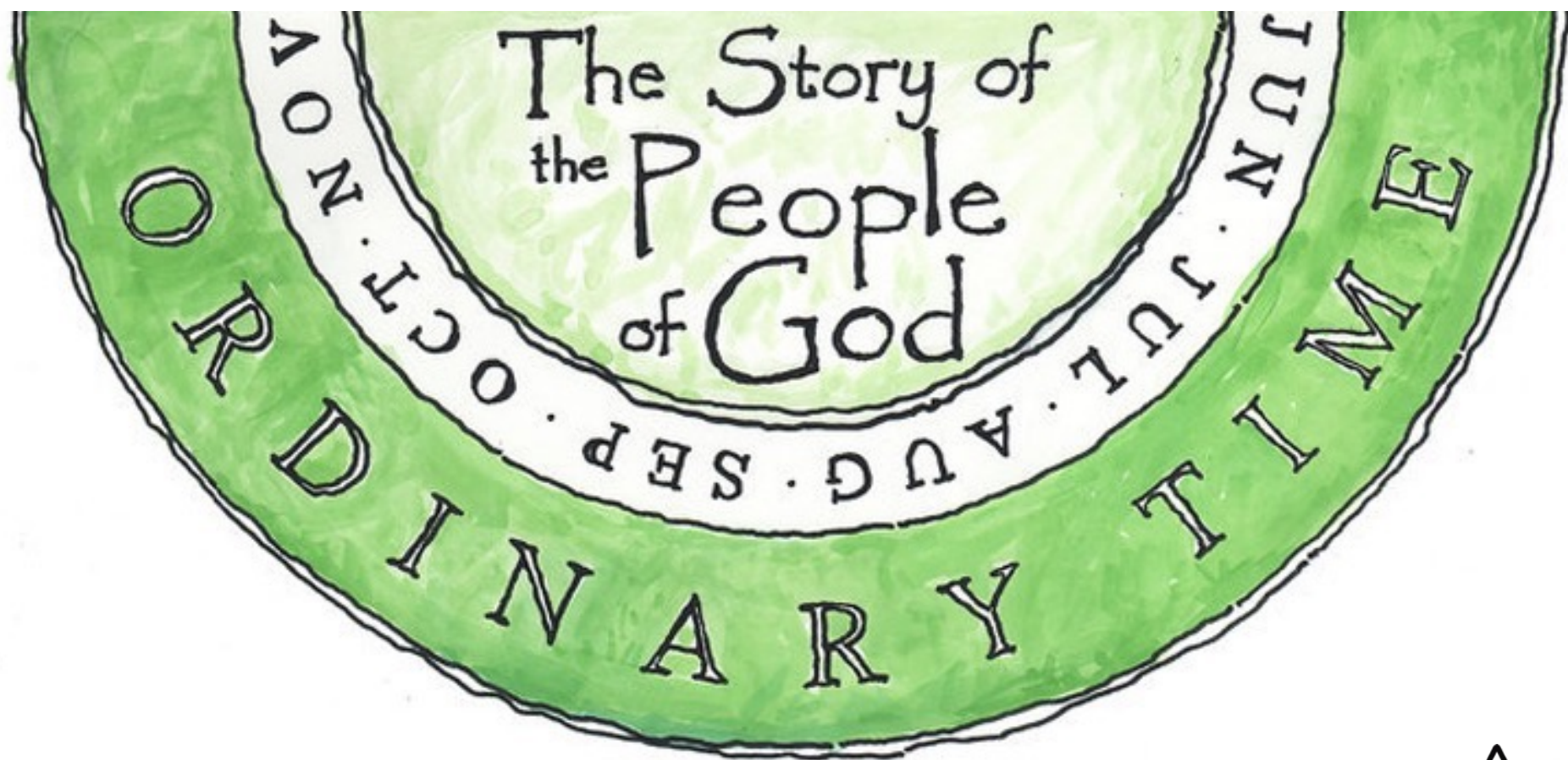


God of strength and courage,
in Christ you set us free from sin and death,
and call us to the risk of faith and service.
Give us grace to follow him
who gave himself for others,
that, by our service, we may
find the life he came to bring.
Amen.

