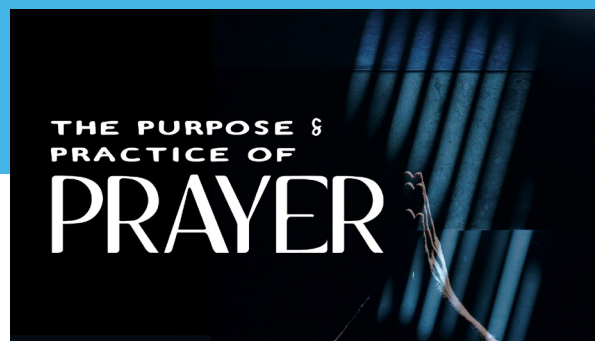


# Discussion Questions

September 24, 2023

## Practicing the Presence of God: Part 2



1. Read John 5:16-20  
Jesus says he can do “nothing by himself.” What does He mean by that?
2. Read John 5:30, John 6:38, & John 14:9  
What do we learn about Jesus’ relationship to His Father in these passages?
3. How did Jesus demonstrate a life of complete dependence on God the Father during His earthly ministry?  
  
Jesus demonstrates for us the way of life we are called to live. Discuss what it can look like for us today to be dependent upon God like Jesus was.
4. Discuss how the example of Jesus living a life completely dependent on His Father challenges your perspective on independence.
5. Discuss how the concept of discipleship/apprenticeship in the time of Jesus often differs from common modern Christian practices of belief and salvation.
6. In the sermon, James referenced a Barna study showing that over 70% of Christians’ actions and attitudes who were surveyed lined up much more with that of the pharisees than Jesus. (If interested, see *Christians: More Like Jesus or Pharisees?*) Discuss your own experience with this and why you think there is such a lopsided disparity.
7. James spoke of the need to increasingly live a life “in Christ” inviting Him to shape our thoughts and actions. He gave a practical way he does it, by continually inviting Jesus to “Live His Life through him” or by inviting the Holy Spirit to open His eyes to what He is doing in His midst. Discuss what practical ways you can increasingly invite the Holy Spirit to continually shape your thoughts and actions throughout the day.

**John 5:16 - 20,30 (NLT)**

So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. But Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I." So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God. So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished...I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.

**John 14:8 - 10 (NLT)**

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.

**John 5:30 (NLT)**

**I can do nothing on my own.** I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because **I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.**

**John 6:38 (NLT)**

For I have come down from heaven **to do the will of God** who sent me, **not to do my own will.**

**1 John 2:6 (ESV)**

..whoever says he abides in him [Jesus] ought to **walk in the same way in which he [Jesus]walked.**

**1 John 2:6 (NLT)**

Those who say they live in God should **live their lives as Jesus did.**

**Dallas Willard - The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology**

..there has been no consistent general teaching or practice under the heading of discipleship among evangelicals [in the mid to late twentieth century] that would be recognizable as discipleship in terms of biblical teaching or of the [ancient church]... Being a Christian... came to be a matter of professing belief in time-honored tenets of traditional Christianity, with a few additional points about the nature and authority of the Bible and about eschatology [end times events].

..[now] to be a Christian - even a 'Spirit-filled' Christian - does not require that you be a disciple of Jesus Christ, or that you, through the course of discipleship, take on the character of Jesus Christ in your life as a whole.

Being a disciple... has become being about soul winning, forgiveness of sins, and assurance that a person will get into heaven if he or she believes the right stuff. Ironically, these new minimum

entrance requirements have produced a “nominal” form of Christianity—the very thing [Christians were] reacting against—and Christians who look so much like non-Christians.

Dallas Willard: Discipleship - The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology

<https://www.nobts.edu/discipleship/downloadable-documents1/Historical%20Discipleship.pdf>

