien, ons kinders groot te maak, sport te kyk, huis te bou, vakansie te beplan, ensovoorts nie belangrik is nie. Dit beteken eenvoudig dat hulle nie die eerste prioriteit in ons hart moet neem nie. Ons eerste prioriteit is om ons lewens te bou rondom dit wat God vir ons wil hê. Dit is waar eenvoud gebore word.

Ons kan begin waar ons is. Ons begin God se wil doen op elke manier wat ons kan. Ons wag nie vir 'n ideale tyd nie. Ons vra elke oomblik dat die lig van Christus ons sal lei. In elke taak wat vandag, by die huis of by die werk voorkom, probeer ons ons bes doen en vertrou God met die uitkomste in alles. Hierdie take hoef nie godsdienstige take te wees nie. Hulle hoef ook nie groot of skouspelagtig te wees nie. In werklikheid begin ons gewoonlik met klein en gewone maniere om God te gehoorsaam. Ons begin nou, vanaf hierdie oomblik.

Natuurlik sal ons misluk en God in die steek laat. Daar sal baie keer wees wanneer ons God vergeet, as ons toegee aan ons selfgesentreerde maniere, wanneer ons toelaat dat ander dinge die eerste plek in ons hart inneem. In hierdie oomblikke moet ons net belydenis doen, opstaan en onmiddellik weer begin. Die kwessie is nie soseer of ons gister misluk het of daarin geslaag het nie, maar of ons hart gefokus is om te doen wat God wil hê ons moet doen. Die uitdaging is: leef ons nou in eenvoud?

Oefening:

Let op die take of verhoudings wat jou hart beset. Wat ervaar jy as jy aan hul dink? Ervaar jy 'n gevoel van vryheid as jy daaraan dink?

Herhaalgebed:

Here, help my om na vryheid en eenvoud te beweeg.



EENVOUD VAN SPASIE.

Hoe lyk die spasies van jou huis? Dikwels wys ons slordige laaie, kaste, kamers en motorhuise die warboel van ons harte uit. Met verloop van tyd versamel ons soveel dinge wat ons nie nodig het nie. Waaraan ons vasklou, openbaar baie oor die toestand van ons siel. Ons hart word geïnfiltreer en oorgeneem deur die donker begeertes om meer en meer dinge te besit. Geen wonder dat ons dikwels oorweldig en onvry voel nie. Eenvoud kan ons bevry van hierdie moderne slawerny, kalmte bring in ons waansinnige gees en 'n mate van inperk aan ons kompulsiewe koopgewoontes gee.

Tydens Lent kan dit 'n goeie oefening wees om sommige van die ongebruikte dinge wat in ons huis rondlê, te orden. Baie sal kwalifiseer as rommel en moet weggegooi word. Ander is miskien nie meer bruikbaar nie en kan miskien gegee word aan iemand wat dit nodig het. Of miskien kan daar 'n skoonmaakwerk wees wat ons al vir jare uitgestel het – om die laai langs ons bed skoon te maak, ons gereedskap in die motorhuis reg te pak, die kas onder die wasbak op te ruim. Dit alles help ons om van minder goeters na meer vryheid te reis.

Hier is die eintlike uitdaging: as ons ons leefruimte net 'n bietjie vereenvoudig het, vertel ons niemand daarvan nie. In plaas daarvan, in die binnekamer van ons hart, kan ons ons afvra: 'Waarom koop ek soveel dinge?' Ons praat met die Here oor ons koopgewoontes en vra dat hy ons moet wys hoe ons vryer en ligter kan leef. Eenvoud begin en eindig altyd met hierdie uitdaging om God eerste in ons harte te hou en te doen wat God wil hê ons moet doen. Dit is die vryheid van die evangelie wat Christus vir jou en my bring.

Oefening:

Praat met God oor jou koopgewoontes en vra hom om jou te wys hoe jy vryer en ligter kan leef.

Herhaalgebed:

Here, help my om na vryheid en eenvoud te beweeg.



EENVOUD VAN SPANDERING.

Het jy al opgemerk dat ons nie baie praat oor ons persoonlike finansies nie? Ons glo dat hoe ons ons geld bestee, ons eie besigheid is en niks met iemand anders te doen het nie. Niemand gaan ons vertel wat ons met ons geld moet doen nie. Hierdie houding teenoor ons spanderingsgewoontes staan in konflik met die lering van Jesus. Hy het meer oor geld gepraat as oor enige ander onderwerp behalwe die Koninkryk van God. Op een of ander manier het hy geweet dat dit een van ons grootste gebiede van stryd en pyn sou wees. As sy volgelinge moet ons groei om in hierdie opsig vryer te leef.

Daar is baie maniere waarop ons ons uitgawes kan vergemaklik. Hoe sal dit wees as ons 'n maaltyd maak wat slegs bestanddele bevat wat ons reeds in ons yskas of koskas het nie? Kyk wat is in die yskas, op die rakke, of in die vrieskas, en maak die kos of bestanddele bymekaar wat al 'n tydperk daar staan. Terwyl ons hierdie items bymekaarmaak, dink saam met die Here waarom hierdie kosgoed al so lank rondlê. Wat vertel ons inkopie-gewoontes oor onself?

Oefening:

Vermyn een dag om advertensies te kyk. As hulle op die TV kom, kyk iets anders! Die Here sal ons hiermee help. Laat ons bid vir die vermoë om die advertensies wat op ons pad kom, te herken en te vermy. Dit kan sinvol wees om 'n gesprek met die Here te hê oor ons verhouding met advertensies. Is ons kwesbaar om geld wat ons nie het nie te spandeer op dinge wat ons sien adverteer word? Wat sou dit beteken om die woorde van Jesus ernstig op te neem: 'Is die lewe nie belangriker as kos en die liggaam as klere nie?' (Matt. 6:26). Onthou hierdie gedeelte uit Matteus. Dit is hier waar eenvoud begin!

Herhaalgebed:

Here, help my om na vryheid en eenvoud te beweeg.



EENVOUD VAN GEDAGTES.

Ons gedagtes is dikwels vol met soveel inligting. Ons word daaglik gebombardeer met TV-beelde, e-posse, sms-boodskappe, Twitter-statusse, Facebook-inskrywings, selfoonoproepe, advertensieborde – die lys van stimuli hou aan. Sommige van hierdie inligting vra ons onmiddellike aandag, maar baie daarvan is nie belangrik nie en kan geïgnoreer word. Hierdie oorstimulasie en konstante afleiding neem ons gedagtes op, verhinder dat ons die werklikheid in die gesig staar en weerhou ons om vry en lig te leef.

As ons vandag na die koninkryk van God soek, kan dit beteken dat ons dit wat ons gedagtes opneem, beperk. Daar is baie maniere om dit te doen: ons kan vandag besluit om geen TV te kyk nie. Dikwels kyk ons televisie tot laat na 'n lang dag. Dit kan dalk beter wees om ons gedagtes te laat rus. Miskien kan ons een dag wegbly van al die woorde en beelde wat ons op Facebook, Twitter en Instagram inneem. Dit is dan geleentheid vir ons om aan die Here te dink wanneer ons in daardie oomblikke ons gedagtes op hierdie dinge sou rig.

Oefening:

Bid met die Skrifgedeelte uit Matteus 6:25–34. Ons begin deur die gedeelte stadig en aandagtig te lees. Ons wag vir 'n woord, of 'n frase of 'n sin wat vir ons uitstaan. Vir 'n paar minute draai ons hierdie woord, frase of sin oor en oor in ons hart. Ons laat dit praat met ons herinneringe, ons uitdagings, ons hartseer en ons vrees. Ons deel dan met die Here alles wat in ons hart aangaan. Uiteindelik sit ons in die stilte en rus eenvoudig in die teenwoordigheid van die Here.

Herhaalgebed:

Here, help my om na vryheid en eenvoud te beweeg.



EENVOUD VAN SKEDULES.

Een van die ooglopende eienskappe van ons alledaagse skedules is dat dit 'n warboel is. Elke dag word gevul met mense om te sien, take om te doen, afspraak om te hou, e-posse om te stuur, telefoonoproepe om te maak, sperdatums om na te kom. Iemand het eenkeer gesê dat ons lewens lyk soos tasse wat bars by die nate. Hoe kom ons voor met ons besige skedules? Daar is heeltyd anders is wat gedoen moet word, voltooi moet word, of onthou moet word. Dit is tragies dat ons vol skedules ons geleentheid vir vryheid steel.

In ons vol skedules nooi Jesus ons om ons fokus op God se koninkryk te hou. Dit is die 'een ding wat nodig is'. Dit is belangrik om te beseft dat Jesus ons nie uit ons besige wêreld uitroep nie. Inteendeel, hy wil hê dat ons daarin moet leef, maar dat ons ons hart duidelik moet laat fokus op wat God wil hê. Dis wat dit beteken om 'julle harte eerste op God se koninkryk te plaas... en al hierdie dinge sal ook aan jou gegee word.' Wat daagliks tel, is waar ons harte gefokus is. Dit is waar ons eenvoud vind.

Oefening:

Identifiseer een ding wat jy kan doen om jou skedule aan te pas om te groei in jou fokus op God. Hierdie is iets waarmee jy kan eksperimenteer. Terwyl jy vandag met elke taak begin, hoe klein dit ook al mag wees, vra die Here om jou te help om dit met al jou aandag te doen. Ons lewens word vereenvoudig omdat ons aan God aandag gee en op Hom fokus. Ons is nie om deur die dag net te oorleef nie; ons probeer eerder om God eerste te stel in alles wat ons doen.

Herhaalgebed:

Here, help my om na vryheid en eenvoud te beweeg.



TERUGBLIK OP DIE WEEK

Saterdagoggend:

1. Vra die Here om jou te herinner aan die week se belewenisse. Reflekteer oor wat na jou toe gekom het. Vertrou jou ervaring.
2. Lees weer die teks van die week. Kyk deur jou notas. Gaan terug na die ervaring deur die week wat by jou bly of vir jou uitstaan. Lees weer deur die oordenking en oefening. Praat met God oor jou ervaring.

Saterdagagaand Hersieningsgebed:

- *Waar het ek God se teenwoordigheid ervaar?*
- *Hoe het my konneksie met myself, met ander en met Hom verdiep as gevolg van my beoefening van die praktyk van eenvoud?*
- *Wat van hierdie praktyk sal ek wil opneem as 'n lewenswyse?*



A large area for taking notes, consisting of multiple horizontal dotted lines for writing.



WEEK 4

STUDIE
Minder Onkunde, Meer Wysheid



GEBED VAN DIE LOOT AAN DIE WYNSTOK

Solank as wat die mens
sy gewaarwordinge in taal bly formuleer
Here, laat my taal leef
en dat U hom nooit van die liggaam
van Afrika sal amputeer nie –
en waar U moet terugsnoei, Heer,
laat ons U hand herken en rustig weet
U sal uit die vurige sap
wat U nou tot besinning kasty
iets wat helder en edel is eindelijk distilleer.

Sheila Cussons



“Daarom, vandat ek gehoor het van julle geloof in die Here Jesus en van julle liefde vir al die gelowiges, hou ek ook nie op om God vir julle te dank nie. Wanneer ek in my gebede aan julle dink, bid ek dat die God van ons Here Jesus Christus, die Vader aan wie die heerlijkheid behoort, deur sy Gees aan julle wysheid gee en Hom so aan julle openbaar dat julle Hom werklik kan ken. Ek bid dat Hy julle geestesoë so verhelder dat julle kan weet watter hoop sy roeping inhou, en watter rykdom daar is in die heerlike erfenis wat Hy vir die gelowiges bestem het, en hoe geweldig groot sy krag is wat Hy uitoefen in ons wat glo.” *Efesiërs 1:15–19*

Hierdie week se praktyk is studie. Studie is 'n geestelike praktyk wat my kan help met onkunde. Om kundig te wees beteken nie om meer informasie te kry nie, maar eerder geestesoë wat die lewe helder maak sodat ek God in alles kan sien. Aandagafleibaarheid keer my om te sien. Daarom moet ek tyd met Jesus spandeer en van Hom leer. Studie behoort nie net met die kop te werk nie, maar ook met hart. Dit is nie net rasioneel nie, maar relasioneel. Dit is nie net ek wat na God toe gaan nie, maar God wat ook na my toe kom. Die woord dissipel kan my help om studie beter te verstaan. Die woord beteken letterlik om aan iemand se voete te sit. 'n Leerling of dissipel het letterlik aan die voete van sy Rabbi in daardie tyd gesit. Jesus sou dit by sy leermeesters gedoen het, net soos wat Paulus aan die voete van Gamaliël gesit het (Handelinge 22:3). Om te sit sê iets van houding en ook die hart waarmee ek die verhouding betree. Ek kyk op en nie af op iemand nie. Ek is afhanklik en oop om te ontvang.