Opening Prayer



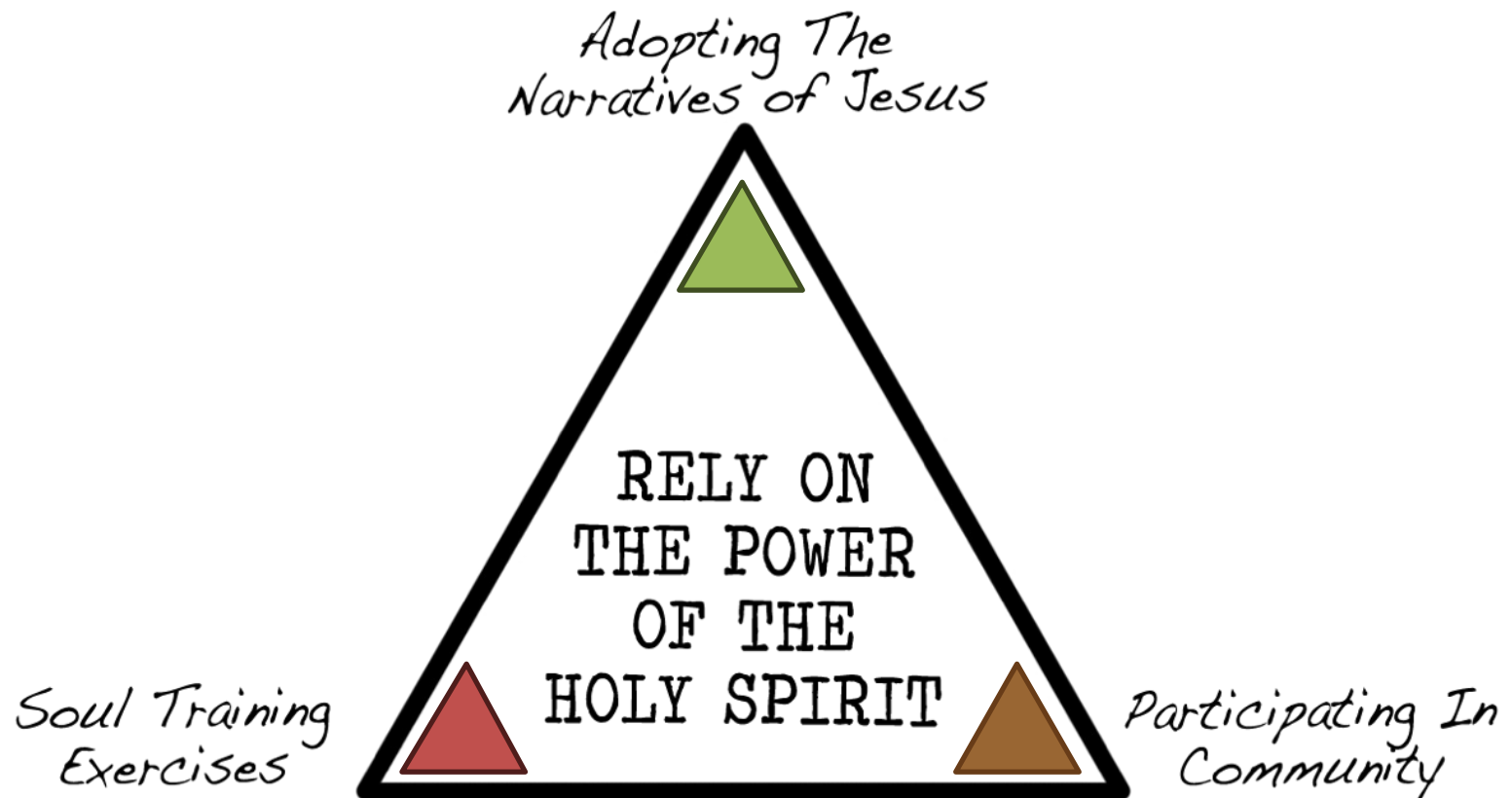




THE GOOD and BEAUTIFUL LIFE



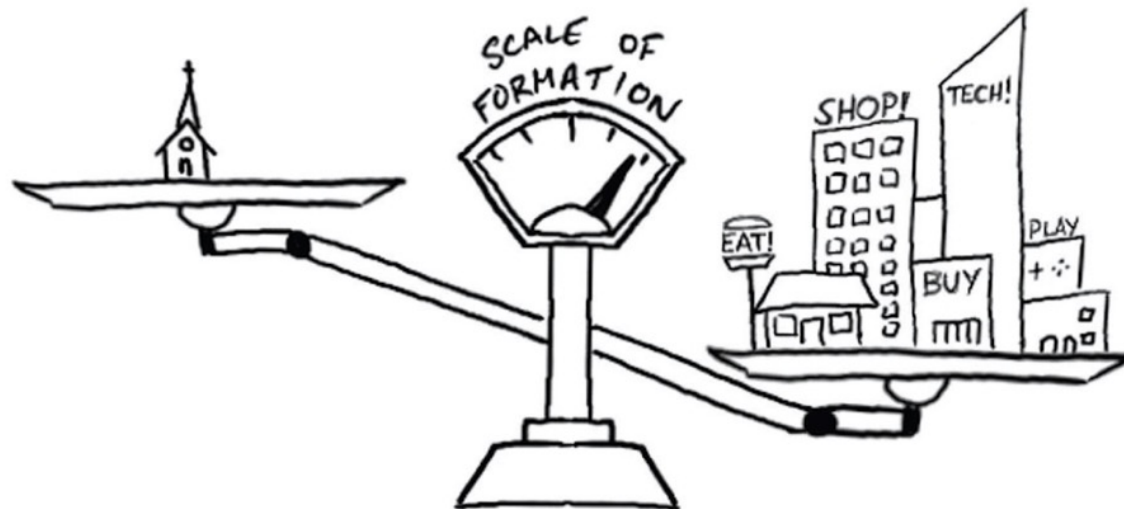
HOW SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION HAPPENS



THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN IN AMERICA...

... ATTENDS CHURCH
2 HOURS A MONTH

... IS SHAPED BY
150,000 ADS PER MONTH



**WHAT IF
JESUS WAS
SERIOUS?**

**SKYE
JETHANI**

