

Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.

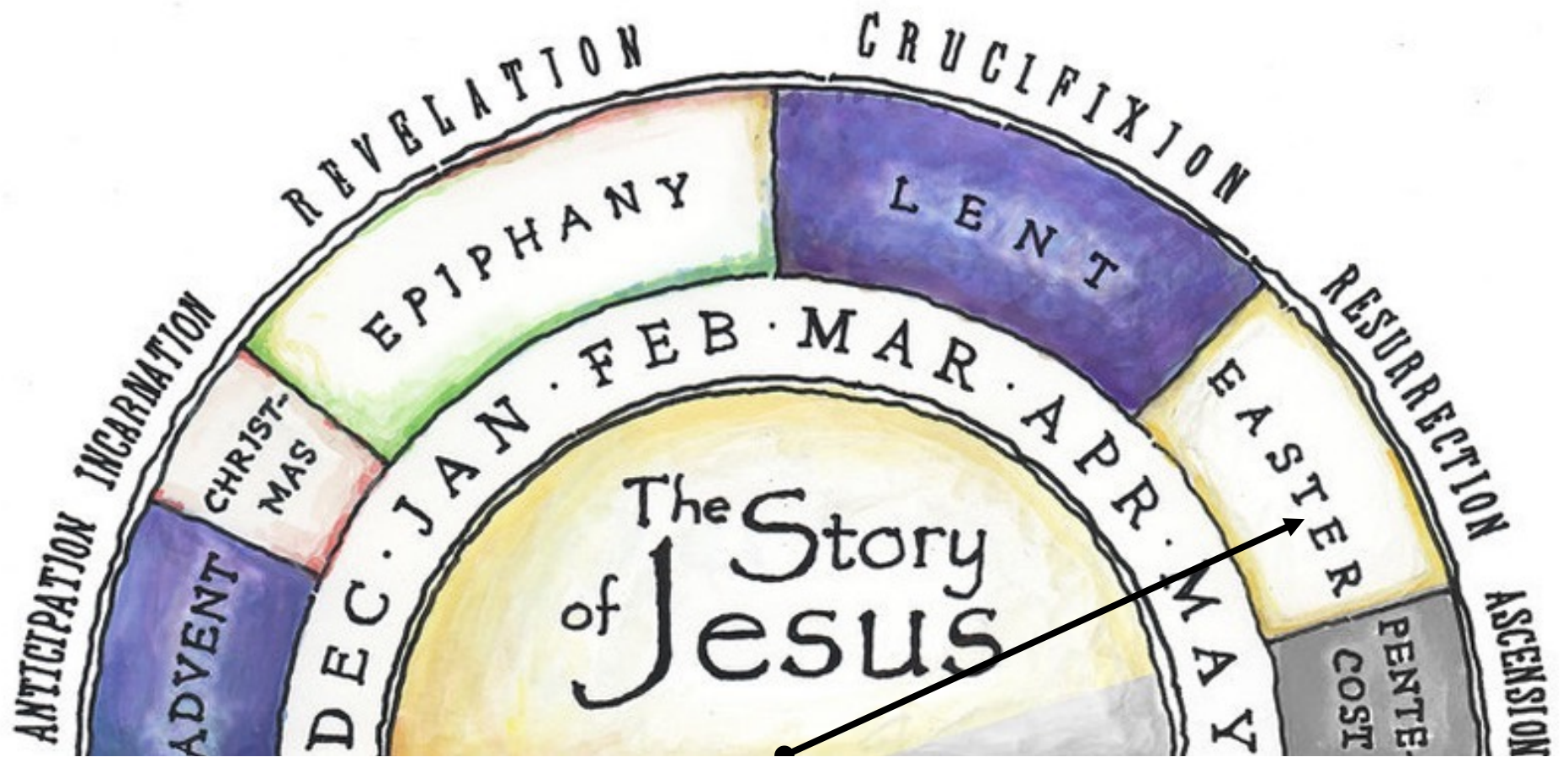
We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice,
love, and peace, to the glory of your name.

