SELAH

Quiet time for the week of August 17-21, 2026

That's Not a Gift

Genesis 22:20-23:20

MONDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS CLAIMED.

TUESDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS SWORN TO.

WEDNESDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS EXPECTED.

THURSDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS SEALED.

FRIDAY
GOD'S FAMILY IS INCLUDED.

You will be asked to write things down this week. A notebook works. So does the notes app on your phone. Use whichever one you will actually open.

NW Hills
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

MONDAY

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS CLAIMED.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

Yesterday you sat in a room with other people and heard about a man who owned nothing. This morning it is just you. No music, no crowd, nobody else's voice.

That makes this harder, not easier. There is a phone within arm's reach that is very good at interrupting, and a list waiting for you the second you stand up. None of it is going anywhere.

Give this ten minutes. It is okay to stop.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

EXHALE

Start with your breathing. You have been doing it all morning without thinking about it once. Slow it down on purpose and let it be the first thing you hand God today.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

> *As you inhale, pray, "You called me yours first..."*
>
> *As you exhale, pray, "...before I had anything to give."*

LOOK

These words are older than every country on the map. God said them to one man living in a tent, and people have been reading them out loud ever since because they needed to know they belonged to somebody.

Read through them slowly two times before you move on.

> *7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.*
>
> **Genesis 17:7-8 NIV**

ASK

God did not wait for Abraham to arrive somewhere before He claimed him. He said, I will be their God. And in the very same sentence He called Abraham a foreigner in the land He was promising him.

- God calls Abraham a foreigner and promises him the whole country in one breath. Does that combination ring true for where you are with God right now?
- What do you think you have to reach, fix, or finish before you would feel like you actually belong to God?
- Where in your life are you living like a guest instead of somebody God has already claimed?

Write a short prayer thanking God for claiming you before you had anything to bring Him.

Or, if belonging to God is something you struggle to believe about yourself, write a prayer asking Him to show you one piece of evidence this week.

HEAR

Now stop talking and listen. If this is not something you normally do, it will feel strange. That is fine.

The hard part of this movement is that most of us want to finish it and get on with the day. Resist that for two minutes. Sit still.

You can start with, "I'm listening for you, God. Speak to me."

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

TUESDAY

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS SWORN TO.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

A day has gone by since you did this last. Something in it went well and something in it did not. Both are welcome here.

You do not have to get yourself sorted out before you sit down. Come in the way you actually are.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

EXHALE

Breathe again, slower than feels natural. You are not trying to relax. You are trying to stop moving long enough to pay attention.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

> *As you inhale, pray, "Your word cannot be taken back..."*
>
> *As you exhale, pray, "...my hands are already full."*

LOOK

This is the only place in Genesis where God swears an oath. He had nothing greater to swear by, so He swore by Himself.

Read through them slowly two times before you move on.

16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Genesis 22:16-18 NIV

ASK

God bound Himself. He did not ask Abraham to hold the promise together. He put His own name on it.

Notice that God is not starting something new here. He made this promise to Abraham decades earlier, in Genesis 12, before Abraham had done anything at all. What happens on the mountain is God signing a promise He had already made. The oath is not payment for obedience.

- God swore by Himself because there was nothing greater to swear by. What difference does it make that the promise does not depend on your grip?
- One chapter later Abraham turns down a field somebody offered him for free. What is being offered to you right now that has a string attached to it?
- What would today look like if you took God at His word about one specific thing?

Write a prayer naming one thing you are still trying to hold together by yourself.

HEAR

Most people go their whole lives without hearing God audibly. That does not mean He is not speaking.

A thought that will not leave you alone. A verse that keeps surfacing. A person who comes to mind for no reason. Pay attention to those.

Ask Him simply: "What are you saying to me today?"

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS EXPECTED.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

You are three days in. If yesterday felt useful, good. If it felt like nothing happened at all, that is also normal, and it is not a sign you are doing this wrong.

Sit down anyway. Some mornings the only thing you bring is your body.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

EXHALE

You have taken something like twenty thousand breaths since yesterday morning and paid attention to almost none of them. Pay attention to the next ten.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

> *As you inhale, pray, "You have made a place for me..."*
>
> *As you exhale, pray, "...and you are not ashamed."*

LOOK

The writer of Hebrews is looking back at a long line of people who did not get what they were promised. He is not embarrassed about it, and he does not explain it away.

Read through them slowly two times before you move on.

> *13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*
>
> **Hebrews 11:13-16 NIV**

ASK

These people died before the promise arrived. Sarah is one of them. She received the son God promised her and she never received the land.

