

Week Twenty-Three:

Practicing the Presence of God

“The LORD directs the steps of the godly.
He delights in every detail of their lives.
Though they stumble, they will never fall,
For the LORD holds them by the hand.”
- Psalm 37:23-24 (NLT)

Day One: In My Father's Lap

God is deeply involved in your daily life and His desire is that you would recognize His activity and come to know Him more intimately. We develop relationships by talking and spending time together. You will come to know God better in the same way.



Each morning, take time to focus your thoughts on God. Talk to Him throughout the entire course of your day. Learn to include Him in everything.

Tell Him what kind of day you had yesterday or today. What's been going on in your mind and heart?



What kinds of negative thoughts or messages have you been experiencing lately?

In light of what is happening and how you are feeling, what specific request would you now ask of Him? In what way would you ask Him to move?

Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... *Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement.* Today we begin the final unit of our



study together. This unit will be filled with hope, with possibilities, and with new life-giving habits. Before we launch into all of that, I feel that God wants us to remember our starting point. Today, as you read these Scriptures, I want you to think back on your life's journey with God. No matter how recently you accepted Christ as your savior, your journey with God began before you took your first breath. Think back over your entire life, with no condemnation (that would be the enemy), no judgment (that would be your mind telling you how it should have been), and with no regret (that would be your heart grieving its losses). Let's honor all those voices by listening to them, but then let's revisit your journey through the Holy Spirit's eyes. We have traveled long and far in our study together. I pray that by now, you know that you are completely safe in the mercy, love, and steadfast care of your God. To make ample room for the Spirit to guide your thoughts in this time, take the time to record the negative messages you are experiencing as you read these Scriptures and reflect on your journey. If your mind is making excuses about certain events in your life, record the messages. If your heart is still grieving certain areas of your journey, then record those, too. Don't feel bad about any of your inner reflections. These are just markers to remind you that you might have unfinished construction areas where your God is still at work. As you are able, go back and listen with the help of the Spirit. Today's exercise is

designed to help you with this concept. **Open your Bible and read Isaiah 63:7-14 slowly.** Stop anywhere you find yourself struck by something you've read.

Now read it in this translation (NLT) and insert your name into the blanks. Spend time with it; listen to what is going on inside of you. ***In the lines just under each statement, write your thoughts and feelings as you absorb this truth for yourself.***

Isaiah 63:7-14

(Vs. 7) "I will tell of the Lord's unfailing love. I will praise the Lord for all He has done. I will rejoice in His great goodness to _____, which He has granted according to His mercy and love. (8) He said, '_____ is My very own (daughter). Surely (she) will not betray Me again.' And He became (her) Savior. (9) In all _____'s suffering He also suffered, and He personally rescued _____. In His love and mercy, He redeemed (her). He lifted _____ up and carried (her) through all the years."

Which part of this passage most captures your heart? _____

Read back through these verses and listen with the Holy Spirit's help. Imagine your Father God holding you on His lap and reading this to you. What are your feelings? _____

(Vs. 10) "But (she) rebelled against Him and grieved His Holy Spirit. So He became (her) enemy and fought against (her). (11) Then (she) remembered those days of old when Moses led his people out of Egypt. (She) cried out, 'Where is the One who brought Israel through the sea, with Moses as their shepherd? Where is the One who sent His Holy Spirit to be among His people? (12) Where is the One whose power was displayed when Moses lifted up his hand—the One who divided the sea before them, making Himself famous forever? (13) Where is the One who led them through the bottom of the sea? They were like fine stallions racing through the desert, never stumbling. (14) As with cattle going down into a peaceful valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. You led your people, Lord, and gained a magnificent reputation.'"

Have you ever had a season of rebelling against God and grieving His Holy Spirit? _____

As you look back over your life's journey, do you see any times when God may have been actively working against you, in an attempt to re-direct you back onto His own life-giving path for you? _____

Read back through these verses and listen with the Holy Spirit's help. Imagine your Father God holding you on His lap and reading this to you. What are your feelings? _____

Have you become like the fine stallions or the cattle that willingly follow their creator (verses 13-14)? Have you experienced the Holy Spirit bringing you into a place of internal rest and rejuvenation? _____

Isaiah 64:3-5a, 8 (NLT):

"When You came down long ago, You did awesome things beyond our highest expectations. And oh, how the mountains quaked! (4) For since the world began, no ear has heard, and no eye has seen a God like You, **who works for those who wait for Him!** (5) You welcome those who gladly do good, who follow godly ways. (8) And yet, O Lord, You are (my) Father. (I am) the clay, and You are the potter. (I am) formed by Your hand."