Herhaalgebed:
Gee my die genade om in wysheid te leef.



MET 'N JUK.

“My juk is sag en my las is lig.” *Matteus 11:30*

Ons volg Jesus deur van Hom te leer en nie net in Hom te glo nie. My geloof verander en versterk reeds omdat ek 'n nuwe lewe by Jesus kan aanleer. Christene in Thessalonika is geprys vir hul groeiende geloof (2 Tessalonisense 1:3). Een van die beelde wat my kan help om by Jesus te leer is 'n juk. 'n Juk sou in die Antieke tyd verwys het na die lering van 'n sekere Rabbi. Jode glo dat elke Skrifgedeelte in die Ou Testament 70 verskillende moontlike betekenisse het en sou geen spanning beleef het met verskillende interpretasies nie. Die verskillende denkrigtings sou vernoem word na die onderskeie Rabbi's wat lering gegee het.

Die juk verwys ook na 'n bees. Twee beeste is gewoonlik ingespan onder die juk. 'n Ervare bees is gewoonlik ingespan saam met 'n onervare bees. Die idee was dat die onkundige, jonger bees by die ouer bees leer. Hy het geweet wanneer om te stop, te rus, te eet en te werk. Die belangrike beginsel is dat God my leer deurdat ek saam met Hom 'n taak verrig, of anders gestel, deur gehoorsaamheid. Met ander woorde, ek leer nie God ken deur 'n ontleding van die juk of lering nie, maar eerder deur die ervaring van werk en doen terwyl ek die juk saam met Jesus dra.

Oefening:

Neem 'n papier en teken 'n juk/soek een op die internet om te druk. Neem die prentjie, en terwyl jy bid, vra Jesus om jou te leer van sy sagte juk.

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om in wysheid te leef.



HOE LEES JY?

“Hoe lees jy?” *Lukas 10:26*

Lees is 'n belangrike praktyk in studie. Deur te lees ontvang ek informasie wat my kan help om beter te verstaan en tot sekere konklusies te kom. Vandag kan die Neurowetenskap my help om hierdie proses beter te verstaan. Lees herskep nuwe neurale paaie binne die brein wat nuwe konneksies vorm. Tog bly die beoefening van lees baie subjektief. Dit is nie altyd maklik om die bedoeling van die outeur te verstaan saam met my eie interpretasies nie. Ek kom dikwels tot ander interpretasies as ander met dieselfde gedeeltes wat gelees word. Jesus het hierdie dilemma baie goed verstaan. Daarom vra hy nie wat of hoeveel ek gelees het nie, maar eerder hoe ek dit lees.

Vandag is daar 'n magdom informasie. Elke persoon het toegang tot die wêreld se grootse biblioteek: Google. Nuwe brein konneksies bring my nie noodwendig by die regte interpretasies uit nie. Om by die bedoeling van die outeur te kom moet ek saam met die outeur lees. Jesus sou hierdie manier van lees so verduidelik: *“Julle ondersoek die Skrifte, omdat julle meen dat julle daarin die ewige lewe het; en dit is dié wat van My getuig.”* (Johannes 5:39). Lees behoort my aan die lewende Christus voor te stel.

Oefening:

Dink vir 'n oomblik aan hoe jy lees. Wanneer jy lees, raak bewus dat Jesus met jou wil lees. Laat Jesus toe om vir jou te wys hoe die Skrifte na Hom wys.

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om in wysheid te leef.



LEES DIT WEER.

“Hy het hulle weer alleen laat bly en ‘n derde keer gaan bid en dieselfde woorde gesê.”

Matteus 26:44, Markus 14:39

In die Romeinse Ryk is die Latynse frase “*Repetitio est mater studiorum*” op baie geboue ingegraveer. Dit beteken: *Herhaling is die moeder van alle studie*. As ek iets wil leer of verstaan moet ek dit herhaal. Herhaling help my nie net om te onthou nie, maar help my om beter te verstaan deur te hoor. Daarom gee God opdrag dat die gebooie aan Israel herhaal moet word (Deuteronomium 6:5, 10:12, 11:13, 30:6). Die doel is nie net om die wet ken nie, maar om die bedoeling en gees van die wet te ervaar. Dit is seker ook waarom die vertelling van Jesus se bediening aan ons deur die vier Evangelies herhaal word.

Hierdie is ook ’n vorm van meditasie. Een woord vir meditasie in Hebreeus is *haga*, wat letterlik beteken: saggies opsê, mompel, prewel of die koer van ’n duif. Dit is in die mompel, saggies prewel, opsê en herhaling van God se woorde dat ons beter verstaan wat God bedoel. Selfs as ek met God praat kan ek soos Jesus bid deur “*dieselfde woorde*” te sê.

Oefening:

Memoriseer die gebedswoorde “Lei my in U waarheid” en bid dit elke dag wanneer jy herinner word aan ’n voorwerp wat jy saam met jou dra. Die voorwerp kan ’n armband, sakdoek, klippe of enige iets wees wat jou aandag herhaaldelik na die gebedswoord toe lei.

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om in wysheid te leef.



PROBEER DIT NOU.

“...Laat die woorde van my mond en die oordenking van my hart welbehaaglik wees voor u aangesig, o Here...” *Psalm 19:15*

Die rede waarom ek die Skrifte herhaal is sodat ek dit kan onthou. Dit vorm 'n geheue waaruit die Heilige Gees my kan herinner en kan lei. Binne die kultuur waarin ek lewe is dit baie moeilik. Tegnologie beïnvloed die brein en het die oorhand gekry op die mens se geheue. 'n Oorgestimuleerde brein stel dopamine vry wat lei tot aandaggebrek. Dan begin ons koppe ping-pong speel. Dit is soos die ghoen wat onophoudelik van die een gaatjie na die ander rol en gekeer word om tot rus te kom. Ek kan slegs onthou wanneer my denke tot rus kom.

Gelowiges het God se woorde gebruik om hulle denke in God te laat rus. Hierdie geloofspraktyk word oordenking (meditasie) genoem. Ek moet lettelik “oor” my denke kom om met God te wees. Dit bring my in kontak met dit wat dieper in my hart leef en verskerp my waarnemingsvermoë. Die woord oordenking beteken om “tuis te maak of herkou.” Die praktyd van studie vra konsentrasie. Deur onverdeelde aandag te gee aan God, word my hart en lewe 'n tuiste vir God. Die doel van 'n enkelvoudige of verlengde aandagspan is dat “die woord van Christus in julle woon in alle wysheid” Kolossense 3:16.

Oefening:

Neem 'n sin uit hierdie week se skrifgedeelte en memoriseer dit vandag.

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om in wysheid te leef.



WORD DEUR GOD GELEES.

“Toe open Hy hulle verstand om die Skrif te verstaan.” *Lukas 24:45*

In die praktyk van studie kan ek agterkom: ek lees nie net die Bybel nie, die Bybel lees ook vir my! Wanneer dit gebeur begin my hart leef. Die Emmausgangers het 'n eerstehandse ervaring hiervan gehad. Hulle ken die Skrifte en probeer Jesus volg, maar is onkundig oor wat dit beteken vir hulle gewone lewe. Toe die kennis vloei van die verstand na die hart, verander alles. Hierdie ervaring word in die Weste en Westerse kloostertradisie beskryf as kontemplasie: 'n persoon beweeg verby sy/haar gedagtes na 'n nie-verbale gevoel. Kontemplasie kom van die woord *contemplum*. *Con* beteken 'met' en *templum* beteken 'tempel'. Die idee was om God in die self, ander en die omgewing te aanskou; waar God die sienwerk deur my doen.

Oefening:

Kniel voordat jy begin bid of Bybel lees. Kyk vir 'n oomblik op. Raak net bewus vir 'n oomblik van die rykdom van wysheid wat daar in God is, en dat Hy dit graag met jou wil deel.

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om in wysheid te leef.



TERUGBLIK OP DIE WEEK

Saterdagoggend:

1. Vra die Here om jou te herinner aan die week se belewenisse. Reflekteer oor wat na jou toe gekom het. Vertrou jou ervaring.
2. Lees weer die teks van die week. Kyk deur jou notas. Gaan terug na die ervaring deur die week wat by jou bly of vir jou uitstaan. Lees weer deur die oordenking en oefening. Praat met God oor jou ervaring.

Saterdagagaand Hersieningsgebed:

- *Kon ek ervaar dat ek uit my kop kom, en hartspasies betree?*
- *Kon ek God se teenwoordigheid geniet sonder om te praat?*
- *Hoe het ek konneksie met myself, met ander en met Hom verdiep as gevolg van jou beoefening van die praktyk van studie?*
- *Wat het ek ontdek van studie wat ek voel vir my 'n uitnodiging inhou om hierdie praktyk 'n geloofsgewoonte te maak vir my lewe?*



NOTAS

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WEEK 5

STILTE
Minder Geraas. Meer Vrede



BUT THE SILENCE IN THE MIND

But the silence in the mind
is when we live best, within
listening distance of the silence
we call God. This is the deep
calling to deep of the psalm-
writer, the bottomless ocean.
We launch the armada of
our thoughts on, never arriving.

It is a presence, then,
whose margins are our margins;
that calls us out over our
own fathoms. What to do
but draw a little nearer to
such ubiquity by remaining still?

RS Thomas

Geofig



“Wees oor niks besorg nie, maar laat julle begeertes in alles deur gebed en smeking met danksegging bekend word by God. En die vrede van God, wat alle verstand te bowe gaan, sal julle harte en julle sinne bewaar in Christus Jesus. Verder, broeders, alles wat waar is, alles wat eerbaar is, alles wat regverdig is, alles wat rein is, alles wat lieflik is, alles wat loflik is – watter deug en watter lof daar ook mag wees, bedink dit. En wat julle geleer en ontvang en gehoor en in my gesien het, doen dit, en die God van vrede sal met julle wees.” *Fillippense 4:6–9*

Jy word uitgenooi om hierdie week stilte te beoefen deur met minder geraas te lewe en meer vrede te beleef.

Paulus gee 'n beeld van die goeie lewe. Dit is om in vrede te lewe. Hy motiveer my deur vir my 'n hoekom te gee: As ek vrede ervaar is ek vry van bekommernis. Ek ervaar blydskap en so 'n lewe is moontlik omdat Hy naby my is. As 'n volgeling van Jesus verduidelik Paulus vir my wat dit beteken om Jesus te volg in die lewe wat Hy geleef het (Romeine 5:10).

Die kerk het deur die eeue hierdie idees beoefen en sekere praktyke geskep. Dit het groot vrug vir volgelinge se geloofsreis ingehou. Die ontwikkeling en die insig van hierdie praktyke kom nie tot 'n einde nie. Kennis vermeerder en vandag kan ons deur die sielkunde en mediese wetenskap die funksionering van die brein beter verstaan en baie insigte kry. Dit help ons om hierdie praktyke nog beter te doen en te versterk.

Herhaalgebed:
Gee my die genade om stil te wees en te weet, U is Heer.



DIE GERAAS BINNE MY.

Baie min mense is bewus van wat hul gedagtes vul. Ons is heeltyd besig om te dink en ons gedagtes gaan veral na 3 plekke: die verlede, die nou en die toekoms. Navorsing wat gedoen is beweer dat ek 12% van my tyd in die verlede spandeer. Uit die bloute kan iets wat met my gebeur het by my opkom. Ek dink aan onaangename ervarings asook goeie goed wat met my gebeur het.

My gedagtes word ook gevul met wat nou aan die gang is, 28% van my tyd spandeer ek hier. Dis egter moeilik om 'n definisie te kry van wat 'nou' beteken. Dikwels begin ek te reflekteer met dit waarmee ek besig is en ek evalueer dit. Die vraag is of ek dan nogsteeds besig is met die oomblik as ek reflekteer oor waarmee ek besig is. 48% van my tyd spandeer ek aan die toekoms. 44% van die 48% spandeer ek aan wat later in die dag gaan gebeur en 40% van die 48% gaan om more en die res van die persentasie handel oor goed wat in die verre toekoms kan gebeur. Denke oor die toekoms word dikwels gevul met scenarios van wat kan verkeerd loop. Dit maak my bekommerd. Om op hierdie manier te funksioneer is om op autopilot te wees.

