



seasons



-a devotional-

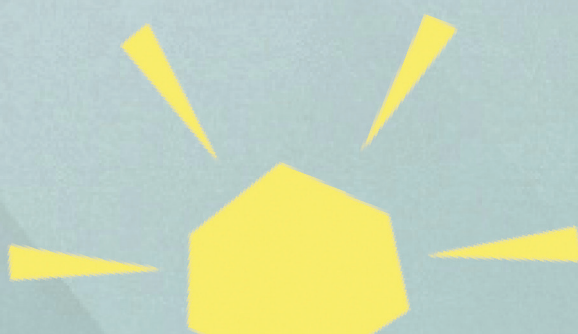
There is a time for everything, and a season
for every activity under the heavens:

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

Life is full of peaks and valleys, times when we feel on top of the world and times we feel like we are in a never ending season of wandering through a desert of emptiness. Whether its physically, mentally, or spiritually there are days as human beings when we feel like we have it all together and days when we feel it's best to just go back to sleep and hope that tomorrow is better than it was today. The world around us experiences seasons, and we spiritually experience seasons. Seasons of excitement, fade, darkness and growth. Seasons build on each other, there is no spring without a winter and no winter without a fall. As god designed the physical world to experience seasons, so he designed us as human to experience seasons. Our mission should be not to avoid the seasons god has laid out for us, rather our goal should be to learn and grow from the seasons we go through.

REFLECT on times in life where you felt “on top of the world” and when you felt like you were “wandering in a desert of emptiness.”

WHAT happened because of those seasons?



That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

There's an idea that life is like a line; our line begins when we are born, we may experience highs and lows but our line continues to progress forward, and eventually it will all end. It's the idea that life is about moving from point a to point b, arriving at a destination more than learning from the journey. We have a tendency to not just view life, but our spiritual journey as a line. What would it look like though if we viewed our lives and our spiritual journey less like a line, and more like a circle? What if our goal isn't to arrive at a peak destination, but to circle through seasons over and over again, gaining the ability to walk with greater wisdom and maturity in each season? Every season has difficulties. Work through the seasons intentionally, gain insight because you will go through it again and again. As we grow through the seasons, we are able to recognize, with a greater awareness, the active presence of god in our life.

PRAY. Ask god to help you intentionally seek growth in every season.



Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the later rains. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the lord is at hand.

JAMES 5:7-8

There are certain characteristics to each spiritual season, as there are for physical seasons. As we circle through life; we will go through summers, falls, winters, and springs. We don't get to determine when one season ends and another begins, but we can recognize the season we're in and intentionally experience the season with wisdom and seeking to gain greater wisdom. In the physical realm it is wise to wear a bathing suit in summer, and a snow jacket in winter; to treat summer as summer and winter as winter. The same goes for spiritual seasons, going through a spiritual winter is different than going through a spiritual summer, a spiritual fall different than a spiritual spring. The key is to recognize seasons, journeying through them gaining wisdom and insight, mastering each season, not rushing to get out of them. Every season has its lessons and every season has its blessings.

WHAT season are you currently in?



READ PSALM 40

Throughout scripture we see people who did big things for god, experience seasons. God uses seasons to help us grow and mature, but god can use people for “big things” no matter what season they’re in. David, a shepherd boy turned king, is historically known as a man after god’s own heart. He slayed giants, honored those who didn’t honor him, led well as king, and from his lineage came jesus. His pursuit of god continues to set an example for us on what it means to pursue a relationship with god. In psalm 40, we can take comfort knowing that as we go through seasons, even great faith heroes like david went through seasons: out of the yuck of mud and mire, god set david’s feet on a firm place, giving him a new song to sing. David’s life was marked by struggle and glory, joy and pain. No matter the circumstances david faced, his life was being used for something far greater than himself.

HOW has god grown you using different seasons?

HOW has God used you to impact others during different seasons of your life?



Sluggards do not plow in season; so at the harvest time they look but find nothing.