Which part of this passage most captures your heart? _____

Have you experienced your God doing awesome things in YOUR LIFE that has exceeded your highest expectations? If so, record it here. _____

Read back through these verses and listen with the Holy Spirit's help. Imagine your Father God holding you on His lap and reading this to you. What are your feelings? _____

(We will not study verses 5b-7 because we are no longer under God's wrath; the penalty for our sins has been fully satisfied through Jesus' death on the cross. Sin can no longer keep us separated from a personal relationship with God. It is only our intentional sins that draw us away from that sweetness of fellowship with Him. Our unfinished areas, areas where we have not yet been fully restored and are still affected by our past, often prevent the flow of joy, peace, and abundance of life to all the areas in our heart, mind, and soul, but they do not inhibit our fellowship with God.

Isaiah 66:1-2 (NLT): "This is what the Lord says: 'Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Could you ever build Me a temple as good as that? Could you build a dwelling place for Me? (2) My hands have made both heaven and earth, and they are Mine. **I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at My word.**'"

Which part of this passage most captures your heart? _____

How do you feel when you consider the fact that God has created your own heart to be a temple in which He is pleased to dwell? His hands have made the heavens, the earth, and your heart. In fact, He is still rebuilding your heart. _____

Read back through these verses and listen with the Holy Spirit's help. Imagine your Father God holding you on His lap and reading this to you. What are your feelings? _____

With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.



God's special gift to me: _____



Take-Away: My God does awesome things beyond my highest expectations. Even though He is the creator of heaven and earth, my heart is His desired dwelling place!

Day Two: At the Teacher's Feet

God is deeply involved in your daily life and His desire is that you would recognize His activity and come to know Him more intimately. We develop relationships by talking and spending time together. You will come to know God better in the same way.



Each morning, take time to focus your thoughts on God. Talk to Him throughout the entire course of your day. Learn to include Him in everything.

Tell Him what kind of day you had yesterday or today. What's been going on in your mind and heart?



What kinds of negative thoughts or messages have you been experiencing lately?

In light of what is happening and how you are feeling, what specific request would you now ask of Him? In what way would you ask Him to move?



Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... ***Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement.*** As you read today's text, be prepared to hear from God by...

- **Looking for your Father's good and beautiful heart.**
- **Listening by seeking to identify with the experience.**
- **Understanding through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**
- **Putting it into Practice by following the Spirit's leadership in applying it to your life.**



The Big Picture we have been studying is that God had created a people for Himself and had rescued them out of their captivity in Egypt. As we studied in Genesis 12, God called Abraham to leave his country and his family, and journey to the land God would show him. Once there, God confirmed to Abraham that God would make a great nation from Abraham's descendants, even though they would be oppressed as slaves in a foreign land for 400 years. God also promised Abraham that He would punish the country that enslaved them and that they would leave their captivity with plunder (*see Genesis 15:1-14*). God fulfilled His promises to Abraham by bringing the Israelites out of captivity "...on the last day of the 430th year" (Exodus 12:41 NLT).

God initiated their freedom through the passing over of the Death Angel. In Exodus 12:2 God told them, "From now on, this month will be the first month of the year for you" (NLT). God started a new kingdom calendar on the very day that His chosen people exited Egypt. ***You see, Sweet Sister, our God keeps a detailed calendar concerning your life (see also Psalm 139:16).***

Our journey through God's Word described how God's visible presence had led the Israelites into the Sinai wilderness. Exodus 19:1 tells us that, "The Israelites arrived in the wilderness of Sinai exactly two months after they left Egypt" (NLT). God had prepared a crucial turning point in their relationship with Him. Remember how He came down on Mt. Sinai in an awesome and terrifying display of His glory? We studied how the Israelites responded to God, and then how they crafted a golden calf to worship. We also studied God's beautiful words and glory, as revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

Today's Scripture reading clearly marks a new date on God's Kingdom calendar. Numbers 10:11 says that, "On the ***twentieth day of the second month of the second year***, the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle of the Testimony" (NIV). The Israelites had been camped at Sinai for exactly one year as we begin today's story.