Ek weet nie regtig wat ek doen nie en ek is nie regtig bewus van die effek op my lewe nie. Een van die groot teorieë meen dat my hele brein ingestel is op oorlewing en voortplanting. Daarom word my gedagtes veral getrek na die toekoms om die bedreiging en goed wat in my pad staan, te kan hanteer. Ook ons kulturele omstandighede beïnvloed ons gedagtes. Ek is oorstimuleer want elke oomblik word ek deur sosiale media en ander boodskappe opgeneem. Die eerste groot uitnodiging is om bewus te raak van wat my gedagtes vul. Dit is belangrik om te dink waaroor ek dink want gedagtes bepaal my lewe.

Oefening:

Onderbreek jou gedagtegang 'n paar keer deur die dag, jy kan bv. die alarm stel van jou horlosie en daardie oomblik net bewus raak van wat aangaan in jou kop. Moet dit nie beoordeel nie, as jy dit doen raak jy bewus van jouself. Raak net bewus van die verhouding en die ingesteldheid wat jy het teenoor jouself.

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om stil te wees en te weet, U is Heer.



DIE EFFEK VAN GEDAGTES.

As ek agterkom wat aangaan in my binne wêreld - dat ek op autopilot leef, dat my gedagtes gevul word met geraas – kan ek dalk verstaan waarom ek voel soos ek voel. Jung het gesê 90% van ons gedagtes is herhalend en, volgens hom, nuttelos. Die effek wat hierdie manier van lewe op my het, is dat dit my aandag aftrek van wat om my aan die gang is. Ek is, met ander woorde, nie teenwoordig in my lewe nie. Ek is 'n slaapwandelaar (1 Thessalonians 5 MSG). Dit dra daartoe by dat ek my eie lewe vervelig vind en niks interessant daarin kry nie. My geheue lei skade en ek voel nie dat daar iets noemenswaardig is waarna ek kan terugverwys aan die einde van die dag nie. Dit is dan nie vreemd as ek met refleksiegebed nie aan 'n hoogtepunt in die dag kan dink nie. Ek let nie op nie. Ek kan nie onthou nie. Dit dra daartoe by dat ek my lewe nie baie sinvol en betekenisvol vind nie. Dit kan daartoe lei dat ek sit met skuldgevoelens. Ek het 'n probleem oor my probleem en ek voel skuldig omdat ek dit nie kan verander nie. Ek sit met vrees en ek wonder of dit altyd so sal wees.

As ek agterkom dat ek so funksioneer en dit probeer verander, is daar dikwels 'n groot weerstand in my teenoor verandering. Daar is baie redes daarvoor. Uit 'n neurologiese perspektief weet ons dat die brein geneig is tot nuwighede. Die brein soek gedurig na iets anders en iets nuut. Daarom die dwaling in die brein. Kultureel gesproke is ek gekondisioneer om lekker te voel en elke ervaring waarmee ek te doen kry is daarop gerig om 'n ekstatiëse ervaring mee te bring. Aan die ander kant, sit ek dalk met 'n persoonlikheid wat uitgedaag is of 'n persoonlikheidsversteuring. Uit 'n spirituele perspektief kan ek dit terugbring na die ekkigheid waarop ek ingestel is om die situasie waarin ek is te beheer of anders te wil hê. Wanneer ek uitgevind het wat die groot geraas binne my is, help dit my om uit te vind hoekom dit so is. 'n Besef van die effek op my lewe sal my motiveer om dit te verander. Dit neem my na hulpeloosheid omdat ek sal uitvind ek kan dit nie self verander nie.

Oefening:

Vestig jou intensie. Paulus gee ons 'n idêe van 'n ander lewe om ons intensie en ons geloof los te maak om dit te vind. Het jy 'n intensie om in hierdie lewe in te gaan?

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om stil te wees en te weet, U is Heer.



KRY JOU SIT.

Die pad wat voorgestel word om te werk met die geraas in my gedagtes, is gebaseer op Bybelse voorskrifte wat deur die loop van die geskiedenis saamgestel is. Dit is 'n toeganklike manier waarop daar 'n innerlike transformasie meegebring word wat lei tot 'n totale nuwe bewussyn waarmee ek kan leef. Die pad begin met die fisiese en het te doen met my omgewing en my liggaam. In die eerste plek, skep 'n spasie. Jesus het gesê: *"This is what I want you to do, I want you to find a quiet secluded place"* (Matteus 6:5). In die lering van Jesus is 'n plek baie belangrik. Baie van ons maak baie min van 'n plek vir afsondering alhoewel ons baie tyd en energie spandeer aan ons vermaaklikheid of ontspanningsareas. In hierdie plek wil ek ontslae raak van sekere goed. Dit beteken dat ek veral van enige moontlike goed wat my aandag kan aflei, ontslae raak.

Een van die grootste goed is my selfoon. Navorsing het getoon dat as my foon binne bereik is, ek elke 3 tot 5 minute my foon sal neem om net te kyk of daar enige iets deurgekom het. Die beste manier om versoeking te hanteer, is om sekere goed voor die tyd te verwyder. In die tweede plek, onttrek ek myself en ek verplaas myself fisies na hierdie plek toe. Ons lees hoe Jesus Hom van jongs af dikwels onttrek het en eenkant gekom het. Volgens Lukas 2:42 was dit meer as net 'n fisiese daad van afsondering – dit was 'n innerlike leegmaak ter voorbereiding van wat sou kom. Ignatius het voorgestel dat as jy na jou plek gaan, jy net eers daar staan en kyk na die plek. So 'recollect' jy jouself, en raak jy net bewus van dit wat jy gaan doen, wat jy besig is om te doen en wat vir jou wag in daardie plek. Wanneer jy in jou plek ingaan, neem 'n gemaklike posisie in. 'n Baie algemene posisie is om te kniel maar dit kan ongemaklik raak as jy dit vir langer tye doen; daarom kan jy sit. Bring jou lyf tot rus. Dit kan tyd vat om te leer wat om te doen sodat jy kan rustig raak. 'n Algemene manier is om net vir 'n paar oomblikke aandag te skenk aan jou asemhaling. Dis een van die oefeninge wat die gees en die siel en die liggaam in kontak bring met mekaar. Die verstillingsproses begin van buite af na binne toe, om uiteindelik van binne na buite te leef.

Oefening:

Nadat jy die Lent-oordenking klaar gelees het, gaan na jou plek toe en as jy nie 'n plek het nie, rig 'n plek in – al is dit in die hoek van 'n kamer waar daar 'n stoel is. Raak ontslae van alles wat jou aandag aftrek of versoek. Gaan sit en probeer om stil te raak vir 'n paar minute.

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om stil te wees en te weet, U is Heer.



LEES DIE SKRIF, SKENK AANDAG & SÊ IETS.

Nadat ek my spasie geskep het, my sit gekry het, volg die volgende moment. Ek word nou uitgenooi om die Skrif aandagtig te lees. Wat nou gebeur is dat ek uit autopilot beweeg deur aandag te skenk. Ek probeer vir 'n tyd lank my konsentrasie met die Skrif te vul. Mettertyd kan my konsentrasie-span verhoog en kan ek vir langer tye konsentreer.

Ek begin deur te lees, aandagtig. Ek let op wat vir my uitstaan. Dit kan 'n woord, 'n frase, begrip of 'n beeld wees wat na my kom. Die uitnodiging is om dit te neem en dit dan rond te gooi in my gedagtes. Die Hebreeuse woord vir meditasie is letterlik om dit te herkou, om vrae te vra. Wat gewoonlik gebeur in hierdie tyd van aandag skenk, is dat my gedagtes weer begin dwaal. Dit is natuurlik en ek word uitgenooi om net weer terug te keer na dit waarmee ek besig is.

Die volgende belangrike ding is om dit wat in my gebeur in woorde uit te druk. Praat met God daaroor. Dit is 'n groot reis om agter te kom wat ek voel, wat ek wil hê en wat ek dink, en dit in woorde om te sit. Dit is dikwels wat in terapie gebeur – ek word gehelp om in kontak te kom met wat in my aan die gang is en woorde te kry daarvoor. Soos in enige ander verhouding gaan dit nie oor om Hom in te lig daaroor nie, maar om my ervaring met Hom te deel en saam met Hom te wees.

Oefening:

Gaan in jou spasie en sit. Gebruik die Skrif waarmee ons tans besig is en lees dit stadig en aandagtig deur en skenk aandag. Let op dit wat na jou toe kom en dink daaroor en deel jou gedagtes met Hom.

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om stil te wees en te weet, U is Heer.



DIE VRUG VAN STILTE.

"Let everyone know your life is being lived in another structure of being, one in which the Lord is constantly a vital presence" (Phil 4:15 Mulholland).

Let op die verskillende geloofspraktyke wat gegee word deur Paulus: skenk aandag aan die Woord; moenie bekommerd wees nie (:6); oordink die Woord (:8), en praat met Hom oor wat jy voel (:6). Deur dit te doen sal iets met my gebeur. Hy sal my Sy vrede gee.

Almal het 'n manier van lewe wat ons oor die jare ontwikkel het. Ek is 'n produk van my manier van lewe. As ek begin lewe soos Jesus gelewe het, vorm dit my en word my hele innerlike wêreld herskep. 'n Nuwe bewussyn kom tot stand. Die bewustelikheid waarmee ek leef sluit 'n bewussyn van Hom in. Ek vind Hom in alles. Ek voel anders oor myself en die lewe lyk anders. Die wêreld is 'n goeie plek en ek weet ek is in goeie hande.

Dit is net deur 'n konstante volgehoue beoefening van die geloofspraktyke dat vrug ervaar word. Baie lees oor die geloofspraktyke, praat daaroor en leer selfs saam met ander daaroor, maar beoefen nie die geloofspraktyk nie. Dit is net deur dit te doen wat ek sal weet (Johannes 7:17).

Oefening:

Reflekteer op jou ervaring van stilte – dit wat vir jou baie goed was, en dit wat vir jou uitdagend was. Praat dan met die Here daaroor en kyk of daar enigiets belangrik is om jou 'n besluit te laat neem hieroor.

Herhaalgebed:

Gee my die genade om stil te wees en te weet, U is Heer.



HERSIENINGSGED

Saterdagoggend:

1. Vra die Here om jou te herinner aan die week se belewenisse. Reflekteer oor wat na jou toe gekom het. Vertrou jou ervaring.
2. Lees weer die teks van die week. Kyk deur jou notas. Gaan terug na die ervaring deur die week wat by jou bly of vir jou uitstaan. Lees weer deur die oordenking en oefening. Praat met God oor jou ervaring.

Saterdagaand Hersieningsgebed:

- *Wat was my ervaring gewees van stilte?*
- *Wat was vir my die grootste uitdaging?*
- *Wat is die bron van geraas in my lewe?*
- *Hoe het ek konneksie met myself, met ander en met Hom verdiep as gevolg van jou beoefening van die praktyk van stilte?*
- *Wat het ek ontdek van stilte wat ek voel vir my 'n uitnodiging inhou om hierdie praktyk 'n geloofsgewoonte te maak vir my lewe?*



'N HERSIENINGSGEBED OOR DIE LENT-REIS

1. Doen 'n oorsig oor jou Lent-ervaring.
2. Skenk aandag aan die temas en dae wat by jou opkom en bly soos jy deur jou refleksie-notas gaan.
3. Waar het ek naby aan God gevoel?
4. Watter geloofpraktyke het my lewe gegee?
5. Watter geloofspraktyke was vir my moeiliker om vol te hou?
6. Watter geloofspraktyk kan 'n moontlike geloofsgewoonte in my lewe word?
7. Die volgende tree waarna ek uitgenooi word is:

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A REVIEW PRAYER ON THE LENT JOURNEY

1. Do an overview of your Lent experience.
2. Pay attention to the themes that comes up and stay with you as you go through your reflection notes.
3. Where did I feel close to God?
4. Which spiritual practices gave me life?
5. Which spiritual practices did you find difficult to sustain?
6. Which spiritual practices could possibly become a spiritual practice in my life?
7. The next step that I am invited to is:



REVIEW PRAYER

Saturday morning:

1. Ask God to remind you of your experiences this week. Reflect on what comes to you. Trust your experience.
2. Reread the Scripture reading. Look at your notes. Go back to the experiences throughout the week that stayed with you or stood out. Read the devotions and practices again. Talk to God about your experience.