Amen.

Opening Prayer



CHURCH CALENDAR



Two ripe peaches with a mix of red and yellow-orange skin are shown against a white background. One peach is in the foreground, slightly to the right, and the other is behind it to the left. Two green leaves are attached to the bottom of the peaches. The text "THE GOOD and BEAUTIFUL GOD" is overlaid in the center in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

THE GOOD and
BEAUTIFUL GOD

WHERE WE'RE HEADING...

God is **GOOD** ✓

God is **TRUSTWORTHY** ✓

God is **GENEROUS**

God is **LOVE**

God is **HOLY**

God is **SELF-SACRIFICING**

God is **TRANSFORMATIVE**



james bryan smith

The Good and Beautiful

GOD

FALLING IN LOVE WITH
THE GOD JESUS KNOWS

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

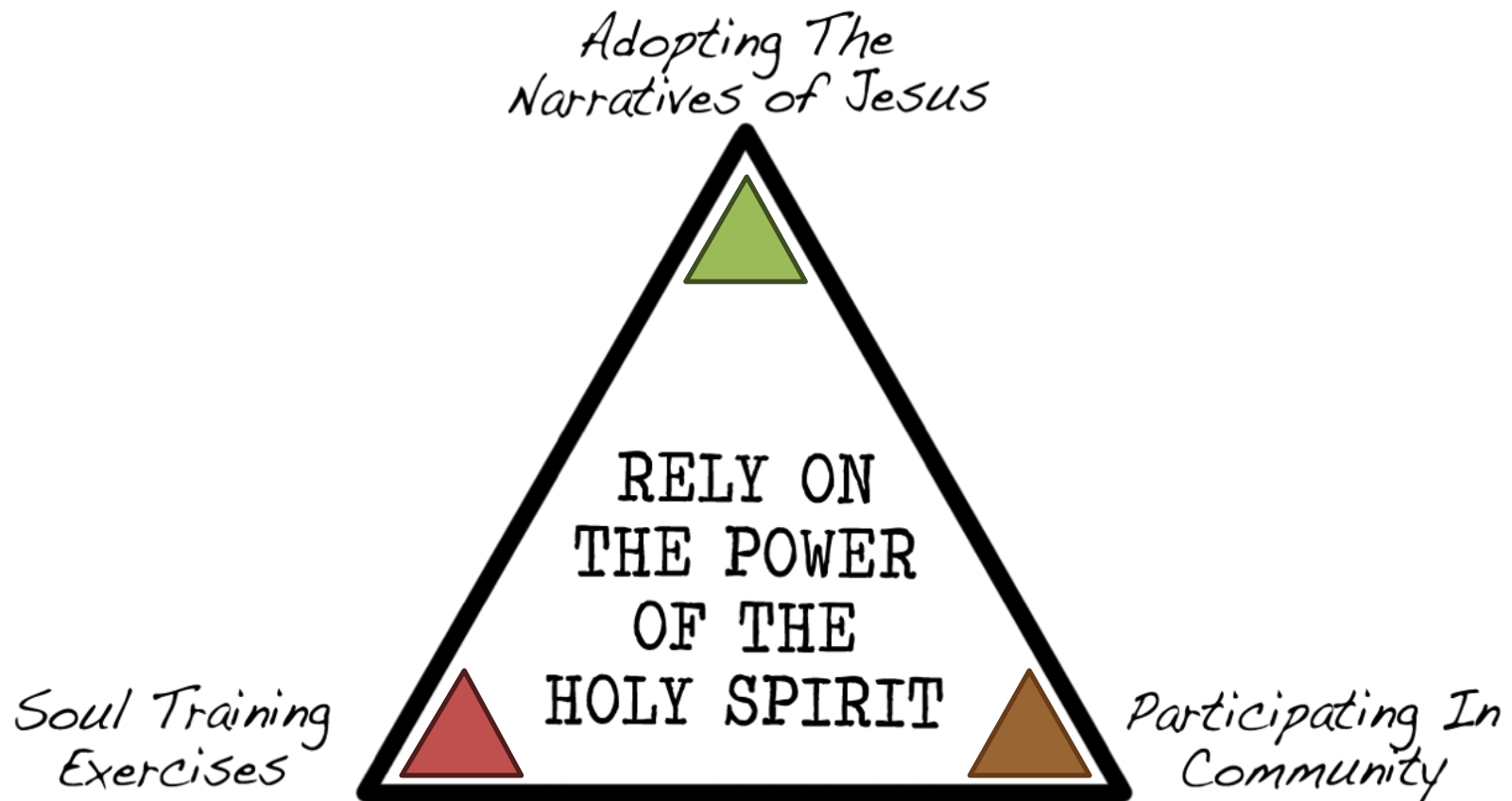
—DALLAS WILLARD

*“What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘HEAR, ISRAEL! THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE; AND **YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.**’ The second is this: ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

HOLY
