

winter break
devotional



YALE
CHI
ALPHA

Over Winter Break, you have an opportunity to begin or deepen your devotional life. Our desire is that each of you would have a vibrant, personal relationship with God. This plan will guide you through all of Winter Break.

Our prayer is that the components of this 3-week plan will help build momentum and establish patterns in your devotional life over Winter Break that you can carry into the Spring semester. This plan was written to run from December 26 through January 15 but can be used on any timeline.

There are four components of this plan:

1

Names of God Study

Each section will include a different Hebrew name for God which reveals different characteristics of who God is. You will learn about those characteristics and how we can understand God through each of the names.

2

Scripture Reading

God's Word is a living Word that speaks life to us and leads us to Jesus. It really is worth engaging. This plan takes you through several chapters each section where the specific name of God was used and the characteristics of God are evident. Read each chapter see the overall theme of how God is represented by that specific name.

3

Spiritual Disciplines

Each section, a different spiritual discipline is highlighted. Spiritual disciplines are practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth and formation. Take each section to try a new discipline!

4

Challenge

Each section will include a practical challenge that you can try that will help practice the spiritual discipline for the section.

1 **YAHWEH**
LORD, JEHOVAH

DEC 26 Psalm 11

2 **JEHOVAH** _____

Jehovah Rapha (God Who Heals)

DEC 27 Exodus 15

Jehovah Shalom (The Lord is my Peace)

DEC 28 Judges 6

Jehovah - Raah (The Lord is my Shepherd)

DEC 29 Psalm 23

Jehovah Jireh (The Lord who Provides)

DEC 30 Genesis 22

3 **ADONI**
LORD, OVERSEER

DEC 31 Exodus 4

JAN 1 2 Samuel 7

JAN 2 Psalm 8 & Psalm 135

JAN 3 Psalm 114 & Psalm 135

JAN 4 Psalm 109

4 **EL SHADDAI**
LORD ALL MIGHTY

JAN 5 Genesis 25

JAN 6 Genesis 35

JAN 7 Genesis 49

JAN 8 Ruth 1

JAN 9 Psalm 68

5 **PALET**
DELIVERER

JAN 10 Psalm 18 & Psalm 37

JAN 11 Genesis 9

JAN 12 2 Samuel 22

6 **EL OLAM**
THE EVERLASTING GOD

JAN 13 Isaiah 26

JAN 14 Psalm 90

JAN 15 Psalm 93

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE:
SABBATH



SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE:
SUBMISSION



SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE:
WORSHIP



SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE:
CONFESSION



SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE:
PRAYER



Over the next several weeks, we will be looking at the different names for God throughout the Bible. These names do not indicate a changing God, but rather the various attributes of the one, eternal God. He is consistent in His love and yet, there is always more to know as we grow in relationship with Him!

Each name overview is accompanied by a spiritual discipline and some ways to practice that discipline. As we learn about and love God more and more, we shift our everyday lives into closer alignment with his will. The spiritual disciplines for each section are a response to the attributes of God being studied. These sections seek to answer the question: *if God is who He says He is, what response does that warrant from us?*

YAHWEH

lord, jehovah

Yahweh is the personal name for Israel's God. We first learn the meaning of this name in the story of Moses and the burning bush in Exodus 3. God appears to Moses and commissions him to liberate the Israelites from Pharaoh's reign. Moses wonders what if people ask the name of the god who sent me? And so God responds, "Yahweh", which means "the god of our ancestors". "Yahweh" is the ancient form of the phrase "He will be". Yahweh essentially meant that God is the one who is and who will be. God's existence doesn't depend on anyone or anyone else. He simply is. This name appears over 6,500 times in the Old Testament!

Over the centuries, Israelites wanted to honor the sacred nature of this divine name. So as they read the Hebrew Bible aloud and came across this name, they stopped saying "Yahweh" and instead started saying the Hebrew name for "Lord", which is "Adonai". And so later, when people started translating the Bible into English, they adopted the same practice. Instead of spelling out the divine name, they translated it as "LORD", spelled with all capital letters. Ancient Jewish scribes wanted to prevent anyone from even accidentally saying this name aloud when reading the Bible, so they came up with a visual device to make sure you said "Adonai". They would use "YAHOWAH", an artificial hybrid of Yahweh and Adonai. But much later, when Christian scribes came along who didn't know that Yahuwah was an artificial word so they began to say it aloud and spell it in their writings. This word eventually entered into their writings as Jehovah (which you can read more about tomorrow)!