Saturday evening Review prayer:

- *What was my experiences of silence?*
- *What was the biggest challenge for me?*
- *What is the source of noise in my life?*
- *How did my connection with myself, others and with God deepen as a result of my practice of silence?*
- *What did I discover about silence that is an invitation to integrate this practice into my life?*



THE FRUIT OF STILLNESS.

"Let everyone know your life is being lived in another structure of being, one in which the Lord is constantly a vital presence" (Phil 4:15 Mulholland).

Pay attention to the different spiritual practices conveyed by Paul: pay attention to the Word; do not be anxious (:6), contemplate the Word (:8), and talk to God about your feelings (:6). By doing this, something will happen to you. He will give me his peace.

All of us have a way of life that has been developed over the years. I am a product of my way of life. When I start living the way Jesus did, it forms me and my entire inner world is transformed. A new awareness is created - the awareness that I live with, includes an awareness of God. I find him in everything. I feel differently about myself and life looks differently. The world is a good place and I know I am in good hands.

It is only through the constant, sustained practice of spiritual practices that it carries fruit. Many people read about spiritual practices, talk about it and even learn about them with others; however, they do not practise these practices. It is only by doing that I will know (John 7:17).

Practice:

Reflect on your experience of silence – what was good for you, and what challenged you? Talk to God about this and see if there is anything important that comes to mind that will help you make a decision in the regard.

Grace:

Give me grace to become still and know You are God.



READ THE SCRIPTURE, PAY ATTENTION & SAY SOMETHING.

After arranging my space and sitting down, I am invited to read Scripture and to pay attention to what I am reading. This helps me move out of autopilot. I try to fill my concentration space with Scripture for a while. With time, I will increase my focus and I can concentrate for longer periods.

I start by reading carefully, paying attention to what stands out to me. It may be a word, a phrase, or image. The idea is to throw this idea around in my head. The Hebrew word for meditate literally means to ruminate, and to ask questions. What usually happens during this time of paying attention is that my mind starts wandering. This is natural and I am invited to just return to what I am busy with each time.

The next important thing is to express what is happening to me in words. Talk to God about it. It is a big journey to realise what I am feeling, what I want, and what I think, and to put this into words. This is a key part of the therapeutic process. Just as in any other relationship, it is not about informing God about these things, but rather to share my experience with him and to be with him.

Practice:

Go into your space and sit down. Use the text that we are busy with currently, and read it slowly and attentively. Pay attention to what comes to you and think about it. Share your thoughts with God.

Grace:

Give me grace to become still and know You are God.



SIT DOWN.

The way that is recommended to work with inner noise caused by my thoughts, is based on Biblical guidelines that have been compiled throughout history. It is an accessible way to bring about inner transformation and leads to a totally new awareness to life. This road starts with the physical and has to do with my surroundings and my body. First, I need to create space. Jesus said, *"This is what I want you to do, I want you to find a quiet secluded place"* (Matthew 6:5). In the teachings of Jesus, place is very important. Many of us make very little time for seclusion, and we rather spend a lot of energy and time on entertainment or leisure. In this space, I want to get rid of certain things. It means that I especially want to get rid of things that distract me.

One of the biggest things is my cell phone. Research has shown that, if my cell phone is within reach, I will look at it every 3 to 5 minutes to see if anything has come through. The best way to deal with this temptation is to remove it beforehand. Secondly, I withdraw myself and I transfer myself to this place. We read how Jesus, from a young age, often withdrew himself. According to Luke 2:42, he emptied himself in preparation for what was to come. Ignatius suggests that, before I enter, I first just stand in front of my place and look at it. This is to 'recollect' myself, and to become aware of what I am going to do, what I am doing, and what awaits me when I enter the place. When I enter, I take a comfortable position. A general position is to kneel, but it can get very uncomfortable to stay like this for longer periods of time. Therefore, it may be better to sit down. I bring myself to rest. It may take time to learn to do this. A very old way is to just take a few moments and to pay attention to my breathing. This exercise is also helpful to connect body, mind and soul to each other. This process starts from the outside inward, in order to eventually live from the inside out.

Practice:

After you have finished reading the devotion, go to your quiet place. If you don't have one, arrange a place – even if it is only a chair in the corner of the room. Get rid of all the things that distract or tempt you. Go and sit in this place and try to become silent for a few minutes.

Grace:

Give me grace to become still and know You are God.



THE EFFECT OF INNER NOISE.

When I realise what is going on in my inner world - - that I live on autopilot, that my thought spaces are filled with wandering thoughts - I can perhaps understand why I feel the way I do. Jung said that 90% of our thoughts are repetitive, and according to him - useless. The effect that this has on my life is that I am not very aware of what is really going on around me. In other words, I am not present in my own life. I am a sleepwalker (1 Thess. 5 - - MSG). It leads to me feeling bored with my own life, and not finding anything interesting in it. My memory suffers damage due to living with inner noise, and I feel that there is nothing significant to refer back to at the end of the day. It isn't strange that, when I do a reflection prayer at the end of the day, there are no significant highlights. I don't notice and I can't remember. It contributes to a feeling that my life is not very significant or meaningful. This, in turn, leads to feelings of guilt. I have a problem as a result of my problem, and I feel guilty because I cannot change. I live with fear and I wonder if things will always be this way. I don't really do anything fruitful when I function in the way.

When I realise that I function in this way and I try to change it, I often feel resistance within me. There are many reasons for this. From a neurological perspective, we know that our brains are geared toward innovation. The brain is constantly looking for something different and something new. Therefore, I experience a wandering brain. From a cultural perspective, I have been conditioned to want to feel good, and every experience that I have is geared toward feeling ecstatic. I might also be challenged by my personality or a personality disorder. From a spiritual perspective, it brings me back to the self-centredness. I am focused on being in control or changing the situation that I find myself in. When I become aware of what the noise is inside of me, it will help me find the reason. A realisation of its effect on my life will motivate me to change it. It will take me to helplessness, because I will realise that I cannot change it on my own.

Practice:

Focus your intention. Paul not only gives us an idea of a different life, he shows us that it is not at all boring to live a more conscious life, a life filled with deeper sense and meaning. It could be very interesting. He sketches it in order to create a feeling of intentionality and deepening of our faith. Before we get to the practices and find ways to live this life, it is important to establish our intention and faith.

Grace:

Give me grace to become still and know You are God.



Very few people are aware of what fills their thought spaces. We are constantly busy with our thoughts, which usually go to three places in particular: the past, the present and the future. Research suggests that I spend 12% of my time in the past. Something that happened in the past, can enter my mind out of nowhere. I think about the unpleasant as well as pleasant experiences that happened to me. My thoughts are also filled with things that are happening now – I spend 28% of my time thinking about it. It is, however, difficult to define what "now" means. I often start by reflecting on what I am busy with now and I evaluate it. The question is whether I am then still busy with this moment if I reflect on what I am busy with. 48% of my time I spend thinking about the future – 44% of the 48% I spend on what is going to happen later today and 40% of the 48% is about tomorrow. The rest of the 48% is spent on what could happen in the foreseeable and distant future. Thoughts about the future are often filled with scenarios of what may go wrong. This makes me worry. To function in this way is to live on autopilot. I don't really know what I am doing and I am not really aware of the effect on my life. The reason why I function in this way could be explained in many ways. One of the big theories deals with evolution, which believes that my whole brain is focused on survival and reproduction.

Therefore, my thoughts are drawn to handling threats and things that stand in my way. Another big reason is the cultural circumstances. I am overstimulated. Every moment, I am stimulated by social media and other messages, which contribute to my thoughts wandering and being filled. The big invitation is to become aware of what fills my thoughts. It is important to think about what I think about, because it determines my life.

Practice:

Interrupt your thoughts a few times during the day – you can set the alarm or your watch. In those moments, become aware of what is going on in your mind. Don't judge it – if you do that, you only become aware of yourself. Just become aware of the attitude and the relationship that you have with your thoughts and self.

Grace

Give me grace to become silent and to know, You are God.



“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” *Philippians 4:6–9*

You are invited to practice silence this week, by living with less noise and experiencing peace.

Paul gives an image of the good life. It is to live in peace. He motivates me by giving me a reason – when I experience peace, I am free of worry. I experience joy. Such a life is possible because God is near. Paul gives me a way of living through the integration of certain spiritual practices that will help me experience the good life. As a follower of Jesus, he explains to me what it means to follow Jesus and to live the way he did (Romans 5:10). Through the ages, the church took these ideas and established certain practices that have been proven to be very fruitful. The development of and insight into these practices will never end, because knowledge increases, and today, through psychology and medical sciences, we come to a better understanding of the functions of the brain. These insights can strengthen these practices and help us build on old ideas.

Grace
Give me grace to become silent and to know, You are God.



Poem

BUT THE SILENCE IN THE MIND

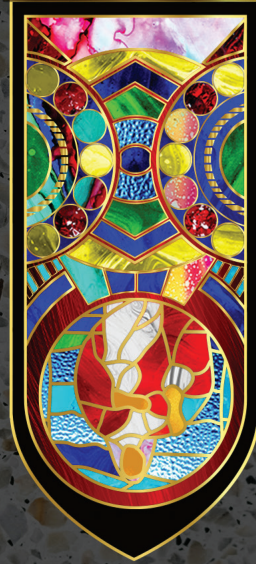
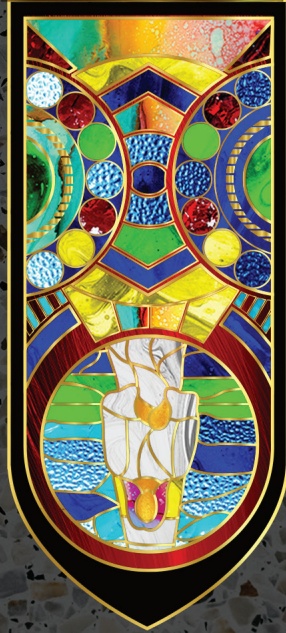
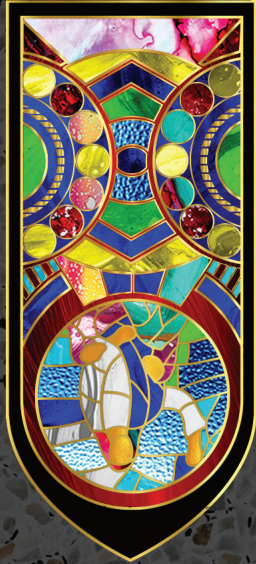
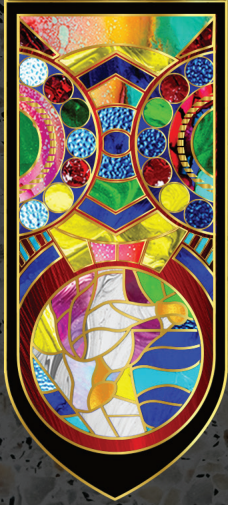
But the silence in the mind
is when we live best, within
listening distance of the silence
we call God. This is the deep
calling to deep of the psalm-
writer, the bottomless ocean.
We launch the armada of
our thoughts on, never arriving.
It is a presence, then,
whose margins are our margins;
that calls us out over our
own fathoms. What to do
but draw a little nearer to
such ubiquity by remaining still?

RS Thomas

SILENCE

Less Noise. More Peace

WEEK 5





A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, starting from the page number '50' and extending across the page.



REVIEW PRAYER

Saturday morning:

1. Ask God to remind you of your experiences this week. Reflect on the things that come to you. Trust your experience.
2. Reread the text of the week. Look through your notes. Go back to the experiences throughout the week which stayed with you and stand out to you. Reread the devotions and exercises. Talk to God about your experiences.

Saturday evening - Review prayer:

- Was there an experience of coming out of my head and into my heart spaces this week?
- How did my relationship with myself, God and others deepen through the practice of study?
- What did I discover about study that I feel is an invitation to include as a habit in my life?



BE READ BY GOD.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures...” Luke 24:45

The purpose of the Bible is for the Bible to read me. When that happens, my heart starts to live! The Emmaus pilgrims experienced the meaning of this first-hand. They know Scripture and try to follow Jesus, but are ignorant about what it means for their ordinary lives. When the knowledge flows back from the mind to the heart, everything changes. In the West and Western monasterial tradition, this experience is called meditation. A person moves past his/her thoughts to the nonverbal feeling. Contemplation comes from the word *contemplatum*. *Con* means ‘with’ and *templatum* means ‘temple’. The idea is to view/behold God from his presence in the self, others and surroundings. It is called the science of love, where God does the seeing through me.

