

Water from an Ancient Well: God in the Everyday
Acts 17:27-28
Sunday, July 7, 2026

On our bathroom mirror, there are several sticky notes. They are mostly love notes between my wife and me, reminding each other of our love every day (Aww, right?), with a few motivational quotes thrown in. Recently, a new note appeared with a quote from author James Clear: “Two Simple Rules. 1. You get better at what you practice. 2. Everything is practice. What are you practicing?” Of course, I immediately recognized it for the passive-aggressive attack it was and asked my wife about it. She said it was a quote she thought we “both could use.” Maybe I’m a little too practiced at being easily aggrieved and thinking everything is about me. Maybe... I’ll have to look into that.

I think James Clear is on to something by asking this question. What are we practicing in our day-to-day lives? In this church, we often speak of “spiritual practices” such as prayer, Scripture study, Christian community, service, and worship. We know they are foundational to what it means to be Christian. Those of us in this room and worshipping online are here because we know we need to participate in those practices, and coming to church is a good way to do so, because in church we pray, we study Scripture, we participate in Christian community, we serve, and we worship. These are all good things, but the question I want to explore further today is “Where and when do we practice?”

I think it is good to ask this question because of an issue as old as the church itself, namely the tendency of the Christian faith to become an “inside the church building” and “Sunday only” faith. This is easy to do because the good activities we do at church are very tangible. We can see them, and church officials can count them. We can quantify them and tell whether we are doing “better” or “worse” by measurements such as attendance, professions of faith, etc. It is also easy to cordon off “sacred” space from “secular” space and create a God who only exists within the four walls of a church. We can create a God who is only present when we are in our “sacred” spaces. We can make the main goal of our faith to be “get people in church,” by which we do not mean the body of Christ, but the church building. Of course, if someone were to ask, we would say that we do not really believe in a God like this, but our behavior often tells a different story.

The problem is that this is neither faith formation nor full discipleship. This type of Christianity cannot withstand the constant onslaught of information and influence directed at our hearts and minds in the modern world. It is not because we are bad people; it is simply a matter of math. One hour of church cannot compete with 16 hours spent scrolling social media, 14 hours spent watching Netflix, or 4 hours spent watching Sunday football. (These are the real averages for Americans per week.) What we practice consistently is what we will become. Thinking that Sunday church attendance is all there is to being a Christian is like being a professional athlete who

trains only on game day, on the field of play. It is like a professional musician who practices only in the venue during the show.

There is an alternative to this approach, found in Scripture and in 2000 years of Christian tradition. This approach begins with the understanding found in Psalm 139 that God is present everywhere, and it continues through the New Testament in our Scripture passage today, where Paul reminds us that we “live and move and have our being” in God. God is not confined to our church building or limited to the “sacred” times. God is present and available to us at all times and in all places.

This is most likely not news to you, but what would it look like to actually practice this daily? What does it look like to live with the ever-present God in the everyday?

Prayer plays a key role. The Celtic Christians of the British Isles understood this well, as reflected in their prayers, which spanned all aspects of life, from the start of the day in the field to the winding down of the fire at the end of each day. They recognized that they lived every moment in God's presence and offered prayers of thanks for God's love and protection. Prayer was not just for church or times of need.

Even in the rush of modern life, we can make time to say a short prayer when we arise, when we begin our work, at noon when we pause to eat, at the end of our workday, and when we lie down to sleep. Many of us check in with friends and loved ones throughout the day. Let's add God to our daily communication! If you spend five minutes in prayer several times a day, you could spend 20-30 minutes with God with a

small effort. If you don't know what to pray, many resources are available. I (or your small group leader or Tommy when he returns) would be happy to help you find something that suits you.

Another place Celtic Christians drew close to God was in the observation of the seasons. They were a people much more connected to nature, so in the repeated changes of the seasons, they saw the hand of God at work in cycles of renewal and rebirth in nature that mirrored the new life found in Christ. In our modern times, we are less in tune with these changes. Many of us engage with the world mostly through technology, which I believe creates a distance between ourselves and the physical world and can dull our spiritual sense of God's creation. We can engage in the observation of God's creation by taking frequent walks in the same area throughout the year, observing the changes we see and listening to what God might have to say as we walk. If walking is difficult, perhaps you have a spot in your house or on your property where you could make a habit of spending a few minutes each day prayerfully observing nature. Notice what you see. Notice how the sky changes every day. Notice the coming and going of various animals around you. Take in God's creation rather than human's creation. Journal about what you see. You may be surprised by what you can learn when you listen for God's voice.

Saint David, the patron saint of the Welsh people who lived from around the year 500, had these last words for his followers, "Be joyful, and keep your faith and creed,

and do the little things you have seen me do.” Because of this story, “do the little things in life” has become a common phrase among the Welsh people to remind them that the little things are important.

When we think about hearing from God, it can be easy to assume that it is something only the “super spiritual” people do, in brilliant flashes of insight that appear out of nowhere. When you study the lives of the spiritual greats of the past, what you will find is that for every insight or breakthrough, there are hours and hours spent in prayer and contemplation, practicing the little things of the faith. May we understand that it is in the little things that our faith grows, and may we learn to practice our faith diligently and consistently so that we may reflect the glory, grace, peace, and love of Christ to all the world. Amen.