

Diving Deeper into Discipleship

December 5, 2021 | Pastor Pete Fowler

Stepping Into the Light: Gaining Distance from Darkness

Sermon Reflection Questions:

- Which of the "material" shadows are the easiest for you to wander into: endless wealth, flawless security, or unhindered progress? How do those shadows manifest themselves in your life? Ask God to help you guard against them.
- Is there someone you know who seems to be walking in darkness during this Christmas season? How might you communicate to him/her God's invitation to walk in His light?
- Are you a person who consistently seeks peace and restrains retaliation? Invite the Holy Spirit to teach you more about the peaceful way of Jesus and empower you to follow those paths, illuminated by His light.

Devotional Reading and Reflection

- **Judges 16:17-30** | What can we learn from Samson's story about God "leaving" someone for a time? How is it similar to/different from the same idea in Isaiah 2?
- **Deuteronomy 17:16-17** | How are these specific commands for Israel's king similar to the description of the nation in Isaiah 2? Why do you think these kinds of temptations are so hard to avoid?
- **John 16:33** | What does this passage teach us about the common assumption that peace is defined as the absence of "trouble?" How can we have peace in the midst of our trials?

Weekly Spiritual Practice

December Practice: Study | "Repetition" (from *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, pg. 64-65)

- Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction. The mind will always take on an order conforming to the order upon which it concentrates. Perhaps we observe a tree or read a book. We see it, feel it, understand it, draw conclusions from it. When this is done with concentration, perception and repetition, ingrained habits of thought are formed.
- Study involves four steps. Repetition, concentration, comprehension, reflection. Repetition regularly changes the mind in a specific direction, thus ingraining habits of thought. We may smile condescendingly at the old teaching method of recitation, but ingrained habits of thought can be formed by repetition alone, thus changing behavior.
- We will use the story of Jesus' birth in Luke 2 as a case study. Repeatedly read Luke 2:8-20 this week. Once a day is preferable. The goal is simply to get familiar with the passage. In the coming weeks, we will move into the concentration, comprehension, and reflection of this passage to see how we can best "study" a text holistically.