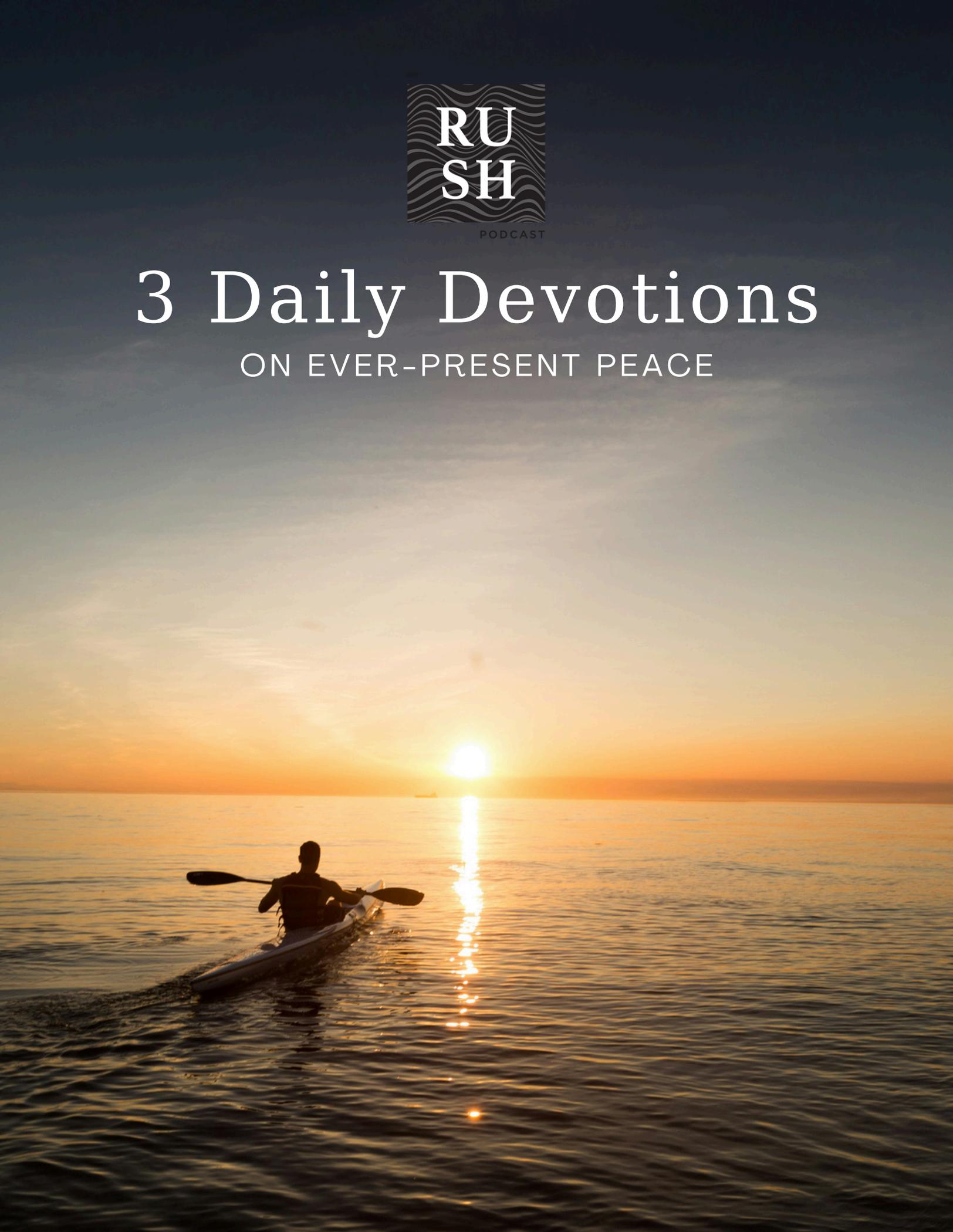


# 3 Daily Devotions

ON EVER-PRESENT PEACE



# Hope Without Limits

## (Pray That Impossible Dream)

You are limited. Your words, your ideas. There is a wall through which you feel you can't break. What are the limits of your mind? Your capabilities? You need more than what you have to break free from this place of limits. Of boundaries. Of what is possible and what is not.

