

providing a future with hope

Challenger

The Challenger
is a publication
of Life Challenge of
Southeastern Michigan

enlightening empowering equipping

January 2006

Life in the Sweet Spot: Seeing the SON in All Things

By Jeff Bonzelaar, Executive Director

As I was driving to work the other morning, God greeted me with the terrific orange glow of the sun. I was mesmerized. After only a few seconds of staring at this bright ball, I had to put down my vizier and look away. But everywhere I turned, little white dots appeared. I could not escape the sun even with my eyes closed. Its image was burned into my mind.

This is how it is with a God-centered vision of life. Everywhere we turn, everywhere we look, we see traces of Him, reflections of His glory. We start seeing things as they truly are—in relation to Him. “For from him and through him and to him are all things” (Rom.11:36). Such is how life is meant to be lived.

“He saw God and aspects of His kingdom in birds, lilies, bread, seed, a net, a tree. He lived in the ‘sweet spot.’”

even the smallest things could make his spirit soar upwards to God, who even in the smallest things is the Greatest. At the sight of a little plant, a leaf, a flower or a fruit, an insignificant worm or a tiny animal, Ignatius could soar free above the heaven and reach through into things which lie beyond the senses.”

Ignatius was alive. Shining at the center of the solar system of his soul was the Son of God’s glory. As such, he could not look upon the simplest, most basic of things without seeing something of God.

How much more true was this of Jesus. He saw God and aspects of His kingdom in birds, lilies, bread, seed, a net, a tree. He lived in the “sweet spot”—that place

Students of Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) said this of their teacher: “We often saw how

of perfect contact. Everywhere He looked, marks of Magnificence shown. It's no wonder He was "full of joy" (Lk. 10:21).

You can live in that place too. The gospel is about not only saving you from badness but from *blindness*. Jesus came to free those in darkness to see a great light (Mt. 4:16). When you receive Him as the Light, your world becomes sweetened beyond measure.

While the veil has been lifted, we still see as in a mirror dimly (2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 13:12). But we look forward to the day when in heaven, we will have eyes to see everything in their connection to God. Author and pastor John Piper puts it like this, "Heaven is a world in which all created things have become mirrors, and all of them are tilted to a forty-five degree angle. Everywhere we look—in every creature—we see the reflection of God."

Until then, train yourself to look, to notice, to see the image of the invisible God spread throughout creation—in a basketball game, in a cup of coffee, in a walk through your neighborhood, as you wash your kitchen floor. And most importantly, pray that the Holy Spirit open your eyes to see the Son in all things.

*"We have seen more than we let on,
even to ourselves.
Through some moment of beauty or pain,
some subtle turning of our lives,*

*we catch glimmers at least of what the
saints are blinded by;
only then, unlike the saints,
we go on as though nothing has
happened. To go on as though
something has happened,
even though we are not sure what it
was or just where we are supposed to
go with it, is to enter the dimension of
life that religion is a word for."
(Frederick Buechner)*

Testimony

Joseph Boyer

"I grew up in Trenton, Michigan. My dad was an engineer, and my mom was a stay at home mom until I was ten years old. My parents never showed much love to each other. They were always fighting, and I remember being frightened when I heard them.

I was always in church as a child. I was taught the fundamentals of the Christian faith. I asked Jesus into my heart but never fully understood what that meant.

When I was twelve years old my mom and dad got divorced. I remember crying and praying to Jesus to heal my parents' marriage. My dad told me everything would be okay and to not worry. He said he'd be there for me, and I trusted him. But when the divorce was final, I saw my dad only a handful of times over the next ten years.

Our family broke apart. My sister and I moved in with my mom and her boyfriend. My brother went to live with my dad for a short time but ended up moving back with us after a year. My other sister moved in with my grandma.

It didn't take long before my mom and her boyfriend started fighting. I was glad when we moved out. I began skipping school and smoking marijuana. I did what I felt like doing. I hated the world and everything in it. I started experimenting with other drugs such as LSD, ecstasy, and cocaine. By the time I was eighteen I had done just about everything. I was a wreck.

I kept telling myself all I needed was the right girl, the right job, the right car, the right something. I quit believing in God and fell into a deep depression. I had thoughts of suicide. I stole my mom's medication with the intention of taking my life. As I swallowed one pill after another, something stopped me. After calling a friend, I cried out to God. I told Him that if He wanted me to live right, He'd have to show me and guide me because I couldn't do it alone. He heard my prayer and the next day my uncle called me and told me about Life Challenge.

I came for the interview in November 2004 and entered the program on Dec-

ember 22, 2004. I had a rough time at first. Satan did all he could to get me to leave. I almost had myself convinced that I didn't belong here. I had this hate built up in me over the years and wanted to run away from my problems. But through God's grace and the love from the staff and other students, I endured.

About one month later I gave my life over to Jesus. I suddenly felt like all my problems were being handled all at once. At first I didn't know what was going on, but by reading the Bible I soon learned that Jesus took the weight of my sins through his death and resurrection.

The void in my life has been filled. For so many years I was looking for something but didn't know it was God. I love Jesus now. I want to follow Him and please Him all of my days. My confidence is in Christ alone.”

P.S. Joe graduated December 23, 2005. He is making plans to join the army.



Our mission at Life Challenge is to help men and women live in the 'sweet spot'—to help them see the Son in all things. Continue to keep our ministry in your prayers, and thank you for all your support.

Together for souls,

Jeff