Please read Numbers 10 and then Numbers 9:15-23. As you read today's passage, ***which of God's qualities stand out to you?*** Remember, you're looking for His heart, His character, His nature, and His goodness. _____



The Smaller Picture captured in today's lesson is: _____

We read Numbers 10 first so that you could hear the orderly instructions God gave to Moses to allow the Israelites to move with Him. Were you surprised at how detailed those instructions

were? _____ Did you notice that three tribes led the way? After those three tribes moved out, then the Levites followed, carrying the Tabernacle with them. Three more tribes followed behind those carrying the Tabernacle. After those three tribes, another division of Levites followed, carrying the sacred items from the Tabernacle. As Numbers 10:21 tells us, this allowed the Tabernacle to have already been set up in its new camp by the time they arrived. These Levites were followed by six more tribes, with the tribe of Dan acting as a rear guard (Numbers 10:25). (An interesting side journey is to read Genesis 48 and 49. Jacob, grandson of Abraham, fathered the twelve sons who would become the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. Jacob gave Joseph's portion to Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. This created a total of thirteen tribes.) As chronicled in Numbers 1 and Numbers 3:11-13, God did not count the Levites in the tribes that would inherit the Promised Land. Instead, God Himself, and His service, was the inheritance of the Levites (see Exodus 32:29 and Joshua 18:7).

Is there anything in what we have already considered together here that speaks to you in some way? If so, in what way?



I am always moved by God's attention to detail. No matter how many times I read Scriptures that speak to this, it moves me deeply. I have had an awful lot of details in my life that have needed the sovereign attention of a sovereign God! My heart overflows as I write this, because just recently He has demonstrated this quality in my own life. In my own heart, in my own little house, there were still some broken exterior walls left there because of sexual abuse. While I knew I had received a measure of healing there, I had no idea that He had so much more work He desired to do in that area of my heart. In hindsight, I suppose I should have known, but we never know how whole we can be until He takes us there! He opened up those wounds for a short time, just as His healing was on its way. He had cracked them open before I knew what the tenderness was, but He was faithful to eventually name the place in which He was at work. It hurts when He breaks open those old wounds. ***Sweet Sister, He never reopens an old wound unless He is administering His healing medicine to that wound.*** Over the course of your life, He will likely heal that area in layers, little by little. It won't be completely healed until you have strength, resilience, and joy in that previously desolate place. You may not believe that joy could ever dwell where so much devastation, evil, and anguish have existed. ***Our God is so very good, Sweet Sister! He will not stop with a partial healing! If only we will cooperate with His good process, He will continue on until a completed healing takes place!***



Do you know of any area in you that has not received a completed healing yet? Lay it before the loving presence of your Father right now. Ask Him again to complete His healing work in this place that has been devastated by the work of the enemy. ***Write your prayer here.***

Numbers 9:22-23 (NLT):

"Whether the cloud stayed above the Tabernacle for two days, a month, or a year, the people of Israel stayed in camp and did not move on. But as soon as it lifted, they broke camp and moved on. So they camped or traveled at the Lord's command, and they did whatever the Lord told them through Moses."

I find it fascinating that Scripture records how obedient the Israelites were to follow God's visible presence, especially in light of Moses' conversation with his brother-in-law, Hobab, as recorded in Numbers 10:29-32. What would easily be construed as insecurity on Moses' part was instead an interest in his extended family members sharing in the blessings that awaited the Israelites. Commentators point out that Hobab apparently stayed with Moses, as he is listed in Judges 4:11 right along with the Israelite descendants in the Promise Land. Not only did Moses invite Hobab to share in the blessings, Moses appreciated the contribution his brother-in-law could make on their journey. Remember that Moses had lived out in this area with his father-in-law's family while Moses was exiled from Egypt between the ages of 40 and 80. His brother-in-law had likely grown up in this area and knew it well. Moses did not hesitate to ask him to join in their journey and lend himself to the effort. ***While they were following God to their destination, they were enjoying the relationships and alliances they could forge with one another.***

