

AN INDIVIDUALIZED HOLISTIC APPROACH
TO CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE



EXPERIENCING
CONNECTION WITH
THE CREATOR
THROUGH MOVEMENT

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Notes

I N T R O D U C T I O N

In this devotional resource, I have created material with the purpose of drawing awareness to how the incorporation of movement into personal spiritual practice can deepen one's connection to God by experiencing His presence through embodied prayer, worship, and Bible study.

Included in this resource are seven daily studies, each containing a brief expositional study of a portion of scripture, prompts to incorporate specific postures and gestures in prayer, and how to engage the mind, body, and spirit through movement in worship. The material is designed to re-awaken creativity by proposing a different approach to personal spiritual practice through embodiment.

Each chapter in this devotional includes seven segments, designed to guide you through finding a quiet space and becoming aware of the posture of your mind, body, and spirit as you engage with the material. The study begins with a section of scripture reading modelled after *Lectio Divina*, a rhythmic process of meditating on scripture and entering into conversation with God through contemplative prayer. Additional theological reflections and commentaries are included for further literary study of the scripture. As part of the contemplative prayer experience, you will be guided by prompts to explore various postures and gestures as an expression of worship. I encourage you to pause at any time to provide time and space for your individual experience of God's presence in embodied prayer and worship.

My desire, as you engage with this material, is for you to further your understanding of the character of God and be reminded of your calling to be His image-bearers (Genesis 1:26-27) and to reflect His creativity (Genesis 2:19-20). In addition, by exploring a potentially life-giving approach of embodiment to your personal spiritual practice, you will experience how embodiment can influence your personal relationships with God and others. I pray as you engage with this material you will become more attuned to the nexus between heart, body, mind, and spirit.

May you, through this experience, gain a deeper understanding of the character of God, your identity in Him, and a fresh perspective of holistic spirituality and how to live it out within your daily rhythms of life.

DAY // ONE
Rest: Sabbath



Prepare | Enter In

- ◆ I invite you to **find a quiet space** to step out of the chaos, noise & distractions that might be drawing for your attention. Setting this time apart is creating space to deeply **connect with God** and the work He is doing in and through you.
- ◆ As you **center yourself** in the present moment **draw your attention inward** & take note of your thoughts, the sensations in your body, & the posture of your heart. Are you in a position or place to listen and receive from the Holy Spirit? Where do you need
- ◆ Draw awareness to the interior architecture of your soul: mind, body & spirit. I invite you to view this time as an act of sacred trust and **surrender of control** into the faithful hands & everlasting arms of God.

"Sabbath is more than just a day; it's a spirit of restfulness that comes as a result of living in God's presence all week long."

-John Mark Comer



Posture | Heart, Mind & Body

- ◆ **Find a position** of your body that places you in a posture of rest. Explore standing, sitting or kneeling to posture your mind, body, and spirit to receive from God and listen to the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ **Consider** the placement of your head & hands. Are your palms open or closed? Is your head lifted or bowed?

Reflect on these words from **Matthew 11:28-30** (Christian Standard Bible) and consider the position of your body in this time.

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Listen to these words again. How does the position of your body impact your engagement with the Word of God?

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Listen one last time and respond to Christ’s invitation in scripture to rest by posturing yourself to receive His presence with full satisfaction.

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”



Center | Breath Prayers

Take a few deep breaths.

Inhale...Exhale.

Inhale...Exhale.

As you take this next breath, inhale & exhale these words from scripture:

| Matthew 11:28-30 |

- ◆ Inhale: **Humble & gentle one,**
- ◆ Exhale: **you are rest for my soul.**

| Ephesians 2:18; 3:18 |

- ◆ Inhale: **Enlighten the eyes of my heart,**
- ◆ Exhale: **for in you, fullness is found.**

Repeat these breath prayers until your mind, body and spirit are centered.



Read | Scripture

As you read these additional passages of scripture, allow your heart to posture itself towards receiving all that God has for you during this time. Pay attention to any **words, phrases** or **images** that come to mind.

*“So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation”
Genesis 2:1-3 CSB.*

*“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”
Matthew 11:28-30 CSB.*

“True restfulness is a form of awareness, a way of being in life. It is living ordinary life with a sense of ease, gratitude, appreciation, peace and prayer. We are restful when ordinary life is enough.”

- Ronald Rolheiser



Respond | Embodied

Begin in a restful posture.

- ◆ Take the word, phrase or image that came to your mind during the scripture reading section & **create three movements with your hands & upper body** to express these ideas.

For example, the phrase “rest for your soul” stood out to me.

1. Beginning in a kneeling posture, I bring my hands to my chest and elongate my spine raising my head skyward.
2. I then curve my upper body forward, allowing my forearms and hands to unfold onto my knees with palms open.
3. Straightening my spine and releasing my arms to the side I imagine the everlasting arms of God holding me.

- ◆ **Create** new gestures or use the ones created above & incorporate them into a breath prayer.

For Example:

Inhale: one hand or upper body gesture & pray, “Humble and gentle one,”

Exhale: one hand or upper body gesture & pray, “you are rest for my soul.”

- ◆ Begin to explore other hand & upper body gestures personally embodying the words, phrases or imagery that came to mind as you reflect on these scriptures.

Continue in embodied worship in your own time & expression.



Pray | Posture

- ◆ After reflecting on the scriptures above, **bring your body into a receptive posture** such as kneeling, lying on your back, sitting in a chair or standing.

- ◆ **Consider the palms of your hands.** Are they naturally folding in or are they open with the palms facing upward?

- ◆ **Take notice of the sensations in your body.** How does the position of your hands, head, shoulders, etc. influence your posture towards God? Are you more or less receptive?

Take time to remain in this place of internal and external awareness. Continue in contemplative prayer and ask the Lord to speak to you.



Read | Study

| Psalm 103 | Hebrews 4:9-10 | Psalm 23 | Genesis 1: 27 |

As human beings, our natural state is one of restlessness. We are always on the search for satisfaction in the things of this world trying to fill a void and fulfill our fleshly desires. This lifestyle produces anxious toil, yet when we properly place ourselves in Christ's original design for His children, we gain a very different perspective on work and rest.

Rest is a fundamental part of our image bearing identity in Christ. In Genesis 2: 1-3, we find that God finished His creation and then ceased from all work. What is fascinating about this day of sabbath is that it directly followed the sixth day of creation when God created Adam. When God created man in His own image, He commissioned him to create and cultivate the earth- we have been given a job to do.