PROVERBS 20:4

No one sets a goal to waste their life. In one way or another, we want our lives to mean something, we want to make the most of the life we're given. For our lives to count, we need to make each season of life count. In each season two things can happen: the seasons pass us by and we unknowingly miss what god was trying to grow in us and do through our lives, or they help us as we intentionally seek to learn and grow. To get the most out of the season you are in: surrender, lean in, and mark the path. If you're already going through a season, why not surrender to it, there's not much you can do to change it. Lean into the lessons for each season, they'll help you the next time around. What you learn in one season, will help you in the next season. Mark the path for the next time around, you'll come back. Understand what happens to you in the season, know your personal tendencies in each season and what seems to happen.

PAUSE. Ask god to help you get the most from the season that you're in.



I called to the lord, who is worthy of praise, and i
have been saved from my enemies.

PSALM 18:3

The bliss of spiritual summer is filled with delight, ease and energy. Everything seems to be going great, and god is readily available without us having to offer up much effort. Summer is the only season people often fake, when people ask “how are you” ... “i’m fine” is offered as a response giving the illusion of summer. Summer is fun as joy and delight coincide. Faith feels fresh and new. Worship feels easy and is filled with emotions as you respond to the visual and tangible goodness of god that summer brings. Bible reading stirs you again for the simple truths of faith. No matter how many times you’ve read or recited john 3:16, in summer the verse adds something new to your life. The tears shed in summer, come from being overwhelmed by god’s goodness. Summer is a season, we ask god to return us to, begging god to “return to us the joy of our salvation.” It’s easy to enjoy the summer season, but we were not meant to remain in summer.

REFLECT on when you first began following jesus, what was faith like for you?



When we find ourselves in summer, it's not that we've arrived at a new level of spiritual greatness or closeness to god, we are just in summer.

Summer is one part of the circle we travel around in our life and in our faith. You will never arrive at a constant state of summer till you arrive in heaven. We want to believe summer will never end, and when we're in the middle of summer, it feels like it never will, but fall is coming. The greatest patience we can have in summer is not with our circumstances, but with other people who may be going through different seasons. In summer we can be quick to judge those in fall and winter, believing that their circumstances are their fault. When others come to us in summer with their “seasons’ issues,” we offer up the answer of “try harder,” when what they may need most is someone to just sit and listen, offering not a solution but a presence. Maybe one of the best things to do in summer, is to enjoy it, understanding that it will soon be a memory only to be returned to again.

HOW can you be patient with others while in summer?

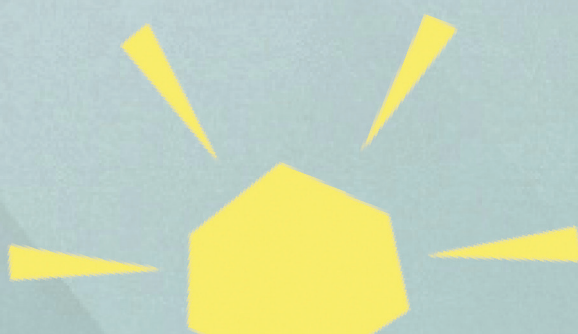


I sought the lord, and he answer me;
he delivered me from all my fears.

PSALM 34:4

With fewer hard situational distractions that other seasons bring, summer allows the opportunity to relearn simple truths that were learned early in faith. Summer reminds of simple things like the amazingness of god. In summer we reclaim our wonder of god. We stand in awe of his sovereignty, amazed by his divine power. Our eyes are open to his kindness, we feel his nearness and understand the sweetness behind romans 5:8, that “while we were still sinners, christ died for us.” In summer the truths that were so real to us at the point of salvation are relearned in deeper ways, as we find ourselves back in summer after experiencing fall, winter and spring. In summer we are reminded of the nearness of god in our everyday lives. God is not a distant being, but a close friend. Summer frees us to see what was hard to see but still truth in other seasons with great awe and wonder in this season.

Today **CLAIM TRUTHS** about god. Fill in the blank,
god is _____.



I sought the lord, and he answer me;
he delivered me from all my fears.

