

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

April 30, 2010—The Jesus Way—A Common Thread

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts—Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<p>“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” —Jesus (John 14:6)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ways of Jesus <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Abraham—A faith life b) Jacob—A man who wrestled with God c) Joseph—From slave to ruler 2) We have examined the lives of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) What do they have in common? b) What is the common thread of the Jesus way? 3) What is the goal of our journey with God? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Romans 8:29 4) What does it mean to be Christ-like? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Matthew 22:37-39 b) Did Jesus love His Father? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Trinitarian theology: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) God is three persons (2) Each person is fully God (3) There is only one God ii) God <i>is</i> love—<i>Perichōrēsis</i>¹ How are the three persons one in such an understanding? Proponents point to Scripture which suggests “a mutual indwelling of the persons, an eternal co-inherence” [Things that exist in essential relationship with another, as innate components of the other]. Jesus says to Philip, “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works” (John 14:10). In John 10:38 He says, “the Father is in Me, and I in the Father” and in John 1:18 the Son is described as being “in the bosom of the Father.” Paul describes the Holy Spirit as One attuned to the very thoughts of God—He knows God’s thoughts (1

¹ Vol. 11: *Emmaus Journal* Volume 11. 2002 (2) (178–179). Dubuque, IA: Emmaus Bible College.

Cor. 2:11). John of Damascus (AD 675–749) described this as a *περιχώρησις* (*perichōrēsis*), meaning “a circulating” or “going about.”² The Father, Son, and Spirit are not eternally “with” or alongside each other, but eternally “in” one another. “The three persons are in one another and reciprocally interpenetrate, interpermeate, each other.”³ “There is an eternal intercommunion and interaction of being in the Godhead, so that each person co-inheres in the others, and the others in each.”⁴ This describes an intimacy far beyond anything we can know, an indwelling “beyond all human experience and reality.”⁵

- c) It seems to me that to be Christ-like is to be in a relationship with God in the same way Jesus was relational with His Father—**this is the heart of the Jesus Way** (Ephesians 3:16-19; Galatians 2:20; Revelation 22:4;...)
 - i) “Mutual Indwelling” is our invitation into direct relationship with:
 - (1) The Trinity (John 14:17, 23; 17:21)
 - (2) And in a Trinity-like relationship with each other (John 17:20-21, 23)
 - ii) “Obedience” (i.e., keeping Jesus’ commands) is evidence of that relationship
 - (1) John 14:15; James 2:18;...
 - iii) “Fruit” (e.g., loving neighbor) comes from the relationship
 - (1) John 15:1-5, 17:25-26; Galatians 5:22-23;...
- 5) The Problem Before Us [recent comments from Denver-area church leaders]
 - a) “We say: ‘The idea of being made in the image of Christ is a nice idea, but I’m really busy.’ Consequently, we don’t see ourselves as still crippled and disabled. Our woundedness hurts us and others; transformation is much more than an add-on.”
 - b) “Our church culture says: ‘get saved, come to church, start serving’; what is the role of discipleship for the saved where service is deemed the pinnacle of discipleship?”
 - c) “How do we help people move past ‘the wall’ or ‘the plateau’ and to dig deeply into areas of their heart where it gets harder?”
 - d) “How do we communicate God’s call to a deeper place to people who are tired and afraid?”
 - e) “Buried within American Christianity is the American Dream, how do we address this idolatry?”
 - f) “We say that being saved is ‘good enough’ Christianity and that the classic spiritual disciplines are icing on the cake. If we say that being saved is enough, what motivates Christian to follow Jesus more deeply?”
- 6) Jesus as Savior vs. Jesus as Lord
 - a) What motivates people to move from Jesus as Savior to Jesus as Lord?
 - b) What case can we make for us to live this sort of Abrahamic faith-life?

² It is also called a “circumincession” from the Latin *circumincessio*. This is found in John’s work, *Fount of Wisdom*. Cf. ODCC, s.v. “John of Damascus,” 748.

³ Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1:415.

⁴ Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 1:300.

⁵ Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 1.1 (370); cf. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:461; Jewett, *God, Creation, and Revelation*, 298.

A Call to Spiritual Formation

San Antonio, 2009

Christian spiritual formation is the process of being shaped by the Spirit into the likeness of Christ, filled with love for God and the world.

God calls us all to become like Jesus.

Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”* We experience this abundance of life – here and now – as our passions, character, understanding, and relationships are increasingly aligned with those of Christ. This lifelong transformation within and among us is the continual gift of God’s Spirit. We are called to be renewed into the likeness of Jesus – but we do not always fully embrace this calling. Sometimes we seem content to be known as “Christians” without intentionally engaging with this work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Other times we desperately long for a new way of life, wanting to grow in our walk with Jesus, but needing help and encouragement. We, therefore, commit to pursue passionately and to receive joyfully God’s grace to be more fully transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

John 7:37–39
**John 10:10*
Romans 8:29
1 Corinthians 11:1
1 Corinthians 15:49
2 Corinthians 3:17–18
2 Corinthians 4:16–18
2 Corinthians 5:16–21
Galatians 4:19
Ephesians 1:3
Ephesians 3:16–19
1 John 3:2
1 John 4:17

As we are rooted in Jesus and in the kingdom he proclaims, we are progressively transformed.