Practice:

Kneel before you start praying or reading the Bible. Look up for a moment. For a moment, become aware of the richness of wisdom that can be found in God and that God wants to share it with you.

Grace

Give me grace to live in wisdom.



TRY TO REMEMBER.

“May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord.”
Psalms 19:15

The reason why I repeat Scripture is so that I can remember it. It forms part of a memory from which the Holy Spirit can remind me and lead me. In the culture that I live in today, it is very difficult. Technology influences the brain and replaced some of its functions. An overstimulated brain releases dopamine that leads to a memorisation deficit. Then our minds start to play ping pong. It is like a goon that is persistently stopped from entering the hole and cannot come to rest. I can only remember when my mind comes to rest.

Believers used God's Word to let their thoughts rest in God. This spiritual practice is called meditation. I literally need to get over my thoughts to be with God. It brings me in contact with the things that live deep in my heart and sharpens my ability to observe. The word meditation means to "make at home or to ruminate". It is literally an extended attention span. To study requires concentration. By giving undivided attention to God, my heart and life becomes a home for God. The purpose of a simplified and extended attention span is that "the message of Christ dwell among you richly... with all wisdom." (Colossians 3:16)

Practice:
Take a sentence from this week's text and memorise it today.
Grace
Give me grace to live in wisdom.



READ IT AGAIN.

“So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.”
Matthew 26:44, Mark 14:39

In the Roman empire the Latin saying: “*Repetitio est mater studiorum*” is engraved on many buildings. It means Repetition is the mother of study. If I want to learn or understand something while studying, I need to repeat it. Repetition is not just a memorisation technique, but also helps me to understand something better through hearing. Therefore, God commanded that the ten commandments be read to Israel repeatedly (Deut. 6:5, 10:12, 11:13, 30:6). The purpose is not only to get to know the law, but also to get to experience the intention and spirit of the law. It is probably also the reason why the report of Jesus’ ministry is repeated in four gospels.

It is also a form of meditation. One word for meditation in Hebrew is *haga*, which literally means to softly recite, mumble, hum or to coo like a dove. It is in reciting, mumbling, humming and repeating the words of God, that we start to better understand what God means. Like Jesus, I can talk to God by saying “the same words”..

Practice:

Memorise the mantra “Lead me in your truth” and pray it every day when you are reminded of an object that you carry with you. The object could be a bracelet, handkerchief, stone or anything that would repeatedly lead your attention to the mantra.

Grace

Give me grace to live in wisdom.



HOW DO YOU READ?

“How do you read it?” Luke 10:26

Reading is an important practice in study. By reading, I recover information which can help me to understand better and reach certain conclusions. Today, neuroscience can help me to understand this process better. Reading constructs new neural pathways inside my brain, which in turn form new connections. Still, the action of reading remains subjective. It is very difficult to understand the meaning of the author, and my own interpretations remain part of the reading process. Therefore, different interpretations are reached for the same text being read. Jesus understood this dilemma very well.

Therefore, he doesn't ask what or how much I read, but rather how I read it. Today, there is an overload of information. Every person has access to the world's biggest library – Google. New brain connections do not necessarily lead to the correct interpretation. To discover the intention of the author, I need to read with the author. Jesus would have explained this way of reading in the following way: “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me” (John 5:39). Reading should introduce me to the living Christ.

Practice:

Think for a moment about how you read. When you read, become aware that Jesus wants to read with you. Allow Jesus to show you how Scripture points to him.

Grace

Give me grace to live in wisdom.



WITH A YOKE.

“For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” *Matthew 11:30*

We follow Jesus by learning from him - not just by believing in him. In fact, my faith changes and is strengthened because I learn the new life from Christ. Christians in Thessalonica were praised for their growing faith (2 Thessalonians 1:3). One of the images that helps me to learn from Jesus is a yoke. A yoke in ancient times would have referred to the teaching of a certain Rabbi. Jews believe that every text in the Old Testament has 70 different meanings, and would not feel any tension when different interpretations are given to the same text. The different views would be named after the different Rabbis that taught them.

A yoke is also a reference to cattle. Two bulls are usually tied together in a yoke. An experienced bull is usually tied with an inexperienced one. The idea is that the younger, inexperienced bull will learn from the older bull. He knows when to stop, to rest, to eat and to work. The important principle is that God teaches me when I do a task with Him – or put differently, when I obey him. In other words, I don't get to know God by analysing the yoke or teaching; rather, I learn through the experience of working and doing, while I carry the burden with Jesus.

Practice:

Take a piece of paper and draw a yoke or search for a picture of a yoke on the internet that you can print. While you pray, Ask Jesus to teach you about his easy yoke.

Grace

Give me grace to live in wisdom.



"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[us] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe." Ephesians 1:15-19

The practice for this week is study. Study is a spiritual practice that can help me with my ignorance. To be more knowledgeable does not mean that I obtain more information; rather, it means that my spiritual eyes are opened wider, so that I can see God in everything. Attention diversion prevents me from seeing. Therefore, I need to spend time with Jesus, so that I can learn from him. Study shouldn't only involve the mind, but also the heart. It isn't only rational, but also relational. It is not only me going to God, but also God coming to me. The word disciple can help me to better understand what the word study means. The word literally means to sit at someone's feet. In Biblical times, a learner or disciple literally sat at the feet of his Rabbi. Jesus would have done it with his teachers, just as Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). To sit says something about my attitude and the heart with which I approach the relationship. I look up to – not down on – someone. I am dependent and open to receive.

Grace
Give me grace to live in wisdom.

Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. Incline my heart to your words, and let your speech come upon me as dew upon the grass.

In days gone by the children of Israel said to Moses, 'Speak to us and we shall listen; do not let the Lord speak to us, lest we die.' This is not how I pray. No. With the great prophet Samuel, I humbly and earnestly beg...

If I hear your voice, may I not be condemned

for hearing the word and not following it,

for knowing it and not loving it,

for believing it and not living it.

Speak then, Lord for your servant listens, for you have words of eternal life. Speak to me to comfort my soul and to change my whole life; in turn, may I give you praise and glory and honour. Amen.

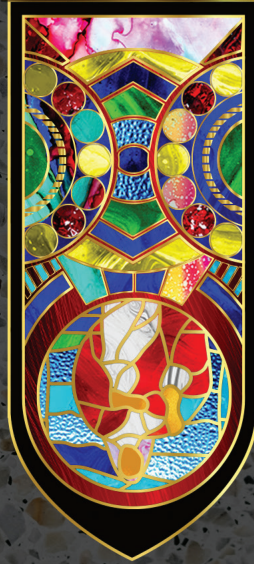
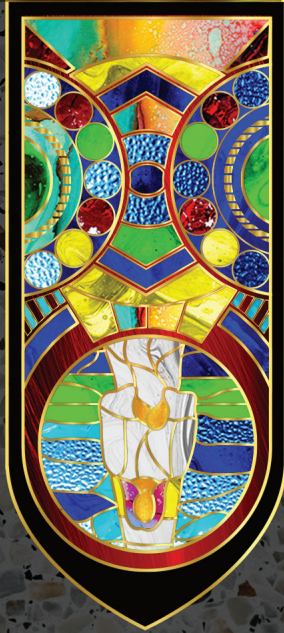
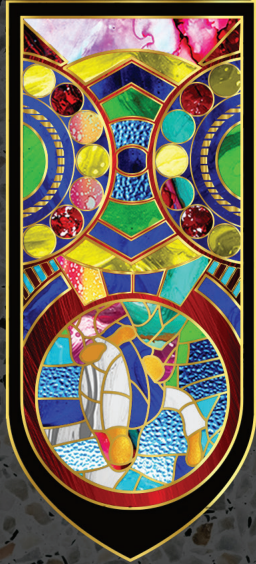
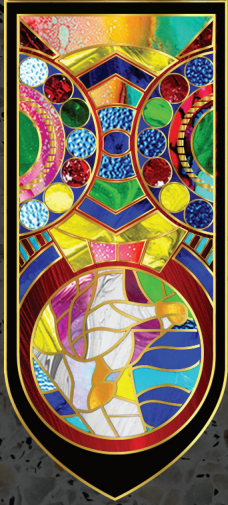
Thomas à Kempis



Poem

Less Ignorance. More Wisdom.
STUDY

WEEK 4





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REVIEW OF THE WEEK

Saturday morning:

1. Ask God to remind you of your experiences this week. Reflect on the things that come to you. Trust your experience.

2. Reread the text of the week. Look through your notes. Go back to the experiences throughout the week which stayed with you and stand out to you. Reread the devotions and exercises. Talk to God about your experiences.

Saturday evening – Review prayer:

- Where did I experience God's presence?
- How did my relationship with myself, God and others deepen as I practiced simplicity?
- What about this practice do I want to integrate into my rhythm of life?



SIMPLIFYING OUR SCHEDULES.

One of the obvious characteristics of our everyday schedules is that they are cluttered. Each day is filled with people to see, tasks to fulfill, appointments to keep, emails to send, phone calls to make, deadlines to meet. Someone once said that our lives seem like overpacked suitcases bursting at the seams. In fact, we often feel that we are running behind schedule. It often seems that there is something else that needs to be done, or finished, or remembered. The tragedy is that our cluttered schedules rob us of the opportunity to live more freely.

In our cluttered schedules, Jesus calls us to keep our focus on God's kingdom. This is the "one thing necessary." It is important to realise that Jesus does not call us out of our busy world. Rather, he wants us to live in it, but clearly keeping our hearts centred on what God wants. As we have seen this week, this is what it means to "set your hearts on God's kingdom first... and all these things will be given you as well." What counts every day is where our hearts are focused. This is where we find genuine Christian simplicity.

Practice:

Identify one thing that you can do in our cluttered schedules that shows your intention to be focused on what God wants? Here is something we can experiment with. As we begin each task today, however small it may be, we can ask the Lord to help us to do it with all our loving attention. This will help us to do one thing at a time. We can be sure that, as we seek to live in constant communion with God like this, our busy schedules will feel much less cluttered. Our lives are being simplified because we are giving our attention to God in all things. We are no longer huffing and panting through the day; rather, we are seeking to put God first in all that we do.

Grace:

Help me to love more freely and lightly.



SIMPLIFYING THE MIND.

Our minds are often cluttered with so much incoming information. Each day we are bombarded with TV images, email demands, text messages, Twitter updates, Facebook entries, cell-phone calls, advertising billboards – the list of stimuli goes on and on. Some of this information requires our immediate attention, much of it carries very little importance and can be ignored. Sadly, we seem to fall prey to the temptation to open our mind to almost all of it. What is tragic is that this steady diet of over-stimulation and constant distraction tires our minds, prevents us from facing reality, and keeps us from living freely and lightly.

Seeking God's kingdom today may mean that we limit what we take in with our mind. There are many ways we can do this: We can spend time without watching TV. Too often, watching TV until late after a hard day's work simply reinvigorates us artificially. Resting our mind may be much better. Maybe for one day, we can stay away from all the words and images that assault us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We can even begin to think with the Lord what we think about when we are not thinking about others all the time.

Practice:

Pray with our passage of Scripture from Matthew 6: 25-34. We begin by reading the passage slowly and unhurriedly. We wait for a word, or a phrase, or a sentence to stand out for us. For a few minutes, we turn this word, phrase or sentence over and over in our hearts. We let it interact with our memories, our challenges, our heartaches and our fears. We then share with the Lord whatever is going on in our hearts. Finally, we sit in the silence and simply rest in the Presence of the Lord. Our cluttered mind becomes free.

Grace:

Help me to love more freely and lightly.



SIMPLIFYING OUR SPENDING HABITS.

Have you noticed that we don't speak too much about our personal finances? We believe that how we spend our money is our own business and has nothing to do with anyone else. No one is going to tell us what to do with our money. This attitude towards our spending habits conflicts radically with the teaching of Jesus. He spoke more about money than any other subject besides the Kingdom of God. Somehow, he knew that this would be one of our biggest areas of struggle and pain. As his followers we really need to help each to live more freely in this regard.

There are many ways, even fun ways, in which we can begin to simplify our spending habits. How about making our meal today from what we already got stored in our fridge or cupboard? Check out what is in the fridge, or on our shelves, or in the freezer, and collect some items that have been lying around for some time. As we gather these items, we may wonder with the Lord why these food items have been lying around for such a long time. What do our food-buying habits tell us about ourselves?

