

# The Way of Jesus

## Week 6

*A 12 Week Seminar for Students of Jesus  
St Stephens/Sewickley  
January-March 2010*

### Opening Discussion:

Let's look at Colossians 3. What overlap do you see in this chapter with what we have been learning about Christlike? How do they relate to Willard's 'Golden Triangle'?



How do these verses relate to the '**The Christ Focus**' of Kingdom life that we looked at last week? We described it as "a dependant, interactive live with ('in') the living Jesus Christ and his Kingdom. That interactive relationship is, in fact, eternal life (John 17.3). In entering this life there are two 'preliminaries' (**humility** and the **intention of inward rightness**) and two 'substantive elements' (the **constant presence of Christ** where we are and **obedience** where we are) that should be embraced."

What steps can you take in this direction? What habits of life might hold the most promise for you as you look at the bright promise of Christlikeness that is given us in the gospel?

## Embracing Habits that Place You Before God

### Reflections

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (ESV)

*Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next.*

1 Tim 4:7-8 (NLT)

### What Spiritual Disciplines Are:

“Any activity within our power that we engage in to enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort...they are [also] disciplines designed to help us be active and effective in the spiritual realm of our own heart...to help us withdraw from total dependence on the merely human or natural...and to depend also on the ultimate reality, which is God and his kingdom.” (Willard, ‘The Divine Conspiracy, p 353) The whole purpose of the disciplines are to place you before God’s grace.

### Centrality of Our Bodies

“The main task is, by engaging in ways of using the body differently, to disrupt and conquer habits of thought, feeling, and action that govern our lives as if we or someone other than God were God and as if his kingdom were irrelevant or inaccessible to us...Appropriate disciplines for developing *new* habits, kingdom habits, are practiced. The ultimate effect of this part of the curriculum is to make our body a reliable ally and resource for the spiritual life.” (354)

### Modeled upon Jesus Himself

“A further help in understanding what spiritual disciplines are for the disciples of Jesus is to recognize them as simply a matter of following him into his own practices, appropriately modified to suit our own condition.”

“The ones who have made great spiritual progress all seriously engaged with a fairly standard list of disciplines for the spiritual life...One has to enter them with Jesus as teacher to find the incredible power they have to change one’s world and character.” (355)

#### Disciplines of Abstinence

Solitude      Silence

#### Disciplines of Engagement

Study      Worship

Fasting	Frugality	Service	Celebration
Chastity	Secrecy	Prayer	Fellowship
Sacrifice	Confession	Submission	Extra Giving
Slowing	Simplicity	Practicing God's Presence	

### **Caution!! A Note on Effort and Earning, on Grace and Legalism**

Behind the spiritual formation movement is the conviction that in Western Christianity, passivity (born out of a misunderstanding of saving grace) has undermined our sanctification and our impact. Remember that human effort is commanded in every book of the Bible. Grace calls forth our full, active, intelligent effort in the Christian life.

But the danger of legalism ever lurks. Legalism is built on effort that is dedicated to earning God's favor and approval. It is important to sort out effort and earning. Effort is normative and commanded as a response to grace. Earning is spiritual poison. As D. Willard puts it, "Grace is not opposed to our effort, but to our earning."

Sanctification and Kingdom ministry cannot happen without Christ, and normally He will not do it without us.

## **Living the LIFE-Style of Jesus: Slowing Your Pace**

### ***Jesus Had a Regular Habit of Getting Away...***

- **Getting Away From People**

*And when it was day he departed and went into a lonely place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them;*

Luke 4:42

- **Getting Away From Work**

*Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places...*

Luke 5:15-16

- **Getting Away From Talk**

*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry.*

Luke 4:1-2

*"Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!"*

Psalm 46:10

- **Getting Away From Hurry**

*"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."*

Mark 6.31

DW's advice to John Ortberg was, *"Ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life."*  
Ortberg: 'OK, I have written that one down. That's a good one. Now what else is there?' I had many things to do [he writes] and this was a long distance conversation, so I was anxious to cram as many units of spiritual wisdom into the least amount of time possible. Another long pause.. *'There is nothing else,'* he said.

- **Getting Away With God**

*But he withdrew to the wilderness... and prayed.*

Luke 5:15-16 (RSV)

*"You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.*

John 16:32

*"Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads, and I will give you REST . . . learn from me . . . and you will find rest for your lives. The teaching that I ask you to accept is easy; the load I give you to carry is light."*

Matt. 11:28-30

## Homework for Week 6:

- This week, do these things with Jesus!
- Reflect on Jesus patterns of getting away in the passages above and following: Luke 4.1; 4.42; 5.16; 6.12; 9.10; 9.18; 9.28; 21.37; 22.41
- Read again, slowly, Colossians 3

## Selected Books on Christian Spiritual Disciplines and Formation

- Richard Foster - *"The Celebration of Discipline"*
- Dallas Willard - *"The Spirit of the Disciplines"*
- Bishop Kallistos Ware – *"The Inner Kingdom"* (Spiritual Formation traditions in Orthodoxy)
- Jan Johnson – *"Invitation to the Jesus Life: Experiments in Christlikeness"* (Jan is a partner to Foster and Willard; this is her curriculum for Christlikeness)
- Richard Foster - *"Life With God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation"*
- **Gary W Moon – *"Apprenticeship with Jesus: Learning to Live like the Master"***
- James Bryan Smith - *"The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows"*
- James Bryan Smith – *"The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the character of Christ"*