

OFFER

I bring the
best and worst
of me to God



Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with God

Offer *I bring the best and worst of me to God*

Deepening our relationship with God comes from regularly sharing ourselves with Him. He knows us intimately, and throughout the Bible He is frustrated with people who try to pretend, cover up, or only offer a part of themselves. We must authentically share all aspects of our lives with God, inviting Him into both the shameful and the things worthy of celebration. To be known fully and loved fully is the greatest level of relationship. We offer our whole selves to God not only to relate more deeply, but to be transformed and utilized more fully for His glory.

PRACTICES

CONFESSION: As we read God's Word, listen to it being taught, and learn to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, we will quickly come upon attitudes, thought patterns and actions that are out of alignment with who God made us to be. God calls us to confess, which means agreeing with Him that what we've done/believe is sin. God is faithful to forgive us and this act of humility, feeling the weight of being out of alignment, is helpful to shape us and cause us to delight in who God is and who He's made us to be. This should be practiced regularly.

KNOW YOURSELF: It's difficult, or even impossible, to offer ourselves fully without truly knowing ourselves. We are all created in the image of God and meant to display aspects of God to the world. We each exemplify character traits and gifts that point people to our Maker and Designer. The more aware we are of how we are wired, the better we can lean in to our uniqueness and offer ourselves and our gifts back to God. There are many tools out there like the Enneagram, personality tests and spiritual gifts analysis which are helpful in this discovery process. You can also talk with an insightful Christian friend or counselor who could help you better understand yourself. Remember: the goal of this practice is to live more fully into who you are, and to point others to God and glorify Him.

LIVING SACRIFICE: In Romans 12:1 we are invited to "offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God". There is so much imagery here that connects us back to the Old Testament. The idea is that we surrender our lives to God, and are set apart for His purposes. This is the greatest act of worship. We release claim on our lives and ask God to be the leader in our lives. This is both an act of ongoing commitment verbally, and intentional movement physically. Regularly choose to bring yourself to God as a servant and a sacrifice to God.

DIG IN

Read 1 John 1:9

Why do you think it's important to God (and us) that we go through the process of naming our sin and humbling ourselves before God?

Read Romans 12:1-2

What implications does the term "living sacrifice" cause you to think about? What might it look like practically?

How does verse 2 potentially inform verse 1? How does it help you understand what it means to "offer" yourself?

Read Romans 12:1-8

What additional insights do you gain regarding offering your full self to God?

Read Psalm 139

What encourages you from this text?

Are there any fears or questions that arise as you read it? If so, name them...

Pray verses 23-24 and then sit and listen. Pay attention to what enters your mind as you invite God to search you fully. What was revealed to you in those moments?

RESPOND

Of the three practices (Confession, Know Yourself, Living Sacrifice) which feels most natural to you? Which stands out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, take it to the next level. If a practice is an area where you would like to grow, make a plan to read more about it, and seek out others who do it well or have incorporated it into their lives. Then, actively and intentionally try out that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you, and others, as a result of anticipating God's movement through the practice.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Set aside an hour, and write out the different aspects of your life:

- Shaping experiences that have impacted who you are (good and bad, past and present):

- Skills, gifts and talents:

- Personality and character traits:

- Flaws and weaknesses:

- Values and convictions:

Review your life and pray through each area, offering it to God. Ask Him to redeem the broken pieces, maximize the beauty, and utilize you for His purposes and glory. If any specific steps are stirred in you from this process, act on them right away.

The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith by Timothy Keller

Humility by Andrew Murray

A Quest For More: Living For Something Bigger Than You by Paul David Tripp

Practicing the Power: Welcoming the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Your Life by Sam Storms

FOR KIDS

Notes From Jesus: What Your New Best Friend Wants You to Know by Mikal Keefer



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