

Cultivating Daily Reflection

Signs: How to Prepare for the Return of Jesus April 25 & 26, 2020

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

Day 1 – Cultivate Wholeness: Pastor Matt reminded us that intelligence and wisdom are not the same thing. This is particularly important in matters of faith. The pursuit of wisdom and God's truest truth is our responsibility and vital to a whole, healthy and mature faith.

¹³ If you consider yourself to be wise and one who understands the ways of God, advertise it with a beautiful, fruitful life guided by wisdom's gentleness. Never brag or boast about what you've done and you'll prove that you're truly wise. ¹⁴ But if there is bitter jealousy or competition hiding in your heart, then don't deny it and try to compensate for it by boasting and being phony. ¹⁵ For that has nothing to do with God's heavenly wisdom but can best be described as the wisdom of this world, both selfish and devilish... ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is always pure, filled with peace, considerate and teachable. It is filled with love and never displays prejudice or hypocrisy in any form ¹⁸ and it always bears the beautiful harvest of righteousness!" James 3:13-15, 17-18 TPT

Reflect on God's picture of a life lived wisely. Are you cultivating wisdom marked by gentleness, honesty, peace and a teachable spirit OR are you living in the "wisdom of the world" with bitterness, jealousy and competition? Confess any areas where you have been lacking in REAL wisdom, then ask God to help you grow, trusting that He not only gives wisdom lavishly, but gives it with grace (James 1:5) forgiving our shortcomings.

Day 2: Jesus tells us the signs of His return NOT so we live afraid, but so we live wise and watchful. He also promises us the Holy Spirit – a power that protects, helps and equips us in our daily walk of faith.

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity *or* cowardice *or* fear, but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of sound judgment *and* personal discipline [abilities that result in a calm, well-balanced mind and self-control]. 2 Timothy 1:7 AMP

We live in 24/7 information culture where we not only face multiple distractions, but the potential to be misled. Things can sound/feel/look right and still be wrong. Take stock of the "news reel" in your life – social media, commentary, public opinions, celebrity gossip, binge watching, etc. Are you following anything more faithfully than you are pursuing God? What needs to change? Ask God for the sound judgement, discipline and self-control you need to live wisely and well-balanced.

Day 3: Your choice! Use today to read a favorite scripture, worship to a song you love, listen to or watch yesterday's episode of The Cultivate Podcast (cultivate.sc/podcast) or simply sit in the presence of God and talk with Him. Today is about grace, so enjoy it!

Day 4: All creation – mountains, sea and sky – is subject to God's authority and will one day reflect the sign of His return. Read Psalm 46 which describes the unmatched power of our God and His ability to not only be our very present help, but to calm chaos in the world around us. He is the Lord of Heaven's Armies and at the same time a loving Father who knows you intimately. Be still and praise your God.

Day 5: "And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So, we will not be afraid on the day of judgement, but we can face Him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in the world." 1 John 4:17 NLT

Our view of God can often be altered by our view of those who come in His name, either distorting truth intentionally or acting in ignorance, pride and self-righteousness hurting us and even wounding our faith. We all need to be ready to stand before God to answer for our actions, but you can only account for yours. Is there any area – personally, relationally, or spiritually - where you need to pursue peace, rest in forgiveness or find freedom SO THAT you can live more like Jesus today and be ready when He returns?