

Section 3: Falling in Love - Book Highlights

13. Hour by Hour

Is there a higher meaning to Work?

The primary purpose of work is to help us become the-best-version-of-ourselves.

The primary purpose of work is not to make money. Making money is a secondary outcome. Don't get me wrong—making money is good and necessary; it just isn't the primary purpose of our work. **The primary purpose of work is to help us become the person God created us to be.**

Work is part of God's purposeful plan.

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

As Christians, **we are called to transform every activity in our lives into a prayer.** This is how we become the-best-version-of-ourselves and live holy lives.

Each hour of your work to God as a prayer for a specific person or a particular intention.

Pray for a friend who is sick, pray for your country, pray for people who have nobody to pray for them, pray for wisdom in a particular situation, pray for your parents, pray for your priest, pray for your parish...

A trash collector can become a saint. Holiness isn't reserved for monks and nuns in monasteries and convents. A child can become a saint. It doesn't require age or education. Rich, poor, young, old, educated, uneducated, single, married—everyone is called to live a holy life.

Your work—whatever it is—is one of the primary tools God has given you to grow in virtue, become the-best-version-of-yourself, and live a holy life.

For a Christian, everything is a prayer. Eating is a prayer. Sleeping is a prayer. Exercising is a prayer. Waiting is a prayer. Traveling is a prayer. Making love is a prayer. Working is a prayer. Resting is a prayer. God loves ordinary things.

Resistance hates ordinary, everyday action. Resistance likes to distract us, keep us thinking about things we can do nothing about.

As disciples of Jesus we are invited to bring meaning to everything we do.

Jesus wanted our presence in the world to elevate and transform ordinary, everyday things. To take something as ordinary as washing the dishes and transform it into a conversation with God; to turn to God and pray an honest prayer: "Lord, I really don't feel like washing these dishes today, but I will do it and do it well.

I offer this task to you as a prayer for my friend Susan, who is suffering with cancer. Please ease her pain a little today. Amen." Everything can be transformed into a prayer. **One of the hardest lessons to relearn in life is to be present. To give our full attention to whoever and whatever is before us right now.** This is the wisdom of being present in the moment.

KEY POINT Every activity can be transformed into prayer.

ACTION STEP Offer each hour or activity of your day to God as a prayer for a specific intention. Set an alarm to go off each hour. Take a deep breath and lift the coming hour up to God. Ten seconds at the beginning of each hour will change your life.

14. Interesting People

“If you want to be an interesting person, read books.”

Read the Gospel of Matthew Pick out the verse or phrase in each chapter that most stood out to me, and have a brief conversation with God about what the verse or phrase was saying to me.

The most important things are almost never urgent. That’s why it’s essential that we schedule them.

People who read the Bible regularly make better decisions. The Bible gives us incredible insight into the mind of God. The Bible is full of interesting people. Some of them walked with God and some of them walked away from

God, and most of them did a little bit of both.

Our lives change when our habits change. Resistance hates good, strong, positive habits in your life.

KEY POINT People who regularly read the Bible make better decisions.

ACTION STEP Set aside a few minutes each day to read and reflect on a passage from the Bible. Begin with Matthew, Proverbs, or Psalms.

15. Falling in Love

The day you fall in love with learning, your life changes forever.

My spiritual awakening ignited my love of learning. I became very hungry to learn more about the faith.

I became fascinated, intrigued, and curious about everything to do with the Catholic faith. Instill in him a love for learning.”

Wherever you find excellence, you find continuous learning. They go hand in hand. Wherever you find that continuous learning is missing, you find mediocrity. When you get close to the best of the best at anything, you always discover that they insanely persist at learning more about their craft. **Ask why a lot.** This is what I came up with: 1. Pray every day. 2. Exercise every day. 3. Read every day. 4. Write every day. **It is one thing to fall in love, and it is something completely different to keep that love alive.** This is true in both human love and our love for learning.

Great books feed us. They focus our minds and inspire our hearts. And great spiritual books help us to pray.

A good spiritual book can be a great help to our prayer. Great spiritual books do is align our minds with the mind of God.

God wants our minds to be clear thinking and positive.

As Christians, we are called to be people of possibility who are filled with hope. Positive thinking is a natural part of the Christian life.

If we are separated from God we cannot do anything (John 15:5). The Bible invites us over and over again not to be gloomy, not to lose ourselves in thoughts about worst-case scenarios, but to trust in God and to fill our hearts and minds with positive thoughts. **Examples:**

- "This is the day the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice." (Psalm 118:24)
- "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Philippians 4:8)
- "Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive." (Matthew 21:22)
- "I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)
- "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind." (Romans 12:2)
- "Do not be anxious about anything." (Philippians 4:6)
- "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)
- "Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another." (Ephesians 4:31-32)
- "Ask and you will receive; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you." (Matthew 7:7)
- "So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5)

Fill your mind with thoughts of God. Spend your days thinking about things that are good and true and beautiful and noble, and you will become good and true and beautiful and noble. It is clear that God does not want us to be negative thinkers. But he also doesn't want our thinking to be neutral. He wants us to be positive thinkers on an epic scale. So, I invite you to fall in love with learning again, or for the very first time.