Many have said they wanted to change, but in reality they nurse a love of (anger, lust, gluttony, etc.) (As Augustine said, “**Lord, make me chaste...but not yet.**”)

Promises, pledges and resolutions are no match for a heart that secretly cherishes (its preferred vice) and merely dislikes its consequences.



JAMES BRYAN
SMITH

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."

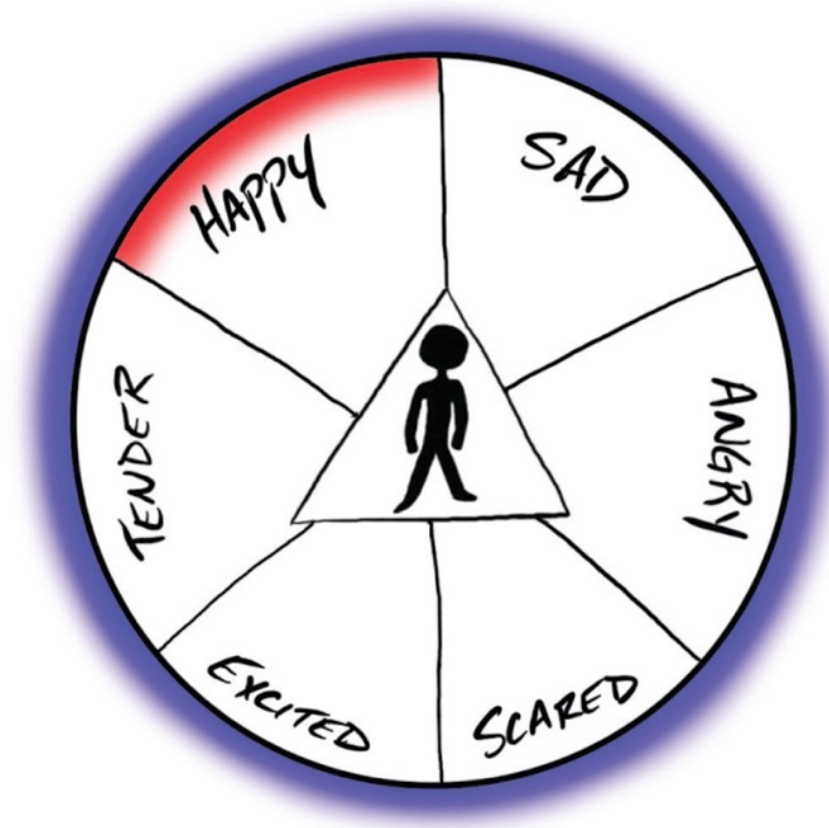
—DALLAS WILLARD

WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS?