PSALM 34:4

“Obedience is not about how much you know but how quickly you react to the word of God.” In summer we remember the joy that comes with obedience and are reminded that God honors simple obedience. We find obedience fun in summer, putting it back in its proper place as an opportunity to grow closer to God. Obedience allows us to see what’s most important in our lives and gives us the chance to prioritize and put first things first. It clarifies our faith, instead of trying to figure out what’s right or wrong, obedience shows us what to do, requiring us to simply respond. Obedience offers protection. It centers us in the middle of God’s will, the safest place and yet most adventurous place we could be. Deuteronomy 5:29, “oh that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever.” In summer we are reminded in our faith the best thing we can do, in every season of our faith is to walk in obedience, as it serves as our guide offering us clarity and protection.

WHERE in your life do you need to walk in greater obedience?

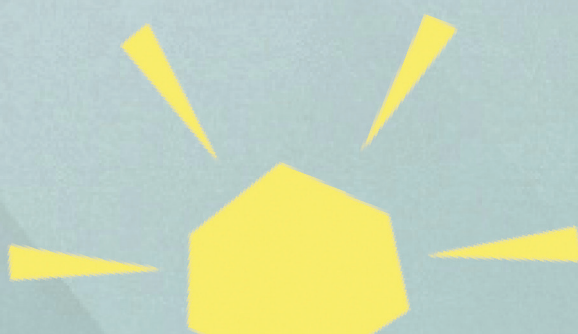


Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

1 THESSALONIANS 5: 16-18

Summer is fun, it is filled with joy, and as we go through other seasons of our soul, it serves as our reminder that there is joy to be found in life. In summer we build joyful memories, knowing that while joy is present in other seasons, it is more difficultly found. Summer reminds us that life is a gift to be received with gladness, and through everything there is a reason to praise God. Summer creates spiritual experiences that gives us spiritual refreshment. Our cups are filled in this season. We experience spiritual highs in summer, coming out of winter retreat there's a chance you feel like you're in summer. Live in the moment. Create memories with God in these times, knowing that as fall and winter come, these moments will drive you through difficult seasons. God is with you in difficult moments, and he's with you in joyful moments like what you are currently experiencing. Look for him in these moments, pause to notice his good and gracious movement in your life.

TAKE TIME to record the joyful moments of summer.



day 11

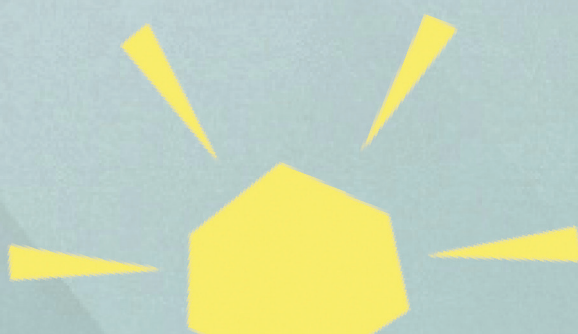
what to learn from summer

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

MATTHEW 13:23

In every season there is an opportunity to learn and grow. What can be learned and how can you grow in summer? Summer is a time to make commitments without over committing. Expand your capacity in summer but don't over reach or you'll set yourself up for failure in fall and in winter. When you feel like coasting through summer, push yourself spiritually. In summer encourage others without condescending. People feel condoned when you bring summer energy into their winter empty. Learn how to be with people in their season, while not leaving your own season. Summer is a great time to share your faith, learning how to be bold with your story while staying sympathetic to different people's journey. In this season, worship without holding back and soak up God without distraction. Summer is a chance to coast or a window of great opportunity. Make the most of summer, build and grow in summer.

HOW has God grown you in previous summer seasons?



they go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in zion.”

