



SUGGESTED WEEKLY SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

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part of the **Reset & Reflect** project by Shannon E. Greene

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As you participate in Reset & Reflect this Lent, use these suggested practices to help you engage more deeply with the seven themes. There is one practice to accompany each weekly theme. Most of the following practices work best when they are done once each day (such as naming what we are grateful for or praying a breath prayer). However, even if you are only able to get to each practice once, you will find a place of deeper connection with God and a valuable time to reset your soul.

THEME 1: REPENT

Practice: Confession

We all know confession to be telling God a list of all we have done wrong, how we have sinned, and how ashamed we are. But what if confession is not about a list of “rights and wrongs” we’ve done?

Instead think of confession as something that the Holy Spirit does in us to open up our hearts to the ways in which we are not aligned with Jesus. For this practice, I suggest looking at the life of Jesus, then looking at your own. Name the differences and feel the embrace of a God who loves you.

THEME 2: SUBTRACT

Practice: Gratitude

Gratitude may seem like a strange practice suggestion for this week, but being grateful for what God has given us is what helps us to see how much we already have. We don’t need to add more to our lives if we can see what we already have as a gift.

Try naming two or three things you are grateful for every night before you go to bed. If you want, write them down in a Gratitude Journal or notebook.

THEME 3: ADD

Practice: Breath Prayer

Breathing is something we all do thousands of times a day. Breath prayer is an ancient practice. The most common and ancient breath prayer is breathing in while repeating in your mind “Jesus Christ” and breathing out while completing the prayer “have mercy on me, a sinner”.

The beauty of this practice is that it can be adapted into any short prayer you need, and it can be added into your life at any time, day or night. Let breathing be a reminder of God’s grace and mercy.

THEME 4: SIMPLIFY

Practice: Unplug

Admit it, we are all glued to devices of some kind, especially since the pandemic started. And, in many ways, our computers, phones, and tablets have been the way we have stayed connected to others. I know unplugging completely during this time is impossible!

Try unplugging from the electronic world and practice being present right where you are, even if it is only for an hour or two once a week.

THEME 5: REMEMBER

Practice: Sabbath

Over and over and over again, God calls His people to remember who they are. In the Old Testament, prophets and priests would tell the people: "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt." The thing is, God isn't just reminding the people where they started. It is God calling His people to remember who they are in the midst of living life. God is actually saying "you aren't slaves anymore, because I delivered you."

The people were commanded to remember their deliverance from slavery every week, because once a week they would rest from all work. They would not produce or be "held captive" to anything other than the belief in a God who would provide for them and love them. Find a day this week to truly rest. We all need Sabbath, because we all need to remember who we are and who we are called to be.

THEME 6: CONFESS

Practice: Recite the Apostles' Creed

What we believe changes the way we live our lives. Thankfully for us, we get to benefit from thousands of years of traditions and stories about who God is and what it means to follow after Jesus with our whole hearts.

The followers of Jesus have used the Apostles' Creed as a way to talk about their faith in who God is. At the core of this creed is the revelation of God's love as we have come to know it through the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The Holy Spirit empowers all of us to follow in the way of Jesus by loving others as God loves them.

This week, begin or end your day reciting this creed. Remember your voice joins with Christians throughout the ages whose faith have changed the whole world.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THEME 7: PREPARE

Practice: Praying the Psalms

We are entering the most important week of the Christian year. This is the week we journey with Jesus from Palm Sunday through Good Friday, as we wait for Easter morning.

On Good Friday we hear Jesus use his last breath to pray words of Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" In one of the last moments of Jesus' life, he sought comfort from the words of Scripture.

Praying Scripture is an ancient practice that provides space for God to shape the way we pray and know Him more deeply. Praying Scripture is more than reading the passage out loud. It is about paying attention and allowing God to shape the content of our prayers. It can be helpful to break the passage into segments and focus on the different movements, stories, and feelings the Psalm contains.

The Psalms capture the full range of human experience. It is only natural that in his final moments, Jesus used the first verse of Psalm 22 to describe what he was experiencing.

This week, try praying that same Psalm every night before going to bed. Meditate on what God is revealing to you through Scripture.