

SANCTUARY OF THE SOUL

Dealing with Everyday Difficulties – Part 1



SANCTUARY OF THE SOUL

Based on the book:

*Sanctuary of the Soul: Journey into
Meditative Prayer by Richard Foster,
InterVarsity Press, 2011.*



Opening Prayer from Lindisfarne, a Celtic Tradition

*Circle us, Lord,
keep protection near
and danger afar.*

Circle us, Lord,

*keep light near
and darkness afar.*

*Circle us, Lord,
keep peace within;
keep evil out.*

*In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*



Our Wandering Mind

- ❖ Wired culture is making more apparent our problem with distraction
- ❖ Foster names this our nation's number one spiritual issue
- ❖ Many worship services seem designed to facilitate distraction in place of prayer
 - ❖ May even discourage us from entering the presence of God

How to Handle Distraction

- ❖ Be patient with yourself
 - ❖ Distraction is a habit cultivated by years of practice
- ❖ *The first thing to remember is not to get impatient with yourself. Do not cramp yourself in despair at the wandering of your thoughts. Just sit down each day and wait patiently. If your thoughts keep running away, do not attempt to restrict them. It is no bother to let them run on to their destination; then, however, take up the place or the person to whom they have strayed into your prayers. In this way you will find yourself back at the text, and the minutes of such digressions will not be wasted and will not trouble you.* Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Meditation for Distraction Reduction



- ❖ Learning about the chaos within us can be a valuable lesson
- ❖ Foster takes note of those tasks and people that come to his attention
 - ❖ Putting these “stray” thoughts on paper allows him to enter more deeply into the presence of God
- ❖ Some “intruding thoughts” may be calling us to attention
 - ❖ If a thought keeps recurring, befriend it and bring it with you into God’s presence
- ❖ Consider “fasting” from electronic devices
 - ❖ 1 hour a day
 - ❖ 1 day a week
 - ❖ 1 week a year

Consider Poetry

- ❖ Beautiful poetry may be helpful in overcoming distraction
- ❖ The concise language expressing multiple layers of meaning may slow down our internal patter and help us focus on the beauty of the Lord
- ❖ The multiple layers of meaning contained in many poems will require more than one reading to reach a more complete understanding of the poem's message
- ❖ Untangling the metaphors of poetry will lead us to focus on the metaphor and its meaning to our lives



A Taste of John Donne

*Batter my heart, three-personed God; for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me; and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.*

From Holy Sonnets

A Taste of George Herbert

*If as a Flower doth spread and die,
Thou wouldst extend me to some good,
Before I were by frost's extremity
Nipt in the bud.*

