

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

WOMEN'S RETREAT

via ZOOM

CHRIST'S LOVE:

The Way HE Moves Me

Galatians 2:20



BOWMAN-FRANCIS MINISTRY

WOMEN'S RETREAT AGENDA

CHRIST'S LOVE: THE WAY HE MOVES ME

- ❖ 9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Spiritual Awakening Guided Meditation
- ❖ 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
1st Session
- ❖ 11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
BREAK
- ❖ 11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
2nd Session
- ❖ 12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Questions and Answers

Donations may be made to the Bowman-Francis Ministry in the form of a check or money order. Please mail to 8681 Jaffa Court E. Drive Indianapolis, IN 46260. And/or DEBIT/CREDIT CARDS (by way of digital-based payment system, i.e., Zelle), is acceptable.

INTRODUCTION

Come to the well my sisters. Come to the well this week at the Bowman-Francis House and pause from your everyday. We hope you experience a time of recollection, reflection, refreshment, and renewal.

My prayer during this retreat is that your experience here would reenergize you and compel you to share your story so that others might come to know Christ Jesus and build up the Kingdom of God.

Devotion to God means letting our hearts, minds, bodies, and souls, be utterly infected with passion and loyalty to the object of our dedication. Our thoughts, actions, words, and decisions reflect our all-consuming preoccupation. The stronger our devotion, the more we identify by it as it becomes an integral part of our lives and a defining facet of our identity. It changes us, and at some point, we can't contain the strength of it and just have to share the love with others.

Jesus feels the same about our having a relationship with Him. Listen to Jesus' plea from Revelation 3:15-16 "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot: I wish that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold. I will spit you out of my mouth." Never ladies of God, let it be said that Jesus didn't use harsh analogies. Clearly, he's trying to get His point across that Christian life done correctly can only be done all in. You have to be committed totally to the way of Christ Jesus. The price that Jesus had to pay for salvation was high! The gift of salvation and communion with God is Priceless – and yet absolutely free. Life in and with Christ Jesus is a gift worth cherishing every day for the remainder of our lives.

Life with Jesus is meant to be abundant (John 10:10). It's an adventure of faith, fulfillment, and purpose, of changing the world as a vessel carrying Christ's love, truth, and Gospel. What will it take to wake us up? To rattle our generation hard enough that we snap out of a mindless cycle of simply doing the "Christian image" - the conference, the mission/revival, gospel concert, the youth conference, and the spiritual and scripture posting on social media – and start to be truly devoted to Christ by putting our relationship with Christ first? In Matthew 10:38-39, Jesus tells us "He who does not take His cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for my sake will find it."

It is an honor to be your Retreat Director for this week of spiritual development and growth. By no means, my sisters, do I have all the answers to the mysteries of life, do I have it all together, or am I done learning and growing. I'm still coming to the well of sanctification and transformation process (Aren't we all?). But I do know a man, His name is Jesus. The one who has all the answers to even the wildest situations life can possibly throw at us. And, I know where God keeps God's truths. We can find it in God's word.

Let us, women of grace, go on this journey of becoming whole heartedly devoted to Christ Jesus together. Through submerging ourselves in God's holy word; taking our worries/concerns, issues, and delight to God in constant prayer; and surrounding ourselves with women who will encourage, empower, and enlighten us to know Christ Jesus intimately; seek God's face daily, chase God's truth furiously, we can live the life of faith with fervor and ultimate joy and happiness. We can, sisters of hope, prioritize the most important relationship of our lives with the highest devotion and praise.

Our foremothers taught us a lot by their example. But overtime we've fallen into forgetfulness and ignorance. We've forgotten our prayer, our power, our passion, and our place. We've forgotten that the feminine is sacred and that God has given us everything we need to do the work we were sent here to do. We, sisters of faith, should be organizing and raising holy hell about the things that are hurting our families and our children most.

We, sisters of grace, should be working together in joy, love, and celebration to create a new world order with a “holistic healing” agenda, a new beginning, and a resurrection for our people.

The great benefits that the millions of middle-class sisters enjoy today don't come from nothing. They have grown out of a long and glorious legacy of mutual love, faith, hope, and commitment that gave our foremothers the courage to stand strong together and petition for justice during times harder and harsher than these.

