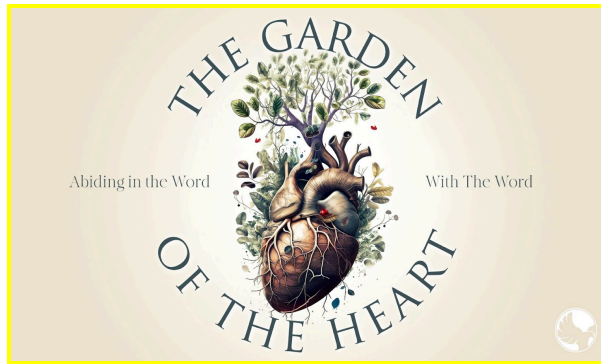


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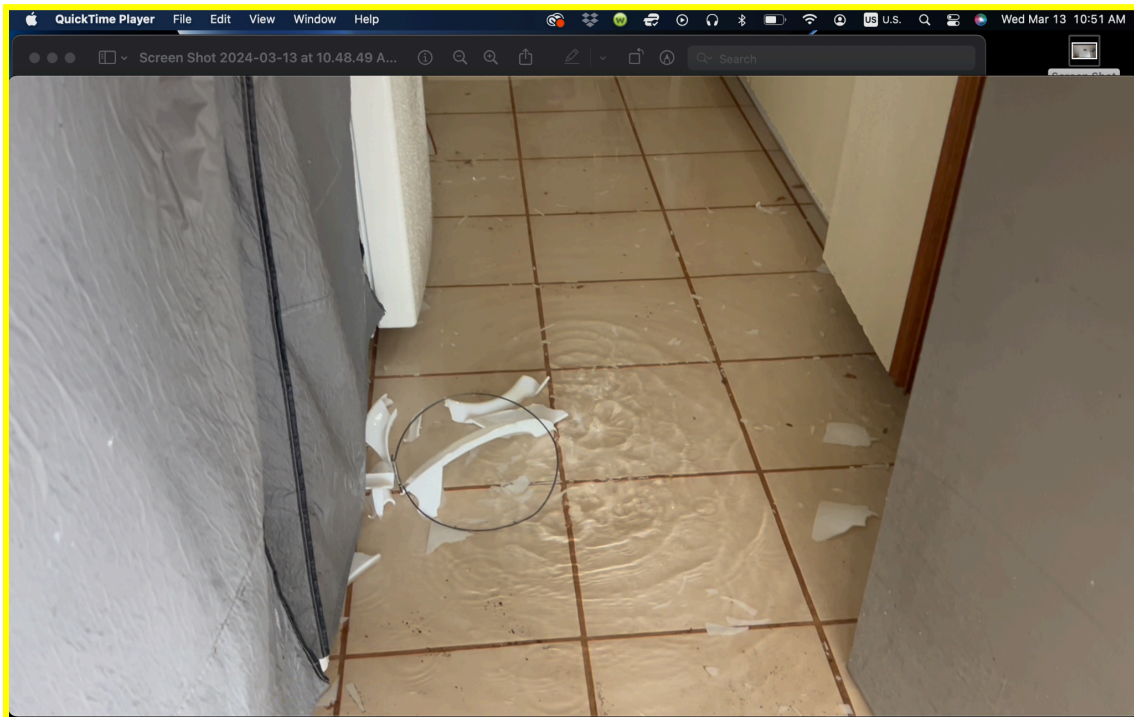
The Jesus Way