Jesus is the center of all life and history, both the source and goal of all creation. God shaped this universe as a place where the love and life of Jesus Christ might flourish. Because we are formed in the divine image, we have the capacity to receive and express this life and love. Although human disobedience corrupts the divine image in us, God still forms a people able to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love their neighbors as themselves. Jesus makes this possible through his life, death, and resurrection. In him we experience a restored relationship of love with God and one another, and continual transformation into his likeness. We are becoming a reconciled and renewed community – which is both the goal and the substance of life in God’s kingdom. This is the good news we proclaim with joy to the whole world.

Genesis 1:26–28
Genesis 3:1–7
Proverbs 8:22–31
Isaiah 42:5–9
Jeremiah 31:33–34
Mark 12:28–34
John 1:1–18
John 13:34–35
Romans 5:9–11
Romans 8:1–11
Romans 8:19–23
Ephesians 2:11–22
Colossians 1:9–23
1 Thessalonians 5:23
1 John 2:7–11

Our engagement with God’s transforming grace is vital.

Renewal into the image of Christ is not a human attainment; it is a gift of grace. God mercifully uses all our experiences, including our suffering and trials, to teach and transform us. Even so, transformation requires our involvement and effort. We need to make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit’s work in all our life experiences, particularly through intentional engagement with historical Christian disciplines, including Word and sacrament. These practices open us to the presence and grace of God. As a result, we become, through time and experience, the kind of persons who naturally express love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Matthew 5:43–48
Matthew 11:29–30
Luke 6:40
John 7:38
John 15:5–17
Romans 12:1–2
Galatians 5:16–25
Philippians 2:12–13
Philippians 3:12–16
Titus 2:11–14
Hebrews 5:13–6:1
Hebrews 12:7–13
James 4:7–8
1 Peter 2:2
1 Peter 4:1–2

Spiritual formation happens in community.

As we long to know and follow Jesus and be formed into his likeness, we journey with those who share this longing. God is calling the church to be a place of transformation. Here we struggle to fulfill our calling to love. Here we learn to attend to the invitations of God's Spirit. Here we follow the presence of God in our midst. Spiritual community is the catalyst for our transformation and a sending base for our mission of love to the world.

Matthew 18:20
Luke 6:12-19
John 17:20-26
Acts 2:42-47
Romans 12:4-8
1 Corinthians 12:1-7
Galatians 6:1-2
Ephesians 4:1-16
Hebrews 10:23-25
1 Peter 2:4-10

Spiritual formation is, by its very nature, missional.

As we are formed into the likeness of Christ, we increasingly share God's infinitely tender love for others. We deepen in our compassion for the poor, the broken, and the lost. We ache and pray and labor for others in a new way, a selfless way, a joy-filled way. Our hearts are enlarged toward all people and toward all of creation.

Isaiah 60:1-4
Matthew 5:14-16
Matthew 28:18-20
John 3:16-21
John 20:21-23
2 Corinthians 5:20
Galatians 6:10
1 John 4:7-21

We invite all people, everywhere, to embrace with us this calling to become like Jesus.

By God's grace, we will seek to become lovers: lovers of God, lovers of people, and lovers of all creation. We will immerse ourselves in a lifestyle that is attentive and responsive to the gracious presence of God. We commit ourselves to the community of Christ's beloved, the church, so that we can learn this way of love together. We entreat you to join us.

Matthew 5:1-10
Matthew 13:44-46
Mark 1:15
Luke 9:23-24
Romans 12:1-2
2 Corinthians 6:1
1 Timothy 6:11-12
Revelation 21:2
Revelation 22:17

To Sign and/or download *A Call to Spiritual Formation*, go to <http://ACallToSpiritualFormation.info>

7:00	Closing Prayer
7:00 – ??	If you would like prayer, please come up front and one or more of us will remain to pray with you.

Further reading:

- *The Bible*
- Au, Walkie and Noreen Cannon Au. (2006). *The Discerning Heart: Exploring the Christian Path*. Paulist Press.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. (1995). *The Cost of Discipleship*. Simon & Schuster.
- Ciardi, John & Williams, Miller. (1975). *How Does a Poem Mean?* Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Ginzberg, Louis. (2003). *Legends of the Jews*. V1 & 2. The Jewish Publication Society.
- Haase, Albert. (2008). *Coming Home to Your True Self: Leaving the Emptiness of False Attractions*. IVP Books.
- Martin, James. (2005). *Become Who You Are*. Hidden Spring.
- Nouwen, Henri. (1981). *The Way of the Heart: Connecting with God Through Prayer, Wisdom, and Silence*. Ballantine Books.
- Ortberg, John. (2010). *The Me I Want To Be*. Zondervan.
- Payne, Leanne. *Restoring the Christian Soul*. 1991. Baker Books.
- Peterson, Eugene H. (2007). *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways that Jesus is the Way*. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Rohr, Richard. (2004). *Adam's Return: the Five Promises of Male Initiation*. The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- _____. (2002). *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*. The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Sanford, John A. 1987). *The Man Who Wrestled With God*. Paulist Press.
- Shelley, Bruce L. (1995). *Church History in Plain Language*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- Tozer, A.W. (1986). *Men Who Met God*. Christian Publications.
- Yancey, Phillip. (2002). *Reaching for the Invisible God*. Zondervan.