

Cultivate Reflection Guide

New Voices: Hearing God in Your Smartphone – Claude Hickman Week of July 19, 2020

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

Who you listen to matters. This summer, Pastor Matt has invited friends and fellow pastors to lend their voices and share their perspectives. As we begin this new series and many community groups resume meeting, we've updated our reflection guide to include opportunities for you to cultivate God's word in community and/or continue to respond through daily personal reflection. The choice is yours!

1. Noteworthy: What stood out to you from this weekend's message? Maybe a quote that resonated, a word you want to remember or that thing you're still thinking about. Claude encouraged us that these are the whispers of God we don't want to miss. Take a few moments to linger here and ask God to give you ears to hear.

2. Cultivate Wholeness: The trials, unknowns and uncertainty (e.g. a pandemic) of life can leave us with a sense of helplessness. That can cause us to grab the reigns and work overtime to right the wrongs rather than look to the One who writes our destiny. When we battle for control, we not only rob ourselves of God's grace, but we miss the good things He has planned for us.

"⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:8-10 NLT

"...live your life empowered by God's free-flowing grace, which is your true strength." 2 Timothy 2:1 TPT

The same God who saved our soul sometimes needs to save us from ourselves. Ask God to show you any areas where you're relying on your own strength or striving for control rather than depending on Him. What would it take for you to surrender that today? Give yourself permission to let go. Pray, asking God to help you rest in His grace SO THAT He can fill your life with the good things He has planned for you.

3. Read Exodus 3:1-6. God met Moses in the middle of an ordinary field on a busy workday. Moses paused to be present, to turn aside and see, and that place became holy ground. God wants to meet us in the middle of our ordinary, everyday moments too. We must choose whether we turn to Him or are tempted by distractions.

- What things do you turn to instead of turning to God?
- What do you think is behind that distraction – e.g. boredom, busyness, loneliness, avoidance, frustration, temptation, etc. If you're not sure, invite God to search your heart and show you.
- Confess your distraction. "Lord, here I am _____ [bored, rushed, lonely, afraid, worried, angry]"
- Mark this moment as holy ground. Commit to God that you will make time to pause and be present with Him. When the distractions come calling, ask God, your Father, to remind you of who He is SO THAT you choose Him above all else.

Cultivate Community: As you consider the things that keep you from God, if it feels secret, bring it to light. When we confess our sins to one another, we not only cultivate whole & healthy lives, but the enemy has no power over us. Take courage from others. Invite your community group or a trusted friend to come alongside you with support, encouragement and accountability.

4. Praiseworthy: Claude challenged us that in a world full of distractions, we are led to ask the wrong questions. We wrestle with insecurity, inadequacy and insufficiency rather than resting in God's love for us. The only audience we need is One. God is everything and He has said we are something. *Read Ephesians 2:4-7* and respond to God with praise for His mercy, compassion, grace and kindness. If you need a greater supply, ask Him to provide.

5. Presence without being present: We are made for community and it's vital that we make time to connect with others – to create presence, even if we can't be present. Reach out to someone in your life with a word of encouragement, a random act of kindness or an invitation to coffee or lunch on a patio somewhere. If you need support, be REAL and ask someone you trust to make time for you. You'll both be blessed!