BIBLE

MARK
10:37-38

SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION



TRUE NARRATIVE #1

*We **CHANGE** by indirect effort*

TRUE NARRATIVE #2

*God is a **GOOD** parent*



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FALSE NARRATIVE #3

GOD is temperamental,
unpredictable, unreasonable,
inconsistent, and can't be trusted



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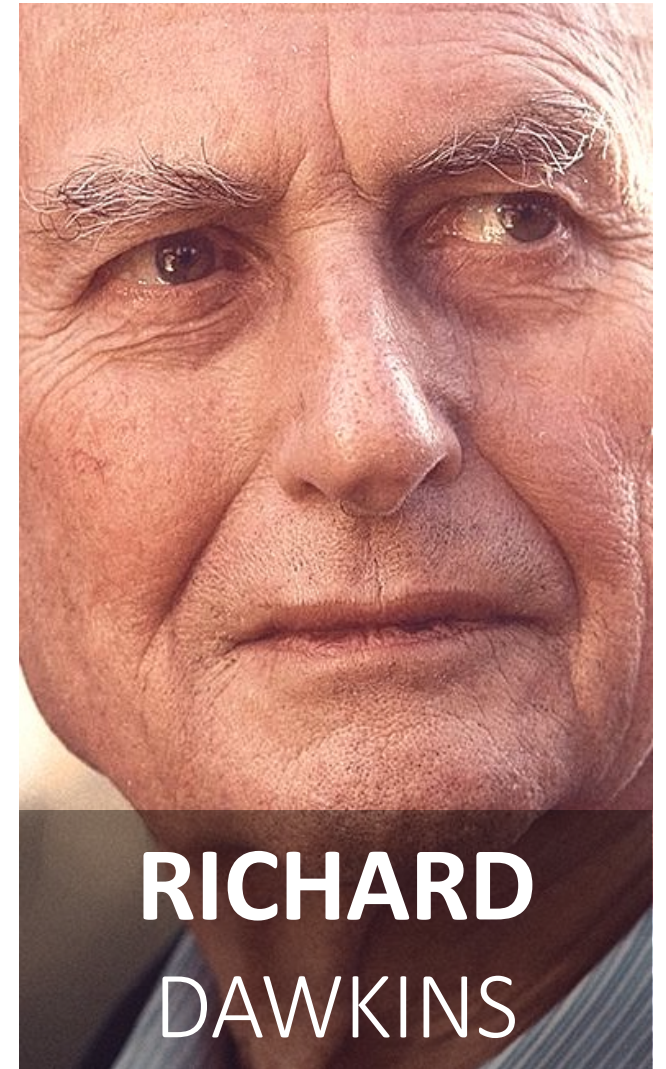
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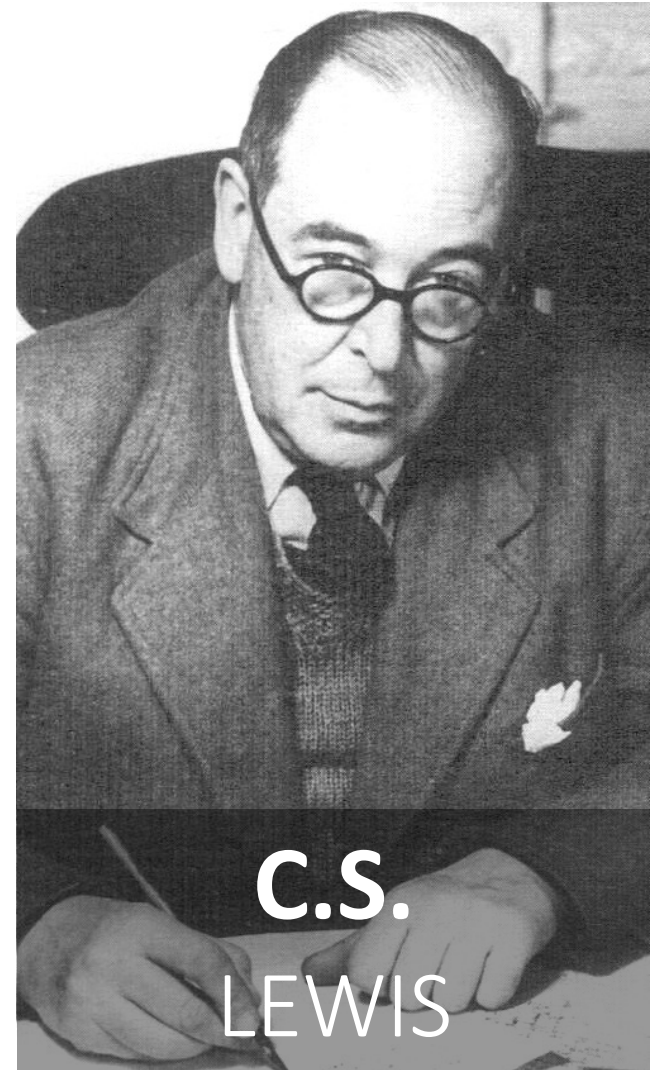
—DALLAS WILLARD

