



STAYING
MINDFUL
OF MY *Maker*

A GUIDE FROM



Thanks for joining us on this journey!

Hi there! We're Etch.Life, and we're a Kansas City-based Christian lifestyle shop. We exist to come alongside you on your journey with Jesus and put products in your hands that help you weave the Gospel into your everyday life. We pray each piece of apparel, home decor, accessory and encouragement art we design and create will help you (and us!) to learn God's Word, live it out and share it.

Recently, we have seen God teaching us over and over that our minds are a battleground. Where we choose to set our minds, what we seek out to gain the peace we are looking for, staying faithful among a million distractions...these are battles we are engaged in every day, and we have a feeling you are too!

Along with what God has been teaching us related to our minds, we were hearing the concept of "mindfulness" popping up everywhere. And we wondered, does it matter what we are mindful of? Or, more precisely, does it matter if our mindfulness is focused inward rather than on our Heavenly Father? Are we missing the boat if we're only more aware of our surroundings, our own actions, and our own emotions?

As followers of Christ, we are offered the perfect peace that comes from setting our minds on Him. But this is something that has to be entered into purposefully, and that's not always easy. We put together this guide to help you think and pray through methods for you to engage with your Heavenly Father and be mindful of Him consistently. We hope it's helpful to you, and we'd love to interact with you about this or anything else related to your journey with God. You can connect with us at info@etch.life, on our website at etch.life, or on social media via our Facebook page or on Instagram (@etch.life).

For His glory,

Etch.Life

Know Your Maker

Let's start at the beginning. So who is it you are trying to "know"? Who is God, and who is God to you?

It's hard to stay mindful of something when you don't really know what you're supposed to be mindful of. The amazing thing about our God is that, though He holds the power that created the universe itself, He wants us to know Him personally. He is not distant. He is not uncaring. He is not removed from the ins and outs of our daily lives. He is a Father, a shepherd to our hearts, interested in justice, seeking to draw us to himself. As incredible as it seems, He loves us.

To put a finer point on it, He loves you. Yes, you. Not you as just a part of "everyone," but you yourself. He knows the number of hairs on your head and the number of days in your life. He knows your name. He knows your story. He knows your strengths, your weaknesses, the things you've done right, and the things you've done wrong. He knows your every thought. And He loves you and is pursuing you throughout it all. The sin and brokenness in each one of our lives makes it so there's a separation between us and God and a price that must be paid. God even sent his own Son, Jesus, to earth to live a perfect life among us and eventually to die on the cross take the punishment that should have been ours and be resurrected to give us a status as God's adopted daughters and sons.

Not only does He know you, He wants you to know Him. God tells us about himself in a variety of ways. One key way is through his words to us, written by divinely inspired human authors... we call it the Bible. The Bible is God's story of love, justice and redemption, and it's meant not to be read or studied simply from an academic standpoint, but to be used as a means to grow our relationship with God and to let him transform our lives.

"I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people." Jeremiah 31:33 CSB

We can't forget that the goal of staying mindful of our Maker is not just to successfully do the thing we feel like we are "supposed" to do as Christians. Without a loving relationship, it will feel like a task. You'll check the box and then feel good about having done it, while still missing the point. And God Himself is the point. Not what He can do in our lives or even His help in living in obedience to His commands.

So where do we start? Let's walk through some ideas together...

Create Your Consistent Rhythm

So why is it important to have consistent time with God? Lots of reasons, but here are a couple of significant ones:

It's what Jesus did.

Scripture shows over and over again that Jesus himself would retreat and pray. Sometimes he'd invite friends to pray with him. But often he would go himself. Jesus considered the Word of God to be more vital even than food. After Jesus had been baptized and began his ministry in a more public way, he was led out into the wilderness and entered a time of where He was going to be tempted by the devil himself. Jesus has fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, then the devil tempted Jesus to use his divine gifts to turn some stones into bread. Now, I'm hangry if I skip one meal, so Jesus' response floors me: "It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) He hadn't eaten for 40 days and he still says the word of God is more important than food!

