

a Spiritual PhotoWalk

a spiritual practice of awareness & paying attention

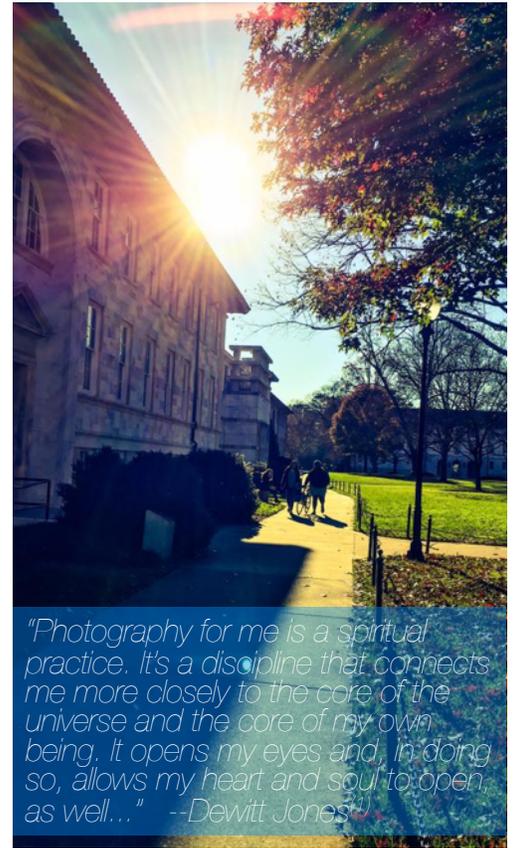
Rev. Joseph McBrayer, DM715 Fall 2016

What is a PhotoWalk?

"PhotoWalks" likely originate with Camera Clubs in 1880's and the advent of affordable cameras. "PhotoWalking," as we know it, was brought back into vogue and terminology in the early 2000's by photography tours, groups, and other photographers⁽²⁾. PhotoWalking can be done as an individual or communal exercise and by people of all ages, abilities, and experience in photography. *Any camera will do--even your smart phone.*

The purpose of a photowalk is to pay attention to and take photos of things that interest you, and, this can be a *spiritual exercise in paying attention*. Later we can reflect on those images, our experience, and how our images might "speak" to us in regard to our emotions, our minds, and our spirits. The capturing of a photo is a still moment in time that marks our unique perspective of a scene, an object, or a person, and, that marks *US* as well in a particular time, place, and space in our lives.

A spiritual photowalk invites us to pay attention in our communities--to take time to be in our communities and notice things we normally rush or drive past--to look at the centers and the margins of our communities and the events, spaces, gifts, and people in our communities. A spiritual photowalk helps us to literally *see* and *capture* moments and opportunities in our communities. It helps us to notice the convergences and boundaries in our communities as they flow together--all while we move amongst these boundaries capturing images with our cameras noticing the light, lines, shapes, and textures we encounter in community.



"Photography for me is a spiritual practice. It's a discipline that connects me more closely to the core of the universe and the core of my own being. It opens my eyes and, in doing so, allows my heart and soul to open, as well..." --Dewitt Jones⁽¹⁾



PLAN: *People* // A photowalk can be done alone or together with 1-3+ people. If going in a group, are they people you know well? Are they familiar with your community or cultures?

the process

Time of day // When do you want to do this? At a typical time you're in this community? At "magic light" (dawn/dusk) or at night using artificial lights? *Your schedule may dictate exactly how long your walk is, but plan accordingly for a 5 min desk break or a 3 hour community walk.*

Weather // What will the weather be? How will this impact your images and you? Will it be sunny? Rainy? (*be sure to bring along an umbrella*), Cloudy? Windy? Cold/Hot? Your favorite or least favorite season? *How will the weather impact what you see and capture? (ponder as you walk)*

Location // Will you go to the boundaries/edges of your community? Into the heart of your community? Into a space you always drive/travel by but never walk/move in? Maybe go walk through a friends' community?

GO: So put on some comfy shoes, grab a water bottle and a snack, and go walk, move, or roll and take photos and be *mindful--maybe offer a prayer or have a mantra/theme scripture/breath prayer to guide you*. Don't get hung up on the images themselves or the taking of the images--look at it just long enough to notice the image and be sure it's "good".

Be aware of your own body and how it feels traveling through space--do you notice things differently because you have a camera in your hands?

1) Dewitt Jones, in "Realizations: What is Outdoor Photography to You? Outdoor Photographer, May 2012. <http://www.outdoorphotographer.com/pro-perspectives/dewitt-jones/realizations/>. Accessed 10.19.2016. 2) "Photowalking" in Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photowalking>. Accessed 10.19.2016.

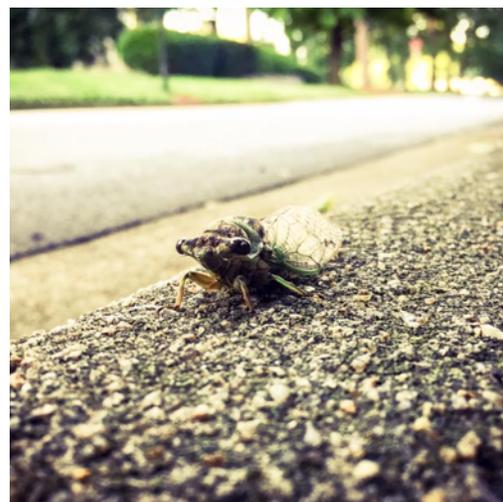
TAKE PHOTOS: *Pay attention to the focus of your images: are you walking through nature? Streets? A neighborhood? People? (you'll need permission or photograph each other as a fun way to do this) Try taking photos from different angles: low and high--vary the perspective from which you take photos (be sure to look up and down). // Move your body to capture the images: don't use the zoom feature on your camera lens or the phone (get better images by moving your camera and your own body closer to the subject and frame the image properly), and think "wide-medium-narrow" when taking multiple photos of 1 object/subject.*

REFLECT: *Afterward, take a look at the photos: Remember the walk/ride and the people with you. Look back through the images: What's in the image? What emotions does it brings up in you, what do you notice or not in the 1st/2nd/3rd time looking at the image. Pair the images with something spiritual--a text/scripture/poem/another image perhaps.*

What do the images and your experience say about God? The Creation? Your Neighbors and Community? What might be the "Gospel from the neighborhood" to help you see the assets and gifts in your community?

SHARE: *Print out the photos or put them on a computer/tablet/phone to share with a friend or a fellow photo walker, or print them and paste into a journal/scrapbook to write around the images, or share on social media with your thoughts on spirituality as captions, or any other combination.*

*May we see our community in new and living color
as the obliviousness of our eyes fades away
and God's Spirit reveals the gifts and beauty of our communities;
that we might be more aware of what God is doing in the world
and go to join in God's work.
In the name of God our Creator,
Christ our Redeemer, and the Spirit our Sustainer, Amen.*



A Spiritual
Photowalk
the process