The God of the OT is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.



**RICHARD
DAWKINS**

What would really satisfy us would be a God who said of anything we happened to like doing, “What does it matter, so long as they are contented?” We want, in fact, not so much a Father in Heaven as a grandfather in heaven...



C.S.
LEWIS

*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. **The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being...***

HOLY
BIBLE

HEB
1:1-3

*For in him all the fullness of God
was pleased to dwell...*

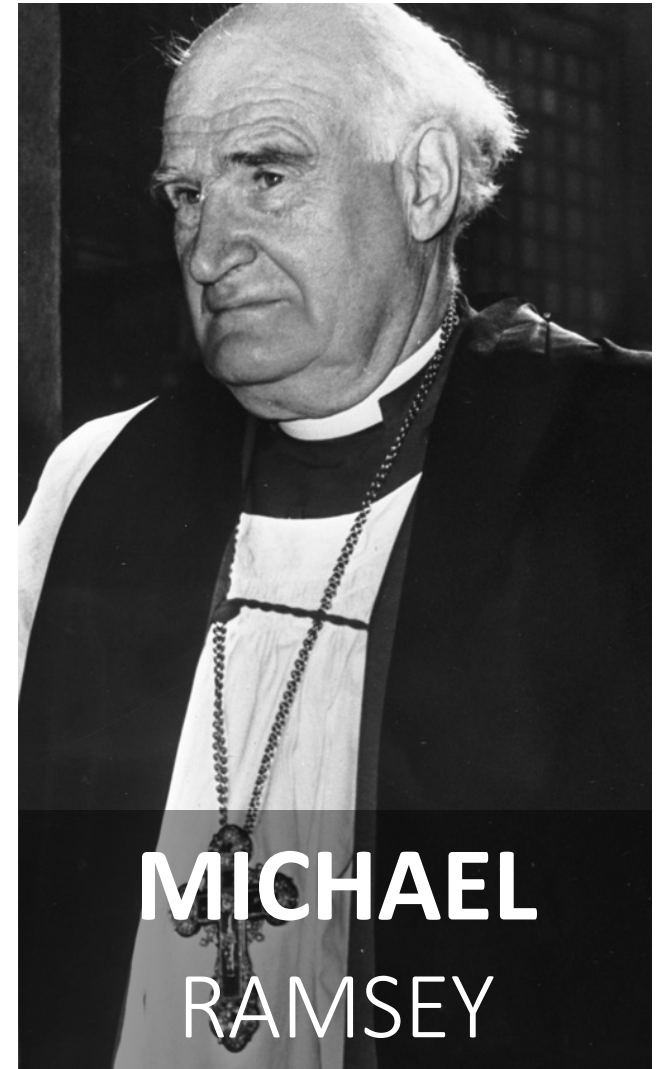
***For in him the whole
fullness of The Deity
dwells bodily...***

HOLY
BIBLE

COL

1:19; 2:9

God is Christlike, and in him
is no un-Christlikeness at all.

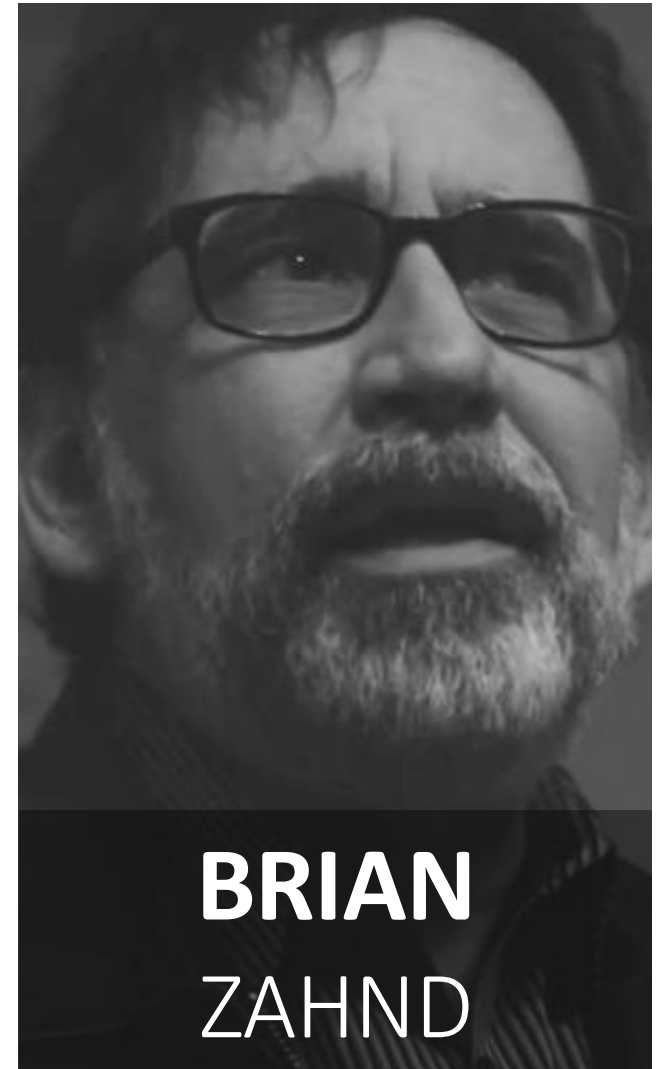


MICHAEL
RAMSEY

...if all the fullness of Deity is embodied and disclosed in Christ, we are misguided to think we need to supplement what we find in Christ with what we find in the OT, or in any other source. Everything we need to know and can know about God is found in Christ.



