



*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them...—John 6:44*

Seventeenth-century Isaac Newton's invention of modern physics and calculus changed the way we think. His model for understanding the world involved a direct cause-and-effect relationship:  $A + B + C = \text{Predictable Outcomes}$ .

This worldview continues to influence our approach to the Christian life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:  $\text{Spiritual disciplines} + \text{Frequency} + \text{Willpower} = \text{Spiritual growth}$ .

We set a goal, harness our willpower, and do the required work to produce spiritual growth: Bible study, prayer, attending church, tithing, sharing our faith, etc.

Surprisingly, perhaps, that approach doesn't work in the spiritual life.

We can't manufacture a relationship with Jesus. We will inevitably get stuck in a spiritual cul-de-sac, going around in circles of religious activity through cycles of start-up and burnout, fueled by hope and desire, before being bullied along by guilt and shame.

Jesus says we come into a relationship with him only as his Father "draws us in by the power of inward attraction."<sup>1</sup> That drawing begins with heart's desire.

A relationship with Jesus is a lived response to a sacred invitation.

Unless we make room to listen and respond to this invitation, we can be involved in endless religious activity and yet miss the very reason we were created.

## Question

What is your experience of being *invited* into a relationship with Jesus?

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<sup>1</sup> New Testament Greek, *helkyo*.