

Sticky Faith Every Day

Week 1: NOTICE

Daily Guide



NOTICE

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide



Notice the moment

Do you ever have trouble paying attention when you read the Bible or pray?

Yeah, we get that. And we want you to know from the start that the most important “rule” is not to beat yourself up about that.

But the second rule—or invitation, really—is that you give it a chance, even if it’s usually hard for you.

Over this 8-week journey, we’re going to practice a way of reading scripture that you may or may not be familiar with. It’s more about *praying with* scripture, where you read not for the sake of getting through a passage or “learning something new,” but rather read scripture as a way to notice God.

Here are our suggestions for trying this out:

First, find somewhere you can be quiet and still for a little while. Turn off your phone and other electronics (yes, really) and begin to settle yourself down. Some people find it helpful to close their eyes, others like to look at something that helps them begin to center their attention, like a window, a candle, or a cross.

Take a few slow, deep breaths, and for a minute or so don’t do anything more than *breathe*. Let God know that you’re ready to notice.

Don’t rush this centering process. When it seems right, move on to the next step:

Things I’m Noticing



Use this space to jot down ideas, questions, or doodle pictures throughout each Daily Guide



Notice God's Word

Things I'm Noticing

Below is a passage from the Bible (Psalm 25) that we are going to use in an exercise the church has done throughout history called *Lectio Divina* (which means “sacred [or holy] reading” and is pronounced “LEX-ee-oh Div-EE-na”). You can also use your Bible to read it if you prefer.



We know that David is the author of Psalm 25, and while we don't know the exact timing, it's thought that David wrote this after he committed the sin of adultery with Bathsheba. This Psalm shows David's desire for an intimate relationship with God. For instance, in verse 5, in the midst of a culture that viewed God's word and truth as rules to obey, David asks God to “guide me in your truth.”

Instructions for Lectio Divina:

Read the passage through three times slowly, pausing to be silent in between each reading.

During the first reading, just listen to the words. It might help to read it out loud if you're somewhere you can do that.

During the second reading, see what else you notice. Maybe it's a phrase that jumps out at you, a word you didn't pay attention to the first time, or something else you become aware of. Perhaps it's an emotion, or a word picture that comes alive.

During the third reading, invite God to point out a particular word, phrase, feeling, or image that might stand out more specifically to you—on this day, at this time, during this reading—as a way God might be speaking through this passage. It's okay if nothing “happens” here, but just let God know you're open to that and listening for it.

Ready? Here it is:

Things I'm Noticing



Psalm 25

- 1 In you, LORD my God,
I put my trust.
- 2 I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
- 3 No one who hopes in you
will ever be put to shame,
but shame will come on those
who are treacherous without cause.
- 4 Show me your ways, LORD,
teach me your paths.
- 5 Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.
- 6 Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.
- 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth
and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you, LORD, are good.



Notice God

After the three readings, sit quietly for a moment with your word, image, or phrase if you have one. Give God thanks either way.

Now pray your own prayer. You might want to use Psalm 25:4-5 below as a starter prayer that leads into your own words to God, or your prayer might become silent awareness in God's presence for a few more moments.

"Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long." (Ps 25:4-5)

-subtract+add

In the spirit of noticing God more, perhaps there is something in your life that you could subtract that would



give you more space, energy, time and focus to pay attention to God in the midst of your days.

Similarly, perhaps there is something that you could add (maybe a bit more time in prayer, or more music that helps you focus on God) that would help you be more attuned to God.

Prayerfully contemplate what you might be able to subtract from your life and what practice(s) you want to add to create space to notice God more. Write some ideas here, and when you make a commitment, be sure to write it down as specifically as possible.

I commit to subtract the following from my life in order to notice God more every day...

I commit to add the following to my life in order to notice God more every day...



Notice this week

This week, take time each day to come back to Psalm 25. You might read it the same way, or different ways—it's up to you.