In his sermons entitled *The Power of Rest* and *Living from Sabbath*, Jonathan David Helser speaks of our design as image bearers to begin from a posture of rest rather than work and strive in order to get to a place of rest. He pointed out that Adam's first act, was one of rest. He joined God in ceasing from all work before even beginning His commission on the earth.

As I heard these words, it produced a powerful shift in my perspective, not only on the importance of Sabbath rest, but its value and the proper place it must have in our lives as Christians and image bearers of God. Rest is a part of our original design before the fall of creation in Genesis chapter three and an important aspect of the human life in the world. When our lives are aligned with God's design, we will discover that He is the one who works in and through us, our human striving is never sufficient. When we rest, we are acknowledging our trust in God's provision and sufficiency, surrendering control of our human abilities and allowing God's grace, strength, and abundance to flood into our being, we can move forward in fullness. As you leave this time of prayer, worship and Bible study I encourage you to let God transform your perspective of rest and give you the ability to model after His design for our lives to live from a posture of rest.



Reflect | Questions

- ◆ How did your understanding of God's character deepen? Is there a descriptive word that comes to mind?

- ◆ Did your mind, body & spirit experience God's provision & purpose for sabbath as you intentionally positioned yourself in a posture of rest?

- ◆ By incorporating gesture in a worshipful response, did you experience a deeper connection to God through embodied spiritual practice?

*"Thou hast made us for Thyself oh Lord, and our hearts
are restless until they find their rest in thee."*

- St. Augustine

DAY // TWO

Begin: Out of Nothing



Prepare | Enter In

- ◆ I invite you to **find a quiet space** to step out of the chaos, noise & distractions that might be drawing for your attention. Setting this time apart is creating space to deeply **connect with God** and the work He is doing in and through you.
- ◆ As you **center yourself** in the present moment **draw your attention inward** & take note of your thoughts, the sensations in your body, & the posture of your heart. Are you in a position or place to listen and receive from the Holy Spirit? Where
- ◆ Draw awareness to the interior architecture of your soul: mind, body & spirit. I invite you to view this time as an act of sacred trust and **surrender of control** into the faithful hands & everlasting arms of God.



Posture | Mind, Body & Spirit

- ◆ Find a position such as standing, sitting or kneeling. What position best postures your heart and mind to receive God's presence?
- ◆ Feel grounded in your body & attuned to the surfaces with which you are in contact. Such as, the floor underneath your feet or sensation of the chair holding you up. What sensations are you feeling in your body?

Reflect on these words from **Genesis 1:1-2** (Christian Standard Bible) & consider the position of your body in this time.

"In the beginning God Created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the surface of the watery depths and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness He called night. There was an evening and there was a morning the first day."

Listen to these words again. How is the awareness of your body enhancing your ability to engage with the Word of God?

"In the beginning God Created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the surface of the watery depths and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness He called night. There was an evening and there was a morning the first day."

Listen one last time & notice how any sensations in your body have changed. Are you more centered in mind, body & spirit? Have any words, images or phrases influenced the posture of your body?

"In the beginning God Created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the surface of the watery depths and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness He called night. There was an evening and there was a morning the first day."



Center | Breath Prayers

Take a few deep breaths.

Inhale...Exhale.

Inhale...Exhale.

As you take this next breath, inhale & exhale these words from scripture:

| Colossians 1:17 |

- ◆ Inhale: **Christ is before all things,**
- ◆ Exhale: **in him, I am held.**

| Genesis 1:2 |

- ◆ Inhale: **Oh, Spirit of God,**
- ◆ Exhale: **move in my soul.**

Repeat these breath prayers until your mind, body and spirit are centered.



Read | Scripture

As you read these passages of scripture, allow your heart to posture itself towards receiving all that God has for you during this time. Pay attention to any **words**, **phrases** or **images** that come to mind.

"The heavens were made by the word of the Lord and all the stars, by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the water of the sea into a heap, he puts the depths into storehouses. Let the whole earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spoke and it came into being; he commanded, and it came into existence" Psalm 33: 6-9 CSB.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and by him all things hold together" Colossians 1:15-17 CSB.



Respond | Embodied

Begin in an open and receptive posture.

- ◆ Take the word, phrase or image that came to your mind during the scripture reading section & **create three movements with your hands & upper body** on three different levels (low, medium and high in any order) to express these ideas.

For example, the image of *“in him all things hold together,”* stood out to me.

Movement 1: High Level

- *Begin standing. Right arm, then left arm reaches up and creates a gathering motion above the head.*

Movement 2: Medium Level

- *Arms fold in, reach forward and then open sideways horizontally away from the midline of the body. Allowing the knees to bend and the torso respond naturally.*

Movement 3: Low Level

- *Clasp hands together, switching & folding them twice as the body comes into a kneel position.*

- ◆ Dwell on the character of God as one who *hovers*, moving in creation to bring form & order out of chaos. Explore movements with your hands and arms that express this characteristic of God.

Continue in embodied worship in your own time & expression.



Pray | Posture

- ◆ After reflecting on the scriptures above, **bring your body into a receptive posture** such as kneeling, lying on your back, sitting in a chair or standing.

- ◆ **Consider the palms of your hands.** Are they naturally folding in or are they open with the palms facing upward?

- ◆ **Take notice of the sensations in your body.** How does the position of your hands, head, shoulders, etc. influence your posture towards God? Are you more or less receptive?

Take time to remain in this place of internal and external awareness. Continue in contemplative prayer and ask the Lord to speak to you.



Read | Study

| Colossians 1: 15-17 | Psalm 33:6-9 |

In Genesis 1:1-2, we see that God created the earth *Ex Nihilo*, which is the *Latin* phrase meaning, “out of nothing.” In creation, God took what began as a chaotic, dark void and formed it into being. Through this act of bringing order out of chaos, God demonstrated his method of providence and grace in the world to bring truth, beauty and goodness into the world so that the Glory of God might be revealed on earth through His creation.

Did you notice the word, *hover* in verse two where it states: “...and the Spirit of God was hovering (or moving) over the surface of the waters”? This word reveals that the Holy Spirit was the first Mover in creation. If indeed we are image bearers of God, then we also are to move in response to the Holy Spirit and as an act of worship. Matthew Henry states in his commentary on Genesis chapter one, “Learn hence that God is not only the author of all being, but the fountain of life and spring of motion.”