Today, in this 21st Century, there is a thirst for spiritual communion and wellness is pushing Black women to meet at the well. We may call it our book club, prayer group, sister circle, study & research group, but these sisterhood gatherings are the spaces we claim to speak the truth about our lives and drink the life-giving water. However, we gather – in small, intimate groups or large councils, in coalitions or sororities – we are called to have on our agenda a project that benefits our people. Across the nation, there are thousands of organizations and religious institutions empowered by Black Women. But there isn't one single issue, not one piece of legislation we can say we are organized around in any meaningful way. When Black women shrink from dealing with the things that oppress us, the whole society suffers.

Black Women of Faith and love are the carriers and transmitters of culture. We're the soul of our households and communities. And, we will be no more or no less than what we bring to them. Sisters, you are the spiritual leaders we have been waiting for, and we must determine the behavior and set the moral tone that will shape our people's lives in this 21st millennium. Nothing is more important to the future of our nation, our families, our children, and the healing of our communities than for Black Women of faith and leadership to think critically, act wisely, and move smartly in the same spiritual direction to God's Kingdom.

“Come to the Well Ladies.”

This is a time of reflection, refreshment, remembering, and restoration of your mind, body, and spirit - a time of relationship, fellowship, and worship.

In John 4:14, the Samaritan woman that met Jesus at the well, did so in the midst of her everyday duties. She went to the well to gather water, which is essential for sustaining life. What she found there was so much more! Essential and sustaining yes, but her pause at the well was life changing, energizing, and compelling. Jesus offered a living water that would never run dry! She immediately went to share her story and her experience, so that others might come to know Him too and thirst no more...and they did!

Come to “The Well” at Bowman-Francis House and pause from your everyday. We hope you experience a time of **RECONNECTION, REFLECTION, REFRESHMENT, and RENEWAL.**

My prayer is that your experience here would reenergize you and compel you to share your story so that others might come to know Christ Jesus too.

SOAP method for studying sacred scripture. It’s called the soap method which stands for:

- SCRIPTURE** Write down and study today’s focus scripture.
- OBSERVATION** What did you observe about the scripture that you reflected on and through the assistance of the Holy Spirit?
- APPLICATION** In your life – How can you apply this deeper meaning, so that it has a heartfelt impact on your life?
- PRAYER** Write out a prayer to God based upon what you just learned and where you would like to grow in your life.
 - Focus on the passage of scripture
 - Use index cards to help you memorize scripture
 - Dedicate a set time to pray, seek God’s face, and study the word
 - Build a personal library of inspirational books and resources
 - Use free apps and technology

Monday Scriptures

Health

READ: 1 John 2:17 - Proverbs 3:7-8 - Psalms 119:93 - Proverbs 17:22

Meditation Prayer

Lord, God, I know that you care about every part of my life. You are not just concerned with my soul; but you also care about every part of my being. My mind, body, and soul are as important to you as my heart. Lord God, I trust that you are my healer. Would you touch me today with your healing power, driving every sickness out, healing every broken part?

Thank you for knowing me inside out Lord. I pray that your Kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven – in my body, mind, and spirit.

What healing are you believing God for right now?

HUMILITY

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also for the interest of others.

Philippians 2:3-4

How mind-blowing is it that God Himself came down to earth as a man and showed us an example of what true humility looks like? Of all people, the Creator of the universe and King of the heavens would be the last logical candidate to lay down His rights to be acknowledged and honored as a holy god. He was born into humble means and lived a simple and sinless life. He walked among sinners and critical Pharisees and endured a horrific and shameful execution to atone for the sins of people who had rejected Him in their sin and pride (Philippians 2:5-11). Even with all power available to Him, Jesus lived in constant obedience to God the Father, seeking God's will and following God even when it was uncomfortably contrary to what His flesh would've chosen. Jesus' example provides that humility is not about what makes sense to the human mind. Rather, humility is the act of obediently decreasing our preoccupation with ourselves so that we can be filled with the Lord and display the love and humility of Christ toward others. Salvation starts with humility. We lay down our own "lordship" so Jesus can be King of our hearts and lives. But if we haven't realized it by now, humility is a daily decision – and often a daily struggle! Every single morning, we can choose to give up our own agenda and "right" to be treated a certain way, deserve certain things, and to adhere to our own will, and instead let the Lord be the one who lifts us up in God's perfect timing (Psalm 3:3).

