

## The Spirituality of ..... Everything!

Quick! Do a word association game with me: what do you think of when I say the word “Spirituality”? Do you think of yogis, seated in a circle, murmuring their mantras? Or candles and incense and hours spent in prayer? Or some kind of ethereal inner calm that could be yours, if you do it just right. Whatever you think of, is it something that is available to everyone, anytime, anywhere? If not, it’s not true Christian spirituality.

Often when we think of spirituality, we think of spiritual “experiences” of one kind or another. Many long for those experiences, believing that extraordinary happenings – ones that stand apart from “ordinary” life- are a true sign of God’s special favor.

But, the spiritual life is not all about meditation and seeking God in quiet experiences. (Although these things matter... see below.) God’s Spirit is deeply embedded within each of us, and within our experiences in the everyday world.

So what about the spirituality of shopping? How can you be aware of and follow Jesus, when you are at the mall? Where is God in evidence there? How is God leading you, as you make your purchases?

Or, how about the spirituality of parenting? Where do you see God at work in your spouse’s life, in your kids/grand-kids? How does Jesus’ love for you inspire and inform you as you live in these oh-so-important relationship?

When I drive through southern Minnesota, I wonder about the spirituality of farming. Do farmers think about the miracle of growth contained in the seeds they plant? Is depending on the weather for your success sort of like depending on God for life?

We could talk about the spirituality of bread baking, of work, of sex, of washing clothes. Because we worship an incarnate God, a God who is willing to inhabit human flesh and be at work in human activity. So, every part of our lives– every activity and relationship – can to be surrendered to and led by God’s Spirit. Or put the other way, there is NO part of our lives that’s off-limits to God.

Now, as for “spiritual practices”, here’s an image my spiritual director gave me not long ago. She said that spiritual practices (or faith practices, if you prefer) are like getting a suntan. If you spend time lying in the sun, you will tan. There is nothing you need do, except expose yourself to the sun.

In the same way, spending time being alone with God, praying, meditating, reading scripture (there are many other practices) exposes you to the loving light of Christ. You don’t need to do anything, except intentionally be there, with your heart open to receive. God will do the rest.

Spiritual practices feed my faith. I need them. I need to do them regularly. And I want to encourage and teach them, because they’re so vital. They are the food and drink of my life with God. But remember, you can be “spiritual” everywhere and anywhere. Because God is with

us... Immanuel!

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