

“A New Year or the Same Ole Rut?” [1. 7. 07]

[Question] Have you ever had one of these days?

- Jim Winski is a dear friend who still lives in Tucson; he’s a rocket scientist - true desert rat & is extremely thrifty.
  - He lived for many years in an old school bus that he converted into a very modest trailer.
  - Solar energy was his only source of power;
    - He didn’t have running water but instead his water was hauled in weekly and stored in a nearby tank.
    - He was a real-do-it-yourself kind of guy ☺
- One day he took his old truck in to have the oil changed & noticed how the Jiffy Lube guys had a pit in which they could stand underneath the car.
  - Jim decided he needed one of these [pits] so he could change his own oil ☺
  - So the next morning, Jim got up and went to work digging his hole.
  - He pulled out his back hole & started digging this gigantic pit.
    - He literally spent all day digging; and when it was finished it was nearly dusk.
    - Anxious to reap the fruits of his labor – he immediately got in his truck, turned on the ignition, put it in gear & promptly misjudged his wheels making his truck fall straight into the giant hole ☺
    - Desperately – he jerked the truck into reverse to no avail; his back tires were straight up in the air spinning uselessly above him.
    - Guess what Jim did the next day?
    - He spent the entire day filling in his giant hole in order to retrieve his truck ☺

I’ve found that the trouble with holes is...

If you don’t pay attention – you will fall into them every time!

Have you identified that “certain hole” that you occasionally fall into?

Maybe it is...

- A bad habit – something that adds no personal value to you or your family
- Maybe it’s an addictive tendency [chemical escape from a painful reality]
- Maybe it’s a personal weakness [that old familiar temptation you fall into]

Remember;

Our enemy the devil places holes in our path in an effort to make us fall!

← ← Listen to this poem by Portia Nelson

Question;

Are you tired of falling into the same old habits that have haunted you for years?

Are you ready to walk down another street in 2007?

If so, you are in the right place!

Jesus regularly practiced (3) disciplines that helped Him avoid unnecessary holes!

These disciplines will change your life – they are presently changing my life!

(R) Luke 6: 12 – 19 or p. 786

The movement of the text goes from Night to Morning to Afternoon

- Jesus spends the night w/His Father = in Solitude

- He forms a small group = a Community in the morning & gathers the 12 disciples around Him & they begin to do life!
- In the afternoon they go out for the sake of (the cause) to engage in Ministry to literally become the “Hands and Feet of Jesus.”

This is the Rhythm of Jesus’ life that helped Him avoid the holes that our enemy the devil placed in His path!

[Question] So, why did Jesus practice solitude?

- Think about Jesus for a moment;
  - He brings the wisdom of God to earth; He is going to bring the wisdom of God to the religious leaders [those who supposedly] had devoted their lives to knowing God; surely they will be filled w/gratitude; but instead they are jealous & angry ☹
  - They send lawyers (specialists in the law) to trip Him up!
- He forms a small group [spends 3 yrs. w/ them] surely these guys would get it; Can you imagine being in Jesus’ small group – greatest in history of world!
  - He spends every moment teaching unforgettable lessons...
    - 1st must be last - parables on Servanthood
    - importance of little children - lessons on washing feet

One day there is an argument – what’s the argument about?

Who is disciple # 1 or who is disciple # 2; concerned about the seating chart in heaven

James & John could not even bring themselves to say it – they had to have their mommy negotiate for them. ☺

He tells His small group that He has to go to the cross and the soldiers come;

Peter the rock w/out hesitation picks up the sword & aggressively slices off the ear of one of the servants of the High Priest ☹

Jesus picks up the ear & puts it back on the guy’s head - & humbly apologizes; “I’ve been w/this guy for (3) years & I still can’t do anything w/Him”

Jesus spent time alone w/God in order to remind Himself that He was not crazy;

Think about Jesus – who in His life did he not disappoint?