March 16-17

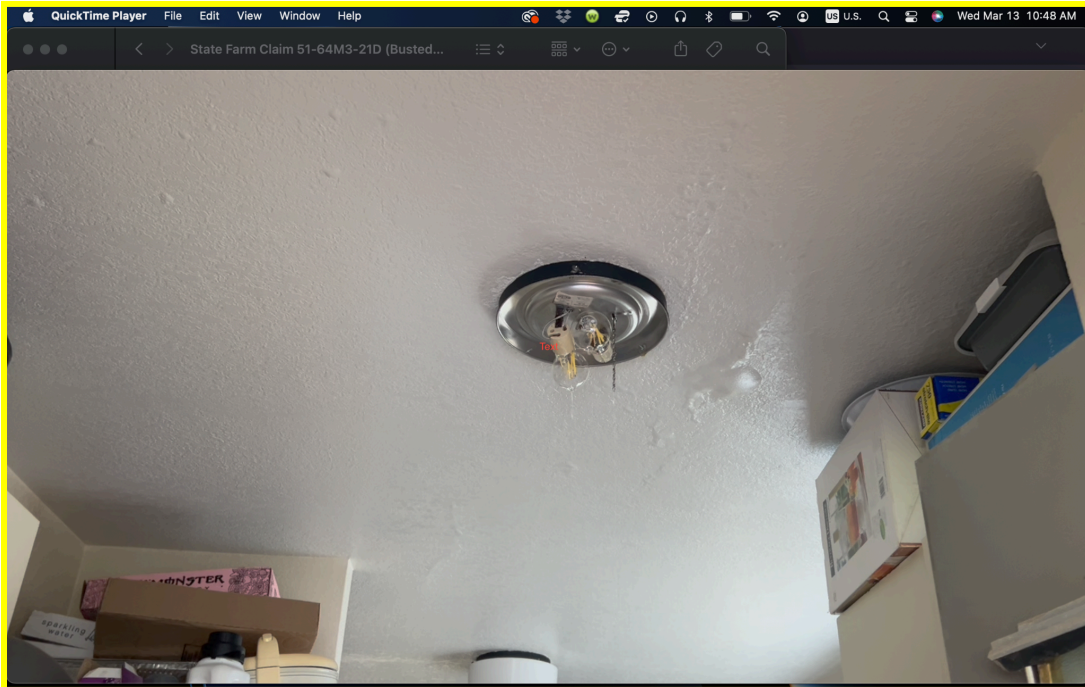
Mike Palompo

I don't think the Devil wanted us to deal with this topic today. Here's what happened at my house this past Tuesday!

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"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says," (James 1:22).

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"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him," (Hebrews 11:6).

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"I think; therefore I am." (Rene Descartes, 17th century French philosopher)

Descartes was trying to reason his way into a philosophy of existence. "How do I know if any of this really exists?" he pondered. And then he realized, "Wait a minute, how can I question my existence if I don't exist?" I know, kind of dumb. But that's how he concluded he must exist. "I am questioning my existence, therefore I must exist!"

Sounds good, pretty ingenious if you think about it. But what Descartes didn't realize was he had started a whole movement in philosophy where we begin with self at the center of existence. In saying "I think therefore, I am," Descartes had made man and his ability to reason, the explanation for reality, and the education system has never been the same since. Man is now the center of the universe. Human reasoning, the basis for reality. We have become "I AM!"

Of course, the reality is we cannot reason our way to God. God is the actual I AM, and the only way we can know Him is if He—here it is—REVEALS HIMSELF TO US. So in the Church we do not begin with human reasoning—human reasoning is important—but the way to God, the way to unlock the secrets of the universe is through HOLY SPIRIT REVELATION not human reasoning.

And that's why we have spent the past 40 days meditating on the significance of the Bible, which is the record of God's revelation to mankind since the dawn of time. It is far and away the most important book you could ever read. It has given birth to western civilization. It is how the United State of America was born. Without the Bible, society degenerates into chaos. You no longer have 2 genders as the Bible says. People no longer know how to relate to the opposite sex appropriately. You can't even define what a woman is!

And the reality is that we cannot merely *think* our way to Christ-likeness. Increased information does not equate to increased transformation. Throughout this series we have learned how to be with Jesus through abiding and meditating on scripture and we have learned how scripture transforms us to be like Him.

Remember at the beginning of our series, we said,

[Slide] "The Jesus Way + The Jesus Truth = The Jesus Life."

We were saying that as Jesus lived in constant abiding communion with His Father in Heaven and proclaimed and lived out the Truth of His Kingdom, He was empowered by the Spirit to live an amazing, fruitful, supernatural life. This week as we conclude our series on the Garden of the Heart, we will introduce to how exactly Jesus lived to abide with His Father. What were the specific practices Jesus employed to abide with the Father? We will discover His "Rule of Life," and learn how we too can live "The Jesus Way."

But first, I know we are in the middle of what may be the biggest election in the history of our country. And people have been asking me to comment on it. Well, I definitely urge you to vote and register every Christian you know to vote. This could be the end of our nation as we know it.

But here's something I read from God's revelation a few weeks ago. Joshua was about to lead Israel to conquer the Promised Land, and he had a visitation. The Bible says it was the Angel of the Lord, but I believe this is Jesus in the Old Testament (because angels never receive worship, and this one does).

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Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" (Joshua 5:13-14).

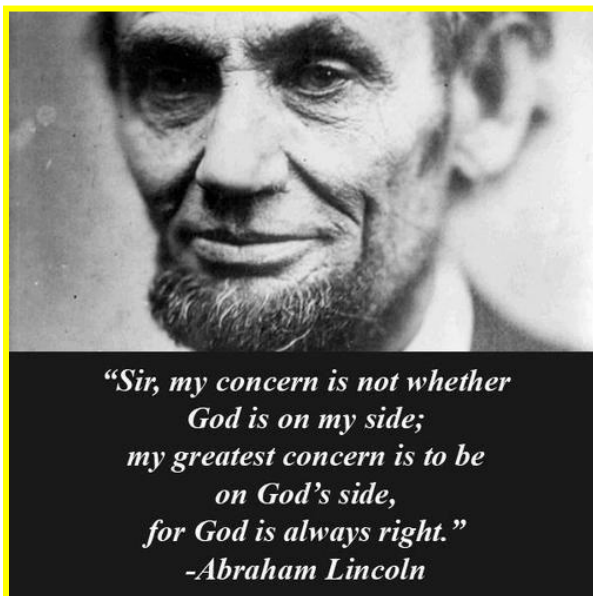
I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but God is NOT A REPUBLICAN! And He's definitely NOT A DEMOCRAT!

