



Three Key Practices for Building and Maintaining Inner Peace

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Introduction

I'M SO GLAD YOU ARE READING THIS because I think it can really make a difference in your life, from your inner life to your relationships with others to your general outlook on life itself.

Let's start by being honest. Life can be hard — unpredictable, difficult and painful. Most who are reading this book will already be aware of the unpredictability of life. Hanging our inner peace on our ability to predict the events of the coming day, week, month, or year is

surely to leave us without the inner peace that we seek. Living life constantly seeking to minimize difficulty will

LIFE CAN BE HARD — UNPREDICTABLE,
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rob us of a richness of experience that life offers. And pain cannot be avoided. Physical pain will intrude on our comfort from time to time. Regarding emotional pain, we will either experience the emotional pain associated with loss and change in our life or we will stuff it inside and suffer physical and mental health consequences of repressed emotions.

I am not writing this to tell you that you can somehow avoid the difficulties of life. I am telling you, however, that simply because you are going through times of unpredictability, difficulty, or pain, does not mean that you need lose your inner peace.

The practices described in the three sections of this short book have the power to dramatically change the way you experience the unpredictability, difficulty, and pain that are inevitable parts of life. The attitudes and practices described in this book will reduce and sometimes eliminate your sense of suffering when you encounter the harder parts of life.

The three practices for inner peace outlined in this short book are by no means an all-inclusive list. Who could make such a thing? Nor are these practices a once-and-done list. You will not be able to check off the three keys to inner peace and then say, "Glad that's over with! Now I will have unshakable inner peace forever."

That’s why they are called “practices” instead of “tasks.” They are practices to be integrated into your life.

The three key practices for inner peace presented in this short book are supported by both scripture and science. The evidence for their effectiveness is both experimental and anecdotal.

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY
ARE INTIMATELY LINKED.

As a Christian pastor, I will be including direction and examples for these three practices for inner peace from the Bible. The Bible is really a library of books and letter collected over a period of about

1,400 years and written by more than 40 authors. This means there is a great deal of experience from people of a wide variety of cultures and socio-economic groups.

As a seeker of truth, I will be presenting you the scientific evidence I found in my research. Links to sources are included.

Science and spirituality are intimately linked. Each attempts to understand life, the universe, and everything. Sometimes science and scripture both point at an attitude or practice as being especially effective for moving people toward the inner peace that all people desire.

When we encounter that intersection between research and religion, we ought to especially sit up and take notice. Spiritual searching is opened to whatever moves the heart of mankind and science properly pursued peels away the layers of our preconceptions through careful experimentation.

YOU MAY HAVE THE RIGHT
KEYS, BUT UNLESS YOU USE
THEM THEY WON'T DO YOU
ANY GOOD.

One thing you will find about these three key practices is that they are like the keys on your key ring. They may be the right keys, but if you don’t use them, the door won’t open or the car won’t start. These keys might look like ways of thinking that one needs to adopt. But that dramatically misses the mark. The real adoption

of these three keys comes with practice — saying things, writing things, doing things — not just thinking about things.

So here I present to you three key practices for building and maintaining inner peace that are supported by both research and religion. My hope and prayer is that the few minutes you invest in reading this booklet will pay dividends of inner peace for the rest of your life.

I have purposely written the three sections in a very generic voice. The closing section of this booklet will move briefly into specifically Christian application.

— John Rallison

Key #1: Gratitude

It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens up. — Eckhart Tolle

I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.
— G. K. Chesterton

ALICE WALKER, author of "The Color Purple," once wrote, "'Thank you' is the best prayer that anyone could say. I say that one a lot. Thank you expresses extreme gratitude, humility, and understanding."

Just as science has been confirming the health benefits of forgiveness (see key practice #2) research continues to support another practice long encouraged in my own Christian spiritual tradition: gratitude. Importantly, the research points to a practice of gratitude, not simply some amorphous attitude of gratitude. More on that shortly.

