

## 2011 Week One Offerings for Quiet Times

### 1. GRATITUDE

**Colossians 2:7; Ephesians 5:4; Philippians 4:6**

- List 10 things you are thankful for, and thank God for them.

**Psalm 33:1-5; Colossians 3:16**

- Sing (even if you think you can't!) a song of gratitude to God. (Ps 95:2; Ps 69:30, for example)

*[NOTE: Science proves the Bible is true: singing is good for you:*

*Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, who has studied developmental and medical aspects of singing for 30 years says, "The health benefits of singing are both physical and psychological. Singing has physical benefits because it is an aerobic activity that increases oxygenation in the blood stream and exercises major muscle groups in the upper body, even when sitting. Singing has psychological benefits because of its normally positive effect in reducing stress levels through the action of the endocrine system which is linked to our sense of emotional well-being. Psychological benefits are also evident when people sing together as well as alone because of the increased sense of community, belonging and shared endeavour."*

*Regular exercising of the vocal cords can even prolong life, according to research done by leading vocal coach and singer Helen Astrid, from The Helen Astrid Singing Academy in West London. "It's a great way to keep in shape because you are exercising your lungs and heart. Not only that, your body produces 'feel good' hormones called endorphins, which rush around your body when you sing. It's exactly the same when you eat a bar of chocolate. The good news with singing is that you don't gain any calories! Not only can it increase lung capacity, it improves posture, clears respiratory tubes and sinuses, and can increase mental alertness through greater oxygenation. It even tones the muscles of your stomach and back, that is if you're singing correctly."*

*Singing even helps you live longer according to the findings of a joint Harvard and Yale study which showed that choral singing increased the life expectancy of the population of New Haven, Connecticut. The report concluded that this was because singing promoted both a healthy heart and an enhanced mental state. Another study at the University of California has reported higher levels of immune system proteins in the saliva of choristers after performing a complex Beethoven masterwork.*

### 2. CHANGE

Does God expect change? What kind of change does God expect?

**Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:8; Romans 8:28-30**

How do I feel about change?

- *Take every thought captive to Christ (2 Corinth 10:5)* – is there any negative feelings I have about some kind of change that I sense God is calling me to make? Make note of these and share them with a discipleship partner. \*

**2A.** Search for scriptures to address my negative feelings about change. Pray these verses specifically before God

### **3. MY GOAL IS TO PLEASE GOD TODAY**

**2 Corinth 5:9; Hebrews 11:5; Hebrews 11:6.** It is impossible to please people, but it is possible to please God!

**Proverbs 15:8** The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

- What “sacrifices” am I making in my daily routine that prevent me from being devoted to prayer, or other essential spiritual pursuits? (**Acts 2:42**)
- Who can I think of who probably needs encouragement to pray (besides myself!)? Please: set aside a few minutes today or tomorrow to call that person and pray with them over the phone

### **4. SELF-IMAGE = GOD’S VISION FOR ME**

**2 Peter 1:3; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Acts 17:25; Romans 15:14; 2 Corinthians 3:1-6**

- Pray for the truth of these scriptures to be my reality, the way I live, what I believe about myself. Thank God for specific ways that I see (or can see) the truth of each of these scriptures in my life
- Make a decision to put the truth of one of these verses into action today – for example, **2Cor 3:6** says God has made us competent as a minister of the New Covenant: what would be something God would expect a competent minister of the New Covenant to do today to affect the life of another person?

### **5. FAITH ENDURES THROUGH TOUGH TIMES**

**Hebrews 11:29-40 – Hebrews 12: 1-13**

One formula for successful change:

Dissatisfaction + Vision + First Steps that are Do-able + Support > Resistance

- Decide that whatever it is that I am dissatisfied about is meant to be a step of faith to lead me to positive change
- Figure out what a “first step that is do-able” needs to be, in order for me to change something for the better today. Pray and take that step!

*\*I thought I'd be vulnerable and share my negative thoughts with you. One example: One thing I would like to change is that I would like to improve my Russian language skills. As I started to have a quiet time in my Russian Bible this week, I noticed a “sense” in me (a negative thought) that said to me, “look, you know so little – you'd never have used that word in a sentence, you don't even know what it means! How can you have lived in Russia so many years and know so little!” i.e., there's no point in me trying to change my level of Russian, I'm hopeless. It's a mountain, a Goliath. I decided to battle this by confessing the pride this revealed in me: thinking I should be further along than I really am, not content with the level of knowledge God has allowed me to have, and feeling resistant and prideful about having to learn so much more. I should instead be happy to learn anything new, not resentful – there's the pride. I decided to meditate on verses about gratitude and contentment and to re-acquaint myself with God's promises to me, (such as Ps 35:27; Ps 119:32; Rev 3:18-20) which has helped banish the negativity and store up good things in my heart.*

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