God wants to transform your mind, and in doing so, he will turn you into an amazingly interesting person, so he can send you out into the world and lead more people to understand the genius of his ways.

KEY POINT Wherever you find excellence, you find continuous learning. They go hand in hand. Wherever you find that continuous learning is missing, you find mediocrity.

ACTION STEP Do something today to stoke your love of learning.

16. No Visitors

"Let me find out and I'll let you know."

I have seen resistance everywhere. I see it in myself, my wife, my children, my colleagues at work, my brothers, and my friends. I see it in the workplace and I see it in my parish. Understanding this resistance is essential to understanding people, how they live, why they do what they do, and why relationships are healthy or dysfunctional. It's essential to understanding ourselves.

My first intense encounter with loneliness.

Being alone is not the same as feeling lonely, but one can slip effortlessly into the other without a moment's notice.

The fear of being alone is the father of many relationships that never should have been. When we choose to be with someone because we are afraid of being alone, we dishonor ourselves and the other person.

Solitude is the cure for loneliness. When we are afraid of being alone, we should go into it. Dive deep into it. Solitude teaches profound lessons, especially about ourselves. Feeling lonely has value. Sometimes we need to turn inward to discover what we need to hold on to and what we need to let go of. One of life's most essential lessons is learning to be alone. In many ways, I believe that until we learn to be comfortable alone—and more than that, to enjoy our own company—we are not really ready to live a bold and passionate life.

Loneliness, or solitude, or perhaps both, teach us who we are deep down beyond the influences of parents, teachers, friends, and current culture.

Loneliness and solitude teach us gratitude.

"This young man is sixteen years old—what advice do you have for him?"

KEY POINT: We keep resisting God even after we are convinced that his way is the best way.

ACTION STEP: Visit the lonely. Somewhere not too far from where you live, someone is saying a prayer. He is asking God to send someone to visit him and lift him up out of the depths of his loneliness. God wants you to help him answer that prayer.

17. An Unconventional Education

I've had an unconventional education.

The more I realize that **life teaches us all the lessons we need to learn to take the next step in our lives and to fulfill our mission in life.** Spent a lot of time in the classroom of silence, sitting with God in empty, quiet churches.

Kept taking the next step, trusting in God. at each stop along the way, I learned something that I needed to know somewhere else down the road.

Parish is the lifeblood of the Catholic experience in many ways.

Always the danger that a parish will turn in on itself and become more like a country club than a mission-driven community reaching out to share the love of God with others.

What's the biggest thing happening in your parish this year? Or, what is the biggest challenge your parish is facing at the moment? Or what are people in your parish disagreeing about right now?

One man's trash is another man's treasure. And that is true not only of things but also of experiences and problems.

Experiencing the Church in so many different countries and cultures gave me a unique perspective of what Catholics were grappling with at that time in history.

We are all just passing through this world, and no matter what lengths we go to make ourselves comfortable, this is not home.

Once you get a taste of God working through you to bring joy to others, you are hooked. There is no better feeling in the world.

Loneliness is one of the great evils of our age.

Somewhere not too far from where you live, someone is saying a prayer. He is asking God to send someone to visit him and lift him up out of the depths of his loneliness. His wife may have passed away and his children may live in other cities. Or maybe they just neglect him.

It may be a neighbor down the street, it may be an old friend, or it may be a complete stranger whom the Holy Spirit points out to you today. Whatever the case, this person is praying to God and asking him to take away the wicked sting of loneliness.

God wants you to help him answer that prayer. Visit the lonely. It takes only a few minutes. Make this a habit. It will bring you unimaginable joy and a deep, deep satisfaction.

KEY POINT Life is always teaching us lessons.

ACTION STEP What lesson is God trying to teach you through the experiences of your life at the moment? Reflect.

18. Tuesday Nights

Really discover the Mass." "Daily Mass." Just one day each week."

There is something very powerful about a small group of people gathering for the Eucharist."

I resist and then I surrender. I resist and then I surrender. The surrender comes because I see the stupidity of resisting or because resisting gets to be miserable, or through grace. **Grace is the help God gives us to respond to his call, and to do what is good and right.** We do nothing to deserve this gift of grace, and yet, as a loving father lavishes gifts upon his child, God lavishes grace upon us.

Grace gives us the strength to break through resistance so that we can do things that are healthy and worthwhile.

Going to Mass on Tuesday evenings.

Intimacy of those daily Masses that creates a different experience.

Fell in love with the Mass during weekday Masses, because it was there in those intimate experiences that I really started to understand it.

Once you understand that God has an incredible dream for you, once you grasp that he wants you to become the-best- version-of-yourself and help others to do the same, and once you start to listen to the prayers of the Mass with all this in mind, you very quickly discover that there is genius in Catholicism. Very powerful about weekday Mass was the homily.

KEY POINT Once you understand that God has an incredible dream for you, once you grasp that God wants you to become the-best-version-of-yourself and help others to do the same, and once you start to listen to the prayers of the Mass with all this in mind, you very quickly discover that there is genius in Catholicism.

ACTION STEP Go to Mass twice this week, Sunday and any other day you like. Pay attention to how it focuses you and fills you with peace.