



Reboot!
Your Life Operating System
for the 21st Century



JP21: The Jesus Path Life Operating System for the 21st Century

Exploring What Jesus Taught about Life, Love, and Liberation

Introductory Course

Reboot!

Your Life Operating System for the 21st Century

JP21: The Jesus Path Life Operating System for the 21st Century

Exploring What Jesus Taught about Life, Love, and Liberation

5-Session Introduction

Designed and written by Craig S. Pesti-Strobel, Ph.D.

Copyright © 2023, Craig S. Pesti-Strobel
All rights reserved, but permission is given to circulate material from this book, provided
proper citation and credit is given to the author.

www.conspiritu.org/reboot-jp21

Copyright Notices

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, 1993
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission.
All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org>.

Session 1

Gather

Introductions:

- ❖ Share name, brief background, why you are interested in this topic
- ❖ Teach Centering Prayer - a Core Practice
- ❖ Share Video: "Why Reboot?"
- ❖ Share reactions and responses
- ❖ Outline the Reboot! Process
 - Bigger Mind (Short video)
 - Discuss: What did you hear?
 - Disentangling at the core
 - Bigger Heart (Short video)
 - Discuss: What did you hear?
 - Work of empathy and compassion
 - Bigger World (Short video)
 - Discuss: What did you hear?
 - Change to a global perspective
 - God's eyeview of the world
 - Includes more-than-human world
 - Interconnectedness and interrelatedness of all things
 - Bigger Life (Short video)
 - Discuss: What did you hear?
 - Compassionate and passionate engagement with human beings and more-than-human beings
- ❖ Discuss, compile questions, invite people to explore Reboot website.

Reboot Your Life

The Gospels all depict Jesus beginning his ministry saying "Repent! The kingdom of God is at hand!" If he had come today, he might say, "Reboot! You are about to commit a fatal error that will cause your life system to crash!" We start on the Jesus Path when we recognize that the path we are on is not working, or is perhaps even dangerous or perilous to our health, and the health of the world. In computer talk: our life is giving us "error messages" and it is time to disconnect from a dysfunctional

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course

Session Outlines and Presentations

system, purge our operating system of the old and download a new Operating System. Time to “reboot.”

Rebooting begins by telling the truth about ourselves or the world around us to ourselves and others: The Life-System in whose grip we find ourselves is destroying us, the people around us, and even the planet on which we live. We need a new Life Operating System. Jesus says, “I have just what you need. Come, follow me. I’ll show it to you.”

The thing about this new Life Operating System of Jesus is that it is a full package deal. All the pieces in this package are designed to work together, and the new Life Operating System doesn’t work unless all the pieces are brought together and put into play. So, let’s put together the pieces to get the full picture of the Path.

Jesus starts his ministry saying “Move into the Bigger Mind that God has made possible for you.” Living in the Bigger Mind of God is called the Kingdom or Realm of God. Viewing the world from this Bigger Mind stirs up compassion for others, (Bigger Heart), who are suffering or struggling in life. This compassion is rooted in love and the realization we are all interconnected (“members one of another”), or Bigger World. This interconnected compassion and love requires action to engage the sources and causes of suffering and struggle, which is Bigger Life. These are the basic pieces of the Path.

Piece # 1: “Bigger Mind”

In order to move into this Bigger Mind way of being, there is unlearning to be done, and psychological and emotional healing to be affected. The after-effects of trauma, abuse, tragedy, terror, have to be addressed. Neurological researchers and scientists know that every physical sensation that we receive has an emotional tag associated with it. When a physical sensation of any sort is received in the brain, it is associated neurologically with the Limbic System. Several neural circuits are set up to register, remember, categorize, and reflect upon our experiences. Because of this complex neurological network, it requires very specific, focused work to establish new neurological pathways in order to expand consciousness, and to overcome programmed and embedded patterns of thinking and behaving.

There is spiritual healing to be affected as well. Harmful and abusive religious teachings need to be unlearned and repudiated. People need to be anointed with forgiveness and the absolute unmitigated grace of God.

There is also a lot of harmful and bad and downright wrong theology to be abandoned and resisted. Jesus' Path is revolutionary in itself, but early on, so-called followers of Jesus rebelled against the Jesus Revolution, and have infected Christianity with things that actually block and work against the transformative power of the Jesus Path. Let me be clear: Christianity as it is today and has been for centuries is not the Path of Jesus. Christianity may claim to aspire to that Path, that Way, but it desperately falls short. G.K. Chesterton is quoted as saying, "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried." Shockingly, the Path of Jesus is non-dogmatic. He only asked of people to believe in themselves, or have confidence that healing and wholeness could happen within them.

[Read here about Jesus and the Bigger Mind: https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-jesus-and-bigger-mind.html](https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-jesus-and-bigger-mind.html)

Piece # 2: "Bigger Heart"

How does this relate to Love? Jesus came to show us the full reality of Love, the Love that holds all things together. This is what the "divine aspect of ourselves" is. It is ultimately realized and expressed as Love.

But it isn't easy to act and live from this divine center of love. There are human tendencies to act according to our own interests at the expense of others or of the world around us. We fall short of acting according to our divine center. This is called sin. Life also throws things at us that cover over that divine light of love at our center. Jesus says to let our light shine - but it is not easy, because we need to peel away the accretions of life.

This is the work of forgiveness, of confession (=telling it like it is), of being honest with ourselves about ourselves, and of changing direction. The decision to move from small mind to big mind initiates the change. But this change cannot happen at the level of ideas and opinions. It has to be lived in the body.

So, Jesus sends his first followers out into the world, two by two. The Path of Jesus has to be walked. And walking the Path actually changes us. It puts us into contact with people we might not ordinarily come in contact with, which helps to expand our minds and increase our compassion. But it also enlarges our world.

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course

Session Outlines and Presentations

[\(Read here about Jesus and the Bigger Heart: https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-jesus-and-bigger-heart.html\)](https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-jesus-and-bigger-heart.html)

Piece # 3: "Bigger World"

The worlds most of us inhabit are incredibly small and constrained. Many people never venture far from where they were born. Even with the advent of the Internet and its possibilities of exploring and connecting with the world at large, the self-reinforcing algorithms of Google and Facebook and many search engines serve only to connect us with like-minded people, or more products just like what we have already purchased, or recipes just like what we recently downloaded. We easily think the world is filled with people and products just like us.

Our urban and suburban enclaves insulate us from the vast natural world just beyond our urban growth boundaries. Packaged and processed food disconnect us from very earth that erupts into bloom, and ripens into our fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds.

Jesus transgressed many of the social boundaries and barriers that separated people into ethnic and religious ghettos. He skewered the self-righteous pretenses of the religious segregationists of his time, and defied the purity practices that separated people into categories of "clean" and "unclean." He then sent his followers out into the world to do the same.

Compassionate connection with people who are not like us, who don't think like us or even speak like us enlarges our world.

[\(Read here about Jesus and the Bigger World: https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-jesus-and-bigger-world.html \)](https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-jesus-and-bigger-world.html)

Piece # 4: "Bigger Life"

Jesus came to show us the *divine aspect* of ourselves, and to show us how to access and achieve it. This is the Fulfilled-Life-in-Abundance he proclaimed [John 10:10]. How does this relate to Love? He came to show us the full reality of Love, the Love that holds all things together. This is what the "divine aspect of ourselves" is. It is ultimately realized and expressed as Love.

