

S A C R E D
S P A C E S

GUIDED PRAYER +
REFLECTION

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Before You Begin

I am so glad you are here! This guided prayer time is set up as if your heart or spiritual life is a house; the stations represent a few of its rooms. Prayerfully move through them at your own pace, asking the Lord to convict, encourage, declutter, refresh, and sanctify.

Psalm 139:23: “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns.”

Romans 15:13: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...”

Psalm 23:1-3: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”

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

-Kathryn Entrekin

*Adapted from a resource written by Allison Krauska.
Verses are from various Bible translations.*

The Front Porch

Picture your ideal front porch. What is on the porch? What isn't? What does it say about the home to which it welcomes you?

The front porch is the most public, visible part of the house. You may know nothing about some of your neighbors or people who live in some of the prettiest homes around town or houses in magazines, but because you see someone's front porch, you can get a sense for what you think people are like: friendly, lazy, adventurous, relaxed. We all have a similar "front porch", whether you use yours to show off a bit or you're just trying to keep it together.

How do you *want* others to see you? List a few thoughts below.

How do you think people actually see you?

Are those two lists above in sync or are they painfully different? If they are similar, do you work tirelessly to master your "public face"? If that is the case, are you working really hard to cover up something broken? Maybe the two lists you made are disastrously different. Maybe everything has fallen apart. Maybe you don't even know how to begin to create a mask for yourself in the first place but really wish you could.

"Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners'" (Mark 2:17). Our faith isn't for perfect people, it was founded by the Perfect Person. And He is calling you to "come to [Him], all who labor and are heavy laden, and [He] will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

God can do so much with your broken pieces if only you will let Him. Let His grace shine through your cracks like a candle through a vase once shattered, now repaired. Share your struggles with your Christian community, so that you can let others know that they are not alone. When you try to hide your brokenness or are ashamed of it, you don't allow God's grace to be seen through you.

Take some time to read and pray through the questions and verses below.

- Is your public face/public image your master?
- What are your most broken parts that you don't want anyone else to see? Or what are the broken pieces that everyone sees that you are most ashamed of?
- What does God's grace mean for those broken pieces?
- With whom can you safely, deeply share your struggles?
- Do you spend so much time focused on performing well that you forget that you sin and desperately need God's grace?
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10: "So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."
- Romans 3:23-24: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."
- Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."
- Matthew 6:19-24: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

The Garden

Not everyone has a garden and not everyone is a gardener, but it is a helpful symbol for cultivation and stewardship. Gardeners coax fruit and flower from the earth in return for their toil. They partner with God in that effort, knowing that at the end of the day, it is the Lord who causes the growth. Using the seeds they are given, the soil they tend, years of practice, and lots of faith, their efforts can reap a beautiful harvest.

If you are a believer, you have been gifted seeds and soil: gifts of the Holy Spirit to be used for the gospel, the church, and the glory of God. In the space below, write down one or two platforms, gifts, or talents God has entrusted you with, if you know them (examples: encouraging others, bringing people together, being a good listener, a sport, something specific you do at school or work).

A note: 1 Corinthians 12:12-17 discusses the body of Christ: “...many parts make up one body... Suppose the foot says, ‘I am not a hand... I don’t belong’...it cannot stop being part of the body... If all the parts were the same, how could there be a body?... God has put together all the parts of the body... All of them will take care of one another... You are the body of Christ. Each of you is a part of it.” Whether you cultivate them or not, each believer has been given gifts by the Holy Spirit. And the people around you need you to be the foot or hand or eye that you were called to be. If you have trouble identifying your gifts, write out a short prayer below asking the Lord to help you.

Stewardship is one of my favorite biblical concepts because it is at once humbling and freeing. Stewardship is the process or position of managing and cultivating something that isn’t yours over a period of time for its owner; instead of labeling something *mine*, it is considered *His*. It’s humbling because that thing you are good at is not completely yours; God gave you that talent/skill/ability, and “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17). The book of Job says “naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord [takes] away” (Job 1:21).