Also begin to cultivate (like digging up the earth in a garden) more awareness of God in your everyday life. Pause to look, listen, and feel for God's active presence at different points through the day. It's okay if you don't actually hear or feel anything tangible, but sometimes

Things I'm Noticing

inviting God's Spirit to make us more aware can open us more to notice what God's doing around us over time.

Try reading this passage in active ways, like while walking to school or around your neighborhood, or just before going on a run. See what you notice differently as a result.

As you begin to look for ways to notice God's presence and activity this week, you might also consider using this prayer of Jesus that's often known as the "**Lord's Prayer**," from Matthew 6:9-13. Some people find that praying this prayer every day is a helpful rhythm:



Our Father in heaven,
Your name is holy.
May your kingdom come,
May your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one,
For yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever.
Amen.

Things I'm Noticing

Sticky Faith Every Day

Week 1: NOTICE

Daily Guide Extra

Introduction to Lent



NOTICE

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide Extra



LENT: a 40-day journey of noticing God

If you've heard of Lent before, chances are one of the first things that comes to mind is "giving something up," as in "I'm giving up chocolate for Lent."

That's sort of right. But not quite.

When you stop doing something you're used to doing (like eating dessert), you notice different things. Lent is like that. It's a season—40 days to be exact (not counting Sundays)—when the Church throughout the ages has chosen to pause and notice something. That "something" is the journey of Jesus to the cross.

Alongside his journey, we're also called to notice our own journeys toward death and resurrection. In many traditions, Lent starts out with "Ash Wednesday," when many Christians choose to wear a cross or smudge of ashes on their foreheads or hands. This is a symbol that represents our death, or "mortality." It's a reminder of the pain, suffering, and loss that are part of life. It's a reminder to turn away from sin and toward God.

Sounds kind of morbid, doesn't it?

But here's the thing. "Lent" actually means "Spring"—you know, the season of new life. So in the midst of the bitter winter cold and all the death that might be around us, there's this uncanny hope that rebirth is possible.

FAST: -subtract+add

Lent often involves a form of "fasting", which usually means some kind of hunger.

When most of us think "fast", we think "speed". You might be a fast runner or a fast test-taker. Ironically, the spiritual use of the word sort of means the opposite. Fasting is a "slow" thing. It makes us stop and notice something—something we're missing, something we're going without. Something we *subtract* from our lives. Like food.

Fasting may typically mean we avoid eating food, or certain kinds of food, for a set period of time. But fasting is a practice that goes beyond food. It can mean choosing to go without TV, Facebook, or Xbox. In fact, fasting is the opposite of *dieting*, which is about controlling our bodies for the sake of achieving a certain waist size or belly



firmness. If that's one of your goals, you should *absolutely not* fast from food, because it's too easy to confuse the two (or celebrate one as a by-product of the other).

No, fasting isn't about obsession with our bodies.

Here are a few other things fasting is NOT: It's not punishing yourself for bad behavior. It's not working to earn God's favor, or doing something to please God. It's much bigger than all that.

In fact, fasting isn't just about subtracting for the sake of subtraction (which is what your math class might feel like most of the time). We subtract something so that we—or perhaps God—can *add* something new. In other words, what happens in the void left by whatever we choose to give up? If we give up an hour of video games, what do we do with those extra 60 minutes? If we give up lattes, what do we do with that money? Maybe it's adding true hunger, a hunger for spiritual growth. Maybe it's adding silence and stillness to a life full of noise and movement. Maybe we add prayer when we're usually silent toward God. Maybe God adds passion for serving the poor where we're usually pretty self-absorbed.

If all of this sounds intriguing, maybe you'd like to join in this 40-day journey of Lent together with other Jesus-followers around the world. Each week we're going to give you ideas for becoming more aware of God in your everyday life. You can use them in whatever way is most helpful to you, though many people find that setting apart a particular time of day to pray and practice other disciplines helps them keep up a rhythm. As you consider the 40 days ahead, we encourage you to also think about what you might want to *subtract* and what you might want to *add* during the season of Lent to help you notice God more.

