

ULC Sermon Study Resource

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality — Developing New Rhythms

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Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: What's your favorite winter activity?

Reading: Luke 5:33-39

Outline: We see the power of presence, newness, and habit as we seek new spiritual rhythms.

- I. The Power of Presence (v. 33-35)
 - a. Jesus challenges our obsession with the actions and things we do, and shows us the importance of seeking His presence in *all* our spiritual practices.
 - b. Jesus compares his disciples to wedding guests: being with him is a time of celebration!
 - c. Without God's presence, our spiritual practices turn into legalism and hinder our growth.
Q: Why are John's disciples fasting? Why don't Jesus' disciples fast?
- II. The Power of Newness (v. 36-38)
 - a. The "new wine" of the Gospel doesn't fit neatly into the "old wineskin" of our lives.
 - b. The reality of the Gospel isn't just a new patch we throw on the old garment of our lives, but a complete and utter transformation through the power of Jesus (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17).
Q: Why are made a "new creation" instead of an old creation with patches?
- III. The Power of Habit (v. 39)
 - a. Growing in new spiritual rhythms is hard because we like the "old wine" of our life.
 - b. Meeting God where he has promised to show up in corporate worship, His Word, prayer, and communion are habits that can really help center us in God's presence.
 - c. We need to focus on God's presence through our habits, not on the habits themselves.
Q: How does fasting help or hinder the faith of people in the Bible?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) What spiritual habits do you practice? How do you draw near to God outside of church?
- 2) Have you ever "checked the boxes" of your faith, but felt you were missing something?
- 3) How can you center your spiritual habits in God's presence?
- 4) How can you focus on *being with* God as opposed to *doing things for* God?
- 5) How do spiritual rhythms affect our walk with God?

Suggestions for further study:

- Deuteronomy 6 **Q: Why is loving God at the center of these commands to Israel?**
- Luke 5:12-16 **Q: How do you see Jesus practicing prayer in the midst of ministry?**
- Luke 18:9-14 **Q: Why is humility important in all our spiritual practices?**

Closing Prayer: "Gracious God, we give you thanks that you have written the Scriptures for us. Let them move us and be life-giving for us as we hear and read them. God, pour out your Spirit on us, so that we respond with praise and thanksgiving to Your Word. Orient our lives more and more around Your Word, the promise of your presence, and the newness that you seek to bring in us. Lord, continue to use the gifts that you've given to your church to reshape and remake us in the image of Your Son Jesus. Amen."