Sweet Sister, we need to take the time to consider the relationships and alliances we have forged along our journey. This week, we are beginning to earnestly attempt to include God's participation and presence in every matter, especially matters we consider to have weight and importance in our lives. The Israelites had the visible presence of God before them. While you do not have the visible presence of God, you do have something much better- ***the Holy Spirit within you!*** You can develop the practice of continually including God in your thought processes. ***Look up, Sweet Sister! The cloudy pillar of your God's presence is with you!***

Remember that your God is with you. He is listening and pondering these next questions with you. Just allow Him to sit in on your thought processes and look things over with you. Now, take the time to consider ***your closest family members.*** ***Is there anything you sense that He might encourage you to change in those relationships?***

Think about your ***extended family members.*** ***Does the Spirit bring to mind in any relationships that might need to be changed?***

Think about your ***closest friendships.*** ***Does the Spirit bring to mind anything that may need to change?***

Think about your ***outer circle of friendships.*** ***Does the Spirit nudge you in any way there?***

Finally, consider your wider range of peripheral relationships. *Don't try to study each one. Just listen with your Father. Does He bring any to mind as you consider them by category? If so, what do you think He may be saying?*



You have practiced the presence of God in this lesson. How is He asking you to act on what He has revealed? Write here your commitment to act in obedience to what He is showing you.

With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.



God's Special Gift to me. _____



Take Away: My God is with me just as surely as He led the Israelites through the cloud of His presence. I can learn to look up from my inner world and acknowledge Him in my thought processes.

Day Three: Just Between You and Me

God is deeply involved in your daily life and His desire is that you would recognize His activity and come to know Him more intimately. We develop relationships by talking, listening, and spending time together. You will come to know God better in the same way.



Each morning, take time to focus your thoughts on God. Talk to Him throughout the entire course of your day. Learn to include Him in everything.

Tell Him what kind of day you had yesterday or today. What's been going on in your mind and heart?



What kinds of negative thoughts or messages have you been experiencing lately?

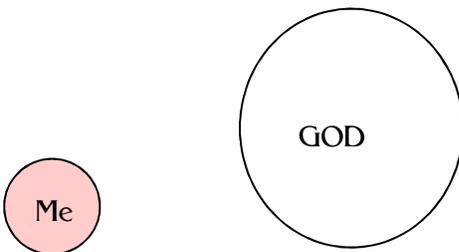
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Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... *Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement.*

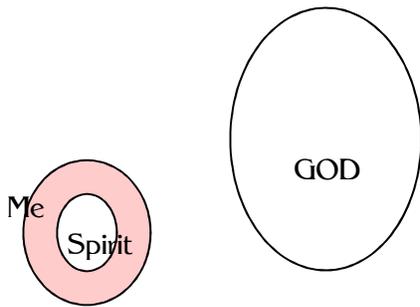
This week we are focusing our attention on practicing the presence of God. What does that mean? It means that you learn to see everything in your life through the frame of God's presence and participation.

I think that many of us begin our spiritual journey with God by seeing Him as very far outside of this world, and most assuredly very removed from the details of our lives. Maybe we see God a little like this:



I wonder if we begin our journey with God feeling like He is very removed from the world in which we live, because of all the bad things that happen here. Along the way, we begin to learn that God influences the world in which we live, and we begin to assert ourselves in prayer to Him, hoping for His intervention. We may have been taught that the Holy Spirit indwells us, but many of us do not discover the practical experience of this until we have begun to apply ourselves to the learning process of discipleship and obedience with God.

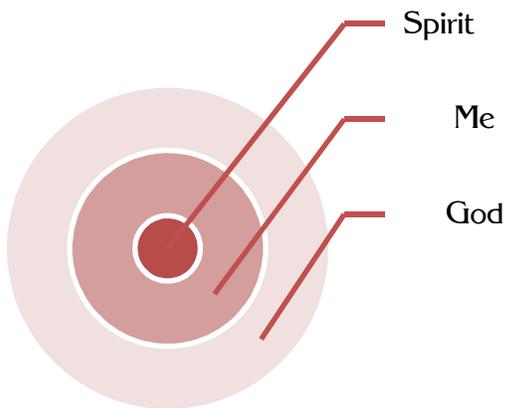
Once we understand that the Holy Spirit is actually operating inside of us, perhaps our view is more like this:



We begin to see God exerting His influence on our world from His place in heaven, and beginning to exert His influence from within us, even if it is just a little bit. For us to begin to operate in the flow of God's life, however, we must begin to see God as in and around everything.

