



CBF

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SIX SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR FORMING BOLD FAITH

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Forming Bold Faith
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Virtual General Assembly
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Workshop Outline with Notes
“Six Spiritual Practices for Forming Bold Faith”
 with Rev. M. Blake Kendrick

I. Defining “Bold Faith”

Bold faith proclaims and embodies the good news of Christ in ways that inspire compassion and build community. Bold faith puts the needs of the community ahead of the needs of the individual. Bold faith includes everyone, because in the heart of God, there is a dream of a world made whole. See Daniel Erlander’s thoughtful book entitled *Manna and Mercy*. Put simply: bold faith takes Jesus Christ seriously. Our deeply divided and troubled world needs our bold faith today.

II. We have a problem

A. One of the most troubling problems of the 21st century is our **elevated sense of self**. This problem is also known as narcissism, egotism, and “the false self.” (See Thomas Merton’s exploration of “the false self” in *New Seeds of Contemplation*). Understanding this problem will help us to understand elements of many of our other problems, such as greed, poverty, racism, xenophobia, tribalism, etc.

B. Everyone struggles with this problem - especially those who subscribe to or consume modern technology. Modern technology exaggerates, manipulates, and exploits our sense of self. Due to this technology, we often forget our deepest, truest identity as beloved children of God. We were created to be grace-agents within God’s beloved community. We were not created to be isolated, individualistic consumers.

C. Human Evolution gives us a clue about where our elevated sense of self comes from. Self-consciousness is a good thing. It is a gift from God. It helps human beings create, express emotions, communicate, and form civilization. But modern culture/technology manipulates, exploits, even weaponizes our self-consciousness. Over time, we can forget why we were created (for community). Instead, we invest our time, money, and resources into the myth of modern technology – which promises us control, choices, customization, and insulation/comfort.

D. The gospel of Jesus Christ puts us into tension with ourselves. Modern culture and technology would have us believe that we are the center of our own universe (me-focused). Yet the gospel is others-focused (altruistic, empathetic, outwardly oriented).

E. We are trapped within ourselves. Over time, if we don't guard our hearts, minds, and souls, we become fixated, obsessed with, enamored with the trappings of modern culture/technology. In our culture, the "self" is the core focus. But we were created for community (for the sake of others).

III. Six Spiritual Practices for Forming Bold Faith

We need a way of life that breaks this vicious cycle of self-centeredness. The following is a list of six spiritual practices that will help us break free from ourselves and our self-referenced attachments. This is not an exhaustive list, but it is a start.

Practice #1: Be Still – More than “not moving”, being still means that I quiet myself in mind, body, and spirit.

Practice #2: Marvel – Learning to see and appreciate the things that I did not create.

Practice #3: Say No – Acknowledging that I am a limited, mortal creature.

Practice #4: Say Yes – Giving myself to that which is truly worthy of my life/time.

Practice #5: Play – Learning to submit myself to someone else's rules.

Practice #6: Give It Away – Learning to see and give away my own privilege.