

Diving Deeper into Discipleship for July 17, 2022

Pastor Pete Fowler

The Gifts and the Giver: Desire the Greater Gifts

Sermon Reflection Questions:

- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into the “most excellent way” and place a desire in your heart for the “greatest gifts.”
- Have you been using any of your God-given gifts, talents or passions in ways that are absent of—or even opposed to—love?
- Choose one of the manifestations of the “most excellent way” to put into action this week.

Devotional Reading and Reflection

- **Jeremiah 9:23-24** | How does this passage help us fight against the temptations to speak/act with pride, arrogance or boastfulness?
- **John 15:9-13** | How many actions from the life of Jesus can you think of that match up with the most excellent way of love described in 1 Cor. 13?
- **Philippians 2:5-8** | In what ways does this description of the “mindset” of Jesus (which we’re called to) overlap with how love is not boastful, proud or self-seeking? How might that mindset become more evident in your life?

Weekly Spiritual Practice

July Practice: Corporate Guidance | Spiritual Direction (from *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, pg. 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 in addition to the helpful friendship found in a trained spiritual director. 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?