AFTER 10 WEEKS, THOSE WHO INTENTIONALLY PRACTICED GRATITUDE REPORTED FEELING MORE OPTIMISTIC, EXERCISED MORE AND VISITED THEIR DOCTOR LESS

In one study by Dr. Robert A. Emmons (University of California, Davis) and Dr. Michael E McCullough (University of Miami), participants were asked to write a few sentences each week focusing on the following topics. One group wrote about things they were grateful for that had happened. A second

group wrote about irritations or things that had displeased them. A third group wrote about things that had affected them without emphasizing the positive or

negative aspects. After 10 weeks, those who wrote about things they were thankful for reported feeling more optimistic and better about their lives. As an unexpected byproduct, they also reported exercising more and visiting their doctor less than those who had written about irritations and displeasing incidents. (See a more detailed summary [here](#).)

In a study of couples reported in the [Harvard Mental Health Letter](#), individuals who took time to express gratitude for their partner not only felt more positive toward the other person but, surprisingly, also felt more comfortable

COUPLES WHO EXPRESSED
GRATITUDE TOWARD THEIR PARTNER
ALSO FELT MORE COMFORTABLE
EXPRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT THE
RELATIONSHIP

expressing concerns about their relationship. See the referenced edition of [The Harvard Mental Health Letter](#) for more interesting research on gratitude.

Forbes.com published an article listing seven scientifically proven benefits of gratitude (see it [here](#)):

- 1) Gratitude opens the door to more relationships;
- 2) Gratitude improves physical health;
- 3) Gratitude improves psychological health;
- 4) Gratitude enhances empathy and reduces aggression;
- 5) Grateful people sleep better;
- 6) Gratitude improves self-esteem; and
- 7) Gratitude increases mental strength.

In [The Gifts of Imperfection](#), researcher Dr. Brene Brown writes, "When it comes to gratitude, the word that jumped out at me throughout this research process is practice." "Without exception, every person I interviewed who described living a joyful life or who described themselves as joyful, actively practiced gratitude and attributed their joyfulness to their gratitude practice." "People were quick to point out the differences between happiness and joy as the difference between a human

emotion that's connected to circumstances and a spiritual way of engaging with the world that's connected."

Dr. Brown likens the difference between a gratitude attitude and practice to the difference between a yoga attitude and practice. One can have a yoga attitude (mindfulness, presence, body-mind-spirit interconnectedness, etc.) and even own yoga pants, but the difference comes when you put on the yoga pants and spend time doing yoga. Her research discovered gratitude practices such as keeping a gratitude journal, doing daily gratitude meditations or prayers, creating gratitude art, and even stopping during the day to say out loud, "I am grateful for..." Dr. Brown concludes, "It seems that gratitude without practice may be a little like faith without works — it's not alive."

GRATITUDE IS LIKE YOGA...
THE ATTITUDE DOESN'T DO
MUCH WITHOUT THE
PRACTICE.

Intuitively, one might think that happier and healthier people are more thankful. But it turns out that the reverse is true: thankful people are happier and healthier. This is good news because it means you have a choice you can make today that will lead to a happier healthier life. Choose to practice gratitude.

Here are 11 ways to include gratitude as a regular practice in your life. Choose one. Practice it for two weeks and see if you don't notice the difference.

1. Keep a gratitude journal. (This seems to be a popular one, but I have never been able to successfully keep a journal about anything for very long!)
2. Thank/compliment someone specifically every day.
3. Use a gratitude jar. On slips of paper, write something every day that you are grateful for. When you are feeling a little bitter, open the jar and remind yourself of all you have to be thankful for. You can also make this into a relational game with family or friends. Fill the gratitude jar as a family. At the end of a week or two, read the slips of paper one at a time and try to guess who is thankful for what.
4. Intentionally avoid starting any conversation with a complaint.

5. When a complaining thought pops into your head, counter it with a grateful thought.
6. Use “what can I learn?” when confronted with difficult situations or people. Most of our real learning comes through struggle and difficulty. So when that comes, ask, “What can I learn?” and be grateful for the opportunity.
7. Take a gratitude walk, noticing things with amazement and beauty.
8. Have intentional gratitude conversation (perhaps at meals?).
9. Thank people in service jobs (e.g. cashiers, waiters, etc.).
10. Make/display gratitude art.
11. Pray or meditate, visualizing things for which you are thankful.

