

Consecration Resources & Practices

Consecration—to dedicate to the service of God

During January 16-22, our church family is setting aside time to reflect on the past year, to give thanks to God for His mercy and blessings and to look forward to 2023 by dedicating ourselves to loving and obeying Him afresh.

The goals of this week of consecration are to:

- Put down the oars and rely completely upon God. (Watch 2 short videos about Isaiah 33 <https://is.gd/2X7lhF>)
- Practice gratitude
- Prayerfully dedicate 2023 to the Lord and walk away with 1-2 practical thoughts regarding how to put that in practice

Below you will find several habits to help you accomplish these goals. This can be done quietly on your own or with one or two others. We just ask that you respect others' ability to prayerfully focus during this time.

Worship

Take 5-10 minutes to meditate on (slowly and prayerfully considering) the following passages. Give thanks to God for who He is.

God the Father

- Psalm 103:13 As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.
- 1 John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
- James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

God the Son

- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
- Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

God the Holy Spirit

- Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.
- Galatians 5:22, 23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- John 14:15-17 If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.
- 2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Journaling/Discussion Prompts

Looking back and letting go

An unhealthy attachment to the past can prevent us from moving forward. Spend 5-10 minutes giving God your grief, disappointment, bitterness, unforgiveness and anger, as well as your achievements, status or anything else you find more identity in than Jesus.

Philippians 3:13, 14 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- Ask, "Father, what do I need to let go of?" Write down what comes to mind. Reflect and evaluate what might be holding you back from moving forward in God.
- Ask, "Father, what do you want to give me in return?" Write down what comes to mind. (Hint: if it's not biblical, it's not of God)
- Examples of what might need to be let go of: fear, insecurity, unforgiveness, some disappointment where you feel embittered toward God (chronic sickness, business venture that went south, untimely death, ongoing financial difficulties, etc.) or toward someone who let you down

Thankfulness

We enter God's Kingdom with thanksgiving and His courts with praise (Psalm 100:4). Gratitude is not just an emotion. It is equally an act of the will. Even if you don't *feel* thankful, exercise your will by choosing to be grateful.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks *in all circumstances*; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- Spend 5-10 minutes writing out what you are thankful for

Setting Jesus before us and limiting distraction

We are likely the most distracted generation in history. To abide in Jesus means to give him our attention; to be present to Him. What steps can you take to limit distraction and "set the Lord always before you"?

Psalm 16:8 I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

- What distracts you from setting your focus and attention on Jesus?
- What 1-2 practical steps can you take in these early days of 2023 to minimize distraction and to set the Lord before you?

5 Minutes of Silence

We rarely spend time in total stillness. Imagine sitting with a friend who is constantly checking their phone and looking over your shoulder to see who else is in the room. They are not being present to you. We are like that with God much of the time. May we all grow in focusing our hearts and minds on Him!

Psalm 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

- Take four deep breaths
- Eliminate distractions from your mind
- Picture God in some manner—on His throne, Jesus kneeling to bless children, Jesus hanging on the cross laboring to breathe, etc.
- Be present to God. The goal is awareness of His presence with you.

Consecration

Dedicating our lives to love and serve the Lord

It is right to set the orientation of our will to follow Jesus every day. Let this be a holy moment of consecrating our lives again to follow Jesus, come what may, in 2023. Pray a prayer of dedication to love and serve Jesus in 2023

- Deuteronomy 30:15 See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.
- Joshua 24:15 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Letting go of self-striving, trusting in self

Pray prayers of repentance for self-reliance and self-striving and ask for grace to depend on the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit in 2023.

- Psalm 20:7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.
- Zechariah 4:6b Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.
- Proverbs 3:5, 6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Bonus

Additional Scriptures for prayerful meditation

Spend some time meditating on the following passages. For the pictorial passages, activate your imagination and paint the scene in your mind. Insert yourself in the story. For all the passages, slowly and prayerfully consider the text.

Genesis 1; Exodus 14:10-31; 1 Kings 18:17-39; 2 Chronicles 6:40-7:4; Job 38; Psalm 18:1-19; Psalm 103; Psalm 147; Isaiah 53; Ezekiel 1; Daniel 3:11-30; Hosea 2; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Matthew 27:27-54; Luke 7:1-16; Luke 15; John 1:1-18; John 10:1-18; Romans 5:1-11; Romans 8; 2 Corinthians 4; Ephesians 1:1-14; Colossians 1:13-20; Hebrews 1:1-3, 5:1-10; 1 Peter 1:3-9; Revelation 1:10-18; Revelation 4; Revelation 7:9-17; Revelation 19:1-16; Revelation 21:1-4, 9-12, 22-27; Revelation 22:1-7

Breath prayers

Give the Holy Spirit room to renew your mind. Spend 3-5 minutes praying a simple phrase over and over—half of the phrase as you breathe out, and the other half as you breathe in. Examples:

- The Lord is my Shepherd // I shall not want
- Lord, Jesus Christ // have mercy on me
- Abba // I belong to you
- You are the Potter // I am the clay
- You satisfy me with good things // and I am renewed
- My flesh may fail // but You are my strength forever
- Lord, shine your face on me // and give me peace
- When I am afraid // I put my trust in You