

Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life

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The Peak

What attracts you to the ways of God?

How has this attractiveness inspired you to move?

What fears or perceived losses are holding you back from the total trust needed to dwell beneath The Peak?

Micah 4:1-5 – ¹In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, ²and many nations shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ³He shall judge between many peoples and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; ⁴but they shall sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. ⁵For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

I) Attracted...

Consider something to which you are deeply attracted. How did you first discover it? When you did, did it replace something else in your heart? Change how you felt about what you already knew of the world? In His infinite wisdom and love, God pursues His desire to heal through attraction, not coercion. And He uses all His might to draw our attention for this purpose.

◆ **Wow, look at that:** We tend to be drawn to mountains, but there is an intensity to the tallest peaks. Something intrinsic within yearns for perfection. Mountains are perfected in their grandeur, their scale, their height. “In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains (Micah 4:1).” God uses this ideal to attract our attention toward His perfection. We discover the majesty of His ways as we wander through various ways of living until, on the edge of the horizon, we see The Peak.

◆ **Beware mirages:** We are made to be attracted. We move through the world searching for objects that attract us. Some of us want to be attracted so badly we do things to delude ourselves into attraction. Suddenly, previously unattractive objects and ideas seem great. Until the delusions dissipate and we see reality for what it is. “The mountain of the Lord’s house...shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it... (v1).” God’s mountain has always been the pinnacle—our distorted perspective is corrected, our eyes see clearly for the first time, and we see the attractive perfection of God’s ways compared to the weak imitations of the hills of the world.

II) Inspired...

There is a form of attraction that pleasantly flits past us never to be considered again. A lovely sunrise on the odd day we rise early. There is also the deep attraction that inspires us to act differently. The sunrise so stunning we set our alarm clock early in hopes of seeing another tomorrow. The Peak more than attracts, it inspires.

◆ **Send me a postcard:** Mountains are for many people more than attractive. Much time and money is invested chasing mountains. The Rockies, Alps, Himalayas, they inspire us to go see them. “Many nations shall come and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob (v2).” The Peak is no ordinary mountain. While it attracts us, something present on it is what inspires.

◆ **Peak baggers:** Sadly, many are inspired to venture out of lustful, greedy inspiration. The prideful need to conquer an ever-higher peak. God’s mountain is not one more hill to be conquered. It is profoundly different, only seen through clear eyes, revealing a source of Power and Truth unequalled in the world. We speak our desire “that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths (v2).” Attracted by the magnificence of Jesus’s way of life, we are inspired to learn it. We go because we know “out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord is from Jerusalem (v2).” We are inspired from passive attraction to active pursuit.

III) Changed...

Common inspiration provokes a temporary trip—a vacation. Inspiration to go see the mountain. Exceptional inspiration changes the course of lives. This is God’s purpose for The Peak, to inspire us to accept His invitation to dwell beneath The Peak forever and ever. Don’t worry, Jesus already paid the cost for this slice of heaven.

◆ **Vacation life:** Most live differently on vacation. We briefly live out the ideals of the object to which we are drawn. Sometimes, we try to bring some aspect of vacation life home with us. God’s ways cannot partially come home with us. It is impossible to enjoy any part of peace, justice, and mercy while constantly defending and warring with each other. Those who want any part of Jesus accept that “He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate (v3),” between us. Every aspect of life at The Peak requires total trust and dependence upon God.

◆ **Permanent vacation:** Those ways of vacation cannot fit into already full lives. Often, they fade away quickly. Rising early for sunrises, new exercise routines, reading more, fads that we leave behind for normal life. They just don’t fit. The ways of peace, justice, and mercy take time and effort. They require partnering with God to be productive and receive His provision. We must “beat swords into plowshares (v3),” trading tools of destruction into those of production. Tools we use to tend His provision, so that each of us “sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees (v4).” Not only do we trust God to provide materially, we expect His protection as “no one shall make them afraid (v4).” This does not say none exist who are frightening—this is ultimate trust in God, “for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken (v4).”

◆ **Live like a local:** The depth of change required to adopt Jesus’s ways includes a total reorientation of our relationship to others. We mandated a way of life in those around us so they would not threaten our ways. As judges and rulers, we required instruments of destruction to legitimize the threat of punishment. Yet God declares that “all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god (v5).” He does not want nor permit us to destroy the ungodly. Instead, He instructs us to walk beside them “in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever (v5).” Our walk in His name is eternally sustainable, lasting forever and ever, and we will outlast other ways. As they weary, they will be attracted to our durable hopeful ways. Our ways bring them to the point they too see The Peak, beginning the cycle of attraction, inspiration, and change again.