The love Jesus modeled is the deliberate choosing to do that which ultimately benefits others and the world around us. Love is acting in the self-interests of the

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

other, as defined by the other. This is expressed by the Platinum Rule: "**Do unto others as they would have you do unto them.**" This revising of what is often called the Golden Rule acknowledges that what is good for us isn't necessarily good for others. Deliberate cultivation of compassionate and empathetic connection, mentioned above, increases our awareness and understanding of the life situations of others, and instructs us as to what the other needs from life,

Session 2 The Bigger Mind

Gather

Reconnect:

- ❖ Share thoughts, ideas, questions that have arisen during the week
 - ❖ Practice Centering Prayer
 - ❖ Share Video: "Bigger Mind"
 - ❖ Share reactions and responses
 - ❖ Discuss the concepts behind μετανοεῖτε.
 - Scripture probe:
 - *Philippians 2:5: "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." The words call us up short as to what we are actually supposed to be doing on this path: not just admiring Jesus, but acquiring his consciousness."*
— Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Wisdom Jesus: Transforming Heart and Mind*
 - *In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."* - *Matthew 3:1*
 - *From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."* - *Matthew 4:17*
 - *Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."* - *Mark 1:14&15*
 - "Move into your next mind!"
 - "Have this mind among you which we have in Christ"
 - "Immerse yourselves in next-mindedness"
 - Definitions
 - Implications
- ❖ Disentangling from dysfunctional and destructive systems
 - Disentangling process
 - How the brain works
 - The process Jesus (along with other great religious teachers) used to cultivate higher consciousness or next-mindedness

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

- Provide the Big Picture: God is love, all humanity is one family, love is doing that which contributes to the well-being of others, we are all part of one another (human interconnectedness)
- Unplug from destructive and dysfunctional teachings
- Reinforce new teaching with embodied actions – put ourselves in situations where we have to confront our prejudices, misconceptions, animosities and engage with those we consider to be “other.”

Where Does this "Bigger Mind" Stuff Come from?

Jesus.

Seriously.

It comes from looking at how Jesus started his ministry as related in the Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament of the Bible. It also comes from a careful look at what Jesus sought to accomplish and inspire in the lives of the people who followed him, and the people he happened upon in life.

The quotes above taken from the Gospels of Matthew and Mark provide the first clue about the Bigger Mind. Mark begins with the following:

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Notice that Mark reads, “a baptism of repentance.” It doesn’t say, “John was baptizing after the people repented.” It was a baptism of repentance. Let’s pause a moment and look at that word, “baptism.”

The original Greek word, *baptisma*, means “to immerse.” It has the same sense and uses of the English word, immerse. For instance, have you ever immersed yourself in a good book? You were baptizing yourself in that book. It doesn’t mean “to dunk somebody in water.” It simply means to immerse. But, I do have to say, there is something powerfully dramatic about being immersed in water. I remember when I was young, my mom taking us to swimming lessons. But I could just never get the hang of things. I didn’t like putting my head in the water, and the whole stroke, turn your head, take a breath, stroke thing just wasn’t going to happen. Several summers

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

went by like this.

Then finally, one summer at Boy Scout camp, we were at Warm Lake in Idaho, and I was taking swimming lessons along the lakeshore. I finally plunged myself in the water and glided along the bottom for about three seconds. But it was amazing! I felt the power of the water all around me, I felt like a fish, and suddenly the whole swimming mystery was solved. Total immersion in the experience changed everything.

This is what John is talking about. New life doesn't happen by just wishing for it. You have to jump in, full-bodied. John is talking about a life immersed in the power and presence of God. Water immersion symbolizes this. Jesus will come to immerse them in the power of the Spirit. John is all about preparing for this immersion in the Spirit. We have to prepare ourselves for this. How? By telling the truth about our lives - confessing our sins is the Biblical phrase - and how off the mark we are, how off-path we have wandered, how lost and confused, how injured and hurt, how self-centered and hurtful we are. It also means telling the truth about the social and cultural systems that have formed and malformed us. John preaches a baptism of repentance - an immersion in this self-examination, telling the truth, and starting over.

Now we need to pause once again and look at the next word, "repentance." The original Greek is *metanoia*, which literally means to *change one's mind*, to change the direction of one's mind, and thus one's life. In fact, *metanoia* also translates as "beyond the (normal) mind," and the force of the verb indicates going beyond our normal consciousness or way of thinking into a deeper, bigger mind, the mind of Christ is what Paul calls it in Philippians. *Metanoia*, or repentance, then, means redirecting our lives from our small self-centered minds into the bigger mind of God. John preached about immersing oneself in repentance, or *metanoia*. John says Jesus will come to immerse us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

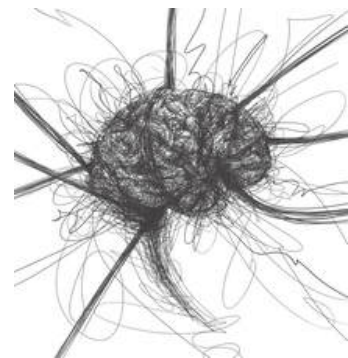
So, Jesus comes down to the River Jordan to meet John. If you are like me, you probably ask, "Why did Jesus have to repent?" But remember, *metanoia* means to move into a bigger mind in order to start over, and Jesus comes to symbolically demonstrate that he embraces this bigger mind of God. In essence, he is embracing his divine nature, and his divine mission to show us a path to God, which is a consciousness of God, a perspective of life based upon the perspective of God.

The path of Jesus is nothing less than a path into a bigger mind, an expanded consciousness, the *metanoia* John preaches. Our minds literally have to be changed. But this is no easy task. Anyone trying to escape the clutches of addiction or trying to heal from an abusive upbringing, or recover from PTSD knows that “changing one’s mind” is not like changing the sheets or changing one’s clothes. It actually entails changing the very quality and content of one’s mind, and changing the configuration of the neurons in the brain. It involves developing a new mode of thinking and perceiving the world. It involves literally an expansion of consciousness. Paul called it having the mind of Christ, Jesus called it the Kingdom or Realm of Heaven (or God) that is within us and in our midst.

This is what Jesus came to help humanity realize and develop into. But there are a lot of things that have to be deconstructed, taken apart, disassembled, in order to be rebuilt and reconfigured in our mental landscape. This is the work of the Spirit within us. And that is what Jesus immerses us in - the power of the Holy Spirit. And this transforms us. It transforms our direction in life, it transforms our focus in life, it transforms the world around us by the things we do, and it transforms our very reality.

Moving into the Bigger Mind Requires Disentangling Our Minds

This whole repentance/conversion thing is not as simple as it appears. Even if one goes with *metanoia* meaning a change of mind (which still can have levels to what that means), even changing one’s mind so that one’s behavior is significantly changed is no easy task. Our minds and brains have been literally shaped and formed by everything around us: our language, our every interaction growing up, what we watch constantly on TV or movies, or on our computers, the steady stream of stuff that comes to us on Facebook or Twitter or SnapChat or any of a dozen social media. All of this creates a form of mind that is self-focused, prone to consider violence as a solution to most problems, commodity and acquisition-oriented, and, in our culture, obsessed with sex.



