





Belonging to the Formational Community

SUBSTANCE

Isaiah 61:3

...provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called **oaks of righteousness**, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

2 Peter 1:3

"his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness..."

Pursuits through GRACIOUS STRIVING:

4 marks/pursuits:

1. Self-sacrificial love
2. The mind of Christ
3. Virtuous freedom
4. In step with the Spirit

4 practices/mindsets:

1. Welcoming the ordinary
2. Escaping Diversion
3. Embracing Discipline
4. Belonging to the
formational community

Central Point: Jesus said that you can't serve two masters.

Opposite of godliness is worldliness.

Not just that he won't accept it
but that it isn't possible.

It just produces torn-hearted, choking, anxious misery.

Matthew 6:19-24

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Mammon...



Flee

('discernment')

Matthew 6:31-34

...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.



Seek

This is all GOOD.

You have HEARD ALL THIS BEFORE! (many of us)

Why does worldliness seem to have such a hold on us and Godliness seems so weak to change us?

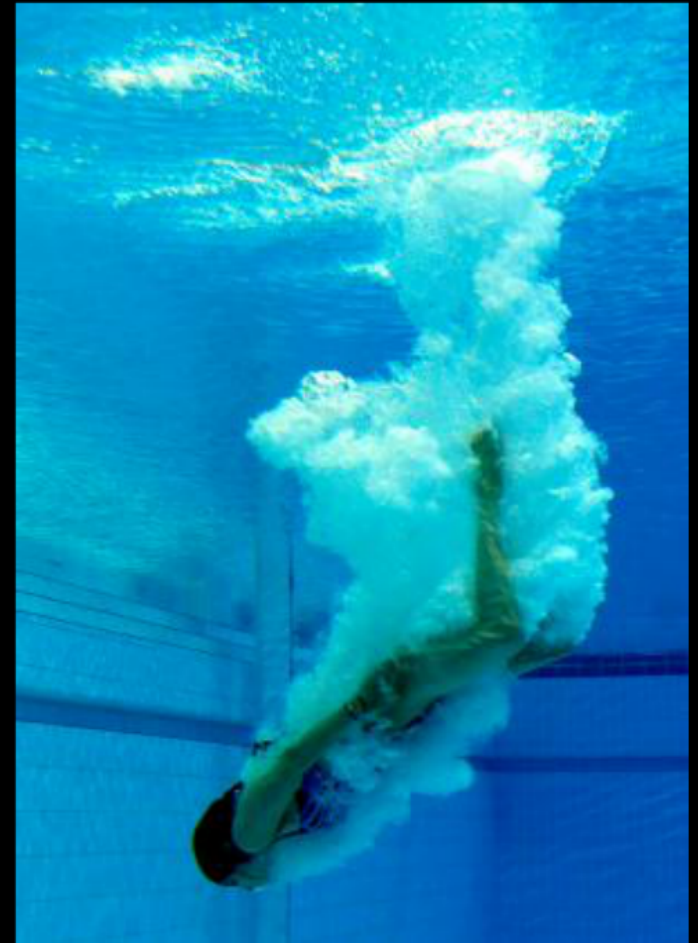
Answer: Immersion and Absorption

God forges substance
through an environment of

immersion,
absorption,
imitation and
experience



called the local church.

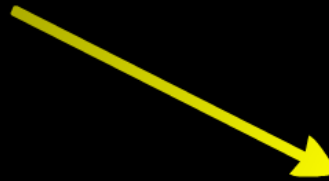


(or: 'We absorb substance through the church.'

"The concrete local church...is the place where the Gospel can not only be heard, but also **seen**, **experienced**, and **absorbed** *in a comprehensive community in which Christ is Lord*. Nothing else in Christian faith or experience can do this."

– Substance, pg 249.





Immersed



Imitate



Absorb

This is why there is so much fury over the family, schools, universities and media technology:

they constitute immersions, and therefore control the absorption and formation of millions of people.

1. The church is Jesus' instrument of spiritual immersion and absorption

Mark 3:14

Matthew 28:18-21

Acts 2:41-3:1

Colossians 3:12-14



Culture (message)

Fellowship
(quality of
community)



Institution
(structure)

Purpose (the work)

The health of the real spiritual family is the most important thing there is.

Are you immersed in it?

...so you can absorb the
substance we say we seek.

2. Immersion takes intimacy,
not just time and proximity.

"Intimus" - Lat. "inmost"

Our fellowship
is

comprehensive

not

continual

Comprehensive set of pursuits:

10 pursuits of Substance

Comprehensive set of practices:

we sing, eat, pray, encourage, correct, exhort,
baptize, eat the Lord's supper, watch each other,
enjoy meaningful fellowship, support each other in
trouble, confront each other, discipline each other-
a comprehensive set of relationships in a
community of immersion.

You have to give yourself to the
comprehensiveness of God's
immersive institutions

Will you strive graciously, in Christ,
to make the church the immersive
community he took hold of us for?

