

Intentional Awareness

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Intentional awareness or mindfulness is an attribute of God. In Psalm 8 David asks God “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” In Psalm 26:3 David promises “for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness.”

We are called, like David’s example, to live mindfully, purposefully of God’s faithfulness. When we’re practicing mindfulness, we are working on being present in the moment. The enemy can attack these times by distracting our attention to our past or the future. Practicing mindfulness skills can be a simple and effective tool to work towards being present in the moment. There is not a "right" or "wrong" way to practice mindfulness. The key is often to try a couple of different skills and see which is the best fit for you. You can even tweak the examples to meet your individual needs and preferences.

Great is Thy Faithfulness - keep a running list of God's faithfulness/provisions in your life

When We Walk With the Lord – working step by step memorizing a verse over the course of a week

For The Beauty of the Earth - aim to identify and record if possible 10 ways God has revealed Himself each day by taking a picture, writing down the event

Jesus Loves Me - read a devotional in the morning and then again at night - focus on how the devotional rang true throughout the day

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus – Identify something in the present moment that fulfills the following criteria: touch, sight, sound, smell, taste. When deliberately creating an environment you could create smell by lighting a candle, putting on scented lotion, baking something. You could create taste by sucking on a peppermint or small candy. You could hear something by turning on the radio, Pandora, playing an instrument. You could look at pictures of a peaceful time, focusing on elements (colors, textures, etc.) in the room. You could practice touch by petting your dog, washing dishes or even writing a letter. The options are as unique as you.

Breathe on Me Breath of God - Square breathing is centered on the number 4. Using a runner’s breath (breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth), follow the pattern of breathing in for the count of 4, hold for 4, breathe out for the count of 4, and hold for 4. (A technique I find helpful is to tap out the count on my leg moving from my index finger, to my middle, to my ring, to my pinky. I have found I need to add that tactile element for my count to be even and to keep my mind from wandering). This skill is particularly helpful because it easily transitions from a fast breath to a slower more evened breath.

It is important to treat yourself with gentle compassion while practicing these skills. We will have days that we are overwhelmed by what the world expects, get off track or even forget our exercise that day. It is essential to simply let go of the disappointment, guilt or even shame we can experience. For Christ has already taken away any condemnation. Sometimes the simplest act of acknowledging getting off track and, then, returning to our mindfulness task can re-center us. As we learn by paying attention to patterns, we become more apt at preventing mindlessness.

I pray at least one of these skills is helpful for you to live in the present and experience God's unfailing love and faithfulness every day. (Psalm 26:3)