It's during this time God can etch his word on your heart.

EtchLife is built around this idea from Proverbs 7:3:

"My teaching is as precious as your eyesight -- guard it!

Write it out on the back of your hands. Etch it on the chambers of your heart."

This consistent listening to God through His Words changes us and forms us.

Practical Ideas

Determine a consistent time and realistic timespan. It can be really easy to decide to go from nothing to reading the Bible and praying for an hour straight every day. It's an admirable goal, but rather than going too hard and burning out quickly, it's better to set a goal that is sustainable and makes sense in your life. If you're starting from zero, that could be 5-10 minutes, 3-4 days a week. Don't feel like it doesn't "count" if it's short. Remember, this is a lifelong process...it's a marathon, not a sprint.

Also consider what time during the day works for you. Many people benefit from spending time with God in the morning when they wake up. But maybe because of your work schedule, evening is the time when you are consistently available. Or it's easy for you to carve out time over lunch. Consider putting an appointment on your calendar and set a reminder to pop up.

Think and pray through a style that works for you. I have a pastor friend who would seek to rid the world of the phrase "Quiet Time." Not because he doesn't believe in setting aside time to read the Bible, worship, study and pray, but because that particular phrase conjures up only one definition of what time with God can look like: it's quiet, it's inside, it's probably early, it's you, a Bible, maybe a journal and pen, and a peaceful and repentant heart. I don't know about you, but that's not the physical or mental space I'm in every day. I love this definition from cru.org: "Let's define quiet time as 'a point during each day when we remove ourselves from the busyness of schoolwork, dorm life, and the ever-increasing demands of Facebook to spend time praying, reading God's Word, and quietly listening to what God has to say to us.'"

There's no one size fits all. So, don't feel boxed in by one specific idea of what or when your time with God should be. For some, the early morning in the living room with a Bible reading plan is a perfect fit. For others, connecting with God is best done outside on the porch or while walking and praying through the neighborhood. Maybe it's listening to a devotional or audio reading of the Bible on your drive to work and a prayer time over lunch. Maybe you bring your focus toward God starting with some worship music. God made you and knows how he wired you...you can pray and ask Him to guide you to the style that fits you best.

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Practical Ideas continued...

Have a plan. It's much less daunting to come to your time with God when you have an idea of what you're going to do. I've certainly tried the "open the Bible to a random page and hope to find something meaningful" and the "start at Genesis and tank out somewhere in Leviticus" methods of studying the Bible, but I can say from experience that my motivation is much better when I know the basic structure of what I'm going to do when I sit down. Again, find the method that speaks to your heart, but here are a few ideas to get things rolling:

Pick a structure to help guide you through prayer time. There are a lot of these out there, but one to get started could be the PRAY method:

Praise: start with praising God for who he is

Repent: confess specific sins we've committed and turn from doing them again.

Ask: ask for the things that are on your mind

Yield: become quiet after speaking to God and listen to what he might want to say to you.

Try a Journible. These books are set up for you to copy scripture into them on one page, and make your own notes on the other page. I found that slowing down enough to actually write passages out helped my focus, comprehension and appreciation for scripture. (Don't tell them I told you, but you could also do this in a blank notebook).

Decide on a focus for the year. Perhaps you have an inkling of what God might be wanting to teach you or what you might like to focus on in the next year. Choosing a focus like prayer, generosity, learning about the Holy Spirit, dealing with fear, etc. can help you target your Bible reading, guide your prayer time, and lead you to other supplemental materials.

Not sure where to start or what to pray? Pray scripture back to the Lord, particularly when you're not sure what to pray. The Psalms can be a great help in this.

My most consistent time of day is: _____

I feel most connected to God in this space: _____

Some elements I'd like to include in my time with God are: _____

Other thoughts: _____

Develop Touchpoints During The Day

As soon as you leave that anchor space (or even before), the world comes calling. Every day, we are in a battle for our minds. This realization led to the Mindful of My Maker collection here at EtchLife, because we wanted to create some beautiful tools we could wear, see and hold to help guide our minds back to Christ all day long. Touchpoints throughout the day are where you can really begin to build a rhythm with God that draws you back to him consistently.

