

# ***Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life***

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

★Thinking...

- In what ways has partially following Jesus limited His power in your life?
- Why do you think God desires our beauty *if* we forget our people and father's house?
- How does mixing thoughts of Jesus's perfection and our lack in prayer bring about the power of Christmas?

★Applying...

- Identify one way in which you have yet to forget old ways and neglect to represent Him in all your beauty.
- Imagine your life giving up that way in exchange for one of Jesus's ways.
- Choose to implement that change and discover the fuller power of being God's chosen one.

★Praying...

- Father, reveal how I have yet to abandon old ways for your ways. Give me a vision for how great life will be if I make that change. Grant me the courage and ability to make the change. I will tell the world of your wonderful ways.

**Psalm 45:10-17** – Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your lord, bow to him; the people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts, the richest of the people with all kinds of wealth. The princess is decked in her chamber with gold-woven robes; in many-colored robes she is led to the king; behind her the virgins, her companions, follow. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king. In the place of ancestors you, O king, shall have sons; you will make them princes in all the earth. I will cause your name to be celebrated in all generations; therefore the peoples will praise you forever and ever.

## **I) Give It Your All...**

Some things in life can only be truly enjoyed when we put all of ourselves into them. We cannot be distracted in the slightest way if we are to do these things well. These dimensions of life likewise return to us disproportionately little when we do not fully engage. This is true of many things we do. It is as true of who we are. And who we are controls our relationships to others. Some will only relate positively to us if we give all of ourselves.

◆**Lifetime employment:** There was a time when getting hired on with some companies meant lifetime employment. Employees did not give thought to working elsewhere because of how well they were treated. Training, benefits, retirement pension. In such circumstances, one is wise to think about which company they join since the benefits come from lifetime commitment. God expects this kind of loyalty from His

people. The terms are stated clearly, we are instructed to “Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear (Ps 45:10).” This is something serious and consequential. We are then told to “forget your people and your father’s house, and the king will desire your beauty (v10-11).” If we accept His invitation to be His people, we accept that He “is your lord” and we “bow to him (v11),” submitting to His authority.

♦ **Take care of the hands that take care of you:** Companies value their people, recognizing the more time they remain employed the more productive they became. People grow in ability by experience over time. They were transformed into experts in their field. Into people whose identities intertwine with the company. The more time we spend as His, the more like Him we become. As we transform into people with hearts after God’s own, He is honored through us. Foreigners to the Kingdom “will seek your favor with gifts” and “the richest of all people with all kinds of wealth (v12-13).” The fruits of our relationship ripen over a lifetime. God does not welcome those who will abandon all He is and does for us before bearing fruit that honors Him.

## II) We Are What We Do...

Full engagement is more than putting our all into something. We immerse ourselves in a way we are known as representing the thing. It is how we equip and dress ourselves. How we speak. How we act. Those things in life that require our all cannot be done in secrecy. Nor should they be. We are encouraged to embrace our true selves.

♦ **Company man:** Companies understand their people represent them in every way. They provide uniforms that declare their affiliation. Company vehicles that represent their brand values. God adorns His people in ways that express His generosity and love. He decks out His chosen in “gold-woven robes; in many-colored robes (v13-14).” He invites His chosen into “the palace of the king (v15).”

♦ **Represent:** Even in work environments that will never be seen by outsiders, companies realize the importance of how employees represent the company to each other. Negative environments corrode the culture and drive disloyalty. Positive environments are pleasant and attractive, compelling employees to recruit friends, family, and neighbors to join. When we embrace life as God’s people, He clothes us beautifully and cares for our needs. For this reason, “the virgins, her companions, follow (v14).” They do not follow grudgingly. It is “With joy and gladness they are led along (v15).”

## III) Legacy...

Some of life’s opportunities leave a legacy. These ask us to give our all, to be known for being one who identifies with the thing. But they also give something back, a memorial to our dedication to being our true selves. These opportunities are the hallmark of significance.

♦ **Leave your mark:** Some, having worked all their lives dedicated to one company, take pride in the legacy of great products the company continues to produce. In the brand recognition of the company. That it stands for something honorable in society. Their work meant something. God’s anointed is told He “shall have sons” and that He “will make them princes in all the earth (v16).” A legacy of honor and dominion over creation on behalf of the Creator. Unbelievably, we are chosen as His partner in this, the one who will mother and raise these princes. Through Jesus, the truly anointed Son of God, we are chosen for the privilege of bringing about God’s glory and honor on earth.

♦ **Tell your tale:** Employees honor their company in many ways. Some make the products. Others define and promote the brand. All can tell others of the good pay and benefits that provide a home, stability to raise a family, security through age and illness. Psalm 45 concludes with the author affirming the legacy of telling the world of God’s goodness. The author causes God’s anointed to be “celebrated in all generations; therefore the peoples will praise you forever and ever (v17).” God is always working in ways that are worthy of praise and honor. Being His people compels us to tell others of His deeds, creating a legacy for us of being the object and representative of His love.

## IV) Christmas Prayers...

Christian prayers of relationship are prayers about Christmas. Jesus is God’s perfect anointed, loving righteousness and hating wickedness, living victoriously for the cause of truth and to defend the right (v4, 7). Jesus came “so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).” Each of us, even the anointed king David, were disloyal to God. Jesus offers us the deepest relationship, one in which we are received by the Father in His name, the name of one celebrated forever. A Christmas prayer recognizes the pure beauty and perfection of Jesus, His invitation to join Him in His Father’s kingdom, and our inner desire to give our all into this relationship. It acknowledges that He will provide all we need to qualify for this relationship, the robes and access to the palace. That we will participate in His legacy. His birth is the gift of our rebirth.