Acts 17:27-28 (NLT) says, "(God's) purpose was for the nations to seek after Him and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him— though He is not far from any one of us. *For in Him we live and move and exist.*"

As we mature, we begin to see life like this:



This picture allows us to see God as the lens through which we view every circumstance. It also enables us to look back through time and see how God was the frame around every thing that every happened to us, for better or for worse. We may not see Him as the author of every event, but we see His sovereign presence in and around it all. As we do this, we are better able to see how God is (and how God was) influencing the events of our life.

Romans 8:28 (NLT):

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

We begin to see that not only does this verse apply to the circumstances we are in, but it also applies to all the circumstances of our past. It allows us to look back and see how God has always been working things out so that they benefit us rather than devastate us. Did the enemy bring destruction into your heart and soul? Absolutely. No one is exempt from the enemy's work of destruction. "I have created the waster to destroy..." (Isaiah 54:16 KJV). Yet, God will let "no weapon forged against you prevail" (Isaiah 54:17 NIV), if you will only cooperate with His good processes in your life.

Now that we are committed to seeing everything through the lens of God in, around, and through every aspect of our lives, we can learn to live in the steady stream of that reality. Rather than looking backwards through the benefit of hindsight, you will be able to look around you in the awareness that ***He is acting NOW, THIS very moment***, and you can dramatically

increase His effectiveness in your life by moving IN the flow of His life. This is the Divine Dance.

We begin this process by training our thoughts on Him as we move throughout our day. One of the first thoughts of the morning can become, "Good morning, Father," and a joyful anticipation of what you and He will accomplish and experience *together* today. ***Practicing the presence of God is a "together" mindset.*** You want to see Him, hear Him, and experience His interaction in every way that He will reveal Himself. This takes intention, focus, and practice. It is the most rewarding practice you can pursue. The more you desire to see your God, the more He will reveal Himself to you. It becomes a graceful dance of joy, expectancy, and delight. Practicing His presence moves us from calling upon Him in time of need, to remaining in an awareness of His interactive and immediate presence. That experience will break through even the most mundane and ordinary of circumstances to create a joyful delight that will take your breath away. You will begin to live in the reality and experience of His overflowing goodness.

You can learn to continually ***think towards God.*** This means that you can recognize God as an ever-present audience to your thought processes. While this may feel awkward at first, God isn't being intrusive and you do not have to grow bashful. His presence doesn't condemn you, Sweet Sister. If you still struggle with feelings of condemnation, please meditate on Romans 8 for the next month.

Your God has been silently listening in on your thought processes throughout your entire life—and He still loves you and wants you!! ***Thinking towards God*** is an effort to invite "The Guardian" upstairs, into your living space, Sweet Sister. Some of us have been willing to invite Him up to our sitting room from time to time, especially if we've taken the time to clean it up a bit. Practicing the presence of God goes beyond inviting His participation and fellowship only when it is convenient for us. Practicing His presence means that we finally acknowledge that He has been in every room with us the entire time, but we have not necessarily given Him the right to freely inhabit and fill every room.

One of the simplest ways to begin this practice is to silently talk to God on an ongoing basis, wherever you are. Because our own thought processes easily consume us, we often do not realize that we have gotten swept up in that invisible mental space. Every time you come out of the world of mental processing and concentration, you must reach out and draw your God into your thoughts. The more you begin to remember that He is already listening and pondering with you, the more you will be awakened to His presence, and eventually His guidance and counsel.

As you are cooking or washing dishes, invite God into what you are thinking about. As you are driving towards your destination, thank Him for riding along with you and ask Him to help you with the task ahead. When you get an unexpected encouragement through phone call, email, or other correspondence, thank Him for loving on you through this other individual. If you receive an unexpected financial favor or gift, even a bill that turns out to be less than you expected, thank Him for that blessing. After all, James 1:17 says that, ***"Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God above"*** (NLT). The first word in that verse really means anything and everything. ***Anything and Everything.*** Isn't that beautiful? It doesn't matter whose human

hand God uses to send that blessing, thank HIM for being the thoughtful giver through whose resources it ultimately comes.

