

PART 1

Medicine and a God that Sees Us

Practicing faithful presence grows out of a deep understanding of how God treats us. When you internalize the truth that God sees and cares about you, then you know what it looks like to embody faithful presence with others. In this week's video "Medicine and a God that Sees Us," Christian physicians share how their faith in a loving God transforms the way they practice medicine.

Day 1

Assignment

Watch the video "Medicine and a God that Sees Us".

Reflection and Practice

1. The doctors in the video seek to imitate God by practicing faithful presence. They are the hands and feet of Christ in their workplace. What do you learn about God's character through watching the way they care for patients? Journal specific attributes that you notice, starting your sentences, "God is . . ." or "God is like . . ."
2. Take a few minutes to replay in your mind a time when someone cared compassionately for you in a time of illness or need. What does it feel like to receive compassion? Close your eyes and imagine God present and caring for you in that moment.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to grasp how much God delights in you.

Day 2

Assignment

Watch the video a second time.

Reflection and Practice

1. Faithful presence involves compassion for all people, not only friends or people we enjoy being around. What enables the doctors in the video to care for difficult patients?
2. Dr. Ben Frush tells the story of meeting a “notoriously difficult patient.” What emotions did Dr. Frush feel when he first met with the client? How did Dr. Frush choose to respond, and what helped him to practice faithful presence in that moment?
3. Dr. Farr Curlin states, “When I go to work, I frequently call to mind the fact I’m going to encounter people who are coming to me in God’s image and, in a mysterious way, even as Christ himself.” As you go about your day today, intentionally look at each person you encounter as God’s image, as though you are meeting Christ himself. Then journal about it at the end of the day.

Day 3

Reflection and Practice

Dr. Patrick Smith says faithful presence involves being “attentive.” Practice attentiveness today. You can do this by listening well to what your co-worker, fellow student, or client is saying. Ask follow up questions to show you are listening and that you care. At the end of the day, journal what it was like to practice attentiveness. What were the challenges? What were the gifts?

Day 4

Reflection and Practice

Dr. Calvin Gross says sickness provides an unusual opportunity—an opportunity for close relationship and care. Try a new practice of looking for opportunity amid difficulties. Is there something bothering you? What might be the opportunity for noticing and doing good in that situation?

Optional Activity

Watch the supplemental video “What Is Beautiful in Medicine?” As you go about your day, ask yourself, “What beautiful thing is God doing?” Then pay extra attention to what is going on around you. Where do you see beauty unfolding in your day-to-day tasks?

Day 5

Assignment

Watch “Medicine and the God that Sees Us” for a third time.

Reflection and Practice

1. One of the primary challenges the doctors face in practicing faithful presence is the demanding pace of their job. Dr. Emy Yang and the other doctors discuss how efficiency and bureaucracy can threaten to overshadow relationships. How do they resist becoming mechanical and detached in their jobs? Be specific.
2. Spend time in prayer, asking God to reveal ways that you prioritize efficiency over relationships. Ask God for specific ways you can become more relationship-centered. Journal what you sense the Spirit telling you, then put that into practice this week.
3. How might you incorporate rest and rejuvenation into your daily and weekly schedule?

Day 6

Reflection and Practice

1. Hope is essential for practicing faithful presence and implementing justice, but Dr. Patrick Smith says, “Hope should not be conflated or confused with optimism.” What do you think he means by that? Do you tend to conflate hope with optimism?
2. Dr. Smith describes hope as a “deep moral vision” that is “informed by something beyond ourselves,” leading us to see where change is needed. Hope or a vision inspires us toward “individual and collective efforts to realize [bring about] the way things ought to be.” In your own community (whether on the job or at school), where do you see a need for more justice and faithful presence? Spend time daydreaming about what it might look like if things were the way they ought to be in your community. Journal your reflections and consider what concrete action God might be inviting you to.