

## Soul Training Exercises

from James Bryan Smith's *Magnificent Story*

### Longing for a Magnificent Story - Habakkuk 3:1-2

#### Chapter 1

We are story-making people. We love stories. When we tell stories, we seek to make sense of our world. When we put our story together with God's story, we enter a "metanarrative", or large story, that can answer life's key questions. Just as Joanna Woolace shared last Sunday, the stories we tell ourselves shape who we are.

The word "magnificent" is defined as that which is beautiful, good and true. The root is "to magnify," and in the case of the Gospel, we seek to magnify what is Beautiful, Good and True. Beauty is hard to define, but it is that which "stops us in our tracks" and makes us say, "wow." Goodness is that which works for the benefit or betterment of others. Christians affirm the highest form of Good being that of love for God and neighbor. And Truth is what we all long for, as it isn't just about a fact or an account of something, it's about reality. "The way things are."

We are creatures with a mystery in our heart that is bigger than ourselves. We may think we can find ultimate pleasure, satisfaction and meaning in physical things, but they are too small for our massive souls. We want to be a part of a magnificent story, filled with truth, beauty and goodness. We want to be a part of a story where God is the hero. The Good News of Jesus Christ is just that, Good News. A story of redemption that is untamable, majestic and magnificent.

- Excerpts from *The Magnificent Story* and observations from Pastor Ron

### ❖ Soul Training #1: Beauty

We become more aware of beauty, goodness, and truth by being intentional. Perhaps you need to keep a journal in the coming weeks or compile a photo journal. Just label it "Beauty I Have Seen." Beauty can be seen, but it also can be smelled, tasted, heard, and touched.

Just remember, whatever it is that you notice this week as "beautiful," it is not the ultimate (the last or best) but the penultimate (the second to last, the second best). The main point is not the music, the art, the nature, or whatever the object of beauty may be. The main point is where that beauty points towards - God. The Creator of All. The One Who Stands Behind All Creation. When you experience beauty, let your "wow" be your way of saying "Thank You" and "Amen" to our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### The Series

Date	Sermon - Speaker	Training
March 3	Longing for a Magnificent Story - Pastor Ron Diener	Beauty
March 10	Falling for Shrunken Stories - Pastor Tyler Hartford	Goodness
March 17	Participating in the Trinity - Pastor Pratik Bagh	Truth
March 24	Bathing in Beauty - Matt Cordella-Bontrager	Sight
March 31	Embracing Our Goodness - Pastor Patrick Obonde	Sound
April 7	Discovering the Truth - Pastor Tyler Hartford	Smell
April 14*	Going the Distance - Pastor Ron Diener	Touch
April 21**	Making All Things New - Pastor Tyler Hartford	Taste & Celebration

\* Palm Sunday

\*\* Easter

#### "Tell me the old, old story of Jesus and His love..."

As with any book, there are places where the views expressed may not always match our own. It's what to love about a book, as it provides a starting place for conversation and a catalyst for ideas and actions. We look forward to having important conversations, wrestling over details, and digging deep into important aspects of telling and living the Gospel story.

- Pastor Tyler

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