The *metanoia* Bigger Mind of Jesus entails changing the very quality and content of one’s mind, and changing the configuration of the neurons in the brain. It involves

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

developing a new mode of thinking and perceiving the world. It involves literally an expansion of consciousness. Paul called it having the mind of Christ, Jesus called it the Kingdom or Realm of Heaven (or God) that is within us and in our midst. It is a quality of human interaction that grows out of an awareness of how we are connected and related to one another and to all things in contrast to a perception of disconnectedness, separation, and individual isolationism.

This is what Jesus came to help humanity realize and develop into. But there are a lot of things that have to be deconstructed, taken apart, disassembled, in order to be rebuilt and reconfigured in our mental landscape. This is the work of the Spirit within us, and we have to consciously disentangle ourselves from the mental hooks and lines that our life in this world have embedded in our minds.

In order to extricate ourselves from the deep psychological, emotional, and behavioral entanglements of these systems, we use the scalpel of truth-telling and inquiry into social and psychological systems that are oppressive, dysfunctional and destructive. A system operates by being an all-encompassing complex of factors, including values, educational processes, religious teaching, popular culture, political and military control, economics, and legal structures. As we work to dismantle and disentangle ourselves from these maladaptive and destructive systems, we begin by analyzing and understanding how these systems operate and how they infect our hearts and minds. This is the first step for moving into the Next, Bigger Mind.

In order to understand how these systems function beneath our level of conscious awareness, think of what it is like to be a fish whose entire life is lived immersed in water. Everything about you as a fish is adapted to living in water. Gills have evolved in order to filter out oxygen dissolved in water. Your musculature and body shape are designed to move you through water. In fact, you are only aware of water as the normal medium in which you live, move, and have your being.

Systems are the water in which we as human beings live, move, and have our being. Systems have shaped our thought processes, our desires, our intentions, and our perceived needs. Systems determine our value, and devalue us if it suits the purposes of the system and the interests served in the perpetuation of the system. Telling the truth about how systems operate as well as understanding the nature of these systems is vital in order to begin disentanglement. Here is a list of the major maladaptive Systems that have a grip on us:

- **Sexism**

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

- **Heterosexism and homophobia**
- **White Supremacy Culture and Racism**
- **Imperialism and Colonialism**
- **Industrialism**
- **Militarism and the Domination System**

The basic process of dismantling and disentangling from oppressive, dysfunctional, and destructive Life Operating Systems (LOSs) is as follows:

1. **Confession: Tell the truth, listen to the truth**
2. **Admit the hold those systems have over us**
3. **Recognize the Divine Source that empowers change, growth, and development, and actively engage with this Source, using time-proven practices to manifest change within ourselves and our societies and communities**
4. **Seek guidance and companionship of experienced and engaged persons**
5. **Make amends for the harm we may have caused, and acting in solidarity with persons subjected to oppression, injustice, bias, hate, discrimination, abuse, trauma.**
6. **Learn to live a new life with a new code of behavior;**
7. **Help others who suffer from the effects of oppressive, dysfunctional, and destructive LOSs.**

You may notice that this process is informed by Twelve Step processes, which are actually an adaptation of traditional and proven practices of Christian Spirituality. Twelve Step processes begin with telling the truth about addictive behaviors and the damage they have caused us and those we love and others. Then means are sought to make amends and even seek forgiveness. Positive behaviors are substituted for destructive behaviors, and accountability is established in order to maintain the change in life. The same basic format is what we follow as we seek to dismantle and disentangle ourselves from oppressive, dysfunctional, and destructive Life Operating Systems.

Session 3 The Bigger Heart

Gather

Reconnect:

- ❖ Share thoughts, ideas, questions that have arisen during the week
- ❖ Practice Centering Prayer
- ❖ Share Video: "Bigger Heart"
- ❖ Share reactions and responses
- ❖ Discuss the concepts behind Bigger Heart.
 - The Restless Heart
 - The Way of the Heart
 - Justice and Right Relationship
 - Compassion
https://www.ted.com/talks/karen_armstrong_my_wish_the_charter_for_compassion?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare
 - **Optional:**
(https://www.ted.com/talks/karen_armstrong_passion_for_compassion?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare)
 - **Platinum Rule**

Where Is Your Heart?

There used to be a slogan that went around when I was younger. It roughly went something like this: "It's 10:00. Do you know where your children are?" When I was in college, the dorms on campus were hit with a rather bizarre rash of thefts where someone stole the furniture out of the dormitories. Pretty soon signs went up all over campus asking, "It's 10:00. Do you know where your dorm furniture is?"

The spiritual life begins with a very similar question that goes like this: "It's 10:00 (or any other time). Do you know where your heart and mind are?" A person's heart and mind devise their priorities, determine their loyalties, and direct their actions. It is a common expression to speak of appealing to the hearts and minds of people. During the Vietnam war, the U.S. Government under President Johnson frequently spoke about winning the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. The same language was used by the Bush administration in reference to the people of Afghanistan and Iraq during those military occupations. The basic idea is that the

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

heart will commit a person to a cause or a program or even a person and the mind will figure out what to do to achieve the purposes of that cause, program or person.

Moses understood this clearly. In the book of Deuteronomy, as he sums up the law for the people of Israel before they prepare to cross over the Jordan into Canaan, he does it this way: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). When he was asked to sum up the Law, Jesus cites this very same passage and adds, "And you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39; cf. Leviticus 19:18). The heart provides the inclination, and the mind activates the action.

So here is the question: Where is your heart? Is your mind where your heart is? And most importantly for us in this era of social media manipulation by corporate and political interests, who has access to your heart and mind? Who and what has shaped how you think and feel about things? Who has instilled what sort of fears and anxieties in your consciousness? What are the unseen forces pulling on the strings of your mind? What memes and propaganda have sunk their barbs into you?

So it is that the first step in exploring the Jesus Path for the 21st Century is to take stock of the worries, fears, and anxieties that have seized control of our lives.

The Restless Heart

Anxiety and worry are related to where the heart is. This is because the human heart is basically restless and seeks satisfaction. Augustine put it pointedly: "Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they rest in thee." Because our hearts are restless, we seek some sort of resting, some sort of satisfaction. This takes many forms. Some people become obsessed with money and material comforts. Others are incessantly busy, working on that project or helping with this cause, not because it is an expression of what they are drawn to do, but because they are so uncomfortable with themselves that they hide from their restlessness in a blur of frenetic activity and busy-ness. Others seek the adulation of others or seek to become the envy of their neighbors. Others may drift from job to job, or community to community, never quite finding their niche or place. Still their hearts are restless



and yearn for satisfaction.

The danger of a restless heart is that it lacks direction, particularly an internally-guided sense of direction. A restless heart all too easily becomes adrift in life, simply going where the flow and flood of society takes it. Therefore it is significant that at the start of his ministry, Jesus addresses the question of where people are headed in life. In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus begins his ministry by calling people to repent, or redirect their lives: "From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near'" (Matthew 4:17; see Mark 1:15).