When you are faced with a dilemma, you can pose the question to Him. *"What should I do here, God?"* It will take a few extra moments to pause and ponder, but it is a wise, rich experience to move through the moments of your day ***together with your God***. When you silently pad into the bathroom in the middle of the night, you can quietly think towards Him. *"Hi Father. I'll see you again in a few more hours."*

A few years ago I led a small, but brave band of women through a Bible study that was really the precursor to The Journey. I had talked about this concept of talking to God anywhere and everywhere for some time when one of the women returned with an amusing report. She had begun to practice the presence of God, and it had flowed smoothly for her until one day she was suddenly shocked to realize that she was talking to the God of the universe while soaking in her bathtub! I'll always remember the spontaneous joyfulness I felt as she described how she quickly covered herself (best she could) with her washcloth. Isn't that just precious? Great news, ladies! You don't have to worry about the washcloth, your state of dress, or the location of your togetherness with God! No matter where you are or what you are doing, ***you can think towards your God. No matter where you are or what you are doing, you can experience each moment of your life together with God. In so doing, you will be learning to practice the presence of God.***



Did you gain any insight into your own experience with God? If so, how?



Take-Away: I can live in an awareness of God's presence as I see myself experiencing the unfolding moments of my life together with God.

Day Four: At the Teacher's Feet

God is deeply involved in your daily life and His desire is that you would recognize His activity and come to know Him more intimately. We develop relationships by talking and spending time together. You will come to know God better in the same way.



Each morning, take time to focus your thoughts on God. Talk to Him throughout the entire course of your day. Learn to include Him in everything.

Tell Him what kind of day you had yesterday or today. What's been going on in your mind and heart?



What kinds of negative thoughts or messages have you been experiencing lately?

In light of what is happening and how you are feeling, what specific request would you now ask of Him? In what way would you ask Him to move?



Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... *Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement.* As you read today's text, be prepared to hear from God by....

- Looking for your Father's good and beautiful heart.
- Listening by seeking to identify with the experience.
- Understanding through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Putting it into Practice by following the Spirit's leadership in applying it to your life.



Please read Numbers 11. As you read today's passage, *which of God's qualities stood out to you?* Remember, you're looking for His heart, His character, His nature, and His goodness._____



The Big Picture is that God had created a people for Himself, had brought them out of captivity, and was leading them step by step towards His land of promise.



The Smaller Picture captured in today's lesson is: _____

There are several different concepts we could possibly explore in today's Scripture passage. Take a moment to make notes about the concepts that stood out to you.

Numbers 11:1a (NLT): *"Soon the people began to complain about their hardship, and the Lord heard everything they said."* This week we are learning about how to **think towards God and talk to Him** throughout the course of our day. This is just another picture of how God is already listening. Practicing the presence of God is about focusing our attention on how we can move through our moments **together with God**.



One of the concepts I feel we are supposed to consider together is found in verse 4. *"Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites began to crave..."* (NLT). We have already spent some time with God considering our various relationships. Yet, here again, it seems that God might desire that we take one more look into that subject. The Israelites were influenced with the foreigners who traveled with them. Sweet Sister, we are influenced by those who travel with us, too. I wonder, are they influencing us for better or for worse? Even when I have recently considered a subject with God, if it arises in my Scripture reading again, I want to listen once more on the subject. **Think about those who are traveling alongside of you in your journey. Are any of them influencing you to become dissatisfied, discontented, or impatient? Write your thoughts here.**



The next thing I want us to consider is **Moses' attitude**, which is described in verses 10-15. Now in all fairness, Moses had never asked to be their leader. He seemed to very well acquainted with his own personal limitations, and he did shoulder a huge responsibility. I have complained about my own load from time to time, and it is nothing like the load Moses carried. Still, the beauty about walking in God's presence is that you do not actually have to **carry** the load. As a matter of fact, when we find ourselves weighed down under the load, we have lost our focus and dependence on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We all do it, make no mistake about it. We can be weighed down less frequently, however, when we learn to practice the presence of God. As the weight begins to descend, we think towards our God and we say to Him, "I'm getting overwhelmed, Father." We ponder it over with Him, and we learn to listen. The greatest immediate benefit, however, is that by thinking it over with God, we automatically acknowledge our dependence upon Him for His strength and leadership. Every time we turn to God for our comfort, our answers, our strength, and our companionship, we grow stronger in Him. **Do you frequently turn to God for these things? In what way would you desire that God teach you how to do this more consistently or more effectively?**