When Scripture paints a picture of how to interact with God's words, it's not just at one specific point in the day, it's an ongoing conversation. Deuteronomy 6:6-8 says this:

These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. 7 Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates.

The good news is that staying mindful is not our work alone. When we choose to follow Christ as our Savior, we get to have the Holy Spirit living and working in us, and He brings us back to truth.

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, who the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you. (John 14:26)

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. (John 16:13)

Practical Ideas

This is where we pray Etch products can come in. Magic isn't going to happen just because you are wearing a shirt with Scripture concepts on it, but we hope perhaps you can choose that shirt in the morning because you need that reminder during the day, and put it on like armor to help in the battle for your mind.

YouVersion Bible app verse of the day. You can set the verse to pop up on your phone at a certain time each day. If you ever wonder if God's paying attention, I can't tell you the number of times I've looked at the verse of the day and thought, "Are you actually kidding me right now? This is exactly what I needed to hear today (sometimes that's encouragement, sometimes it's a bit of a rebuke)."

The Daily Office. If you'd really like to get into some rhythms that have been observed by Christian sisters and brothers over the centuries, explore the Daily Office. This is a practice of regularly stopping throughout the day to be with God through prayer. A great guide for this practice is *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day*, a 40-day guide through the Daily Office by Peter Scazzero. In it, he says, "The great power in setting apart small units of time for morning, mid-day, and evening prayer infuses the rest of my day's activities with a deep sense of the sacred – of God. I remember that all time is his. The Daily Office, when practiced consistently, works to eliminate the division between the sacred and the secular in our lives."

One idea for creating touchpoints I'd like to try is: _____

Invest in Times of Deeper Reflection

It's no secret that we live in a world that bombards us with information from all directions at all times. Some of those messages are helpful, some are not, but we spend most of our time taking in, taking in, taking in, and rarely have time to reflect and unpack what it is we're absorbing. An extended time of deeper reflection, like a half-day retreat, can be an incredible tool to gain some clarity and let God work in us.

We're all busy, but carving out this time is so worth it, whether it's monthly, quarterly, or a couple times a year. To add some accountability, this could be a great activity for a group of friends or community group to do at the same time, but separately, and then come together afterwards to process how God is working in their lives. You'll be surprised how fast the time seems to go, even if several hours devoted to Scripture, prayer and reflection seems like a long time at first!

Practical Steps

How to plan out several hours can be intimidating, so here's a guide from Pastor Tim Overby:

Step 1: Choose a location that connects you to God most. Consider outdoors/park if you connect with God in nature. Maybe for others of you, a coffee shop, or maybe an old traditional church sanctuary.

Step 2: Allow some drive time. Make your destination at least 20 or 30 minutes away, so that you can use the drive time to quiet your spirit and ask the Father what He wants to do with your time. Keep your heart open.

Step 3: Begin with where you have been. Through journaling or verbal prayer, work through the question, "Lord, what have you been revealing to me lately about who you are? What have you been revealing to me about me? (Consider your time in the Scriptures, your relationships, your service, your spiritual community)"

Step 4: Continue to reflect. Through journaling, work through the question, "Lord, where are you calling me deeper? In dependence, passion, surrender, or faith in you?" (Consider any decisions in front of you, close relationships, or potential opportunities presented to you)

Step 5: Preparing next steps. Through journaling, work through the question, "Lord, what do I most need to know about you in the days ahead? What do I most need to learn about myself?" Consider putting together a Scripture reading plan for the next 6 months and identifying other spiritual formation books you would like to tackle in the coming months.

Consider fasting from food during your retreat and finish your retreat with a nice meal to celebrate God's extravagant goodness and generosity.

A few dates I could schedule a half-day retreat are: _____

A location where I could connect well with God is: _____

We've given you a lot of ideas here, and you'll find some to be a good fit for you, and others not so much. But our goal with this guide, and the entire Mindful of My Maker Collection, is to encourage you to experience Isaiah 26:3:

You keep in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts you.