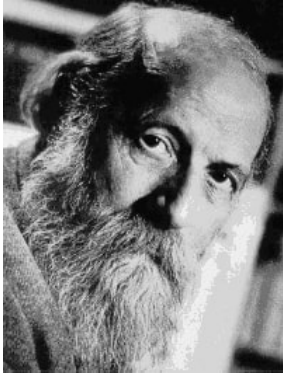
But what exactly is repentance? In the Koiné Greek, the word for repentance is *metanoia*, which literally means to change one's mind, to change the direction of one's mind, and thus one's life. (See [Jesus and the Bigger Mind: https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-jesus-and-bigger-mind.html](https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-jesus-and-bigger-mind.html).) In fact, *metanoia* more accurately translates as "beyond the (normal) mind," and the force of the verb indicates going beyond our normal consciousness or way of thinking into a deeper, bigger mind. Jesus calls out, "Repent! Redirect your mind!" But what does this mean? Perhaps it is best to think of *metanoia* as not just a turning, but also a re-turning of the heart to the way, the way that moves us into a bigger circle of consciousness.

The Way of the Heart

Jesus left behind a Way of living that is a way to the heart of Love itself. It is a Way of thinking, a Way of living fully and joyously, a Way of transforming human relationships, and a Way of spiritual and personal healing and expansion of consciousness. It encompasses body, mind, and soul. It keeps you grounded on the earth, in the here and now at the same time it floods you with the power of the Spirit and a vision of the Eternal. It transforms people into being the means whereby the prayer "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" is made real. This is what Jesus taught and equipped his followers to become and to do. the same is true today.



Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations



So let's talk more about this Way and the Bigger Heart. This can be illustrated by considering what it means to have a "way" as taught in the Hasidic Jewish tradition as interpreted by Martin Buber, who was one of the great religious and philosophical thinkers and writers of the last century. He is particularly famous for his interpretation of Hasidic stories, "examining and explaining the basic tenets of a way of life which lies near the center of Judaism." In his book, **The Way of Man: According to the Teaching of Hasidism**, Buber explains the centrality of searching the human heart in Hasidism:

Every person born into this world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique. 'It is the duty of every person in Israel to know and consider that he is unique in the world in his particular character and that there had never been anyone like him in the world, for if there had been someone like him, there would have been no need for him to be in the world. Every single man is a new thing in the world, and is called upon to fulfill his particularity in this world. For verily: that this is not done, is the reason why the coming of the Messiah is delayed.' Every man's foremost task is the actualization of his unique, unprecedented and never-recurring potentialities, and not the repetition of something that another, and be it even the greatest, has already achieved. (Martin Buber, *The Way of Man: According to the Teaching of Hasidism*, (), p. 16)

Hasidism teaches that each person has a way, or a path, that is unique for them. As important as following one's given way may be, it is not presented to us on a golden scroll at birth. It is a path that must be discerned by examining one's heart. "The decisive heart-searching is the beginning of the way in (human) life; it is again and again the beginning of a human way. But heart-searching is decisive only if it leads to the way."

This heart-searching of which Buber speaks is the kind of "repentance" - or metanoia - that Jesus talks about. Repentance as metanoia, involves this searching of one's heart, in order to return to one's path, one's way. So, Jesus is saying, "Where are you going? Where is your heart leading you? Where is your treasure? What is the treasure that is calling out to your heart? Where are you going?" Repentance means to return to searching the heart, realizing that the purpose of searching one's heart is not to berate oneself for failures or for getting off the track, the path, but rather to

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

get back on the path, that it is possible to return to the path, to the way. But it requires that searching, that asking of "Who am I? Where am I going? Where is my heart taking me? Where is my treasure?"

Buber goes on to say:

Every person born into this world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique.... Every (person's) foremost task is the actualization of his unique, unprecedented and never-recurring potentialities, and not the repetition of something that another, and be it even the greatest, has already achieved." Buber then relates the famous quote of Rabbi Zusya: "In the world to come I shall not be asked, 'why were you not Moses?' I shall be asked: 'Why were you not Zusya?'"

The Way of the Heart is that Way that leads us directly into being the very person that only we can uniquely be, not a copy or clone of someone else, not the product of what a dysfunctional, violence-prone, consumption-driven culture would malform us into being.

Bigger Heart

As we become more globally aware and connected, it is imperative that we cultivate greater compassion and seek justice in our world. Bigger Mind consciousness leads directly into Bigger Heart compassion and justice. This is an insight shared among the world's great wisdom and spiritual traditions. Jesus looks out on the teeming crowds and is moved deeply within. He teaches them, heals them, and feeds them. The Buddha taught that, having achieved the Great Insight into the causes of suffering (wisdom, or *prajña*), the enlightened person is moved to act on behalf of all beings, who similarly struggle and suffer. This compassion, or *karuna*, arose naturally from enlightenment, or *bodhi*.

Justice and Right Relationships

A minimum definition of justice is that all persons have the potential and opportunity to live lives of meaning and purpose, have unfettered access to the basic necessities of life, are free to choose the material and social conditions of their life and have equal power to influence political, and social decision-making processes.

Justice is based upon what some religious traditions call "right relationship." The idea of right relationship is predicated upon the recognition that all things in the world (and universe) are connected to one another through a complex network of

relationships, and the nature of these relationships can either contribute to the well-being of things, or to their detriment. Right relationships are those that are conducive to well-being. Engaged compassion and doing justice means creating the conditions wherein the potentials for human and non-human beings can be realized and maximized, where there is equitable sharing of resources, meeting true needs of people and all other beings on the planet.

Bigger Mind leads to the realization that current inequalities and inequities and economic and financial imbalances and the wide divergence of incomes are detrimental to human and ecological survival.

Practices for a Bigger Heart

Karen Armstrong's book, **Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life**, is an excellent guide to deepening your compassionate connection with others. In that book, Armstrong offers the following practices:

1. Learn About Compassion
2. Look at Your Own World
3. Compassion for Yourself
4. Empathy
5. Mindfulness
6. Action
7. How Little We Know
8. How Should We Speak to One Another?
9. Concern for Everybody
10. Knowledge
11. Recognition
12. Love Your Enemies

The [website and world-wide effort \(https://charterforcompassion.org/\)](https://charterforcompassion.org/) that grew out of her book is an excellent place to learn more about the practicalities of compassion. Compassion is not just a warm gushy feeling, it is a way of being and acting in the world. Get connected with the **Charter for Compassion**. Compassion needs to be coupled with action, otherwise we suffer compassion fatigue. In order to be effective, all action needs to be cooperative and collaborative action. In other words, "feeling-with" needs to be joined to "acting-with."

The Platinum Rule

This is expressed by the Platinum Rule: "**Do unto others as they would have you do unto them.**" This revising of what is often called the Golden Rule acknowledges that what is good for us isn't necessarily good for others. Deliberate cultivation of compassionate and empathetic connection, mentioned above, increases our awareness and understanding of the life situations of others, and instructs us as to what the other needs from life.