SCRIPTURES FOR GOING DEEPER

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:5-8

The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life. Proverbs 22:4

Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. James 4:10

MONDAY DAY 1 – GRATITUDE

READ: Ephesians 5:20

Three things I am grateful for today:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My self-care today...

(Example: Spend time with God, call a friend, do something that replenishes me, soak in affirmations, practice breathing exercises, listen to worship music, etc.).

I chose to _____ and it helped me in this way:

Today I feel...

Catch it, challenge it, change it. (Use this format to investigate your thoughts, and practice challenging them so you can create healthy change.)

My hope for today is...

Joy is rooted in gratitude. A grateful heart is a joyful heart; a joyful heart is a grateful heart. – Kay Warren, Choose Joy

JOURNAL QUESTIONS AND NOTES

What are your thoughts on Jesus' example of humility? What standards did He set as both man and God Himself in choosing to live even lower than the people He served and ministered among?

Note someone you admire who is an example of humility and selflessness.

When is it hardest to show humility? Do you ever find yourself bragging, putting yourself above others, or even putting your way above God's commands?

Tuesday Scriptures

Hope

READ: Lamentations 3:25 - Romans 5:5 - Psalm 147:11

Meditation Prayer

Lord God, You are my hope and my salvation. You are the one I look to today. Meet me Jesus in this moment, breathing life into my weary heart. Fill my mind with your peace. When my path gets bumpy and I am uncertain at how things will turn out, I turn to you, Oh Lord.

I don't have to know how everything will play out in my life – I just need to know you. I need to know who you are. In you Oh Lord, I find my hope. Come close to ME, Lord God, and lift my head. Your unfailing love surrounds me.

Know that God always hears what you can be hopeful for?

STANDING UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. 1 John 4:4

In a world where too many people enjoy angry, spiteful fighting, it can be major temptation to just go with the flow and try to keep everybody happy and in agreement and avoid controversy at all costs. While being a peacekeeper is commendable, shying away from doing or speaking up for the right thing is not. Being a people pleaser should never come before serving the Lord and upholding His truth. The Bible itself, while being one of the bestselling books ever, teaches some unpopular messages that Jesus is preaching. While grounded in the immense love of God, the truth of the scriptures didn't sit well with many of His listeners who loved their religion and their sin a bit too much. Jesus warned those who follow Him, "If the world hates you, know that they hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18). It takes wisdom, discretion and prompting of the Holy Spirit to know when to speak and stand up, as well as when to stay silent. **(Relevant tip: Avoid online comment section debates. Always!!! Period. They never amount to any good.)** The Holy Spirit is faithful to direct us, to stir something inside of us and tell us it's time to take action. We can have boldness to live out the unpopular, often controversial message of the Gospel and to bring that message to the world. Being human, we understand why even the cross offends so many people: though God's loving gift of salvation is free for us to accept in humility and repentance. Following Jesus requires abandoning our position as the one in control of our own life – something totally counter to our sin nature. Don't allow conflict or discouragement to keep you from living out your faith wholeheartedly.

SCRIPTURES FOR GOING DEEPER

“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.” John 15:19

But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ. Ephesians 4:15

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentile’s foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:21-24

TUESDAY DAY 2 – ENDURANCE

READ: Romans 12:12

Three things I am grateful for today:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My self-care today...

(Example: Spend time with God, call a friend, do something that replenishes me, soak in affirmations, practice breathing exercises, listen to worship music, etc.).

I chose to _____ and it helped me in this way:

Today I feel...

Catch it, challenge it, change it. (Use this format to investigate your thoughts, and practice challenging them so you can create healthy change.)

My hope for today is...

Some of the most extraordinary people – women I have ever met, are suffering from some form of mental illness. Their pain forces them to be honest. - Helen Perry, CDC Specialist and Team Leader

JOURNAL QUESTIONS AND NOTES

When is it hard for you to stand up for what's right? What are some examples of situations in which you felt it was necessary to take a stand?