The “His” over “mine” mentality is also incredibly freeing because your standard of success moves from what the world says you need to accomplish to what Jesus says you need to accomplish. “And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first

commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets,” and really everything else in your life (Matthew 22:37-40).

Consider how you are using what God has given you. This can go beyond skills and talents, but for now let's focus on just what you wrote down above. Thoughtfully rate your perspective on your activities, 1=fully mine and 10=fully His. Then, think about the suggestions I listed below for how to steward your gifts and consider how you can use them to glorify the Lord.

- Befriend people through your activity or school or workplace who don't know Jesus and are beyond your usual friend group
- Use your position to “set... an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12)
- Don't compare yourself to others because that mind set focuses on yourself rather than the Lord
- Give God credit for your gift and be sure to honor Him as you use it

Spend some time in prayer, asking God for wisdom in how to be a better steward, as well as the humility to see yourself as a steward rather than an owner. Pray that through that heart change, you will experience freedom because of an altered standard of success and confidence to cultivate and practice your gift as if you were doing it for the King.

The Bedroom

Welcome to one of the most private rooms in your home and hidden areas of your heart. Your bedroom has probably seen you at your darkest, your loneliest, your most broken.

The good news is that no matter your secret struggles, Jesus Christ, perfectly and simultaneously man and God, died to set you free so that you can live in freedom (Galatians 5:1). It is a gracious and merciful gift: there is nothing you can do to earn it (Romans 6:23), and nothing you can do or have done can erase it (John 10:28-29).

But wallowing in brokenness and using God's grace like a get-out-of-Hell-free card is missing the point. We are to "live as people who are free, not using our freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God" (1 Peter 2:16). So what does that look like and how do we get there?

1. Assume a humble posture before the Lord: if you are able, kneel down on your knees, sit cross-legged on the ground with your palms facing up, or simply bow your head low from your seat. Meditate on Romans 5:8, and don't take the words for granted.
 - Romans 5:8: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
2. Ask God to show you your sins. Think about the areas of sin listed below and pray Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"
 - Sexual immorality and impurity, including lust
 - Pride
 - Bitterness, unforgiveness, resentment, secretly hating a friend or family member
 - Discontent, grumbling, or complaining
 - Jealousy, greed, or materialism
 - Idolatry (prioritizing, valuing, desiring or pursuing something over God)
 - Self-destructive actions or thoughts; negative self-talk
 - Unhealthy relationships with food, exercise, or your body
 - Laziness or apathy
 - Inappropriate use of alcohol or other substances
 - Judging someone you know for one of the sins listed above without considering the gravity of your own sin (Matthew 7:3-5: "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.")

3. Confess your sins to the Lord. (Proverbs 28:13: “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who **confesses and forsakes them** will obtain mercy”). Write them down on the paper provided and then crumple it up and throw it in the trash.
4. Growth & accountability: pray about who you need to confess your sin to, for “as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). Satan wants you to feel alone in your struggles. Scripture describes him as a lion in 1 Peter 5:8. As the Discovery Channel teaches us, when lions prey on animals, they look for the ones that are off by themselves, because that makes for a much easier target than even a vulnerable animal among the pack. Confess to just one or two people, and make sure they are trustworthy and will hold you accountable, pray for you, and encourage you as you do battle with sin. Who will you confess your sins to?
5. Finally, “put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to take your stand against the schemes of the devil,” (Ephesians 6:10-20). Pray that the Spirit would help you bolster your defences as you do battle with sin.
 - Belt of truth: belts hold pants up to keep you from tripping over the sagging. Knowing the fundamentals of what our faith is and what sin is will keep you from stumbling and help you to avoid temptation.
 - Breastplate of righteousness: breastplates protect the heart. Defend your heart and emotions from Satan by not putting your heart where it will be tempted by emotional pornography (social media, books, songs, movies, conversations that make you long for satisfaction in people/things other than the Lord).
 - Shoes of the readiness of the gospel of peace: Roman soldier’s shoes were like cleats; they allowed the soldier to stand firm in battle. The peace that comes from knowing the Good News of Christ allows us to be ready for battle and confident in our position. Do you know it? Have you claimed it for yourself?
 - Shield of faith: shields protect from enemy attack. Faith protects us from the “flaming arrows” of doubt that Satan volleys our way about who God is and his perfect plan for His kingdom.
 - Helmet of salvation: different types of helmets protect your brain when doing various dangerous things. The helmet of salvation is 1) a marker of Christianity worn by those who fight on the side of the Lord and 2) protection for your mind, which is your source of reasoning and motivation and spiritual life. If you aren’t saved by Jesus, then your head isn’t protected from Satan’s attacks on it.
 - Sword of the Spirit: the sword is the primary tool of the soldier. For believers, the Bible is our primary tool, to be used offensively and

