

MON

- ✓ READ PSALM 26:2
- ✓ THOUGHT We will examine those places of the heart where God calls us to listen to his voice and re-align our motivations and priorities with his divine love.
- ✓ PRAYER God, in your great mercy, I come near to you and ask that you speak to my heart today. Amen.

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TUES

- ✓ READ PSALM 4:23
- ✓ THOUGHT Heart Check! "Keep vigilant watch over your heart; that's where life starts." Close your eyes. It's time for a check-in with your heart. What are 3 priorities or goals you have for today? What might God say about your list? Be open to adjustments!
- ✓ PRAYER Lord, I'm surprised how quickly my life gets off track. Please renew my purpose in you with your strength and guidance. Amen.

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WED

- ✓ READ PSALM 141:8
- ✓ THOUGHT Eye Focus! "But God, dear Lord, I only have eyes for you." Maybe this is the centering point for your focus today. Take notice of your breathing. As you inhale say, "My eyes are on you" and as you exhale say, "I rest in your love".
- ✓ PRAYER God, you are the balancing point where I can find rest despite the ups and downs of my crazy life. Thank you for your grace and mercy. Amen.

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THURS

- ✓ READ Romans 12:2
- ✓ THOUGHT "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think." Simplify! We are convinced that our wants are our needs, but maybe we need to take a second look at our possessions or priorities. What is God leading you to re-imagine today?
- ✓ PRAYER Lord God, in your wisdom please guide me as I examine what I consider necessary and important. Amen.

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FRI

- ✓ READ PSALM 26:2
- ✓ THOUGHT "Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and mind." Even though this may feel like a dangerous prayer, be brave! God does not ask you to examine your life without offering help. There are wonderful things to be discovered and new possibilities for you!
- ✓ PRAYER Lord, I come to you today a bit scared but ready to open my mind to new things. Amen.

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SAT

- ✓ READ PSALM 51:10
- ✓ THOUGHT The attachments of our hearts reveal where we place our trust and hope. List some areas of your life where you think a change might be needed.
- ✓ PRAYER Here I am, Lord. Change me. In your gracious name I pray. Amen.

NOTES: _____



GROUP GUIDE

HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM...

- ✓ **PRAYER** God, we acknowledge that you are already here. May our hearts be open to your presence and direction. Amen.
- ✓ **BIG IDEA** We have been called beyond our small, selfish lives into authentic living with God's grace and mercy. This requires our willing participation to recognize and transform the parts of our lives that get in the way of a loving relationship with God and others.
- ✓ **READ** MATTHEW 15:1-20, MATTHEW 11:28-29
- ✓ **DISCUSS**
 - "Some Pharisees and teachers of religious law now arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus." Crowds followed Jesus to witness his miracles and listen to his radical teachings. The religious experts lurked nearby, attempting to trap Jesus with his answers to their questions. What was the question voiced in verse 2? Still today, we get caught up in rules and regulations. Identify a human-made rule or restriction that you've experienced and describe the effect it had on you or someone else.
 - As usual, Jesus caught the overly-religious in their own trap. We, too, have perfected the art of rationalization. *"I gave at church; someone else can care for my neighbor."* How would you describe the central message of God's commands?
 - Then, Jesus reminds the holier-than-thou of the words of Isaiah, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship is a farce, for they teach human-made ideas as commands from God." Centuries later, those words still ring true. The Christ-like life is a matter of the heart, not just a set of rules. How do we become more like Jesus? Perhaps it's in the guidance of the Holy Spirit that nudges and shapes us into God's image. What nudges have you have felt recently about changes you may need to make in your life?
 - The disciples still didn't get the message. "Don't you understand yet?" Jesus asked. Anything you eat passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer. But the words you speak come from the heart. That's what defiles you." So we are called out of the sewer system of our humanity into places of rest with God. Read Matthew 11:28-29 aloud. Share what speaks to you today.
- ✓ **Pray** God, help us to be willing to listen to the ways you are guiding us. We want to become more like Christ in the way that we follow you and relate to each other. Show us the things in our lives that might need an adjustment. Amen.