Sticky Faith Every Day

Week 2: UNPLUG

Daily Guide



UNPLUG

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide



Notice the moment

First, find somewhere you can be quiet and still for a little while. Turn off your phone and other electronics and begin to settle yourself down. Physically unplug something (your computer, TV or something else) as a symbolic act of “unplugging.” Close your eyes and take a deep breath.

Think of all the distractions in your life – the things that cause you anxiety, fear or stress. Imagine these things written on wet sand at the beach.

Now imagine the ocean tide sweeping in and completely erasing the words, leaving smooth wet sand.

Sit in a moment of silence, unplugged from your distractions.



Notice God’s Word

We’re going to engage scripture in a pattern that involves four steps: Read, meditate, pray, and contemplate. The first step is to read the passage:

Read **Psalm 46**. As you read, take note of any words or phrases that stick out to you.

Things I’m Noticing



Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains
tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
"Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth."
The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Meditate on the word or phrase you noticed most. Focus in on it for a few moments. Make a list or draw some images of other things that are similar to this word or phrase. Why do you think this grabbed your attention?

Pray to God. Invite God to speak to you about your own life in light of this passage. Ask God to create a deeper connection with you day by day.

Contemplate on the characteristics of God that are highlighted in Psalm 46. Make a list of all the things we learn about who God is and what God is like based on this passage. Thank God for these truths.

Plan another time this week to set aside a Sabbath moment, maybe even every day. Try this pattern again: *read, meditate, pray, and contemplate* with another passage of the Bible.



Notice God

During the moments this week that you have intentionally "unplugged," have you noticed any difference in your life or your time with God? Has God showed you something that you wouldn't have noticed before?

If you haven't really had a chance to "unplug," how do you feel about that?



Part of noticing God is to look for ways in which God is at work in the world around us. This can be hard to do when we are overwhelmed with life's distractions.

That's why we create Sabbath moments. What is something you could temporarily "unplug" from to create space to notice God? This doesn't need to be something that literally plugs in (like a computer or phone, although those are definitely included). This could be any of life's distractions.

Could you choose to intentionally "unplug" from something – for an hour a week, ten minutes a day, one day a week or even for the rest of this series?

Take a moment to think this over and write something you want to unplug from, and how often or how long you want to unplug from it.

Remember that removing something from your typical routine is your choice. It is not a punishment or something you "should" do. **It is an opportunity.** The things you unplug from are not bad things; you are just taking a purposeful break. Make sure to use the unplugged moments to notice where God is at work. If you choose to not unplug right now, that is an okay choice.





Notice this week

If you do choose to unplug from something, take notes (mental or written) of what the experience is like for you. Is it hard to let go of what you unplug from? Do you find yourself thinking about it instead of being focused on noticing God? If so, don't worry—that's a common experience.

Here are some ideas of things to do while you are unplugged:

- Go for a walk or run and thank God for the different things you see that you are genuinely grateful for.
- Choose a word or phrase to focus on each time you're reminded of the thing or experience you are unplugging from. For instance, when you think about it, you might silently say, "God, I want to notice you," or "Jesus, be near." This can be a helpful way to redirect your thoughts and frustrations toward God.

Things I'm Noticing

Sticky Faith Every Day

Week 3: RECEIVE

Daily Guide



RECEIVE

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide



Notice the moment

It can be hard to receive a gift when something's in the way.

Imagine an obstacle course with a prize at the end. The obstacles in the way make it more difficult to get to the goal. But once we get through the obstacles, the prize becomes easier to receive.

The same can be true of our walk with Christ. God freely offers us great love and grace, yet it can be difficult for us to receive these from God because of the obstacles sin props up in the way.

Perhaps in the first few weeks of this journey of noticing God every day you have become more aware of some of these obstacles. This week you will have the opportunity to invite the Holy Spirit to remove these obstacles in your life so you can receive the gift of God's love.