As the earth began in chaos, formless and lacking beauty, so our hearts with God inherently exist in our sinful nature separated from God. By God’s grace, he brings our bodies out of the grave and makes them glorious. God is making all things new and creating beauty where there was darkness. The work of the Kingdom of God is bringing our bodies out of the grave and raising them in glorification.

Let us then draw near to God, recognizing that He is the author of our salvation, creator of our bodies and the redeemer who has come to reveal His glory on earth through His children.



Reflect | Questions

- ◆ How did your understanding of God's character deepen when you read the words: "the spirit of God was hovering over the waters"? Did you see God in a new way?
- ◆ Where in your mind, body & spirit do you feel empty right now? Where are you hoping for fullness? Pray for God's provision of fullness while you embody those areas of your life through various gestures.
- ◆ By incorporating gestures into a worshipful response, were you more attuned to the sensations of your body & the presence of the Holy Spirit within you?

Take time in prayer to ask God to "hover" & move into the empty spaces and places in your soul.

DAY // THREE

Form: Preparation



Prepare | Enter In

- ◆ I invite you to **find a quiet space** to step out of the chaos, noise & distractions that might be drawing for your attention. Setting this time apart is creating space to deeply **connect with God** and the work He is doing in and through you.
- ◆ As you **center yourself** in the present moment **draw your attention inward** & take note of your thoughts, the sensations in your body, & the posture of your heart. Are you in a position or place to listen and receive from the Holy Spirit? What places in your life is God doing a work of preparation?
- ◆ Draw awareness to the interior architecture of your soul: mind, body & spirit. I invite you to view this time as an act of sacred trust and **surrender of control** into the faithful hands & everlasting arms of God.



Posture | Mind, Body & Spirit

- ◆ **Find a position on the ground** that is comfortable for you such as: sitting with your legs straight or crossed, kneeling, or lying on your back with your knees bent or straight. Close your eyes. Draw your awareness inward imagining your body being rooted into the ground.
- ◆ Take a moment to **be still**, settling into this posture. Acknowledge the expanse of creation and the space surrounding you.

Reflect on these words from **Genesis 1:6-8** (Christian Standard Bible) and consider the position of your body in this time.

"Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." So, God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. God called the expanse "sky." Evening came and then morning: the second day."

Listen to these words again. How is the awareness of your body enhancing your ability to engage with the Word of God?

"Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." So, God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. God called the expanse "sky." Evening came and then morning: the second day."

Listen one last time & notice how any sensations in your body have changed. Are you more centered in mind, body & spirit? Have any words, images or phrases influenced the posture of your body?

"Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. God called the expanse "sky." Evening came and then morning: the second day."



Center | Breath Prayers

Take a few deep breaths.

Inhale...Exhale.

Inhale...Exhale.

As you take this next breath, inhale & exhale these words:

| *"The Mover"* – The Valley of Vision |

- ◆ Inhale: **Supreme Moving cause,**
- ◆ Exhale: **secure me by thy grace.**

| *"Union With Christ"* – The Valley of Vision |

- ◆ Inhale: **Christ keep me from unbelief,**
- ◆ Exhale: **unify me with thyself.**

Repeat these breath prayers until your mind, body and spirit are centered. Pause.



Read | Scripture

As you read these additional passages of scripture, allow your heart to posture itself towards receiving all that God has for you during this time. Pay attention to any **words, phrases** or **images** that come to mind.

“Lord, your faithful love reaches to heaven, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your judgments like the deepest sea. Lord you preserve people and animals. How priceless your love is, God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They are filled from the abundance of your house. You let them drink from your refreshing stream. For the wellspring of life is with you. By means of your light we see light” Psalm 36:5-9 CSB.

“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert” Isaiah 43:18-19 ESV.



Respond | Embodied

Begin in an open and receptive posture.

- ◆ Take the word, phrase or image that came to your mind during the scripture reading section & **create two movements with your body** incorporating the imagery of being rooted and embracing the expanse in the space around you.

For example, the imagery of length & being pulled simultaneously in two directions came to mind from the words: "...reaching to the heavens" & "...the deepest sea."

Movement 1:

- *Begin standing: Left arm reaches above the head as the right arm reaches to the ground below (rooted). Feel the expanse in this oppositional reach. Release the tension and create a circular motion with your arms using the space around you (expanse).*

Movement 2:

- *Begin kneeling: Place the palms of the hands on the ground in front of you allowing some weight to transfer into the hands (rooted). Hold for a moment. Release this posture and draw the hands back to the knees, turn the palms upward and draw together so that the pinky fingers are connected. In this shape explore a pathway upward, allowing the spine to extend upward with the arms (expanse). Release the hands and let them pour over your head to unfold naturally at your sides.*

- ◆ Once you have explored your created movements, create two more in the same way.

Continue in embodied worship in your own time & expression.



Pray | Posture

- ◆ After reflecting on the scriptures above, **bring your body into an open posture** such as kneeling, lying on your back, sitting in a chair or standing.

- ◆ **Consider** the places in your life where God desires to move in your soul: mind, body & spirit, to continue the work of formation into His likeness.

- ◆ **Take notice of the sensations in your body.** How does the position of your hands, head, shoulders, etc. shift or change in response to God's work in your heart and the preparation of your soul?

Take time to remain in this place of internal and external awareness. Continue in contemplative prayer and ask the Lord to speak to you.



Read | Study

| Psalm 36:5-9 | Isaiah 43:18-19 | Genesis 1: 6-8 |

Below is an excerpt from Mathew Henry's commentary on Genesis 1:

*"In verses 6-8, we have here an account of the second day's work, the creation of the firmament, in which observe, 1. The command of God concerning it: Let there be a firmament, an expansion, so the Hebrew word signifies, like a sheet spread, or a curtain drawn out. This includes all that is visible above the earth, between it and the third heavens: the air, its higher, middle, and lower, regions—the celestial globe, and all the spheres and orbs of light above: it reaches as high as the place where the stars are fixed, for that is called here the firmament of heaven (v. 14, v. 15), and as low as the place where the birds fly, for that also is called the firmament of heaven, v. 20. When God had made the light, he appointed the air to be the receptacle and vehicle of its beams, and to be as a medium of communication between the invisible and the visible world; for, though between heaven and earth there is an inconceivable distance, yet there is not an impassable gulf, as there is between heaven and hell. **This firmament is not a wall of partition, but a way of intercourse.***