As for me? I'm thankful you read this far and I'm grateful for the opportunity to help other people through writing!

KEEP A GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Key #2: Forgiveness

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. — Mahatma Gandhi

It's one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself, to forgive. Forgive everybody. — Maya Angelou

"Bitterness is a poison you swallow hoping someone else gets sick."

I DON'T KNOW WHO SAID THIS, but it's true. When you hold onto hurt — when you refuse to forgive — you are the one you are hurting. This has been a spiritual truth for millennia. More recently it has become a scientifically demonstrated truth, as well.

A study entitled, "Forgive to Live," published in the Journal of Behavioral Medicine involving 1,500 adults ages 66 or over demonstrated that those who practiced "conditional forgiveness" — meaning that they would *not* forgive others until they apologized or

promised not to do it again — died earlier than those who scored low on the conditional forgiveness scale. This is consistent with a growing body of research demonstrating positive mental and physical health effects associated with forgiveness.

"But, what about...?"

Nope. No buts. "But" is a conditional forgiveness word that apparently can decrease your lifespan. Before you throw in the towel and resign yourself to an early death because of what someone said or did to you, let's tease apart the

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THREE KEY PRACTICES FOR BUILDING AND MAINTAINING INNER PEACE

general idea of forgiveness into two components: forgiveness and reconciliation. Forgiveness and reconciliation are often thought of together because they often happen together. But they are two different steps.

**FORGIVENESS IS ABOUT ME...
RECONCILIATION IS ABOUT WE.**

Reconciliation is about restoring the broken relationship between the people involved. And, most importantly for our discussion, reconciliation depends on the willingness and ability of

everyone involved. There's the rub. Sometimes reconciliation is not possible. The other person may need more time. The other person may neither desire nor care about reconciling. The other person may have died (this happens especially with parents). In many cases, reconciliation simply is not an option. That's why it is important to see forgiveness as a separate issue.

The difference is this: reconciliation is about "us" while forgiveness is about "me." Separating forgiveness and reconciliation in your mind will free you to forgive in ways and times you may never have thought possible.

Merriam-Webster's first definition of forgiveness is not so helpful: "to stop feeling anger toward someone." Have you ever tried to just stop being angry? How'd that work out? Not so hot, eh? Yeah, me, neither.

Here is the best definition of forgiveness I have ever read: "give up your right to get even."

Retribution is so natural to the human condition. If you say something hurtful, I say something hurtful back. If you hit me, I hit you. If you break something of mine, I break something of yours. It even seems like justice. But the research indicates that retribution and withholding forgiveness until reconciliation can be achieved is bad for you.

**FORGIVENESS IS GIVING UP
YOUR RIGHT TO GET EVEN**

The good news is that "give up your right to get even" is something you can do choose to do. You can decide not to let the law of retribution guide you. If you've

been hurt deeply, it will likely be a choice you have to make over and over. But, unlike "stop being angry," "give up your right to get even" is a choice you can make.

**FORGIVING DOES NOT MEAN
FORGETTING, IGNORING OR
RELEASING FROM CONSEQUENCES**

It's also a general attitude you can cultivate that will significantly decrease negative emotions in your life. Imagine the day when someone wrongs you and your natural response is to wonder what is going on

with them rather than thinking about how to get back at them. This may seem far-fetched, but the more you live into the notion that forgiveness is only about you and how you relate to others, the more natural it will become.

The Mayo Clinic, in an article entitled, "Forgiveness: Letting go of grudges and bitterness," ([jump to May Clinic article](#)) asserts that forgiveness can lead to:

- Healthier relationships
- Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- Stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Higher self-esteem

WebMD also has a great article ([jump to WebMD article](#)).

Forgiving does not mean forgetting. Who could actually forget some of the really major hurts of their life?

Forgiving does not mean pretending nothing happened (nor does reconciling). Quite the opposite. When you make the decision to forgive, the underlying presupposition of that decision is that you have been hurt and need to consciously decide to forgive.

Forgiving does not necessarily mean no consequences for the other person. Full reconciliation often includes compensation for wrongs done. You might choose to release the other person from the consequences, but that is a separate issue from forgiveness.

