

WORSHIP AT HOME

Why Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual Direction

Read Matthew 5: 17-48.
Notice, Jesus invites us to remember the 10 Commandments God gave to Moses. "You have heard it said..." Each command is followed by, "but I tell you..."

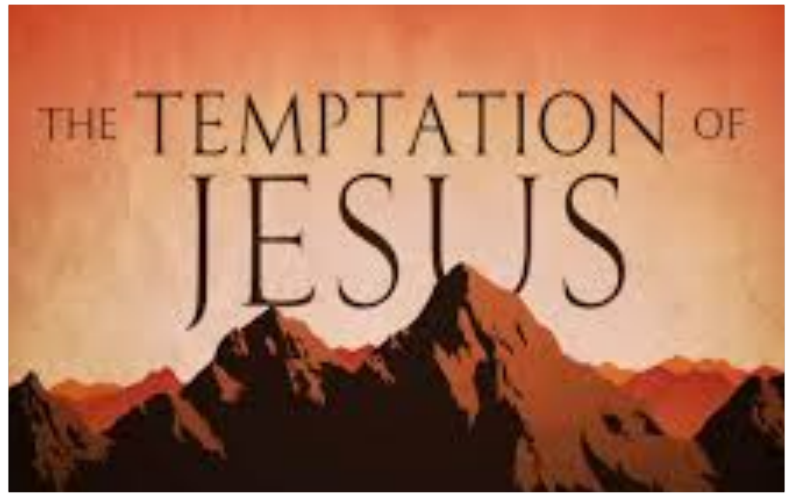
Do you put your Faith/Trust in Moses or Jesus.

Belief

We know the Law of Moses teaches us to know and recognize sin. It teaches us what to confess. Jesus invites us to trust him with our heart, soul, and mind to form Jesus-Habits

The 21-90 Principle

Name 1 temptation you desire to become a Jesus-Habit. For 21 days confess your temptation only to trust receive His mercy, abide in His Grace. After another 90 of practice you will have a new memory!



Prelude

Where he leads me I will follow, where he leads me I will follow, where he lead me I will follow; I'll go with him, with him all the way.

Do This in Remembrance of Me.

Temptations are invitations to develop a Jesus - Habit by practice doing it in remembrance of Jesus.

Name a temptation. For example: We often hear people





New Class Forming

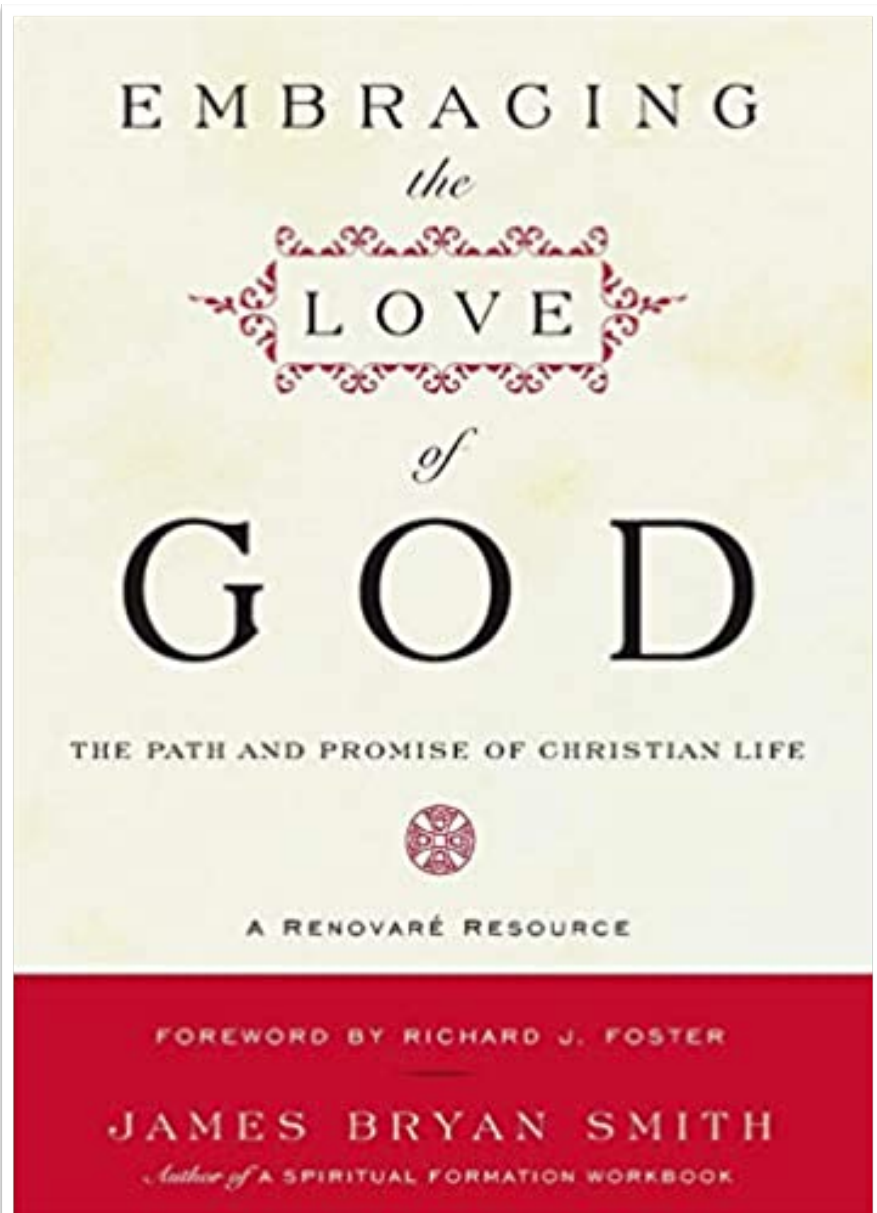
Embracing the Love of God by James Bryan Smith