The main thing is, the word "LORD" is an indication of the divine name. Yahweh, simply, refers to the one who was, who is, and who forever will be.

Challenge

Today, as you reflect on the past year and look with expectancy at the year to come. The same God who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush is the same God who David speaks of in the reading for today and the same God who speaks to us today!

Try writing out five things/people you were blessed with this last year in each of the categories below and spending time in thanksgiving for the Lord's consistency in your life.

Relationships

Experiences

Areas of growth (spiritually or otherwise)

JEHOVAH

Jehovah is one of the Hebrew names for God and originally means “to be”, “to exist”, or “to become known”, and is often translated to God or Lord in English. Often in the Old Testament, Jehovah is coupled with another Hebrew word to describe characteristics of who God is. Each unique name can remind us of the character of God and all that He is. Each day of this section, you will read a different passage with one of the names of God. Jehovah Rapha, “God who Heals”, describes God as a healer and restorer and is a name God uses for himself. Jehovah Shalom, “The Lord is Peace”, describes God as peace, harmony, and wholeness. Jehovah Raah, “The Lord is Shepherd”, describes God as the leader of our life. Jehovah Jireh, “The Lord who Provides”, describes God as our provision.

Although there are many other names for God, these few names show some of the qualities of God and how he is able to interact in our life. God is the same, yesterday, today, and forever so these characteristics of God are not characteristics only experienced by the Old Testament people but are qualities for God we get to experience in our regular walk with Him. Through God we can experience healing, restoration, peace, wholeness, guidance, and provision.

Sabbath

We see how God is a healer, our peace, a shepherd, and our provider. These characteristics of God we want to be able to experience, but sometimes struggle, because we are so preoccupied with our busyness. Each of us have experienced times where we feel hurried, stressed, tired, and feeling like a minute of rest can put us into a dangerous spiral of unproductivity. We get caught up in “the grind” and sometimes do not even realize how “overwhelmed and overworked” has become our identity. We are willing to sacrifice our time with friends, family, and most importantly God to do more.

This is not what God intended. God called us to rest. God wants us to live outside the confines of productivity culture and take time to rest, recharge, and be in His presence. Often, when we finally take time to rest and spend time with God, we realize how much we have been missing and feel recharged and renewed. Additionally, in restful time with God we can experience the characteristics of God we just read about: healing, peace, guidance, and provision.

Challenge

Sabbath can be spent playing, spending time with family, doing something you love, etc. But most importantly, it needs to include intentional time with God.

