

Cultivating Daily Reflection

How to Elevate Fathers June 20 & 21, 2020

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

The reality is all good things require work. What we really need when life gets challenging is a new way to look at ourselves, our relationships and the world around us. Whether you choose to share your thoughts in community or use this as a personal exercise, we encourage you to daily reflect, respond and pray so that Jesus can elevate your life.

Day 1 – Cultivate Wholeness: Pastor Matt challenged us to consider that we elevate what we celebrate. Our world elevates celebrity, personal desire and social status including likes, followers and “friends.” But we don’t belong to the world and to cultivate wholeness and godliness into our lives, we need to elevate what God elevates.

“Don’t love the world’s ways. Don’t love the world’s goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity.” 1 John 2:15-17 MSG

“Keep your thoughts continually fixed on all that is authentic and real, honorable and admirable, beautiful and respectful, pure and holy, merciful and kind.” Philippians 4:8 TPT

Reflect on the verses above. Be REAL with self and God. What do you elevate in your life? Consider what you value, follow, celebrate or give your time, energy and resources to. Does what you elevate draw you closer to God or isolate you from Him? If you used Philippians 4:8 to rate what you elevate in your life [is it authentic, honorable, respectful, pure...] how would it stand up? Invite God to show you anything or anyone in your life that needs to decrease so that He can increase, and YOU can elevate the right things.

Day 2: Our relationship with our father – good/bad, present/absent, encouraging/disappointing – can shape our beliefs and feelings about God as our Father. To experience the intimate “Abba or Daddy” relationship God wants with us, we must get to know Him personally. God is the Father who will not fail us. He is our protector and provider, giver of wisdom and guide. Using the prompt “God is...” reflect on what you believe to be true of God’s character [e.g. safe, trustworthy, loving]. Now, are there any areas in which you doubt God’s character? In faith, ask God to make Himself real to you in those ways so you can grow in your relationship with Him. Be intentional about pursuing that growth – through time in God’s word, prayer and even by processing with trusted community.

Day 3: We elevate fathers when we recognize our need for a Father. Jesus, the one person who could have gone it alone, models humility in crying out to our Heavenly Father in our greatest moments of need. God longs to hear from YOU, loves YOU relentlessly and offers YOU unconditional access into His presence. Humble your heart, casting aside pride, shame or doubt, which are tools the enemy uses to keep you away from God. Tell your Father what you need – physically, emotionally, spiritually and/or relationally. He is listening!

Day 4: Honor is defined as that which we regard with great esteem. We live in a culture that highlights the broken far more than it honors the beautiful. That can make it difficult to keep our thoughts fixed on what is real, admirable, holy and kind (Philippians 4:8) and more so to ensure our emotions, words and actions reflect the same.

“Let every activity of your lives and every word that comes from your lips be drenched with the beauty [the honor] of our Lord Jesus.” Colossians 3:17 TPT

What comes out of us is what is in us. How do you respond when those around you tear down what or who you value and honor? Do your emotions, words and actions reflect your great esteem, your honor, for God? Reflect and if necessary, repent. Ask God for the courage to change – to elevate – your response SO THAT what comes out of you is WHO is in you and you point others toward God with every activity of your life.

Day 5: There is no such thing as a perfect father this side of heaven. However, you likely have men in your life who have invested in, influenced, prayed for or encouraged you personally, spiritually, professionally or academically. Perhaps you even know men who have been honest in their mistakes and done their best to make amends. How can you elevate – encourage, empower, enable, cheer on or celebrate – these men in your life? If you missed the opportunity on Father’s Day, make the time this week to reach out and say what you see in them!