Notice God's Word

In our attempt to wrestle with obstacles that make it difficult for us to receive grace, we will journey through Psalm 51. It's important to keep in mind that Psalm 51 was written by David, the second king of Israel, after the prophet Nathan had confronted David about his adultery with Bathsheba (for the background story, read 2 Samuel 11-12). Recognizing his sin, David is desperate to receive forgiveness and cleansing from God.

Each day you'll be invited to read Psalm 51 through a different lens. Have a pen ready to write down fresh insights from scripture with each new reading.

Things I'm Noticing



Every day before you work through the passage, pray the following prayer:

“God, help me to receive today what you want to say to me.”

Say it a few times before you begin, then read Psalm 51:1-17.



Psalm 51:1-17

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
- 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.
- 5 Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
- 6 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.
- 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- 8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
- 9 Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
- 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
- 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.
- 14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
- 15 Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- 16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
- 17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.

Things I'm Noticing

Day One: Read the passage and write about the emotions that you notice the author expressing.

Day Two: Read the passage and underline where David appears to be acknowledging his sin and failure.

Day Three: Read the passage and **circle** the words where the author is seeking God's love, mercy, or forgiveness.

Day Four: Just read verses 1-5.

Day Five: Just read verses 6-14.

Day Six: Just read verses 15-17.

Day Seven: Read the passage from start to finish out loud one time.



Notice God

Day One: Do you relate to any of these same emotions? How do they affect your ability to receive God's good gifts?

Day Two: Ask God to reveal areas of sin that block or hinder your ability to receive or hear God speak. Journal or pray about those.

Day Three: In what areas of your life do you need to receive God's mercy and love? Write those down and pray over them.

Day Four: What does David acknowledge about his life? What do you relate to most about just these 5 verses?

Day Five: What does David acknowledge about his life? What do you relate to most about just these 9 verses, especially as it relates to receiving from God?

Day Six: What does David acknowledge about his life? What do you relate to most about just these 3 verses, especially as it relates to receiving from God?

Day Seven: As you think back through your journey of Psalm 51 this week, how has God spoken to you? What new insights do you have about yourself or about God? What new questions do you have?

Every day, we invite you to close your time by praying this verse:

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10)



Notice this week

Part of this week’s journey is to think about repentance. *Repent* means to look at the direction of your life and decide to turn and go in a different direction.

As you walk through this week, there may be areas where you recognize the direction you are going is destructive and you need to go in a different direction. This may happen as you read, as you sit at school or work, listen to the radio, or hear people around you speak.

So while you work through the obstacles that may keep you from receiving God’s mercy, make note of repentance moments and ask God to pour grace and love over you as you continue on this *every day journey* of faith.



Lamentations 3:22-23

Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

Sticky Faith Every Day

Week 4: YIELD

Daily Guide



YIELD

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide



Notice the moment

Find a place where you can be free of distractions for a little while.

This week we are engaging God through the idea of “yielding.” To *yield* something is to give it up for some other reason or purpose. You probably see yield signs on the road, where cars from one direction must yield—or give way—to the cars coming from a different direction.



Among other things we may yield to God and God’s purposes, this week we want to think together about what it means to yield our *relationships* to God.



Notice God’s Word

Read **Colossians 3:1-14**, and keep this “yield” idea in your mind as you do.

Things I’m Noticing



Colossians 3:1-14

Living as Those Made Alive in Christ

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6** Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **7** You used to walk

in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Think back on the words, phrases, ideas, or images that strike you from this passage. You might want to underline, circle, or jot some of those down.

Ask God to help you focus even more deeply, and to help you notice what God might reveal through this text. After you do this for a moment, read through Colossians 3:1-14 again.



Notice God

What do you read about in this passage that offers a new picture (or pictures) of what it means to yield to Christ?

How would you rephrase Colossians 3:7-10 in your own words?

How would you try explaining Colossians 3:12-14 to a 6-year-old?

Much of Colossians 3:1-14 describes what our relationships with others look like as we yield our lives to Jesus.

When it comes to your relationships with others, what do you gain when they are more like Colossians 3:12-14 than Colossians 3:7-10?

