

I. Prayer to enter the Lord's presence:

Be still for a moment. "Lord, I give the day that is now past to you. It is yours. I give the day that is to come to you; help me to see where you are working and to join you there. Speak to me during these moments. I commit them and myself to you."

II. Prayer of Confession:

"Lord, you are faithful to forgive me and cleanse me of my sin when I confess it to you. I confess my sin(s) of _____ . Thank you for forgiveness." (1 John 1:9)

III. Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Choose to be thankful, speak out loud of what God has done.

"Thank you, Father, for _____ . Fill my heart and my mouth with gratitude throughout this day."

IV. Scripture Reflection

Read: Day 1:

1 Samuel 8:1 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. ² The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. ³ But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

1 Samuel 8:4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

1 Samuel 8:6 But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. ⁷ And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do."

1 Samuel 8:10 Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹ He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. ¹² Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. ¹⁶ Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day."

1 Samuel 8:19 But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. ²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

1 Samuel 8:21 When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. ²² The LORD answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”
Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Everyone go back to his town.”

1 Samuel 10:17 Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah ¹⁸ and said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.’ ¹⁹ But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. And you have said, ‘No, set a king over us.’ So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans.”

Reflect:

Israel wanted a King because they failed to realize what they had. They had an opportunity to be guided as a nation by the God who raises up and deposes human kings for his own purposes. God had promised to be their God and to dwell in their midst if they would simply be his people. They looked around them and were jealous of other nations rather than being the light to the nations that God had intended them to be. They rejected the God who had saved them and who would continue to lead them and demanded a human king instead.

Respond:

If you are a Christ follower then you have relationship with the God who has made everything. You have direct access to the very Being who made you and who alone can give your life meaning and lasting purpose. Do you look around at what others have and envy them? Be a light to them...don't envy them. Certainly don't emulate them...don't try to be like them or wish you had what they have. You have what everyone wants, but not everyone understands this is true. You must understand this is true.

Read: Day 2

Exodus 32:1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

Exodus 32:2 Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” ³ So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

Exodus 32:5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD.” ⁶ So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

Exodus 32:7 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. ⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’

Reflect:

Aaron did not propose that this calf idol had literally taken them out of Egypt. They believed what they had learned in Egypt, that there are many gods and that there must be a physical conduit between men and the gods. Now that Moses was presumably dead, they decided to forge their own conduit to the gods.

Respond

Instead of pondering how foolish Israel was, repent of your own folly in regard to idols. What thing or pleasure or person has become in your life a conduit to what you really want? Repent of your idolatry. Repentance is first a change of thinking that is followed by a change of lifestyle. What needs to change in your thinking? How will that show up in your choices today?

Read: Day 3

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Reflect

This is the "Shema" prayer. Shema means "hear." It is prayed twice daily by devout Jews. When they say "Hear, O Israel" they are telling themselves the truth. The truth is there is only one God. This is not a statement denying the Trinity, the one true God is a Triune God. This is a declaration of the absolute uniqueness of God. There is none other than him therefore he alone must have all our worship, all of our lives.

Respond

What can you do to proactively embed this truth in your heart? Are you learning and thinking about Scripture that reminds you of God's uniqueness? Do you have regular conversations with friends where you talk about God and not just current events? Be intentional today to remember. Tell yourself right now to "hear" the truth of God's uniqueness.

Read: Day 4

Isaiah 44:1 “But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen. ² This is what the LORD says — he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. ³ For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. ⁴ They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. ⁵ One will say, ‘I belong to the LORD’; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, ‘The LORD’s,’ and will take the name Israel. ⁶ “This is what the LORD says — Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. ⁷ Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come — yes, let him foretell what will come. ⁸ Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.” ⁹ All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame. ¹⁰ Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit him nothing? ¹¹ He and his kind will be put to shame; craftsmen are nothing but men. Let them all come together and take their stand; they will be brought down to terror and infamy. ¹² The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals; he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm. He gets hungry and loses his strength; he drinks no water and grows faint. ¹³ The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in the form of man, of man in all his glory, that it may dwell in a shrine. ¹⁴ He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow. ¹⁵ It is man’s fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. ¹⁶ Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, “Ah! I am warm; I see the fire.” ¹⁷ From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, “Save me; you are my god.” ¹⁸ They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. ¹⁹ No one stops to think, no one has the knowledge or understanding to say, “Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?” ²⁰ He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, “Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?” ²¹ “Remember these things, O Jacob, for you are my servant, O Israel. I have made you, you are my servant; O Israel, I will not forget you. ²² I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.” ²³ Sing for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done this; shout aloud, O earth beneath. Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees, for the LORD has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel. ²⁴ “This is what the LORD says — your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, ²⁵ who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, ²⁶ who carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited,’ of the towns of Judah, ‘They shall be built,’ and of their ruins, ‘I will restore them,’ ²⁷ who says to the watery deep, ‘Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,’ ²⁸ who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.””

Reflect

This is an example of what is called "irony." It is a genre of literature that was common with the prophets. They said things that are "ironic"(think comic). This is supposed to make you laugh when you read it, it is

supposed to be funny as in "wow, that's dumb!" Then you are supposed to see yourself in the irony. Read verse 28 again. You will see even more irony. Not only can these man-made gods do nothing, the one true God can do anything. He is going to take Israel from exile in Babylon and bring them back to the land. He will use a pagan king of Persia, Cyrus, to do this. Cyrus will defeat Babylon and allow Israel to return to their land. Isaiah wrote this hundreds of years before it happened. Now compare a man-made god to the God who uses kings as his tools for his purposes.

Respond

Worship the God who holds kings and kingdoms in his hand. Reflect on the fact that all that has happened all that will happen is determined by him. Now think of how silly it is to put your trust in "gods" of your own making.

Read: Day 5

Psalm 51:1 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 that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. ⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. ⁶ Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost 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, and sinners will turn back to you. ¹⁴ Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, 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 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. ¹⁸ In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem. ¹⁹ Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Reflect

David was Israel's greatest king. Of the forty or so kings (and one Queen) in the divided Kingdoms all were compared to David as the standard. Only eight Kings in the Southern Kingdom (Judah) compared favorably at all. Now, remember that this Psalm of David was written after he had sinned horribly...he had committed adultery and murder. How is it then that he could be the "gold-standard" for kings? First, he truly and fully repented of his sin. He did not excuse it or blame it on anyone else. Second, ultimately King David pointed forward to King Jesus. King Jesus would become the perfect King. He was the promised Messiah from the line of King David would save his people.

Respond

The fact that David was a "man after God's own heart" even though he sinned horribly is a tremendous encouragement. If your sins are evident to you right now. If you have guilt and regret that is ever before your mind's eye...remember that God will not despise(turn away from) a broken and repentant heart. You can yet be a man or woman after God's own heart. Rejoice in the opportunity of repentance.

V. Prayer for others:

Pray specifically for the concerns of your life and the lives of others.

VI. Prayer of commitment:

“Lord God, I commit to love you with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength and with all my mind and to love my neighbor as myself. Empower me today to love you and others with everything that I am.” (Luke 10:27)

This Month's Scripture Memory:

Psalm 23:1-6

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.