



"The world is a fallen world because it has fallen away from the awareness that God is all in all."

—Alexander Schmemmann,
For the Life of the World

What are spiritual practices? The working definition we are using is actually an image—spiritual practices can be understood as a trellis that gives structure and support to our relationship with Jesus Christ. Through intentional habits, we structure our time and orient our hearts toward Christ, interrupting our natural use of time and our heart's affection that often bends in on our selfish desires.

It is not our hope that you leave with a longer list of to-do's than you walked in with. Spiritual Practices are meant to create space for us to receive God's invitation to come to him and rest. (Matt. 11:28)

We are using the book [Liturgy of the Ordinary](#) by Tish Harrison Warren as a jumping off point. This week we are look at chapter 6.

Welcome + Psalm 121

Icebreaker Discussion

How has your family of origin shaped the way you do conflict?

Fighting for Healthy Relationships

See the back of this page.

Reflect + Discuss

1. Take a minute to reflect on a recent conflict or grievance you've had with someone close to you. What actions/inactions characterized your approach? What are some deeper fears, demands, attitudes, or anxieties that the conflict triggered?
2. Now reflect on the same conflict using the Grievance and Conflict Guide. What is one thing you would have brought into the situation from the guide? What is one thing you would use in addressing future grievances or conflicts— how would it change if *you* are the offender?
3. How do you see your small sphere and ordinary days as part of the broader mission and work of God's redemption— through conflict?

Sources

- *Listen* Eric Bryan "The Spiritual Practice of Healthy Conflict" <https://goo.gl/gQCC6W>
- *Read* Chapter 6 in [Liturgy of the Ordinary](#) by Tish Harrison Warren
- *Study* All Souls Grievance and Conflict Guide <https://goo.gl/AneLEk>
- *Read* Chapter 7 in *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzero

Review

What is one thing you want to remember from this morning?

Write it here:

What is one thing that you learned from this session that you want to live?

Write it here:

Closing Prayer

See Scazzero, p. 187.

Fighting for Healthy Relationships

Passing the Peace and the Everyday Work of Shalom

The Real Problem with Conflict— We Avoid It (and miss out on God's blessing through it)

"It's clear that many of our hearts have been formed more by the liturgies of radio talk show hosts [and podcast hosts] than the lessons of Jesus." (Barry Corey, Christianity Today, 2016: "Lovekindness")

"Our problem is not that we are arguing about these things. Our problem is that we are *not* arguing about these things. I know how crazy that must sound. Especially in an age where conflict is something to be avoided or diffused instead of something to be embraced. But rest assured, I am not calling for the bickering and quarreling that Peter condemns in his letters. Bickering and quarreling are actually the poor forgeries of real and redemptive, Spirit-filled conflict. Those forgeries lead to isolation, bitterness, and misunderstanding. The real thing looks a lot more like learning than bickering. When we argue well and in a godly way something happens when we get to the other side. It's a kind of closeness between you and the person you are in conflict with. It's a closeness I have felt in no other situation and no other circumstance." (Eric, "The Spiritual Practice of Healthy Conflict")

The Bible shows us conflict is a key way in which He blesses: Jacob, Job, Esther, Ruth, Joseph, David... Jesus, Paul
BUT we avoid it. Usually in one of two ways—

1/ *Bickering* (but not engaging with the real issue). Ex: Saul— he was *not* arguing/engaging with Christians. Blinded.
2/ *Cut Off* Ex: Every time we have an argument, I hear a voice along the way: "Just forget it. Go to bed. It's not worth it." What that voice really means is *he* is not worth it. *Our relationship* is not worth it.

Embracing Conflict— New Habits for Peacemaking

"Jesus refused to separate the practice of the presence of God from the practice of the presence of people." (Scazzero, 171)

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. (paraphrase Matthew 22:37-40)

"Christ's peace is never a cheap peace. It is never a peace that skims the surface or papers over the wrong that's been done. It is not a peace that plays nicey-nice, denies hurt, or avoids conflict. It is never a peace that is insincere or ignores injustice. It's a peace that is honest and hard-won, that speaks truth and seeks justice, that costs something, and that takes time. It is a peace that offers reconciliation. We cannot seek peace out of our own strength. We all blow it--we fail those around us, we pass judgement instead, we retreat into selfishness as often as we extend a hand. If we are ever peacemakers, it is not without a good deal of war within our hearts." (Warren, 86)

Ordinary Love— The Substance of Peace on Earth

"Because most often what we're arguing about—in this case a decision about our daughters schooling—isn't really what we're arguing about. What we are actually arguing about is our fears, anxieties, identities, and hopes." (Warren, 74)

"I am not mad that you threw your shirt on the floor today; I am mad about the last three hundred times you've thrown your shirt on the floor. Or, more painfully, it's not just that I'm mad about your criticism today, it's how a pattern of criticism, comment by passing comment, bumps up against my own patterns of sin, woundedness, self-defensiveness... it's a burr under the saddle conflict over the kind of habitual resentment that if we let it, builds." (Warren, 75)

"Ordinary love, anonymous and unnoticed as it is, is the substance of peace on earth, the currency of God's grace in our daily life." (Warren, 79).