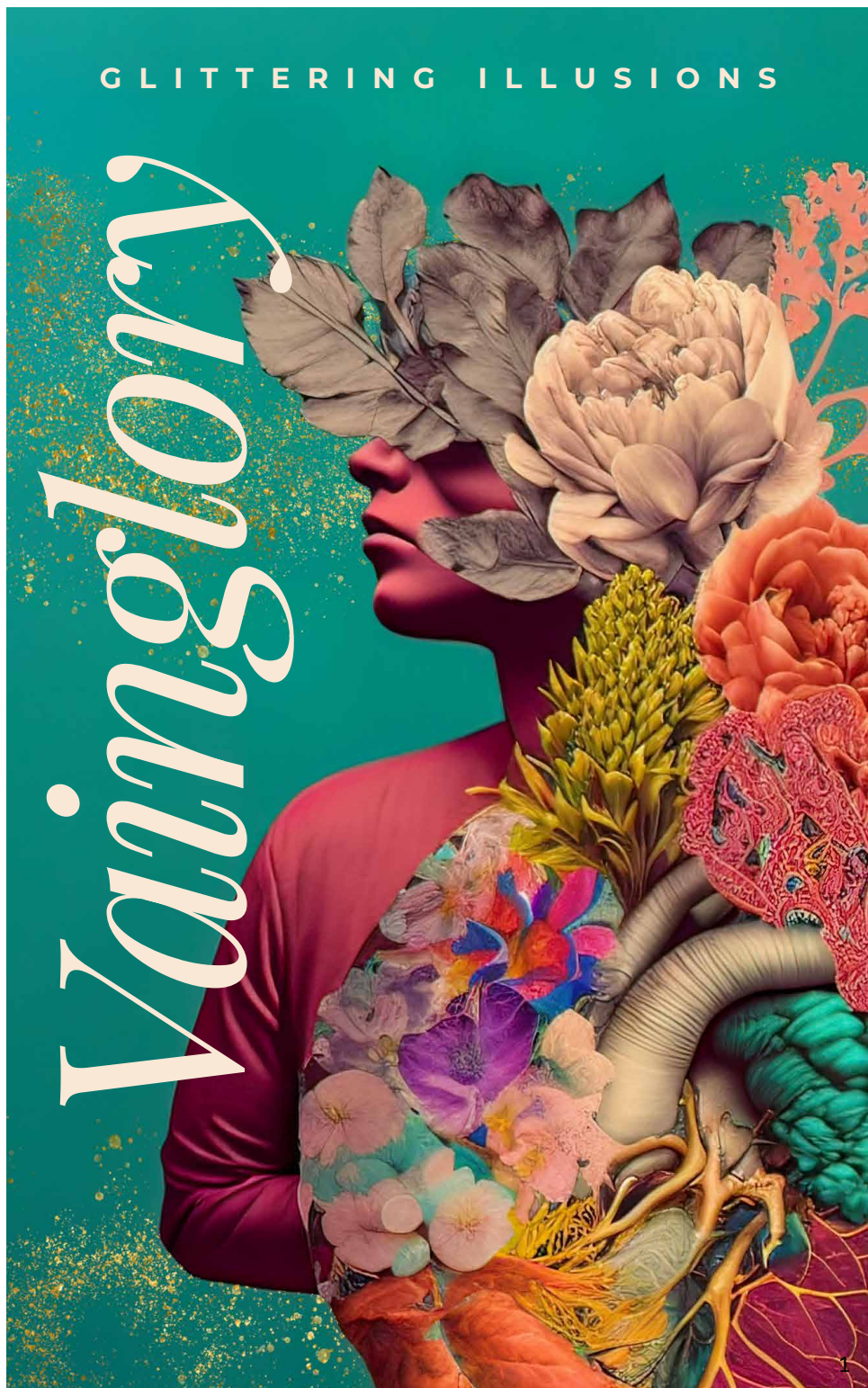


GLITTERING ILLUSIONS

Vergil



Voignia



SCRIPTURE

Galatians 5:19-26 + Luke 6:43-45

Vainglory is the excessive and disordered desire for recognition and approval from others.

