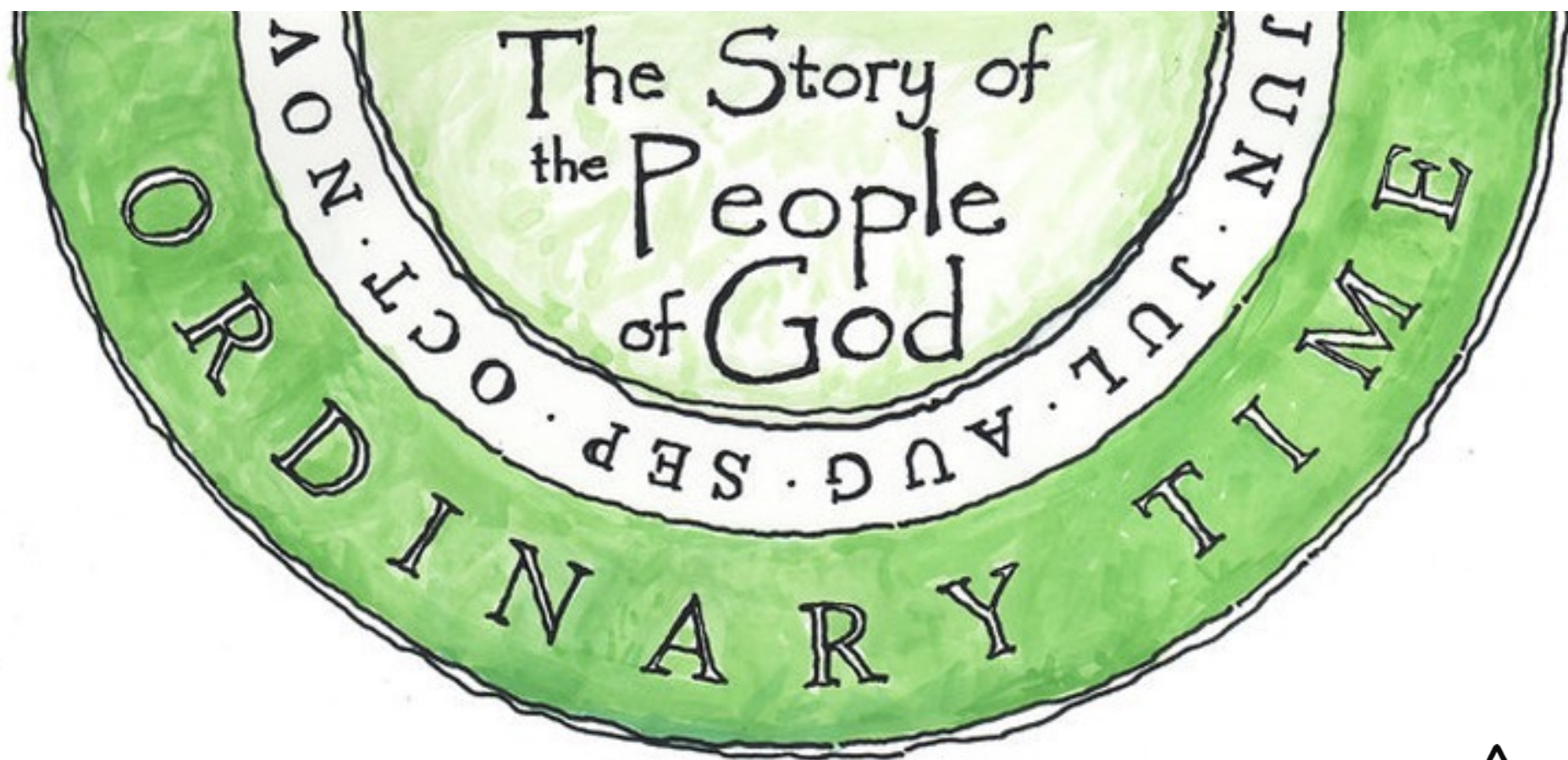


Redeeming Sustainer,
visit your people
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,
that we may hurry to make you welcome
not only in our concern for others,
but by serving them generously
and faithfully in your name.
Amen.