See Job. 26:7 Job. 37:18 ; Ps. 104:3 ; Amos. 9:6 . The creation of it. Lest it should seem as if God had only commanded it to be done, and someone else had done it, he adds, And God made the firmament. What God requires of us he himself works in us, or it is not done. He that commands faith, holiness, and love, creates them by the power of his grace going along with his word, that he may have all the praise. Lord, give what thou commandest, and then command what thou pleasest. The firmament is said to be the work of God's fingers, Ps. 8:3 . Though the vastness of its extent declares it to be the work of his arm stretched out, yet the admirable fineness of its constitution shows that it is a curious piece of art, the work of his fingers. 3. The use and design of it—to divide the waters from the waters, that is, to distinguish between the waters that are wrapped up in the clouds and those that cover the sea, the waters in the

air and those in the earth. See the difference between these two carefully observed, Deu. 11:10, Deu. 11:11 , where Canaan is upon this account preferred to Egypt, that Egypt was moistened and made fruitful with the waters that are under the firmament, but Canaan with waters from above, out of the firmament, even the dew of heaven, which tarrieth not for the sons of men, Mic. 5:7 . God has, in the firmament of his power, chambers, store-chambers, whence he watereth the earth, Ps. 104:13 Ps. 65:9-10. He has also treasures, or magazines, of snow and hail, which he hath reserved against the day of battle and war, Job. 38:22, Job. 38:23 . O what a great God is he who has thus provided for the comfort of all that serve him and the confusion of all that hate him! It is good having him our friend, and bad having him our enemy. 4. The naming of it: He called the firmament heaven. It is the visible heaven, the pavement of the holy city; above the firmament God is said to have his throne (Eze. 1:26), for he has prepared it in the heavens; the heavens therefore are said to rule, Dan. 4:26 . Is not God in the height of heaven? Job. 22:12. Yes, he is, and we should be led by the contemplation of the heavens that are in our eye to consider our Father who is in heaven. The height of the heavens should remind us of God's supremacy and the infinite distance there is between us and him; the brightness of the heavens and their purity should remind us of his glory, and majesty, and perfect holiness; the vastness of the heavens, their encompassing of the earth, and the influence they have upon it, should remind us of his immensity and universal providence."

May we be reminded of the necessity of the work of separation in our lives, to put away human striving and the pursuit of worldly ambitions, finding nourishment and provision in the living waters of God.



Reflect | Questions

- ◆ How did your understanding of God's desire to commune with you deepen after reading the scripture verse and commentary above? How do you see **God's posture toward you**?
- ◆ Where in your mind, body & spirit do you sense the presence of the Holy Spirit forming connection with you in this time?
- ◆ Reflect on your time of embodied response. Did you experience the Holy Spirit in a new way through movement? Did it deepen your understanding of God's expansive presence, desire for connection to His children and faithful provision?

Take time in prayer to ask God to continue the work of preparation in your heart for the spiritual formation He is doing in your soul: mind, body, & spirit

DAY // FOUR

Rhythm: Sacred Habits



Prepare | Enter In

- ◆ I invite you to **find a quiet space** to step out of the chaos, noise & distractions that might be drawing for your attention. Setting this time apart is creating space to deeply **connect with God** and the work He is doing in and through you.

- ◆ As you **center yourself** in the present moment **draw your attention inward** & take note of your thoughts, the sensations in your body, & the posture of your heart. Are you in a position or place to listen and receive from the Holy Spirit?

- ◆ Draw awareness to the interior architecture of your soul: mind, body & spirit. I invite you to view this time as an act of sacred trust and **surrender of control** into the faithful hands & everlasting arms of God.



Posture | Mind, Body & Spirit

- ◆ Find a position on the ground that is comfortable for you such as: sitting with your legs straight or crossed, kneeling, or lying on your back with your knees bent or straight. Close your eyes. Draw your awareness inward imagining your body being rooted into the ground.
- ◆ Take a moment to **be still**, settling into this posture.

Reflect on these words from **Genesis 1:9-13** (Christian Standard Bible) and consider the position of your body in this time.

“Then God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place and let the dry land appear.’ And it was so. God called the dry land ‘earth,’ and the gathering of the water he called ‘seas.’ And God saw that it was good. Then God said, ‘Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Evening came and then morning: the third day”

Listen to these words again. How is the awareness of your body enhancing your ability to engage with the Word of God?

“Then God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place and let the dry land appear.’ And it was so. God called the dry land ‘earth,’ and the gathering of the water he called ‘seas.’ And God saw that it was good. Then God said, ‘Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Evening came and then morning: the third day.”

Listen one last time & notice how any sensations in your body have changed. Are you more centered in mind, body & spirit? Have any words, images or phrases influenced the posture of your body?

“Then God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place and let the dry land appear.’ And it was so. God called the dry land ‘earth,’ and the gathering of the water he called ‘seas.’ And God saw that it was good. Then God said, ‘Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Evening came and then morning: the third day.”



Center | Breath Prayers

Take a few deep breaths.

Inhale...Exhale.

Inhale...Exhale.

As you take this next breath, inhale & exhale these words:

|Psalm 119:64|

- ◆ Inhale: Lord, the earth is filled with your faithful love,
- ◆ Exhale: Teach me your statutes.

|John 15:1|

- ◆ Inhale: True Vine and Gardener,
- ◆ Exhale: I abide in you.

Repeat these breath prayers until your mind, body and spirit are centered.



Read | Scripture

As you read these additional passages of scripture, allow your heart to posture itself towards receiving all that God has for you during this time. Pay attention to any **words, phrases** or **images** that come to mind.

"You reveal the path of life to me; in your presence is abundant joy; at your right hand are eternal pleasures" Psalms 16: 11 CSB.

"For this is what love for God is: to keep his commands. And his commands are not a burden, because everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith" 1 John 5:3 CSB.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me" John 15:4-5 CSB.



Respond | Embodied

Begin in a kneeling posture.

- ◆ Take the word, phrase or image that came to your mind during the scripture reading section & **create two to four movements** incorporating the imagery of pathways into your movement.

For example, the words, 'remain,' 'path of life' & 'faith' came to my mind.

Movement 1: Begin kneeling with palms facing upward, resting on the knees. Shift the hands directly forward along the floor, letting the torso follow "bowing" with the palms facing up in surrender.

Movement 2: Bring the arms and torso back to a kneeling position and draw the hands in, overlapping them and placing them on the chest. Allow the palms to give a gentle pressure into the chest. Then reach the arms forward at shoulder height.