In the morning, when you rise, your mind is too quickly filled with what is tangible, with what is real to you. But I want to expand your mind and your heart so that when you awake you seek more than what is likely to happen that day. I want you to seek what feels impossible to you. I want your heart to desire it. I want your whole body to yearn for it. *The impossible*. What is impossible? What feels impossible to you?

Hope tells you all things are possible. Faith comes from hope which leads to joy. For all things are possible with Me: What you believe will never happen, *could* happen. What you believe is too good to ever be true, *could* come true. I am without limits. I am not deterred by a mind that clouds possibility.

What would happen when your eyes opened in the morning, your mind awakening from dream, and you lived believing there is more than what you can see and touch and feel and know right now? That this *More* is not so far away. That this *More* is not unavailable to you. For I am available to you. I am available to you. My kingdom, My hope, My joy, My love is available to you.

Please, why do you make Me so small?

You keep Me small to protect yourself, believing that limited hope will shield you from pain when dreams are not realized. You are afraid to dream. You are afraid to hope. Hope feels distant from you, an idea that you might believe is true only in theory—a nice idea that will be true *one day*. But when have you called heaven down? When have you prayed, with the authority I give you, with the power within you—the love I give you to be made manifest in your life? If My words speak life, if My breath caused your spirit to awake and live, how can My words now not stir you toward hope, toward new life that is within your beating heart right now?

I call you forward son, daughter, into a new way of living, into a new mindset, into a new way to approach your problems. I am not asking you to ignore reality, the pain and challenges, the struggles and hurts. I want you to feel them, be awake to them, consider how things that seem too big, too hard, too difficult for change, *can* change, *can* be made different, transformed into something completely new, with My hope in you, My power in you, My faith in you.

You are My child, My inheritance. I pour My love into you. All I have is yours. I hold nothing back from you, if you want it. Ask for more of Me in your life. Ask for heaven to come down. Pray for what feels too good, too glorious, too beautiful, too wonderful for your mind and heart to dream right now. Let Me give you hope and dreams and love that reach beyond your imagination, beyond the limits of your mind. In Me all things are possible. In Me all things are made good. In Me all pain and all heartache, all disease and all wounds are healed. Ask for more, Ask for more of Me. Seek Me, and you will find Me. Ask, and you will receive. I give all in accordance to My Son, who loves me and who gives of Himself so the whole world will know Me and give glory to My name. Watch My glory pour out now, child. Watch Me not hold out on you.



## EXERCISE :

We live in the physical world. A world with limits, with causes and effects. It's a world of data and hard science and hard evidence. And we've lived here a long time. We've seen a lot of things, personally and up close. So, we've kinda come to *know* just what is possible and what is impossible in this world of ours.

But . . . hang on a minute. Scripture tells us that God exists beyond this physical world, apart from data, and above our human understanding. And it tells us that He's our Father, and that you and I are His beloved sons and daughters. The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 3 that God's love for us is so great that it's literally immeasurable and unfathomable by our human minds. And from this loving Father, Paul wrote in Galatians chapter 4, that we've received "a full legal adoption as His children." And "because we're His," Paul wrote, "we can access everything our Father has."

Think about that. We can access *everything* our Father has. He's a dad who likes to say yes when we ask. He's a dad, in fact, who'll never say *no—if what we ask fits His will*.

That *has* to change our thinking, doesn't it? It *has* to change how we view our physical world, and our circumstances, doesn't it? It *has* to change our perspective of what's possible and what's impossible, doesn't it?

And doesn't it beg the question, what exactly *should* we be asking for?

I mean, is what you're asking for in prayer based on your status as a physical man or woman in a physical world with limits? Is it based upon your understanding of cause and effect, of your conception of what's possible?

Or . . . are you beginning to ask for the impossible, because of who your heavenly dad is? Are you beginning to dream impossible dreams because of who you are, truly?

Is it possible that impossible prayers are exactly the kind of prayers God wants to hear?

God loves our minds. He loves our hearts. He loves engaging with us. He loves when we share with him what we think. He loves when we share with Him our dreams.

But when was the last time you allowed yourself to dream big? When was the last time you let your prayers match the size of your Heavenly dad's power and strength, to match the size of *His* imagination and goodness and love? When was the last time you prayed an impossible prayer based upon an impossible dream?