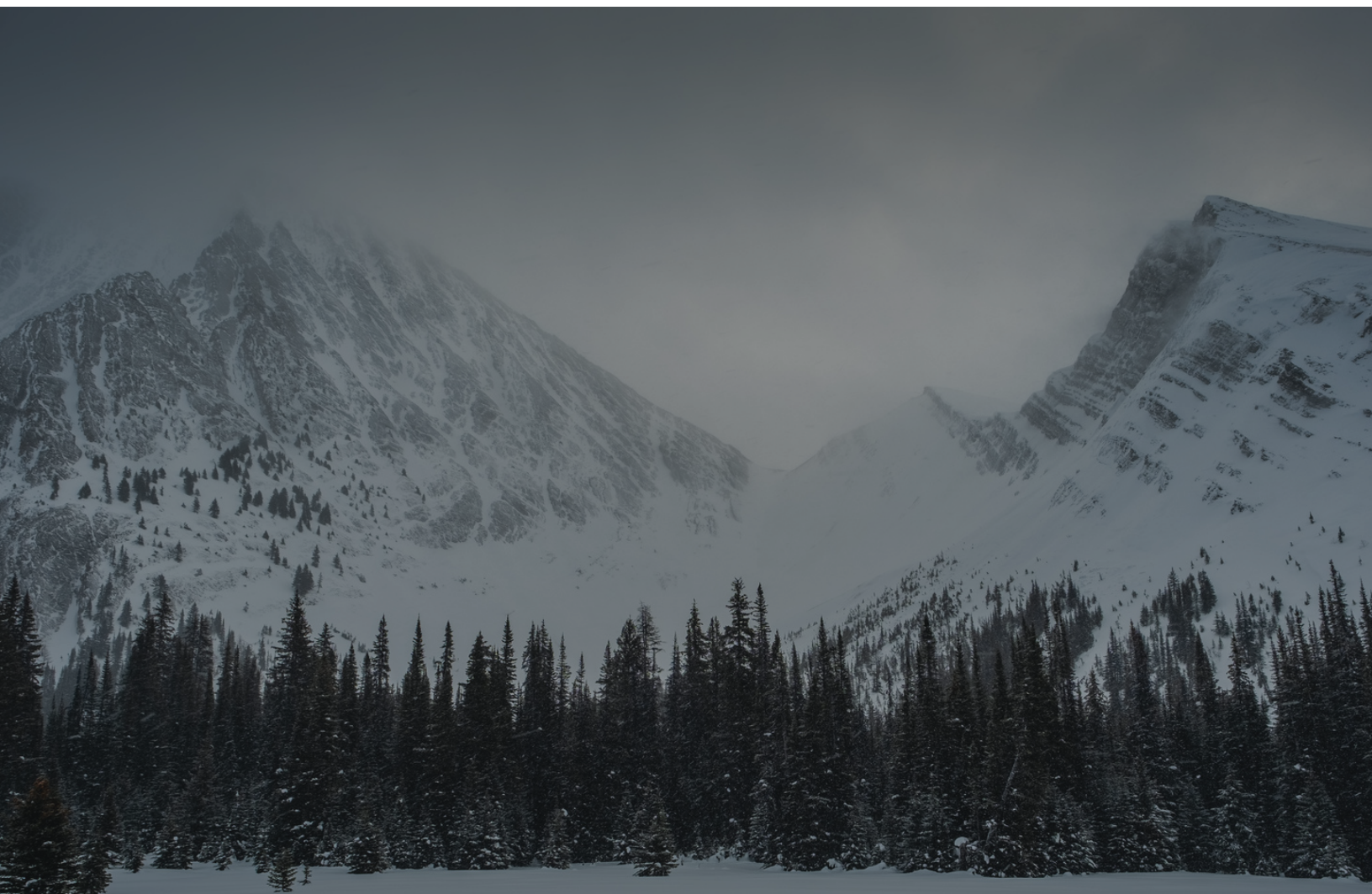
As you read each day of scripture in this section, we encourage you to try these mini challenges in your rest time to relate to the name of God you read for the day.

Dec 27: When we are struggling physically or emotionally it can be difficult to truly rest as that pain may always seem present. Is there an area in your life where you need physical or emotional healing? Pray to God asking for healing in that area.

Dec 28: In your rest time today, find an activity that brings you peace: maybe it's being in nature, working out, cooking, art, or listening to music. Thank God for the peace he provides.

Dec 29: . Read Psalm 23 again, but this time read it as a prayer to God and reflect on what it means that God is your shepherd. To read it as a prayer, say the Psalm to God like you do when you pray to God. You can personalize it too and change parts like "The Lord is [your name's] shepherd", etc.

Dec 30: Today audibly thank God for what you have. Thank God before you eat for food, before you sleep for rest, before you wash your hands for water, before you spend time with friends or family for community, etc.





ADONAI

lord, overseer

A *don* is an ancient word that means “lord”. It refers to one singular ruler or person in power. The plural form is “adonai”. It’s used in the Bible to refer to a human lord or overseer. When the Bible refers to “the LORD” (in all capitals), it uses an exclusively different form: Adonai. Moses called God “Jehovah”, until he made him his Lord in Exodus 4. And when he gave into submission, he referred to him as Adonai. We will be looking at this idea of submission over the next several days.

