

WELCOME TO MOD 1 **FORMING**

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”
Colossians 2:6-7

“Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.”¹

Can we really become “little Christs?” It seems like an impossible feat. The Apostle Paul liked to speak of living our lives “in Him” (in Jesus). In other words, we put Jesus at the center of our lives – doing what He did, learning what He taught, obeying what He commanded.

Receiving Jesus Christ as Lord is the first step to a lifetime of “continuing to live your lives in Him.” We have never *arrived*. We cannot perfectly become “little Christs.” However, we can keep Jesus as the goal and make efforts to “live our lives in Him.” These efforts do not “save” us, because our salvation is not earned, it is a gift of God’s grace. It is through God’s grace and the work of the Holy Spirit that we can continue growing in this lifetime.

“The Christian journey is an intentional and continual commitment to a lifelong process of growth toward wholeness in Christ. It is a process of “growing up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph 4:15), until we “attain to...mature personhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13). It is for this purpose that God is present and active in every moment of our lives.”²

This module will explore some of the elements of being formed. We offer ourselves to God, and His Spirit will form us. This is the process of “forming.”

Our human spirits are always in a state of being formed...by something. It takes intentionality to position ourselves to be formed by God.

We do not grow ourselves, nor form ourselves. But we can take actions that allow our spirits to be formed by The Spirit.

¹CS Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p 153.

²Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, p 29.

THE JOURNEY

- 1 The life of following Jesus is journey. The metaphor of a pilgrimage best describes our life as believers who seek to follow Jesus. It is a metaphor used for centuries in the Christian faith. Disciples of Christ are pilgrims on a journey. The Christian journey is an intentional and on-going process of growth into Christlikeness. We grow "...to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ." (Paul in Ephesians 4:15)
- 2 We need companions for the journey. We don't journey alone. First, we are gifted by the presence of the Holy Spirit at work within us. Second, we need the family of God, our Christian community, to encourage, support, care for, love one another.

KNOW

“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”

Philippians 2:12-13

Salvation is MUCH more than “getting into heaven.” It is about being rescued from sin and experiencing change (God working in us) so that we can enjoy the “abundant life” Jesus came to give us (John 10:10). We are rescued *from* sin, *for* abundant life.

*“**Biblical salvation** is so much more than having satisfied the minimum requirements. It is the grace-powered redemption of our thoughts and desires and will and action into cosmic meaning and divine love that leads us ever onward and upward... Salvation is a journey to God.”¹*

OTHER TERMS

Sanctification | “to make holy”

¹John Ortberg, *Eternity is Now in Session*, p 57, 68.

"We do not cooperate in the gaining of our salvation, but we do cooperate with the Spirit of God in manifesting the fruits of our salvation to the world."²

Conversion | more than just "receiving Jesus into one's heart"

Disciple/Apprentice | "a learner" (*mathetes* in Greek)

A disciple is someone who follows a teacher/rabbi around, learning how they do what they do, listening to their teachings, obeying their commands.

We see from the New Testament that for all of Jesus' disciples, it was a process. And Paul reminds us that our discipleship walk (or race in some instances!) necessarily results in our transformation. But, it cannot happen without our whole-hearted cooperation with God's Spirit (Eph 4:22,24; Col 3:9-10, Gal 3:27, Col 3:14).

"A close look at Jesus' 'great acts' of humility, faith, and compassion recorded in the Gospel narratives finds them to be moments in a life more pervasively and deeply characterized by solitude, fasting, prayer, and service. Surely, then, the lives of his followers must be just as deeply characterized by those same practices."³

²Donald Bloesch, "Justification and Atonement," *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology*, p 229.

³Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, p 28-29.

BE

SILENCE

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

Mark 1:35

“Silence is letting what there is be what it is. In that sense it has to do profoundly with God: the silence of simply being.”⁴



“The practice of silence is the radical reversal of our cultural tendencies. Silence is bringing ourselves to a point of relinquishing to God our control of our relationship with God. Silence is a reversal of the whole possessing, controlling dynamic of trying to maintain control of our own existence. Silence is the inner act of letting it go.”⁵

“For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation.”

Psalms 62:1

⁴Rowan Williams, *Where God Happens*, p 43.

⁵Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, p 158.

DO

HOLY EXPERIMENT

- 1 Spend time each day in silence. Plan ahead for the best time of each day for you to take in silence. Put it on your calendar. It could be five minutes, ten minutes, twenty minutes, or 60 minutes...however you can best work it into your daily routine. Maybe five minutes on one day, and 30 minutes the next day. Sit still in silence any place you like – your bed, a comfy chair, your balcony, or patio. Wherever you can best get time alone in silence. Sit and be still. Listen. What do you hear? Where does your mind go?
- 2 If you keep a journal, write about your experiences.

Here are some ways to incorporate silence into your day:

- Pause at the beginning of each new activity or before a meeting to remind yourself of God's presence.
- Put an alarm on your phone every three hours to just pause and take some deep breaths.
- Use travel time in the car as an opportunity to be in silence instead of putting on music or the news. Incorporate silence into a walk with the dogs.
- Taking a couple moments before laying down to sleep to pause and recall where God is working in your life.



PRACTICE

What are you going to do this week to ensure that you have some protected time of silence?