Odds are good that as you've been reading these words in scripture, you've thought of specific relationships that would be different—and better—if your life and your relationships were more yielded to God. What are those relationships, and what would you like to see be different in them? Write some of those names and thoughts down here:

What steps might you take over the next week to try to have these relationships be more fully flavored with the attributes Paul describes in Colossians 3?

When we yield ourselves, and everything that means, to God, we gain a huge opportunity to trust God. In other words, we have the chance to grow in our faith. Yielding to God makes a statement:

“God, part of me would rather do _____ with my relationships, but I’m grateful to you, and I want to honor you and learn to trust you. So, here I am offering my relationships to you.” Maybe you’d even like to pray a prayer like that as you close this time.



Notice this week

As you think about your relationships this week—with your friends, boyfriend or girlfriend, your family, and others—and the ways you might yield them more fully to God, you may realize you need to have some conversations.

Perhaps it's a conversation with someone about your relationship with them and the ways you'd like it to be different. Maybe it's a conversation with a trusted friend or adult about how you need to be held accountable for new commitments you'd like to make in your relationships. Throughout the week consider those conversations that need to be had, and look for opportunities to make them happen.

Things I'm Noticing

Sticky Faith Every Day

Week 5: SIMPLIFY

Daily Guide



SIMPLIFY

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide



It's a word we don't often use, especially to talk about our own lives.

The older we get, the busier and more complicated our lives often become. School, work, family, friends, sports, fashion, the future, and everything else under the sun compete for our attention. And, to keep up with all of that, we need computers, smart phones, credit cards, club teams, social media sites, and lots of caffeine.

How complicated has your life become? How much stuff do you need to get everything done? Notice how you're rarely ever satisfied with the amount of stuff that you have.

Chances are you don't need everything you want or even everything that you already have. It may be that one of the best ways to notice God in your life and in the world is to *simplify*.

Through Jesus' life we're invited to live another way. A way that isn't complicated by the fear and worries of this world, but is guided by this simple truth:

We can put our trust in God, who knows our needs and provides for us.

The invitation this week is to simplify your life by letting go of some of your stuff. Now, this doesn't mean that we have to live in the dark ages before Facebook and Starbucks. It does mean, however, that you can probably afford to let go of some stuff in your life—what you're spending your money on, how you're spending your time, and maybe most importantly, what you're worrying about during the day.

Simplifying helps us to put our trust in God and to realize that we are not at the mercy of the pressures, worries, and materialism that swirls around us. By simplifying, we are

Things I'm Noticing



able to recognize what is important—not just for a season but for a lifetime. And we are given space to see God and to see people in our world we can give to and bless.



Notice the moment

Where do you have the most stuff?

It might be your closet where your clothes or shoes are. It might be your Facebook page. It might be the place where you keep your phone, watch, jewelry, hats, or collections. It might be your calendar. It might be your credit card bill. It might be your computer or your video game collection.

Maybe it's where you have the most actual stuff, or maybe it's where you *care about the stuff* the most. You might even say that it has a sort of control over you.

Go there right now and take a look around. What do you notice? Think about where, when, and why you got all the things you have now. What are some things that aren't there that you wish were there?

Now spend a few moments silent before God.

Take a look at your stuff again. Ask yourself some different questions. Do you really need all of this stuff? What could you afford to subtract? If you made a list of what was really important to you, would all of this stuff make the list?

During this series, you've been invited to subtract something from your life (Week 1) and also to unplug from something (Week 2) in order to notice God more. The invitation this week is to simplify your life by letting go of some stuff AND letting go of the worry and dissatisfaction that come when we are chasing after stuff. It's an invitation that extends beyond these 8 weeks. Instead of only practicing this discipline for a season, what if you could simplify for a lifetime and notice God more every day?



Notice God's Word

Below is a passage from the Bible that shares the words of Jesus. Read through the passage slowly three times, pausing to be silent between each reading.

What do you notice about Jesus' words? Take note of specific words or phrases that stick out to you. You may want to write the words, thoughts, and feelings that come to mind as you read the scripture.