Practice:

Avoid looking at adverts for one day! When they come up on the TV, look elsewhere! Our Lord will help us with this. Let us pray for the ability to recognise and to avoid the adverts that come our way. We may find it very helpful to have a conversation with the Lord about our relationship with advertising. Are we vulnerable to spending money that we don't have on those things that we see being advertised? What would it mean for you and me to take seriously Jesus' words, "Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6:26) Remember this passage from Matthew. This is where Christian simplicity starts!

Grace:

Help me to love more freely and lightly.



SIMPLIFYING OUR SPACE.

What does your home space look like? Often, our untidy drawers, cupboards, rooms and garages reveal the clutter of our hearts. Over time we accumulate so much stuff that we don't need or use. What we cling to reveals a lot about the state of our soul. Our heart gets infiltrated and taken over by the dark passion to possess more and more things. Little wonder that we often feel overwhelmed and unfree. Real Christian simplicity can free us from this modern slavery, bring serenity to our frantic spirit and some sanity to our compulsive buying habits.

This Lent, it may be a good practice to go through some of those unused things lying around in our home space. Many will qualify as junk and need to be thrown away. Others may not be useful any longer and can perhaps be given to someone who does have need for it. Or maybe, there may be a cleaning job that we have put off for ages – cleaning out the drawer beside our bed, packing away our tools lying around in the garage, tidying up the cupboard under the kitchen sink. All this helps us to journey from less clutter to more freedom.

Here is the real challenge: when we have simplified our living space just a little, we don't tell anyone about it. Instead, in the inner room of our hearts, we can ask ourselves, "Why do I buy so much stuff?" We speak with the Lord about our buying habits and ask him to show us how we can live more freely and lightly. Christian simplicity always begins and ends with this challenge to keep God first in our hearts and to do what God wants us to do. This is the Gospel-freedom that Christ brings to you and me.

Grace:

Help me to love more freely and lightly.

Practice:

Speak to God about your buying habits and ask him to show you how you can live more freely and lightly.



SIMPLIFYING OUR HEART.

We simplify our heart by practicing to "seek first the kingdom of God." (Matt 6:33) When our main life-focus is to know God and to walk with God, our cluttered heart becomes much freer. This doesn't mean that other things like earning a living, raising our children, watching sport, making a home, planning holidays and so on, are not important. It simply means that they don't occupy first place in our heart. Our first concern that takes precedence over all else is that we want to build our lives around what God wants for us. This is where genuine Christian simplicity is born.

We can start right where we are. We begin to do what God wants in every way we can. We do not wait for some future time. Right now, we ask for the light of Christ to lead us. In every task that comes our way today, at home or at work, we seek to do our best, trusting God with the outcomes in whatever we do. These tasks don't have to be religious tasks, nor do they have to be big or spectacular. In fact, we usually begin obeying God in very small and insignificant ways. We begin now, from this moment.

Of course, we will fail and let God down. There will be many times when we forget God, when we give in to our self-centred ways, when we allow other things to take first place in our heart. In these moments, we simply need to make confession, get up, and start again immediately. The issue is not so much whether we failed or succeeded yesterday, but whether our hearts focus is on doing what God wants us to do right now. The challenge is: Are we living in simplicity now?

Practice:

Pay attention to the tasks or relationships that occupy your heart. Do you feel cluttered when you think about them? Do you experience a sense of freedom when you think about them?

Grace:

Help me to love more freely and lightly.



"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. *Matthew 6:25-34*

Last year when I went to the East Rand Mall to buy Christmas gifts. While waiting in the queue to pay, a couple I knew walked past me. They were both pushing trolleys filled with items they had just bought. Thinking that they had finished their shopping for the day I said that they must be relieved to be going home. I still haven't forgotten their answer. "No" the husband answered, "we still haven't found what we are looking for."

This encounter was like a parable. We spend our lives seeking to accumulate more and more stuff. We are constantly looking to buy something that will enable us to live happier, fuller and freer lives. Sadly, our lives often resemble that couple in the mall. We walk up and down the shopping aisles of life, pushing trolleys overloaded with good things, but still not having found what our hearts truly desire. We feel strained, stressed and high-strung. There seems to be no escape from the rat-race.

Christian simplicity helps us to journey from less clutter to more freedom. The most powerful passage in the New Testament must be Jesus' words where he challenged his followers to freely "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," knowing that everything we need will be provided. (Matt 6:33) This teaching does not mean that we sit back and do nothing. Rather, we work and make provision (just as the birds do), but we work with the simple trust that we are under the watchful eye of God, who richly cares for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. This is where the journey into God's simplicity begins.

Grace:
Help me to love more freely and lightly.



Poem

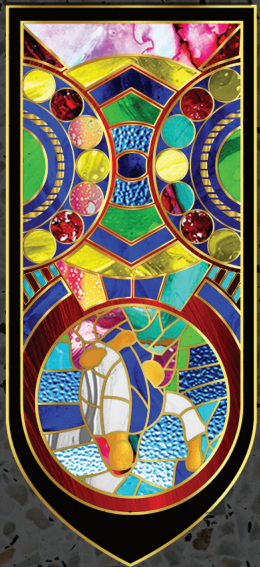
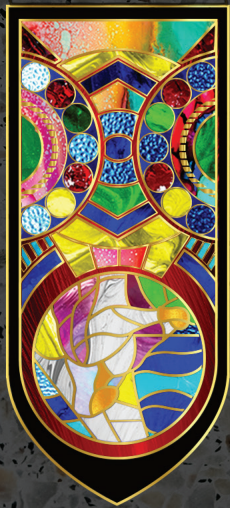
SIMPLE GIFTS

Tis the gift to be simple,
Tis the gift to be free
Tis the gift to come down
Where we ought to be
And when we find ourselves
In the place just right
Twill be in the valley
Of love and delight:
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend
We shall not be ashamed
To turn, turn
Will be our delight
Till by turning, turning
We come around right.

SIMPLICITY

Less Clutter. More Freedom.

WEEK 3





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REVIEW PRAYER

Saterdagoggend:

1. Ask God to remind you of your experiences this week. Reflect on the things that come to you. Trust the experience.
2. Read the text of the week again. Read through your notes. Go back to the experiences which stood out for you this week. Read through the devotions and practices. Talk to God about your experiences.

Saturday evening Review prayer:

- Have I ever experienced the power of forgiveness from God through others?
- What do I learn about myself through the experience of confession?
- How did my connection with myself, with others, and with God deepen through this practice?
- Which aspects of this practice do I want to integrate into my life?



THE JESUS PRAYER.

One of the greatest gifts that I have ever received from someone, is the Jesus prayer. This is a way of praying in the East Orthodox tradition. The prayer is very simple: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." This prayer occurs a few times in the New Testament, with people praying for different needs. Some of them had physical, psychological, and other social needs that they experienced. Jesus answered this prayer every time. These few words summarise our entire Christian faith. Much has been written about this simple prayer. It is not so easy to pray it. It is suggested that it be combined with breathing. *Jesus Christ, Son of God (breathe in), have mercy on me (breathe out)*. Shorter versions can also be prayed, e.g. "*Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.*"

The suggestion is that you just start by repeating these words for ten minutes, without stressing any word, and concentrating on the words you are praying. There are many testimonies about what happens to people when they pray this prayer. One view is that it is a time of godly therapy. People also say that the soul is anointed, and they experience the grace and forgiveness of God through this practice. The heart is cleansed. One of the great effects of this prayer is that it brings about inner silence. Another effect is that you start praying the prayer of the heart, which means that your heart continues praying these words throughout the day, even when you are busy doing other tasks. No matter what the advantages are, the greatest reason is that this prayer reunites us with God. We can be with him, experience him and start to change inside.

Practice:
Pray the Jesus prayer for 10 minutes.

Grace:

Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.



SIN BRAVELY.

"Sin bravely" is a statement that is attributed to Luther. There is a lot of concern that is voiced around this statement. It is believed by some that Luther meant that you could do whatever you want, as long as you are honest about it, and talk to someone about it. Can you lie? Hurt someone? Be unfaithful in your marriage? Gossip? Then you need to talk to someone about it. It might be the last thing that we want to do when we have done something that we know is wrong – to talk to someone. We want to avoid it, blame others, rationalise – just like Adam and Eve. This statement by Luther goes against this tendency and actually says that what we do with sin can be harmful. It is not so much what I did. But what I do with my sin that is the problem. More harmful than the sin itself is the fact that I am not brave enough to talk about it. It is suggested that sin against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:22–30) could be defined as the rationalisation and dishonesty of sin. Eventually, I reach a place where my heart is hardened and I cannot see the truth and therefore cannot show any remorse. This might be the reason why we see people boasting about their sin today. We are all weak and sinful and need guts to admit it and talk to someone about it.

Henri Nouwen at one stage, when he received many invitations and travelled a lot, decided to take someone from his community with him on his travels. His reason was that he felt that he was exposed to greater temptations when he travelled on his own. Another reason was that he realised that he tended to boast about his life when he travelled on his own. By having someone who lived beside him, he found that he didn't fall into temptation so easily and that he stayed more faithful to the truth.

Practice:

Reflect on what you confess to God and how you do it.

What would it be like to share this with a confidant? Are you invited to share your life with someone else?

Grace:

Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.



THE NECESSITY OF CONFESSION.

It is said that confession is good for the soul. We learn this through the therapeutic community which says that you cannot be helped with your addiction and no healing can occur, unless you admit and confess. There is an adage which says, "*you are as sick as your deepest secrets,*" which means that your addiction has more to do with denial than it does with drugs, sex, alcohol, or any other addiction. It is only when I am honest with myself, stop misleading myself, stop lying to myself, that I can be healed and be freed. James 5:17 states that, if we confess our trespasses to each other, we can be healed. At the heart of healing and freedom lies the practice of confession. It means that I cannot be freed through will power or be motivated to change through guilt. Trying harder won't help, neither does a guilty conscience. It doesn't bring me to grace. It doesn't bring me to the power that would enable me to change and be free. It is only when I confess. It isn't something that I can just do quietly in my heart and to God. James says it must be done in front of others. I need the grace of God and others to be freed. The health of my soul is at stake. This seems to be what Jesus is saying in John 9. I am not expected to be without sin or to understand everything, but I must be honest and stop misleading myself. When I do that, the truth, the life and the light of Christ will find me.

Practice: Come in contact with your feelings about confession. Do you feel that it is negative? Do you feel that it promotes an awareness of sin and that it affects your mind and self-image? Or is it something that leads to peace, freedom and joy? Talk to God about it and ask him to lead you in this matter.

Grace:

Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.



It seems as if people find it difficult to talk about sin these days. We can still refer to it in a systemic or corporate way of thinking, especially when things happen that are clearly bad or cruel. However, when it comes to ourselves, we seem to shy away from it and we are reluctant to call any action sin. It is seldom that someone will stand up and say: "I am wrong. I have sinned." This is sad, because we are comfortable talking about our neurosis, our immaturity, our pettiness, our own woundedness, our genetic disposition, but a diagnosis that is sociological, physiological, or psychological in nature, is lacking. Our diagnosis will determine what we would try to do with this problem that we are dealing with. When I can look at my actions and thoughts and say, "It is sin," I can admit that it is wrong. I can admit that I have done it and in so doing, I take responsibility for it. I admit that I can't actually do anything about it, but that I am delivered in order to be forgiven. It is therefore a wonderful thing to call something sin when it is sin. It opens me to love, it opens me to forgiveness, it opens me to receive grace, it opens me to another power outside myself, which I don't have.

It can be seen in the story of Adam and Eve. After they had sinned, they went to hide from God. And they didn't want to admit that they had sinned. Adam immediately said that it was Eve, and Eve said that it was the snake, instead of admitting their sin and reaching out and receiving help and grace and deliverance. The effect was that they became more entangled in their sin. This is exactly what happens to us every time we rationalise, deny or blame. I don't open myself up for grace, for love, for forgiveness, which can come to me and help me change. I must have the courage to say I have sinned, because then I surrender myself and I hope and trust that there is love. My hope is that there is power and forgiveness, and that something good is given to me, which I don't deserve.

Practice:

Start your time of silence by asking God to remind you of any sin. If there is something, no matter how trivial, confess it and thank him for his forgiveness and mercy. Think about this exercise.

What was it like for you to do this exercise? Do you notice your tendency around sin?

Grace:

Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.



BELOVED SINNER.

For a moment I live myself into these words of Jesus. Like the Pharisee, I am often religious. I am okay and I am not bad. I go to church, believe in God. I do good deeds and my intentions are pure. I even pray and give. Then one day, I come to a deep realisation that everything is not good in me and I realise that I am actually sinful. Like the sinner, I turn to God and ask him to forgive me. I then feel that I am his child, I am forgiven, I have been reborn. I then hear that I am a new person. I am now holy, I am now the righteous of God. I receive a whole new identity. But after some time, I realise that I am still not doing what is right.