When it seems like the world is against you and, even more, against Jesus and Christianity in general, where do you find your hope? What are some verses that encourage you?

Have you ever missed an opportunity when you felt led to speak up or take a certain stand? Did you regret it? Were there consequences? What would you do differently?

Describe what it means to speak the truth in love. Why can this be difficult? Why should truth and love go hand in hand?

Wednesday Scriptures

Restoration

READ: 2 Timothy 1:9 - Romans 5:1-2 - Luke 1:68-69

Meditation Prayer

Oh, Precious God and Creator of heaven and earth, you set the stars in motion. You who created all things are the one who also fixes the broken. You see my brokenness: the areas that are filled with unhealthy coping mechanisms, pain, and regret. You are the only hope I have for liberation and change. I don't want to repeat the same cycles that perpetuate brokenness and pain. Come Lord and restore all that's been lost. I receive your perfect love, and I welcome your healing power into my deepest pain and insecurity. I trust that the work you started in me, you will complete. Have your way, Lord.

Have you experienced the power of restoration in your life?

Selfishness

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Romans 12:15

It's tough to survive in a world that we've created to be all about us. We struggle through life in a tight game of looking out for number one, exalting her, and reserving special privileges for her: the last piece of pizza, the best reputation, the most coveted social media image, the prized friendship group, the finest opportunities, the final comeback, the most celebrated victory...whatever she wants. Really? The truth is, we don't have to be extreme narcissists to forget about putting others before ourselves. Sometimes it slips our mind to be fully present and lovingly engage with the friend telling us an important story – yet how much do we appreciate when others match our excitement or offer sympathy when we share about our lives? Or what about gossiping and comparing ourselves to others – a pastime that masks 'our insecurities and puts others down to elevate ourselves? That's a pretty sorry attempt at improving our self-image. The little things we do (or don't do) can say a lot about who we are as people, as friends, and as daughters of the King. They can be a testimony of Jesus' sanctifying work in us, if we allow them to be. We're not perfect, but by inviting the Lord to grow us in character and teach us to be less about ourselves and more about others. We can make the effort to show others that they matter. And perhaps, if others see how treasured they are in our eyes, the love we show them will be a tiny reflection of how massively the Lord loves them.

SCRIPTURES FOR GOING DEEPER

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. James 3:16

An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels. Proverbs 18:1

Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Psalm 119:36

WEDNESDAY DAY 3 – RENEWAL

READ: Psalm 94:19

Three things I am grateful for today:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My self-care today...

(Example: Spend time with God, call a friend, do something that replenishes me, soak in affirmations, practice breathing exercises, listen to worship music, etc.).

I chose to _____ and it helped me in this way:

Today I feel...

Catch it, challenge it, change it. (Use this format to investigate your thoughts, and practice challenging them so you can create healthy change.)

My hope for today is...

For the Soul to be well, it needs to be with God. - John Ortberg, Soul Keeping

JOURNAL QUESTIONS AND NOTES

When do you find yourself being selfish? In what relationships is it especially difficult for you to put the other person first?

What makes you feel honored and prioritized? How can you follow the command in Philippians 2:3 to “regard one another as more important to yourselves”?

What actions or manners make you feel less than important? How can you know selflessness even when someone else is behaving selfishly?

What is difficult about being emptied of yourself? What is beautiful about it?

Thursday Scriptures

Stress

READ: Psalm 103:1-5 - Proverbs 16:3

Meditation Prayer

Gracious & Merciful God, when I am overwhelmed by the worries of life, I come to you. When it seems like I can't keep up with all the demands, I turn to you, God. When I step back for a moment and invite you in, you bring the clarity I so desperately need.

Thank you that your peace is mine in the rush of every day. Would you help me to slow down and let you in, yielding my heart to you every time I feel overwhelmed? Thank you, Lord God, for being my perfect portion in every circumstance.

When was the last time you were able to let go of stress and just sit with God?