God is like Jesus. God has always been like Jesus. There has never been a time when God was not like Jesus. We have not always known what God is like—but now we do.



BRIAN
ZAHND

FALSE NARRATIVE #3

GOD is temperamental, unpredictable, unreasonable, inconsistent, and can't be trusted

TRUE NARRATIVE #3

GOD is present, pure, and powerful; provides for us, pardons us, protects us, and genuinely seeks our good



James Bryan Smith

The Good and Beautiful

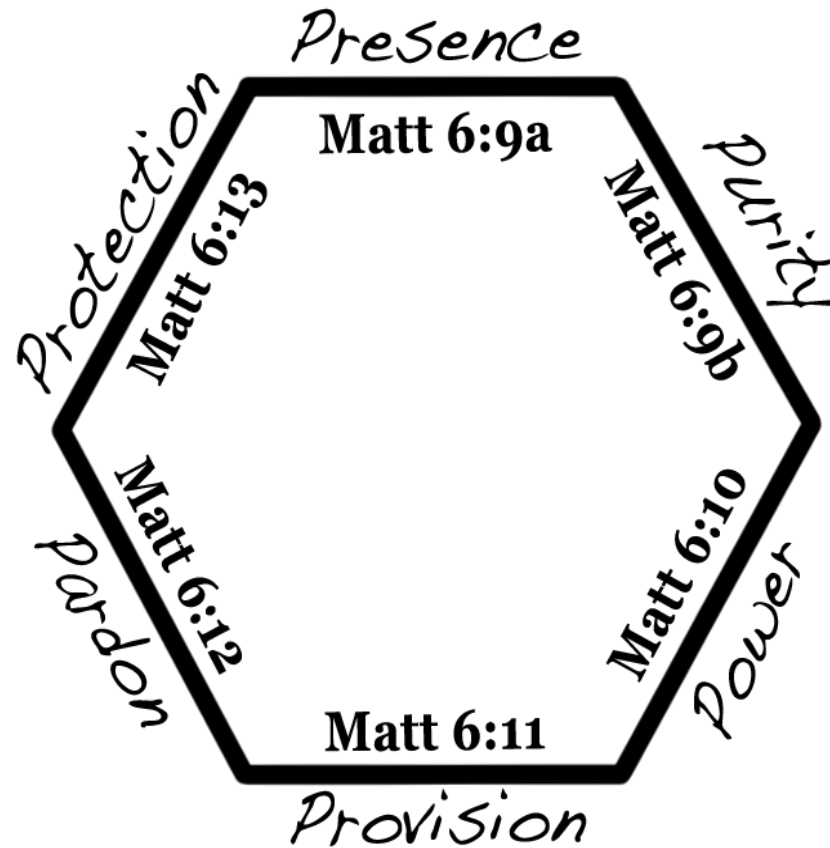
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—DALLAS WILLARD

THE PICTURE OF GOD IN THE LORD'S PRAYER



They came to a place named Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." And he took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch."

HOLY
BIBLE

MARK

14:32-34

*And He went a little beyond them,
and fell to the ground and began praying
that if it were possible, the hour might
pass him by. And he was saying,
“Abba! Father! All things are possible
for you; remove this cup from me;
yet not what I will, but what you will.”*

HOLY
BIBLE

MARK

14:35-36

JESUS REVEALS GOD TO BE...

ABBA

conveying the deepest, most
trustful reverence imaginable



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JESUS REVEALS GOD TO BE...