A Platinum Rule kind of love requires that we come into relationship with others. It is get down and get dirty. It's why Jesus walked the dusty roads of Galilee and Palestine, instead of spending his career hanging around the rarefied precincts of the temple in Jerusalem, making pronouncements.

Judith Moffett, in her article, "The Habit of Imagining," suggests that this teaching be reworked to say: "**Do unto every individual as you imagine you would want to be done unto if you really were that individual.**" Her point is that we need to make the imaginative and empathetic step to truly place ourselves not only in the shoes but in the skin of the other person with whom we are engaged. This is an indication of an expansion of our consciousness - to expand our circle of awareness and concerns to include others - and beyond the circle of family and friends but out to the world. Recall what was said of Jesus, that he looked out upon the crowds and had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. These people were not family or friends. Many were not even countrymen (fellow Jews) but included people outside of his ethnic circle.

Practicing compassion and empathy with others opens our hearts to the Divine Presence within us and others.

Golden Thinking

Heaven is the realm or state of expanded consciousness, a way of knowing, understanding and acting that is at a higher level.

Moral development from "me" to "us" to "all of us." Ken Wilber explains it this way: "If we look at moral development, for example, we find that an infant at birth has not yet been socialized into the culture's ethics and conventions; this is called the **pre-conventional stage**. It is also called **egocentric**, in that the infant's awareness is largely self-absorbed. But as the young child begins to learn its culture's rules and norms, it grows into the **conventional stage** of morals. This stage is also called **ethnocentric**, in that it centers on the child's particular group, tribe, clan, or nation, and it therefore tends to exclude care for those not of one's group. But at the next major stage of moral development, the **post-conventional stage**, the individual's

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

identity expands once again, this time to include a care and concern for all peoples, regardless of race, color, sex, or creed, which is why this stage is also called **world-centric**. Thus, moral development tends to move from “me” (egocentric) to “us” (ethnocentric) to “all of us” (world-centric)—a good example of the unfolding stages of consciousness. (Stages and States of Consciousness, found on the Integral Life website: <http://integrallife.com/integral-post/integral-operating-system?page=0,1>)

Session 4 Bigger World

Gather

Reconnect:

- ❖ Share thoughts, ideas, questions that have arisen during the week
- ❖ Practice Centering Prayer
- ❖ Share Video: "Bigger World"
- ❖ Share reactions and responses
- ❖ Discuss the concepts behind Bigger World.
 - Gaian Perspective: Reconnected to the Natural World
 - Interfaith and Interspiritual
 - Science and Religion
 - Global Interconnected Morality and Ethics

As we cultivate **Bigger Mind** and **Bigger Heart**, our perspective moves up the expanding [Spiral of Consciousness \(https://www.conspiritu.org/reboot-bigger-mind-road-signs.html\)](https://www.conspiritu.org/reboot-bigger-mind-road-signs.html), from tribal/national to a truly global perspective. Because our world is more populous than ever before in human history, we have to view ourselves as part of one diverse human family. As one family, the demands for true justice become paramount in importance, establishing and maintaining the conditions wherein each being's full potential can be maximized:

- Physical
- Mental,
- Emotional,
- Spiritual,

That Global Perspective Includes the Earth - a Gaian Perspective

We are going to have to get serious about caring for Creation and tend to the needs of the planet upon which our Path is placed. More than that, as the fully conscious self-expression of the Natural World, might we not also realize that our consciousness is an emergent unfolding of Nature itself, and that our full health requires that we become fully are of Nature as part of ourselves and ourselves as part of Nature?

Bigger World moves beyond Domination Systems and Doctrines to systems of

honoring, respecting, sharing, caring. This includes repudiation of doctrines such as the [Doctrine of Discovery \(https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/\)](https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/) and other religious and legal justifications for the domination of humans over other humans and over the natural world in any form. Bigger World also involves the radical practice of Re-embedding and Reintegrating into the Natural World, in which we recognize that we are all creatures in a magnificent Creation.

Reconnected to the Earth and Natural World

We are going to have to get serious about caring for Creation and tend to the needs of the planet upon which our Path is placed. More than that, as the fully conscious self-expression of the Natural World, might we not also realize that our consciousness is an emergent unfolding of Nature itself, and that our full health requires that we become fully are of Nature as part of ourselves and ourselves as part of Nature?

Thus, the **JP21 Bigger World** moves beyond simply *caring* for the earth into reintegrating ourselves into the natural life processes of the earth. This reintegration begins by spending time in the natural world, not as a consumer of experiences, but as a natural being participating in the processes of the ecosystem in which you find yourself. There are a variety of practices that work to situate in a natural environment, and which can open and expand your awareness to incorporate ecological systems into your own consciousness.

There is resistance among many Christians to engage in Earth-Consciousness because of fear about "worshipping the earth," or "confusing the Creator with the Creation," or, worse, because of a long tradition of Christian teaching that the body and physical world (=earth and all life on it) is corrupt and sinful, and is to be overcome and even transcended. "Think of nothing earthly-minded," is the way one ancient hymn puts it. But this interpretation of Christianity neglects the older understanding, found in the Bible, that God created the earth and all its physical creatures, plant and animal, and called it "good." Jesus himself never said a single thing against the natural world or it's creatures. In fact, he considered the natural world and the processes of life as providing the means to deeper spiritual insight.

In his article, "**Creation in Community - Faith and the Environment**," Dr. Terence Fretheim argues that the Creation stories in Genesis, in fact, actually emphasize that humans are to remain actively engaged and connected with the earth:

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

God's creation is built to go somewhere; the potential of becoming is built into the very structure of things. And this is so not just because God does not exhaust the divine creativity in the world's first week, but because of the creative capacities given to the creatures. God creates a paradise, but this is not a static state of affairs. The creation is not presented as "a finished product," all wrapped up with a big red bow and handed over to the creatures to preserve as it was originally created. God creates a dynamic world in which the future is open to a number of possibilities and in which creaturely activity is crucial for proper creational developments.

In pursuing these tasks, human beings are to reflect the character of God in the life of the world, to be God as God would be to the non-human creatures.

Human beings cannot rest back and assume that God will take care of everything or that the future of the creation is solely in God's hands. They are called, not to passivity relative to the earth, but to genuine engagement, the nature of which will have significant implications for the future of the environment.

The environmental and climate crisis in which we find ourselves can be traced to our disengagement with and estrangement from the Natural World, i.e., the multiple interconnected systems of the Earth. Our estrangement is due in large part to the manner in which Industrialism has commodified the Earth's systems and their components and constituent beings into products for human consumption. One of the tasks for achieving Bigger Mind is to disentangle from the Industrialist mindset and value system, which is not easy to do, given the fact that Industrialism is an outgrowth of the rise of scientific discovery, capitalism, and colonial expansion. All of the Earth's land, seas, waterways, vegetation, animals, and human populations became objects for dissection, experimentation, exploitation, and conquest. The vast bulk of human knowledge that we now possess is the result of the intersecting spheres of science, capitalism, and colonialism. Because contemporary cultures across the world owe their existence and identities to the after-effects of these modernist systems, it requires concerted, intentionally and repeated efforts and actions to reverse the damaging psychological and spiritual effects of Industrialism, let alone the environmental devastation it has caused.