In Joshua Chapter 3, the Ark of the Covenant is called “The Ark of the Covenant of Adonai”. And Joshua told the people that when the priests of Adonai set their feet in the Jordan river, the waters will stop rushing. It was meant to show the people that God would be with Joshua, just like he was with Moses; Joshua wanted to show the people that God was not just Elohim, he was Adonai, He was Lord. Just like God was Lord to Moses, so he would be to Joshua and David and us! You can know that God exists, but this name for God, Adonai declares him as your Lord, your Master. This means something more intimate and more practical in each day of your life. When God is your personal Adonai, you follow his every move because he is your Lord.

Submission

An understanding of God as Lord or master demands a response on our part. If we call God “Lord”, we are demonstrating his rule in every area of our lives. An understanding of God in this way leads to submission to him—his will, his plan, his reign. However, submission is an unpopular concept these days. The notion of giving away power conjures up images of becoming a “doormat” for those around us. But this perception is miles away from the biblical model of submission. True biblical submission begins in the very center of the Trinity where the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit all mutually honor and defer to each other. Christ’s submission to the Father did not make him less than the Father. It was a way the Son gave glory to the Father.

We must also recognize that we already submit in various ways every day. When our professors are explaining a concept beyond our understanding, we submit to what they are saying. We trust that they have the end goal of our intellectual growth in mind and we trust their methods for achieving that. If we do this with human professors, how much more trust does the Lord’s goodness warrant? When we submit to God we are thanking him for having our best interest in mind.

Submission is a way we allow God’s kingdom agenda to shape our choices, relationships, and vocations; it is trusting that God’s instructions concerning this life are good for us. Instructions to forgive, serve, and love are not given to abuse us but to set us free to be who we were meant to be.

Beyond submission to God (or “Adonai”, as we’ve talked about here), we are also instructed to submit in our human relationships. We are called to reflect the Trinity here. Each member of the body of Christ contributes to every other. Each part serves every other. Each one has a lead part that no other part can play. Together Christians freely choose to enter the divine dance of love. Steps change with seasons and rhythms. Sometimes submission means giving. Sometimes it means receiving. Sometimes submission means leading and other times it means following. But in each case there is an element of self-giving. We can assess who the Lord has placed in authority over us and make the decision to listen, serve, and honor those people well.

Challenge

Dec. 31:

Spend some time thinking and praying about your feelings surrounding the idea of submission. What emotions come up when you read the word? What past experiences might be contributing to that view? Have you ever been able to view God as master of all in your life?

Jan. 1: Start your day (today or tomorrow) with a time of prayer, submitting the day and its events to God. You can start with “Father, into your hands I commit _____.”

Jan. 2: Spend time thinking and praying about areas of your life in which you struggle to release control. Is that academics, work, future plans, how you spend your time, etc.?

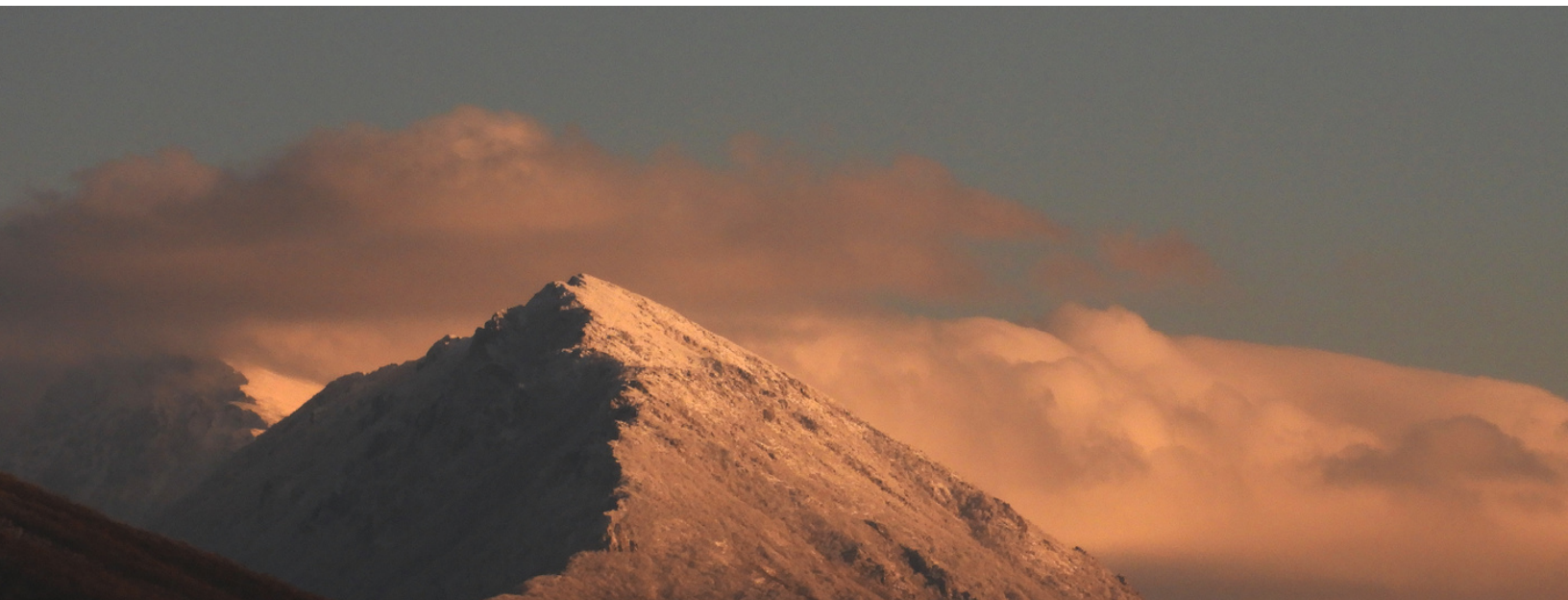
Jan 3: Write out or think through the people you struggle to submit to. What does submission look like in each of these healthy relationships? Are there ways in which you have refused to submit to their authority in a way that is not honoring to the Lord? Pray for humility in these relationships.

