



MESSAGES

# Daily Devotion

WORKING ON RELATIONSHIP

# Working on

## *Relationship*

It feels so good to check something off your to-do list, doesn't it?

There's something so satisfying about seeing a list of chores and tasks and being able to tick them off one by one. It's a sense of accomplishment. Something tangible you can point to and say, "Done!"

But as important as tangible checklists are, there are other types of work that are just as important—if not more important. It may not offer that same sense of physical accomplishment, but this work is just as crucial to our lives and health.

We're talking about the work of relationship. The inner work we do with Holy Spirit. The intangible task of digging deeper into how we feel, what we believe, what truths our hearts need to fixate on.

This is the work we tend to overlook in our lives, isn't it? Maybe because it doesn't offer that same satisfying sensation as checking something off a list. Or maybe because it's even harder to do than many of those other physical tasks.

If you've been avoiding that deep work, friend, then today's message is for you, written tenderly by Holy Spirit with your heart in mind.

God's heart for us, for you, is to experience the beautiful work and inner healing that comes through working on relationship, our relationship with him.

Are you willing to join us on that inner journey today? We promise the fruit of this work is always worth any discomfort it costs.

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# 01.

## *The Message*

“It is confusing, isn’t it, how you feel both strong and weak? You are confident in your ability to push when things get hard, dig in and do the things necessary to accomplish a task or work through a problem. And those things get done, usually: that problem addressed, that challenge dealt with. But the next day, when new problems and challenges arise, will you continue to approach them like a test that is being graded, a mountain that simply needs to be climbed?

“It is time to care for your heart now. While you are good at action, at getting things done, not all work is created equal. The things you do that involve the inner work of your soul are what change you. You know this. Deep down you know this—that the tension of using distraction, filling your day with one thing to do after another, makes feeling difficult.

“What is it you are feeling now? And can that feeling be trusted? Is it true? For what is underneath that feeling? And what is underneath that? It is time to do some work that involves less accomplishment—getting something done on a task sheet—and more relationship—listening to my voice and spending time with me. For when you do, you will have my companionship. And this companionship will ground you and bring you deeper rest than achievement.

“What is the value of any job you can get done this day? What is the value you place in being with me?

“You are not alone. You do not have to go through this day making one decision alone. I love going through your day with you. I love speaking to your heart through your rest and your work and your play. And with my presence with you, you will be present to your emotions. You will learn you do not have to carry any burden alone, including the weight of worry or anger or frustration or grief. I help you understand why you feel the way you do—and how to engage your heart as you move through all moments.

“Do not be overwhelmed now. I am with you. Lift out your hands. Lift up your head. Take a deep breath and look into my face. I am for you. I am with you. Break the lie that you are alone and are the one in charge—by yourself—striving to get things done. Give me your heart, and then let’s do what is for you to do today. But let’s do it together.”



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## 02.

*Listen*

Do you ever feel alone in making decisions, in dealing with the emotional fallout of life? If so, how does your heart respond to the final paragraph of this week's FLAG message? Let's write out our response to the Lord in our journals.



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## 03.

*Think*

*“Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear” (Isaiah 65:24, ESV).*

1. What are some barriers that keep you from doing inner work (working through your feelings with the Lord, unearthing lies you believe, and allowing Holy Spirit to speak truth to those lies)?
2. What defense mechanisms do you use to avoid doing inner work or reflecting on how you feel? (Do not receive any condemnation or shame for how you answer these questions. Simply allow Holy Spirit to reveal patterns to you and receive his grace.)
3. What is Holy Spirit revealing to you about these barriers and defense mechanisms? How is he calling you to work past them so you can do deep inner work with him? Let's write down the answers Holy Spirit shows us.



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# 04.

## Trust

Inviting God into our decisions and feelings can be the most freeing thing we can do. It lifts the burden to “handle” everything on our own or come up with the perfect solution.

But that doesn't mean it's always comfortable. When there are deep hurts or wounds (or uncomfortable decisions we have to make), sometimes we resort to defense mechanisms to avoid that inner work.

Have you ever...

- Avoided prayer because you felt more depressed afterward?
- Said “No” when someone asked you if you needed prayer for anything?
- Kept your personal devotions short on purpose because you didn't want to deal with the feelings you knew were brewing below the surface?
- Made a big decision without praying about it because you knew God would reveal something uncomfortable to you?

There are many subconscious tactics we use to avoid doing the inner work that's required for deeper intimacy with our heavenly Father. But avoiding the work of relationship with Holy Spirit will simply delay the growth, healing, and peace he wants to give us and produce in us.

So today, if you're willing, let's start that deeper work. Let's lay aside the defense mechanisms and give Holy Spirit an open door to speak to us, comfort us, reveal truth to us, and minister to our hearts.

To start, let's get out our journals, a pen, and our Bible. Find a quiet spot in your home or outside, somewhere you can be alone with Jesus. Take a deep breath, as full as your lungs can bear, and hold it for four seconds. Then release it slowly, allowing your defenses to come down.

Now, let's write a letter to our heavenly Father, approaching him as children—humble, hungry for love, eager to believe his words.

As you write your letter, avoid writing what you think you should write. Simply communicate your heart to him, what you feel right now. What is worrying you? Hurting you? Confusing you? Tell him.

In the midst of writing, let's remember to pause, giving our words room to breathe, and giving Holy Spirit space to speak.

And now, let's lay our pens down, close our eyes, open our hands, and pray...





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## 05.

### *Pray*

Father, thank you for listening to me, for always listening to what's in my heart, for knowing me better than I even know myself.

These concerns I just shared with you, these feelings and emotions that I don't fully understand, will you show me what to do with them? Will you speak truth to the lies that are subtly sabotaging my faith and help me trust you as my heavenly Father?

I want to do the inner work, the work of relationship. I know it's important. But sometimes it's hard and I avoid it because it's uncomfortable. Help me press through that discomfort and allow you to lead me through the emotions I feel so that I can walk in the peace and healing you've promised me.

You are so good, so faithful, so kind. I love that about you. I love everything about you. Take me deeper in relationship with you, Jesus. I adore you.

Amen.



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