God recognized Moses' need for a team to come alongside of him. It is interesting to note that God took some of the anointing of the Spirit that rested on Moses and spread it to the seventy elders. I love the tender concern I hear in God's voice as He tells Moses of His plan. See it here in *Numbers 11:17b (NLT)*:

*"They will bear the burden of the people along with you, **so you will not have to carry it alone.**"*

Isn't that beautiful? Your God cares about the size of your small shoulders and is fully willing to send wise, "Spirit-led" others to shoulder that burden along with you. How beautiful is that? *Do you have any thoughts about God's concern for your burdens?*

God's provision of the quail is a dramatic statement of how God can provide anything He desires to give to us. When asking God for specific provision in my own life, I have sometimes included a qualifying phrase such as, "Now if this request is quail to you, please don't send it." I want to ask God boldly when I believe such provision is His will, or when such provision is required to solve the problem at hand. Sweet Sister, as long as we are not complaining about God in our heart, I don't think we have to have a "quail-qualifier" in our prayers. Why? God responds favorably to an honest, but grateful daughter's heart. Even if His answer is no, as long as we live in gratitude rather than griping, I believe He is honored.



The final point I would like us to consider together is another interesting statement from Moses. I think he must have worn himself completely out before this event, because his recorded conversations with God sound very much like he was at the end of his rope. Again, however, listen to what Moses is really saying.

Numbers 11:22 (NLT):

*"**Even if we** butchered all our flocks and herds, would that satisfy them? **Even if we** caught all the fish in the sea, would that be enough?"*

Did you see it? *"Even if we _____..."* Moses was focused on his own limited resources. How often do we get caught up in a mindset that says, *"Even if we _____...?"* This means that we are focusing on our own limited resources. We know that we cannot accomplish whatever God has placed before us because God-sized challenges require God's own strength and movement. See God's response to Moses in Numbers 11:23 (NLT), *"**Has My arm lost its power?**"*

When God places a God-sized assignment before you, He isn't asking you to commit to accomplish it. God is asking you to be the vessel *that allows Him the opportunity to accomplish that assignment through you.* His assignments are opportunities to lean into Him, throw ourselves in dependence upon Him, and to yield to His interactive presence within and through us. All He is really asking is that you make room *for Him to flow through you. It isn't about your resources at all; it is all about His resources, and your ability to trust in Him so that those resources flow to His waiting world.*



How has God been speaking to you today and how will you respond?



With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.

God's special gift to me: _____



Take Away: My God wants me to learn how to move through my moments together with Him. He also wants me to trust Him in such a way that allows His unlimited resources to flow into the waiting world through me.

Day Five: What He's Singing Over Me

God is deeply involved in your daily life and His desire is that you would recognize His activity and come to know Him more intimately. We develop relationships by talking and spending time together. You will come to know God better in the same way.



Each morning, take time to focus your thoughts on God. Talk to Him throughout the entire course of your day. Learn to include Him in everything.

Tell Him what kind of day you had yesterday or today. What's been going on in your mind and heart?



What kinds of negative thoughts or messages have you been experiencing lately?

In light of what is happening and how you are feeling, what specific request would you now ask of Him? In what way would you ask Him to move?

Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... *Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement.* We are learning how to better meditate on God's Word. When we take the time to soak in it, it becomes a distinct part of us. When we truly take it into ourselves and believe it for ourselves, it becomes part of the way we think, act, and live.

Read this Psalm slowly and listen to how your heart responds as you read each phrase. *Do you resonate with its message? Do you find yourself resisting its message? Does it make your heart warm towards your God or does it make your heart uncomfortable?*



Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His wisdom and insight as you ponder these short phrases. *He will cast light on the phrases you are to soak in today.*

Do not worry if you do not have a comment for each section.
Just follow the Spirit's lead.