Who am I actually? Am I a sinner? Am I a saint? There is a danger of only looking at this from one side. One the one hand, it could lead to an awareness of sin and a weak self-image. I might feel that I am no good and am not accepted by God, that I cannot change. On the other hand, it could lead to denial that cuts me off from the reality that I sin. The problem is that I often live with a split identity and a split spirituality, because I struggle with the tension between these two sides. I see-saw in life and I struggle to bring these two truths together. 500 years ago, Ignatius suggested that we see ourselves as beloved sinners. He felt that, before dealing with your sinfulness and sin, you must first become deeply rooted in the love of God. Only when you know and feel that you are beloved, you can start dealing with what is wrong in your life. He believed that we should live with a deep awareness that God cannot love us more or less than he loves us right now. He loves us with an eternal love. Nothing can ever change this love. It doesn't matter what I have done or what I do right now. He loves me and is there for me.

Practice:

Think about God's love for you. Think about everything he does for you. What is he doing for you at the moment?

Grace:

Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.



“The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’” But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’” I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” *Luke 18:9-14*

At some point, all of us find out that there is something wrong with us. I do things that look right in that moment but are not good for me or the people around me. I do things that I don't want to do and disadvantage myself. What do I do with these things? I can call it my weaknesses, brokenness, pettiness, neurosis, woundedness, or immaturity. What do I do with these things? I can go for therapy, learn to live with it, ignore it, or just carry on and expect other people to live with it. I can expect other people to accept me as I am. The Bible has a different way of viewing these things. The Bible calls it sin, and aware of our sin and what we should do with it. We need to confess in order to receive forgiveness. Confession doesn't replace the need for growth and moving from immaturity and neurosis, but it takes away my sin. It cleanses me and gives me a new beginning so that I can change.

It is not something that only happens once in my life, even though there might be a big first time where I realise who I am and what I have done in my life. As I grow in my life with God, I will realise that I need to confess regularly and regularly need to turn to Him as part of my healing and growth.

This week's journey is around the spiritual practice of confession in order to live with less guilt and more grace.

Grace:
Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.

23



Poem

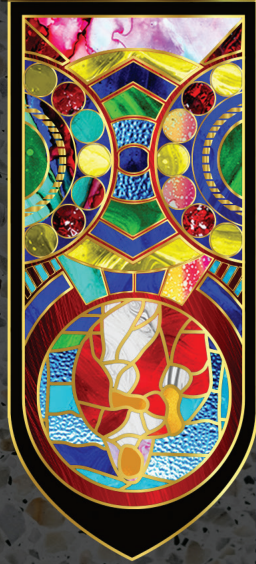
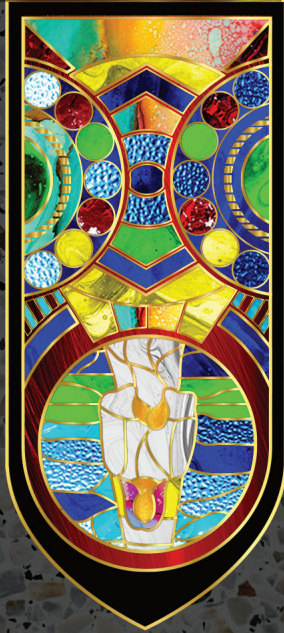
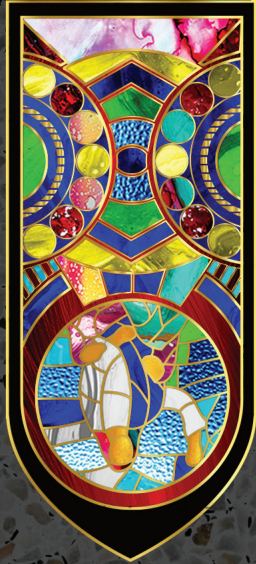
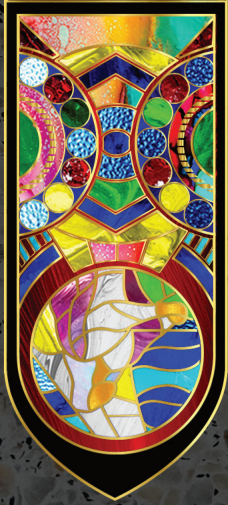
I AM NOT – DH Lawrence

"I am not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections.
and it is not because the mechanism is working wrongly, that I am ill.
I am ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional self,
and the wounds to the soul take a long, long time, only time can help
and patience, and a certain difficult repentance
long difficult repentance, realization of life's mistake, and the freeing oneself
from the endless repetition of the mistake
which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify."
DH Lawrence

CONFERENCE

Less Guilt. More Grace

WEEK 2





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REVIEW PRAYER

Saturday morning:

1. Ask God to remind you of your experiences this week. Reflect on the things that come to you. Trust this experience.
2. Read the texts of the week again. Read through your notes. Go back to the experiences that stayed with you. Read the devotions and practices again. Talk to God about your experiences.

Saturday evening Review prayer:

- *Where did I experience God's presence?*
- *How did my connection with myself, with other, and with God deepen as a result of my experiences of worship?*
- *Which of these practices do I want to take up in my lifestyle?*



THE PRACTICE OF WORSHIP

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”
Colossians 3:16

To worship means to attribute the highest value to someone or something. I do it the whole time and the invitation is to learn to attribute the highest value in my life to God. I can develop the spiritual practice of worship. Here are a few concepts that can help to develop this practice of worship:

1. Rhythm – the early church decided to gather on Resurrection Sunday to worship. It was recommended that people worship on their own at certain times during the week. There seem to have been special daily, weekly, and annual times - like Easter - that were set aside for worship.
2. Preparation – In Mat. 5 Jesus says, before you go to the temple, pay attention to the unfinished issues in your life and bring them to closure before you enter the temple to worship. What would it be like to first reflect on what needs to be done - with others or on your own - before you enter the place to worship?
3. On your own or with others – there is a difference between the dynamics of coming to worship alone, with your family, or as a faith community. Different things happen to you in the different spaces. Don't we need all these encounters to take us into a deeper experience of worship?
4. Offer – we sometimes need to make a sacrifice. Sometimes it is necessary to act contrary to my feelings and just to worship, because it is the right thing to do.
5. Song – Songs, poetry and other forms of art. We need to look past the words, move to a sensing, an intuition and an imagination of God's beauty, goodness and power. We need to look past our limited understanding of God and move to admiration of God.
6. React – the woman at the well in John 4 reacted by going to the town and telling everyone what happened to her. Worship is not only to see and to admire, it is also to react to what you have seen and to integrate it into your life. It is what this woman did by telling others about her worship experience.

Practice:

Start with the first step. Choose an aspect of worship or practice of worship that is attractive to you. Put aside some time today and see in what way you can practise it.

Grace:

Less of myself, more of You.



WORSHIP AS PAYING ATTENTION.

“ 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[] the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:17,18

To worship literally means to ascribe the highest value to someone or something. When I worship God, I am saying what I see - the beauty, the goodness, the power, and everything that he has created - is the biggest and highest that I know. I value him and by valuing it, I worship him.

Dallas Willard said, *“In worship we focus our mind on God and engage ourselves, dwell upon and express the beauty and goodness of God.”* Worship cannot take place unless we pay attention. It requires time and intention. Practically, we can pay attention to God by focusing on Scripture. Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians that, when they discover the beauty and glory of God in the mirror, which is Scripture (:16); they will change. An old tradition in the church is to attentively read Scripture and to meditate on the movements that take place inside of you. The experience of the Emmaus pilgrims was that their hearts started to burn when Jesus started laying out Scripture to them. I can experience this same inner sensation of Scripture when I notice something of God’s character in Scripture. By paying attention to him as I focus on Scripture, I see something of him. By thinking about it, something happens inside of me. My thoughts change. Perspective is repaired. I feel different. Psalm 34:3 “(KJV) says: *“O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.”* We cannot really magnify the Lord more than he already is, but when we pay attention together and talk about his greatness, goodness and power, something happens inside of me. It may be dark around me, but by paying attention to God’s Word together, and reacting to it together, everything changes inside of me. Nothing probably changes in my circumstances, but everything inside of me moves. He was magnified and worries in my life became small.

Practice:

Take the text of today and read it a few times. See what comes to you. Notice the movements inside of you. Think about it and ask God to work in you. Talk to him about it.

Grace:

Less of myself, more of You.



WORSHIP AS A PRACTICE.

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.” *Hebrews 13:15*

Worship is to attribute the highest value to something. When we worship God, we are saying that there is nothing more beautiful, nothing better, nothing stronger, than Him. The truth is that we often think and feel differently. We sometimes value someone or something else more. The other day I was visiting people and the little boy was playing with a toy car that he received as a present. For this boy there was nothing greater or better than this little toy car. One of the other visitors had a lot of cash with him. He took out a few thousand rand and said to the boy, “Can I buy this little car from you with this money?” The boy started crying, took his car and ran away, because he thought there was nothing greater or better than his car.

I thought about how we sometimes act. We lose perspective when things happen to us. We think we can find life in other places. Other things look stronger, more beautiful, and better than God. Often, we are not even aware that we think and feel this way. It is time to turn to him and to worship him. It is a choice. It is a practice, a spiritual practice, that we need to embrace. I do it because it is the right thing to do. I calibrate through worshiping. I clear my lenses. I am just saying to myself again - he is the greatest, he is the most beautiful. It helps me when I do this with others. My perspective is repaired, and through it, my possessions and I become less, and God becomes more.

Grace:
Less of myself, more of You.

Practice: Reflect on what you think about worship. When you go to worship, do you evaluate it and say it was good and enjoyable? Do you criticise the musicians, theologians, the sermon? Or is worshipping a practice that you practise? Is it something that is important to you? Worshipping frees us from our self-centredness and preoccupation, so that we can focus on God.



CHOOSE TO WORSHIP.

“Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “‘Holy, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come.” Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created.” *Revelations 4:8-11*

John sees heaven as a place of worship. Through metaphors, John shares the idea that everyone and everything worship God and animals, creation, and all the people there. However, John also shows that there is a difference in the way people worship and the rest of creation worship. The living beings say, “‘Holy, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come,” and every time the living beings bring honour, glory and thanksgiving to the one on the throne, the 24 elders – who is seen as the church, the people – fall down and worship him, “‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor [sic] and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created.” Human beings find a reason. There is a why. Human beings can reflect, understand something, see something of who God is, and they react to it by saying, “Worthy. I value you higher and more that anything else in my life that I have encountered before.” I can do many things, like studying, sharing pain with others, learning, helping, etc. But there is one thing that I am invited to, which lies at the core of my being, the origin of everything in my life. And that is worship. In the words of Dallas Willard, we are invited to “engage with, to dwell upon and to express the greatness and the goodness and the beauty of God. To worship.”

Practice: Thomas Merton said, “a tree brings glory to God by being a tree.” Go and stand by a tree in the garden. Look at the tree and realise that this tree brings glory to God in its own way. Become aware that the whole of creation is tuned to God. I, as a human being, have a choice to do the same. Tell God what you think and feel about him.

Grace
Less of myself, more of You.



DO YOU WORSHIP?

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.” Matthew 13:45,46

Worship can be described as the act of attributing value to someone or something. I constantly place value on everything that I get to do with in my life. Everyone worships.

Example: A friend of mine inherited a watch and kept it safe in his cupboard. One day, another friend – he is a jeweller –came to look at the watch and became really excited. It was a special heirloom. The jeweller knew immediately who had made the watch and where it had come from. My friend believed the jeweller and started to view the heirloom, which was valued at R100,000s, in a different light. My friend started admiring the watch and realised that this watch was really valuable. It would cost a few R1000s to service the watch, but in light of the total value of the watch, it was a small price to pay.

This is an example of the process of worship and what worship is about. Jesus says we must worship God. Dallas Willard describes worship as an *‘engagement with and to dwell upon and express the greatness, the goodness and the beauty of God’*. When we are informed by a messenger – like the jeweller in the story above – about God and who he is, what he has, what he did for us, and is busy doing for us - it changes our entire life. We have so much and there are so many possibilities, when we discover this treasure.

Practice: Reflect on the person or things that you value the most. Think about what it would be like to lose it, if something happens to it or if it is taken away from you. Talk to someone about it today.

Grace
Less of myself, more of You.



