

Kingdom Living Requires Daily Workouts!

Faith formation in a secular World: Brentwood Hills Church of Christ, Fall, 2018




Review and consideration...

- Homework: Christian master narrative: take your given blessings, choose to use them for other than your own advantage, serve others for their well-being.
- Purpose of the church – to show the world the holiness of God as we live in God's narrative of generous gift...
- God leads us to die so that we might live.
- We are not who we think we are *to the world* – *for them* we are who *they* think we are – we need to “re-brand.”
- We (all humanity) were made in the image of God. Jesus is the image of God in the flesh. *Kenosis* is the frequency of authentic living.
- Not so much to “imitate” Jesus as to *participate* with him in new creation. We are called to be the *proleptic, eschatological people of God* – a contrast community – the visible reign of God

What might this look like?

A community:

- of justice in a world of economic and ecological injustice
 - of generosity and simplicity (of “enough”) in a consumer world
 - of selfless giving in a world of selfishness and entitlement
 - of humble and bold witness to the truth in a world of uncertainty
 - of hope in a world of disillusionment and brokenness
 - of joy and thanksgiving in a hedonistic world that frantically pursues pleasure
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If we don't change the narrative, we can't change the church...transformation is the Spirit's work.

- Most present solutions are not helpful. Tweak worship, change preachers, remodel the building, take a survey...
- Must confront the elephant in the room – too many of us are not living in God's redemptive narrative.
- Helpful change comes from within (renewing, transformative work) via the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus said our actions come from within, caused by how we “see” the world. If our eyes are full of darkness (sinful distortions), there is no light.
- Romans 8:1-15 – live according to the flesh? Death. Mind governed by the Spirit? Life and peace! “Through the Spirit put to death the misdeeds of the body and live!” (8:13)

Paul's Challenge to the Colossians...

- **New (ancient) narrative: Colossians 1:15-22**
- **Colossians 2:2, 3 – all treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden here**
- **Colossians 2:8 – WARNING – all other narratives are false...**
- **How do we become a part of this story? Colossians 2:9-15 By God's grace!**
- **Colossians 3 is the challenge – live into the story! You have been raised, set your hearts and minds on God's purposes, not this secular world!**
- **Take off, put to death what does not belong...**
- **Replace it with godly attire – intentionally dress yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience...**
- **Live a life of singing this song! All that you do!**

OK, I understand, but how?

- We all need a “Rule of Life.”
- We have been called to be athletes of God’s kingdom and training is required!
- I Corinthians 9:19-27 – diligent training is indispensable in Christian walk.
- Training vs. Trying
- We cannot try to be like Jesus without accepting his training regimen.
- IT IS NOT ABOUT DOING MORE OF WHAT YOU ARE PRESENTLY DOING POORLY. “A bucket of balls does not cure a bad swing.”
- We need to relearn the Christian practices so that they become the workplace of the Holy Spirit.

Essential Practice Elements...

- **Love God with all your heart, mind, strength, soul – all disciplines should deepen our love for God!**
- **Feed your soul! A high spiritual metabolism requires nourishment
Psalms 19:7-8; 119:20, 27 Developing a longing for study...**
- **Quiet your mind and learn from God – the desperate need for reflective disciplines...**
- **Note the results. Not all practices produce fruit.**
- **All spiritual disciplines lead not only to love of God but love of fellow human beings.**
- **Spiritual formation or disciplines that does not lead to missional living is not authentically Christian...**

Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Yearly

- Homework? Develop a “rule of life” and keep it. INTENTIONALITY is the first discipline.
- Begin the day with the Lord, intentionally
- Give the best part of your day to knowing God better
- Open your eyes and your ears to the language and events of the kingdom
- *Examen* – awake to the work of God around you. Join God in his work – he is already there.
- Find helpful “replacement” disciplines. Consider buying a copy of Adele Calhoun’s *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (2 edition is better).
- Develop a routine. Assess the value – experiment, discover, flourish!

The canvas of your life stands before you...