Beware of Idols

Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Psalm 100:3

Idolatry is more alive today than ever in a culture where money, fame, technology, and self are elevated to gods. If an idol is anything we put before God, then it can be a bit scary to reflect on and make a list of how many things we've allowed to take priority over our Lord and King we love and serve. Have we made little pleasures, good things, even blessings into idols – our sleep, time, phone, relationships, social life, future, entertainment, or hobbies? Sometimes the idol that sneaks in our life most subtly and tries to hold our allegiance most powerfully is not made out of gold or found in a bank account. We can become our own idols, our own self-made gods, putting our will and our desires God commands and His plans. Since the beginning of time, history has showcased person after person trying to be their own god. It never works in the long run. You see, as we scrap God's commands in order to free ourselves from their obligations and authority, we find ourselves without true freedom, ensnared in our own pride and sin. Psalm 14:1 begins with some apt name calling – those who dismiss god and refuse to acknowledge Him are fools. Matthew 19:16-26 illustrates the fact that our earthly treasures – whatever good or bad things we hold dear, can blind us to God if we cling to them as idols. It takes humility to Christ – a realization that we're not gods, not even close. We can't save ourselves. Perhaps it's time we acknowledged, honored, and worship the real Savior.

SCRIPTURES FOR GOING DEEPER

Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. Colossians 3:5

Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation has overtaken you but as such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 1 Corinthians 10:12-14

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen Romans 1:25

THURSDAY DAY 4 – HOPE

READ: Romans 15:13

Three things I am grateful for today:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My self-care today...

(Example: Spend time with God, call a friend, do something that replenishes me, soak in affirmations, practice breathing exercises, listen to worship music, etc.).

I chose to _____ and it helped me in this way:

Today I feel...

Catch it, challenge it, change it. (Use this format to investigate your thoughts, and practice challenging them so you can create healthy change.)

My hope for today is...

You are valuable just because you exist! – Max Lucado, no wonder, they call him the Savior.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS AND NOTES

How would you define an idol? What do you think drives people to worship something or someone?

What do you think it means to worship? How can you worship God wholeheartedly, exclusively, through every circumstance in your life?

What things or people do people tend to turn into idols and put before the Lord? Do you think you have any idols in your life right now?

What do you treasure? What are some blessings God has given you? How can you direct praise and worship to Him for these blessings?

Friday Scriptures

Worry/Surrender

READ: Psalm 55:22 - Luke 12:25 - Proverbs 12:25 - Philippians 4:6-7

Meditation Prayer

Merciful God, you know how easily worries can overtake my mind. You know how overwhelmed my heart can get at the thought of everything that could go wrong. I don't want to be weighed down by worry: I give it over to you God! I'm taking what energy I have and, with thanks, asking for all I need.

When worry threatens to shut down my gratefulness and skew my view of life, gently turn me and I will hand it over to you. Thank you for faithfully keeping me going. I trust you Jesus for your provision in these areas.

Name your worst fears - losing your income, home, health, your lover, your looks - in an instant any of these can happen and overtime, some surely will. A few have already happened to some of our sisters, and they are still standing strong, enjoying life more than ever before. In the course of our lifetime, everything will fall away from us, but nothing is truly lost. Look deeply, and you will see how everything works for good, that God's got your back and is always moving toward new possibilities - deeper connections, more meaningful work, greater vitality and excitement - always something new and better. Just make each step toward goodness, toward God.

Trusting God makes us powerful, positive and loving despite our upheavals. When we dedicate ourselves to the power responsible for our presence, we become emboldened, more sincere and more calculating risk takers. We see that God even has enemies under control.

Living for God connects you to the best of who you are, so you come to life each day with unshakable faith and a gentle spirit able to enjoy this exquisite journey, knowing your purpose, knowing that God's got your back.

What worries can you hand over to the God of Deliverance?

Doing It All Unto Jesus

Whether then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

The day our identities changed from slaves of sin to daughters of the King, our priorities shuffled around. Jesus desires for us, and asks us daily, to re-center our lives around intentionally, perpetually worshipping Him, our first and greatest love. He wants an invite to be the center of our lives, to transform us from the inside out. Through our every act, thought, and word, we honor and praise the only One truly worth living for. Of course, we're not perfect or immune to mistakes and weaknesses, but we've undergone life-changes thanks to Jesus' powerful blood and His repentance-inducing kindness (Romans 2:4). Through the evidence of our transformed lives, we can mirror Christ to those around us throughout our Sunday morning worship, weekday grind, and weekend fun. Whatever time, whatever place – we can't help but be changed. The very word transformation denotes that something is not the same as it was before. In this short blip on the timeline that we get to walk the earth and impact history, we have the opportunity to live life well. To choose living with integrity over cutting corners. To embrace joy, exude positivity, and complain less. To let daily worship, pour from our actions even when the floor needs vacuuming, the chemistry needs solving, the dissertation needs writing, the tough conversation needs having, and the decision needs making. Live life abundantly, without regrets, for the Giver

