



PRACTICE #3 – INCARNATE LOVE OF CHRIST

BLESSING AND ENCOURAGEMENT

James recently spoke to us about the roadblock to relationship with God that pride represents. The opposite of pride is not self-deprecation, nor is it to tame other people's ego's – rather it is recognising the God given worth and value that we have received through God in Jesus choosing to become everything that it means to be human.

Often pride is masking a deeper and more sincere belief that one is actually worthless, pride is trying to claim a sense of worth from something that we are not to mask what we believe we truly are. So this practice invites us to look deeper into others and ourselves recognising when we might be trying to mask a belief that we are stupid or worthless, and that others are often believing the same lie. The practice would have us look for the worth God sees in us and others, and to bless people with the Love God has for them. Let us not forget that even Jesus received blessing and validation from the Father

*“You are my son, whom I love: with you I am well pleased”
(Mark 1:11).*

We invite you to intentionally practise encouragement and blessing two to three times over the next two weeks.



STEPS

Preparation

To prepare yourself for this practice reflect on:

1. When have people encouraged you in your life? In what ways? What was that like for you?
2. When have people withheld encouragement from you? What was that like?
3. What does this mean for how you might practice blessing and encouragement?

Practice: Blessing and Encouragement

1. Craft a blessing for someone you know. Ask God to lead you to a Scripture that can encourage her/him. Give the gift of blessing in person or in written form.
2. Think of someone who did not receive a blessing as a child, or someone who you know receives a lot of cursing. Ask them if they would be willing for you to pray a blessing over them at sometime in the future. Prayerfully ask God to lead you to a blessing for them. When you know what you want to say, write it down so the person can remember it. You may like to place your hands on the person's head and speak God's blessing over them.
3. If you have children in your life, talk to them about God's love and desire for them to use their gifts in ways that benefit this world. Encourage them about their talents and God's work in their lives.
4. Choose one day in the coming week to bless or encourage as many people as you can. Don't flatter. Ask God to give you divine insight. When Appropriate, speak your truthful blessing out loud. When you can't say your blessing out loud, speak it to God and ask God to bless them

After each time practising blessing and encouragement, reflect:
What happened; what feelings or thoughts did I experience?
Peace, hope, joy, God's presence, silence, absence or none of the above.

1st Occasion:

2nd Occasion:

3rd Occasion (optional):

At the conclusion of the fortnight, reflect:

What was it like for you to give or receive words of encouragement?

How do you recognise the difference between the voice of the accuser and the voice of the spirit of God?

What was it like to be one who carried God's blessing into the day?