Things I'm Noticing



Matthew 6:25-34

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.



Notice God

After reading the passage, sit quietly for a moment, holding all the words, feelings, and thoughts before God. Reflect on this question:



Do I believe these words of Jesus to be true?

Then spend some time in prayer with God. For a long time, people have used a simple prayer to turn their hearts to God called the “Serenity Prayer”:

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
courage to change the
things I can, and the
wisdom to know the difference.

You may want to use this to start your prayer time with God. Think back to the Matthew 6:25-34 passage and lift up to God the areas of your life where you feel stressed and worried. Consider the ways you can simplify and let go of some stuff in order to trust God more and experience greater freedom.

Don’t worry about making your prayers fancy or long. God hears simple prayers.



Notice this week

This week, spend some time each day with this passage of scripture and this guided prayer. Again, don’t worry about being formal or fancy.

Think through how you’re spending your money and your time this week. What is one thing that you can let go of this week in order to simplify? Maybe it’s unplugging from social media and entertainment for a day. Or deciding that you don’t need to buy that hoodie you’ve been eyeing for a while. Or even ordering a burger and not getting the fries.

Finally, as you go through your day, make a physical (or mental) list of all the ways that God is providing for you. End your day thanking God for God’s care and concern for you.

Things I’m Noticing

Sticky Faith Every Day

Week 6: LAMENT

Daily Guide



LAMENT

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide

Life isn't always butterflies and rainbows. In fact, life is often very painful. Doubt, fear, anger, disappointment and grief are all emotions that play a significant role in our humanity.

Sometimes it's tempting to withhold those feelings from God. But the Bible is filled with stories, poems and songs written by and about people who were sometimes very disappointed, and who brought those disappointments to God.

In lament we pour out our emotions to God—pain, doubt, disappointment, grief—and then remind ourselves of God's continued presence. Lament doesn't always finish with a happy ending. Sometimes heartache comes and stays for a long time, but lament always ends with a reassurance of God's presence.



Notice the moment

Take a couple of deep breaths and let yourself wind down a little bit. Consider lighting a candle near you; some people have found this helpful as they spend time with God. The constant light of the candle is a tangible reminder of God's presence; even as our minds sometimes wander, God is fully present with us.



Notice God's Word

Once you've begun to wind down your mind, open your Bible to **Psalm 77**. Slowly read through the whole psalm.

Now read through it again, paying attention to the emotions that the psalm brings up in you. How do each of the verses make you feel?

Things I'm Noticing





Psalm 77

- 1 I cried out to God for help;
I cried out to God to hear me.
- 2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands,
and I would not be comforted.
- 3 I remembered you, God, and I groaned;
I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.
- 4 You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.
- 5 I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;
- 6 I remembered my songs in the night.
My heart meditated and my spirit asked:
- 7 “Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?
- 8 Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
- 9 Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?”
- 10 Then I thought, “To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched out his
right hand.
- 11 I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
- 12 I will consider all your works
and meditate on all your mighty deeds.”
- 13 Your ways, God, are holy.
What god is as great as our God?
- 14 You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the peoples.
- 15 With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.
- 16 The waters saw you, God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.
- 17 The clouds poured down water,
the heavens resounded with thunder;
your arrows flashed back and forth.
- 18 Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightning lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.
- 19 Your path led through the sea,
your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.
- 20 You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Things I'm Noticing



Notice God

The writer of Psalm 77 has essentially created two lists. The first nine verses line up disappointments and grievances against God and don't seem to hold anything back! Then in verses 10-20 the list switches to the character and actions of God.

Now take as long as you need to create your own two lists. First, write down your "dirty laundry" list of doubts, hurts, fears and disappointments. Take courage from the author of Psalm 77 and don't hold anything back.

Pause for a few minutes with that list.

Then write another list of what you know to be true about God. Think through the character and attributes you know to be true about God from the Bible, but also think through your personal life. Where has God been present and faithful to you personally?

