



## Weekly Newsletter: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022

### Reflection: Hymn Workouts: 100 Exercises to Set Your Heart Ablaze

*This is an excerpt from Joe's New Book, find out more at [www.hymnworkouts.com](http://www.hymnworkouts.com)*

Let's start with a problem: A lot of Christians hit a low ceiling of spiritual growth. Most of us have felt this frustration. For a while, especially at the start of our Christian journey, we feel as if each day God is unlocking a new chest in the treasuries of His grace. Character is being transformed. The horizons of knowledge are expanding. The wellsprings of the heart are like irrepressible geysers that spontaneously shoot forth praise and gratitude.

Yet, over time, the pace of growth begins to slacken – first from a sprint to a gallop, then to a canter, then to a lumbering walk, and finally to a standstill. We keep reading our Bibles, but we begin to feel as if our understanding of them is no better than it was a year – or even a decade – before. The coals of devotion that once burned so brightly begin to look more like a pile of ashes than a pile of embers. Spiritual disciplines grow stale. Routines harden into ruts. Eventually, the Christian life starts to feel a little bit like the process of aging. Our deepest ambition is no longer to continue the process of maturing, but to just hang on as long as we can to whatever vitality lingers in our deteriorating bones.

It's easy to become resigned to this condition. We look around and see that other Christians have the same struggles that we do. Thus, we conclude that treading water is the basic rhythm of the Christian life. We look to Numbers, not to Joshua, to frame our spiritual expectations. There is no conquest to be had in this life. There is no forward progress. Life has become just one big waiting room in which the believer is told to sit patiently until God finally calls our name and takes us home.

Now, in many respects, camping in the wilderness is a legitimate description of the Christian life. Each Christian is not called to be a Hercules, an exceptional hero who exhausts his life completing one heroic feat after another. Elizabeth Elliot, the missionary and author, once commented in an interview, that even among the frontier missionaries in the Amazon, most of life is filled – not with sensational acts of witness and mercy – but with dishes washed, floors swept, and dinners made.

And yet, admitting this, we need to be careful not to be *too* accepting of stagnating faith. There is an ever-present danger of using spiritual causes to explain natural phenomena. There are seasons when a quiet time feels arid due to a drought of joy that God mysteriously permits. Yet, other times, the problem is something far more mundane. A basic fact of human nature is that all of us hate discomfort. If faced with two options, one to go uphill and to try something new and another to glide downhill along a familiar path, most of us will choose the gentle downward slope whenever possible.

We need to recognize that this 'bias toward ease' is a spiritual liability. It's not hard to fall into a cycle in which a 'quiet time' is nothing more than a moment to snuggle up with God under a blanket with a mug of coffee in hand. While there is nothing wrong with savouring the presence of God in a relaxed position, it should be pointed out that spiritual disciplines share a lot in common with physical exercise. In the world of fitness, the comfortable routine is rarely – if ever – the one that yields significant results. If a person is comfortable with jogging a mile and decides to go out and run a mile at the same casual pace every day, he may maintain the status quo, but he will never increase his stamina or improve his strength. Something similar is often true spiritually. If each morning a Christian wakes up and reads one chapter of Proverbs and then spends a few distracted minutes in prayer, he should expect the output of this routine to reflect the input. We all need to be honest enough to admit that a lot of what passes for a 'devotion' is more along the lines of a survival ration than a hearty diet for spiritual growth.

Does any of this sound familiar? If so, keep reading. This is a book for people whose spiritual routines are every bit as novel and exciting as doing laps on a hamster wheel.

*You can pre-order a copy of Joe's book (released on 23 September) [here](#) or we'll have copies available in the church next month.*

## **Act Like Men, Hope Church Bingham – this Wednesday**

Joe is speaking at a city wide event 'Act Like Men' this Wednesday (24<sup>th</sup> August) from 7pm until 8.45pm. All men in the church family are invited to attend and the aim of the conference is to 'encourage each other to live for King Jesus in Edinburgh and beyond.'

There will be music from 20schemes Music and a book stall run by the Faith Mission.



## **Edinburgh Korean Grace Church – Picnic in the Park – this Sunday**

It is great to have the Korean Church using our building on Sunday afternoons. This Sunday, the Korean Church are going to join us for our morning service and we are hoping (weather permitting!) to have a picnic in the park together afterwards. Please come along with your picnic and tea and coffee will be provided.

## **Welcome to Holyrood!**

It's wonderful to see new faces at church on Sunday mornings. On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September, Joe will be holding a short session after the morning service in the hall downstairs to welcome any newcomers and provide them with information about the church. Please share this information with anyone you know who has recently started attending.

## Montgomery Street Park



The Park Committee have organised for a mural to be painted on the substation in the park by artists from Colony of Artists and Vue, Ltd. This will take place on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

The Committee have asked if the church would be able to serve tea and coffee to the artists and any passers-by. Please speak to Liz if you would be able to help with this.

## Men's Discipleship this Autumn

Save the date! Joe is running a Men's Discipleship Group for eight weeks from Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September. Meet at 10.30am in the church and coffee will be provided. Joe will be using hymns as the basis of the discussion.

## Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September – Jon Gemmell preaching

Joe is speaking at a men's weekend from Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> until Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September in Pitlochry. We're very grateful to Jon Gemmell for preaching on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> when Joe's away. There will be no communion on 4<sup>th</sup> September and our next communion service will be on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

## Church Barbecue – Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September

Our annual church barbecue will be on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September at the Newlands Centre in Romanno Bridge, Peeblesshire, EH46 7BZ. We need to get an idea of numbers for catering and a google form will be emailed out later this week so keep an eye on your inbox...

## Liz's Admin Hours

Liz will be doing her admin hours for the church four mornings a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday). She plans to be in the church building on Monday and Thursday mornings during term time. Feel free to email or text her outside of these times and she'll reply the following day or two.

## Return to the Hiding Place – 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> August

Searchlight Theatre Company have produced 'a wonderful new reimagining of Corrie Ten Boom's biographical tale of forgiveness and reconciliation in the shadows of WW2.' It's part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and is on at Palmerston Place Church from Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> until Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August. For more information and to book, click [here](#).

## Urgent Accommodation Request

Vivi, a Chinese student, who has attended the church is looking for accommodation urgently in Edinburgh for nine months. Please contact Alison Nelson or Liz Scott if you can help with this.

## Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group at 10am
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting on Zoom at 7pm
- Sunday:
  - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching. Please contact Liz by 12 noon on Thursday if you would like a socially distant seat.
  - Picnic in the Park with Edinburgh Korean Grace Church
  - Bible Class joint event with Grace Church Leith, 5pm at Portobello beach



[www.holyroodevangelical.org](http://www.holyroodevangelical.org)

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