In today's world, many people fail to experience the powerful freedom and healing of God's grace. Even Christians too often experience judgment rather than the love that is the vital essence of Christian life. This visionary guide calls believers back to the basics: understanding the promise of God's love to transform our most important relationships and fulfill our deepest spiritual needs. The moving insights found within illuminate the gentle nature of God's love and teach readers how to continue on the path of love by embracing it day by day.

Begins Monday January 18th at 6 pm. Class meets at the Parsonage. Please see Robert for more information.

say, "I confessed this or that sin, laid it down, but after a few hours or days I picked it up again.

In the refrain of "Where He Leads Me" we say the same phrase three times. The Great Commandment teaches that Jesus leads us into our heart, soul, and mind. He leads us into our feelings, actions, and thinking to deliver us from sin, and heal our heart-soul-mind to reflect God's image on earth as it is in heaven.



Confession states a habit Jesus would have us change. In other words, confession names our temptations. This week, approach confession as an invitation to shape and form a Jesus - Habit.

For the next 21 days begin your day by confessing this one temptation. For 21 days, name it. Each day, write how it makes you feel about yourself, your neighbor, and your relationship with God. Write how it makes you think about yourself, your neighbor, and your relationship with God.

Next “do this in remembrance of Jesus.” In other words denying your feelings, actions, and thinking. Make Jesus a Habit.

- A. Remember, Jesus offers your heart empathy, compassion and merciful forgiveness.
- B. Remember, Jesus offers your soul a place to rest in God’s Grace.
- C. Remember, Jesus offers your mind peace beyond human reason and understanding.

Mercy and Grace reveal God’s Love. These are the core values of every Jesus-Habit. Mercy, Grace, and Love fulfill the Law of Moses and the Prophets.

Medical Science says it takes 21 days for the heart -soul- mind to make Jesus-Habits. It takes another 90 days for each Jesus-Habit to be an automatic response to its temptation. This is why forming Jesus-Habits is called Discipleship.

Jesus’ Habit Forming Way of Prayer

The Lord be in you!

And also in you, in us, and in all of humanity.

Let us Pray!

Our Father in heaven. Holy is your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Wait, what does Jesus say about God’s will for our lives on earth?

Jesus says, “Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Let us pray the way of the Meek.

Give us this day or daily bread.

Wait, what does this have to do with being Meek?

Jesus says, man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

We believe Jesus is God with us. What words of life come his mouth?

Let us listen with Meekness!

Forgive us our temptations as we forgive those who tempt us.

Wait, what does forgiveness have to do with being meek?

Jesus says, Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Forgiveness is food for our mourning hearts and the troubled minds.

Let us do this in remembrance of Jesus' Way.

He Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil. His is the power of mercy, grace, and love forever.

Wait, where does this way lead us?

Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Where Jesus leads we will follow. Lord gives us ears to hear our temptations as Your invitation to live life in remembrance of Christ or Lord.

