

Chosen

Begin your time this morning with praise to God. Revelation 4:8-11 gives an example of the praises that will be given to God for all eternity. Use this Scripture as a guide for your praise this morning. Write down the things you know to be true about God from this passage.

“To those *chosen*, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, *chosen* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:1-2)

Peter addresses his letter to those who are *chosen*. This is a beautiful thing! If you are a Christian, then you also have been *chosen*.

What do you learn about being *chosen* from these two passages of Scripture below? What does God ask you to do in return for being *chosen*? How can you live this out in your daily life?

1. John 15:15-16

2. Ephesians 1:4

It is a unique privilege to be *chosen* by the Lord God Almighty. Following is a beautiful Puritan prayer about our election (*chosen-ness*). Finish your time this morning praying this prayer. The words are in old English but use these strange sounding words as an opportunity to slow down and really consider the meaning.

Holy Trinity,
All praise to thee for electing me to salvation,
By foreknowledge of God the Father,
Through sanctification of the Spirit,
Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus;
I adore the wonders of thy condescending love,
Marvel at the true believer's high privilege
Within whom all heaven comes to dwell,
Abiding in God and God in him;
I believe it, help me experience it to the full.
Continue to teach me that Christ's righteousness
Satisfies justice and evidences thy love;
Help me to make use of it by faith as the ground of my peace
And of thy favour and acceptance,
So that I may live always near the cross.
It is not feeling the Spirit that proves
My saved state but the truth of what
Christ did perfectly for me;
All holiness in him is by faith made mine,
As if I had done it;
Therefore I see the use of his righteousness,
For satisfaction to divine justice and making me righteous.
It is not inner sensation that makes Christ's death mine
For that may be delusion, being without the Word,
But his death apprehended by my faith,
And so testified by Word and Spirit.
I bless thee for these lively exercises of faith,
For the righteousness that is mine in Jesus,
For grace to resign my will to thee;
I rejoice to think that all things are at thy disposal,
And I love to leave them there.
Then prayer turns wholly into praise,
And all I can do is to adore and love thee.
I want not the favour of man to lean upon,
For I know that thy electing grace is infinitely better.

"Election," The Valley of Vision

How is it with your soul?

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:23

What is your soul?

The soul is not a part of you, nor is it distinct from the “real you.” The soul *IS* you! As humans, we are created in the image of God as complex creatures—body, soul, and spirit. The spiritual life involves our body, soul, and spirit in glorifying God. And yet, Scripture often refers to our souls as a place of spiritual activity. So, let’s do a little “soul check-up.”

Take a few minutes to allow yourself to become quiet both physically and mentally. Take a few slow, deep breaths. Intentionally place whatever you have been thinking about into God's care and ask for the grace to listen for His voice.

I. Understanding the Soul

“Care of the soul begins with observance of how the soul operates. We can’t care for the soul unless we are familiar with how it operates.”

Thomas Moore, *Care of the Soul*

A. The soul-

- Longs for God: Psalm 42:1-2
- Can be depressed, disrupted: Psalm 43:5
- Glorifies the Lord: Luke 1:46
- Can be quieted: Psalm 131:1-3
- Responds to God: Deuteronomy 6:4-5
- Has capacity for intimacy with God and others: Luke 10:27
- Is impacted by choices: Matthew 16:26
- Is formed by rhythms: Psalm 5:3
- Anticipates and waits for the Lord: Psalm 130:5-6

B. The soul can be neglected, depleted and dangerously tired

Why, my soul, are you so dejected?

Why are you in such turmoil?

Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him,
my Savior and my God. Psalm 42:11

Symptoms of *soul neglect*: self-absorption, shame, apathy, toxic anger, physical fatigue, isolation, stronger temptation to sin, driven-ness, feelings of desperation, panic, insecurity, callousness, a judgmental attitude, cynicism, and lack of desire for God

C. The soul can be nourished

Come, everyone who is thirsty,
come to the water;
and you without silver,
come, buy, and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without silver and without cost!
Why do you spend silver on what is not
food,
and your wages on what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is
good,
and you will enjoy the choicest of foods.
Pay attention and come to me;
listen, so that you will live.
I will make a permanent covenant with
you
on the basis of the faithful kindnesses of
David. Isaiah 55:1-3

The Lord is my shepherd;
I have what I need.
He lets me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside quiet waters.
He renews my life;
he leads me along the right paths
for his name's sake. Psalm 23:1-3

Signs of *soul health*: love, joy, compassion, giving and receiving grace, generosity of spirit, peace, ability to trust, discernment, humility, creativity, balance, and focus.

Mindy Caliquire, *Discovering Soul Health*

“Once we clearly acknowledge the soul, we can learn to hear its cries.”

Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*

II. Questions to Consider

1. In the last week, what brought you joy, energy, delight? What brought you sorrow, boredom, or drained you?
2. Describe your current prayer life. How does this seem to you?
3. How are you and God getting along? Describe some specific feelings, observations, experiences.
4. What activities in your ordinary life seem to be drawing you toward God and what things seem to pull or push you away from God?
5. When or where are you most likely to be aware of God's presence? When or where are you least aware of God's presence?
6. Is there a particular Scripture text that seems to be speaking to you recently? How is this text meaningful to you in this season?
7. What would you like to say to God?
8. What do you think God might like to say to you?

Adapted by Kristi Briggs from:

Bakke, Jeannette A. *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.
Dallas Theological Seminary, DM650 Spiritual Formation Cohort, Gail N. Seidel and M. Michelle Pokorny.

Humility

Read Philippians 2:5-11

Spend some time in humble adoration and praise to Jesus for what you just read about Him.

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.” (1 Peter 5:6-7)

“Humility is the bloom and the beauty of holiness. The chief mark of counterfeit holiness is its lack of humility.” –Andrew Murray, *Humility*

An attitude of humility is essential in the Christian life. Jesus Christ Himself modeled humility for us. As Christians, we must learn to humbly submit to God’s authority in every area of our lives. Ironically, it is when we fully submit to God that we find true freedom.

Spend some time in prayer, asking God to reveal any areas in your life that you have not humbled yourself to His authority. You can journal below.

What are some areas of your life where you sense God's pleasure in your surrender to Him?

An *attitude* of humility must lead to an *action* of humility. Those who follow Christ's lead in humility will love and serve others. How are you already obeying God in this?

How could you even better love and serve others?

The hymn, *Make Me a Captive, Lord*, was written by George Matheson in 1890. The words creatively illustrate the fulfillment and freedom found in humble surrender to God.

1. Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqu'ror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.
2. My heart is weak and poor
Until it master find;
It has no spring of action sure,
It varies with the wind.
It cannot freely move
Till Thou hast wrought its chain;
Enslave it with Thy matchless love,
And deathless it shall reign.
3. My pow'r is faint and low
Till I have learned to serve;
It lacks the needed fire to glow,
It lacks the breeze to nerve.
It cannot drive the world
Until itself be driv'n;
Its flag can only be unfurled
When Thou shalt breathe from heav'n.
4. My will is not my own
Till Thou hast made it Thine;
If it would reach a monarch's throne,
It must its crown resign.
It only stands unbent
Amid the clashing strife,
When on Thy bosom it has leant,
And found in Thee its life.