

SACRED STORY



February 10, 2013

Encouragement & Wisdom

E & W reflections are additional helps for your Sacred Story prayer journey. Reflect on them at the beginning of the week or outside of your fifteen-minute prayer windows.

Presence

There are two ways of cultivating presence. One is to become aware of what you are feeling and thinking. The other is to actively cultivate awareness of something specific beyond a simple awareness of thoughts and feelings. The first way is simply recognizing *what* is happening in your mind and heart. The second way is directing your awareness to something that will benefit you if you are present to it.

In John's first letter, he affirms that love (sometimes translated "gratitude") casts out fear: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love." (1 Jn 4:18). Those who specialize in neuroscience point out that fear and gratitude/appreciation cannot exist simultaneously in our minds. Cultivating love, gratitude and appreciation pushes fear out of our consciousness. Science seems to be catching up with Gospel truths!

So strive to simply be aware of what is happening in your mind and heart. But also strive to intentionally direct your conscious awareness to love, gratitude and appreciation. It will make you well. But remember again, it will only be in the kingdom-to-come that we will be *fully present*. Let the awesomeness of this truth create gratitude in your heart. Ponder its meaning. *Consciously* give thanks.

Pray this week to cultivate a spirit of gratitude in your awareness of presence.

Pray to cultivate an attentive, grateful heart.

Pray for continued mind/heart awakening to all God's gifts.

Pray that the Holy Spirit illuminate all your thoughts, words and deeds.

Awaken to Creation, Presence, Memory, Mercy and Eternity.



*I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart,
for you have heard the words of my mouth;
in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;
I will worship at your holy temple
and give thanks to your name.
In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.*

(Psalm 138:1-2)