Opening Prayer

A decorative banner at the bottom of the slide. It features a dark background with stylized, colorful hands (red, orange, yellow, green, blue) reaching upwards. To the right of the hands is a white geometric pattern resembling a woven basket or a series of overlapping triangles.





THE GOOD and BEAUTIFUL LIFE



LEARNING TO LIVE LIKE JESUS

Learning to live w/out **ANGER**

Learning to live w/out **LUST**

Learning to live w/out **LYING**

Learning to live w/out **VENGEANCE**

Learning to live w/out **VANITY**

Learning to live w/out **AVARICE**

Learning to live w/out **WORRY**

Learning to live w/out **JUDGMENT**



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The Good and Beautiful LIFE

PUTTING ON THE
CHARACTER OF CHRIST

"The best practice I have seen in Christian spiritual formation."

—DALLAS WILLARD

FALSE NARRATIVE

If someone **HITS** you, hit them back **HARDER**; protection only comes through **VIOLENCE**



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FALSE NARRATIVE

If someone **HITS** you, hit them back **HARDER**; protection only comes through **VIOLENCE**

- Helen, Paris, and Menelaus
- Agamemnon, Greeks, and Troy
- Humanity, the gods, and each other
- Exile, destruction, and the endless cycle of vengeance and death...



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FALSE NARRATIVE

If someone **HITS** you, hit them back **HARDER**; protection only comes through **VIOLENCE**

TRUE NARRATIVE

If someone **HITS** you, it really is **POSSIBLE** to respond from a place of kingdom **SECURITY**



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*You have heard that it was said,
'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'*



HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:38-39

**HOLY
BIBLE**

LEV

24:19-20

*Anyone who maims another
shall suffer the same injury in return:
fracture for fracture, eye for eye,
tooth for tooth; the injury inflicted
is the injury to be suffered.*

*You have heard that it was said,
'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'
But I tell you, do not resist an evil person.
If anyone slaps you on the right cheek,
turn to them the other cheek also.*

1

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:38-39

These are illustrations of what a certain kind of person, the kingdom person, will characteristically do in such situations. They are not laws of “righteous behavior” for those personally imposed upon or injured. If you read them *as* laws, you will immediately see that we could “obey” them in the wrong spirit...



*You have heard that it was said,
'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'*

*But I tell you, do not resist an evil person.
If anyone slaps you on the right cheek,
turn to them the other cheek also.*

***I.E. A kingdom heart forces the aggressor
to think twice about hitting you again,
forcing them to reckon with the deeper
issues of dignity, humanity, and justice***

1

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT
5:38-39

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:5

*Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.*

Meekness ≠ weakness + being a doormat

***Meekness = power + restraint;
strength under control;***

*And if anyone wants to sue you
and take your coat, hand over
your cloak as well...*

2

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:40

*And if anyone wants to sue you
and take your coat, hand over
your cloak as well...*

2

***I.E. A kingdom heart offers more than
necessary as an expression of blessing,
and of trust in God as provider; it cares
for the other person more than it fears
for the loss of its own possessions***

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:40

HOLY
BIBLE

PROV

25:21-22

*If your enemy is hungry,
give him food to eat;
if he is thirsty,
give him water to drink.
In doing this, you will
heap burning coals on his head,
and the Lord will reward you.*

***Compare and contrast to awaken
conscience, and bring conviction***

HOLY BIBLE

ROM

12:17-21

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil.
Be careful to do what is right in
the eyes of everyone. If it is possible,
as far as it depends on you, live at peace
with everyone. Do not take revenge...
On the contrary, "If your enemy is hungry,
feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something
to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning
coals on his head." Do not be overcome
by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

HOLY
BIBLE

“...you will heap burning coals on his head.”

Think: “Kill them with kindness!”

