



INTEGRATED
FAITH PROJECT

Foundation for Integrated Living

If you are like most of us, finding the balance between work, family, and spiritual growth can be challenging, particularly for those of us in the military. While a Christ-follower may say that Jesus is the center of and governs our entirety of life, how that actually plays can seem like an impossible challenge.

Like mismatched pieces of a puzzle, sometimes things just don't seem to fit together. Our faith doesn't seem to be welcomed in the workplace. Our workload is at constant war with our family time, and community relationships are charged with unbiblical views and practices.

We are pulled in 20 different directions, bombarded with distractions and buried under an ever-growing to-do list. Top that off with a complex and confusing cultural climate and restrictions on outward expressions of faith and it may seem easier to just compartmentalize our lives and avoid trying to make the pieces fit together. We figure that as long as we can juggle faith, family, profession, and other relationships we will be doing alright. Juggling all four, however, is quite a challenge.

But what if there was a model to follow? What if there was a blueprint that showed how those puzzle pieces should fit together and make us better leaders, spouses, parents, friends and followers of Christ?

Well, here's the good news: There is blueprint; there is a Model—and His name is Jesus. You see, the fullness of an integrated life is found in the example of Jesus. And during this session, we'll discuss four aspects from the life of Christ that will start you on the path towards an integrated life.

So let's get started.

Often, our compartmentalized and fragmented lives lead us to some nagging questions:

- Who am I becoming?
- What is God's purpose for me?
- How public can I make my faith?
- Where is my faith producing fruit?
- In what areas of life have I excluded faith?



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Jesus models a perfectly integrated life for us:

He was fully God, yet fully man.
He was physical, yet spiritual.
Emotional yet rational.
Caring yet firm.
Graceful yet disciplined.
Strong yet gentle.
Powerful yet humble.

He was able to fully integrate his life, because he had a single point of focus that governed every step of his life. Here in lies our first lesson from Jesus on our path towards an integrated life.

The Father's will was the single point of focus for Jesus. From His human birth through 33 years, Jesus' journey led Him straight to the cross. Scripture tells us that through His earthly pilgrimage Jesus grew. He grew physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually, and that He increasingly grew in fulfilling the purpose the Father had for Him. In fact, Jesus described His one single focus this way: "My food is to do the will of the One who sent me" (John 4:34). Jesus modeled in every step of His earthly journey what He asks us to do.

Often when it comes to big decisions in our lives, we turn to God for guidance. But what about the seemingly insignificant choices we make each day? Certainly, Jesus submitted to the will of the Father in cosmic works God had for Him like his virgin birth, the transfiguration, walking on water, the crucifixion, and resurrection, but also in the seemingly smaller works. You see, Jesus' every step, word, and action was informed and governed by God's will including when He fed the hungry; spoke kindly to the woman at the well, rebuked Peter, washed his disciples' feet, and presumably as He labored in His father's carpenter shop. It was his daily attention and commitment to the will of the Father that allowed Jesus to live a perfectly integrated life. With a single focus, his path was clear.

When we find our single focus, we become less easily distracted and make better choices. So today, what is your single focus? Is it the will of the Father? Or is it something a bit more popular in our culture such as financial success, the approval of others, more authority and power—or even a countdown to retirement?

Therefore, **the first component of an integrated life of faith** is deciding on your single point of focus.

The second component of faith-filled living is accepting the gospel mission as your primary mission.



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Jesus issues us a litmus test to gauge our level of faith in the Father's will. Are we carrying out the gospel mission? If not, we aren't accepting and doing the will of the Father.

We might ask, "What is the gospel mission?" Jesus tells us as He begins His earthly ministry. Reading from Isaiah's Old Testament prophesy, He said "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). Later, just before His sacrificial death for mankind's sin, Jesus reported fulfilling His mission while on earth saying to the Father, "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do." He had come as God's divine agent of love to give His life as a ransom, to restore our relationship with the Father, and to send the Spirit to provide grace and hope to those redeemed by Him.

But then He shifted His prayer to the continuation of His mission through those who trust in Him through faith. He says, "As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18).

Simply stated, Jesus delegates the continuation of the mission to us. He invites us to carry forward the gospel into every generation and nation. What's our gospel mission? To respond in faith to God's grace and mercy, share in works and words the good news of God's redeeming love, and exalt Jesus Christ in everything we do.

Accepting this mission is simple, but it isn't easy. In fact, living a life on gospel mission will likely cause us to make choices that others around us question. Due to the extreme nature of this mission, Jesus did not leave us without guidance. He gives us His purpose, His presence, and His power to carry out this mission. Before ascending into heaven, Jesus told the disciples they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they will be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Today, He gives us the same Holy Spirit power to continue the mission we've been given—and promises to be with us "always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:30).

The third component of an integrated life is an abiding relationship with Christ, through an ever-growing faith in Him.

Once you have determined your single point of focus and accepted your mission, you begin a daily journey, accompanied by the person and power of God Himself. This is where the puzzle gets more complicated to put together. We begin to ask questions like:

- Am I growing personally in my knowledge of and affections for Christ?
- Am I being transformed in character and godliness through my faith?
- What is God's mission for me in the workplace—with those I work with, in doing my professional task, in seasoning the workplace with God's wisdom and character?



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- Does God have a voice in which school my kids attend, where we choose to live, how we relate to non-Christian neighbors?
- Where is God and what is His view when I am suffering and struggling?

You see, we receive Him, His person, and His power through faith in Jesus Christ. As faith is embraced, it is meant to be lived out in every corner of our lives. But no one said it would be a life free of trouble. In fact, even Jesus himself promised us that “in this life we will face trouble” (John 16:33).

You might ask: What about those of us called to lead others, to raise military families, to serve in a challenging military culture? That’s a fair question. You have chosen a more challenging path. There are requirements and expectations of your duty that others will not face. You will be put in lose-lose situations and forced to endure assignments that are hard on your family.

Therefore, **the fourth component of an integrated life of faith** is holding on during hardship.

Our call in 21st-century military society is the same as it was for the disciples 2,000 years ago—to continue Jesus’ Gospel mission. We are to live on His mission for us, informed by our faith in Jesus Christ with every step integrated through faith in Him. Even when it is hard.

Isn’t our commitment level both tested—and strengthened in struggle? Isn’t Christ and His wisdom and power revealed most clearly in the dark spots of life? A compass with the arrow calibrated to true north provides direction for the long journey, just as a life calibrated to God’s will through faith in Christ directs us through the confusing obstacles and misdirections of life. If we say our focus is live a life on mission, yet shift our attention to whatever new opportunity or obstacle arises, we must question our level of dedication.

OCF’s vision is to see “the military community positively impacted through Christ-like leaders.” Military men, women, and families with a Christ-like focus; those who abide in Him through faith; and who in faith serve His purpose. Those will be the ones empowered as His agents within the military community.

The following ***Integrated Faith Project*** sessions lay a foundation for faith-filled service in the challenging domains of military life to include: our personal transformation in godliness, within our profession, in the family, and in our communities and relationships. Paul said, “I appeal to you brethren by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice.”

Let’s begin a journey of renewing the foundation for living fully and fruitfully through our faith in Jesus Christ.