Movement 3: Reach the right arm back, establishing a small twist in the body as the left arm stays forward. Feel the length of this oppositional reach. Take both arms overhead, grasp the hands together and fold back down to the beginning kneeling position.

- ◆ Repeat these movements in sequence four times. Beginning at a very slow pace that increases as you repeat to create a 'flow.'

Continue in embodied worship in your own time & expression.



Pray | Posture

- ◆ After reflecting on the scriptures above, **bring your body into a kneeling posture** and position your mind, body & spirit to humbly sit in the presence of Jesus.
- ◆ **Consider** the rhythms and cadence of your life and let the Lord use your imagination to bring them to mind. What paths are you walking along? What rhythms, if any, are being brought to your attention?
- ◆ **Take note of the sensations in your body.** Are you shifting to release some rhythms in surrender to God? Are you posturing yourself to receive God's intended cadence for your life, to abide in Him and align your life to the rhythms established in creation? How does the position of your hands, head, shoulders, etc. shift or change in response to these considerations?

Take time to remain in this place of internal and external awareness. Continue in contemplative prayer and ask the Lord to speak to you.



Read | Study

| Psalms 16: 11 | | John 5:3 | John 15-4-5 |

In Genesis 1:9-13, God establishes the vegetation on the earth representing the beauty of habits that cultivate spiritual transformation. By incorporating repetitive physical and spiritual practices in daily life the soul can experience change as we seek to align our lives to the way of Jesus Christ and model after the rhythms established in creation. In her article entitled, *Let the Rhythm Move You*, Myquillyn Smith discusses routine and rhythm, defining them as:

“Routine: something cheerleaders did when I was in high school to 90s dance music. It had predetermined, robotic movements and it was either correct or incorrect, and it was obvious if you messed up. Routine focuses on rules and doesn’t like to be changed. Rhythm: a frame of mind that suggests more of an art. If you have rhythm, then whatever you decide to do with intention fits in the dance. Rhythm feels like choice and nuance and paying attention to your surroundings. Rhythm is alive and open to adjustments based on the circumstance. Rhythm focuses on needs.”

The creation model invites us to consider our orientation to God, the paths we have chosen to walk and the rhythms we have established in our daily life. The cadence of our lives exposes our true posture towards God and our beliefs about His posture towards us.

“The path to spiritual wholeness lies in my increasingly faithful response to the One whose purpose shapes my path, whose power liberates me from the crippling bondages of my previous journey, whose transforming presence meets me at every turn in the road.”-Robert Mulholland



Reflect | Questions

- ◆ Does your spiritual life represent routine, striving, control and rule-based living or are you pursuing Jesus by seeking the “unforced rhythms of grace,” (Matthew 11:28-30 MSG)?
- ◆ How did your understanding of God’s desire to walk with you deepen after reading the scripture verse and commentary above? How do you see **God’s posture toward you**?
- ◆ Did the embodied response provide a deeper connection with God as you prayed through what it means for your life to be ‘In rhythm’ with the Holy Spirit? Where in your mind, body & spirit did you sense the presence of the God in this time?

Take time in prayer to ask God to continue the work of establishing rhythms in your life that align with creation and God’s intention for His children to walk in.

DAY // FIVE

Reorient: Alignment



Prepare | Enter In

- ◆ I invite you to **find a quiet space** to step out of the chaos, noise & distractions that might be drawing for your attention. Setting this time apart is creating space to deeply **connect with God** and the work He is doing in and through you.
- ◆ As you **center yourself** in the present moment **draw your attention inward** & take note of your thoughts, the sensations in your body, & the posture of your heart. Are you in a position or place to listen and receive from the Holy Spirit? Where do you find yourself needing to re-align to God's design?
- ◆ Draw awareness to the interior architecture of your soul: mind, body & spirit. I invite you to view this time as an act of sacred trust and **surrender of control** into the faithful hands & everlasting arms of God.



Posture | Mind, Body & Spirit

- ◆ Find a position on the ground, in a chair or standing that is comfortable for you such as: sitting with your legs straight or crossed, kneeling, lying on your back with your knees bent or straight, or standing lengthening your whole body. Close your eyes. Draw your awareness inward imagining your body being rooted into the ground.
- ◆ Take a moment to **be still**, settling into this posture. Acknowledge the orientation of your soul- mind, body & spirit in the presence of God.

Reflect on these words from **Genesis 1:14-19** (Christian Standard Bible) and consider the position of your body in this time.

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons and for days and for years. They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.’ And it was so. God made the two great lights-the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night- as well as the stars. God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.”

Listen to these words again. How is the awareness of your body enhancing your ability to engage with the Word of God?

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons and for days and for years. They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.’ And it was so. God made the two great lights-the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night- as well as the stars. God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.”

Listen one last time & notice how any sensations in your body have changed. Are you more centered in mind, body & spirit? Have any words, images or phrases influenced the posture of your body?

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons and for days and for years. They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.’ And it was so. God made the two great lights-the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night- as well as the stars. God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.”



Center | Breath Prayers

Take a few deep breaths.

Inhale...Exhale.

Inhale...Exhale.

As you take this next breath, inhale & exhale these words from *Every Moment Holy*:

| A Liturgy for Stargazing |

- ◆ Inhale: Oh Lord, our Maker,
- ◆ Exhale: shape us by your eternal power.

- ◆ Inhale: Awaken our hearts now to beat,
- ◆ Exhale: in rhythm to the dance of your creation.

Repeat these breath prayers until your mind, body and spirit are centered.



Read | Scripture

As you read these additional passages of scripture, allow your heart to posture itself towards receiving all that God has for you during this time. Pay attention to any **words, phrases** or **images** that come to mind.

"How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams, that bears its fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither, whatever he does prospers. The wicked are not like this; instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore, the wicked will not stand up in the judgement, nor the sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin" Psalms 1 CSB.

"Lord, you are my portion and my cup of blessing; you hold my future. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I will bless the Lord who counsels me- even at night when my thoughts trouble me. I always let the Lord guide me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices; my body also rests securely. For you will not abandon me to Sheol; you will not allow your faithful one to see decay. You reveal the path of life to me; in your presence is abundant joy; at your right hand are eternal pleasures" Psalm 16:5-11 CSB.



Respond | Embodied

Begin standing in an open posture with hands at your sides, palms facing forward and fingers spread, reaching down toward the ground.

