

## Practicing the Way Series

# Become Like Jesus

By JOHN MARK COMER

## The Invitation of Jesus

The invitation of Jesus is to come and be his disciple. And to be a disciple of Jesus means to order your life around three goals:

- to be with Jesus
- to become like Jesus
- to do what Jesus did

## To Become Like Jesus

He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher."

— Luke 6:39-40

The whole point of being a disciple is to become like your rabbi. The goal is not just to know about the Bible but to be transformed into the image of your teacher. And notice that ***this takes training and time***.

Most of us need a major overhaul of our entire self from the inside-out in order to become like Jesus. The word often used in the New Testament to describe this kind of change is the word **transformation**.

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

— 2 Corinthians 3:18

The Greek word used for *transformation* is the same word that is used to describe the change from a caterpillar to a butterfly. Transformation implies a profound change in form from one stage to the next in the life history of an organism.

## The Process By Which We Change: Spiritual Formation

“Spiritual formation in the Christian tradition is a process of increasingly being possessed and permeated by the character traits of Jesus as we walk in the easy yoke of discipleship with Jesus our teacher.”

— Dallas Willard

And spiritual formation is not just a Christian thing; it's a human thing — to be human means that we are constantly being shaped and formed every moment of every day. We are all a disciple or an apprentice of somebody or something. This question is NOT are you a disciple or an apprentice; the question is who or what are you a disciple or an apprentice of? **We are all being formed and shaped just by waking up and living our normal life (unintentionally)**. The only real question is who or what are we being shaped into.

## Unintentional Spiritual Formation

- Cultural Narratives — These are the stories that we live by and believe that help us make sense of the world in which we live. These narrative and stories shape the way that we live and the way that we see the world. (ex. “*Evolution show us that sex is strictly biological*” will shape your view of sex.)
- Habits — What we do on a regular basis shapes what we become.
- Relationships — We become like the people that we hang out with on a regular basis.
- Environment — All of the above is taking place in the context of a particular environment — our city, the larger society and our phone world.

# How Do We Change?

How can we counter or offset the unintentional spiritual formation that is happening in our daily life?

## **Two Myths:**

1. “All you really need to do is know the Bible.”
2. “All you need to do is to let go and let God.”

## Intentional Spiritual Formation

- Jesus’ Teaching — It does more than tell you what’s right and wrong (it does do that!); it gets into your head with a vision of the “good life” — life to the full (John 10:10). It confronts the cultural narratives and tells you the way the world actually works.
- Practices — Disciplines that change the orientation of our heart and our perspective on life.
- Community — People that we decide to follow Jesus with because we can’t follow Jesus alone. Living in community exposes us and encourages us (and we need both of those).
- Holy Spirit — The goal is that the Holy Spirit would become our dominant reality and environment more so than our city, the larger society and our phone world. Practicing the presence of God (like we talked about in our previous study) needs to become the primary way that we experience life in this world. As Paul said above (2 Corinthians 3:18), “We all are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

***All of this takes training and time.***

***This is not fast food that you can order; it’s fruit that you have to grow.***

Based on your current way of life (what you’re believing, your current habits, your closest relationships and the environment in which all of this is taking place)... ask yourself... ***Who are you becoming?***

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

— Romans 12:2

# Unintentional vs Intentional Formation

Cultural Narratives *	Habits	Relationships
Movies / TV / Music / Advertising Political Discourse Social Media (#Trending) Popular Podcasts Education	Phone Eating Exercise Sleep Shopping Netflix	Family / Friends Teammates Co-workers Social Media
Jesus' Teaching	Practices	Community
Bible Study Church / Baseball Chapel Books Podcasts Mentor	Morning Quiet Time Fixed-Hour Prayer Fasting Bible Study Living in Community Sabbath Simplicity	Church Small Group Christian Family / Friends Christian Teammates

## \* Current Cultural Narratives

- Identity Narrative — You have to be true to yourself. You have to look inside and see who you are and just be true to yourself.
- Happiness Narrative — You must never sacrifice your happiness for anybody else. In the end, you can't sacrifice your happiness to help other people.
- Freedom Narrative — As long as I'm not harming anybody, I should be absolutely free to live my life however I choose.
- Truth Narrative — All truth claims are socially constructed (and yet science is our salvation).
- Morality Narrative — All morality is socially constructed (but we need to work for justice).

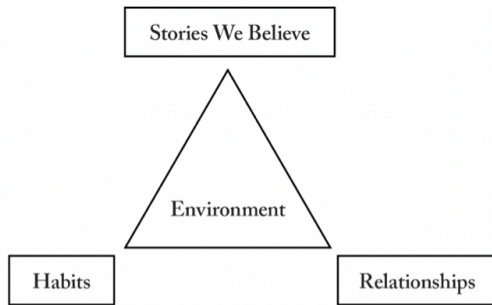
These narratives/claims are not arguments, but they are put out there as givens that only evil people disagree with. However, they are really faith assumptions (religious in their own right) because there's really no rational argument for them. But if you deny them you are labeled as a problem.

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## Spiritual Formation Paradigms

There are two main thoughts on transformation; unintentional vs intentional. Here is our working paradigm for how the world plays an influential role in your life, whether you are aware of it or not.

### Unintentional Spiritual Formation



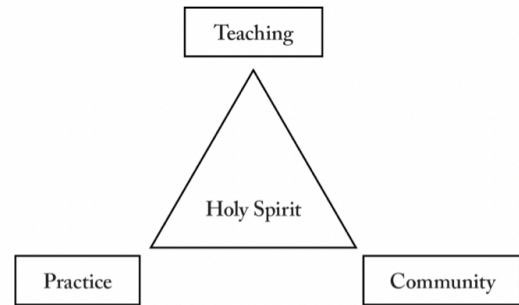
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High Control

Low Control

Over Time -----> Through Experiences

### Intentional Spiritual Formation



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High Control

Low Control

Over Time -----> Through Hard Knocks of Life

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\* This chart is borrowed from [www.practicingtheway.org](http://www.practicingtheway.org)