of life Himself, obeying His Word, listening to His loving voice. Surrender all with open hands to Jesus, and let Him guide you on a wild faith adventure.

SCRIPTURES FOR GOING DEEPER

Because Your loving kindness is better than life, my lips will praise You. Psalm 63:3

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory because of Your loving kindness, because of Your truth. Psalm 115:1

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.... Therefore, I run in such a way, as not without aim. 1 Corinthians 9:24, 26

FRIDAY DAY 5 – ENCOURAGEMENT

READ: Hebrews 6:18

Three things I am grateful for today:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My self-care today...

(Example: Spend time with God, call a friend, do something that replenishes me, soak in affirmations, practice breathing exercises, listen to worship music, etc.).

I chose to _____ and it helped me in this way:

Today I feel...

Catch it, challenge it, change it. (Use this format to investigate your thoughts, and practice challenging them so you can create healthy change.)

My hope for today is...

If you have felt hopeless, hold on! Wonderful changes are going to happen in your life as you begin to live it on purpose. – Rick Warren, Purpose Driven Life

JOURNAL QUESTIONS AND NOTES

What does it mean to bring glory to the Lord in all things?

What is an area of your life you think reflects Jesus Christ? What is an area you need to work on surrendering in order to glorify God?

Describe a time when you put your whole heart into something in order to glorify God.

Do you struggle with trying to hold onto certain areas of your life rather than surrendering them to Jesus? Describe the struggle of pride versus humility in relinquishing all control and praise to the Lord.

Saturday Scriptures

Depression

READ: Psalm 34:17 - Psalm 42:11 - Psalm 3:3 - Colossians 1:13

Meditation Prayer

Faithful God, I need you to be the lifter of my mind and spirit. When darkness clouds my mind and settles over me like an unwelcome haze, I know I cannot wish it away. You, God, are my deliverer and liberator. I will choose to put my faith and love in you no matter what I'm feeling.

Please Lord, do the heavy lifting there. Lord God Almighty I choose you, do what only you can do. Let the light of your love shine through the fog of despair and loneliness. Bring relief and true freedom. You are my hope and my salvation.

Hurt people hurt other people because they bring their pain with them wherever they go. Aware of this fact, you separate the act from the actor, and no one takes you off your path – no crazy manager or mean-spirited boss. Fill your mind with positive thoughts about yourself and your goals and make realistic plans to take you from here to there. Know why you are working where you are: to gain a skill, to earn money, to invest in yourself, to educate your children, to buy a home, to lay a foundation for your own venture – or simply because you love the work.

When we are on a mission of value, God gives us a special blessing. Like our ancestors, who always knew the way even when they couldn't see the light, we are divinely guided. We are surrounded at the highest spiritual level with an aura of protection that disarms any enemy and attracts what is right for us.

The Truth About Your Heart

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

Self-control, in my opinion, is one of the hardest character qualities to develop. Sometimes it is nothing short of spiritual brain surgery to try to bring order, sense, and clarity to the whirlwind of thoughts, emotions, ideas, and attitudes swirling around in our minds. While thinking, analyzing, and feeling are God-given gifts that can be helpful at times, they are not free of human error, nor are they inspired, authoritative sources to base all of our life's decisions upon. We may waiver, waffle, make mistakes, and change our minds. Allow yourself time to process, but don't forget to take whatever is going on in your heart, be it a burden or a joy, to the One who invites us to give up our cares to Him and receive His rest (Matthew 11:28). Contrary to the popular cultural creed of "following our hearts," our hearts may not always be reliable truth tellers. But you know who never lies, who's always the same? Jesus. The Bible guarantees that yesterday, today, and forever He will be the same loving, good Lord, He has always been (Hebrews 13:8). Only when we put our trust in Him and rely on the Holy Spirit to give us divine wisdom and understanding, will we be able to sift through the often-muddy residue of what enters and exits our thoughts and hearts (Proverbs 20:5). Let God's peace – rather than confusion – overwhelm you and set a guard over your heart (Philippians 4:7).

