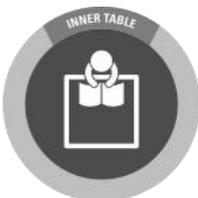


Sermon Notes

“Now and Later”
July 21, 2019



**First
Friends**
Church



Seeking God
in Solitude



Finding God
in Friendship



Celebrating God
in Community



Reflecting God
in Relationships

Reflection Questions *(please use these individually or in groups)*

Sermon Reflections:

1. How does it make you feel that God has an “unobstructed view” of your life?
2. What do you want to receive as a result of the decision to follow Jesus?
3. Do you feel left out, like David was? Or least important, like Gideon felt? Meditate on the truths that God sees your heart and can empower your life with his presence.
4. Consider the present state of your life, and the things that have most influenced where you are today. Are there “old” ways that need laid down? Ask God to teach you how to live in the “new creation” life of the resurrected Christ.

Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **1 Sam. 16:1-13** | In our culture today, what sorts of qualities are mistakenly valued over “heart conditions” like integrity?
- **Judges 6:1-16** | Do you feel comfortable talking to God like Gideon did (v. 13)? Why or why not?
- **2 Cor. 5:14-21** | Are you guilty of sometimes looking at people from a “worldly point of view?” How? Why?
- **John 3:22-36** | Do you think it was hard for John to be joyful about “becoming less?” Why or why not?

Self-Care Disciplines *(Excerpts from Celebration of Discipline)*

July Discipline: Corporate Guidance | “Spiritual Direction (cont.)” (p. 187)

A personal experience of the Emmanuel presence of Jesus, that He has come to guide his people himself, leading them in definite and immediate ways, is a deeply profound thing. But, it is not sufficient. Individual guidance must yield to corporate guidance. There must also come a knowledge of the direct, active, immediate leading of the Spirit *together*. Perhaps the preoccupation with private guidance alone in Western cultures is the product of their emphasis on individualism. The people of God have not always been so.

It is helpful to realize that there are many forms of spiritual direction. Preaching is a form of spiritual direction as is the ministry of many small groups. John Wesley established the “class meetings” and the “bands” as forms of spiritual direction. The Bible itself functions as spiritual direction, for as we read it prayerfully we are being formed more and more into the image of Christ.

Which of these examples do you benefit from most? Is there one of them that you have let languish or even avoided? How might you introduce another layer of spiritual direction into your life?

Note: Don't let these burden you each week. Please engage only if you feel it would be beneficial in caring for yourself. Sometimes self-care involves giving yourself a break, even from self care disciplines.