

North Summit Church

Devoted: Intro

May 11, 2025

Devoted Series: All of Life for the Glory of God

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 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.

[PRAYER]

- Today we're beginning a 16-week journey together called "Devoted," where we'll explore spiritual disciplines that help us build our lives upon the solid foundation of Christ.
- Building off of everything thing we learned and experienced through the Sermon on the Mount

- I want to frame this entire series around a simple but profound phrase:

"All of life for the glory of God."

- When we talk about glory, we're talking about the beauty and character of something revealed. The glory of God is the truth, goodness and beauty that is revealed in His character.
- **Have you ever received a new set of LEGO blocks?**
 - Without instructions, you might build something interesting, but you'll never create what the designer intended.
 - Our lives work the same way. We need the proper model to understand what we're building toward.
- **Here's our fundamental reality:** We were created in God's image, designed to live in perfect communion with Him. This communion would

result in humans reflecting God's character. But we have a problem. Sin has marred that image.

- This is why Jesus came – not just to defeat death so we could go to heaven someday, but he defeated death so that we might live victorious lives in Christ now. He came to recreate us from the ground up into the image bearers we were designed to be.

- **As Irenaeus beautifully put it, "The glory of God is man fully alive."**

- As image-bearers, we will reflect glory – we were made for it.

- **The question isn't whether we'll reflect glory, but which glory we'll reflect.**

- We reflect which we give our attention too. Like a mirror we reflect that which we are aiming at.

1. Christ as Our Perfect Model

- To give glory to God in all of our life, we must start with our model. This is precisely what Jesus meant when He taught about building our lives on the rock:

Matthew 7:24-25

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."

- Christ is our rock. He is our foundation and our model.

- **And the model Christ gives us is in both form and function.**

- Think about your favorite car. Would you ever use a Ferrari as a bulldozer? Of course not! That would corrupt its glory. Similarly, humans function best when used according to their design.

- **In Christ, we see what humanity looks like when perfectly united with God.** Jesus demonstrates true human nature unmarred by sin. His life shows complete harmony between divine will and human will. Christ's humanity becomes the model for our transformation.

- **But this transformation isn't achieved through mere imitation.** It requires participation in Christ through the Spirit, as 2 Cor. 3 reminds us.

- Ephesians 2 reminds us that it is the grace of God received through faith in Christ that enables us to become what we could never become on our own.

Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

- The goal isn't to cease being human but to become fully human as God intended – to have our humanity restored and elevated through union with Christ.
- **Think of it like iron in fire:** The iron becomes red-hot and takes on the properties of fire while remaining iron. Similarly, we become "Christ-like" through participation in Christ while remaining human. Through God's grace, we participate in divine life while maintaining our created nature.
- This understanding transforms discipleship from mere behavioral modification into a profound participation in divine life. We're not just following rules or trying to copy Jesus' actions – we're being transformed from within through union with Christ, enabled by the Spirit to live as truly human beings in communion with God.
 - It is about right relationship that leads to a life that reflects Christ.
- **In Christ, we see both what God is like and what we're meant to become: beings who fully reflect God's glory.**
- But Christ isn't just our model in form; He's our model in function as well. Every action of Christ, whether seemingly "human" or "divine," served one purpose: our salvation. His incarnation, miracles, teaching, suffering, death, and resurrection form one coherent work.
- When Christ hungered (human), it served our salvation. When Christ healed (divine), it served our salvation. When Christ taught (both), it served our salvation. When Christ suffered (human), it served our salvation. When Christ rose (divine power in human flesh), it served our salvation.
- This is what Paul means when he speaks of salvation as past, present, and future. We are saved, being saved, and will be saved. If we focus only on being "saved" in the past tense, we miss the ongoing purpose of Christ's ongoing salvation in our lives.

Remember what Jesus said:

Matthew 4:19

"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

- Jesus made atonement for our sins **so that** we might become the image-bearing missional community God intended from the very beginning of creation.
- **This is important because:** When we get the form right but not the function, we fall into legalism. When we get the function right but not the form, we end up with permissive forms of Christianity that do good things but not for the glory of God.