Well, *right now* is as good a time as any.

So, I want you to take some moments to consider and discover your impossible prayer. Allow your heart and mind to dream right along with the Spirit of God—who lives right there inside you.

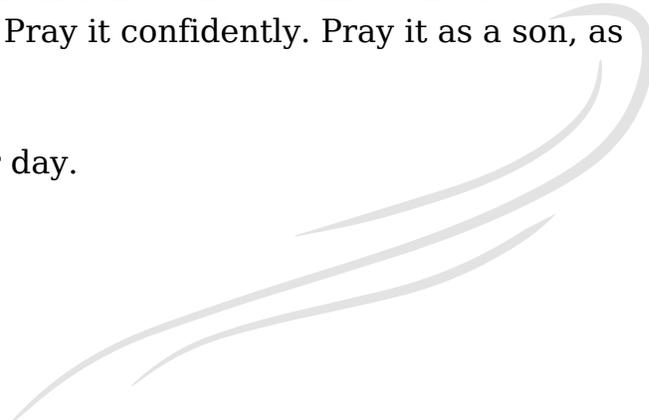
But let's confess and repent first—and consecrate our praying to Him.

*Father, I confess I make You small. I confess my prayers are often limited to what I understand to be possible—rather than what is possible for You. For I know, with You, all things are possible. Nothing is too big. Nothing is too difficult. So, help me to begin to live in my inheritance. I want to learn to dream and pray as Your son, as Your daughter. Ignite my desires. Ignite my imagination. Ignite my dreams. Awaken in me the ability to believe in, and ask for, the impossible. I want my prayers to be in alignment with Your heart. I want to want, what You want. I want to want, what You want for me.*

*And now, Father, what is the impossible prayer you want to answer?*

Did you discover your impossible prayer? If it fits what we know about God's heart from Scripture, then pray it now. Pray it confidently. Pray it as a son, as a daughter of God.

And keep praying it faithfully, day after day.



# Dealing with Comparison and Envy

## MESSAGE :

Pay attention to your dreams, the ones in the night when your mind is not reined in by distraction. Your subconscious shows you what rests deep within your heart. What lingers there. What troubles you. What stirs deep within that you have not recognized before or what you have pushed down, felt shame about, and had wished would just disappear.

In the night, when all is quiet, comparison sneaks in like a thief. Envy is right behind.

Connections, relationships, acclaim, financial success, ease in social situations—all can look so much better than what you have, than what you have been given.

Here, in this place of doubt, you isolate yourself from me. I am here, like I am always here, but you pull away from truth and love and goodness—and you sabotage gifts I give you, wonderful gifts specific to you and your relationship with me.

So, in the night, when the ache is heavy—turn back to me. I build you up; I do not tear you down. I free you from comparison and envy. I give you gifts of gratitude and hope and peace and a clear way for your heart to see. Let me bring clarity, purity. Let me isolate comparison and envy and destroy them so they are no longer able to rob you of love . . . and distract you from Me.

You are whole and all together perfectly made. You cannot realize the gifts I give you when comparison and envy steal faith and joy. What I give you—and what we get to do together—can never be stolen by thieves, unless you let them be taken.

So, live with Me—where love is pure and gifts are real and comparison and envy have no place.

I have your heart. I am with you. You are My beloved.



## EXERCISE :

Comparison and envy are brothers . . . and they are thieves. They come and conspire and rob us of peace and joy and energy. And we open the doors. And we let them in. We open our lives to them when we decide to pursue lives of self-glory—rather than ones pursuing more of God.

It is exhausting worrying and obsessing about how we measure up with other people, isn't it? And when we don't measure up, we're left with self-contempt and bitterness. And when we do measure up, we often become conceited and callous.

God wants to bring you "clarity, purity." He wants to "isolate comparison and envy and destroy them so they are no longer able to rob [us] of love . . . and distract [us] from [Him]." To do this, God invites us to "turn back" to Him. For when our hearts are focused on God—on His love, on His truth—we cannot help but be filled with contentedness and gratitude for who He is and for His outrageous love for us.

So, in these next few minutes, let's turn our hearts to God by engaging in an ancient Christian practice—a practice that dates back to at least the sixth century AD. It is called Breath Prayer, although other names for it are the Jesus Prayer or the Prayer of the Heart.