Forgiving is simply giving up your right to get even. You can choose forgiveness with regard to individual situations. You can develop forgiveness as a life attitude that flows from you as a natural reaction. And forgiveness will even contribute to a healthier, longer life.

**CHOOSE TO FORGIVE...
FOR YOUR OWN SAKE.**

Key #3: Meditation

There are techniques of Buddhism, such as meditation, that anyone can adopt. And, of course, there are Christian monks and nuns who already use Buddhist methods in order to develop their devotion, compassion, and ability to forgive. — Dalai Lama

What we plant in the soil of contemplation, we shall reap in the harvest of action. — Meister Eckhart

THERE IS A SCENARIO TOSSED AROUND occasionally about scientists doggedly slogging their way up the mountain of reality by experimentation on testable hypotheses only to find, when they reach the top, the theologians are sitting up there having tea.

That's certainly not going to happen with every religious belief or practice. However, an increasing body of scientific evidence is pointing to the mental and physical health benefits of an ancient practice that is found in many of the world's religions: meditation.

Stop! Don't put this book down because you think I'm getting all "woo woo" on you! I'm not suggesting you wear beads and sit cross-legged in the forest chanting, "Om." Give me another moment to present the evidence and explain the practice before you reject this section as hazy unrealistic spiritualism.

**DON'T REJECT MEDITATION AS
UNREALISTIC SPIRITUALISM**

Depending on your faith or worldview, there might be specific ways for you to practice meditation, but the basic practice of meditation is available to everyone

from Atheists to Zoroastrians. At the end of this section I will give you a link to a powerful, simple, free resource to help you get started if you are willing to at least give it a shot. Somewhat ironically, it is a cell phone app (they also have a web site version). It is, by the way, non-sectarian. It is simple meditation.

My personal experience is that when I have taken time to meditate, my outlook on my whole day... really my whole life... is subtly changed for the better. I find myself living with a calmer spirit, an increased sense of gratitude, greater hopefulness and a positive feeling of being able to handle the challenges life throws my way.

MEDITATION SEEMS TO
CHANGE MY ORIENTATION
TOWARD LIFE

Setting the religious elements aside, meditation is essentially about practicing mental focus. Our minds are active travelers through time and space. We spend time reliving the past and rehearsing various possible futures. We think about what is going on in places

we are not. The [Mayo Clinic](#) (might as well start with the big guns!) describes meditation as a time when "you focus your attention and eliminate the stream of jumbled thoughts that may be crowding your mind and causing stress. This process may result in enhanced physical and emotional well-being." ([This article](#) on their web site is a good overview.)

Obviously there is a ton of information available in the internet so, beyond my personal testimony and the endorsement of the Mayo Clinic, I'm going to give you a short bullet list of the benefits of meditation with each item linked to its source. Note that these are all practical, evidence-based, non-religious/spiritual web sites.

Meditation...

- physically changes your brain in positive ways, including reducing depression and anxiety. ([Click here](#) for article on Forbes.com)
- builds resilience, boosts emotional intelligence, enhances creativity, improves relationships, increases focus. ([Click here](#) for article in Harvard Business Review)
- can help relieve the symptoms of chronic pain. ([Click here](#) for article in Massachusetts Institute of Technology News)

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- may reduce the degradation of our telomeres (the end caps of DNA) that happens with age and can be accelerated by chronic stress. ([Click here](#) for video on Nutritionfacts.org)
- boosts your health, happiness, social life, self-control, and productivity along with keeping you real and making you wiser. ([Click here](#) for article in Psychology Today, with links)

Wow! That's quite a list! And meditation can produce the great effects listed above without the side-effects of pharmaceuticals. (Drugs, of course, have their place. I won't be trying to meditate my way through a root canal!)

So, if you are game, here's the free app. It's called, "Calm." It is available for both Android and iOS. Their web site is [Calm.com](#) and works just like their apps. They have a paid subscription that unlocks more content, but you don't need it. I have been using the basic meditations for some time and feel no need to buy their upsell content.