Open your Bible and read Psalm 63 slowly. In the lines under each section, write down the phrases or verses that especially speak to you. Offer them as a prayer or as worship to your God. *All verses are in the New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.*

Read Psalm 63:1-2 below:

"O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for You. My soul thirsts for You; my whole body longs for You in this parched and weary land where there is no water. (2) I have seen You in Your sanctuary and gazed upon Your power and glory."

Now read verses 3-4 below.

"Your unfailing love is better to me than life itself; how I praise You! (4) I will honor You as long as I live, lifting up my hands to You in prayer."

Read verses 5-6 below.

"You satisfy me more than the richest feast. I will praise You with songs of joy. (6) I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on You through the night."

Read verses 7-8 below.

"Because You are my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of Your wings. (8) I cling to You; Your strong right hand holds me securely."

Read verse 11 below.

"But (_____) (Your daughter) will rejoice in God. All who trust in Him will praise Him...."



Please make a special note of the verse that most fed your hungry heart today. Consider writing it on a little card and carrying it with you. Keep the card on your desk or your kitchen window sill. Type it as a reminder in your cell phone. Let it be a daily reminder to you until God gives you a new word to marinate in.

Soak it up, Sweet Sister. This is His word to you today.

Thinking back over all you've considered here, what does God desire for you today?

With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here and keep this thought before you.



God's special gift to me: _____



Take-Away: *As I walk in trusting reliance upon my God, my heart will rejoice and I will praise Him for His unfailing love.*

When we gather together again for our next group session, you will meet with the other members of your discussion group. The process of sharing with one another in this way is vital for a flourishing relationship with God. Even in our study of Adam and Eve we see the dynamic that humans need other humans. *Spend a few minutes looking back over your week's entries. As you think back on all that has happened in this last week, where do you recognize God's fingerprints, whispers, or guidance?*

List here each day's Take-Away.

Day One: _____

Day Two: _____

Day Three: _____

Day Four: _____

Day Five: _____



What is your most significant "take-away" this week? Put a star by it and then prayerfully consider how you can share this with your discussion group.

Message Week 24: Taking Every Thought Captive

Find the MP3 message for Week 24 at www.journeybiblestudy.com

Unit Memory Verse: "As long as (_____) sought guidance from the Lord, God gave (her) success." 2 Chronicles 26:5b

Study Text: Numbers 20:1-13, Exodus 17:1-7

To live in the _____ of God's life, I will need to learn how to rely on _____, and not my own.

To do this, I will need to learn...

- How to _____ my life in _____
- How to _____ and listen for _____.
- How to _____ for _____ before I respond.

1) God considers Moses' _____ to be a _____ issue.

2) We often consider our _____ with God to be a _____ issue.

Teaching Question: How do we make the shift to relying upon God's strength, and not our own strength?

"By His power God raised the Lord from the dead, and He will raise us also." - 1 Corinthians 6:14

"But God raised Him (Jesus) from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him." - Acts 2:24

2 Corinthians 1:3-10

"For it has pleased God to tell His people that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. For this is the secret: *Christ lives in you, and this is your assurance that you will share in his glory.* (28) So everywhere we go, we tell everyone about Christ... (29) I work very hard at this, *as I depend on Christ's mighty power that works within me.*"

- Colossians 1:27-29 (NLT)

3) Shifting to _____ is like changing my _____.

4) My strength is like a _____ that loses its power and must be _____.

5) God's strength is like the _____ availability of an _____.

6) I can live my entire life _____ His constant flow of _____ and _____.

I do this by remaining thoroughly attached to Him.

- Live my life in God's presence.
- Slow down and listen for God's guidance.
- Wait for God's leadership before I respond.

7) Use whatever _____ necessary to help me make the switch.

- _____
- _____
- Wear a _____ (like jewelry- ring, bracelet, necklace) to help me remember that I am dependent upon God.

Unit memory verse for you to copy, cut out, and use.

“As long as [] sought
guidance from the Lord,
God gave [her] success.”

- 2 Chronicles 26:5b

(NIV)

“As long as [] sought
guidance from the Lord,
God gave [her] success.”

- 2 Chronicles 26:5b

(NIV)

“As long as [] sought
guidance from the Lord,
God gave [her] success.”

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