- ◆ Take the word, phrase or image that came to your mind during the scripture reading section & **create movements with your body** incorporating the imagery of moving within the boundary lines of God's way. Let these movements reflect how the Holy Spirit is guiding you to reorient your life to God's precepts, purposes and promises.

For example, I imagine a boundary wall in front and behind me with endless space on either side of me, much like standing in a narrow alleyway.

The phrase, "because he is at my right hand," stood out to me so I am going to use my right hand to initiate all of my movements.

I then explore linear pathways with my right arm, allowing the torso to follow the impetus of the movements. In this exploration, I find all the ways I can move with my hand in front, behind, side-to-side, upward and downward. Finding the fullness available to me in this boundary. Remember at least four of these movement pathways and develop them into a sequence.

- ◆ Once you have explored your created movements, take the same movements and travel through your defined space as you repeat them, creating a pathway of reorientation and alignment to God's Word.

Continue in embodied worship in your own time & expression.



Pray | Posture

- ◆ After reflecting on the scriptures above, **bring your body into a supported posture** such as kneeling, lying on your back, sitting in a chair or standing.
- ◆ **Consider** the rhythms and cadence of your life and let the Lord use your imagination to bring them to mind. What paths are you walking along? Are you aligned to God's intended path for your life?
- ◆ **Take notice of the sensations in your body.** How does the position of your hands, head, shoulders, etc. shift or change in response to the work of reorienting your heart to God's rhythm for life established in creation?

Take time to remain in this place of internal and external awareness. Continue in contemplative prayer and ask the Lord to speak to you.



Read | Study

| An excerpt from *The Songs of Jesus* by, Timothy Keller |

“The Nourishing Word- Psalm 1 is the gateway to the rest of the psalms. The ‘law’ is all scripture, to ‘meditate’ is to think out its implications for all life, and to ‘delight’ in it means not merely to comply but to love what God commands. Christians have their attitude toward God changed from one of duty to free, loving self-giving because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. So to know how to meditate on and delight in the Bible is the secret to a relationship with God and to life itself. Views contrary to God’s Word are no anchor in time of need. God’s Word gives us the resilience of a tree with a source of living water that will never dry up” (p.1).

As we consider the rhythms of life in creation, especially the orientation of the lights - creating the days, seasons and years- we have a visible representation of God’s intended design and orientation for our lives. Boundary lines and pathways at first seem limiting and void of life. Yet, when we choose the path of life that God provides, it is there that we experience true abundance and a fruitful life. We find nourishment and provision as we seek the Lord’s will in every circumstance and intentionally reorient our lives, living with an eternal perspective and vision in pursuit of the Kingdom of God.

May we be reminded of the necessity of the work of reorientation in our lives, putting away human striving and the pursuit of worldly ambitions, to find nourishment and provision in the living waters of God.



Reflect | Questions

- ◆ How did your understanding of God's character deepen after reading the scripture verses and reflection above? How has **your posture toward God shifted or changed?**

- ◆ Where in your mind, body & spirit do you sense the presence of the Holy Spirit realigning and transforming your life?

- ◆ Reflect on your time of embodied response. Did you experience the Holy Spirit in a new way through movement? Did it help you identify help you identify the fullness available to you when you align yourself to God?

Take time in prayer to ask God to continue the work of orientation in your heart for the spiritual formation He is doing in your soul: mind, body, & spirit

DAY // SIX

Cultivate: Attention



Prepare | Enter In

- ◆ I invite you to **find a quiet space** to step out of the chaos, noise & distractions that might be drawing for your attention. Setting this time apart is creating space to deeply **connect with God** and the work He is doing in and through you.
- ◆ As you **center yourself** in the present moment **draw your attention inward** & take note of your thoughts, the sensations in your body, & the posture of your heart. Are you in a position or place to listen and receive from the Holy Spirit? Is there a place in your heart that needs to be tilled and softened?
- ◆ Draw awareness to the interior architecture of your soul: mind, body & spirit. I invite you to view this time as an act of sacred trust and **surrender of control** into the faithful hands & everlasting arms of God.



Posture | Mind, Body & Spirit

- ◆ Find a position on the ground that is comfortable for you such as: sitting with your legs straight or crossed, kneeling, or lying on your back with your knees bent or straight. Close your eyes. Draw your awareness to your hands and imagine the feeling of tending a garden with your hands.
- ◆ Take a moment to **be still**, settling into this posture. Tend to your soul-mind, body & spirit, as you center yourself in this time.

Reflect on these words from **Genesis 1:20-23** (Christian Standard Bible) and consider the position of your body in this time.

“Then God said, ‘Let the water swarm with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.’ So God created the large sea-creatures and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them. ‘Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.’ Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.”

Listen to these words again. How is the awareness of your body enhancing your ability to engage with the Word of God?

“Then God said, ‘Let the water swarm with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.’ So God created the large sea-creatures and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them. ‘Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.’ Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.”

Listen one last time & notice how any sensations in your body have changed. Are you more centered in mind, body & spirit? Have any words, images or phrases influenced the posture of your body?

“Then God said, ‘Let the water swarm with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.’ So, God created the large sea-creatures and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them. ‘Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.’ Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.”



Center | Breath Prayers

Take a few deep breaths.

Inhale...Exhale.

Inhale...Exhale.

As you take this next breath, inhale & exhale these words from *Every Moment Holy*:

| A Liturgy for Gardening |

- ◆ Inhale: **Walk with me now, O Lord,**
- ◆ Exhale: **in the stillness of this tilled & quiet space.**

- ◆ Inhale: **Lord, let our labors in this garden be fruitful,**
- ◆ Exhale: **Lord, let our labors in this garden be blessed.**

Repeat these breath prayers until your mind, body and spirit are centered.



Read | Scripture

As you read these passages of scripture, allow your heart to posture itself towards receiving all that God has for you during this time. Pay attention to any **words**, **phrases** or **images** that come to mind.

“How happy is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways! You will surely eat what your hands have worked for. You will be happy, and it will go well for you” Psalms 128:1-2 CSB.

“So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude” Colossians 2:6-7 CSB.

“I pray that he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God’s love, and to know Christ’s love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” Ephesians 3:16-19 CSB.



Respond | Embodied

Begin in a seated or kneeling posture. Draw your attention back to your hands.

- ◆ Take the word, phrase or image that came to your mind during the scripture reading section. Is it something that God wants to cultivate in your life? **Create a few gestures with your hands**, representing any or all of the following tasks: sowing, planting, tilling, pruning, weeding, training, protecting, and harvesting.

