

LIFE GROUP

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Mind of Christ July 21, 2024

Summary

Pastor Dale spoke from Colossians 3:1-4 and Romans 12:1-2, emphasizing that we must actively engage in spiritual practices to genuinely transform our minds and live out our identity in Christ. He introduced "7 Sacred Habits of the Mind," inspired by Brother Lawrence's *Practicing the Presence of God*. These habits help Christians move beyond intellectual understanding to practical, life-changing faith.

Scripture

Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person. Genesis 2:7 (NLT)

"For the Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." Job 33:4 (NLT)

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. Psalm 1:1-3 (NLT)

"Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world." Psalm 46:10 (NLT)

I will praise you seven times a day because all your regulations are just. Psalm 119:164 (NLT)

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Psalm 150:6 (NIV)

The LORD is good to those who depend on him, to those who search for him. So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the LORD. Lamentations 3:25-26 (NLT)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

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Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4 (NIV)

Let's Start

If you had to choose a hymn or worship song that plays every time you sit down to read the Bible or pray, what song would it be and why?

Gratitude and Prayer

How has God worked in your life since we were together?

Let's Talk

1. In what ways do you find it challenging to "set your mind on things above," as instructed in Colossians 3:1-4?
2. Which of the "7 Sacred Habits of the Mind" resonates most with you and why?
 - Practice the continual awareness of God's presence.
 - Practice short, simple prayers throughout the day.
 - Practice daily surrender and trust.
 - Practice mindful breathing
 - Practice reflective breaks.
 - Practice reading and meditation in Scripture.
 - Practice silent meditation.
3. How can practicing the continual awareness of God's presence change your daily routine?
4. What practical ways can you incorporate short, simple prayers into your everyday life?
5. Discuss how regular reading and meditation on Scripture can transform your thinking and behavior.
6. Why is silence important in your spiritual life, and how can you incorporate more of it into your daily schedule?
7. How do you plan to implement these habits to experience a deeper relationship with Christ?
8. Pastor Dale gave some helpful ways to trust God with your whole heart:
 - Acknowledge God in every situation.
 - Believe in every circumstance that God is sovereign.
 - Depend on God's guidance and believe He will make a path for you to follow.
 - Visualize placing your anxieties in a worry box and hand them over to God.How can you incorporate these into your life this week?

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7 Sacred Habits Exercise

Beginner's Week-by-Week Plan

Week 1: Practice the Continual Awareness of God's Presence

- Daily Routine: Set five daily reminders (morning, mid-morning, noon, mid-afternoon, evening) to stop for five minutes and focus on God's presence. Use the pulse-finding exercise to ground yourself and imagine God's presence with you.
- Reflection: Keep a journal to note moments when you felt God's presence or any distractions that made it difficult.

Week 2: Practice Short Simple Prayers throughout the Day

- Daily Routine: Develop prayer triggers linked to daily activities (e.g., waking up, meals, starting the car, brushing teeth). Keep the prayers short and simple, acknowledging God and your dependence on Him.
- Reflection: Reflect in your journal on the triggers that helped you remember to pray and any changes in your sense of connection with God.

Week 3: Practice Daily Surrender and Trust

- Daily Routine: Start each day by picturing yourself putting your worries in a "worry box" and giving it to God. Throughout the day, remind yourself to acknowledge God's sovereignty in every situation.
- Reflection: At the end of each day, note instances where you surrendered and trusted God, and reflect on how it influenced your peace and decision-making.

Week 4: Practice Mindful Breathing

- Daily Routine: Incorporate mindful breathing exercises (e.g., Box breathing) into your day, especially during moments of stress or anxiety. Combine this with meditative thoughts on God's presence and your connection to His Spirit.
- Reflection: Note any changes in your anxiety levels and overall well-being due to mindful breathing. Reflect on how this practice impacts your awareness of God's presence.

Week 5: Practice Reflective Breaks

- Daily Routine: Choose a verse for the day and take reflective breaks during meals or snack times to meditate on this verse. Use daily activities like walking or observing nature as opportunities to reflect on God's creation and presence.
- Reflection: Write about the insights you gain during these reflective breaks and how they deepen your understanding of God's Word.

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Week 6: Practice Reading and Meditation in Scripture

- Daily Routine: Dedicate at least 15 minutes each day to reading and meditating on Scripture. Use journaling prompts to reflect on God's revelations, promises, and personal applications.
- Reflection: Track your progress and insights in your journal, focusing on how regular Bible reading influences your thoughts and actions.

Week 7: Practice Silent Meditation

- Daily Routine: Set aside time each day for silent meditation, using the parable of the quiet monk as a guide. Allow your mind to settle and clear, reflecting on God's presence and seeking His guidance.
- Reflection: Document the clarity and peace you experience from silent meditation, and any ways it helps you hear God's voice more clearly.

Advanced Week-by-Week Plan:

Layered Integration Plan

Week 1: Practice the Continual Awareness of God's Presence

- Daily Routine: Set five daily reminders to stop for five minutes and focus on God's presence. Use the pulse-finding exercise and imagine God's presence with you.
- Reflection: Journal moments of awareness and distractions.

Week 2: Continue Awareness and Add Short Simple Prayers

- Daily Routine: Maintain the five daily reminders for God's presence. Introduce prayer triggers linked to daily activities.
- Reflection: Journal both awareness of God's presence and the impact of short prayers.

Week 3: Continue with Awareness, Prayers, and Add Daily Surrender and Trust

- Daily Routine: Keep practicing the first two habits. Each morning, visualize placing worries in a "worry box" and handing them to God.
- Reflection: Reflect on your daily surrender and trust experiences alongside the first two habits.

Week 4: Continue with Previous Habits and Add Mindful Breathing

- Daily Routine: Continue the first three habits. Introduce mindful breathing exercises, especially during stress.
- Reflection: Reflect on all habits practiced so far and the effects of mindful breathing.

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Week 5: Continue with All Previous Habits and Add Reflective Breaks

- Daily Routine: Maintain the first four habits. Choose a verse for daily meditation during meals or reflective breaks.
- Reflection: Reflect on the chosen verse and its impact on your day, in addition to practicing the other habits.

Week 6: Continue with All Previous Habits and Add Reading and Meditation in Scripture

- Daily Routine: Keep practicing all previous habits. Dedicate 15 minutes daily to reading and meditating on Scripture.
- Reflection: Journal insights from Scripture reading and its influence on your thoughts and actions, while continuing to reflect on other habits.

Week 7: Continue with All Previous Habits and Add Silent Meditation

- Daily Routine: Continue all previous habits. Set aside time for silent meditation, using the parable of the quiet monk as a guide.
- Reflection: Document the clarity and peace from silent meditation, along with reflections on the integration of all seven habits.

Going Forward:

- Rotate focus: Spend a day each week focusing on one habit in depth.
- Combine habits: Integrate multiple habits into daily practices, such as combining mindful breathing with silent meditation.
- Personalize routines: Adjust the practices to your fit individual schedule and spiritual needs, ensuring the habits become a natural part of your daily life.