PSALM 84:7

While summer and winter are seasons of conditions, fall and spring are seasons of transition. Movement happens in fall and spring, in spring we rise from winter to summer, and in fall we descend from summer to winter. Fall is a season of fade and end, characterized by disappointment, unexpectedness, and mundaneness. While God is easily found in summer, God is found sometimes in fall, but it's always with much effort. Bible reading seems forced, and worship isn't as emotionally rewarding as it was in summer, it feels difficult and distracted. Anxiety rises as the unexpected happens often in fall. Old temptations we thought we conquered resurface in fall, and “what was” in summer is now gone. Fall is a season where things seem to be getting harder and more difficult but they are not impossible. In the transitions you may feel like in your relationship with God, that you're the only one working, but hold on knowing God is doing work both in your life and in circumstances around you.

In your personal life, **WHAT** characteristics define fall?



day 13

mistakes of fall

Fall is a lot more uncomfortable than summer. While summer is blissful, fall is tiresome. You feel like something must be wrong, because you aren't experiencing the same joys of summer, so you start spiritual troubleshooting, doing your best to earn your way back to fall, when the best thing for you is fall. There's a tendency to miss fall lessons, in the hopes for summer. You feel like God is disappointed with you, because it takes effort to experience him. God backs away not because he's disappointed in you, but because he believes you're ready to take a next step, not because he's rejecting you. Hosea 11:3, "it was i who taught ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was i who healed them." God is like a father teaching his child to walk, he walks hand in hand with his child, and steadily removes a hand hoping to help the young child walk less like a wobbly baby and more like a stable adult. It's not that the father leaves the child, it's that the father wants the child to grow. Fall is uncomfortable and you believe this is as bad as it gets but it isn't because winter is coming. Don't



Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.”

PSALM 84:5

Summer may feel like we've arrived at heaven, fall reminds us that while we're here on earth we can't arrive at heaven. Heaven wasn't made for earth perfection can't find its home in imperfection. On earth we journey with God, in heaven we arrive with God. Sometimes that journey unravels without explanation, perfection just isn't going to happen. Our hope isn't in a perfect journey, our hope is in Jesus who we journey with. Fall reminds us that we aren't as far along on our journey as our best moments would suggest, but at the same time it reminds us that we aren't as far behind as the worst moments would highlight. We have this ideal picture of the journey we want, fall reminds us that we don't get the journey we want we get the journey God wants for us. God's plan for our journey is far better than we could ever imagine. As Christians we follow the example Christ set for us, even when the journey to the cross wasn't his ideal journey, he embraced the journey God had for him. Let us learn not to idealize our journey but to embrace the journey both when it seems held together and when it's unraveling.

ASK God for help, embracing the season you are in.



They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.”

HEBREWS 12:10

Holiness is defined as “the state of being devoted entirely to the deity or the work of a deity.” It’s a state of being sold out. God wants holiness, and holiness is grown through a process. It’s not achieved with the snap of your fingers but is built through trying times, and times of discipline. God relentlessly presses you onward to holiness, because he relentlessly wants you to become more and more like him. You will never achieve the state of being a God, but God desires to make you into a clear image of him, to where, when people look at you they see the characteristics of him: his love, his gentleness, his justice, his peace, and his mercy. Hebrews 12:11 says this, “no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” Fall isn’t pleasant, at times it may seem painful, but if we allow ourselves to be trained by it, growing holiness, we’ll see a harvest of righteousness and peace, which can be explained in no other way other than God given.

WHAT situations has God used in your life to have grown you to display his characteristics?



You will seek me and find me when you seek
me with all your heart.”

JEREMIAH 29:13

Fall is not what we necessarily want but what God wants for us. If we were to decide our own spiritual journey, we would be in a constant state of summer, but we don't get to decide our own spiritual journey. We want God to chase us, we like when God pursues us, which he does but God also wants to be sought and wants to be found. Deuteronomy 4:29, “but if from there you seek the lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.” Fall reminds us, that the goal of our journey is not finding ease but finding God. We want God to show us the path, but God wants us to follow him. As Jesus prepared for the cross, he promised, “that in this world you will have trials, but take heart, for he has overcome the world.” Trials are a normal part of life, and are a regular visitor of the fall season. God doesn't run from trials, he overcomes them. In Christ, we have the same ability to overcome trial, and find God in a greater way, on the journey he has for us, than what we could've ever imagined.