Jan. 4: Spend time in prayer for those in authority over you. Pray for your boss, professors, parents, pastors, and anyone else you submit to. Consider letting some of those people know that you have prayed for them and that you are grateful to be under their leadership or direction.

References:

Adonai piece taken from “Names of God in the Bible - ADONAI” by Pastor Landon 08/28/2020

Submission piece taken from The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook by Adele C. Calhoun



“Without doubt, the mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of God, and the weightiest word in any language is its word for God.”

—A.W. Tozer





EL SHADDI

lord almighty

El Shaddai is a Hebrew name for God which means “Lord Almighty” or “All Sufficient One” and is one of the most frequently used names of God in the Bible. God first introduced himself to Abraham in Genesis 17. At this time Abraham is 99 years old and childless yet God makes a large promise: “I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.” This seems absurd to us today as Abraham and Sarah seem too old to have kids and it was absurd to Abraham too as he started laughing. Yet in this moment it was not absurd to God but a revealing of His Sovereign nature.

Too often, we can be like Abraham, laughing at the absurdity of our situation or who we are often thinking God cannot change it or us. However, in those moments we need to recognize El Shaddai and how He is almighty and sufficient for our needs and His promises. There is no situation that we can go through that is too much for God or anything within us God is not capable of viewing and changing.

Worship

We all practice the discipline of worship, regardless of whether we identify as Christian or not. Everyone looks to something or someone to feel meaning in their life and worship can reveal what we value most. Some of us may adore relationships, grades, independence, or success. We may not consider the way we adore something and spend time on something as worship but often it is.

Worship is a way for us to show reverence or adoration for something. In our Christian walk, this is a reverence and adoration for God in word and action. Worship is not us just singing a song to God, but it extends beyond that into how we live our lives and the way we view God. Worship is part of the way we live our life in awe of God, our desire to know Him more, and honoring God in our day to day actions. True worship happens when we put God first in our lives and make Him the center of everything we do. One theologian says, it happens “when what God says matters more than what others say, and when loving God matters more than being loved”. Coupling worship with our understanding of El Shaddai can help us understand the reverence and honor we can have for God in the way we worship. When we view and understand God as All Mighty, it can be easier to see the honor, praise, and worship we should give Him.

Challenge

This section, we are going to do small daily challenges that show different ways we can worship God.

Jan 5: Reflect if there are aspects of your life where you may be worshipping something else more than God. It might be academics, independence, success. Tell God about those things and pray to him about those things you may be worshipping.

Jan 6: Find a worship song you relate to and sing it to God, really meaning the words that you are singing.