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course

Session Outlines and Presentations

[Interfaith and InterSpiritual \(https://www.conspiritu.org/bigger-world---interspirituality.html\)](https://www.conspiritu.org/bigger-world---interspirituality.html)

Because our world is more populous than ever before in human history, we have to view ourselves as part of one diverse human family. Jesus said very clearly, "And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven" (Matthew 23:9).

Bigger World is also Interfaith and InterSpiritual, in which people work together rather than try to conquer one another. Interfaith and InterSpiritual movements involve sharing and gifting our discoveries and ways of transformation. In Bigger World, we engage Learning from one another as coequals and companions, deepening our understanding of the world, and what it means to be human. Read **The InterSpirituality Manifesto** to learn more about the InterSpiritual aspects of Bigger World.

Science and Religion

Bigger World holds Science and Religion together in a mutual dialog in which both cooperatively share knowledge and insights into the Nature of Reality and the Reality of Nature. Scientific research for the last two or more centuries has yielded dramatic and extensive knowledge and insight into the physical constitution of the universe. Our knowledge of the physical reality extends for quarks and bosons to the farthest reaches of intergalactic space. But what is the meaning and significance of that knowledge, and what is the appropriate use of all that knowledge. To what end do we probe life and all its mysteries?

One of the central contributions that religion can offer science is an understanding of the significance of a thing. A thing in its various relationships and interrelationships has significance precisely because of those relationships. In fact, you cannot understand a thing apart from its relationships. You can't understand an electron apart from its relationship to protons and neutrons. You can't understand molecules apart from the interrelationships of their constituent atoms, nor apart from their interactions with other molecules. And so on right up the levels of complexity in life, including human and biotic communities.

Each thing in the world is a bearer of meaning precisely because its significance in the grand scheme of things, the vast network of interbeing, (to borrow an expression from Thich Nhat Hanh), of all things. This level of significance - this level of meaning is as constitutive a part of things as is their physical structures and the natural laws

that describe those structures. Religion reminds us that the language of relationship is also the language of purpose. Most scientists are extremely leery of speaking of the “purpose of things” precisely because that suggests a leap into metaphysics, and meaning cannot be empirically demonstrated or subjected to scientific analysis and experimentation. However, if the language of scientific discourse were shifted to include the thing under investigation to be also described in terms of its various interrelationships, then meaning can become part of the conversation, and part of the research process.

Morality - to what end?

If mathematics can be considered the formal language of scientific description, then morality and ethics together constitute the formal language of relationship. Ethics and morality are based upon the idea that things, and in particular, people, are bearers of meaning and purpose, of significance. The impartiality and unbribability of God to which Deuteronomy witnesses, alludes to this notion of everyone and everything having significance. Widows and orphans have significance in themselves, not in relationship to their husbands or fathers, not in terms of their productivity, and not in terms of their wealth or ownership of property. For example, there is a basic ethical and moral principle: “People are not means to an end, they are to be treated as ends in themselves.” They are ends precisely because they are bearers of meaning, and this meaning is realized in terms of relationship.

What religion offers science, then, is an additional language for describing the natural world, not only in terms of its physical structures, but additionally in terms of the significances of all the interrelationships of those physical structures internally and externally. But it also reminds scientific researchers that questions of morality, questions that ask why a particular research program is necessary or important, significant, or which inquire into the ethics of research methodologies are as necessary as are the research protocols themselves.

Meaning, morality and purpose are gifts of religion to science. Through the creative engagement of religion with science we can expand our understanding of what it means to be human, and how our story is inextricably bound up with the meaning and purposes with which God has endowed the entire universe. But we are not dwarfed by this universe. As the Christian tradition puts it, God’s eye is on every sparrow, and on each of us. Each of us is significant, and each of us has purpose and meaning.

Session 5 Bigger Life

Gather

Reconnect:

- ❖ Share thoughts, ideas, questions that have arisen during the week
- ❖ Practice Centering Prayer
- ❖ Share Video: "Bigger Life"
- ❖ Share reactions and responses
- ❖ Discuss the concepts behind Bigger Life.
 - Live It, Don't Just Think It
 - Practice and Practices
 - Abundant Life
 - The Realm of God is Here, Now
 - Wisdom is the Goal
 - Unfurling and Expansion of Understanding and Perspective
 - Walking the Path of Justice, Liberation, and Freedom

Bigger Life

The Bigger Life is lived.

Yes, that sounds redundant and obvious. But far too often people will have a spiritual awakening or religious experience or flash of deep insight that remains an internal mental event, with no resulting change of behavior or social circumstances. Reboot! Life Operating System for the 21st Century is precisely that: a system for living, not just thinking. It encompasses every aspect of being: psychological, spiritual, emotional, social, environmental.

In fact, a flash of enlightenment or deep discovery is not enough to affect lasting and significant change. A person may have a sudden, life-changing experience that forever alters their direction and priorities. But in order for this change to have lasting effects, the person must find ways of acting that are in accord with this new direction. They must also redirect their thoughts and attitudes along lines in concert with this new direction. What they need to do is to adopt a set of practices that serve

to reinforce their new life and to help establish the change as permanent.

Practice

In order to understand this, consider theatre and athletics. In order for any actor to be prepared for an actual performance, they must run through their lines and movements on stage over and over again in order to memorize their part. This is called "practicing." Similarly, athletes on a team practice together as a team over and over so that they develop their skills and learn how to work as a team. They have certain "plays" that they need to know as a team in order to compete in a game. In order to compete well and effectively, these plays must be so well-rehearsed and practiced that they are second nature to each player and to the team as a whole. In essence, through repeated practice and rehearsal, actors and athletes each internalize their lines, parts, routines and plays to the extent that the actor fully embodies their character such that they seem to actually be that character, and the athlete executes their plays so well that they seem to have been born to the game, or such that they are football or baseball itself.

This is the work of *formation*. Human beings have as part of their normal developmental process the natural capacity to learn, grow, change, and adapt. Human beings are malleable and formable. This is true physically as well as intellectually, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Human behaviors are shaped by a wide variety of factors . This is because humans are fundamentally shapeable. Neurophysiologists have discovered that the brain itself is malleable at the level of neurons. In order to establish a new physical ability or a new behavior, a person must deliberately engage in learning and repeating a certain action or behavior. Continued repetition of that action or behavior establishes new neural pathways that support that action or behavior. Over time, deeper neural pathways are established within the brain that solidify that action or behavior into habitual actions or behavior that become "second nature."

Because of this malleability, the primary way humans are formed spiritually is through the process of engaging in a set of practices that serve to reinforce and fashion their behaviors and attitudes according to a particular set of values and beliefs about the world. These practices are called spiritual disciplines, but their actual sphere of action is at the neurological level.

Virtually every religious system in the world has developed a set of attendant disciplines aimed at affecting mental attitudes and behaviors through physically

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course

Session Outlines and Presentations

enacted practices or disciplines, Most of these disciplines are remarkably similar across the world. Practices such as meditation, prayer, alms-giving or acts of charity, corporate worship or devotional practice, and ritualized activities are among the disciplines most common . There is evidence of these disciplines having been practiced for millennia—a testimony to what humans have found to be efficacious in all places and at all times.