SCRIPTURES FOR GOING DEEPER

The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out. Proverbs 20:5

Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control. Proverbs 25:28

SATURDAY DAY 6 – FAITH

READ: Hebrews 11:1

Three things I am grateful for today:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My self-care today...

(Example: Spend time with God, call a friend, do something that replenishes me, soak in affirmations, practice breathing exercises, listen to worship music, etc.).

I chose to _____ and it helped me in this way:

Today I feel...

Catch it, challenge it, change it. (Use this format to investigate your thoughts, and practice challenging them so you can create healthy change.)

My hope for today is...

The life of faith is lived one day at a time. – Elizabeth Elliot, Let me be a Woman.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS AND NOTES

Describe how you handle your thoughts and emotions. Would you consider yourself steady, impulsive, unpredictable, calm, or something else?

What does the culture say about following our hearts and dealing with the good and bad thoughts we're constantly bombarded with?

What can you surrender your heart and your thoughts to the Lord? How do you gain more wisdom in processing the thoughts and attitudes of your heart?

Has there ever been a time when your heart told you one thing, but God's Word told you another? Which did you follow? What was the outcome?

Sunday Scriptures

Transformation & Change

READ: 1 Corinthians 15:31 - Philippians 3:21 - Hebrews 13:8

Meditation Prayer

Lord God, when change threatens to overwhelm me, help me Lord, to remember that change brings with it hope for better things ahead. When it feels as if the bottom has dropped out of life and I don't know what my future will look like, I know that I can trust in you. You stay the same forever, and there are no mysteries to you God.

You see and know every step of my journey. You know the end from the beginning, and You are not surprised by anything. I trust in You, the unchanging One. How do you handle change?

Setting an Example

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.” Matthew 5:14

The bright side to living in such a dark world is that it is that much harder to spot the radiating light of Christ. As members of the body of Christ, we are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20) on this foreign soil, here to represent our King, His better way of life, and the hope of His salvation and His return. Do our lives exhibit proof of Jesus’ fingerprints? Coach John Wooden once put it this way: “If I were ever persecuted for my religion, I truly hope there would be enough evidence to convict me.” Our lives can show the world around us a new standard morality as outlined in God’s Word. Forget simply not killing our families – we’re going to actually love them to win the battle (Matthew 3:44). We’re not going to avoid sin so long as it’s convenient, but rather we’re going to steer clear of situations that would compromise our testimony or our integrity (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Through the prime of youth, we can set a higher standard than the low bar “kids these days” are held to. No matter our age, we can live out our devotion to Christ in a way that encourages, challenges, and ministers to both believers and unbelievers. Who knows who will be taking notes on the countercultural, Christ-pursuing way you live? We can exemplify to the world who Jesus Christ is through the tangible evidence of the way we live our lives, desiring to use each breath we take to win others into the family of God.

SCRIPTURES FOR GOING DEEPER

“You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.” Matthew 7:16-17

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Colossians 4:5

Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:15-16

SUNDAY DAY 7 – COMFORT

READ: Psalm 34:18

Three things I am grateful for today:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My self-care today...

(Example: Spend time with God, call a friend, do something that replenishes me, soak in affirmations, practice breathing exercises, listen to worship music, etc.).

I chose to _____ and it helped me in this way:

Today I feel...

Catch it, challenge it, change it. (Use this format to investigate your thoughts, and practice challenging them so you can create healthy change.)

My hope for today is...

My brokenness is a better bridge for people than my pretend wholeness ever was – Sheila Walsh

JOURNAL QUESTIONS AND NOTES

How would you want someone to describe the way you live your life? What do you want to be known for?

What are some specific changes that have happened in your life since you began following Jesus? What are some areas where the Holy Spirit is sanctifying you?

Who are some people you think have exemplified Christ well? What do you admire about them?

What are some ways you can set a Christ-like example for those in your life and your environment?