In the most basic form of meditation, the meditator sits in a comfortable but alert posture (think sitting up straight in a chair with the hands resting in the lap as opposed to lying in bed or kicked back in a recliner), closes her eyes and breathes in a slow, steady, natural way. Then meditator focuses

her mind simply on the sensations associated with the breath moving in and out of her body. When the mind wanders, the meditator gently and nonjudgmentally returns the focus of the mind to the breath. It's important to use some kind of timer so you don't end up thinking about how much time you are spending meditating. 😊

SET A TIMER FOR YOUR
MEDITATION TIME SO YOU
CAN RELAX

The advantage of using the app/web site over simply trying to meditate on your own is that the app/web site offers background sounds and guided meditations of various types. This can be extraordinarily helpful for beginners. It was for me (and still is). The app/web site lets you to select from a variety of guided meditations (none oriented to a specific faith or worldview) and background audio (including

nature sounds and soft music). You can also use just the background audio with the timer function without the peaceful voice guidance.

I sometimes repeat a short mantra that focuses me on life as I think God is calling me to live it according to my Christian faith: "I am here. I am now. I am loved. And I love." I say these phrases silently in slow rhythm as I breathe in and out, focusing on being just where I am at that moment in space and time.

I offer you both my personal testimony and the scientific evidence for the power of meditation to positively affect your life in both mind and body. I hope you'll try it.

NOTE: I am not affiliated with Calm in any way. I don't receive any compensation for recommending the app other than the intangible benefits of helping other people by recommending something that has made a difference in my life.

MEDITATION WORKS

Christian Specifics

For my readers who are interested in how these three key practices are part of the historic Christian faith, I offer the following:

GRATITUDE

The idea of giving thanks is sprinkled liberally throughout the entire Bible. The Psalms alone contain 46 verses about thankfulness. The New Testament has 53 verses and the entire Bible contains 132 verses. This is all matter of how you go about looking up verses. If you look for the concept of gratitude, I think the number would jump up significantly.

It's no accident that Paul opens and/or closes many of his letters with thoughts of thankfulness, both to God and to others. Paul even gives us an imperative (such a nicer word than command!): "Be thankful." (Colossians

3:15) David included thanking God in the duties of the Levites who went before the ark of the covenant. (1 Chronicles 16:4)

GIVE THANKS TO THE
LORD FOR HE IS GOOD!

Here are a few verses for you to chew on:

Psalm 106:1 (ESV) Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

Isaiah 12:4 (ESV) And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.

John 6:11 (ESV) Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.

Romans 1:8 (ESV) First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.

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1 Corinthians 15:57 (ESV) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:11 (ESV) You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

2 Corinthians 9:15 (ESV) Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Ephesians 1:16 (ESV) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

Colossians 3:15 (ESV) And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

So the science and the Christian scriptures come together to encourage us to be thankful. Perhaps their constant thanksgiving was part of what helped the early Christians live lives of joy and peace in the midst of such hardship and persecution.

FORGIVENESS

Since forgiveness is one of the very central tenets of the Christian faith, it almost seems like I should just write, “Yup. Forgiveness. Of course!” But let’s not assume anything.

**TAKE HEART, YOUR SINS
ARE FORGIVEN**

The basic assertion of the Christian faith is that God forgives us for Jesus’ sake. In some way Jesus’ life, death and resurrection restores our relationship with God. Why this is and how this is accomplished is a question that has

been debated since the time of Christ. Salvation pictures abound. To name a few: in Jesus we are redeemed, adopted, cleansed, restored, renewed, rescued, set free, healed, made whole, reconciled, reborn and, of course, forgiven.

Christians follow Jesus. It is more than simply intellectually assenting to the idea that Jesus brings forgiveness and new life. It is trusting Jesus enough to follow him.

Luke 6:46 (ESV) Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?

As we read through the life of Jesus, we see him over and over bringing forgiveness to people's lives.

To a woman caught in adultery, he said:

John 8:11 (ESV) "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

FORGIVE OTHERS AS GOD
IN CHRIST JESUS HAS
FORGIVING YOU

To a paralyzed man who probably assumed that his sin had somehow resulted in his disability (a notion that Jesus rejects), he said:

Matthew 9:2 (ESV) "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."