Practices

- **Attentive Awareness:** Practices such as mindfulness, meditation, contemplation, centering prayer have been practiced around the world for thousands of years. Focused attention, calming the ever-busy and scattered mind, taming the wild horses of thought, directing one's intentions towards that which is of greatest benefit for others - these are all bedrock practices for the expansion of consciousness of **Bigger Mind**, the justice-oriented compassion of **Bigger Heart**, and the reintegration into a **Bigger World**. [\[Read and explore Attentive Awareness Practices.\]](#)
- **Disentangling:** In order to "install" the new Life Operating System at the center of Reboot!, it is necessary to do the work of disentangling ourselves from the maladaptive and destructive systems of domination and injustice such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, industrialism, and imperialism. Reboot! borrows the insights of Twelve-Step programs utilizing a process with seven actions to take:
 1. **Confession:** Tell the truth, listen to the truth
 2. **Admit** the hold those systems have over us
 3. **Recognize** the Divine Source that empowers change, growth, and development, and actively engage with this Source, using time-proven practices to manifest change within ourselves and our societies and communities
 4. **Seek** guidance and companionship of experienced and engaged persons
 5. **Make amends** for the harm we may have caused, and act in solidarity with persons subjected to oppression, injustice, bias, hate, discrimination, abuse, trauma.
 6. **Learn** to live a new life with a new code of behavior;
 7. **Help** others who suffer from the effects of oppressive, dysfunctional, and destructive Life Operating Systems.
- **Seek Coherence and Integration:** All the various systems of domination seek to fragment and disintegrate our lives and our consciousness. Industrialism seeks to separate humans from the natural world by depicting the natural

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

world as "resources" and commodities for human consumption, and then commodifying other human beings as objects of consumption or as mere means to a powerful individual's end. Racism separates humans on the basis of artificially-constructed categories based upon skin color or physical characteristics. Sexism separates people according biological differentiation that exists solely for purposes of procreation. Heterosexism insists that human love can only exist in biologically-differentiated relationships defined by procreative capabilities. All these systems of domination create conflict and division within human consciousness, within human communities, and result in environmental degradation and catastrophes. Seeking coherence between our intentions, our knowledge of what is of greatest benefit to the world and to others, and our actions in that world brings integrity to our lives, and empowers effective action in the world. We counter the destructive narratives of domination systems by reconnecting with persons across cultures, across socio-economic differences, learn about the real-life experiences of persons whose skin color or physical appearance is distinct from our own. We listen to one another's stories engagements with the truth that sets each of us free from systems of domination. We counter those systems by acting on behalf of those who suffer from domination systems in whatever way, recognizing that our own humanity has been compromised and diminished by these systems as well.

- **Engage:** Find ways to change social and cultural systems through political activism, advocacy, artistic expression, creation of new economies, new forms of community, new activities to refresh our minds and bodies, and so on. The systems that exist now have been created by humans, New systems can be created by humans.

Bigger Life is Abundant Life

Jesus came to show us the divine aspect of ourselves, and to show us how to access and achieve it. This is the Fulfilled-Life-in-Abundance he proclaimed [John 10:10]. How does this relate to Love? He came to show us the full reality of Love, the Love that holds all things together. This is what the "divine aspect of ourselves" is. It is ultimately realized and expressed as Love.

But it isn't easy to act and live from this divine center of love. There are human tendencies to act according to our own interests at the expense of others or of the world around us. We fall short of acting according to our divine center. This is called sin. Life also throws things at us that cover over that divine light of love at our center.

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course

Session Outlines and Presentations

Jesus says to let our light shine - to live and act from that center of Love - but it is not easy, because we need to peel away the accretions of life that cover and hide that light.

This is the work of forgiveness, of confession (=telling it like it is), of being honest with ourselves about ourselves, and of changing direction. The decision to move from small mind to Big Mind initiates the change.

The Realm of God is Here, Now

Moving into the Bigger Mind is a state of expanded consciousness that Jesus called the Kingdom or Realm of God, or Heaven. But it is important to understand that this Realm of Heaven is not some far off place that we go to after we die. Rather, he said that it is something in our midst, something attainable within. The Kingdom/Realm of God/Heaven is *now*, a quality of existence, of mind and consciousness, of heart and soul, of neighborliness and compassionate justice. It is an enlarged perspective that no longer sees things in terms of Us vs. Them, but all of us in this thing called life together.

Let me repeat and emphasize this point. The Kingdom/Realm of Heaven/God that Jesus taught is **here and now**. It isn't something we wait to enter after death. Rev. Frederick Ward Kates has a great quote that seems to me to express clearly and concisely the mission of Jesus Christ. The quote goes like this: "The purpose of religion -- at any rate, the Christian religion -- is not to get you into heaven, but to get heaven into you."

"To get heaven into you!" What a magnificent way to phrase the idea of Bigger Mind, Bigger Heart, Bigger World, and Bigger Life. The Jesus Path for the 21st Century is all about getting Heaven into us, not getting us into Heaven. That's why Jesus says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand (or in your midst, or within you)."

Wisdom is the Goal

The Jesus Path Life Operating System for the 21st Century (JP21) pursues Wisdom as the goal of a fully-lived and fully-realized life - seeking the integration of one's life experiences in order to mentor and benefit others who are coming along on their own paths toward integrity of action and belief. The main goal and destination of the spiritual journey is wisdom. What do I mean by "wisdom"? One way to understand wisdom is that it represents a way to integrate the various pieces of your life into a way of life that is unified and intentional. It means no longer being lost in our

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

wanderings but being guided by our destination. It means arriving at home in our hearts.

Wisdom begins by yoking our experiences and knowledge with the bigger perspective that God can give us in Jesus Christ.

But just what exactly is Wisdom?

1. Wisdom entails the ability to reflect upon critical experiences, problems or difficulties one has experienced or encountered in one's life, and
2. The ability to (self-)critically examine the factors, etiology and development of those experiences, problems or difficulties, and
3. The ability to derive modes of behavior and mental attitudes based upon this analysis that are conducive to the adaptive well-being of one personally, and
4. To extend those modes of adaptive well-being to others.

Wisdom is developmental in nature, but it also must be structured and guided. Just because one has a lot of life-experience does not mean one is wise. The process of growing into wisdom is related to practices of spirituality. Jesus taught a Way of Ways to attune our thinking and behavior to the Divine Way of Love. It is a [Way of Ways](https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-way-of-ways.html) (<https://www.conspiritu.org/jp21-way-of-ways.html>) because it consists of a number practices and behaviors that enlarge our minds and hearts through the very act of doing them and doing them repeatedly. Jesus lived and taught the following spiritual and life practices:

- **Prayer,**
- **Study of the Scriptures of his time,**
- **Acts of charity,**
- **Devotional practice and worship,**
- **Time alone in the natural world,**
- **Fasting,**
- **Repentance,**
- **Works of mercy and justice as well as works of love and compassion.**
- **Acts of forgiveness and reconciliation,**
- **Simplicity of life.**
- **A new form of community among his disciples and followers.**

You can read more about these practices by following the URL above, or by participating in a JP21 Via Vida group.