Early practitioners of Breath Prayer simply repeated, to the rhythm of their breathing, something like the phrase, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." In time, the prayer was shortened to, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy" or simply, "Jesus, mercy."

But Breath Prayer can, of course, be personalized to fit whatever God puts on your heart. It just needs syllables to match the inhale and exhale of your breath.

Typically, the first part of the prayer (on the intake of breath) is praise—employing one of the names of God (Father God; Lord, Jesus; Holy Spirit) or any other term of adoration. And the second part can be a request—your heart's cry to God. For example, as you breathe in, you might imagine God and

say, "Abba Father." And then, as you breathe out, you might say, "Keep me close." Or, you might imagine Jesus and say, "Jesus, my King," as you breathe in and "More of you," as you breathe out.

So, the first question, as we construct our personalized Breath Prayers, is this: "What is the cry of your heart today?"

Now, I know, in the rush and charge of modern life, we often lose touch with our hearts. So, let's just be still before God for a moment. Let's ask the One who knows us better than we know ourselves what we ought to pray.

Close your eyes, if you can, and let God speak.

What do you want most from Him, right now?

What did you hear? What did you feel? What thought arose?

Now, if what you heard fits within the principles of Scripture, let it become the foundation of your Breath Prayer for today . . . or for this season.

Now, choose the member of the Godhead to whom you are most comfortable speaking. And choose the name for Him you are most comfortable using. And then simply combine it with the cry of our heart.

And this is *your* personalized Breath Prayer.

And let's use it now.

But, just to recap one more time, you're going to *breathe in* your name for God and then *breathe out* your request or need or your heart's desire.

You can pray silently, in your mind, so you can be aware of your breath. Or you can do it quietly, but out loud. Whatever is most comfortable for you.

And try to do it continuously for a few minutes.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter five, the Apostle Peter urged you to "Make your life a prayer." And this practice, Breath Prayer, is just one more way you can take a step in that direction.

# Why It's Time to Raise Your Head

## MESSAGE :

There are days when you feel invisible, the world erupting with busy and noise. I see you, how you hide. What you have and who you are doesn't feel enough. Your head is down, your heart tucked away. It's not that you are trying to keep your heart hidden, at least not consciously. Do you recognize it's Me now who's talking to you?

The pain, these years, of doubting your ideas, your decisions, has convinced you of one thing: you have nothing to offer, your value is less than *her* value . . . and *his*. The lies you've heard your whole life have tangled themselves around you. Swallowing your true identity. But I've come to change that. I've come to tell you a rescue mission is underway. I never leave you here, in the rubble of pain and self-deceit. Not unless you want me to. But you don't, do you? Remember, who you see right now, who you feel you are right now, is not who you are, dear one. Only I see with eyes that are pure. Only I see with a love that breaks through pain. Only I can show you who you are.

Only I can show you what and who I see.

To begin, let Me tell you this: your strength is not far away. Your beauty, your glory, your weapons of fighting the insecurities you face are in you. You struggle to see them, but I want to reveal them to you now. What you see in the mirror, what you see on paper, what you see in the eyes of the people who have hurt you, what you perceive about your qualities, your talents, your worth, is not what I see. And the best way to show you what I see? Well, you're going to have to let Me expand your mind a bit. Sometimes, it takes knowing that what you see, what you live now, is just a fragment of a moment. Your life is just beginning. This pain may feel like the only thing that shapes you. But that is a small, limited way to look at things now.

Let Me tell you this: I am preparing a room for you, a place just for you. Soon you will see it; you will see that everything I do, everything I make, is with intention, and with extreme care. The struggles you face now break my heart, but they are shaping you, changing you. I have told you this before: there is more than what you see; there is more than what you know. Ask me to increase your faith so that your perception of your circumstances, your outlook, your very self, is through my eyes. I see you in your fullness. I see you in your glory. I see you here on earth and in heaven too, when all is restored, when you realize there is no separation from me, when the struggles and pain and shame and regret are but shadows that frame the glory of who you really are.