- Religious leaders -He threatened their status & challenged their spirituality, in the end they led the charge to kill Him out of envy.
- Zealots – Jesus refused to overthrow Rome & they turned against Him
- Crowds – melted away when His teaching got difficult
- Family – John 7: 5 says, “...even His own brothers didn’t believe in Him”
- Disciples - they could not understand why He went to the cross & when Jesus needed them most, they ran the other way!

Solitude is an incredible place of grounding;

[Phil 2. 7] Jesus freely emptied Himself of all divine privileges when he became human.

Jesus was completely dependent upon God for guidance & assistance!  
& we are as well!

- It's an incredible exercise to remember each day that we are not the One!
- It's only by God's grace that we do anything worthwhile for His kingdom!

← ← Tom Watson = Fortune 500 C.E.O. of I.B.M.

And finally in Solitude is the place where God says don't quit!

- Jesus under agony in the Garden of Gethsemane [Matt. 26: 36] filled w/anguish, prays to God the Father, "My soul is overwhelmed w/sorrow to the pt. of death."
- After a time of Solitude [being alone w/God] He was able to say, "Not my will but yours be done."
  - There have been times in my life when I wanted to give for one reason or another. But, when I am alone before the Father, I hear His voice saying,
    - "Don't give up – what you are about is of eternal significance."

Jesus arranges His life around Solitude & then He moves into Community where He forms a small group!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote in his wonderful little book Life Together;

"Only those who practice solitude can safely be in community. Only those who live in community where they are devoted to living & serving one another, can they safely practice solitude w/out becoming self-absorbed."

This needs to be part of our rhythm of life = Solitude to Community

Doing life w/one another = in a small group

This is the place where my family & I receive our love and care;  
Small Groups are the place your soul will be cared for!

(2) Quick things about being in a small group = Community

1. Community reveals the truth about Yourself

- Who I really am & just how far I have to go!
- In isolation it is e-z to convince yourself that you are compassionate & a spiritually advanced person.
- In a small group (in relationships) you find out the humbling truth about yourself!
- Monday morning small group = hard + life changing!

2. Community is never easy!

- Henri Nouwen once said, "Community is the place where the person you least want to live w/always lives." ☺
  - Think about Jesus for a moment;

- He forms a small group – what is the last name on the list (v. 16)
  - The one who would betray Him; don't forget this person is always in your community – in the eyes of others you might be that person.
  - remember some people are e-z to love; some people are hard to love
  - Our task is to be prayerfully respectful of others we disagree w/ [not malicious ] it's not always easy ☺

This is the Rhythm of Jesus' life...Solitude to Community to Ministry

God never intended for our small groups to become “holy huddles” safely removed from those outside our closely connected group.

He intended for us to move beyond our ‘comfort zones’ to demonstrate God's love to a lost world.

God expects His church to literally be the ‘Hands & Feet’ of Jesus to those around us.

I learned this summer...they can reject our doctrine but they can't deny our godly actions!

Because of your generosity last (2) weeks; (6) new homes will be built for some single moms and their children!

Not only money – actually building homes on August 17th – 19th!!  
Can you imagine being in Jesus' small group; Bible studies & worship time must have been the [best mtn. top experiences] ever!

Take that one step further; can you imagine being with the greatest servant – teacher of all times.

No one would have ever wanted to leave; but Jesus knew if the disciple's lives were to be different they must give their lives away!

Come tonight to see how the church is planning to take it's next steps of utilizing one of God's strongest blessings @ WRCC – it's godly ♥'s.

[Question]

Do you want to get out of that old familiar hole that you have fallen in the last several months or years? Follow Jesus example:

Invest in...

1. in being alone with God the Father on a regular basis
2. find a small group to begin doing life w/immediately – come out of seclusion [Connection Point = Phil Heller]
3. Determine in 2007 that you will begin utilizing your spiritual gifts in order to be the hands & feet of Jesus for the sake of others who are not as fortunate as you!

2007 has the potential to be the best year of your life; it starts for some of you by taking that 1st step out of that hole:

- Confessing your sins & making Jesus Lord of your life!
- Need a church home – we would be honored to have you!