

Israel's time in the wilderness is of great importance to Christians because of the way Christ fulfilled so many of the themes and promises throughout the narrative. God's chosen people, the Israelites have been set free from their slavery but are now in the wilderness and in the process of learning what it means to be God's people before His plans come to completion. Does that sound a little familiar? For us, it's often representative of the fact that we were all born as slaves to sin but because of Jesus' great love and sacrifice we are free. We, too, are in our own wilderness as we have access to freedom but await the completion of God's promises and plans.

New to daily devotionals? Here are a few tips for this week:

- Before you begin your devotional time, spend some time in prayer. So much of following God is making yourself available to God, to receive what He might have for you.
- Consider adding a time of reflection into your routine, especially at the end of your day. Think back through your interactions and moments and ask, "What brought glory to God?", "When did I feel separate from or indifferent about God?", "When did I give my best to God?"

Monday, April 1st

Read Matthew 6:31-33

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.

What keeps you from seeking God first? When do you find yourself worrying instead of going to God and bringing Him your best? What things tend to pull your attention away from God?

What do you notice about yourself or your life when God isn't the priority? When you have brought God your first and best, how has that benefit you?

What might you need to start doing, continue or stop doing in order for God to be the priority in your life? How might you safeguard your faith so that you can bring God your best?

Tuesday, April 2nd

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

What do you notice about how the runner trains? What kind of sacrifices would a runner have to make in other areas of their life? What would make this kind of intentionality worth it?

What do you work hard at in life? What would it look like for you to run in such a way as to get the prize (that is, right relationship with God)? What kind of training/resources might need to be in place? Where do you find yourself running aimlessly instead of with your best efforts on an intended path? Is there something you might need to change?

Wednesday, April 3rd

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31-33

³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. ³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— ³³ even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

What do you think it means that whatever we do, it would be for the glory of God? Why would not doing that cause others to stumble? Why would doing things for the glory of God be for the good of many?

Part of giving our best to God is reorienting all parts of our life towards God. It means we would ask the question, "Does this thing I'm doing give glory to God?" If you asked that question of your life, would it stay the same? What things would you continue? What things would you stop? Are there people in your life who might keep you accountable?

Thursday, April 4th

Read Romans 12:1-2

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. ² 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.

What is God's mercy? Why would we offer a sacrifice in response to God's mercy? Why would it be considered true and proper worship? Why do you think this passage mentions both the body and the mind in the context of sacrifice and worship? Why would offering the mind and body to God allow us to discern God's will?

This passage speaks holistically—mind and body. How have you offered your whole self to God as a sacrifice? Are there things God has been bringing to your mind that might need to change? How might you need to reorient yourself towards true and proper worship of God?

Friday, April 5th

Spend time praying Psalm 145. Pay attention to the ways the psalm calls every part of us to glorify God. Pray it slowly or reread it several times.

I will exalt you, my God the King;

I will praise your name for ever and ever.

² *Every day I will praise you*

and extol your name for ever and ever.

³ *Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.*

⁴ *One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.*

⁵ *They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works*

⁶ *They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds.⁷ They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.*

⁸ *The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.*

⁹ *The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.*

¹⁰ *All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you.*

¹¹ *They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,*

¹² *so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.*

¹³ *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.*

¹⁴ *The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.*

¹⁵ *The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.*

¹⁶ *You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.*

¹⁷ *The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.¹⁸ The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

¹⁹ *He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.*

²⁰ *The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.*

²¹ *My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.*

Unsettled

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