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 4:I-II

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted[a] by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'**[b]**"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **6** "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'**[c]**"

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'**[d]**"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. **9** "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’[e]”

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Message: Invitation to Form Jesus-Habits

Mark Reedy and I worked together at Colonial Height’s UMC. He was our Family Life Director. As I was leaving to serve Trinity UMC, Mark and his family relocated to Athen’s Tennessee. Mark remains one of the people with whom I share my heart and mind. I am old enough to be His dad. He is wise enough to transcend the generation Gap.

He offered me a story that opened my eyes to the simplicity of the devil’s temptations and the Holy Spirit actively leading us to develop Jesus - Habits. Mark said, “Robert, have you ever seen an apple tree eat apples? I said, No! Mark went on to explain that God created the apple tree to produce fruit and freely give it to all who are willing to eat? Robert, have you noticed that church people are tempted to believe that the fruit of its ministry is for our consumption?”

We are tempted to eat one another alive with our Beliefs. We are tempted to defend our faith in Christ as is “if” we are the guardians of mercy, grace, and love. We are tempted to divide ourselves from those we judge sinners. “If” is a small deceptive and tempting word. The Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount introduce us to Spiritual Disciplines that the Holy Spirit uses to invite us to form Jesus-Habits.

Jesus speaks about Spiritual Disciplines in Matthew 6. “Alms” are what we call tithes and offerings. He goes into great depth about the way and purpose of prayer. Jesus says “fasting” accomplishes exactly what he experienced in today’s text. Fasting reveals our temptations. Fasting exposes the “treasure of our heart.” The sum of the Spiritual Disciplines lets us see the “plank in our eye”, the way to remove it, and ultimately to see Jesus way to “remove the speck” from our neighbor’s eye. The Spiritual Disciplines lead us into the Wilderness where we experience the devil, Jesus, and our neighbors who want to lord over our lives. Jesus final word regarding the practice of Spiritual Disciplines is “do not worry.”

Nathan Foster, son of Richard Foster, whom I regard as the father of The Protestant Spiritual Discipline Movement, says the Spiritual Disciplines immerse us in experiences of how the things of this world control our thinking, feelings and actions. I find they lead me to face my temptations, trust Jesus, and develop Jesus-Habits.

For the next few weeks we will explore the Wilderness, encounter just how similar Jesus’ temptations are to our own, and experience Temptations as God’s invitation to develop Jesus - Habits.

The Wilderness is the place God leads God’s people to be delivered from sin’s temptations, teach us to “worship God, and serve Him only.” The Wilderness of Sin is shaped by the temptations we encounter through our Belief, Faith, and Love.

Belief stands on **what** we know to be right, good, and true.

Faith tells us **who** we trust .

Love is the **fruit** of acting out our Belief through Faith in Christ alone.

The Devil's most deceptively, tempting word is "if." If God is love, why do people suffer? If you are a true Christian you would not do this or that? "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread. If immediately poses doubt. It explores conditions. It invites us to judge, defend, and prove what we Believe to be right, good, and true. It exposes our selfishness!

Jesus' reply to the Devil immediately questions the reader's ability to hear and see. Remember, chapter 3. Jesus rises up out of the water of John's Baptism. The reader is invited to see God tear open heaven. With Jesus and John the Baptist we are invited to see the Holy Spirit descend upon him. We are given ears to hear God say, "This is my Son, the beloved, with Him I Am well pleased." The sights and sounds unite heaven and earth. All righteousness is fulfilled in Jesus' humble invitation for John the Baptist to join Him in the fulfillment of the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Please do not miss that the devil is not just tempting Jesus. He is tempting the reader too!

Faith tells us who we trust. Jesus responds to the devils temptation to be controlled by daily bread. Jesus denies Himself. His Faith is in God alone. Jesus says, man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Notice that Jesus does not place his faith in his knowledge of Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, or King David. Jesus receives the Devil's temptation as an invitation to "do this in remembrance of the words that came directly from the mouth of God."

I am tempted to prove my Beliefs as right, good, and true. I deferred to Nathan Foster, Richard Foster's son. Name the teachers who shape your beliefs. What book do you read over and over again. Let us love our teachers, quote them, and share their knowledge. Now, let me ask, How many of our cultures battles are mere temptations to listen to mortals and make them the gods of our Faith?

One in Christ,

Robert