



How to Love
Those Who Spit
on You

Jesus has shown us what life in the Kingdom of God is like (e.g. Luke 6:20f) but how can we actually live like that?

Loving people who spit on us is too hard for us. Instead of just *trying* harder, we can *train* as an apprentice of Jesus in everyday life. This is really just one example of living a distinctively different life because you are following Jesus.

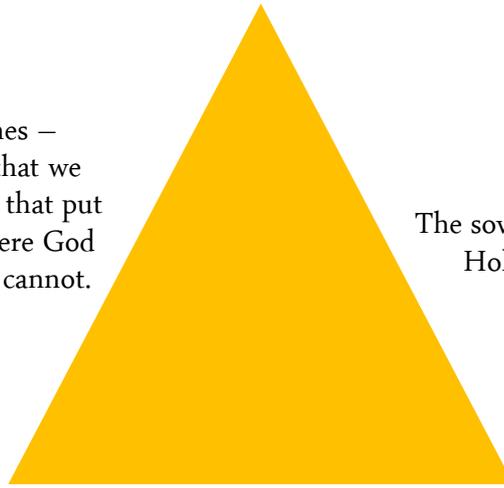
Jesus is the Way.

His Spirit is the means.

His example is our pattern and inspiration.

The Golden Triangle of Spiritual Formation

Spiritual disciplines –
Training exercises that we
can choose to do that put
us in a place where God
can do what we cannot.



The sovereign work of God's
Holy Spirit in our lives

Our reflective work on the events of life
– learning what God has to show us

1. Consider the Goal – Jesus call to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. (Lk 6:27) Be inspired by Jesus example in Luke 18:32 and Mark 14:65; 15:19.
2. Face up to where we fall short of this goal. Be specific in prayer with God.

Repentance is not an emotion. It is not feeling sorry for your sins. It is a decision. It is deciding that you have been wrong in supposing that you could manage your own life and be your own god; it is deciding that you were wrong in thinking you had, or could get the strength, education and training to make it on your own; it is deciding that you have been told a pack of lies about yourself and your neighbors and your world. And it is deciding that God in Jesus Christ is telling you the truth. Repentance is a realization that what God wants from you and what you want from God are not going to be achieved by doing the same old things, thinking the same old thoughts. Repentance is a decision to follow Jesus Christ and become his pilgrim in the path of peace. Repentance is the most practical of all words and the most practical of all acts. It is a feet-on-the-ground kind of word. [from Eugene Peterson's "A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society" pp.25-26]

3. Ask God to help you see what is going on inside you. (You might need help from a trusted friend or advisor). Why do you find it hard to love those who spit on you? Is it because you hate it when people don't like you? Are you are scared what they might do to you? Do you feel criticized when people don't like you?

4. Choose or develop a spiritual discipline (a spiritual training exercise) to address the issue you face. (This is something you can do that will put you in a place where they Holy Spirit can do what you cannot).
 - a. If you find yourself answering back and then regretting it, try experimenting with the spiritual discipline of silence.
 - b. If you find yourself doubting your own self-worth as someone created in the image of God, then meditate on Psalm 139, or the love of Jesus expressed to the woman in John 8:1-11. This is about being secure in Christ.
 - c. On the other hand, if you find yourself being arrogant or stubborn, you may need to seek God for humility. The spiritual discipline of confession could help you with this.
 - d. If you are fearful for your safety, memorize some verses that reassure you that God is on your side. E.g. Ps 27.
 - e. If you find yourself looking for the approval of others for your feelings well-being, then spend some time alone with God trusting in his approval and love.
 - f. If you find yourself isolated and feeling alone when someone is spitting on you, then spend some time with trusted friends who can support you.
 - g. If you find yourself growing in anger or frustration toward the person, try praying for God's blessing in their lives.

Like training for a marathon, these exercises all take time to bring results.

5. Can you forgive the person? (Remember – forgiveness doesn't mean they don't need to face justice).
6. If it is safe to do so, and you believe there is opportunity for reconciliation, consider how you could meet with the person to seek reconciliation.

Some questions to think about and discuss:

- **What do we do about relationships that don't improve? What did Jesus do in that situation?**
- **Are you tempted to focus on the "sovereign work of the Spirit" side of the triangle, and neglect the others? Why might that be?**