“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but

you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.” *John 4:19-26*

Jesus acts strangely. In John 3 he speaks to a believer about being reborn, and in John 4 he speaks to a sinner about worship. Shouldn't it be the other way around? When I contemplate the meaning of worship, these actions of Jesus make everyone values someone or something. Jesus invites this woman to discover what it is that she values the most and invites her to value God more. He takes her to her relationships – the part of her life that she values the most. She tries to find life in someone that would fill up her life and give her everything that she needs. She is already in her 5th intimate relationship and she hasn't found what she's looking for yet. Even though she believes in God, her romantic relationships have been more important. I often act the same way in my relationship with God. I say that I value him, but my actions contradict this. To worship is to become aware of this gap, to turn to God and to see who he is, to admire him and to react. Jesus says God seeks people who worship him – not because he is narcissistic, but because he knows how much we need to come in contact with the reality of who he is and to live accordingly. I have a deep need to worship. Everything in my life comes together when I am able to worship. I must learn to worship him. The journey this week is, less of myself, more of God (John 3:30) through worship.

Grace:
Less of myself, more of You.



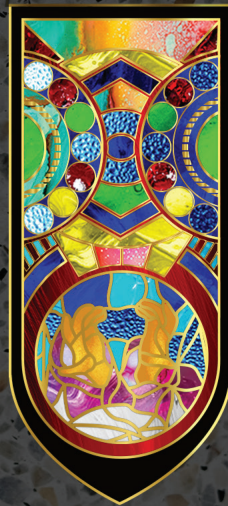
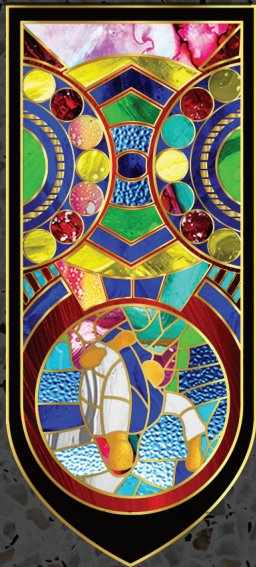
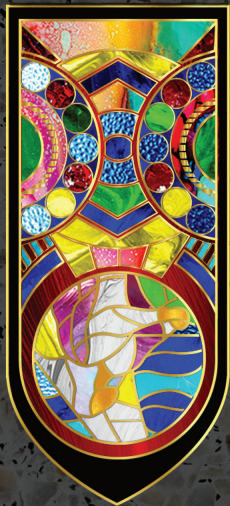
LATE HAVE I LOVED YOU – St Augustine

“Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient,
ever new, late have I loved you!
You were within me,
but I was outside,
and it was there that I searched for you.
In my unloveliness
I plunged into the lovely things which you created.
You were with me,
but I was not with you.
Created things kept me from you;
yet if they had not been in you
they would have not been at all.
You called, you shouted,
and you broke through my deafness.
You flashed, you shone,
and you dispelled my blindness.
You breathed your fragrance on me;
I drew in breath and now I pant for you.
I have tasted you,
now I hunger and thirst for more.
You touched me,
and I burned for your peace.”

Augustine of Hippo was converted to Christianity late in life, and yet left a rich legacy for all who have come to faith in Christ since. Writing during the Patristic period of Christian History, he is counted as one of the most influential of the early Church Fathers. His works are considered invaluable resources even in our day, rediscovered in each generation as a deep spiritual resource. This excerpt from Confessions is Augustine's passionate declaration of love to his Beloved.

Less of Myself. More of Him
W O R S H I P

WEEK 1





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Saturday morning:

1. Ask the Lord to remind you of the week's experiences. Reflect on the things that come to you. Trust your experience.
2. Read the text of the week again. Look through your notes. Go back to the experience you had during the week, which stand out to you or stays with you. Read through the devotions and practices again. Talk to God about your experience.

Saturday evening Review prayer:

- *Where did I experience God's presence?*
- *How did my connection with myself, with others and with him deepen as a result of my preparation for Lent?*



"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God." Psalm 42:1

Blaise Pascal once said that every person has a spiritual vacuum inside of them. We try throughout our lives to fill that void... If only I can get that new job... If only I can find a life partner... If only I can buy that car... If only I can have children... If only I could pay off my bond... If only I can retire....

To Jesus it was important that people come in contact with the desires they live with. In one of his beatitudes he says: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.* Blessed am I when I know what I am longing for, for when these longings are righteous, then my hunger and thirst will be filled and quenched.

Willem Nicol has a wonderful metaphor that he uses. On a farm there is a big fountain and from this fountain many side streams flow. However, you have to be careful. If you try to pump too much water from a side stream, the water will become muddy. To get a lot of water and to quench your thirst, you can only go to the main source. God is the main source and he has many side streams. He gives you life in many ways. You find it in friendships, in deep love, in romantic love, in the things you have, in a home... But be careful! If you try to draw too much water from one of these side streams, then you are drinking muddy water. You can only go to the main source to truly be quenched.

Lent helps us to come in contact with the longings of our heart, which we try to fill up with something or someone. On this journey, I am invited to absorb less of the things that fill my life superficially, and experience more of him who fulfills my deepest needs.

Practice:

What is the biggest longing that you have lived with in the recent past? Is it something, someone, a child, soulmate? What would it mean to you if this desire is fulfilled? What kind of emotional need would be met if you get what you want? What role does this desire play in your life? How does it affect your life, your thoughts, your decision making, and everything that you do? Ask God to show you whether your desires bring you closer to him, or whether they keep you from him.



"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Proverbs 4:23

If you have a heart you can be saved. – Abba Pambo

This strange remark of Father Pambo helps me to become aware of my heart. Everyone has a heart, but so many people live in their head. I am sometimes totally taken over or absorbed by my thoughts. Such a life prevents me from experiencing many things – directly and indirectly. For example, if I am in a conversation and I start thinking about what I look like and what the person is saying about me, I am no longer present and I am no longer in the conversation, I am absorbed by my thoughts.

Granted, my head is indeed an aspect and a part of my heart, but it is not my heart. My heart is not my emotions either – I can be totally overwhelmed by my emotions and I can feel without thinking. I can also be absorbed in the things I have to do. Henri Nouwen says that our hearts are the place in us where our entire being comes together: our body, our thoughts, our feelings, our intuition, our longings and our desires. It's your core, that's where you can meet God. This is the place where you can understand, can feel and can decide.

The journey is not about trying to live from emptiness – it is not about emptying my head so that I can only focus on my heart. Rather, it is about paying attention to what my mind absorbs. Often, the things that my mind absorbs, are the things that I try to deem important, but these things are not necessarily a priority and are not life-giving. Many people decide to give up or fast something during Lent. Usually something that preoccupies their minds.

Practice:

Take a few moments to think back on your day. Were there times when you were present in the moment and were aware of your heart, your emotions, desires and longings? Which thoughts absorbed you or took life from you? Maybe there is something that occupies your mind that you want to give up or replace because it absorbs your thoughts or takes life from you. Talk to someone about it.



ASH WEDNESDAY

“For Dust you are and to dust you will return.” Genesis 3:19

Lent is not just a time to commemorate the suffering of Jesus or to only focus on this; it is also about sharing and partaking in the suffering of Jesus the way Paul invites us to in 2 Corinthians 1. On Ash Wednesday, the day on which Lent starts, we encounter the suffering of being human – that I am dust. I am temporal, that I am insignificant. From the moment we left our mother's womb, we started the dying process.

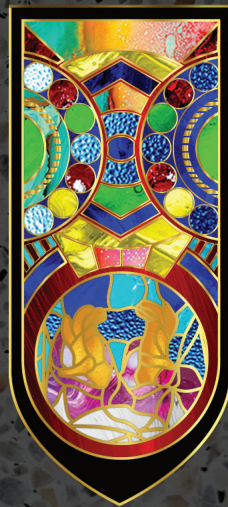
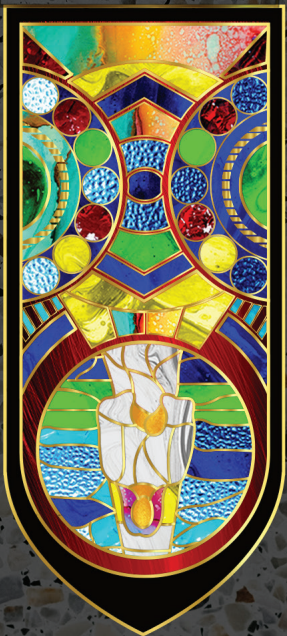
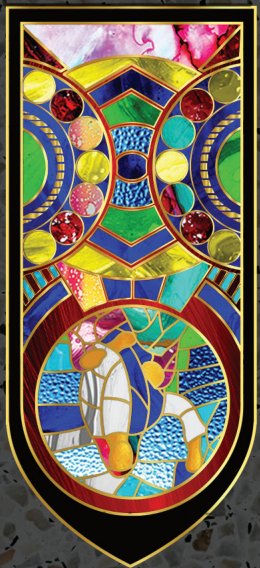
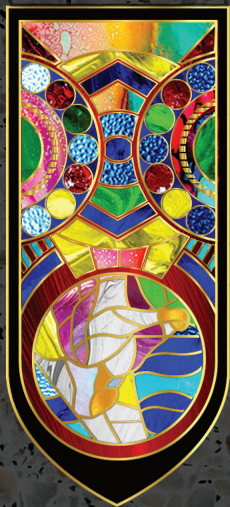
The vulnerability of my being human – my losses, the flesh, sin – helps me to realise that there is neurotic suffering in my life that I must get rid of. But there is a suffering that leads to growth and I need to accept it. It is a wonderful move from the flesh to the spirit and requires discernment.

On Ash Wednesday the sign of a cross is made on people's foreheads, as a reminder that they are creatures made of dust. Ironically, this symbol signifies so much more, because, marked with the cross, I am also so much more than dust. I am God's beloved, and through Jesus, nothing – not even death – can separate me from God's love. I'm beloved dust.

Practice: Get in touch with your insignificance today. Think of what it would be like to attend your own funeral. What emotions do you experience when you go to the painful reality of your mortality?

ASH WEDNESDAY

WEEK OF PREPARATION





How to use this guide:

This guide begins with a week of preparation, which starts on Ash Wednesday and which orientates you for the next 40 days. Each week starts on the Sunday, named Day 1. At the beginning of the week, there are four elements: i) a poem; ii) Scripture Reference; iii) Explanation of the spiritual practice for the week; and iv) a grace¹ for the week. The devotion for each day could be read in the morning, with a reflection prayer² done at the end of the day. At the end of the week – on the Saturday morning – you are invited to do a repetition of one of the practices you did during that week, and a review prayer³ the Saturday evening to reflect on your experience.

The danger of spiritual practices is that it could become a heavy burden that drains life from us. It is important not to view spiritual practices as laws that we must obey, but rather as resources of grace, through which God comes to us. An attitude of experimentation and adventure is usually far more constructive than rigidity.

The purpose of this journey is not to make you feel guilty if you couldn't do everything that we recommended. If you miss a day, you just carry on the next day. The purpose of this journey is to bring about these movement in our lives by intentionally practicing the suggested spiritual practices and reflecting on them. It is unlikely that every practice will become an integral part of every person's life after this journey. However, it is possible that some of these spiritual practices will become important to you and form an integral part of your life..

¹ Grace: a short prayer (a word or phrase, e.g. Jesus or Maranata, that you pray continually in order to anchor yourself in God and to silence your thoughts.

² Reflection prayer: think back on the events of the day. Ask the Spirit to lead you in this. Choose one or two prominent events (positive or negative) that took place. Contemplate on these prominent events in the presence of God and talk to him about it.

³ Review prayer: This prayer is exactly what the name suggests. It invites you to "re"- "view" the things you experienced during the week. Do an overview of your week and stand still at the experiences that draw your attention. Reflect on these with the accompanying questions that are supplied at the end of each week.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Lent journey. During this experience, you are invited to a few movements.

The purpose of these movements is to equip you to enter a life of freedom, by moving from one place to the next.

To bring this about, you will be practising a new spiritual practice each week. According to Dallas Willard there are two types of spiritual practices: abstinence and engagement.

"Abstinence and engagement are the outbreathing and the inbreathing of our spiritual lives and we require practices for both movements". Dallas Willard

The practices of engagement that we will be focusing on are worship, confession, and study. The practices of abstinence are simplicity and silence.

To assist you on this journey, every day and week have specific rhythms that you can participate in, as and when possible. There is an old adage that says: 'Pray as you can, and as you can't. Experiment with these and find your own way.'



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From Less to More
LENT