SKYE
JETHANI

SCOPE OF THE
HUMAN-DIVINE
RELATIONSHIP
EXPRESSED
By...

- THE PSALMS
- CONSUMER
CHRISTIANITY



Anger is the correct response to injustice...becoming angry, in some cases, is the right course of action... To feel angry, to tell someone that you feel angry, and to talk about your anger, are both healthy and necessary...(but) the vast majority of anger is a natural outgrowth of (resentment) over the false narratives (we embrace.)



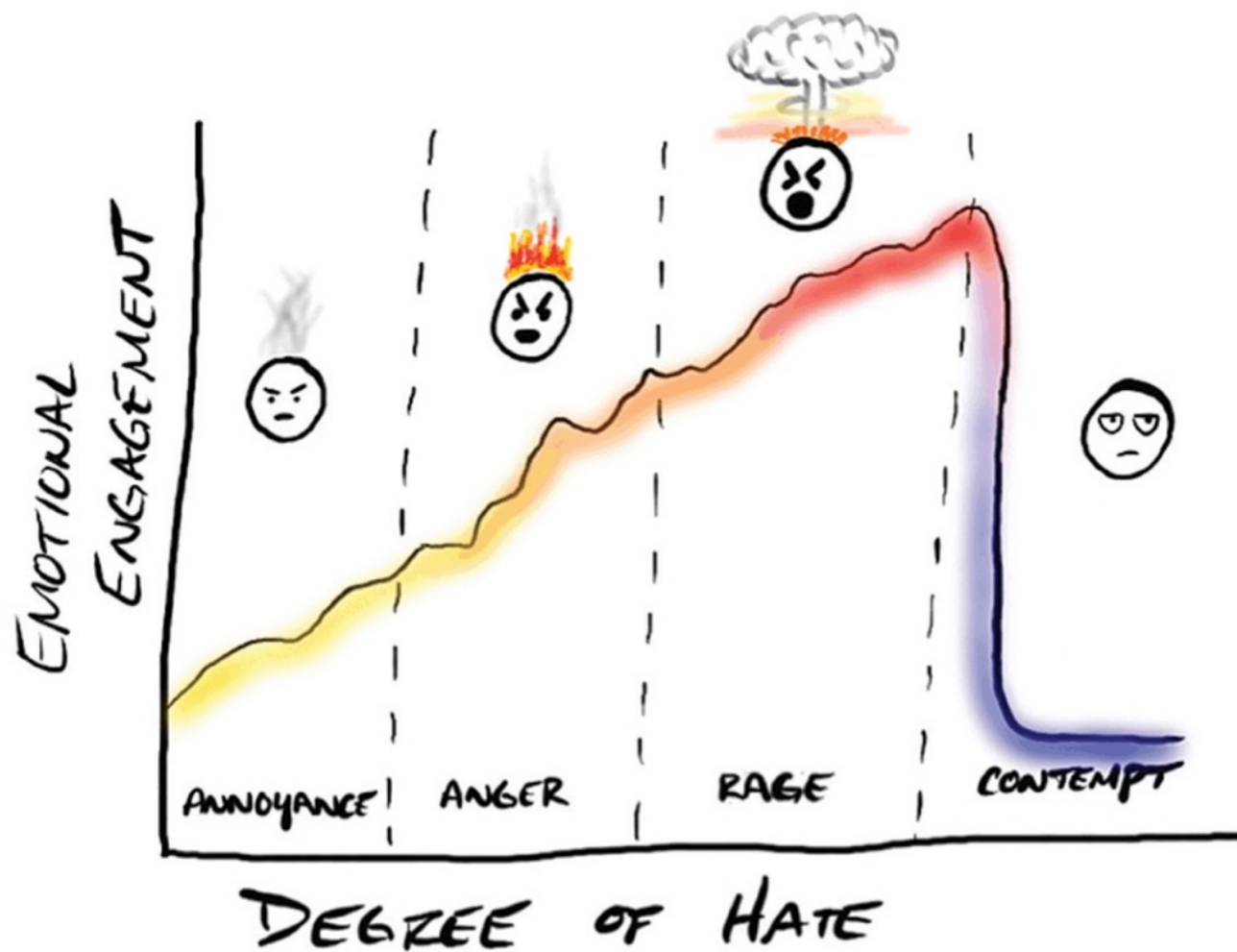
*You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is **angry** with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, '**Raca**,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, '**YOU FOOL!**' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT
5:22-23