ABBA

conveying the deepest, most trustful reverence imaginable

FATHER

a term followers of Jesus learn to be defined by him, not by our own experience



James Bryan Smith

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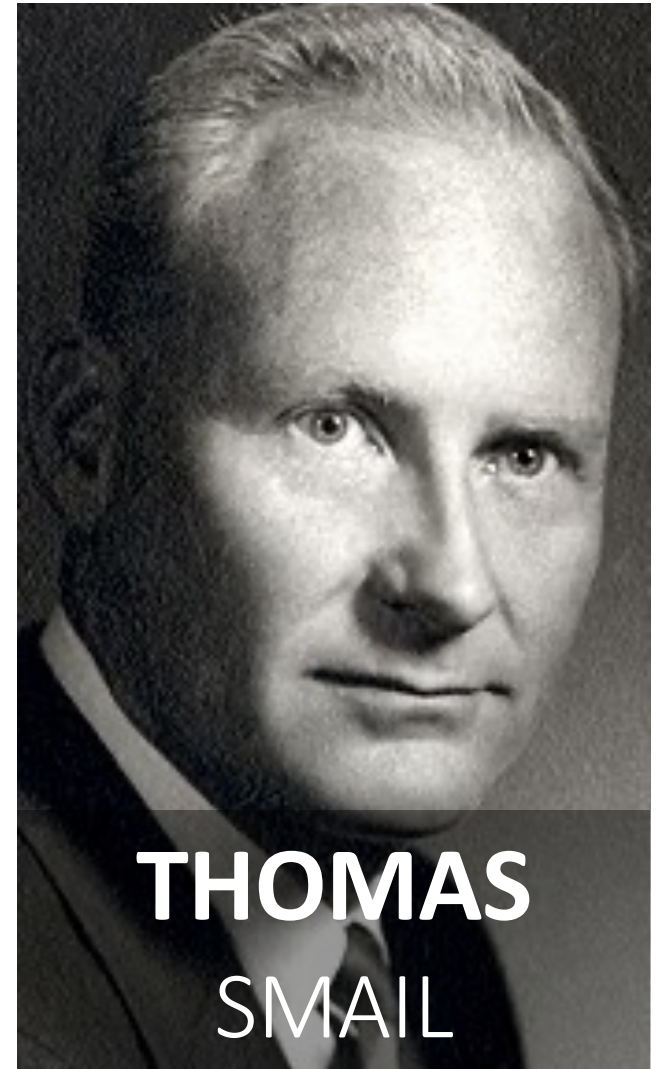
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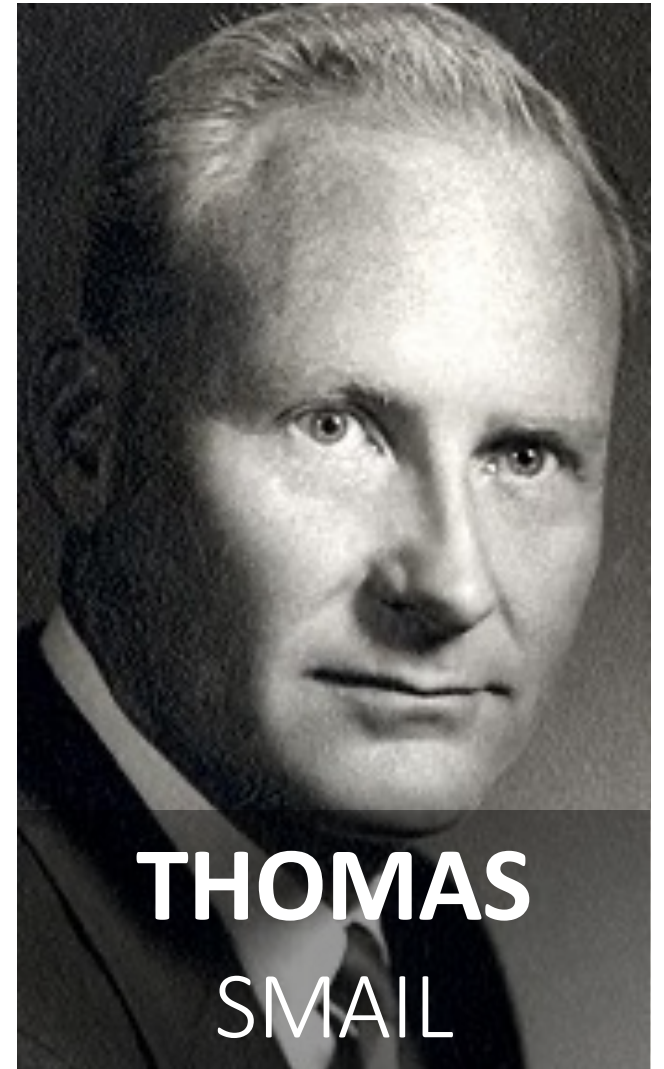
—DALLAS WILLARD