***The Point is obviously NOT to kill them,
nor to set their head on fire; this is simply
a phrase encouraging actions that force
your enemy to compare/contrast your
attitude/behavior w/their own;
it might awaken their conscience,
and may bring conviction...***

*If anyone forces you to go one mile,
go with them two miles.*

3

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:41

*If anyone forces you to go one mile,
go with them two miles.*

3

***I.E. a kingdom heart is able to do
more than what is asked, and do it
with genuine generosity and love
– not bitterly, through gritted teeth –
for the sake of the other person involved***

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:41

*Give to the one who asks you,
and do not turn away from
the one who wants to borrow
from you.*

4

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:42

*Give to the one who asks you,
and do not turn away from
the one who wants to borrow
from you.*

4

HOLY
BIBLE

***I.E. a kingdom heart is able to give freely
and trust in God to provide for its needs,
while genuinely seeking the good
of the other, recognizing the great
humility/vulnerability in the request***

MATT

5:42

FALSE NARRATIVE

If someone **HITS** you, hit them back **HARDER**; protection only comes through **VIOLENCE**

TRUE NARRATIVE

If someone **HITS** you, it really is **POSSIBLE** to respond from a place of kingdom **SECURITY**



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*You have heard that it was said,
'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'*

5

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:43-48

**HOLY
BIBLE**

LEV

19:18

*You shall not take vengeance
or bear a grudge against
any of your people, but you
shall love your neighbor
as yourself: I am the LORD.*

WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS?

SKYE
JETHANI

WHAT GOD SAID	v.	WHAT PEOPLE HEAR
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR -LEV 19:18		HATE YOUR ENEMY
GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS & THE EARTH -GEN 1:1		SCIENCE IS A LIE
DO NOT OPPRESS AN IMMIGRANT -EX 23:9		DO NOT OPPRESS A DOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT
GOD IS LOVE -1JN 4:8		GOD AGREES WITH ME & I DON'T HAVE TO CHANGE

*You have heard that it was said,
'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
But I tell you, love your enemies
and pray for those who persecute you,
that you may be children of your Father
in heaven. He causes his sun to rise
on the evil and the good, and sends rain
on the righteous and the unrighteous...*

5

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:43-48

To love is to will the good of another. It does not entail emotion...we will their good and demonstrate that in action. Loving our enemy *seems* impossible because we think, “*I could never feel love for a person who abuses me.*” Jesus is not asking his apprentices to *feel* love, but to *act* in love towards everyone, including our enemies.



JAMES BRYAN
SMITH

Jesus practiced what he preached...
Jesus is not asking us to do
what he himself would not do.
He invites us to a way of living
that transcends the normal course
of action. Jesus' apprentices refuse
to use violence, not because of an
abstract principle, but because...
we do what he taught in order to
become the kind of person he was.



*You have heard that it was said,
'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
But I tell you, love your enemies
and pray for those who persecute you,
that you may be children of your Father
in heaven. He causes his sun to rise
on the evil and the good, and sends rain
on the righteous and the unrighteous...
Be perfect, therefore, as your
heavenly Father is perfect.*

5

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:43-48

The word perfect creates problems for us because we think it means moral flawlessness, which we know is impossible. The Greek word used here is *telios*, which refers to a kind of spiritual maturity. We should not expect to be able to fulfill all Jesus is asking right away. Maturity takes time. But we must give the kingdom of God a chance to operate...



Within the kingdom...the presumption is that I will return good for evil and “resist” only for compelling reasons, that I will do more than I strictly must in order to help others, and that I give to people merely because they asked me for something they need. In each case I must determine if the gift of my vulnerability, goods, time, and strength is appropriate...



That is my responsibility before God. By contrast, the way of law avoids individual responsibility for decision. It pushes the responsibility and possible blame onto God. That is one reason why people who *must* have a law for all their actions lead such pinched and impoverished lives and deploy very little in the way of genuine depth in godly character.



I must decide before God what to do (in any given situation), and there may be grounds for some measure of resistance, (but) that grounds will *never* be personal retaliation or “getting even.” I need to ask not “*Did I do the specific things in Jesus’ illustrations?!* ” but “*Am I being the kind of person Jesus’ illustrations are illustrations of?*”



SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

Pray peace for your competitors

- Anyone you might be measured against in some way, or whose success might diminish yours
- Anyone considered an “enemy”
- Ask God to bless them, to reveal God’s self to them, to bring them peace of heart/mind/body



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We praise your abiding guidance,
O God, for you sent us Jesus,
our Teacher and Messiah,
to model for us the way of love
for the whole universe.
May we offer our lives in that same love,
on behalf of one another, our neighbors, our friends,
and even our enemies, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing Prayer

