

Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life

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★Write down one new insight you received today...

★Thinking...

- In what way is the promise of Jesus's return as King of kings relevant to me today?
- How might I think, speak, and act differently with this in mind?
- What is the effect of prayer as poetry, something felt instead of understood?

★Applying...

- Begin the day reflecting on the Lordship of Jesus. Imagine *the day of his wrath* in which evil is finally defeated.
- Now spend a moment thinking about the person you want to be on that day, the one who looks Jesus in the eyes.
- Choose to bring that vision to life today. Be intentional about *who* you are instead of *what* you have or do.

★Praying...

- Father, all glory is due to your Son Jesus. Thank you for inviting me to be His follower and for transforming my heart and mind.
- Please give me what it takes to joyfully grow into the kind, patient, gentle, and loving person you made me to be despite the temptation to be frustrated, angry, or isolated.

Psalm 110 – The Lord says to my lord, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.” The Lord sends out from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes. Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning, like dew, your youth will come to you. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter heads over the wide earth. He will drink from the stream by the path; therefore he will lift up his head.

I) Where Are We Going?

Few will follow a leader into complete unknown without a destination, no matter how great the leader is. The Father establishes a vision for us in Jesus from the beginning. Examining Psalm 110, we see praying about this *hope* yields faith, perseverance, and joy.

♦**A new hope:** There are times in life when we need to remind ourselves of the mission we are on and our vision for how that manifests. In our youth it may be the profession and lifestyle we want to develop. In work, the career we want to carve for ourselves. At home, what shape and pattern our family will have. Most of us have learned setting that vision once and putting it on the shelf is ineffective. We must gaze at it, dream about it, refresh our passion and yearning. This gets us through the dry season. Here we see the psalmist imagining the day when “The Lord says to my lord, ‘Sit at my

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right hand until I make your enemies your footstool (Ps 110:1).” There will be a day when God’s anointed King rules over all the earth. “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (v4).” Now and forever our Messiah is our Priest, interceding on our behalf with the Father in His Temple. Jesus is our King and Priest, presenting us blameless before the Father and preparing to subject all enemies of God under His rule when the day arrives. *Hope* for our souls today, for an eternity of Love and Joy when the Father deems it time.

♦ **A clear path**: Tantalizing visions can lead us astray. Some dreams are just that. Contrary to many self-help gurus, we each have a range of potential bounding our opportunities. There needs to be a path from here to there for the vision to be realized. If you want to be a world-class scientist, you must have the ability to master complicated theories and mathematics. An athlete, the physical talent and discipline to perfect difficult feats. “The Lord sends out from Zion [Jesus’s] mighty scepter (v2),” paving the path for Jesus to lead His people. His “people will offer themselves willingly on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains (v3),” conquering His enemies. “The Lord is at [Jesus’s] right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath (v5).” Having secured the Father’s blessing, the path to our vision of Jesus as King and Priest to all is paved by the strength of the Almighty. It is a promise upon which we can rest our faith.

II) Endure to the End...

Hope and faith lead to perseverance and joy. Desiring the vision and believing in its path, we have the inspiration to carry on and be joyful in our approach. Each hard day is worth the effort as we get closer and closer to that goal. Long journeys such as university degrees, career tracks, and raising children require joyful perseverance lest we give up or lose ourselves to misery along the way.

♦ **One foot in front of the other**: For many, achieving a vision is less about ability than it is endurance. *Can I grind like this day after day, month after month, for years?* One year of university can be exhausting, especially if taking an untraditional route that includes full-time work or family. Battling a hard, thankless job while putting in the extra to rise to the top is exhausting. Three kids and a house to clean...mothers are incredible. We look to those who have gone before to assure us *we can do this, too*. The Holy Spirit says of Jesus, “Rule in the midst of your foes (v2).” This message is to us, those in whom He rules while engaged in the world of His foes. “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind (v4),” a reminder that God will carry

us through to the end promised to all. “He will execute judgment among the nations (v6),” the certainty that the cost of giving up is far greater than carrying on. We not only can endure, we must.

♦ **Enjoy the journey**: We have all heard stories of those who miserably got through their studies only to abandon their vision. *I hated medical school, I’m not practicing medicine*. Enduring without joy leads to burnout and regret. Our *hope* must be inspiring if we are to not only reach our goal but thrive in the life we envision. Academics struggle to interpret the meaning of the poetic phrase, “From the womb of the morning, like dew, your youth will come to you (v3).” Poetry is meant for the heart, evoking emotional imagery, not logical conclusions. This conjures freshness, energy, vitality, the essential resource we need to joyfully approach each day as we pursue the Kingdom of Heaven. “He will drink from the stream by the path; therefore he will lift up his head (v7),” an image of rest and restoration. We can count on the Holy Spirit to refresh Jesus and His followers. The living water and delightful refreshment is assured to those who stay the course. Be joyful in the journey knowing the water will be all the sweeter to those who thirst (Mt 5:6).

III) Hopeful Prayers...

Prayers of *Hope* deliver the power of faith, perseverance, and joy. They remind us of our promised destiny, heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, beloved children of God (Rom 8:17, Gal 3:29, Titus 3:7). It is this assurance, this *Hope*, that makes today valuable, allowing us to be joyful regardless the circumstances (Rom 8:28, Rev 21:1-4). While we must travel this path, we also do not linger at this point on the path. Bright days are ahead as long as we continue to follow Jesus.

♦ **Living hopefully**: God has a different vision for each of us. Praying our *Hope* gives God opportunity to tell us our story. God gave Abram visions such as “for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever (Gen 13:15).” He will instill in each of us the particulars of how living in Jesus will build us up into His image. For some, we will be shaped by learning patience and kindness. Others, self-control and joy. Yet others, ceding control as we learn to embrace the adventure of a life serving the King. Receiving these often starts with acknowledging what is already revealed in Jesus and the *Hope* of His victorious return. Within that context our destiny takes its shape. Seize the power of *Hopeful* prayer.