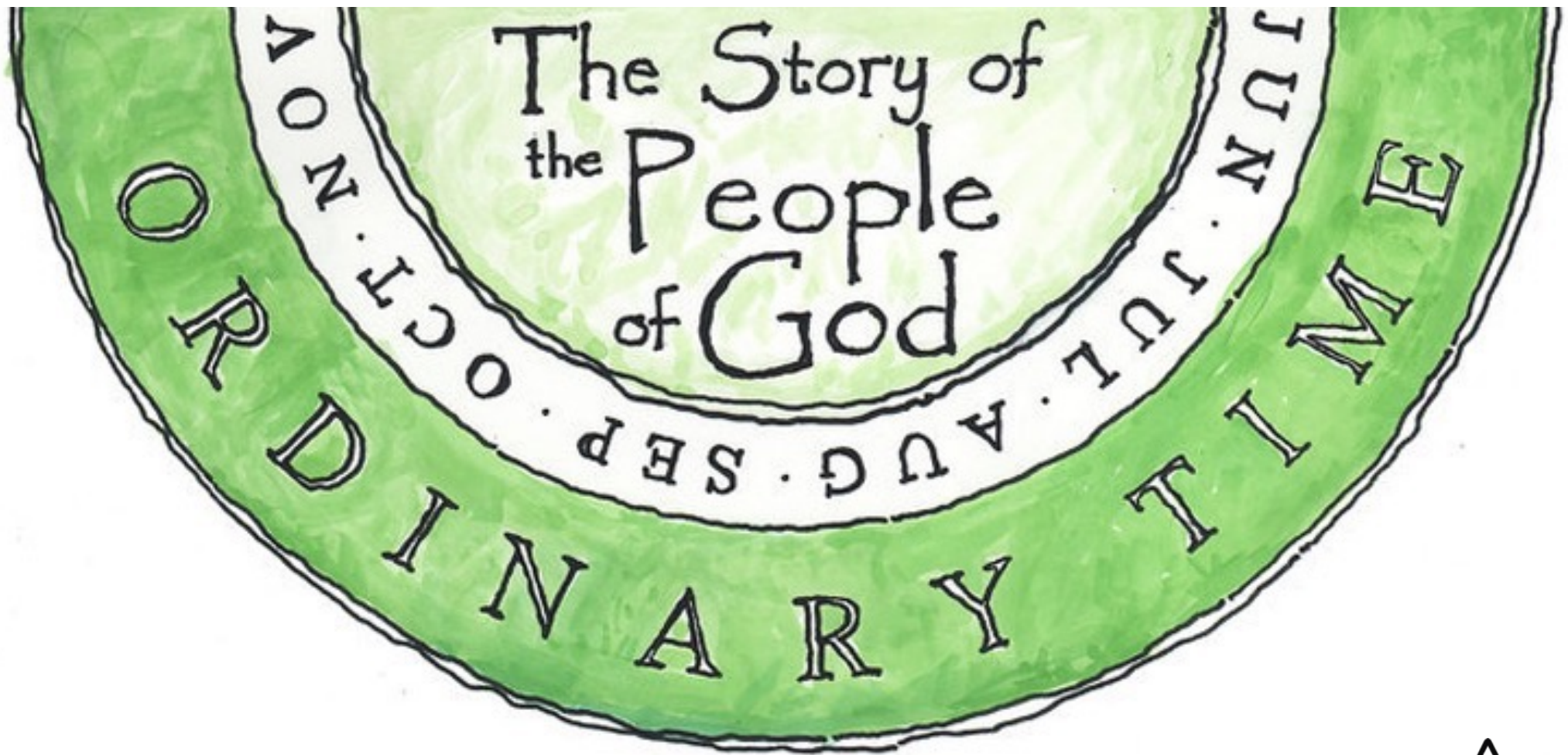


Redeeming Sustainer,
visit your people
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,
that we may hurry to make you welcome
not only in our concern for others,
but by serving them generously
and faithfully in your name.
Amen.