Jan 7: Write a letter to God expressing your love and honor of Him. Write out aspects of His character, who He is to you, and why you worship Him.

Jan 8: Go outside and spend time in nature. Thank God for the creation you see around you.

Jan 9: After reading Psalm 68, read the Psalm like a letter to God, praising him for all He does.





Pallet means “deliverer” and is found throughout the Bible. Deliverance may come in as many ways as you may find yourself in trouble. God protects, rescues, restores, replenishes, heals and makes a way of escape from trouble and from temptation. God delivers from the oppression of an enemy, from a threatening situation or from a false charge.

As you remain faithful and obedient to His general and specific instructions He goes to work on your behalf. When a deliverer comes to rescue you from danger, they usually give you specific instructions. When you follow the instructions there is victory or deliverance as you escape or are drawn into safety. When you hesitate, procrastinate, have objections or are disobedient to the instructions there may be disaster. Some may sit in the presence of the Deliverer but remain in bondage for reasons such as these.

God delivers us in very practical ways but His most important deliverance is from the grip of sin on our lives. Before we turn to the Lord for deliverance from life's circumstantial trials, we must rest in His deliverance from our own sin. Psalm 18 refers to God as the rock and a fortress, alongside his role as deliverer. Our turbulent hearts can find refuge in the truth of salvation!

Confession

We all sin. Sin is anything that breaks relationships. Jesus taught that the damage done through sin was not the last word on life. Sin could be confessed. Sin could be forgiven. And sinful people could be set free.

True repentance means that we open the bad in our lives to God. We invite him to come right in and look at our sin with us. We don't hide behind being good, moral people or indulge in neurotic self-recriminations. We don't pretend to be other than we are. We don't disguise the truth by carting out all the disciplines we practice. We tell it like it is—without rationalization, denial, or blame—to the only person in the universe who will unconditionally love us when we are bad. We hand over the pretense, image management, manipulation, control, and self-obsession. In the presence of the Holy One we give up on appearing good and fixing our sin. We lay down our ability to change by the power of the self. We turn to Jesus and seek forgiveness.

Jesus died so that we may know what freedom from sin tastes like. He is our Deliverer—Johovah El Pallet—and every time we confess how we have missed the mark of God's love and truth, we open ourselves up to his deliverance through his work on the cross.

Challenge

Jan. 10: Imagine the kind of person you would like to become in your old age and write some of those points down. What do you hope others say of you when that time comes? How do you spend your time, in public and in private? What do your relationships look like? You will use this list over the next couple days.

Jan. 11: Using the framework of the 10 Commandments, spend time confessing to the Lord ways in which your current life does not match up with the list you wrote yesterday. Feel free to add to your list as you go. You can find the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20:2-17.

After, pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God as your deliverer, the only one who has the power to give you freedom from these sins!

Jan. 12: Using the framework of the “7 deadly sins”, spend time confessing to the Lord ways in which your current life does not match up with the list you wrote two days ago. Feel free to add to your list as you go. The “7 deadly sins” are listed below.

After, pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God as your deliverer, the only one who has the power to give you freedom from these sins!

Lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, anger, envy, pride

References:

“Jehovah El Palet - The Lord God Your Deliverer” by Lawrence A. Fox 01/28/2020

“Deliverer” from namesforgod.net

Confession piece taken from *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele C. Calhoun





EL OLAM

the everlasting god

El Olam is one of the names for God that means “The Everlasting God”. God has no beginning and no end and is fully eternal. This concept can sometimes be difficult to grasp as, in our human view, time is linear and everything we have seen or known has a beginning and an end. But God is beyond that and is eternal. It should be reassuring that we can depend on a God who always has been, is, and always will be. We can put our hope in an Everlasting God who will not leave us or change. The characteristics of God we have been viewing in this “Names of God” study are not for a point and time but are for us now too.

We have learned how God is a healer, is peace, is our shepherd, our provider, Lord, all mighty, our deliverer, and now we see God as an everlasting God. These are all characteristics that we can be confident God still does and will always possess. Understanding who someone is, is important when we are building relationships with others. In the same way understanding who God is is important in building our relationship with Him.