Contempt is a greater evil than anger; it is a kind of studied degradation of another, and more pervasive in life than anger. It is never justifiable or good. The Aramaic term *raca* was current in Jesus' day to express contempt, and to mark someone out as contemptible. In anger, I want to hurt you. In contempt, I don't care whether you are hurt or not.





**WHAT IF
JESUS WAS
SERIOUS?**

SKYE
JETHANI

The “you fool!” said with a combination of freezing contempt and withering anger Jesus has in mind, is a deeper harm than either anger or contempt alone. It is an expression of malice. To brand someone “fool” in the biblical sense was a violation of the soul...combining all that is evil in anger as well as in contempt (and) totally out of harmony w/the kingdom.



DIFFERENT TYPES of ANGER

Visceral Anger

Very little lag time between
the action and reaction



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DIFFERENT TYPES of ANGER

Visceral Anger

Very little lag time between the action and reaction

Meditative Anger

Grows worse over time the more we stew on it

Both are hugely multiplied by SOCIAL MEDIA + 24hr “NEWS”



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DIFFERENT TYPES of ANGER

Visceral Anger

Very little lag time between the action and reaction

Meditative Anger

Grows worse over time the more we stew on it

**Both are largely fueled by
UNMET EXPECTATIONS + FEAR**



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A CASE STUDY

A friend is late to lunch...



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FALSE IMPERATIVE NARRATIVES

- I **am** alone, and I **will** be alone
- Things **must** always go as I wish
- Something terrible **will** happen if I make a mistake
- I **must** always be in control
- Life **must** always be fair/just
- I **must** anticipate what happens
- I **must** be perfect at all times



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The heart full of anger, the heart that hates, is not far from the heart that *would* murder...Jesus (knows) that an angry person *would* actually harm someone if they *could* get away with it, (and in our sense of isolated humanity) we are on our own. We must protect ourselves, we must fight for our rights, and we must punish those who offend us...



Inside the kingdom of God, though,
life is much different. (Here) Jesus
informs us we can trust (God.)
We may lose sight of God,
but God never loses sight of us...
To make headway with our anger,
we need to fill our minds with
kingdom narratives...It will not
be quick or easy, but it is possible.



TRUE KINGDOM NARRATIVES

- Jesus is with you, always
- Jesus is king over all things
- Mistakes do happen, a lot, and usually, things end up fine
- Life isn't always fair or just, but God will have the last word
- Jesus accepts me, even though I am not perfect



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

Enjoy a Day of Rest

- Trusting God with all of our resources, and selves
- Sleep, or non-productive rest, is an act of trust, of letting go, of surrendering control, and of relinquishing the need to be defined by what we do/produce



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

Enjoy a Sabbath day

- Plan ahead; be intentional
- Start in the evening, carry over to the next day
- Play games
- Eat great food at home
- Take a nap, read fiction, etc.
- Spend time in prayer, reading scripture, meditation, etc.



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FALSE CHRISTIAN NARRATIVE

All sexual desire is **EVIL**



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FALSE CHRISTIAN NARRATIVE

All sexual desire is **EVIL**

FALSE WORLDLY NARRATIVE

All sexual desire is **GOOD**



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*You have heard that it was said,
'You shall not commit adultery.'
But I tell you that anyone who
looks at a woman* **lustfully** (ἐπιθυμία)
has already committed adultery
with her in his heart.*

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:27-28

TRUE KINGDOM NARRATIVE

EPITHUMIA is the real problem.

This is **NOT** about sexual attraction.

ἐπιθυμία is about *intentional objectification of another person for one's own gratification, without thought of the other's humanity.*

It's **NOT** about the **FIRST** look, but about the **SECOND**...



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We must (differentiate) between attraction and objectification, between feeling sexual desire and cultivating *ἐπιθυμία*. When we fail to make the distinction, we adopt the first false narrative (all sexual desire is evil) and think that sexual attraction is evil in itself (which leads to shame.)



