

Just One Week

I am inviting you to participate in a “Just One Week” whole-life exercise. I have been involved in a year-long program of the ELCA Board of Pensions and Mayo Hospital titled, “Journey of Renewal,” that is intended to look at the balance in my life. Use the day planner to help you start to live a more balanced life. Try it and have fun, it’s only for “Just One Week.” Perhaps it will change your life.

Pastor Jeff

Day One - Take note of your early morning routine. In which step do you realize this new day is a gift to you from God?

- Drink 12 ounces of water before breakfast
- Eat breakfast that contains at least 10 grams of protein
- Before you clean up from breakfast pray for 3 minutes....
 - 1st minute - “You are God, Holy, and Mighty” repeat
 - 2nd minute - “Lord, Jesus Christ, You love me.” repeat
 - 3rd minute - “Holy Spirit, Breath of God strengthen me.” Repeat
- Take a walk. Sometime during the day plan a 20 minute brisk walk. As you walk intentionally focus on your breathing. Breathe fully.....exhale fully.
- Choose to limit your sugar intake today. Try to eat only fructose, the natural sugar in fresh fruit. Do not add sugar to cereal, coffee or tea, and limit dessert.
- Before bed, slow down. Turn off the TV/computer twenty minutes before bed. Turn down the lights. Use the quietness to invite the Spirit of God to dwell in you. Recall a time when you received a blessing.

Day Two - Take note of your early morning routine. Change the order you do two things.

- Drink 12 ounces of water before breakfast
- Eat breakfast that contains at least 10 grams protein. Limit sugar.
- Before you clean-up from breakfast pray the following Scripture for three minutes repeating the words aloud with intent:

“We also pray that you will be strengthened with his glorious power so that you will have all the patience and endurance you need today.” Colossians 1:11
- If you work, drive to work by a different route. If you stay at home, sit in a different chair, or spend more of your time in a different room.

- Limit your lunch: eat 1 cup of raw vegetables, 1 cup of fresh fruit, 1 hard-boiled egg, iced- tea (black or green) unsweetened.
- 20 minutes before bed turn off the TV and dim the lights. Remember the times in your life when you were with people you deeply loved. Allow those thoughts to lead you to your bed-time prayer, giving thanks for those you love.

Day Three - Take note of your early morning routine. First thing look in the bathroom mirror

and offer yourself this greeting: ***“Good morning you beautiful child of God!”***
Repeat four times.

- Drink 12 ounces of water before breakfast.
- Eat breakfast focusing on the food you are eating. Taste deeply. Sense texture. Note how your body responds to the food.
- Before you clean up from breakfast practice this “breath prayer” As you inhale deeply pray ***“Spirit of holy joy fill my life.”*** As you exhale deeply pray ***“God of mercy forgive my sin.”*** Pray this prayer for four minutes, repeating with each breath.
- **Today’s Goal** - Where *do I see the fingerprints of God?* Be mindful of God’s creation, and the creations all around you. For each fingerprint say, “By Your hand, Lord.”
- Call someone you have not talked with in a long time. It may be a sibling, a friend, a co-worker, a neighbor, but make it someone you have not talked with recently. Catch up on your lives. In the call, allow yourself to tell them what they have meant to you. Ask “is there anything that I can pray for you?”
- 20 minutes before bed turn off the TV and dim the lights. Picture yourself at the communion rail after a really hard week. Hold out your hands to receive the bread and wine. Listen for your name to be whispered. Look up into the eyes of Jesus....all is lifted. Forgiven.

Day Four - Take note of your early morning routine. Greet yourself in the bathroom mirror:

“Good morning you beautiful child of God!” Smile at yourself no matter what!!!
SMILE CHILD!

- Drink 12 ounces of water before breakfast
- Pray for all who provided the food before you: farmer, trucker, miller, baker, grocer, cashier, and bagger. Ask for God’s blessing upon them and their families this day.
- Eat breakfast that includes 10 grams of protein. Limit sugar and salt.
- Before you clean up from breakfast choose one of these three words: GRACE MERCY PEACE. Focus upon that one word for five minutes. Imagine a world with that. Imagine a family member with that. Imagine this day filled with that. “Choose well, grasshopper.”

- **Today's Goal – Seek out where grace is...where mercy is...where peace can be.**
- Write your “statement of faith”. Who is God to you? What does Jesus mean for you? What does it mean to be baptized? What have you learned as a disciple of Jesus? What means most to you about grace, mercy, and peace?
- 20 minutes before bed turn off the TV and dim the lights. Read your statement of faith aloud, slowly, intently. Read it with passion. Read it with power. Then, offer a prayer of thanks.
- Sleep in grace, mercy, and peace.

Day Five - Greet yourself in the bathroom mirror: ***Good Morning you precious child of God!***

- Drink 12 ounces of water before breakfast
- Pray with thanksgiving for the meal you are about to eat.
- Eat breakfast containing 10 grams of protein, limit adding sugar and salt.
- Before you clean up from breakfast write out a prayer to use before going to bed tonight. Focus on the blessings of the day; the presence of the Holy Spirit in your journey; the strength you receive from God's mercy.
- **Today's Goal - Identify blessings. Name them. Give thanks for them.**
- Twenty minutes before bed, turn down the lights, turn off the computer or TV. Tonight's devotions have been written by you. Read your “**Faith Statement**” aloud. Pray the prayer you wrote this morning. Rest in Christ's grace, mercy, and peace.

Day Six - Greet yourself in the bathroom mirror: ***I love you blest child of God!***

Repeat 4 times.

- Drink 12 ounces of water before breakfast.
- Pray with thanksgiving for the gift of a new day. It is truly a gift. What is your gift wrapped with?
- Eat a breakfast with at least 10 grams protein, while limiting sugar and salt.
- After you clean up from breakfast practice this whole-body prayer.
 - Stand with feet not quite shoulder width apart.
 - Raise your arms up and reach as hard as you can, without bouncing.
 - From this position take four deep breaths and exhale.
 - Bend forward from your waist and stretch gently for 20 seconds.
 - Return to standing position and repeat three times.

- **Today's Goal - To be flexible with other's plans and expectations.**
- Tonight "pray the news." At either the 5:30 pm time, or with the 10:00 pm news listen intently to the stories. Pray for those involved, pray for healing, pray for justice, pray for peace.
- Twenty minutes before bed, turn down the lights, turn off the TV or computer, In the darkness "**be still and know that I am God.**" Practice silent meditation on that verse for 10 minutes.

Day Seven - Who are you going to greet? The Beautiful, Precious, forgiven child of God that looks back at you.

- Drink 12 ounces of water before breakfast.
- Prepare a breakfast with at least **20 grams of protein. Note the increase.**
- **After breakfast before you clean up pray aloud** for the day that is ahead. What do you ask for?
- Take a walk today. Identify where God's fingerprints are known and unknown. Listen for the sounds of creation, and the sounds made by man. Look for signs of resurrection.
- **Today's Goal - identify ten places/images of resurrection to draw you closer to the mercy of God.**
- Tonight's activity involves looking at the "dead parts of your life" and to identify areas where you need some "waking up."

"You know, I used to (complete that statement) but I no longer do. That part of me has died. How have I grieved it?"

What "new life" activity or attitude has replaced it? How do you see resurrection in this "new thing?"

- Twenty minutes before bed, turn off the TV/computer. Dim the lights. In the silence of this time recall the images of new life, or resurrection, and prepare to act on one or two of them in the week to come. Blessed sleep.

Congratulations, you have completed a whole-life exercise for "Just One Week." How might you begin to practice some or all of these exercises this coming month? For the rest of the year?