Even with regard to those nailing him to the cross, he spoke to the Father saying:

Luke 23:34 (ESV) "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Then there is the parable of the unforgiving servant. A servant is forgiven an insurmountable debt and yet refuses to be merciful toward a fellow servant who owes him a sizable but not overwhelming debt. The servant who had been forgiven his insurmountable debt had the debt reinstated and was thrown in jail for the rest of his life. Jesus conclude the parable by saying:

Matthew 18:35 (ESV) "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

And there can be no stronger words than those found in Matthew:

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Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV) For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Paul writes to the Christians in Ephesus:

Ephesians 4:32 (ESV) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

And to the Christians in Colossae Paul writes about how we live with others:

Colossians 3:13 (ESV) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Paul reminds the Christians in Rome:

Romans 5:8 (ESV) God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

So, to put it all together, Jesus died for all of us before we ever repented of our sins. God’s forgiveness flows over us before we turn from our wrongs.

In fact, it is God’s love that enables our repentance, that gives us the confidence to face our wrongs and move forward.

OUR OPEN, UNCONDITIONAL FORGIVENESS TOWARD OTHERS IS A POWERFUL REDEEMING FORCE

This is the power of unconditional forgiveness toward others: it often enables them to repent, to turn from their wrongs and to make a fresh start. Knowing that you are a forgiving person will empower them to be honest with themselves and to come to you seeking forgiveness. It is your proactive forgiveness that will often push forward the process of reconciliation.

Forgiveness is God’s power for peace in your life. And forgiveness is your power for peace in both your own life and the lives of those around you.

Forgive and be at peace.

MEDITATION

Now we come to the practice that gives many Christians pause.

First, meditation sounds like Eastern religion. I hate to break it to you, but Christianity as a fulfillment of Judaism is an Eastern religion. In the USA, we have both Westernized and Americanized the Christian faith.

THERE IS A LONG HISTORY OF
MEDITATION OF VARIOUS
FORMS AS PART OF CHRISTIAN
FAITH AND PRACTICE

There is a long history of meditation as a Christian practice. There are also people who write about the danger of adopting Eastern style meditation practices (such as [this article](#) in Christianity Today, 11/2004). Basic meditation, such as body scan and focus meditation found in the basic Calm app

referenced above, doesn't carry any spiritual baggage. But forms of meditation that see themselves as connecting with the divine apart from God's grace could conceivably draw the Christian off track.

So, let's talk briefly about meditation that is specifically Christian.

First, I would suggest that meditation, prayer, reflection and solitude can all be part of what a Christian might call "meditation." For most Western Christians, the word "prayer" typically brings to mind the idea of talking to God, which is fine as far as it goes. But contemplative prayer often includes long periods of listening. Sitting quietly and listening to God looks an awful lot like meditation. Some types of prayer focus on a specific verse of scripture or article of faith. For instance, someone in contemplative prayer might reflect for some time simply on what Psalm 23 is talking about when it says that God leads us beside still waters or that God is with us even in the valley of the shadow of death.

There are enough different types of Christian meditation that I am not going to attempt to introduce them all. Go to Wikipedia and search on "[Christian Meditation](#)" for a good overview.

But in general terms of taking time for yourself for solitude, reflection, prayer, meditation, etc., we have the example of Jesus himself:

Luke 5:16 (NASB95) But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

Luke 6:12 (ESV) In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God.

In Jewish religious practice, there are prayers that are said from memory (such as praying the psalms) and there would extemporaneous prayer (prayer that comes from the heart in the moment). This is speculation, but it seems reasonable that in all his prayer time, Jesus also spent time listening to the Father instead of talking to him and sitting in thoughtful meditation on the scriptures.

CONCLUSION

There you have it, my friends: three practices that meet at the intersection of spirituality and science to build and maintain inner peace.

I am continuing to learn about these areas and solicit your feedback.

If you happen to be in Central Florida some Sunday morning, we would love to welcome you into our community at Journey of Life Lutheran Church (www.journeyoflife.org), a place where...

- a person can ask questions without embarrassment,
- history is honored but not enthroned, and
- people know that they don't know everything.

We are all on this spiritual journey called life. What we all need for growth is grace, truth and time. At Journey of Life we strive to be offers that to all and we hope to see you soon.

Grace and peace to you.

- John Rallison