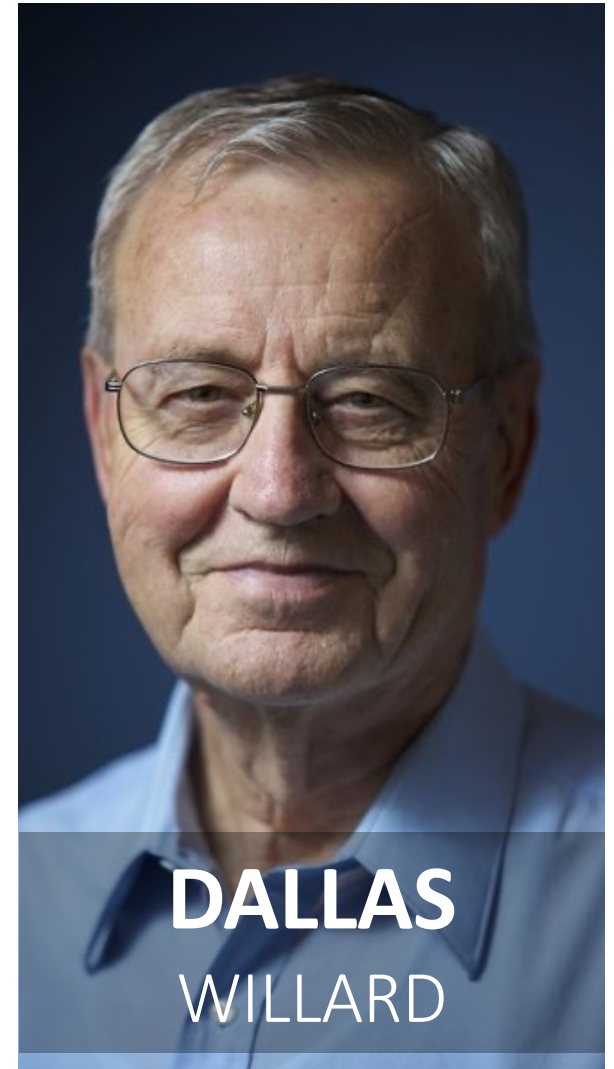
*If your right eye causes you to stumble,
gouge it out and throw it away. It is better
for you to lose one part of your body than
for your whole body to be thrown into hell.
And if your right hand causes you
to stumble, cut it off and throw it away.
It is better for you to lose one part
of your body than for your whole
body to go into hell.*

**HOLY
BIBLE**

MATT

5:29-30

Jesus was not speaking literally, but using a rhetorical device called *reductio ad absurdum*, meaning to reduce the argument to its logical absurdity. He was attacking the commonly held notion that sin resides in the offending body parts... Jesus is not here advocating we cut off every offending part so we can roll into heaven as a bloody stump!



For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:20

THE POINT IS:

Not **MURDERING** someone is **NOT** a great moral accomplishment...

Nor is plucking out your **EYE**,
or lopping off your **HAND**
to keep you from **OUTWARD** sin!

Jesus wants us to **GROW** into
people whose **HEARTS** become
INSTINCTIVELY healthier that.



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

48hr Digital Media Fast

- No non-work-related internet
- No social media
- No television
- No blogs/vlogs
- No podcasts/radio
- No phone/video games
- **Exception:** therapeutic music



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

48hr Digital Media Fast

- Read a physical book
- Play a physical board/card game
- Listen to music that calms you
(try to do so w/no device in hand)
- Take a walk, ride a bike, etc.



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THE POINT IS:

Jesus does **NOT** want us to live in a state of emotional denial and repression, **NOR** does he want us obsessed with achieving some mystical level of “purity.”

Jesus wants us to **HONOR** the **DIGNITY** of other people’s humanity with our **WHOLE** selves.



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God of power, uphold us in struggle
and strengthen us to live faithfully to the way of Jesus.
As you have delivered us from death,
send us forth, now, to proclaim all of creation's
glorious redemption through the victorious
resurrection of your son, so that all
may know and claim the freedom
of forgiveness and new life in you.
Amen.

Closing Prayer

A decorative banner at the bottom of the slide. It features a dark background with white line art of hands reaching out. Overlaid on this are several overlapping circles in red, green, blue, and purple. The text 'Closing Prayer' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the banner.