

WEEK THREE
ADULT DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul

OVERVIEW:

Eugene Peterson writes that Psalm 131 teaches us to say, “I will not try to run my own life or the lives of others; that is God’s business, I will not pretend to invent the meaning of the universe; I will accept what God has shown its meaning to be; I will not strut about demanding that I be treated as the center of my family or my neighborhood or my work, but seek to discover where I fit and do what I am good at. The soul, clamoring for attention and arrogantly parading its importance, is calmed and quieted so that it can be itself, truly.”¹³

This week we are transitioning from verse one to verse two, inviting Jesus to move us out of our prideful hearts and into our quiet souls. We will consider how letting go of who we are is an act of surrender and embracing the calming presence of Jesus is a call to a life of humility. As we journey together this week, we will look at two stories where Jesus brings calm into a chaotic situation. We will conclude with Jesus welcoming the weary and burdened to come to him to find rest for our souls.

- Calming the storm (Matthew 8:23–27, Mark 4:35–41, Luke 8:22–25)
- Walking on water (Matthew 14:22-34, Mark 6:45-53, John 6:15-21).

Your time this week will include music, Bible reading, journaling, and quiet meditation. To deepen your engagement consider using the artistic expression exercise, Storms of Life, and the prayer practice, Ignatian Contemplation.

MUSIC: This week I am inviting you to use Sarah Sparks’ song, inspired by Psalm 131. It speaks of a person who is wrestling with God in the night. We all have restless nights where we cry out to God. We are waiting, desperate, and angry as we ask God to calm and quiet our souls.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: For your time of spiritual practice, you are invited to experience Ignatian Contemplation, or imaginative prayer. In this prayer practice, you place yourself inside a passage from the Bible. You imagine the sights and sounds, you interact with the people, and you ask questions of those present in the story. For this exercise you will need to set aside 30-45 minutes to properly engage in the story. Dive into one of these two stories of Jesus on the water. Use the supplemental guide for more detailed instructions.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION: Storms of Life

As you reflect on one of these two stories, allow God to invigorate your creative juices. Imagine Jesus interacting with the chaos of your life and offering you a calm heart and quiet soul. Put pencil to paper, paint to canvas, thread to needle, create a video, compose a song, choose whatever medium inspires you. Include illustrations, symbols, flourishes, verses, words, memories to make this personal. Use the supplemental guide for more detailed instructions.

¹³ Peterson, Eugene, A Long Obedience in the Same Direction. Pg. 154.

DAY ONE: Instead**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

MUSIC: Listen to Psalm 131 chant by John Michael Talbot**READ: Psalm 131: 1-2a**

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. **Instead**, I have calmed and quieted my soul...

INSTEAD: A preferred alternative or a replacement in place of something else. Suggests that of the choices available, one is favored. Asks us to choose the preferred over the popular.

QUOTE: "Instead of proud pursuits, [the Psalmist] is determined to find satisfaction and serenity of soul, content with God and His works."¹⁴ - David Guzik

Psalm 131 suggests that the popular choice might be pride and arrogance, but the preferred is to calm and quiet.

DISCUSS

- Why is pride and arrogance the popular option?
- Why is a calm and quiet soul preferred?
- Which do you tend to lean toward?

Journal: What choices are awaiting you today? How would you typically respond? How might Jesus want you to respond?

MUSIC: Listen to Psalm 131 by Sarah Sparks

MEDITATE: Close your eyes and think of these words, "I will calm and quiet my souls, and I believe. Help my unbelief." Sit in silence for at least one minute.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

¹⁴ *The Enduring Word Bible Commentary by David Guzik*

DAY TWO: Jesus Calms the Storm**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

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READ: Mark 4: 35-41 (also in Matthew 8:23–27 & Luke 8:22–25)**REFLECT**

- How was chaos being experienced in this passage?
- How do the disciples respond to the chaotic situation?
- How does Jesus respond to the chaos?
- How does Jesus bring calm?
- What is the disciples' response? Why?

RESPOND:

- How might the chaos in your life be reflected in the storm at sea?
- How are you reacting to the storms?

JOURNAL: What is keeping you from having a calm and quiet soul today? Invite Jesus into your storms and ask him to calm and quiet your soul.

MUSIC: Listen to Psalm 131 by Sarah Sparks

MEDITATE: Close your eyes and think of these words, "The wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Sit in silence for at least a minute.

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

DAY THREE: Jesus and Peter Walking on Water**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

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READ: Matthew 14: 22-33 (also in Mark 6:45-53 & John 6:15-21).**REFLECT:**

- What was causing the disciples to fear?
- How does Jesus respond to their fear?
- Why does Peter step out of the boat?
- What causes him to sink?
- How does Jesus respond to Peter's sinking?
- What is the disciples' response to Jesus?

RESPOND:

- What are the things causing you to sink?
- How are they keeping you from having a calm and quiet soul?
- Have you cried out, "Lord, save me!"?

REACT: Imagine Jesus is reaching out his hand. Reach out and grasp it. Imagine him rescuing you from sinking. What thoughts and emotions come to mind as you are rescued from sinking?

MUSIC: Listen to Psalm 131 by Sarah Sparks.**JOURNAL:** What is causing you to sink? What is stealing your focus from Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust

DAY FOUR: Calm and Quiet**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

Take a few minutes and practice our breathing prayer as you come into God's presence. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul. Hope in the Lord. Trust now and always. Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

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QUOTE: "God, my heart is often proud and haughty. I desire for things to be busy and rushed. I get bored and nervous in the quiet. I turn to my phone and look for ways to find meaning. Work, tasks, something that says, 'I have meaning.'" - Dave Reiss

CONSIDER:

- How do you respond when you are quiet? Do you embrace or do you look for distraction?
- What things do you do to avoid quiet? How do we expect them to bring meaning?
- Why do we find it difficult to come to the quiet? What is it about the quiet that makes us nervous?
- What is the benefit of calming and quieting our soul?

JOURNAL: Write out the things that steal your focus from God, the things that distract you from quieting your soul. Confess your need for calm and quiet and ask God to still your soul.

MEDITATE: Close your eyes and think of these words, "I have calmed and quieted my soul." Repeat them a few times. Sit in silence for at least a minute.

MUSIC: Listen to Psalm 131 by Sarah Sparks.

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust

DAY FIVE: "Come to Me." - Jesus**BREATHE:** Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust.

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OPENING PRAYER: Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me. Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen

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MEDITATE: Close your eyes and meditate on the "I have calmed and quieted my soul." Repeat that phrase in your mind seven times.

READ MATTHEW 11: 28-30.

CONSIDER:

- Who does Jesus invite? Does that include you?
- What does he promise those who come? Is that promise for you?
- What does he say about himself? Do you believe him?
- What does it mean that his yoke is easy & light? Is your current yoke heavy or light?
- Do you need rest for your soul? Why?

JOURNAL: Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens." (Matthew 11: 28) What are the things that are making you weary and what is burdening you?

IMAGINE: Close your eyes and imagine you are coming to Jesus weary and burdened. Slowly remove those burdens and lay them at Jesus' feet. Now picture Jesus saying to you "Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace" (from the Message. Sit in silence for at least a minute.

MUSIC: Listen to Psalm 131 by Sarah Sparks.

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BREATHE: Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust