



# Life of the Beloved Intensive

## CLA Outcomes Conference 2022

### Margaret Fitzwater and Mark Looyenga

#### Train – Develop – Care: The Navigators

**The way of life Jesus modeled (Isaiah 30:21) is rooted and born from His own belovedness. His Spirit fruitfully overflows through us into the safety and freedom of community, where all can belong and grow as beloved.**

### **Session 1: Embrace Belovedness**

**Belovedness is God's way of life. It begins and grows through intimacy with Him alone.**

#### **1) "Mind the G.A.P."**

- We are living in a historical and a spiritual Gap between the Cross/Resurrection and the Consummation
- The G.A.P. is described in Scripture by both Jesus (John 16:33) and Paul (Romans 8:22-25)
  - Grief
  - Anxiety
  - Powerlessness
- The G.A.P. holds both brutal desolations and beautiful consolations

#### **2) Jesus' Way of Life**

- Jesus' journey through life that He modeled for us is very different from the world's: His way is rooted in His own belovedness. (Mark 1:11, Isaiah 30:21; John 10:10)
- Being loved and loving Him and others was His central message (I John 4:7-12)
- Jesus' way focuses less on attaining success and much more on life lived in relational intimacy with the One through whom and for whom we were made. (Colossians 1:16)
  - We were made for relational intimacy (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18)
  - We were made in God's image (John 1:1; Psalm 8:4-6)
  - Psychological research supports our innate need for relational intimacy

### **Session 2: Abide in Belovedness**

**Belovedness leads to healthy, diverse community.**

#### **1) Our story impacts our capacity to listen empathetically and to foster belonging with others**

- Two perspectives on the same story
- We listen to people's story from our wounds within the G.A.P.
- God's redemptive story transformation

For Reflection:

- What is your honest tendency when someone wants to share a problem with you?

- I want to fix it.
  - I want to look at the clock to see how long this is taking.
  - I want to share my own struggle.
  - I want to tell the person to get over it and move on.
  - I want to \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you ever had someone really listen to **you** as well as to what you were saying? Based on your answer, what was that like for you?
  - What's one example of how you tell your story differently today because of God's redemptive work?

2) **The way Jesus lived His life models how to live through and for Jesus in life and ministry**

- Nouwen's understanding of Jesus' way of life in belovedness Circles (Luke 6:12-19).
- Relational discovery and expression of belovedness in each circle
- The vitality of engaging all three circles in the G.A.P.

3) **Healthy rhythms with boundaries and limits are key to living daily out of our belovedness.**

- Sabbath (Exodus 19:20-21, 20:8-11; Isaiah 30:15)
  - Eugene Peterson – “If you don't take a Sabbath, something is wrong. You're doing too much, you're being too much in charge. You've got to quite, one day a week, and just watch what God is doing when you're not doing anything.”
  - Rest, Reflection and Renewal
- Rule of Life (Ephesians 5 :15-16): framework for healthy rhythms – Prayer, Rest, Relationships, Work
- Fourfold life rhythms – Divert Daily, Withdraw Weekly, Meditate Monthly, Abandon Annually
- Ideal Week tool – provides guidelines and filters for the week

### **Session 3: Pursue This Kingdom Way of Life**

**It is attractive, and it transforms others and the culture around us.**

1) **In the Kingdom of God, leaders are lovers and lovers are listeners**

- Paul Harvey's “The Rest of the Story”
- “A New Commandment” (John 13:34)
- Agape love in the G.A.P. takes fight (1 John 3:16)
  - What's new about love?
    - Loving in the way of the Spirit (Romans 7:6)
    - Loving with Perspective
    - The 3 L's of Loving through and for Jesus

## 2) We love because God first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

- Ambassadors of belovedness (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)
- My Italian grandmother's meatballs
- Jesus' image of abiding in the Vine (John 15)
- Shepherd or hired hand? (John 10:10-13)

## 3) The Kingdom is winsome and transformational as we intentionally serve others from our overflow of God's love.

- Hospitality: the new apologetic?  
"Hospitality makes anxious disciples into powerful witnesses, makes suspicious owners into generous givers, and makes closed-minded sectarians into interested recipients of new ideas and insights."  
(Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*, p. 95)
- Hospitality as a source of healing requires concentration and community
  - Leviticus 19:34 – deep roots of hospitality
  - Disease of the West. Loneliness and spirituality
  - Romans 12:10-13, 3 John 5, 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8
- How-tos of Hospitality
  - Caring and Praying
  - Welcoming – face, space, place and grace (The 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversations – see resources)
  - Noticing – training ourselves to “see” (Matthew 9:36-38)
  - Conversations – conduits for Good News
  - Listening (James 2:19) – Cultivate Curiosity
  - Asking engaging questions – be intentional and thoughtful
- Barriers to Hospitality – Things that keep us from experiencing the joy of a greater authenticity
  - “Not enough time” – pace of life – let's change to a Jesus kind of pace
  - “Our home is a refuge just for us” – and let us make it a refuge for others

Living from our own belovedness as the core of our identity and belonging overflows into others' belonging. “Belonging will change the trajectory of your story and help you join the stories around you with wisdom and joy.” (Dan Allender) The Holy Spirit can then use us to change the trajectory of their lives, too!

### References/Recommended Resources

*Belonging: Finding the Way Back to One Another.* Sharon A. Hersh. NavPress, 2020

“Brené Brown on Empathy vs Sympathy.” <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZBTYViDPIQ>>

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (2017) and *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (2015). Pete Scazzero. Zondervan.

*Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World.* Henri J.M. Nouwen. Crossroad, 2002.

“Life of the Beloved.” Henri Nouwen. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWmeQ9cKRVE>>

*The 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversations: Walking alongside People Who Believe Differently.* Mary Schaller and John Crilly. Tyndale, 2016.

“The power of empathy: Helen Riess at TEDxMiddlebury.” <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baHrcC8B4WM>>

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