WHERE have your plans and God's plans for your life differ? **WHAT** did you learn about God, as you followed his plan for your life?

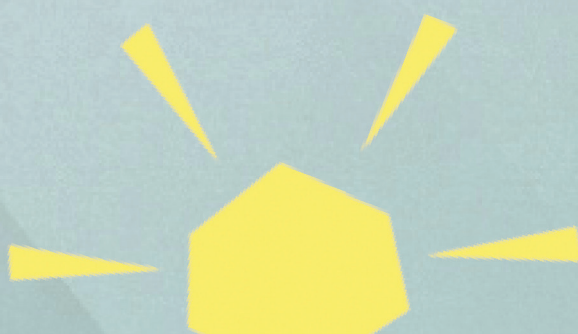


going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘my father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’

MATTHEW 26:39

To surrender is to “cease resistance, and submit to a greater authority.” Surrender is hard, when we want control and stability in our lives. As christians, God is not just our savior but our lord. He’s the master, yet even in his kindness and grace we sometimes have a hard time submitting to what he has for us. In fall, we need to learn how to rehearse surrender until it owns us. Surrender is moving from having to do something to getting to do something. We are called to let go of our rights, until we are owned by gratitude. Fall sets the stage, to practice gratitude, even when our life isn’t filled with rainbows and butterflies. Fall teaches us to wake up, finding gifts in each and every day, even if it takes some searching. We must learn how to manage what we think is deserved. Entitlement robs gratitude, and gratitude spurs forth joy. Salvation wasn’t deserved; it was a gift given from grace. Our relationship with God is a gift. The very breath in our lungs is a gift. In fall we learn how to practice surrender, realizing what God gives, are truly gifts.

HOW can you practice giving God greater control in your life?



Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, ‘follow me!’

JOHN 21:18-19

As Jesus called the disciples into a life of following him the word “immediately” was used constantly to describe their response to his call. I’m not sure their response was always immediate to everything Jesus asked, but they always followed, trusting him. In fall, we learn to trust God, even if our natural tendency isn’t to immediately follow. In fall learn to cling to God’s sovereignty even when it is hard to immediately follow him. Even when you don’t understand what’s God doing, don’t worry, he’s in control. In fall cling to God’s kindness. God’s working all things out for good for those who believe in him (romans 8:28). In fall trust God’s nearness even when he feels further away than what he did in summer. Just because he doesn’t feel close, doesn’t mean he isn’t close.

Ask God to help you trust him.



READ DEUTERONOMY 8:10-20

Our faith is a faith of remembrance. Remember and don't forget. In fall revisit your story, and stay connected to your story. Remember how God has moved in your life. Summer is when God moves freely in your life, and fall is when you strive to remember how he's moved. Take time in fall to reflect on where you were when your faith began, and how God has transformed your life bringing you to where you are now. Cling to your story in fall, so that your faith continues to look like a journey instead of mindless obedience. Faith is trusting God as he's unfolding your life story. In fall, when it's hard to see God in your life; remember his faithfulness in your life, remember God's hand in your life, and remember the unique experiences and words that God has spoken into your life. God directs us in some seasons, and in other seasons we must remember the directions, even when nothing seems clear.

Today, take time to **REMEMBER** where you were at when your faith began, key experiences you've had with God, and how God has shown up in your life, bringing you to where you are now.



Course he isn't safe. But he's good.
He's the king, I tell you."

MR. BEAVER

The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe

Winter is a season of absence and darkness, characterized by disinterest, discouragement, and depression. Winter is depicted accurately by c.s. lewis' the lion, the witch and the wardrobe. Winter is cold, people are fighting to defend themselves, petty conflict is evident, and God is a distant memory. The psalmist writes in winter, "be merciful to me, lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak (psalm 31:9-10)." Winter is a season where things are just dead, everything seems to just be over and God has left the building. While bible reading and worship are difficult, but accessible in fall, in winter bible reading seems meaningless, and worship is pointless. Winter is the most difficult season. It's the most painful season, it makes you forget the joys of other seasons, and what it was like to live in other season. It seems spring will never come, but hold on, for it surely will.