defensively, and just like soldiers with swords, we are to practice with it daily so that we can be ready to use it whenever the need arises.

The Bathroom

I'm not sure if the bedroom or the bathroom see more of our brokenness, but this room sees quite a bit of us. The bathroom is where we come face to face (literally) with what the mirror shows, what the scale says, what remains when the things propping us up are stripped away. If Satan has planted seeds of lies in your mind, the weeds they produce seem to grow wild in the bathroom, and the roots of those lies can grow very deep. Have courage, and start finding and pulling up those weeds.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience...” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).

God has given you the tools to destroy any stronghold or lie Satan has buried in your psyche (psyche: human soul, mind, or spirit); those tools aren't a magical weight-loss program, cured ailment, or perfect solution to any other thorn in your side. Through His gift of salvation, we have access to the Holy Spirit, a truthful Helper to dwell in us (John 14:15-17), and “the mind governed by the Holy Spirit is life and peace” (Romans 8:6, NIV). He also enables us to bear fruit, including self-control (Galatians 5:22-23), which helps us to catch negative thoughts or straight up lies, rather than letting them run crazy through our minds. When we do that, we punish those disobedient thoughts by holding them up to the truth we know about God as our Perfect Father, Faithful Shepherd, and Loving Creator.

Do you know enough truth to combat the lies? Knowing a few self-esteem-bolstering verses about being “fearfully and wonderfully made” and a “lily among thorns” is fine, but those verses only work on me when I already feel good about myself. They don't do much for me when Satan's lies have a stronghold in my life. The “divine power to destroy” said lies comes from knowing truth about God. Take some time and write down what you know about the One who sent His Son to die for your broken, lost self.

Using the tongs provided, take a warmed washcloth from the crockpot and wipe it on your hands. Imagine Jesus washing the lies away. Embrace your own vulnerability with confidence, knowing that you are in safe community and you were made by a Perfect Creator.

At Home: Here are some verses to cling to about the character of our LORD when you are struggling with insecurities or a failing identity.

Zephaniah 3:17

Isaiah 41:13

Joshua 1:9

Psalm 34:8

Psalm 31:3

1 John 1:9

Isaiah 25:1

Isaiah 40:11

1 John 4:9

John 10:11

The Office/Study

Managing the stress of the season you are in right now can be intense, with a crazy schedule and expectations bearing down on you from all areas of your life. Below, write two or three stressors you have in this season or those you see on the horizon.

Managing stress so that you don't spend your life feeling like a shell of a person, empty and frazzled, is challenging. Philippians 4:4-7 has some wisdom for how we are to respond to stress.

Philippians 4:4-7: “**4** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. **5** Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; **6** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Verse 4: How are we to respond to life's joys AND its stresses? How often are we to do that?

When the Bible repeats something, it's because it's important and we need to pay attention. We are called to rejoice ALWAYS, not just when life is good. Paul said he had “learned in whatever situation [he was] to be content... in every circumstance... in plenty and hunger, abundance and need” (Philippians 4:11-12). Do you have that kind of contentment, so that even when life is hard, you can rejoice in the Lord?

Verse 5: What should everyone be able to see in you? Why?

ESV says “reasonableness”, NIV says “gentleness”, NASB says “gentle spirit”, CSB says “graciousness”, but you get the picture. We are not supposed to look like the world when it comes to how we deal with stress or hard things. But why? Why does that matter? Because “the Lord is near”; the Message translation reads: “He could show up any minute” (Philippians 4:5).

