

The Deeply Formed Life by Rich Villodas

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The Deeply Formed Life

The Deeply Formed Life by Rich Villodas is a book aimed at the Church and people from all walks of life. He is a seminary graduate and Pastor of New Life Fellowship Church and shares his personal life experiences of spiritual formation. The text makes it plain that superficial spirituality is detrimental to our lives. Villodas calls attention to the spiritual journey forward and its purpose to draw closer to God to become deeply formed. The focus is on building a greater depth of character formation. This book teaches you how to interact with God through an ongoing transformation process in Christ. It also educates you on the importance of five spiritual values Contemplative Rhythms, Racial Justice, Interior Examination, Sexual Wholeness, and Missional Presence and how to change the perspective of the way one thinks. Villodas gives insight into how to keep oneself from burnout and experience life with God; to be present with God daily is to be formed by a contemplative rhythm. The five spiritual disciplines are the development of silent prayer, careful reading, the Sabbath, Stability, and contemplation. Doing so will allow us to have a relationship with Christ and have a deeply formed life. He makes the distinction between mindfulness and silent prayer.

Villodas discusses race and ethics types. He points out to first identify and reveal individual racial prejudice in oneself. It is clear to Villodas that each person has a bias fashioned by a specific historical context. He stresses the harmfulness of a lie that one race is superior to another. Villodas is thorough when it comes to individual racism, systemic institutional racism, white privilege, and its sin of it. The text specifies what racial reconciliation is and what is not. Another thing, Villodas does is address racial reconciliation, which is impossible to achieve without justice. Without a doubt, he is clear that it cannot happen if the abuses of power are not

held accountable for their actions toward the oppressed people. Furthermore, he explains the importance of a deeply formed life of reconciliation can only happen by being vulnerable, willing to engage, and attentive to everyone with an open mind speaking on race at the most uncomfortable time. In the text Villodas calls attention to sexuality.

I strongly agree with *The Deeply Formed Life* “One of the biggest challenges in the conversation on race is our refusal to do the work of identifying and exposing our individual racial prejudice. We have been socialized to see people in certain ways. This is a problem for all of us regardless of our skin color.”¹ The way I see it, taking the class on racial reconciliation helped me tremendously to understand racial identity development and how to view the conversations that shaped my thinking from childhood to adulthood on race, which allowed me to pinpoint my own racial biases. Self-examination is hard but worth it.

Another thing that I mostly agree with is Villodas “We are all in the same boat of needing a regular rhythm to help us to grow in awareness of our blind spots, shadow sides, and hidden sins.”² From my perspective, scripture should govern our hearts so we will not get tricked by the flesh to operate in it and sin against God. But there are times that I failed short because I did not apply the contemplative rhythms due to extreme tiredness, distractions, and overwhelmingness. With that said, the Holy Spirit illuminates my thinking and shows my weakness as I slowly meditate on what I read in the scripture and pray silently before him.

This book reveals my biblical worldview perspective. The authoritative Word of God impacts my life; I am abundantly clear that God wants me to practice justice by loving my neighbor and helping those who are spiritually destitute and impoverished. Practicing justice is

¹ Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life: Five Transformative Values to Root Us in the Way of Jesus* (Water Brook 2020), 56

² *Ibid.*, 127.

taking up one's cross-like Jesus did. According to Villodas, "Practicing justice is an act of joining God in seeing that the created order (people and everything else) receives what is due."³

My spiritual expectation is that I will continue to grow deeper in my relationship with Christ. And that the Holy Spirit will continuously draw me close through Scripture and that I will have divine encounters as I read the Word of God attentively. Villodas indicates, "The first movement is lectio, which means reading. But this is not a careless, flippant, perfunctory kind of reading. It's attentive reading."⁴

Furthermore, I agree with Villodas. "Deeply formed reconciliation can't happen without the spiritual discipline of lamenting."⁵ The way I see it drawing near to God and lingering in his presence is necessary. Doing this helps me to understand the spiritual disciplines more. Also, implementing them in my daily life has given me a closer walk with God. Lamenting helps me to cast my burden on God. As I pray, it helps me to process the grief, pain, deaths, hurts, torments, and disappointments in life. Also, lamenting helps me forgive others as I release the hurt to God, which has allowed me sometimes to resolve differences with others. Another point Villodas makes that I strongly agree with "It makes sense that a good place to begin self-examination is with our family of origin because it is the environment that has formatively shaped us. The developmental years of infancy, childhood, and adolescence have lasting effects on how we understand ourselves, others, and the world at large."⁶ From my perspective, without me looking at my family origin, I would not know just how much my family has impacted my life negatively and positively. Going in the presence of the Holy Spirit and lingering there has been beneficial. He has revealed many things from my childhood that cause me to stumble as an adult.

³ Ibid., 196.

⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁵ Ibid., 75.

⁶ Ibid., 111.

This book impacts my theology. It allows me to see that God commands his children to embrace the gift of the Sabbath rest so that we can enter His presence and be present to God. This book impacts my anticipated ministry for racial justice. The book gives me a broader viewpoint and insight into biblical justice. It helps me understand clearer the fight for social justice. Jesus stood for justice, so should I. Also, the book teaches me the importance of the Sabbath rest to keep me from burnout.