HAVE YOU experienced winter in your life? **WHAT** were characteristics that defined your winter?

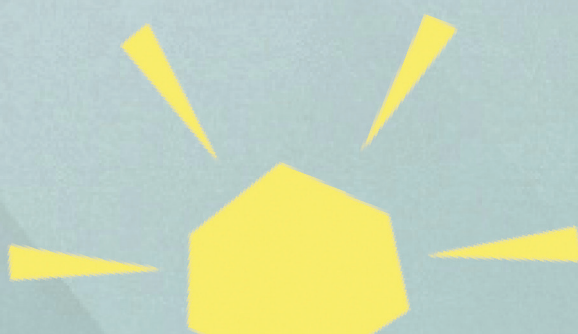


All this came upon us, though we had not forgotten you; we had not been false to your covenant. Our hearts had not turned back; our feet had not strayed from your path.”

PSALM 44:17-18

In the deadness of winter, you can quickly feel like something you did caused the spiritual emptiness you feel. You feel like your faith is broken beyond repair. You feel like if you were a better christian you wouldn't be in winter. You don't cause winter; these feelings though can cause you to want to throw in the towel. Don't quit, winter is a season. In winter, you can easily mistake the absence of God when God is actually pulling back to bring something greater into your life. This is a season where you have to learn how to depend on the truth behind your faith rather than just the feelings of your faith. Winter is a season where you learn to fight for God. In the darkness of winter, it's easy to believe nothing is happening spiritually. You can't see God, but what if he's preparing you for a greater spring. In the bareness of winter, it's easy to believe it will never end, but hold on.

WHEN you enter into winter, what is your common response to the season?



Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of zebulun and the land of naphtali, but in the future he will honor galilee of the nations, by the way of the sea, beyond the jordan.”

ISAIAH 9:1

In winter you see clearly that your efforts to spiritually fix yourself are actually part of your spiritual brokenness. You can't solve winter, trying harder to rush out of winter, doesn't work. Winter gets you to a place where you cannot solve what is wrong, you can't produce spring you can only hope for spring. Winter brings you to a place where you come to God openhanded, ready for him to take over, knowing your efforts has not solved anything. If you let winter do its work in you, you will leave something good for something better. Psalm 131:1-3, “my heart is not proud, lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed, and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content. Israel, put your hold in the lord both now and forevermore.”

Take time to **PRAY**, asking God to have full control over your life. Submit to him.



It's hard to teach an old dog, new tricks because it's hard to help the old dog let go of the old ways to embrace new ways. Winter allows us to learn new God ways, because it encourages us to let go of "what was." Winter teaches us to "enter into our own nothingness" to truly be formed by God. Winter is a season of stripping, prepping us for the building that comes with spring. Winter strips you of false identity so you can embrace your true identity in christ. It strips you of what you have filled voids in your life, to remind you of the only thing that can fill voids and that is christ. Winter takes what you were trying to form in your life, pushes it to the side, so you can embrace something better. Winter is a season of letting go. Winter prepares you for newness and greater growth that comes with spring. Letting go sometimes hurts, but it's necessary.

WHAT do you need to let go of, in order to embrace the newness that God has for you?



day 24

thankfulness without emotion

Winter moves you to praise despite a lack of emotion. While summer praise, thanksgiving and worship are full of excited emotion, winter pushes you to deepen your worship by praising God for who he is not only what he's done for you. When God turns out the light, do you continue to sing even in the darkness? When you worship in the dark for who he is, not how you feel you grow as a worshipper. In winter you worship God because he is worthy to be worshipped. He is worthy or worship because he is sovereign. He's in control, even when you feel out of control. He is worthy of worship because he is kind. He is worthy of worship because he is near to you. Psalm 103:2-4, "praise the lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits- who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion." Winter you learn how to praise not for the feelings of faith, but the truth of God and his promises.