Prayer

As we saw, El Olam is everlasting, beyond the confines of time and even if billions of people are praying at once, He can hear every prayer and understand every need, cry, praise, and thanksgiving. Prayer is the avenue in which we can talk to God . With prayer we can tell God about our day, ask Him about our needs and the needs of others, praise Him, and grow deeper in our relationship and intimacy with Gd. in *Love in a Fearful Land*, Henri Nouwen writes, “Prayer is the way to both the heart of God and the heart of the world- precisely because they have been joined through the suffering of Jesus Christ... Praying is letting one’s own heart become the palace where the tears of God’s children merge and become tears of hope.”

In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus provides a framework for how our prayer time can look:

This, then, is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from the evil one.

The Lord’s Prayer can be useful in remembering the different aspects of our life and God’s will for what we pray for and can be a helpful framework when learning to pray.

Challenge

Over the next 3 days we are going to pray in different ways.

Jan 13: When doing something mindless like washing the dishes, tell God about your day.

Jan 14: Pray through the Lord's prayer really reflecting on what each part means.

"Our Father..."

Take a moment and think about the idea of God as your Father, with good intentions toward you. Recognize that if you haven't prayed in a long time, God is not disappointed with you now — he is delighted to spend this time with you.

"In heaven..."

Take a moment to think about the idea that God is all around you. Take some deep breaths to center yourself. If you feel distracted, acknowledge the distractions and let them go.

"Hallowed by your name..."

Spend a few minutes just sitting with the Father in joyful, grateful, worship. You might want to sit in silence for a few moments. Encourage people to make their expressions of praise and gratitude out loud, one at a time. (E.g. "Father, thank you for your kindness." "Father, thank you for loving me.")

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven..."

Spend a few minutes asking for God's will to be done in your city/church/community/life.

"Lord, we pray your will be done in [Yale, New Haven, World]"

"Give us each day our daily bread..."

Spend a few minutes praying for specific needs and wants in your life or that of your community.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors..."

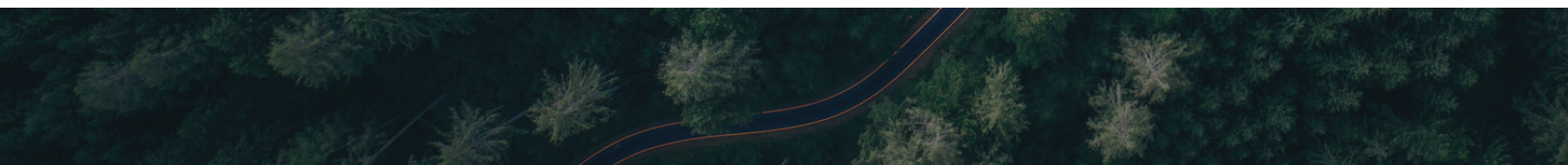
Spend a few minutes quietly asking God for forgiveness for specific areas in your life, and releasing others to forgiveness.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Spend a few minutes praying against temptation (the word can also be translated trouble) in your life.

- *Pray against specific sins*
- *Pray against any kind of evil—spiritual evil (demonic), human evil, natural evil, etc.*
- *Pray against bad things in your life or community, and for God's blessing—the divine flow of good things into your life and community.*

Jan 15: Pray for the needs of people around you that may be suffering/struggling.



To conclude this winter devotional, we want to send you off with a few encouragements...