In other words, when we live in the illusion of vainglory, we operate from the belief that image is everything (heard of Dutch fronts, anyone?). Actual achievement matters less than recognition; reality matters less than appearances. Those things for which we long to be noticed may be “big”—career success, material possessions, academic or athletic feats—or they may be “every day” kinds of things—the style of our clothes, our kids’ success, or even seemingly godly traits such as how frugal or self-sacrificing we are. Whatever image we attempt to present, vainglory motivates us to pay whatever cost required to be thought of well. We hope to impress others with successes or qualities we may not actually have and that do not really matter.

Whether our motivation is pride—protecting a reputation which deems us “good”—or fear—the dread of being exposed as “not good enough”—vainglory inherently produces isolation and loneliness. We can forget the truth of who we are and, as a result, limit our ability to deeply connect with others and live in the fullness of who God created us to be.

*“Vainglory provides a cheap substitute for true fulfillment of the human desire to be profoundly known by another person—to be known by name, for who we truly are—and to be loved just that way.” **

So, what do we do when we recognize ways we’ve accepted the illusion of vainglory, but we want to live a life of authenticity and connection?

Practice

SILENCE + SOLITUDE

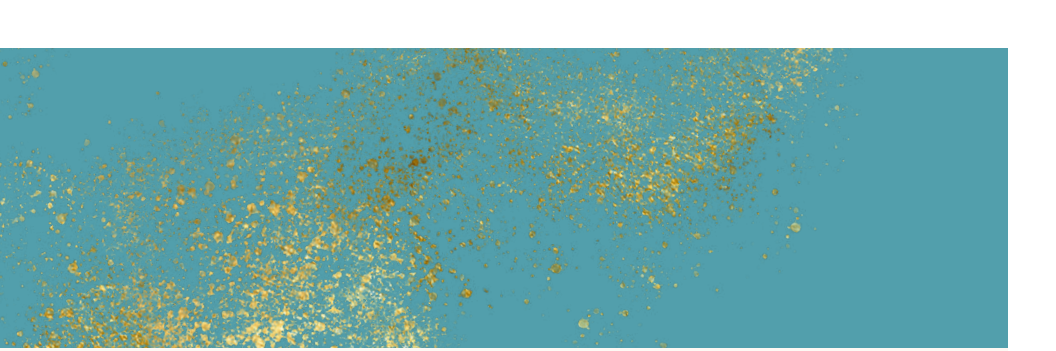
According to Richard Foster, “Regular practice of the discipline of silence quietly weans us off our overdependence on human approval ratings. It also provides a break from the voices clamoring with disapproval, including our own.” Similarly, solitude “‘frees us from the panicked need for acclaim and approval’ by removing our audience,” making space for God to “...fulfill our deep desire to be known, to be acknowledged, and to be accepted with unconditional love.”

SILENCE

This week, let your actions speak for themselves and intentionally keep the focus on others during conversations (in person or online). Mute your need to justify or defend yourself, offer your opinion, or share stories about your own situations or achievements.

As you remain quiet, notice what your internal voice tells you. Observe, welcome, and name (OWN) the feelings that stir as you allow others to think whatever they choose about you. What does it tell you about the ways you typically engage in conversation—do you often turn the attention to yourself? Are you more often attempting to promote or protect yourself?

When you are silent, what emotions rise in you? Do you



feel anxious or panicked? Numb and confused? Or maybe more settled and at peace? Are you able to simply listen to another?

A simple idea: consider fasting from social media this week as you practice silence. Simply let each moment be a moment with no need to share about it, creating space for a deeper glimpse of yourself.

SOLITUDE

As you spend time alone with God this week, invite Him to speak to you about your true identity. Ask Him this: if He were to introduce you to a room full of people, what would He say about you?

Notice the first thing that comes to mind—a word, phrase, image, title, character trait, etc. Welcome and receive what He says, even—maybe especially—if it is something you never would have said about yourself.

Does what He spoke to you make you feel loved? Does it feel authentic to who you are and who you long to be?

If nothing comes to mind, that's okay! Return to the question each day until you hear His voice of love speaking over you.

Pastoral Word

+ NEXT STEPS

Don't be surprised if both silence and solitude feel uncomfortable at first. Start small, be gracious with yourself, and create an intentional space to allow the places we seek "vainglory" to become known. Consider finding someone safe to share your experience with who can bear witness to the real you and what you see God doing.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Do you have a trusted friend you can share with?
- Attend our Generational Healing Service November 15.
- Consider meeting with a Spiritual Director.
- Schedule a session with our Care and Prayer team using the QR code below.





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