So know there is a place I prepare for you, but it is not for you yet, not yet. For there is more for you to do now. There is more for you to know. There are people who I ask you to see with the eyes I give you. There are people who won't know My love until they feel it through you. For your strength is My love. Your hope is My love. Your glory is My love. Know that I am in you, and I fight for you, so that together, we can work to restore what is broken. I make all things new. In you. In this world. There are so many more rooms I am preparing. Will you join Me in letting the others know? Raise your head now. Raise your head.



## EXERCISE :

The Apostle Peter told us what's true about our identities, what's true about our roles in the Kingdom of God. He wrote, "But you are God's chosen treasure—priests who are kings, a spiritual "nation" set apart as God's devoted ones. He called you out of darkness to experience His marvelous light, and now He claims you as His very own. He did this so that you would broadcast His glorious wonders throughout the world." That's from 1 Peter chapter 2.

Eugene Peterson paraphrases those same words like this: "But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do His work and speak out for Him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference He made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted."

From nothing to something. From rejected to accepted. We are God's chosen treasure. We are kings and queens. We are now a people set apart as God's devoted ones. We were called out of darkness. And we said yes to that call. And because of our yes, we're now partnering with our Father, our heavenly Dad, in telling others of the power that rescued us and now burns within our hearts.

So, when we cower, overwhelmed by our circumstances, distracted, our attention focused only on everything we can see and touch around us, we can easily lose sight of who we are, who He is, what's really going on here, and our good Father's presence in our lives, in every moment.

Okay, so, how can *we*, little by little, day by day, begin to turn our attention *back* to what is true?

Well, here's a way: The Ignatian tradition encourages the regular, daily practice of reflecting—*prayerfully*—upon our hearts, our thoughts about God, and how we've seen Him working in our lives and in our circumstances. It's a way to turn our minds and hearts to God—with purpose, with intention. It helps us to begin to see things a bit differently—to see with His eyes, to see His presence in places we've missed Him before. In effect, it works to increase our faith and our gratitude for the incredible things God *is* doing among us, every day.

The five steps in the Ignatian Prayer of Examen are these:

1. To become aware of God's presence;
2. To review the day with gratitude;
3. To pay attention to your emotions;
4. To choose one feature of your day and pray from it; and
5. To look toward tomorrow.

So, let's try this right now. Get yourself comfortable. Settle in—wherever you are. Relax your body, your legs, your arms, your hands. Drop everything you are doing, if you can. And now, focus your mind on who your heavenly Dad is. How He is loving and present with you right now. Consider what you know of His character, His personality, His abundant love—*specifically, for you*.

Now, recall of the details of your day today—or your day yesterday, if your day today is just beginning. Recall the moments of waking, eating, working, resting. Spend a few moments running through everything you can remember. And then ask Father to help you see where He was—in the details, in the moments. And then praise Him. Give Him thanks for His presence with you during the day—and for His amazing love and attention.

Now, step back, figuratively, and notice to your emotions. How are you feeling today? How is your heart? What feels heavy? What feels light? What burdens are weighing you down? What is giving you joy and hope?

And ask Father what He wants you to understand about how you're feeling, *right now*.

Now, choose one feature of your day—today or yesterday—and pray from it. What is that thing that's weighing on you? What is that things that is troubling your heart? What is that thing you want to celebrate?

What about your day do you want to give to God? Is there something you want to say to Him? Is there something you want to confess? Do that now.

And, finally, look to tomorrow. What are you looking forward to? What do you want to take into tomorrow? Where do you want to be intentional?

Ask God to show you what He has for you, tomorrow. Ask Him how He would like to direct your attention, your heart, your dreams. And listen for His still, small voice as thoughts come.

*Father, thank You. Thank You for choosing me—for making me Yours, Your own son, Your own daughter. Thank You for making me holy, day by day. And thank You for inviting me into Your wonderful work in the world. Thank You for that honor—of being able to tell people about the night-and-day difference between life with You and life without You. I love You so much.*

*In Jesus' name, Amen.*



# ENCOUNTER HOLY SPIRIT

This world tells you to be strong. Resilient. Unbreakable. Productive. Is it time to get off this treadmill and step into something new?

The Rush podcast, inspired by the Holy Spirit, helps you get still, create space, and encounter God, 15 minutes at a time. New episodes drop weekly and tackle topics like distraction, love, complacency, forgiveness, and discouragement. Free, no ads, and found wherever you like to listen.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY, FREE!



PODCAST