For example:

Sowing- closing the hands as if grasping" seeds", and then slowly unfolding the fingers to release "seeds" into the earth.

Tilling- various hand gestures on the ground such as swiping, pressing, kneading motions representing tilling soil.

Harvesting: hands come to the chest and pull "fruits" out of the heart and unfold them out in front as if offering them to others or the Lord.

- ◆ Once you have explored your created movements continue to explore these task-oriented gestures and let represent "a prayer acted rather than spoken" (*Every Moment Holy*).

Continue in embodied worship in your own time & expression.



Pray | Posture

- ◆ After reflecting on the scriptures above, **bring your body into a rooted posture** such as kneeling, lying on your back, sitting in a chair or standing.
- ◆ **Consider** the places in your life where God desires to cultivate deep roots in your soul: mind, body & spirit, to continue to cultivate the work of formation into His likeness.
- ◆ **Take notice of the sensations in your body.** How does the position of your hands, head, shoulders, etc. shift or change in response to God's work in your heart and desire to dig deep to establish the roots of truth, beauty and goodness in your soul?

Take time to remain in this place of internal and external awareness. Continue in contemplative prayer and ask the Lord to speak to you.



Read | Study

| A LITURGY FOR GARDENING- from *Every Moment Holy* |

Leader: O Creator who calls forth life,
May this ground, and our labors
here invested, yield good provision for
the nourishment of both body and soul.

**People: Lord, let our labors in this garden
be fruitful. Lord let our labors in this
garden be blessed.**

As we work the soil of this garden plot,
furling, planting, watering, and harvesting
may such acts become to us a living parable,
a prayer acted out rather than spoken.

**Lord, let our labors in this garden be fruitful.
Lord, let our labors in this garden be blessed.**

**As we co-labor with you
And with your creation**
to produce a beneficial harvest, may we
find in such toil a kind of rest. May this plot
of ground become a hallowed space and
these hours a sacred time for reflection, for
conversation with friends and family, and for
fellowship with you, our Creator.

**Lord, let our labors in this garden be fruitful.
Lord, let our labors in this garden be blessed.**

Through the tending of these

Your delightful creations-
vegetables and fruits,
beans and berries,
vines and stalks,
and roots and flowers-
Renew our own tired hopes,
Redeem our own wearied imaginations.
As we cultivated gentle order,
training,
pruning,
weeding,
and protecting,
so cultivate and train our wayward hearts,
O Lord, that rooted in you
the forms of our lives might spread
in winsome witness, maturing to bear
the good fruit of grace, expressed in
acts of compassionate love.

Lord, let our labors in this garden be fruitful.
Lord, let our labors in this garden be blessed.
Walk with us now, O Lord,
in the stillness of this tilled and quiet space,
that when we venture again into the still
greater garden of your world, we might be
prepared by the long practice of your presence,
to offer our lives as a true and nourishing
provision to all who hunger for
mercy
and hope
and meaning,
a true nourishing provision
to all who hunger for you.
Lord, let our labors in this garden be fruitful.
Lord, let our labors in this garden be blessed.
Amen.

May we be reminded of the necessity of the work of cultivation in our lives, to put away human striving and the pursuit of worldly ambitions, finding nourishment and provision in the living waters of God.



Reflect | Questions

- ◆ How did your understanding of God's desire to commune with you deepen after reading the scripture verses and liturgy above? How are you responding to **God's invitation to co-labor with Him in creation?**
- ◆ Where in your mind, body & spirit do you sense the Holy Spirit softening and tilling the soil of your heart to focus on practicing presence?
- ◆ **Reflect on your time of embodied response.** Did you experience the Holy Spirit in a new way through movement? Did this time of focused attention on cultivating and co-laboring with God stir up renewal and restoration in your soul?

Take time in prayer to ask God to continue the work of cultivation in your heart for the spiritual formation He is doing in your soul: mind, body, & spirit

DAY // SEVEN

Identity: Image Bearers



Prepare | Enter In

- ◆ I invite you to **find a quiet space** to step out of the chaos, noise & distractions that might be drawing for your attention. Setting this time apart is creating space to deeply **connect with God** and the work He is doing in and through you.
- ◆ As you **center yourself** in the present moment **draw your attention inward** & take note of your thoughts, the sensations in your body, & the posture of your heart. Are you in a position or place to listen and receive from the Holy Spirit? Where are you finding your identity?
- ◆ Draw awareness to the interior architecture of your soul: mind, body & spirit. I invite you to view this time as an act of sacred trust and **surrender of control** into the faithful hands & everlasting arms of God.



Posture | Mind, Body & Spirit

- ◆ Find a position on the ground that is comfortable for you such as: sitting with your legs straight or crossed, kneeling, or lying on your back with your knees bent or straight. Close your eyes. Draw your awareness inward imagining your body being rooted into the ground.
- ◆ Take a moment to **be still**, settling into this posture. Acknowledge the presence of God dwelling in you.

Reflect on these words from **Genesis 1:26-31** (Christian Standard Bible) and consider the position of your body in this time.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.’ So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. God blessed them, ‘Be fruitful multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.’ God also said ‘Look. I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth-everything having the breath of life in it- I have given every green plant for food.’ And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.”

Listen to these words again. How is the awareness of your body enhancing your ability to engage with the Word of God?

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.' So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. God blessed them, 'Be fruitful multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.' God also said 'Look. I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth-everything having the breath of life in it- I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day."

Listen one last time & notice how any sensations in your body have changed. Are you more centered in mind, body & spirit? Have any words, images or phrases influenced the posture of your body?

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.' So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. God blessed them, 'Be fruitful multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.' God also said 'Look. I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth-everything having the breath of life in it- I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day."



Center | Breath Prayers

Take a few deep breaths.

Inhale...Exhale.

Inhale...Exhale.

As you take this next breath, inhale & exhale these words from scripture:

| 2 Corinthians 5:17 |

- ◆ Inhale: **In Christ I am,**
- ◆ Exhale: **a new creation.**

| Romans 8:17 |

- ◆ Inhale: **In Christ I am,**
- ◆ Exhale: **a coheir with Christ.**

Repeat these breath prayers until your mind, body and spirit are centered.



Read | Scripture

As you read these additional passages of scripture, allow your heart to posture itself towards receiving all that God has for you during this time. Pay attention to any **words, phrases** or **images** that come to mind.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do” Ephesians 2:10 CSB.

