

Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life

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Inspire Magnetically

What originally attracted you to come and see?

How were you welcomed and embraced into your first church community?

What are two ways we can be welcoming and embrace the friends, family, and neighbors you want to attract to Jesus?

Acts 2:37- 42 – ³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” ³⁸Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” ⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

I) *Magnetic Talent...*

Talent is *magnetic*. Massive crowds gather for displays of the best in sport, music, art. Some come for the spectacle, to say *I was there*. Others for inspiration. These have an inner desire to be more, to believe they too are talented. They are eager to know how. It is for this Jesus has called together His Thriving Church.

♦ **That’s different**: We identify talent by contrast. It is abnormal, extraordinary, different. Talent stands apart from average. Its *magnetism* originates in its uniqueness and is fulfilled in its rightness. Some quality is perceived as more perfect than the norm. When the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, it drew a crowd. Then, Peter

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displayed his talent for publicly declaring Jesus's message. In few words he persuaded many that Jesus was the Messiah who fulfills all the audience sought. He concludes with stark contrast, saying "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified (Acts 2:36)." A stunning chasm of difference between usual preaching and Peter's that seemed impossible to cross. Those wanting a spectacle were satisfied. Not those inspired to be more, *magnetized* to the rightness of the message.

♦ **I want to be like Mike**: Those whose inner desire is to unlock their own talent and perfect it are unsatisfied having observed the performance. They are inspired to follow. These want the backstage pass, the interview clips, the behind the scenes look at how the performer develops their craft. Not offended nor intimidated by the contrast, they seek the way across. Displaying curiosity, humility, and courage, "when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, 'Brothers, what should we do (v37)?" This is the response we hope for from "everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him (v39)." Jesus calls His Thriving Church to inspire this response and be prepared to answer it.

II) Follow Me...

Many talented people are out to build their brand. They are content to inspire those eager for spectacle. Their needs are met by being idolized, enriched, glorified by those who show up to see singular talent. That is not what Jesus wants for His Thriving Church. He expects us to hope for more in those we inspire. He instructs us to "Go therefore and make disciples (Mt 28:19)." Christian *magnetism* means welcoming others to be like us.

♦ **It's not too late**: We are familiar with stories of naysayers motivating the talented. Usually, the naysayers are left behind, only used for motivation. The satisfaction from this is selfish, revealing a distorted human sense of justice that punishes those who are wrong. That's not the Way of Jesus. Peter, recognizing he too was once wrong, invites these who he accuses of crucifying Jesus to join him, saying, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38)." It is tempting to misinterpret the meaning of *repent*. Peter is not demanding his audience beg forgiveness – he is inviting them to change their mind. In so doing, he invites them to share in his source of talent.

♦ **Give it away**: Most benefits of talent are scarce. There are only so many fans, awards, spots in prestigious museums to go around. Giving away the source of talent means sharing – or losing – these benefits. God's economy is different. His resources are abundant. Jesus wants us to use His gifts of talent for others and offer them the very source. Once others repent and believe, they "will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away (v39)." We the Thriving Church are *magnetic* as we invite others to "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation (v40)," by becoming one of us and sharing God's abundant life.

III) Ready For Company...

Those eager to perfect their talent and inhabit life's purpose dream of learning from those who go before. Most of those dreams are limited, wanting a brief glimpse behind the curtain. It is too audacious to hope for more. Stories of true talent befriending the next generation tugs at our hearts because they are rare. Not in God's kingdom. He intends us to inspire then embrace. He wants us eager and ready for company.

♦ **Got the T-shirt**: The talented offer a sense of inclusion through merchandise. Those wanting to associate with a form of talent wear the shirt. This form of inclusion is limited in supply. What happens when more fans gather than expected? After Peter spoke, "those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added (v41)." I wonder how many the apostles expected, if any? We read nothing of them turning any away, seemingly prepared to do whatever necessary to baptize and welcome all who accepted the invitation to follow Jesus.

♦ **Longer tables**: A curious thing happens to some talent as it is recognized by the masses. The original fans lose interest, some claiming that the talent has diminished, selling out by trading original ideas for common ones. The culture changes as the early insiders become the minority. These new believers "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (v42)." Prior to Pentecost, the gathering believers "numbered about one hundred twenty persons (1:15)." Adding "about three thousand (2:41)" was a dramatic change! Many more homes, kitchens, tables must have been used to welcome and bring everyone together. We read this was only the beginning of the early church's *magnetic* attraction. Are we ready to inspire such powerfully *magnetic* revival?