Close by praying that God will hold all of the things on your first list, and that God will be especially present to you as you lean into trusting the second list to be true.



Notice this week

Like other disciplines we've tried in this series, lament takes practice.

We're often very comfortable turning to a friend or close family member with our anger or heartache, but a little timid when it comes to expressing everything we feel to God. **Psalm 62:8** is a great reminder that God is interested in everything we're feeling, not just the good stuff:

"Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts before him; God is a refuge for us."

Let that phrase be a reminder to you this week. You might even want to take a few moments to memorize it or write it on a notecard and place it somewhere you'll notice it throughout the week.

Things I'm Noticing

Sticky Faith Every Day

Week 7: LOSE

Daily Guide



LOSE

Sticky Faith Every Day Daily Guide



Notice the moment

Our bodies require constant cycles of filling and emptying, living and dying, gaining and losing—we just aren't always aware of them.

We're usually aware of the digestion process, but we don't often pay attention to many of the other daily cycles. Every day we lose and re-grow hair. We constantly shed and build new skin cells, blood cells, and most other kinds of cells. Our body is constantly gaining and losing. We just don't notice.

Today you'll notice your breathing, connecting it to the idea of gaining and losing.

Think of it like this: you need to fill your lungs with oxygen several times each minute, but you can't fill them if they are still full with your last breath. In order to gain your next breath (and stay alive) you need to lose your last breath. This is often how life is, and as we think this week about how Jesus lost and regained his life, we can experience it better if we notice the constant cycle of breathing.

Did you know that most of us don't breathe properly?

Optimal breathing is done with the diaphragm (so that your abdomen moves out as you inhale and in as you exhale) at a rate of about 6-8 breaths per minute. Most of us breathe shallowly and rapidly through our chest and shoulders, which doesn't provide the best amount of oxygen to our brain and body.

Try this breathing exercise and as you do it, think of Christ's death as a cosmic, divine exhale of loss and think of his resurrection as a cosmic, divine inhale of new life.

Things I'm Noticing



1. Find a quiet place to sit up straight with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Notice your breathing. What does it feel like to take air into your lungs? What does it feel like to exhale?
3. Now focus on breathing with your diaphragm (place your hand on your stomach—it should be moving in and out).
4. Finally, begin to notice the pace of your breathing. It should take about 5-7 seconds to inhale and about the same to exhale.
5. Do this for a couple of minutes. (Remember, this should feel comfortable, so if it's not, just relax and breathe at your normal pace again for a few moments.)

What was it like to breathe this way? How does noticing your breathing help you focus on the weight of Christ's death and resurrection?



Notice God's Word

Through the centuries, Christians have combined breathing patterns with reading scripture or praying. Often this is done with the psalms.

Today you can try it out with a paraphrased passage from **Job 1:21**. Job was a character in scripture who lost everything and felt as if he was about to lose his life.

As you read the italicized lines, inhale slowly; as you read the bold lines, exhale slowly. You can repeat this practice several times.

Naked I came into this world

Naked I will depart

God has given

God has taken away

Blessed be God's name

Blessed be God's name



Notice God

Each breath that you've taken today—and every other breath you have ever taken—is a gift from God.

In Genesis 2:7, the creation of the first human is described like this: “Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” One of God's first acts of love towards us is to give us life through breathing. Breath is our first experience of God's grace—it is not something we earn or deserve from God, it is something God gives to us out of goodness and love.

Someday you'll take your last breath, and you don't know when that day will be. This week, become more aware of your breathing as a cycle of life and death, gaining and losing, every day.



Notice this week

- There is a lot of science and research behind breathing rates. If you're interested in finding out more about optimal breathing rates, talk to your doctor or do some studying. There are several apps for computers or smartphones that will help you become aware of your breathing pace. (Note: talk to your doctor or your parents before taking medical advice from apps, websites or others.)
- Try pacing your breathing with some other scripture passages like Psalm 46:10, Psalm 131, or Romans 8:38-39.
- One of the most common “breath prayers” is called the “Jesus prayer”:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.
Or sometimes it's shortened to just,
“Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.”

