

Take a Survey

Look through the kaleidoscope. Notice the shifting shapes, colors, light, and darkness. Now, look again, and turn the tube. Notice the different swirls of color, structure formation, and luminosity. Each time you look, you see something different, beautiful, and intriguing. One of my favorite spiritual practices is what I call "Survey." It is similar to looking through a kaleidoscope.

Taking a survey involves a careful and curious, yet non-judgmental look at a portion of time to notice God's activity. It is reflecting. Looking back in order to move forward. A survey allows you to notice God's presence, your thoughts, feelings, and longings. It offers a view and examination over time. When we take a survey, we see different aspects of God, the variety of ways He draws us to Himself, and how we are being transformed to reflect Him. Each time we take a survey we see something different, beautiful, and intriguing.

Lamentations 3:40 - Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.

This practice can be done daily, weekly, monthly, and even yearly. The intention is reflection - a time to notice with God. I like to picture God walking beside me as I review my day with Him. Taking a survey can take hours or minutes. For some it's the length of time to brush their teeth, for others, it's an afternoon or few days away for reflection. Whatever the length, a survey with God positions us for spiritual depth and growth while living in His extravagant love and grace.

There are five parts, each beginning with the letter R, to guide taking a survey.

Remember - Give thanks! Place yourself in God's presence and recognize His gifts and grace in your life! Count His blessings using ABC praise. For each letter of the alphabet ascribe a name for God, characteristic of God, or a goodness/grace of God. (1 Chronicles 16:34)

Request - Pray for grace to understand how God is moving within your life. Ask God for an open heart. What is it that you "want" from God? Pray a simple prayer - A name for God, A request of God. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Reflect - With God as your companion, recall specific moments and your feelings during that time. Listen to God and notice where He was meeting you, encouraging you, convicting you, and challenging you. As these things arise, encounter them with Jesus. (Lamentations 3:40)

- When did I most notice God's presence? When did God feel distant?
- When did I give or receive the most love? The least love?
- When did I feel most alive? When did I feel drained?
- When did I most experience joy? When did I experience sadness?
- When did I feel most creative? When did I feel my creativity stifled?

Repent - Come to God in repentance and release. Notice when you were drawn to the love of God and when you pushed away God's presence and care. Approach God with sorrow for your sin. God's voice to you is love, grace, delight, and encouragement; void of condemnation. His voice invites you to authenticity, redemption, and growth. Release your sin and receive the cleaning forgiveness and release of God. (1 John 1:9)

Renewal - Allow God to pour His extravagant love over you. Look toward tomorrow - How is God inviting you to live with Him? Look with hope! God is present with you and will continue to guide, renew, and transform you. (Isaiah 40:31)

Notice God's activity and invitations by reflecting with a survey. See the different, beautiful, and intriguing movements of God in you and around you as you reflect, like in a Kaleidoscope.

-Jenni