So whose side is God on?

During the Civil War (and we are in another Civil War in America today), President Abraham Lincoln (Republican—how many of us know the Republican Party was created to abolish slavery?) was asked that very question. Both the north and south believed in the Bible and thought they were doing God's will.

Here's how Lincoln answered that question:

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If you read Joshua, you will see the almost total annihilation of the Canaanites—men, women, children, herds, pets, everything! But remember, the whole time, God was not on Israel's side. And He was not on the Canaanite side! So too during the Civil War, God was not on the North's side of the South's side!

But whoever was on God's side prevailed. If you were not on God's side, you lost!

So today, God is not on the Right and He's not on the Left. But whoever is on God's side will prevail. If you are not, you will eventually be judged.

So how do you know whose side you're on? There's only one way, and you must not be deceived!

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"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says," (James 1:22).

Only one way to know if you love Jesus — you obey Him. How many of us can tell if you're being tempted? But can you tell if you're being deceived? The scary thing is if you're being deceived, you won't know it. It's in the definition of the word deception. James says you can hear the word, but if you do not obey God, you are deceiving yourself into thinking you are His follower, when you're really not. So maybe nobody is a true disciple of Christ, since nobody's perfect?

What if I told you there is a way to live, to make sure you are on God's side and you are indeed a true disciple of Jesus?

What you need is...

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A RULE OF LIFE

Rule = (Latin) *regula*; a straight stick, like a ruler

So a rule of life are daily PRACTICES you do to make sure you are abiding in Christ, the Living Word. If you are a true apprentice of Jesus, then you will live the way He did, practice the same Spiritual disciplines He did. This is a lifestyle that will keep you in His abiding presence always.

I'm not going to be able to do justice to this teaching in one message, but I can point you to some awesome resources.

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QR Codes for Right Now Media (ask Pastor Rich for this)

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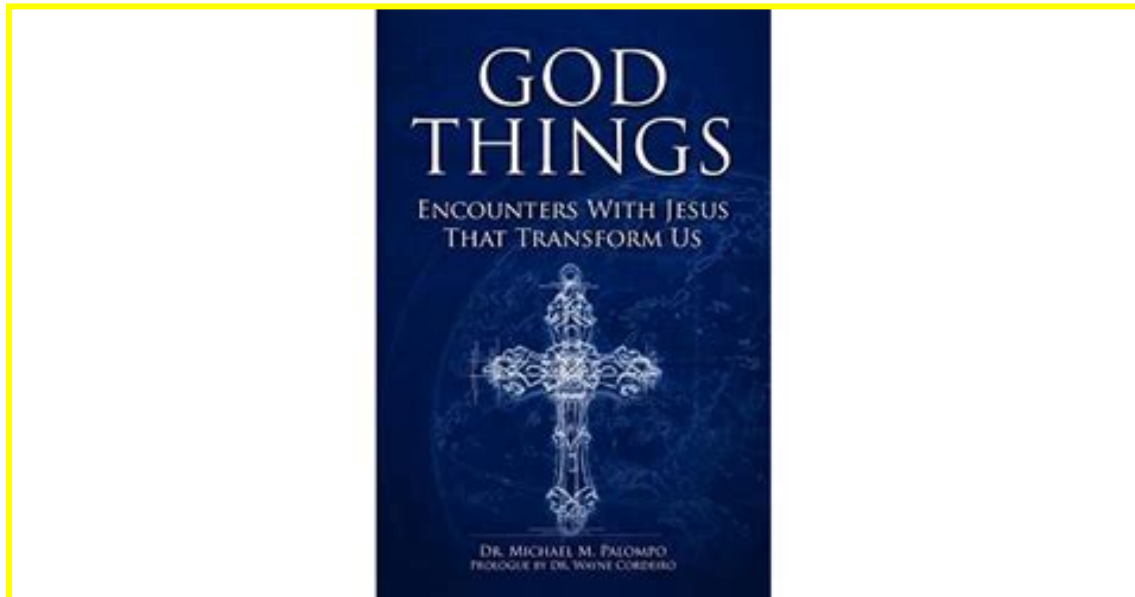


I recently finished listening to both of these books by John Mark Comer, and **SPOILER ALERT** they both end with the same practical application. Can you guess what it is?