### **James 2:17 (NIV)**

*..faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

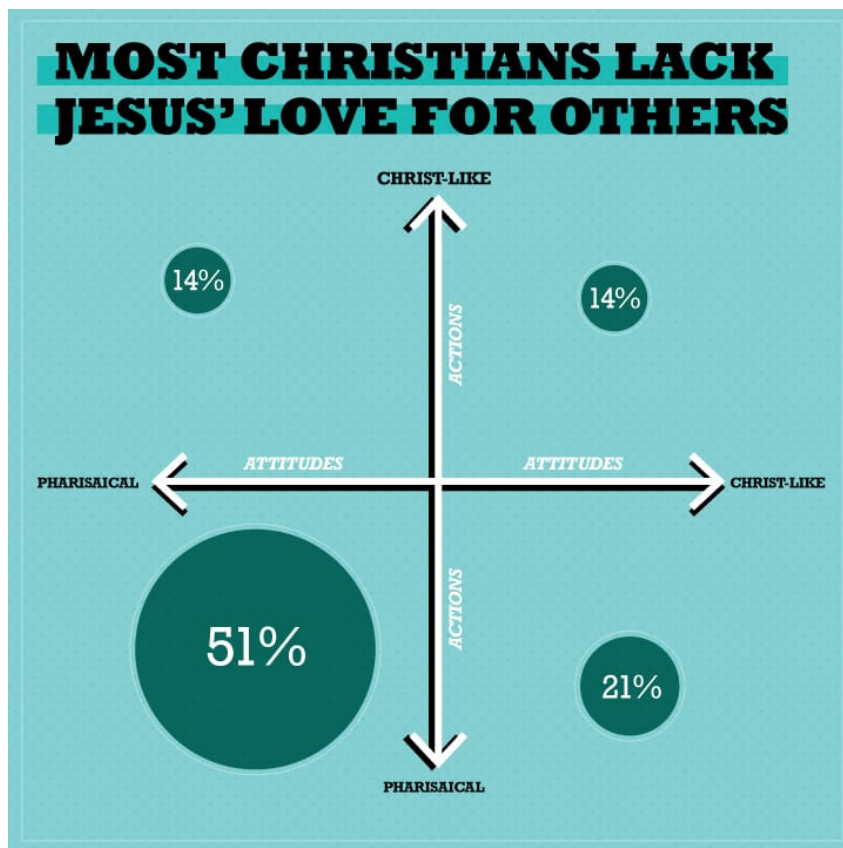
### **Eugene Peterson- The Jesus Way**

Here is a text, words spoken by Jesus, that keeps this in clear focus: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The Jesus way wedded to the Jesus truth brings about the Jesus life. We can't proclaim the Jesus truth but then do it any old way we like. Nor can we follow the Jesus way without speaking the Jesus truth. **But Jesus as the truth gets far more attention than Jesus as the way. Jesus as the way is the most frequently evaded metaphor** among the Christians with whom I have worked for fifty years as a North American pastor. In the text that Jesus sets before us so clearly and definitively, way comes first.

### **Barna Survey of Non-Christians (cited in unChristian by David Kinnaman)**

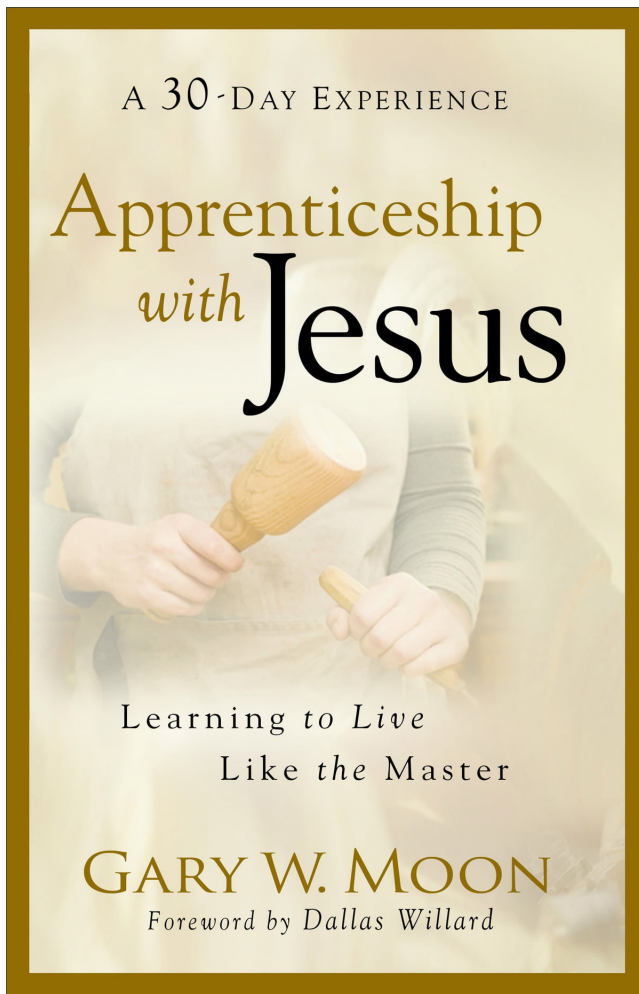
84% say they personally know a Christian

15% say they could see a lifestyle difference that was different in a good way



### **Colossians 3:3b-4a (NIV)**

*...your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears...*



**Gary Moon Apprenticeship with Jesus (p. 106)**

..the early church was so much more than forgiveness of sins; it was also, and primarily, the journey toward union with God. Against this backdrop, Jesus' number one teaching theme—life in the kingdom—and Paul's number one theme—being “in Christ”—are two sides of the same coin. Life in the kingdom is participation in an interactive friendship with Jesus. This friendship, or experiential apprenticeship, is the process of learning from the Master and becoming as much like the Master as possible through experiencing the mystery of Christ within (Col. 1:26–27) and living a “with-God” life.

While it is common for Christians to be exhorted to “take Christ into the workplace” or “bring Christ into the home,” this points to the deadly assumption that Christians normally leave Christ at church. Let's change that.

I don't believe the transforming power of Christ is present with us now because [Jesus] once said, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” but because the living Christ can love my neighbor through me by being in me. The difference here can be as vast as the chasm that separates reading a prayer about God from experiencing prayer with God.

**John 15:5 (NLT)**

*Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit*

**Galatians 5:22–23 (NLT)**

*But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control.*

**Andrew Murray - Like Christ**

My brother, if you have known but little of this life of conscious dependence and simple obedience, begin today. Let [Jesus] be your example in this. It is His blessed will to live in you, and in you to be again what He was here on earth. He only longs for your acquiescence: He will work it in you. Offer yourself to the Father this day, after the example of [Jesus], to do nothing of yourself but only what the Father shows you. Fix your gaze on Jesus. Adore Him who, for your sake, humbled Himself, and showed how blessed the dependent life can be.