Before the questions, one thing needs saying plainly. Dying before the promise arrives is not a failure of faith. It is not evidence that somebody did not believe hard enough. The writer of Hebrews puts these people in the faith chapter and commends them by name. Yesterday you read God swearing an oath after Abraham obeyed, and it would be easy to read this week as though obedience unlocks the outcome you are hoping for. That is not what happened to Sarah. She waited, and she died still waiting, and God is not ashamed to be called her God. If you are carrying a loss this morning, this page is not asking you to explain it or find the lesson in it.

- They saw the promise from a distance and welcomed it anyway. What are you welcoming from a distance right now?
- Verse 16 says God has prepared a city for them. What does it do to you to know that you are expected somewhere you have never been?

- Who do you know who died still waiting? What would it mean to believe God is not ashamed to be called their God?

Write a prayer for someone you love who is waiting on something that has not come.

Or, if you are the one waiting and you are tired of it, write a prayer telling God exactly how long it has been.

HEAR

Some of us avoid this part because we suspect that if God did speak, He would be disappointed in us.

Look at verse 16 one more time. He is not ashamed of the people who died still waiting. He is not ashamed of you either.

Sit with that for two minutes and let Him have the last word.

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

THURSDAY

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS SEALED.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

By now you have a rhythm going. That is good, and it is also the risk. The morning this turns into a box to check is the morning it stops doing anything for you.

Be intentional today. Read it like you have not seen any of it before.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

EXHALE

Breathing is one of the few things your body handles without being told, which is a mercy. Take the next minute and do on purpose what you have been doing all night without trying.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

> *As you inhale, pray, "God, you put your Spirit in me..."*
>
> *As you exhale, pray, "...as a promise of more."*

LOOK

Paul is writing to a church that had good reason to wonder whether he meant what he said. He answers them with a word off a bill of sale.

Read through them slowly two times before you move on.

> *21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*
>
> **2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NIV**

ASK

God set His seal of ownership on you. He put His Spirit in you as a deposit, which is the money a buyer lays down to guarantee the rest is coming.

- A deposit obligates whoever laid it down. Paul says God laid it down. What does that say about who is responsible for finishing what God started in you?
- "Seal of ownership" is language about belonging to somebody. Where do you go looking for that same sense of belonging somewhere else?
- Sunday we said that nobody can purchase what God has promised. What are you still trying to pay for?

Write a prayer thanking God that the finishing is His job and not yours.

Or, if it does not feel like God is finishing anything in you right now, write a prayer asking Him to show you one place He is working that you have not noticed.

HEAR

Your mind is going to wander. That is not failure, it is what minds do. When you notice it, come back. You do not have to start the whole thing over.

Give it two minutes without producing anything.

"I'm listening for you, God. Speak to me."

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.

FRIDAY

SELAH

GOD'S FAMILY IS INCLUDED.

(Write your answers down)

STOP

This is the last one. Before you start, think back across the week.

Monday you read that God claimed a man before he had arrived anywhere. Wednesday you read about people who died before the promise came and were commended anyway.

Hold both of those this morning.

- What's on your mind? Notice your thoughts. Is there a distraction that you need to set aside for a few minutes during this quiet time? Is there something specific you feel God is asking you to pay attention to?
- What's on your heart? What are you carrying into this space? A specific emotion, a person, a weight you didn't realize you were holding?
- Describe how you currently feel in just one word.

EXHALE

One more time. You have done this four mornings now, and the breathing was never the point. The point was that you stopped.

If you find it hard to focus, count slowly to four as you breathe in and slowly to six as you breathe out, letting the count steady your pace.

> *As you inhale, pray, "You are not finished yet..."*
>
> *As you exhale, pray, "...and neither am I."*

LOOK

These two verses close out a long list of names. A few of them you would recognize. Most of them never saw the thing

they were waiting for.

Read through them slowly two times before you move on.

> *39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*
>
> **Hebrews 11:39-40 NIV**

ASK

None of them received what was promised. God planned something better, and the plan has you in it. Only together with you would they be made complete.

- You are part of a story that started long before you and is not finished. Does that make you feel smaller this morning, or larger?
- Abraham and Sarah are still waiting. So are you. Who is waiting alongside you that you could actually talk to this week?
- The promise to Abraham was that all nations on earth would be blessed through his family. Who is watching how you wait?

Write a prayer asking God to make your waiting visible to somebody who needs to see it.

HEAR

This is the last page, and the temptation is to finish it and be done with it.

The practice does not end with the page. You can do all five of these movements tomorrow morning with nothing in front of you.

Ask Him one last time: "What do you want me to carry out of this week?"

Whatever comes into your mind, write it down.