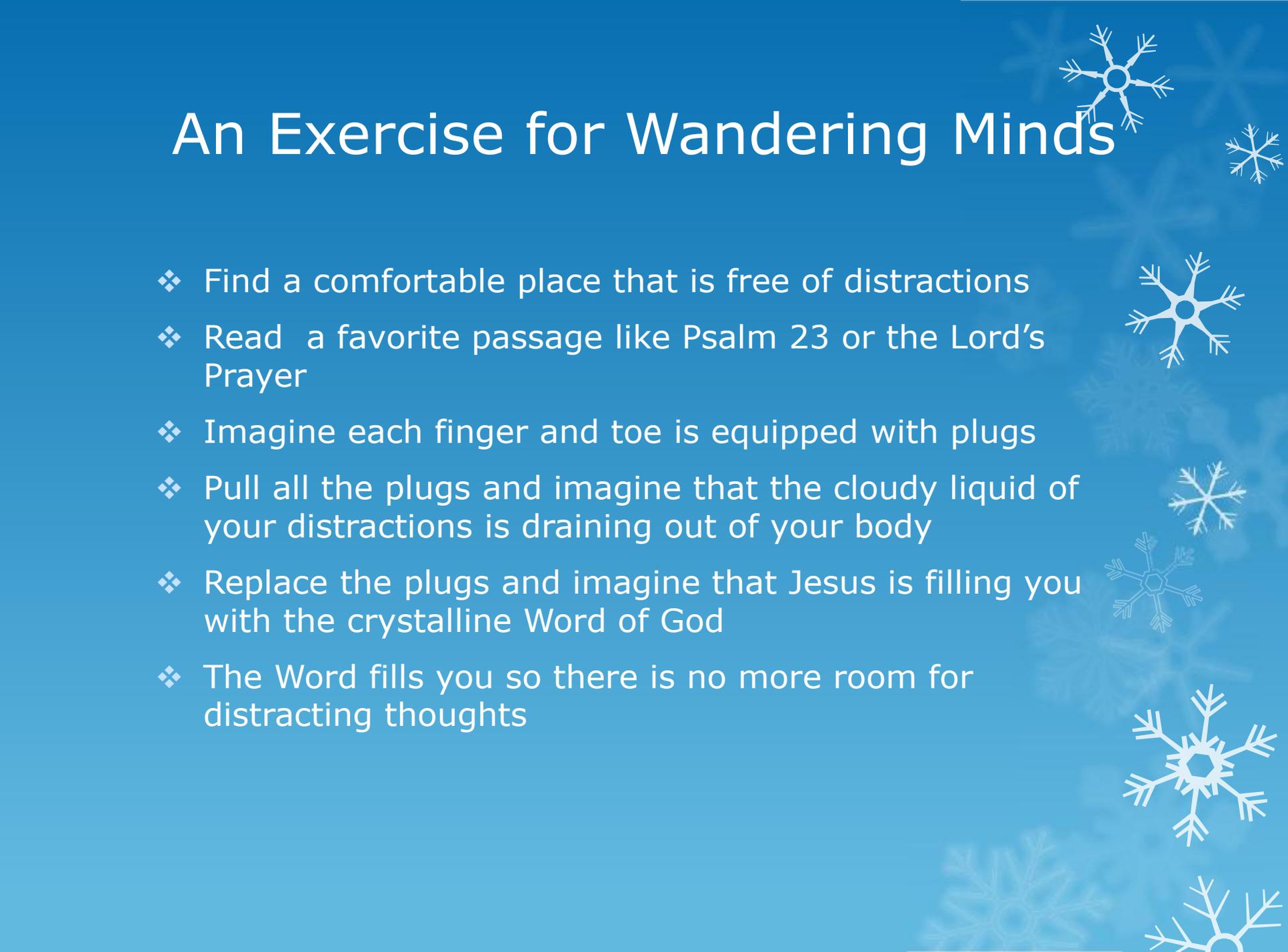
From The Temple

A Taste of Robert Siegel

*Yellow flames flutter
About the feeder:
A Pentecost of finches*



An Exercise for Wandering Minds

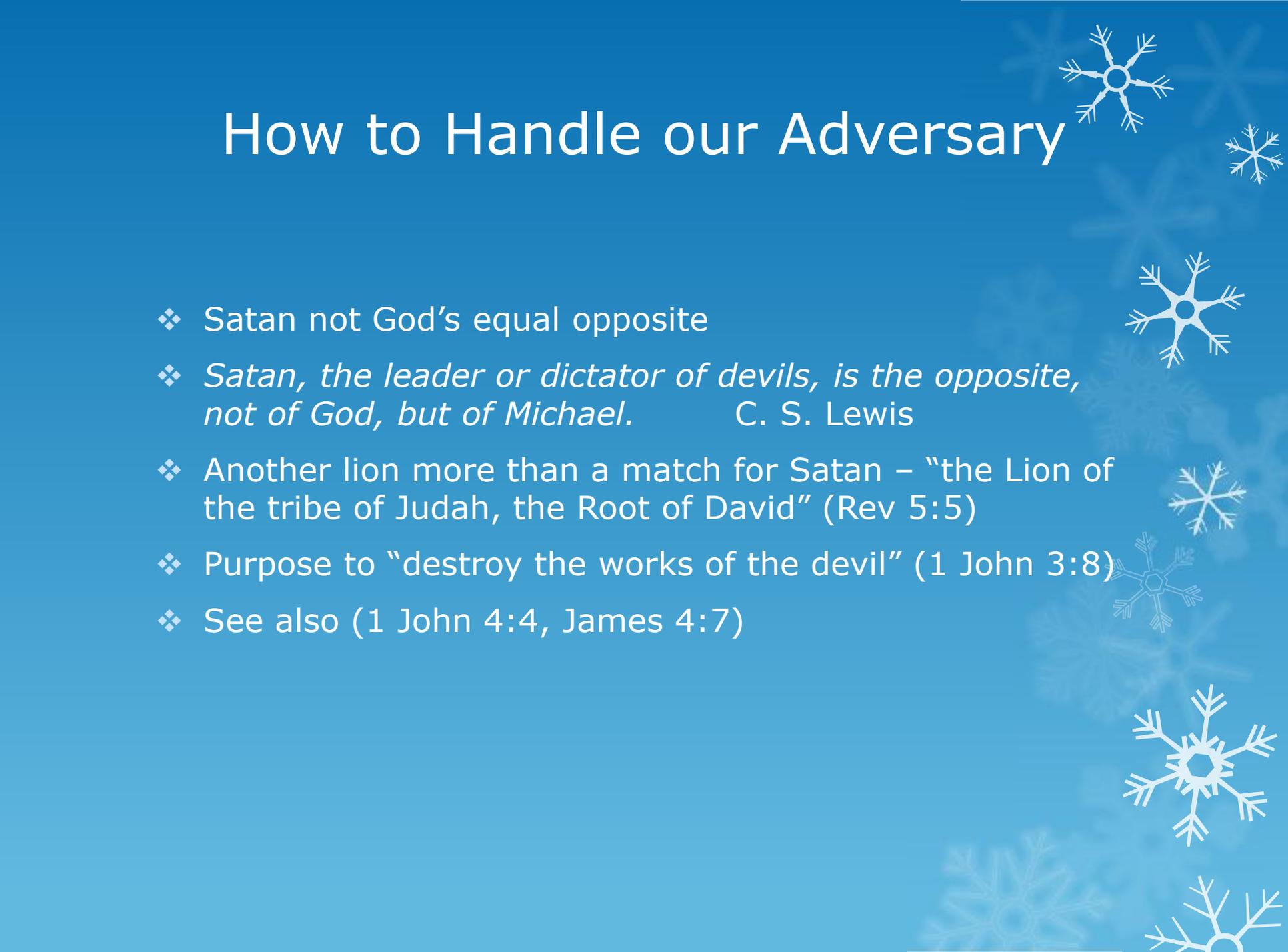


- ❖ Find a comfortable place that is free of distractions
- ❖ Read a favorite passage like Psalm 23 or the Lord's Prayer
- ❖ Imagine each finger and toe is equipped with plugs
- ❖ Pull all the plugs and imagine that the cloudy liquid of your distractions is draining out of your body
- ❖ Replace the plugs and imagine that Jesus is filling you with the crystalline Word of God
- ❖ The Word fills you so there is no more room for distracting thoughts

The Trouble with Angels

- ❖ Angels are found often in the Bible where their appearance invariably causes fear and panic (Luke 1:12)
- ❖ Angels are numerous (Rev. 5:11)
- ❖ Angels subject to temptation and sin as we are
- ❖ Some of these angels chose to oppose God – we know them as Satan and his devils
- ❖ Called the devil, Beelzebub (Matt 10:25), the ruler of this world (John 14:30), the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8)

How to Handle our Adversary



- ❖ Satan not God's equal opposite
- ❖ *Satan, the leader or dictator of devils, is the opposite, not of God, but of Michael.* C. S. Lewis
- ❖ Another lion more than a match for Satan – “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” (Rev 5:5)
- ❖ Purpose to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8)
- ❖ See also (1 John 4:4, James 4:7)

An Exercise for Wandering Minds

- ❖ Find a comfortable place that is free of distractions
- ❖ Read a favorite passage like Psalm 23 or the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6: 9-13)
- ❖ Imagine each finger and toe is equipped with plugs
- ❖ Pull all the plugs and imagine that the cloudy liquid of your distractions is draining out of your body
- ❖ Replace the plugs and imagine that Jesus is filling you with the crystalline Word of God
- ❖ The Word fills you so there is no more room for distracting thoughts

Preview of Next Week

- ❖ We will look at Jesus' temptation as a model for us
- ❖ Matthew 4:1-11
- ❖ Luke 4:1-13
- ❖ Mark 1:12-13