Verse 6: “Be anxious about NOTHING.” Okay, but that’s really hard. What two/three tools does God give us in the very next phrase to help us do battle with worry and anxiety?

Google says that supplication is “the action of asking or begging for something earnestly or humbly.” Prayer and supplication require and help us to have humility, which gives us perspective. God is big and we are not. Either the problem we are stressing about isn’t worth the energy we are spending on anxiety, or it is genuinely too big for us and God can handle it. Either way, you are called to humbly “cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). The God of the universe cares about all of your problems, big and small. And that is why verse 7 of Philippians 4 says that our hearts can be guarded with peace that doesn’t even make sense.

Take some time to pray about what part of this stress-management model is hardest for you. Do you lack contentment, which makes you unable to rejoice when life gets hard? Do you turn into a crazy person when you get overwhelmed, so that people can’t see Jesus in you? Or do you have a hard time letting go of the daily stress of life because you forget that the God of the universe, who provides for the birds and the flowers, loves you so much more than them (Matthew 6:25-34)?

The Kitchen

The breakfast table, kitchen island, and the tall counter with the barstools were my favorite part of my childhood home, because that was where food happened and where the people I loved gathered to enjoy it and each other. That was where I learned what community looked like and first got to experience its power in my life.

Acts 2:42, 46-47 says, “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

When we live in a way that prioritizes community, not just hanging out with your friends but looking for ways to invite in outsiders and unlovables, the family of God explodes. One of my favorite quotes about hospitality is: “the heart of hospitality is about creating space for someone to feel seen and heard and loved. It’s about declaring your table a safe zone, a place of warmth and nourishment.” When we stop talking about ourselves, put our phones away, make good, old fashioned eye contact, and have a conversation with someone we don’t know that well, we are practicing hospitality. Be a curious listener. Encourage more than you complain or advise. Love more than you judge or gossip. Be a safe place for friends and strangers alike.

Take some time and pray about what this will look like in your life. With whom does God want you to connect? The friend you haven’t talked to in forever? The friend you never talk about real stuff with? The person at church who is new or the one who seems to be struggling? Write down where God is leading you in the space below.

The Living Room

So. Much. Media. Most modern living rooms look more like scrolling rooms where people sit together and don't act like they are together at all. Media is not a bad thing, just like money is not a bad thing. TV shows & movies, social media, music, and podcasts can be great sources of entertainment and relaxation, and they can bring people together for fellowship. But they can also be sources of wasted time and temptation; it all depends on how you use media. Think about a tool, any tool: a saw, hammer, screw driver, car, or pencil. On their own, those things aren't good or bad, they are just things. The user determines their value and purpose and how helpful or dangerous they are. Those things can all be used as weapons, but they can also be used to build things, move things, and learn things. In the verses below, I substituted the concept of media for the concept of money. Both are valuable, morally neutral tools that are also indicators of the posture of our hearts and can easily become idols. Let's look at the story of the rich young man:

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

"Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."

"Which ones?" he inquired.

Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, delete your social media accounts, sell your computer, your TV, and your phone, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he was too attached to his digital life.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for a digitally-connected person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who loves their electronic devices and online presence to enter the kingdom of God."

Matthew 6:19-22 (adapted)

1 Timothy 6:10 (CSB) says, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

Did you catch that in the 1 Timothy verse? The *love* of money, of something that wasn't the Lord, was what got the rich young man from Matthew in trouble, not the money itself. The problem was that issues of the heart kept him from following Jesus.

Spend some time thinking about media as a tool in your life. How well do you use or abuse it in that light? Do you control it or does it control you?

How does media help you or your love of media prevent you from being obedient to the Lord?

The 1 Timothy verse talks about being "pierced... with many griefs." What kinds of griefs do you experience because of a love of media?

What do you need to confess as it relates to your use of media? What changes do you think you need to make in how you use your accounts and your time spent watching or scrolling?