Opening Prayer







THE GOOD and BEAUTIFUL LIFE



HOLY BIBLE

MATT

5:14-16

*'You are the light of the world.
A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.
No one after lighting a lamp puts it under
the bushel basket, but on the lampstand,
and it gives light to all in the house.
In the same way, let your light shine
before others, so that they may see
your good works and give glory
to your Father in heaven.*

HOLY BIBLE

JOHN

13:34-35

*I give you a new commandment,
that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you,
you also should love one another.
By this everyone will know that
you are my disciples, if you have
love for one another.*

HOLY BIBLE

ACTS

2:44-47

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

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**



James Bryan Smith

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

Your **VALUE** is based in the assessment of **OTHER** people, which can be **ESPECIALLY** insidious when it comes to **RELIGIOUS** beliefs **AND** practices



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Just when we might begin to think,
*“Well, I have conquered anger, lust,
and lying, and have learned to bless
those who curse me – I am really
something now!”* we find out
we have another obstacle on
the road to kingdom living:
vainglory – the need to have *others*
think well of *us* so *we* feel worthy.



JAMES BRYAN
SMITH

FALSE NARRATIVE

Your **VALUE** is based in the assessment of **OTHER** people...

TRUE NARRATIVE

You are **VALUABLE** to God, who loves you **NO MATTER WHAT**, regardless of others' **ASSESSMENT** of your wealth, fashion, faith, etc.



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The Good and Beautiful

LIFE

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Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So, whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others.



HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

6:1-2

When Jesus spoke of “the hypocrites,” he was utilizing a vivid image that effectively seized the minds of his hearers because of their familiarity with stage actors. They were thus able to see much of the most obvious religious behavior of their day as the sham it in fact was.



I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.



HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

6:3-4

The kind of people who have been so transformed by their daily walk with God that good deeds naturally flow from their character are precisely the kind of people whose left hand would not notice what their right hand was doing...who do not have to invest a lot of reflection in doing good for others (and) hardly notice their own good deed, and rarely remember it.



And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.



HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

6:5-6

**SEE YOU
AT THE
POLE**

NATIONAL DAY OF STUDENT PRAYER



And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

2

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

6:5-6

When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

i.e. God does not need to be manipulated, nor to be impressed by human eloquence

2

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

6:7-8

*And whenever you fast, do not look
dismal, like the hypocrites, for they
disfigure their faces so as to show
others that they are fasting.
Truly I tell you, they have
received their reward.*



HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

6:16



***i.e. You don't have to
announce your exit...
just quietly bow out,
then quietly step back in***

**WHAT IF
JESUS WAS
SERIOUS?**

**SKYE
JETHANI**

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.



HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

6:17-18

(The issue is) not are we seen doing a good deed (or practicing our religion), but are we doing a good deed (or practicing our religion) *in order to be seen.*



FOR EXAMPLE...

Am I praying ***to be seen*** as someone who is, say, “good” at prayer? Or...?

Am I giving ***to be seen*** as a person of means, or a person of generosity?

Am I fasting ***to be seen*** as spiritually or religiously righteous/mature?

(Insert your relevant example here...)

A photograph of a tree trunk covered in a dense layer of blue butterflies, illustrating the concept of being seen rather than following commands.

ILLUSTRATIONS
NOT
COMMANDS

HOLY BIBLE

LUKE

18:9-11

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector...

HOLY BIBLE

LUKE

18:12-14

“I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.” But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” I tell you: this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.

**HOLY
BIBLE**

PSALM

51:16-17

*O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt-offering,
you would not be pleased.
The sacrifice acceptable to God
is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.*

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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

Do Five *INTENTIONAL* and *ANONYMOUS* Acts of Kindness

- Drop groceries off
- Mail an encouraging note
- Mow someone's yard
- Meet a need, lighten a load, pay a bill, but *try* to do it without being seen...



james bryan smith

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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