The practice of Spiritual Disciplines - A Rule of Life! In fact, at the end of *Practicing the Way*, he gives you a website where you can actually create your own Rule of Life. So definitely add these two books to your list of books to read.

Of course we've had our own locally produced book on Spiritual Disciplines here at NHCO available for the last 15 years! **Shameless Plug** here's my own personal Rule of Life,

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On sale now for just \$5 at our bookstore! [Give away a free one]

With the balance of our time, let me see if I can get you started on creating your own Rule of Life.

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Work For or Work Out? (Spiritual Disciplines)



Here's Chris Hemsworth, better known as The Mighty Thor, before and after he transformed into the mythical god of Thunder. Honestly, I'd be happy looking like his "before" photo, right? Spiritual Disciplines are essentially EXERCISES for your soul so you can **shred** in the Spirit! How many of us know, Chris Hemsworth did not work FOR his muscles? But in order for him to look like Thor, he had to what? WORK OUT the muscles God gave him at birth.

So in the same way, we were all blessed with a perfect SPIRIT when we were BORN AGAIN! But now we need to work for? NO! WORK OUT our salvation in the fear of God!

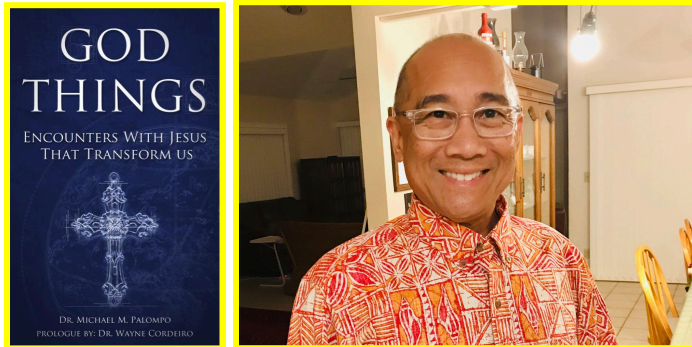
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A Rule of Life is = The Way Jesus Lived.

So if we want to be like Jesus, we follow or copy the way He lived. Let me share with you my Rule of Life

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1. Solitude/Silence
2. Worship
3. Fasting
4. Sabbath
5. Study
6. Marriage
7. Spiritual Friends (Community)

My thesis for *God Things* was we must first be Spiritually transformed by regularly encountering Jesus (abiding) then the community around us will be transformed. These Spiritual disciplines are not a religious way to “work for” your transformation, but rather...

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“The purpose of Spiritual disciplines is to CLEAR A PATHWAY for the seeking Father.”

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²³ But a time is coming and is already here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit [from the heart, the inner self] and in truth; for the Father seeks such people to be His worshipers” (John 4:23 AMP)

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The Unforced Rhythms of Grace (Eugene Peterson)

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace” (Matthew 11:28-29 MSG)

So this is the Message Bible version of “take my yoke, my yoke is easy.” A yoke is farming equipment. You put that on your ox to till the soil. So why would Jesus say, “Take my yoke?”

That’s like telling your wife, “Hey, honey, here’s your Mother’s Day present.” And you give her a vacuum cleaner.

But of course, the Lord’s wisdom is greater than Solomon’s. So Jesus knows for now there is no escaping the restlessness of this world. But WE don’t know that. When we try to rest, we’re basically trying to escape. Our TV binging, our self-medicating, all of it an attempt to find some break from the pain.

For years, I thought I was practicing Sabbath. But as I was watching the news, watching sports, watching movies, (nothing evil or wrong with any of that), I wasn’t really practicing Sabbath. I was trying to escape. I could never truly “rest.” The most challenging thing for me was to simply sit quietly in God’s presence or with others and just “be” or “just talk.” I always needed a game, an activity, or a show to watch. But only lately I’ve been “making every effort to enter God’s rest.

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“Let us, therefore, make every effort (σπουδάζω: “spoudazo” zealous, eager) to enter that rest” (Hebrews 4:11 NIV).

Think about the strange irony in that passage. “Make every effort” to rest. Hebrews 4 says that you don’t just automatically enter into rest. It ironically requires “effort.”

May I urge you today to figure out the Spiritual discipline of Sabbath rest! Maybe I could have saved my kidneys if I learned it earlier.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION AND DISCUSSION

1. Whose side is God on politically? Explain/Discuss.
2. What is a “Rule of Life?”
3. And why is a “Rule of Life” important?
4. What is Pastor Mike’s Rule of Life as explained in *God Things*?
5. What does your Rule of Life need to include?
6. Why is Jesus giving us an “easy” yoke?
7. What did Holy Spirit say to you today? And how will you obey Him?