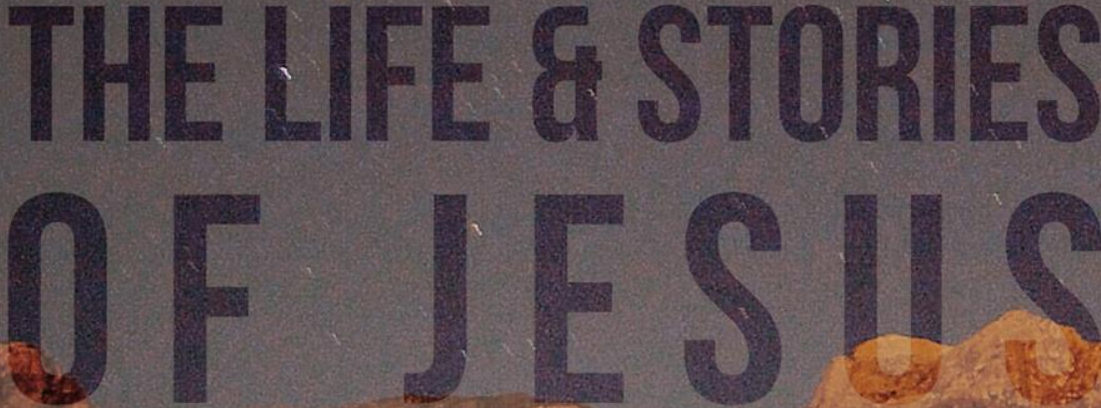




LUKE:



**THE LIFE & STORIES
OF JESUS**

and mary said, “my soul magnifies the lord, and my spirit rejoices in god my savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. for behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. and his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. he has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. he has helped his servant israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to abraham and to his offspring forever.” and mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

(luke 1:46-56 esv)

learning the value of a
worshipful response

christian maturity is
dependent upon
response.

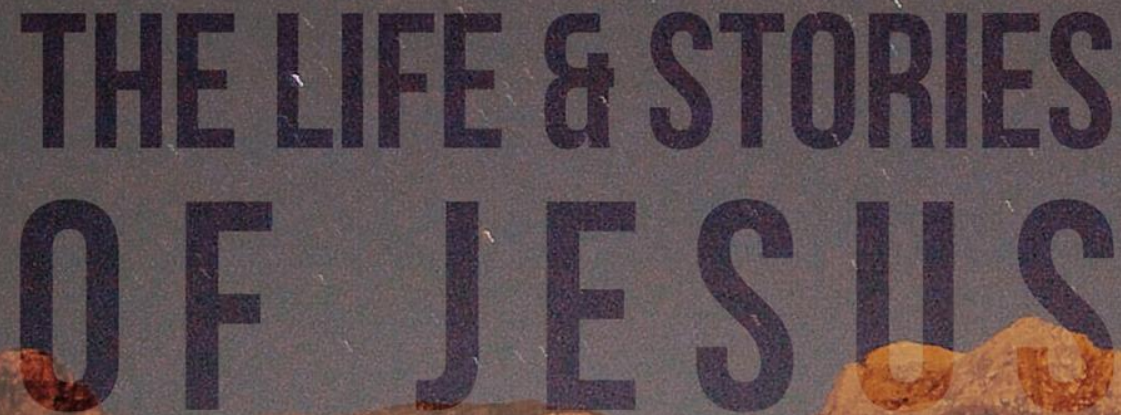
how **you respond**:

1. suffering
2. discipline (correction)
3. instruction

learning to **struggle well** in the arms
of a loving father.



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Solitude *vs.* Loneliness

as long as we are trying to run away from loneliness we are constantly looking for distractions with the inexhaustible need to be entertained and kept busy. we become the passive victims of a world asking for our idolizing attention. we become dependent on the shifting chain of events leading us into quick changes of mood, capricious behavior and, at times, revengeful violence. then our life becomes a spastic and often destructive sequence of actions and reactions **pulling us away from our inner selves.**

+ Nouwen

don't be misled: no one makes a fool of god. what a person plants, he will harvest. the person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring god!—harvests a crop of weeds. all he'll have to show for his life is weeds! **but the one who plants in response to god**, letting god's spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.

galatians 6:7-8

Learning to **invest into our**
true self.

false self vs. true self

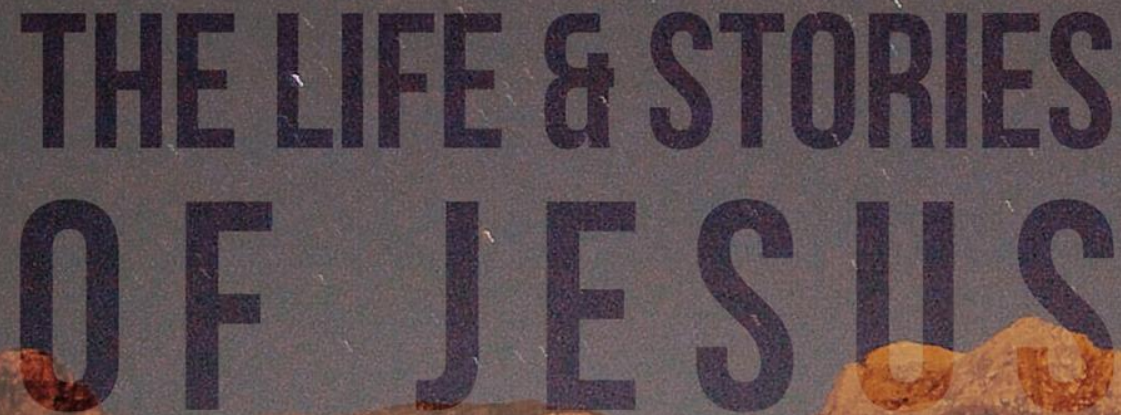
but what if our interruptions are in fact our opportunities, if they are challenges to **an inner response by which growth takes place and through which we come to the fullness of being**? what if the events of our history are molding us as a sculptor molds his clay, and if it is only in a careful obedience to these molding hands that we can discover our real vocation and become mature people? what if all the unexpected interruptions are in fact the invitations to give up old-fashioned and outmoded styles of living and are opening up new unexplored areas of experience?

and finally: what if our history does not prove to be a blind impersonal sequence of events over which we have no control, but **rather reveals to us a guiding hand pointing** to a personal encounter in which all our hopes and aspirations will reach their fulfillment?

+ Nouwen



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