

# **Reflection Guide** 2024

## Introduction

Taking time for reflection, solitude, and making space for God to speak is vital for spiritual growth. Though we can't control the outcomes of this practice, we can intentionally create moments of stillness and openness. By stepping away from distractions, we allow God the opportunity to guide, heal, and transform us. This practice helps us discern His will, deepen our relationship with Him, and become more attuned to His presence in our lives.

## **Preparation**

Preparing well for a time of reflection helps you make the most of the experience. By creating a quiet, distraction-free space, setting clear intentions, and opening your heart to God's guidance, you allow yourself to fully engage. Preparation helps focus your mind, deepen insight, and maximize spiritual growth. Consider the following recommendations:

☐ Establish an official start and end to your retreat or time for reflection.
☐ Pray about and intentionally form a list of things you want to bring or activities you want to do.
☐ Communicate as needed to others that you will be disconnected except for urgent calls.

COMMONITEMS	COMMON ACTIVITIES
Bible	Lectio Divina
Journal & Pen	Walk or exercise
Book(s)	Nap
Instrument	Write encouraging notes or letters

# Pray | PSALM 63

Psalm 63, written by David in the wilderness, reflects a soul earnestly seeking God amid barrenness. It invites worship, gratitude, and reflection on God's faithfulness. As you sit in solitude to reflect on the past year, let this psalm guide you to remember His steadfast love and presence in all circumstances.

**Instructions:** Read Psalm 63 twice in your Bible and then journal a paraphrase of the Psalm from what you can remember. After reflecting on your paraphrase, use the following five prayer prompts to begin your time:

- 1. God give me a genuine desire to have more of you and to hear what you want to say to me (Ps. 63:1).
- 2. God, help me to remember what you've done for me this year and increase in praise of you(Ps. 63:2-5).
- 3. God, remove any distractions while I spend time with you (Ps. 63:6).
- 4. God give me a heart of dependence on you as my refuge and guide (Ps. 63:7-8).
- 5. God protect me from the liars and any voices of condemnation or shame (Ps. 63:9-11).

# Reflect (pt. I)

Reflection is essential for spiritual growth, allowing us to pause and consider God's work in our lives. Through self-examination, we can identify areas of sin, celebrate God's faithfulness, and align our hearts with His will. Psalm 139:23-24 invites us to ask God to search and guide us. Reflection deepens our relationship with Him, strengthens our faith, and fosters gratitude. By looking back, we gain clarity to move forward with renewed purpose and dependence on God.

**Instructions:** This section contains 11 categories with five questions per category to guide you in a time of reflection. **Select 3-5 areas** you want to prioritize for this time of reflection and work through the accompanying questions. Use a separate page or journal to process your thoughts.

#### The 11 categories include:

REFLECTION CATEGORIES	Intellectual Growth
Physical Health	Vocational Dependability
Emotional Health	Avocational Enjoyment
Spiritual Health	Familial Bonds
Relational Depth	Marital Commitment
Financial Stewardship	Parental Responsibility

## **Physical Health**

Reflecting on physical health encourages awareness of how our bodies support daily life.

#### Use the questions and a separate page to journal your thoughts:

- 1. What has prioritizing your physical health looked like this year?
- 2. What are 3-5 words that come to mind when you think about your body?
- 3. How would you describe your relationship with food this year?
- 4. What have been some barriers for you regarding consistent physical activity?
- 5. What have your sleep patterns looked like and how would you rate your level of rest this year?

## **Emotional Health**

Reflecting on emotional health fosters awareness of how our feelings and mindset shape our relationships, decisions, and overall well-being.

#### Use the questions and a separate page to journal your thoughts:

- 1. Where do you sense the most stress occurring in your life?
- 2. How aware are you of your emotional state throughout the day or from week to week?
- 3. Where have you noticed your emotions affecting your relationships?
- 4. What have you celebrated this year?
- 5. What have you mourned this year?

## **Spiritual Health**

Reflecting on spiritual health helps us assess our connection to something greater, align our lives with our core principles, and find meaning in our experiences.

- 1. What level of enjoyment have you been feeling in your walk with Jesus?
- 2. What did you enjoy most in Scripture or theological study this year?
- 3. How would you describe your prayer life?
- 4. In what area(s) do you feel insecure about your "performance" as a Christian?
- 5. How has your view of God been changed, challenged, or affirmed this year?

## **Relational Depth**

Reflecting on relational depth encourages awareness of the impact of our connections with others. It helps us recognize patterns and identify opportunities to foster trust, empathy, and mutual growth.

#### Use the questions and a separate page to journal your thoughts:

- 1. What do you value about your closest friendship(s) right now?
- 2. How diverse are your circles? Do you tend to hang out with people just like you?
- 3. How would others describe you as a friend?
- 4. Describe your relational satisfaction with family, friends, church, and co-workers.
- 5. In which relationships do you feel pushed towards growth or spurred on?

## **Financial Stewardship**

Reflecting on financial stewardship encourages awareness of how our resources are being used for eternal purposes. It helps us align our finances with our mission, values, and aspirations as guided by God.