WHY do you worship?

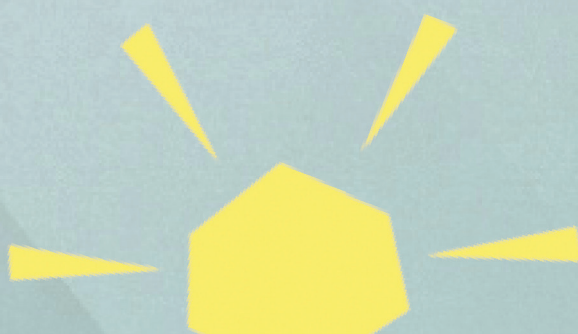


He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings utter darkness into the light.

JOB 12:22

In the dark of winter, you can see aspects of God that are hidden in other seasons. There are things about God that only winter can reveal. In the dark of winter, you can see aspects of yourself that are hidden in other seasons. Winter reveals your neediness, you see the limits of your own self. Winter gives you time to reflect on the truths of God, and your own humanness, even if it hurts. Winter choose to reflect, over the ease of being distracted by the comfortable, whether it's your routine, your work, your school, friends, sports, netflix or social media. In winter create time to process and reflect. Is God who you run to? Do you choose God because it's simply him? God can choose to give or not give, it doesn't change who he is. Allow your processing and reflection to expose idols. The comfort you run to, where you go to numb your pain is your idol. Winter allows you the chance to run to God, at the same time, winter gives you the chance to run to worldly comfort, you get to choose.

WHAT is something in your life that may be taking the place of God?



In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.

ALBERT CAMUS

To pine, is to want or miss someone or something very much. When you miss a person or want something bad you'll stop at nothing to see the someone or get the something. In winter you learn to persevere as you pine. During winter you pine, learning to work without receiving something in the season. The question winter poses, "how long can you pine after God, not get him, and keep pining?" To pine and not receive is to hurt. If you aren't hurting, you aren't pining right. Running to idol brings comfort and eliminates the hurt. When you run to idols, you check out from what God is trying to do during your winter. Press in, winter takes work, but winter yields reward. Lean into your ache for God's presence. Continue to chase his nearness, even when it's hard. In winter learn how to seek God, not necessarily find him and keep seeking him. Refuse to numb your longing for God with worldly comfort. Winter is a season where patience is needed. Learn to wait on God, true waiting is resolved in trust.

ASK God for the strength to keep pining.



The bitter cold of winter is followed by the sweet freshness and newness of spring. Winter may feel unending, but christ restores the spring. Spring is a season of relief, rejoicing and restoration. Relief because you made it, and rejoicing because you weren't sure what was happening in winter but you found restored life after making it through the season. Things seem to be reborn in spring, winter may feel like death, but spring brings about resurrection. God moves in spring, and all you can do is try and keep up. In spring bible reading becomes fresh again, as you read scripture you unlock new truths, as God does something new in you, you're able to see these new things. After a season of dry worship, worship once again feels deep and refreshing. Spring is by far the most rewarding season: where you find joy, you also find maturity and where you find zeal you also find knowledge. Spring is a season of fulfilling victory. It is filled with joy, because you're able to take a step back and see the full cycle of seasons you've just gone through, and you're able to see that God was with you the entire time.

WHEN in your life have you experienced seasons of spring?



Where things are once again good in spring, it's easy to coast and become careless with the new things God is trying to do in you. Instead of coasting through this season, learn to be intentional in spring. Spring comes and lifts the weight of winter, be careful to be carefree without becoming careless. Spring brings newness, don't put the new thing God is doing into an old container. In winter, God did something new in you, don't revert back to the old ways you held before winter. At the same time, during spring watch out for legalism, be cautious not to turn new fire into a to-do list. Matthew 9:17, "neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." In spring it's easy to over analyze the new thing God is doing leading you to underestimate it. You can't humanize what God is doing in the supernatural. Scripture reminds us that God's way are beyond our understanding. In spring it's easy to distrust the new thing God is doing in you and become spiritually tentative. Give into what God is doing, you don't have to be in control of what's happening to trust who is making it happen. Spring is a season of freshness, it's hard to believe you'll ever cycle again, but you will, summer is coming.

