

When we observe the spiritual practices that Jesus observed, we do so as a means to an end... to be with, live with and be shaped by Jesus.

Every day, no matter what you are doing, you can be in two places at once. You can be in the Father's presence and returning an email, or driving your car, or holding a conversation. This concept was detailed by Brother Lawrence, a 17th century Carmelite monk in France, who wrote "Practicing the Presence of God". He infused His relationship with God into his menial kitchen tasks, and there he found a life that was filled with intimacy and hidden joy. It is in that place the Jesus can shape us and enable us to live fully alive.

Consider some of the places you might start to practice living like Jesus lived. Which of these practices do you think could be your next step in following the lifestyle of Jesus; solitude, prayer, observing sabbath rest, gathering to worship, or fasting.

WRAP-UP

If we truly desire to be shaped by Jesus, we have to give God access to our lives. God gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us if we seek Him and recognize His voice. The key to recognizing God's will is found by abiding in Jesus. Like Brother Lawrence, we need to infuse our relationship with God into our everyday lives, being aware that He is with us, listening for His voice and seeking His direction. Spiritual practices help us to be more attuned to God. As we spend more time with Jesus, abiding in and drawing true life from Him, we will be shaped by Jesus.

Memory Verse

*"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."
- John 15:5 NLT*

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____
Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge- Start allowing Jesus to shape you this week by setting aside 10 minutes daily to sit quietly in His presence anticipating He will meet you there. Come with the attitude that says, "Speak Lord, I'm listening."

"Shaped by Jesus" Fully Alive #3

INTRODUCTION

So, you say you want to be shaped by Jesus- that's great! The next question would be – "How does that work?" The first hurdle is actually allowing Jesus to shape you. Let's start with some introspection. Jesus asked people, "What do you want?" because our actions will follow our desires. If you desire to be shaped by Jesus your actions will prove that out. Being shaped by Jesus requires more than just gathering information about Him. Jesus invited people to "come and see". He also invites us to experience and encounter Him in such a way that we can be shaped by Jesus.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Who has been the greatest influence in your life?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. The Holy Spirit In You

John 14:15-17 NLT - 15 "If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.

As Jesus prepared His disciples for His departure, He promised to send the Advocate (*paraklētos*). This term refers to a helper who comes alongside of you to encourage, comfort or exhort.

Can you recount a time when God encouraged, comforted or exhorted you?

We find both good and evil forces at work in the world. Sometimes the evil we see is so overwhelming we forget that God is actually present in us. We forget that He is there to guide us in all truth (v.17), and instead rely on our own understanding for direction in our lives.

Those apart from God don't know the Spirit, seek Him or recognize Him, but Jesus promised the Spirit is in His followers and will never leave us.

What does Proverbs tell us to do to find the path we should take in life?

Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT - 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. 6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

For most of us it is natural to rely on our own understanding to make decisions, but when we never seek God's will, those decisions may take us in the wrong direction.

How would you go about seeking God's will for a decision you facing? Have you ever been compelled to change direction because you felt God was redirecting you?

2. You and Jesus Together

John 15:1-8 NLT - 1 "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. 3 You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. 5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

If we are going to be shaped by Jesus, it means we need to be connected to Him, in fact we need to recognize Jesus is our only source of true life.

The consequence of failing to remain connected to Jesus is that you wither and die. If your source of life is anything other than Jesus, you won't be producing the kind of fruit God desires.

Galatians 5:22-23 NLT - 22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

This "fruit of the Spirit" can be a good indicator of your spiritual health. Would you say you have a bountiful harvest, or do you see some fruit that just isn't being produced very well?

The prescription to living fully alive is to remain in Jesus by living like He did. Our lives are a byproduct of our lifestyle. Even though Jesus was God, He was also living fully human as He walked the earth, so we can reflect his lifestyle by living the way He lived.

Some of Jesus' regular practices include; praying, resting, spending time with others, gathering in synagogue. His life could be characterized as simple and unhurried.

What are the things in your life that battle against a simple and unhurried lifestyle?

3. Spiritual Practices

Believers of the early church were called the followers of the way. Not just because they believed the right stuff but because they arranged their lifestyle around Jesus.

What did Jesus say to those who were well studied but not following Him?

John 5:39 NLT - 39 "You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!

Nowadays we have an abundance of information, but if we are not changed by what we know about Jesus, it does us no good. Knowing the scriptures can help you to learn God's voice but we need to actually "come and see" by being present with Jesus in our everyday lives.