Hi,

Today’s updates:

* My Sunday class will be week six of the series, *The New Testament in Seven Sentences*. As usual, it will be on [my own Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/scottengle).
* My 3pm Monday class on Matthew and my noon Tuesday class on Genesis will meet next week, both on my Facebook page.
* The links to my on-line classes, the video recordings of the classes, the class audio podcasts, and the archive of these daily emails can all be found at [www.scottengle.org](http://scottengle.org/scotts-weekly-classes/). All the postings are up-to-date.
* The Weekly Bible Study is attached. **Note -- this week’s study was written by Lauren Sandstedt, one of our summer interns from Perkins Seminary.**

We’ve considered a servant’s heart, hands, and head; today, we turn to a servant leader’s habits.

***Matthew 26:36-41 (NRSV)***

**Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**

***Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11 (NRSV)***

**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.**

**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.**

**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.**

**God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.**

**“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”**

**The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.**

Gethsemane. The place of testing and temptation and submission. Jesus came there to pray on the eve of his crucifixion. He prayed for strength and even for another way forward, a way to avoid the horror that he knew lay just ahead. Avoiding the cross would be easy. Escape out the back of the garden, down the backside of the Mount of Olives, and into the Judean wilderness, where no one was found unless they wanted to be found. But Jesus prayed in the Garden and he stayed. He found the strength to stay faithful to the work that God had given him. He found the discipline to resist temptation, to turn aside from the easy way out.

We will all face Gethsemanes of one sort or another in our lives. Some big, some small. The places and times of testing and crisis. The question is how we’ll respond. Will it be in faith or in panic? In confidence or in terror? Even more to the point, will we stand or will we run? How can we prepare ourselves for the difficult times that await us, so that we can remain faithful and hopeful, knowing . . . knowing! . . . that, as the psalmist wrote, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (psalm 46:1).

*The habits of crisis*

I’m often surprised by the things that come to my mind as I write. Today is an example. Reflecting on how we could possibly learn to respond to crisis as Jesus responded in the Garden of Gethsemane, brought to mind my pilot training days. I had such a low draft lottery number (if you are young enough to have no clue what I’m talking about, be grateful), that I went ROTC in college and entered the USAF upon graduation where I spent my first twelve months learning to fly jets.

A key part of the curriculum was learning what to do in the event of an emergency, like the loss of one or both engines. We had manuals telling us what to do and classroom instruction on every conceivable problem. We wore a quick-flip book of emergency procedures strapped to our thigh every time we went up. Our instructor pilots would demonstrate for us and then we’d practice and practice and then practice some more, until we got past the panic and grew confident that we knew what to do, so much so that we’d hardly have to think about it.

For 2,000 years Jesus’ followers have “practiced” their faith, endeavoring to deepen their trust in God, to renew and transform their minds, to serve others, and to prepare themselves for the storms of life. We practice and we practice and we practice again.

On his return trip from America, John Wesley’s ship was overrun by a storm that caused Wesley to fear for his life. In the midst of the tumult, he observed the serenity of some of his fellow travelers, a group of Moravian pietists. He saw in them a deep and abiding faith, a peace in the face of terrible events that he desired for himself.

Though such faith is certainly a gift from God, it must also be learned and cultivated by being totally immersed in God and the ways of God. The spiritual disciplines are long-tested means of helping in this immersion, preparing us for the inevitable crises so that they do not overwhelm.

*The habits of servanthood*

Likewise, learning to be a servant takes practice, or as John Ortberg pointedly puts it, training not merely trying.

Prayer, reflective Scripture reading, worship, Bible study, service and more all help to develop within us the habits of a servant. It is a bit like language training. Anyone who has tried to learn another language knows that nothing beats total immersion in the new language. So also, the habits of servanthood are best learned by immersion.

I was a bit surprised when I got toward the end of Blanchard & Hodges book, *Lead Like Jesus*. Their chapter on the habits of a servant leader has none of the leadership-speak, no tips on the practices of effective leaders, no more principles for the servant leader to follow. Instead, they turn to reflections on prayer, meditation, Scripture memorization, and reading the Bible. They speak of intimacy in relationship, the importance of group accountability, and listening to those who would tell us the truth. All this takes me back to yesterday’s email and the need to embrace the total transformation of ourselves. The spiritual disciplines are essential to this extreme makeover.

So this is where our talk of servant leadership ends and our practice of it begins. These disciplines that help us to become like Jesus, to love like Jesus . . . to lead like Jesus.

‘til Monday, grace and peace,

Scott