2. The Process of Sanctification: Putting Off Sin and Putting On Christ

Discipleship is essentially the process of "putting off sinful flesh" and "putting on Christ."

- Note: The problem isn't with our humanity, or you would have to say that there was a problem with Jesus' humanity. Jesus is the model of true humanity not stained or marred by sin.

Scripture speaks to this repeatedly:

Romans 13:14

"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh."

Galatians 3:27

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Ephesians 4:24

"Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."

Colossians 3:10

"Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

- We don't become something other than human; we become more truly human. Through the Spirit, we gradually take on Christ's characteristics: His love for the Father, His compassion for others, His wisdom in decisions, His purpose in mission.
- As we dive deeper in communion with Christ, we learn to see as Christ sees, to love as Christ loves, to serve as Christ serves, to suffer as Christ suffered, and to rejoice as Christ rejoiced.

- **This process of transformation is where our series "Devoted" comes in.** Over the next 16 weeks, we'll explore key disciplines and practices that God has baked into the fabric of reality. These aren't just nice things to do. They are gracious gifts from God given to help us put on Christ-likeness.

- Some focus on the intellect (mind), some on the will (heart), some on our actions (strength) – all given to help us commune with God more intimately so that we might be formed into His image.

- We'll explore practices like prayer, Scripture reading and study, worship, fasting, solitude, simplicity, generosity and the list goes on. Each one is a channel through which God's grace forms us more into the image of Christ. God has been extravagant with His graces, and the ways that we can commune with him.

- As we engage these practices, we're not earning God's favor. Rather, we're positioning ourselves to receive what He freely gives. We're creating space for the Spirit to do His transforming work in and through us.

2 Corinthians 3:18

"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."

3. Every Area of Life for the Glory of God

This is the goal. When we truly grasp that we're being transformed into Christ's image, it changes how we approach every aspect of life. Everything becomes an opportunity to reflect God's glory.

1 Corinthians 10:31

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Philippians 4:8-9

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

meant to reflect God's glory.

- **As children**, we honor our parents not just because God commanded it, but because it reflects His character:
 - **Exodus 20:12** "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."
- **Marriage is designed to reflect the glory of Christ's love for the Church and the Church's response to Christ.**
- **Our social interactions**, including how we engage on social media, the entertainment we consume, the music we listen to – all reflect something about what we value.
- **Our work and vocation are to ultimately be for God's glory.** John Chrysostom taught that work can be worship, and Brother Lawrence showed how even the most mundane tasks can become spiritual offerings.
- **Even the way we engage cultural matters for the Kingdom.** We live as citizens of two realms, seeking to transform culture while maintaining Christian distinctiveness. This is why Jesus commanded us to pray that His Will would come on earth as it is in heaven, and why Paul calls us ministers of reconciliation
 - We're commanded to disciple nations, bringing them under Christ's lordship. We oppose things that distort or destroy God's image, but we also redeem the good things in culture – music, food, art, dress – and use them for God's glory.

Righteousness as both right thinking and right doing.

- As we begin this series I want to highlight the connection between right thinking and right doing. These disciplines that we will be teaching on do both.
- As we behold God's nature, we begin to reflect it. Knowledge of God's love compels us to love others. Understanding God's mercy moves us to show mercy.
- Likewise, righteous actions prepare us for deeper understanding. Practicing virtue clarifies and motivates our discipleship. Obedience opens

understanding. Living truth leads to more fully knowing truth.

Let me close with this thought:

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

- Augustine

- This is true freedom!
- Far too many people waste their lives searching for fulfillment in things that can never satisfy. True freedom can only come from a rightly ordered life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- Over these next 16 weeks, we'll explore practices that help us build our lives on the rock. That God has given us to grow our roots down deep. These disciplines aren't ends in themselves but are gracious gifts from God that position us to be transformed into Christ's likeness, so that all of life might be lived for the glory of God. They put us in a posture of receiving the grace and mercy so that we might reflect His glory to the world around us.