



Renovaré Institute

FOR CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Course IV April Monthly Practice: Swimming in the Social Justice Stream¹

Theme/Invitation: Becoming Like Jesus in the Social Justice Stream

Purpose:

As you prepare to read about the Social Justice Stream, we want to invite you to wade even deeper into those waters yourself.

Exercise:

Here are some ideas for swimming in the Social Justice Stream. Try to experiment with a few of them over the month.

The Compassionate Life is committed to compassion and justice for all people. Through this stream, God develops within us the compassion to love our neighbor freely, and develops within our world a place where justice and righteousness prevail.

Thoughts:

Meditate on James 1:27 this month. *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.* Ask God how you can practice a pure and undefiled religion this month.

Emotions:

Ask yourself, *What breaks my heart that breaks the heart of God?* Consider passages of Scripture that talk about what breaks God's heart. Then consider, *What injustices catch my attention and break my heart?*

Will:

Spend a day making a conscious, moment-by-moment effort to treat everyone you meet as if that person were Jesus. Notice how this orientation changes the interactions.

Bodily Behavior and Social Interactions:

1. Visit and perhaps volunteer with an organization that helps those who are poor, oppressed, lonely or overlooked (e.g. programs for abused children, a free medical clinic, a hospice, Meals on Wheels). Or take an hour to buy a meal for someone standing outside a convenience store asking for money. Eat with that person and listen to his or her life story. Then, do not think to yourself: "There but for the grace of God go I." Instead, meditate on the fact that *in Christ*, "There I am, too; and there also is Christ."
2. In his chapter on simplicity in *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster encourages readers to avoid spending money on material possessions which come from the sweat and labor of people who were oppressed. As a disciple of Christ, avoid buying items produced by people who are being exploited, or buy an item that includes expenditure to provide a living wage (e.g. fair trade coffee or chocolate; see sites like [The Good Shopping Guide](#).) As you do this, pray for the

¹ Some of these exercises are taken from the Leader's Guide for Streams of Living Water DVD curriculum, written by Gary Moon.



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world God so loves.

3. Throughout the month, experiment with small deeds of love, especially if they will lift someone else's burden. Do them as secretly as possible so that no one knows (or at least not until later). Or, do them but don't wait for or expect a thank you. For example, you might make the bed of someone in your family or household. Celebrate with God about it.
- Adapted from Gary Moon & Jan Johnson

Bonus:

You may find it helpful to engage once more in a process of *visio divina* (divine seeing) as you reflect on the Social Justice stream. Please visit the [April Visio Divina – Imaginative Exercise](#) for a creative reflection.