“When I observe your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you set in place, what is a human being that you remember him, a son of man that you look after him? You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all the sheep and oxen, as well as the animals in the wild, the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea that pass through the currents of the seas. Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name throughout the earth!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is anew creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!” 2 Corinthians 5:17 CSB.

“For the entire fullness of God’s nature dwells bodily in Christ, and you have been filled by him, who is the head over every ruler and authority...Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Chris is, seated at the right hand of God. Set you minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” Colossians 2:9-10; 3:1-4 CSB.



Respond | Embodied

Begin in an open and receptive posture and use this time to move freely in the space that you are in, whether that means staying in one place or moving throughout the room.

- ◆ Take the word, phrase or image that came to your mind during the scripture reading section and use it as inspiration to **move through various gestures and movements** representing your identity in Christ and His desire to display His glory through you.

- ◆ Choose one of the scripture verses above, **read & pray** through it once in a still **posture of your choice**. Now, **incorporate movement into this prayer** by creating or improvising with gestures and movement phrases. Let this be a time of communion with the Holy Spirit, inviting Him to move in and through you in this time.

- ◆ Continue in embodied worship in your own time and expression.

“Bodily experience enables us to become more aware of God’s presence and puts us in a mode of awareness where we can hear God’s call coming through.” -Father Thomas Ryan



Pray | Posture

- ◆ After reflecting on the scriptures above, **bring your body into an open posture** such as kneeling, lying on your back, sitting in a chair or standing.
- ◆ **Consider** your identity as an image bearer of God, created in his image. What places in life and being is this truth moving in your soul: mind, body & spirit?
- ◆ **Take notice of the sensations in your body.** How does the position of your hands, head, shoulders, etc. shift or change in response to your identity as an image bearer of Christ and a co-creator with God?

Take time to remain in this place of internal and external awareness. Continue in contemplative prayer and ask the Lord to speak to you.



Read | Study

In Genesis 1:27, God created man in His likeness and gave him the job of co-laboring in creation, joining him in the work of creating and cultivating on the earth. Through Christ, we have been joined with the work of the Kingdom of God to declare His glory through our lives and our work in this world. Emily P. Freeman states in her book *A Million Little Ways*, "Being his workmanship doesn't mean we are all poets. It means we are all poems, individual created works of a creative God. And this poetry comes out uniquely through us as we worship, think, love, pray, rest, work, and exist."

As we ponder the work of creation, the patterns of life established by God and the necessity to live out of our true identity, courageously stepping into our calling as image bearers - May we learn to embody these truths and allow them to influence our spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship and Bible study, as we rest in our Creator and embrace artful living in our daily rhythms of life. What is your posture toward God? How do you see His posture toward you? And in turn, what is your posture towards other image bearers?

"God is not a technician. God is an Artist. This is the God who made you. The same God who lives inside of you. He comes into us, then comes out of us, in a million little ways. That's why there's freedom, even in the blah. Hope, even in the dark. Love, even in the fear. Trust, even as we face our critics. And believe in the midst of all that? It feels like strength and depth and wildflower spinning; it feels risky and brave and underdog winning. It feels like redemption. It feels like art."

– *A Million Little Ways* by, Emily P. Freeman



Reflect | Questions

- ◆ How did your understanding of God's desire to work through you deepen after reading the scripture verse and reflections above? How do you see **God's posture toward you**?
- ◆ Where in your mind, body & spirit did you sense the presence of the Holy Spirit moving in this time?
- ◆ Reflect on your time of embodied response. Did you experience the Holy Spirit in a new way through movement? Did it deepen your understanding of your identity as an image bearer of God?

Take time in prayer to ask God to remind you of your image bearing identity and reveal how He desires you to co-labor with Him in creation.

NOTES

Day One | Rest:

1. Breath Prayers: adapted from Sarah Bessey's "Breath Prayers for Anxious Times"
<https://sarahbessey.substack.com/p/breath-prayers-for-anxious-times>
2. Study: *The Power of Rest and Living from Sabbath* by, Jonathan David Helser
<http://jonathanhelser.libsyn.com/the-power-of-rest>

http://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/4/3/1/43177b98c2851a76/Episode_3_-_Living_from_Sabbath_-_JDH_4.mp3?c_id=14881759&cs_id=14881759&expiration=1587332154&hwt=8902850f01bffb053d6f91e282afe755

Day Two | Begin:

1. Breath Prayers: adapted from Colossians 1: 15-17 CSB.
2. Study: Matthew Henry's commentary on Genesis 1.
<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/genesis/1.html>

Day Three | Form:

1. Breath Prayers: adapted from "The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions" by, Arthur Bennett.
Bennett, A. (1975). *The Valley of vision: a collection of Puritan prayers and devotions*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust.
3. Study: Matthew Henry's commentary on Genesis 1.
<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/genesis/1.html>

Day Four | Rhythm:

1. Breath Prayers: adapted from Sarah Bessey's "Breath Prayers for Anxious Times" & Psalm 119
<https://sarahbessey.substack.com/p/breath-prayers-for-anxious-times>

2. Study: from Myquillyn Smith's blog post, "Let the Rhythm Move You."
<https://www.incourage.me/2014/08/let-the-rhythm-move-you.html>

Day Five | Reorient:

1. Breath Prayers: adapted from *Every Moment Holy* by, Douglas McKelvey. McKelvey, D. K., Bustard, N., & Peterson, P. (2017). *Every moment Holy*. Nashville, TN: Rabbit Room Press.
2. Study: from *The Songs of Jesus* by, Timothy Keller.

Day Six | Cultivate:

1. Breath Prayers: adapted from *Every Moment Holy* by, Douglas McKelvey.

McKelvey, D. K., Bustard, N., & Peterson, P. (2017). *Every moment Holy*. Nashville, TN: Rabbit Room Press.
2. Study: *A Liturgy for Gardening* selected from *Every Moment Holy* by, Douglas McKelvey.

McKelvey, D. K., Bustard, N., & Peterson, P. (2017). *Every moment Holy*. Nashville, TN: Rabbit Room Press.

Day Seven | Identity:

1. Breath Prayers: adapted from 2 Corinthians 5:17 & Romans 8:17 CSB.
2. Study: reflections from Emily P. Freeman's book entitled, *A Million Little Ways: Uncover the Art You Were Made to Live*.
Freeman, Emily P. *A Million Little Ways: Uncover the Art You Were Made to Live*. Grand Rapids: Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2013.

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