HOW has God used situations and circumstances to grow you?



READ MATTHEW 8: 23-27

In spring you realize that God is more awesome, more sovereign, more kind and more near than what you knew. The wisdom of his plan is more encompassing than you than you thought. The beauty of his character is more multifaceted than you thought. You realize in spring God never forsakes you. Winter you feel like God is distant, but in spring you begin to understand that he never really was. Deuteronomy 31:8, “the lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” In spring you realize you never really needed to be afraid. Fear sucks. Fear holds people back, takes everything good, it builds up walls when God never did. Jesus doesn’t like your fear, even when you think it’s ok. Fear sucks happiness out of your days, and the adventure out of your spiritually. We are not called to walk in fear, but rest in God’s sovereignty, kindness and nearness.

WHAT attributes of God have you seen displayed in your life?

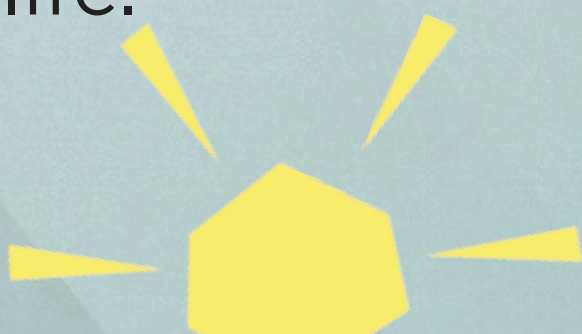


And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother... for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”

MATTHEW 19:29

It's hard to understand the growth involved with spring. In spring you are surprised by your growth. You grow in the deep qualities as God takes you through winter. In spring you discover the unexpected areas that God grew you in that season, how he changed your heart, and in spring God helps you grow habits that reflect the heart change from winter. In spring you see things of old fading, you aren't losing these things in a bad way, God is just growing you. In spring you discover God's way is different than the way of the world, and you realize how much better it is. You realize in spring that God sometimes takes, but he gives more. God can't build something new until he tears something down in you. You realize in spring that you had been holding on to something empty but God has something full for you. God is a fan of progress even if it may be a little unfamiliar. Spring helps us realize, spirituality depended less on us and more on God than what I understood. God gives more than what we realize, grows deeper than what we can imagine, and ultimately his plan is better than our own.

Take time to **REFLECT** on the blessings God has given you in your life.



Spring moves us to action. It moves us to rejoice in the joy of our salvation. The new life we find in christ, gives us a reason to sing. Spring moves us to put new insights into new practice. Winter brought new insight about our identity. Spring helps us put those insights into practice. Winter also brought new insights about God, and once again spring creates space for us to put those insights into practice. Spring gives us the chance to feed the new fire we find after a cold winter. Whatever the new is, it will shape the next season of spirituality. Spring is the time to practice new disciplines. Spring is the time to build new spiritual friendships. Spring is a time to tackle old spiritual strongholds and to get honest in community. The spiritual momentum spring creates, creates opportunity to clean up past mistakes, seek forgiveness where needed, and make peace with those around you. Hebrews 12:1, “... let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

HOW can you use the spiritual momentum of spring to grow spiritually in this season?



understanding your season

Giving a name to the season you are in spiritually has great power. It has the ability to give hope when a season is difficult, and give focus to preparation as you find yourself in seasons of joy and excitement. Knowing your season is not an excuse to mope and not pursue God and the plan he has for your season, rather it gives you a greater understanding to what God has the opportunity to do in your life in the season you are in. Understanding seasons also gives you the chance to better love people in different seasons than you. It gives you the ability to intentionally encourage, and intentionally be with people in their season, while not leaving your own season. Patience grows in understanding. Knowing your season gives understanding, which opens the door for patience: patience with yourself in your season, patience with others who are in different seasons, and patience as God's plans for your life unfold.

