

From Ordinary to Extraordinary

Today is the last in the series on Spiritual Pathways. Jennifer has prepared some more Spiritual Pathway Assessments that are available on the table in the foyer if you would like to take one.

We have spent some time considering – Living in Jesus' Name, and considering how our faith can impact -Everyday relationships, Creation, Work, Leadings or Nudges or Prompts, and Solitude. Today I want to spend a bit of time considering how to enhance your life by moving along your preferred Spiritual Pathway.

Whatever your preferred Spiritual Pathway, here are some suggestions for your consideration, intended to support you as you strive to become even more aware of the reality that God is with you, God is in you, and you are in God.

#1. Slow Down

Walk more slowly. Eat more slowly, taking care to completely chew and enjoy your food. Be aware of your breathing and breathe deeply. Really listen to children. Drive in the slow lane. Choose the longest line at the grocery store.

How many of you cringed when you heard any of those suggestions? Some of them go against our nature. Fast is not fast enough! I am trying all these things and I encourage you to try. Slowing down is quieting down. Quieting down opens us up to the possibility of making room for God. Not that God is not already there, but rather it simply helps us to be more aware of God's presence. For everything there is a season. There is no such thing as the frantic season, unless we create it!

#2. Say NO!!

Every commitment we make is a decision that can either help or hinder our ability to love God and others. Choose carefully. And when we do make a decision, we need to also choose to connect the dots. If I say yes to this, how will I be able, in the midst of this, to love God to serve God, to learn more about God, to enjoy God? If you can't connect the dots, say NO!

Weeding the garden, making the coffee, moving the chairs, participating on a committee.....how can I use this opportunity to be with God? Can I connect those dots?

#3. Remember the Sabbath and Keep it Holy-

Our goal is to keep an awareness that God is with us throughout the day throughout the week. Taking one special day to be more intentional about this will help. Commit to one day a week when you rest, take a long walk, read a spiritually enriching book, have an unhurried conversation, put your phone away, stop reading advertisements or checking e mail. Thank God for the gift of Sabbath. Engage in activities that are restful and renewing. Life giving!

#4. De-clutter –

People who have moved, tell me that is a great way to de-clutter!

But if moving is not on your radar, many of us still need to de-clutter, travel lighter, use the space we have for only what we need. The more stuff we have, the less space we have and the more time and energy required to maintain it. I want you to think about your home for a moment. Your garage. Your basement.

Your bureaus and closets. Is there anything hiding there that you could live without? What could you give away?

#5. Use your leisure time in productive ways-

Choose activities that refresh you. Think for a moment right now - what are those things that refresh you? Can you create more time to engage in those things?

This series has been called **An Ordinary Day with Jesus – experiencing the reality of God in your Everyday life. Monday – Saturday.**

We have talked about ways to do that.....to refuse to limit our time with Jesus to Sunday morning from 10-11. Listen for God in Solitude. Look for God in the beauty of Creation. Be sensitive to the ways that God is nudging you, leading you.....on a Monday or Tuesday, in the morning or the night time. Stop trying to keep Jesus shackled to a Sunday morning encounter. Stop having conversations about the weather and start having conversations about God.

So I have 3 questions for you today-

#1. Do you honestly believe that experiencing the reality of God in your everyday life is a real possibility for you? Do you?

Do you honestly think that you can experience God at the breakfast table, in the car, at work, in the grocery store? Is it God who has to initiate that encounter? Is it always up to God to do whatever it takes to get your attention or might you slow down and open up and initiate that? Do you think it is even possible for you to be more aware of the reality that where you go God goes?

#2. Is it your desire?

Do you really want to grow in your awareness that Jesus walks with you through your day? That He is with you? Do you want that? Knowing that it is possible, how might this affect your words or actions or behaviour? How might it affect your attitude toward others? How might it give you confidence or peace or comfort? How might it elevate you to become the person you know you can be?

And finally #3. **Decision verses Desire**- It is one thing to **want** to walk a mile. It is another to decide to walk it. It is one thing to **want** to lose weight. It is another to do what you need to do to actually lose it. It is one thing to **want** to become more aware that Jesus is with you. It is another to actually do something to make it happen!

So the question is, what are you willing to do to make your desire become a reality?

I want to close today by reading the 2 Thessalonians passage from The Message - as I read this, consider what I have shared with you today and what you have learned about Spiritual Pathways and about growing in your awareness that God is with you even in the ordinary days of your life –

“Because we know that this extraordinary day is just ahead, we pray for you all the time – pray that our God will make you fit for what he’s called you to be, pray that he’ll fill your good ideas and acts of faith with his own energy so that it all amounts to something. If your life honors the name of Jesus, he will honor you. Grace is behind and through all of this, our God giving himself freely, the Master, Jesus Christ, giving himself freely.

Grace and peace to you as you consider the decisions you will make to take God with you throughout the day, every day.

Amen