#### Use the questions and a separate page to journal your thoughts:

- 1. How does your current budget reflect your priorities?
- 2. What level of joy accompanies your current giving practices?
- 3. When was a time you were spontaneously generous this past year?
- 4. What material possessions or experiences would be hardest to give up?
- 5. How would you describe your level of contentment regarding your current lifestyle and income?

## **Intellectual Growth**

Reflecting on intellectual growth helps us assess our commitment to continue to learn and grow. All that we watch, listen to, and read significantly impacts who we become over time.

- 1. What are some new topics you learned about this year?
- 2. What books, podcasts, or resources impacted you the most?
- 3. What do you wish you knew more about?
- 4. With whom did you feel safe to share or explore new ideas?
- 5. Do you feel your leisure time has a healthy balance of learning vs. entertainment?

## **Vocational Dependability**

Reflecting on vocational dependability encourages awareness of how we are being faithful contributors to our workplaces in healthy, sustainable ways. It also helps us assess our growth and impact in our roles.

#### Use the questions and a separate page to journal your thoughts:

- 1. What aspects of your job are you enjoying most?
- 2. How connected to God do you feel in your work?
- 3. In what ways does your job shape your character?
- 4. What aspects of your job drain you? Why?
- 5. How do you and others close to you feel about your current boundaries with work?

## **Avocational Enjoyment**

Reflecting on avocational enjoyment encourages awareness of how our hobbies and interests enrich our lives and bring balance. It helps us recognize the value of creativity, relaxation, and joy outside of work.

#### Use the questions and a separate page to journal your thoughts:

- 1. How often are you intentionally engaging in an activity that fills you up?
- 2. What activities did you enjoy this past year that gave you life and rest?
- 3. What has it looked like to share your hobbies and interests with others close to you?
- 4. Describe your ability to balance leisure time with relationships, job, or home responsibilities.
- 5. What's something new you've tried this year?

## **Familial Bonds**

Reflecting on familial bonds develops awareness of how our relationships with family shape our sense of belonging and support. It helps us strengthen connections, resolve conflicts, and nurture love and respect.

- 1. How satisfied are you with the level of closeness between you and your family?
- 2. Are there any areas of momentum you notice in your relationships with your family members?
- 3. How are you trying to be a faithful son/daughter or brother/sister to your family?
- 4. What do you think it means to honor your parents in this season?
- 5. How do you feel about your rhythms of communication with your family?

## **Marital Commitment**

Reflecting on marital commitment encourages awareness of how our dedication and efforts strengthen the partnership with our spouse. It helps us assess communication, trust, and mutual support.

#### Use the questions and a separate page to journal your thoughts:

- 1. What has God been teaching you through your spouse?
- 2. What have you enjoyed doing together?
- In what ways are you and your spouse reflecting Christ and the Church to others?
- 4. To what degree do you feel fully known and fully loved by your spouse?
- 5. Which word resonates most with how you currently feel in your marriage? Roommates, co-workers, partners, friends, lovers, adversaries, competitors, or teammates.

## **Parental Responsibility**

Reflecting on parental responsibility encourages awareness of how our parenting shapes the development and well-being of our children as we nurture their growth and provide emotional and practical support.

- 1. How are you doing at studying your children so that you can be attuned to their specific needs and desires?
- 2. What does your prayer life for your children look like?
- 3. How would you describe your level of surrender to God regarding the size of your family?
- 4. How frequently do you ask for forgiveness from your children or in front of your children?
- 5. How aligned are your weekly activities with your family mission?

# Reflect (pt. II)

Use this space to journal and process any other areas you must consider. Are there any big decisions coming up in these next few months? Is there anything you need to start preparing for? How are you feeling about these events or decisions?

# **Structures & Rhythms**

Regular rhythms of prayer, rest, study, and other disciplines cultivate physical, emotional, and spiritual health. They provide structure, promote reflection, and encourage balance in life. These habits renew our minds, restore our energy, deepen our faith, and enhance our resilience, fostering holistic well-being and alignment with our values.

Outline any thoughts you have below about the following spiritual practices for this upcoming season:

Prayer	
Bible Reading	
Theological Study	
Rest/Sabbath	
Solitude	
Community	
Fasting	
Generosity	
Hospitality	
Simplicity	

# Debrief (pt. I)

Debriefing after reflection solidifies insights and transforms experiences into actionable lessons. It helps identify what worked, what to improve, and future strategies. This intentional process fosters growth, strengthens planning, and ensures continuous improvement for future times of reflection.

**Instructions:** Use this page to jot down the key insights from your reflection. Imagine revisiting this in three months and reviewing your thoughts and goals. What would be helpful for your future self to remember? Write a summary that captures what's most important for you to reflect on later.

# Debrief (pt. II)

### Final Ouestions:

<ol> <li>What is most exciting to you as you look ahead to this next year?</li> <li>With whom can you share your takeaways from this retreat?</li> <li>What did you like about this time of reflection?</li> <li>What would you do differently next time?</li> </ol>	IIIdi	nai questions.				
3. What did you like about this time of reflection?	1.	What is most exciting to you as you look ahead to this next year?				
	2.	With whom can you share your takeaways from this retreat?				
4. What would you do differently next time?	3.	What did you like about this time of reflection?				
	4.	What would you do differently next time?				

5. When would be a good time to put your next quarterly retreat on the calendar?