The father Jesus addresses in the garden is one he has known all his life and found to be bountiful in his provision, reliable in his promises, and utterly faithful in his love. He can obey the will that sends him to the cross...



THOMAS
SMAIL

...with hope and expectation
because it is the will of Abba
whose love has been so proved
that it can now be trusted so fully
by being obeyed so completely.



THOMAS
SMAIL

TRUE NARRATIVE #1

*We **CHANGE** by indirect effort*

TRUE NARRATIVE #2

*God is a **GOOD** parent*

TRUE NARRATIVE #3

*God is **TRUSTWORTHY***



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE #1

*Literally **COUNT** your blessings*

- A few words of caution:
 - This is **NOT** about toxic positivity that denies reality
 - This is **NOT** about performing for God or others
 - This **IS** about following the example of the Psalmist/Paul



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*Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.
My soul is downcast within me;
therefore, I will remember you...*

**HOLY
BIBLE**

PSALM

42:5-6

*...be transformed by
the renewing of your mind...*

HOLY
BIBLE

ROM

12:2

SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE #1

*Literally **COUNT** your blessings*

- Pray through:
A Liturgy of Thanksgiving
- Pray through:
A Meditation on Thanksgiving
- Make a list of 5 things you can be thankful for right now
- Now expand the list to 10 things...
- Now expand the list to 50 things...



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During the Day

For times when you need to confess, repent, or forgive...
(Roughly 10min, +/- meditation time)



During the Day

Spending time contemplating the breadth, depth, and beauty of creation
(Roughly 10min, +/- meditation time)



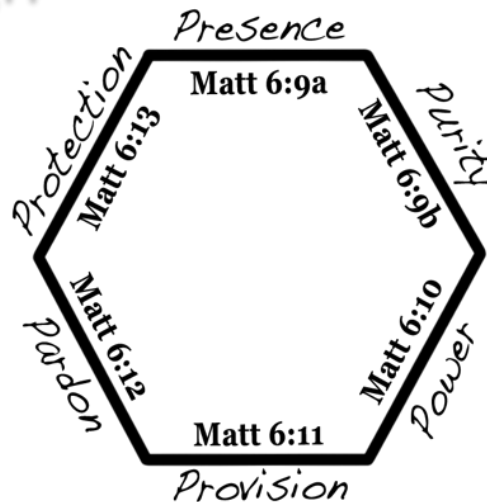
During the Day

For when you're struggling, feeling discontented, or joyful/grateful
(Roughly 10min, +/- meditation time)

SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE #2

*Use the Lord's Prayer as a **FILTER***

- Pick ONE issue/scenario
- Entrust God with this issue as you pray through each section of the Lord's Prayer



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Holy Shepherd,
you know your sheep by name
and walk with us through the valleys of death.
Guide us by your voice,
that we may walk in certainty and security
to the joyous feast prepared in your house,
where we celebrate with you forever.
Amen.

Closing Prayer

A decorative banner at the bottom of the page features a dark background with white line art of hands holding a globe. The globe is composed of several overlapping circles in red, green, blue, and purple. To the right, there is a white pattern resembling a fishnet or a woven mesh.