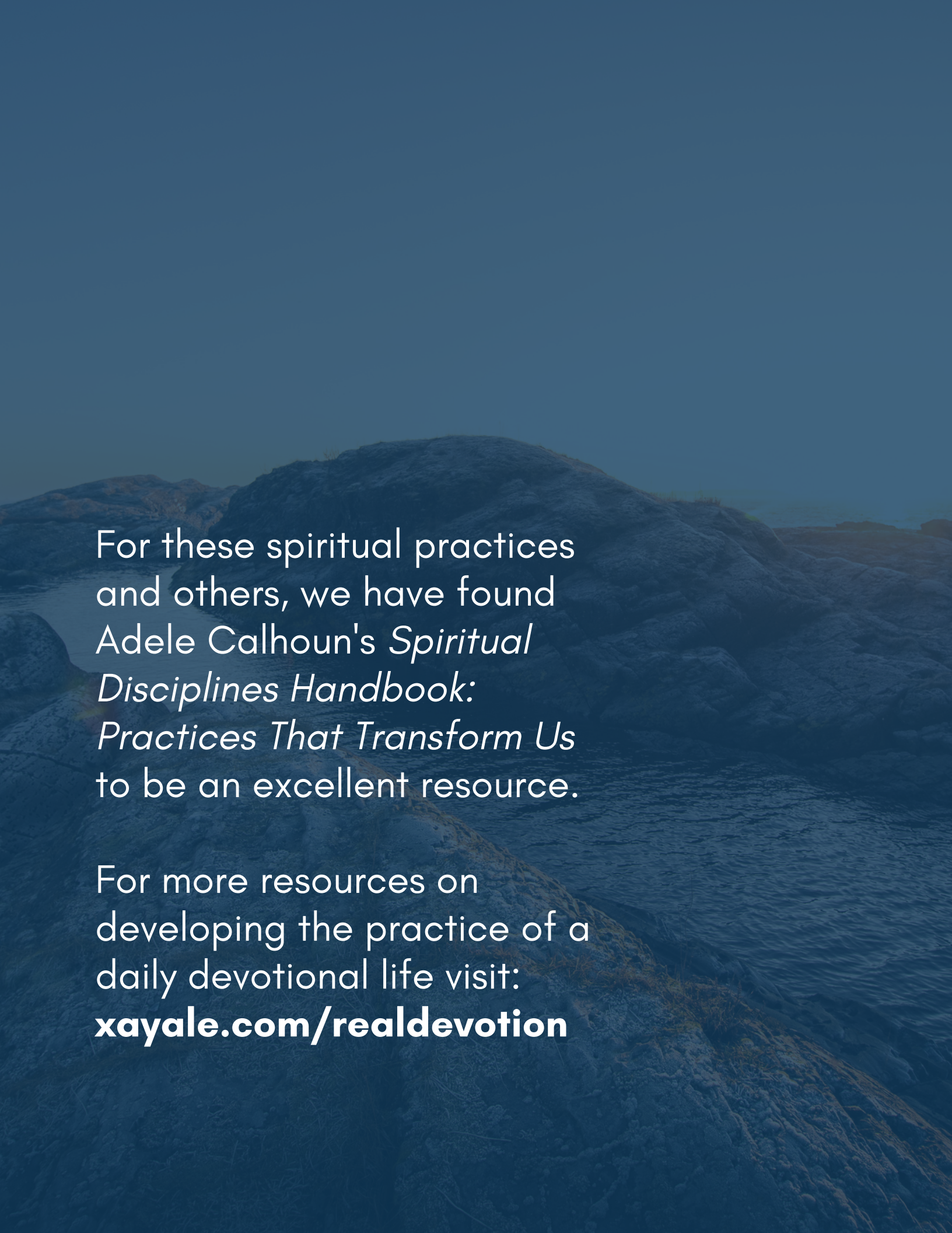
This coming week you will start classes back up again. Another semester at Yale is ahead of you. You may be considering ways in which you need to change things from last semester. New routines, bed times, note-taking strategies, or study spots may all be under consideration for you as you look ahead. In the midst of potential change, God's consistency is highlighted. As you have studied these names for God we pray that you have had the opportunity to recognize God's unchanging nature over the course of your life.

We encourage you to commit to integrating one or two of these spiritual disciplines into your daily life over the course of this semester. Remember, these disciplines are not tasks to accomplish, but rather responses to...

Yahweh, who was and is and is to come
Jehovah Rapha, who heals you
Jehovah Shalom, who gives you peace
Jehovah Raah, who shepherds you
Jehovah Jireh, who provides for you
Adonai, your Lord
El Shaddai, the Almighty
El Palet, who delivers you
El Olam, the everlasting God

May you rest in his consistency in all these attributes in the coming semester!

We love you and are praying for you,
The Yale Chi Alpha Team



For these spiritual practices
and others, we have found
Adele Calhoun's *Spiritual
Disciplines Handbook:
Practices That Transform Us*
to be an excellent resource.

For more resources on
developing the practice of a
daily devotional life visit:
xayale.com/realdevotion