Try saying this prayer as you breathe in and out, or while walking, running, or driving this week.

Things I'm Noticing

Sticky Faith Every Day

Week 8: Made New

Daily Guide





Notice the moment

Before and After: Take out your journal or a piece of paper. Draw a line down the center of the page and write “before” on the left side of the line and “after” on the right side of the line.

Spend 5-10 minutes prayerfully reflecting on your life before this series. Write down everything that comes to mind – the good, bad, and ugly. Use these questions to help you focus:

- What spiritual practices and rhythms were present in your life?
- What emotions dominated most of your days?
- Where did you spend your discretionary or spare time?
- What did you spend your money on?
- How would you describe your language and conversation?
- How much did you notice God’s activity in your life and around you?

Now, spend another 5-10 minutes reflecting on your life at the end of this series. Use the same questions above (and any others!).

Finally, reflect on both columns. What differences and similarities exist between the two columns? How would you summarize your life *before* and *after* this “Every Day” series into a few words or an image? Celebrate even little changes you see God working in your life.



Notice God’s Word

The truth is that God is at work in your life and all around you at all times, *every day!*

Things I’m Noticing



Our hope and prayer for you through this series has been that you would notice God's miraculous and powerful work in your life more and more. And we are confident that God has changed you in the last 8 weeks.

Another mind-boggling truth is that God is continually transforming your life, a transformation that will only be complete when Christ makes all things new. This theological truth is called "**already and not yet.**"

You are *already* made new like Christ Jesus, but you are *not yet* what you will someday be when you meet Jesus face to face. Just as the Holy Spirit has already made you new, you are also not yet all you will be in eternity.

As we live in this tension of already being made new and not yet fully renewed, we enter into this next season reminded of God's great love. Open up God's Word and turn to **1 John 3**. Here are some questions to guide your reflection as you read this passage:

- Where do you see this idea of "already and not yet" in 1 John 3?
- What might God be saying to you as you wrap up this series and in continue into the next chapter of your discipleship journey?
- How can you continue remembering that you are loved by God? How might you bring your thoughts and choices in alignment with that love?
- What sin may God be illuminating as you read this chapter? How can you turn from that and toward God's grace?
- How is God prompting you to act in love and not just talk about it?



Notice God

If you have a copy (or can easily find it online), listen to the song "Beautiful Things" by Gungor (from the



“Beautiful Things” album) which you can find on YouTube or any music download service. Let this lead into a prayer of commitment of your whole life to God, who is continually making us new.

You may want to write a prayer to God naming your commitments. You may want to open your hands in submission, or kneel. Do whatever will help you receive God’s love and express your desire to be made new.



Notice this week

Here are a few ideas that may help you continue noticing what God’s doing to make you and this world new every day:

- Memorize Romans 12:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 5:17 as a reminder of being made new.
- Study the book of Romans this year. This letter Paul wrote to the Romans is all about how Jesus came to make all things new again.
- Search these words in the Bible: reconcile/reconciliation, restore/restoration. Study what these words mean in the context of scripture.
- Study the people whose lives God reconciled and restored in scripture. Not sure where to begin? In the Old Testament, check out Abraham (Genesis 12-25), Joseph (Genesis 37-50), Moses (Exodus—Deuteronomy), David (1 Samuel 16—1 Kings 2), Jeremiah (Jeremiah, Lamentations), and Nehemiah (Nehemiah). In the New Testament search out Mary Magdalene (Mark 15-16, John 19-20), Saul who became Paul (Acts 9-28), Zacchaeus (Luke 19), sisters Mary and Martha (Luke 10, John 11, 12) and Timothy (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy; also Acts 16-20).
- Make a playlist of songs that remind you of your new life in Christ and how he’s continuing to transform your life.
- Read one psalm each day and let it be a starter prayer for you. Don’t skip over the laments! Praying through the psalms is a centuries-old “every day” practice.