Unfurling and Expansion of Understanding and Perspective

The imagery of a flower unfolding is a good analogy for the unfolding of human consciousness at the personal as well as the societal level. As a flower buds, opens, wilts, and produces seeds, it goes through a process of development or progressive evolution in which each stage is continuous with the previous stage, and is necessary for the subsequent stages. You can think of human societies and the history of human civilizations being like whole gardens full of plants growing, budding, putting forward flowers, etc. Not everything grows and develops at the same pace. And so, we have societies in which there are various segments of society that are at differing worldview developmental stages, just as every person goes through developmental stages differently, depending upon a wide variety of conditions and factors.



The purpose of JP21 is to affect this growth of consciousness within persons and our society. Such growth is developmental, and arises out of our life experiences in the context of societies and cultures that are in similar phases of development. Many different people have researched how it is that people grow and develop in terms of their awareness of the world around them, and how to relate to that world and the people within it. One such system that is based on exhaustive research is called [Spiral Dynamics \(https://www.conspiritu.org/reboot-bigger-mind-road-signs.html\)](https://www.conspiritu.org/reboot-bigger-mind-road-signs.html). Think of it as reading road signs along the Path of Life, or the Path of Human History that indicate: "You are this far to Wisdom." Basically, the idea is that human individuals as well as whole societies develop and grow in the manner in which they think and relate to one another. Therefore, we can evaluate where we are along the Path according to how we think and how we relate to one another. For instance:

1. The first stage in development is basic survival, and thinking is instinctual. Find food, keep warm, protect oneself and one's family. The next level is magical or animistic thinking: there are spirits everywhere that have to be appeased or avoided, the ancestors may be these spirits, people are bound by clan and tribal ties.
2. After that, the next level elevates these spirits to a few power-gods, which patronize kingdoms. Powerful rulers emerge, that are viewed as quasi-divine. Power and glory are qualities that are cultivated, warriors are glorified who protect the empire from threats or extend that empire. In individuals this stage

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course Session Outlines and Presentations

manifests as youthful rebellion, frontier mentalities, epic heroes, James Bond villains, gang leaders, and so on.

3. At the next level, the Mythic Order, Life has meaning, direction, and purpose, with outcomes determined by an all-powerful Other or Order. This righteous Order enforces a code of conduct based on absolutist and unvarying principles of "right" and "wrong." Violating the code or rules has severe, perhaps everlasting repercussions.
4. Out of this stage emerges the next stage of Scientific Achievement. The world is a rational and well-oiled machine with natural laws that can be learned, mastered, and manipulated for one's own purposes. Highly achievement oriented, especially (in America) toward materialistic gains. Our country and most of the industrialized world is heavily invested in this stage right now.
5. But the next stage is also starting to emerge, the Communitarian stage. The human spirit must be freed from greed, dogma, and divisiveness; feelings and caring supersede cold rationality; cherishing of the earth, and all life. Refresh spirituality, bring harmony, enrich human potential. Strongly egalitarian, anti-hierarchy, pluralistic values, social construction of reality, diversity, multiculturalism, relativistic value systems.

Integrate Science with Spirituality and Religion

JP21 does not consider science and religion to be at odds with each other. the attempt to set science and religion in opposition is simply a maneuver by conservative expressions of Christianity to assert dominance and control over the intellectual lives of people who feel a yearning to live a spiritual life. The spiritual path of Jesus is a path of freedom to explore, to ask questions, to seek new discoveries, all in the name of the God whose incredible creativity, wisdom, and unfathomable knowing originated, undergirds, and upholds the entire universe, from quantum strings to the curvature of time and space. Therefore, JP21 seeks to weave into the teachings of spirituality the insights, discoveries, and laws of science, and offers back to science the following:

- depth of insight into meaning and significance of the universe,
- deep morality based upon what it means to be human in the universe and to possess free will,
- integrated vision and articulation of human, social, and environmental wholeness.
- Insights from physics, astronomy, biology, chemistry, etc., will help expand our understanding and concept of the creative participation of God in human and universal reality.

Reboot! JP21 5-Session Introductory Course

Session Outlines and Presentations

<https://www.conspiritu.org/reboot---bigger-world.html>)

Walking the Path of Justice, Liberation, and Freedom

At the core of JP21 consciousness is the realization that all things, all beings are interconnected and that the well-being of one is dependent upon the well-being of all, and the reverse is true as well, that the well-being of all is connected with the well-being of each individual member of the world - animal, plant, mineral, water, and air. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King has expressed it succinctly: *"We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured."*

Jesus came to liberate humanity from the grip of systems of domination, violence, dehumanization, and spiritual abuse and ignorance. Any work we do to free people from the bondage to unjust systems anywhere is doing the work of Jesus. Any work to eradicate racism and white supremacy, end sexism, eliminate gender discrimination and homophobia, and promote equity and justice is doing the work of Jesus. Jesus came to the marginalized, the powerless, those cast out and cast aside by their society, those considered to be expendable by the rich, the elites, the military and those in power. He fed the hungry without a permit, healed the sick without payment, touched the untouchables, spoke with his culture's bitterest enemies, and spoke truth to military governors. He taught his followers (especially the men) not to worship power or privilege but to lay it aside and act as servant to others, especially those despised by society. In the midst of a brutal military occupation, he taught a [Nonviolent Third Way \(https://justfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Wink-Jesus-Third-Way.pdf\)](https://justfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Wink-Jesus-Third-Way.pdf) of responding to a domination system that was neither violent in return nor an obsequious capitulation to that oppression.

Conclusion

What's Next?

My hope in presenting this introductory five session course looking at the Reboot! JP21 approach to the Spiritual Path of Jesus has piqued your curiosity concerning what Jesus taught about life, love, and liberation. It may be that this is the first time you have considered the idea that Jesus actually taught a way of living that liberates us spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and socially. This may sound radically different from what you were taught in Sunday School and church, if you were raised in a church. It may sound radically different from the teachings and preaching of people you may have encountered who call themselves "Christian." It may be that you have been turned off by those teachings, but have wondered if there was more to who Jesus was, and what he taught. Perhaps you haven't ever associated with anything "Christian," but are interested in living a life that is integrated, that cares for the earth and seeks justice among persons. You may be seeking to transform your own life struggles as well as the world around you so that others might not face the same struggles.

Whatever has led you to this study, there is much more to explore. I invite you to dive deeper into the Jesus Path Life Operating System for the 21st Century by getting involved in a JP21 Via Vida group. **Via Vida** means "Way of Life," and the JP21 Via Vida is an in-depth exploration of and experimentation with the spiritual way of living that Jesus lived and taught. During this study of the JP21 Via Vida, you will discover how the Realm (or Kingdom) of Heaven isn't something that awaits us after death, but is a lived reality here on earth. It is a heightened awareness of the Divine Reality within us, and by accessing that Divine Reality we perceive and relate to the world around us differently. It is a practical and proactive way to engage our world with all its problems as well as potentials, and to be a part of making the world a more just, sustainable, and compassionate place.

Visit the JP21 website for further information and reading:

<https://www.conspiritu.org/reboot-jp21.html>. May you find this path to be a blessing and balm in your life, so you can in turn be a blessing and balm for our troubled and hurting world.