

Mindfulness



Challenge

1. Set a timer for one minute.
2. Close your eyes. Don't count.
3. Try and predict when one minute is up.
4. You only get one chance – as soon as you open your eyes to check the timer it's over

How did it go? Did you make it to 30 seconds? What did you think about? When was the last time you took 60 seconds to be still, with no agenda, and with nothing to accomplish? Most people struggle with this challenge. Our culture values moving fast, getting things done, and wears busyness as a badge of honor. Today we want to look deeper into the idea of mindfulness. We hope to answer the following questions:

1. What is mindfulness?
2. How does mindfulness fit into the Christian faith?
3. What are the benefits of mindfulness?

What is it?

One thing is for sure, mindfulness is often misunderstood. It doesn't have to involve sitting cross-legged on the floor or burning incense. Instead, it involves being still, present, and accepting your current thoughts. The 10 minute Ted Talk to the right gives further detail on what mindfulness is and why it is needed



How does mindfulness fit into the Christian faith?

Great question! There are many who don't want anything to do with mindfulness or hesitate because some have used it improperly or inappropriately. This would be like not using a phone because it's possible to dial a wrong number. The fact of the matter is God created us to rest. We are made in his image and he rested. If we stopped there we could convince ourselves that watching TV, mowing the lawn, cooking, reading, or going for a walk could all be restful. Scripture takes it a bit further. The word that shows up over and over is meditate. The following verses give us a better glimpse of what this looks like.

Genesis 24:63

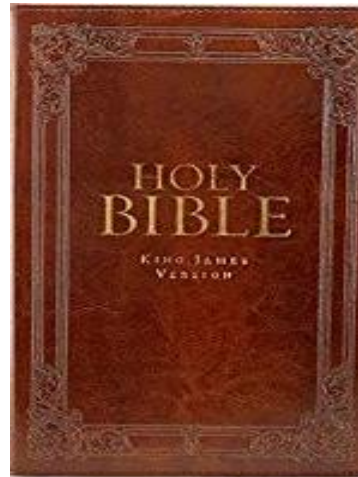
Psalms 104:34

Psalms 77:12

Psalms 145:5

Psalms 199:148

Joshua 1:8



We meditate on God, His law, and His works. In Deuteronomy, Abraham tells the people of Israel to commit wholeheartedly to God's word and bring it with them everywhere. In this case we would expect our thoughts to be infused with God's word, character, and power. Taking the time to be silent, present, and appreciate these thoughts can bring amazing benefit. Finally, we are fearfully and wonderfully made! The connections between our mind and body are fascinating. Keep reading!

What are the benefits?



Mental Health:

Mindfulness has been shown to "turn off" the stress centers of the brain while increasing our ability to experience feelings of compassion and empathy.

Immune System:

Scientific studies have shown that mindfulness can improve immune function. Specifically, a group that practiced mindfulness compared to one who didn't had a stronger immune preparation response to the flu vaccine.



Digestive Health:

We know mindfulness has been shown to increase secretion of serotonin (a neurotransmitter released in the brain often tied with mental health). What is amazing is that almost 90% of serotonin receptors are located in our gut and play a key role in digestion.



Join us this Wednesday (1/22/2020) at the indoor track for a practical, walking mindfulness session at 12:15 p.m.