

## Spiritual Disciplines

“...train yourself for godliness” - 1 Tim 4:7

### Context

- \_\_\_\_\_ – We see the concept, commands to practice, and examples spread across scripture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Falls under sanctification in the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) in sanctification. It is not what makes us acceptable to God. It is the outworking of our justification where God makes us become in reality what he declared us to be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Spiritual disciplines help us become the destination (disciple) we are proclaiming.

### Why are they needed?

- Biblical expectation that we \_\_\_\_\_
  - Commanded to \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves for the purpose of godliness (1 Tim 4:7-8)
  - Commanded to \_\_\_\_\_ (Lev 19:2; Matt 5:48)
- Jesus’ expectation that we \_\_\_\_\_
  - Jesus assumes we will \_\_\_\_\_ (Jn 14:15; 14:21; 15:14)
  - Making disciples involves teaching people to \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt 28:20)
- Grow in freedom
  - You can either remain a slave to \_\_\_\_\_ or become a slave to \_\_\_\_\_.  
Becoming more like Jesus is the path to freedom
  - Leads to greater \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with God

### What is a spiritual discipline?

- **Definition:** A \_\_\_\_\_ in cooperation with the Holy Spirit for the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Purpose of training - to develop the ability to do something when called upon.
- Spiritual disciplines are training to help us \_\_\_\_\_ who can obey God when called upon in a specific situation.

### How do we engage in a spiritual discipline, and how does it work?

- **General pattern** - Lead with the \_\_\_\_\_ to open the \_\_\_\_\_ to the Spirit
  - Engaging in a discipline is within our \_\_\_\_\_. We are not\_\_\_\_\_.
  - The core of every spiritual discipline is not the \_\_\_\_\_ of what we are doing, but the opening of our hearts to God through that action. It is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the truth of \_\_\_\_\_ (good and bad) with the truth of \_\_\_\_\_(his character and desires)\*\*
    - Not about transforming ourselves by our own strength, but opening us to the transforming power of God (Col 2:20-23; Gal 3:2-3)
    - If practiced rightly, a spiritual discipline will force us to examine an area of our heart in light of \_\_\_\_\_ and will present an opportunity for us to exercise \_\_\_\_\_.
- **Challenges**
  - Three primary temptations:
    - To hide from \_\_\_\_\_ - rather than letting them expose our guilt and drive us to God for pardon.
    - To cover our \_\_\_\_\_ - rather than trusting in Christ's covering righteousness
    - To seek \_\_\_\_\_ more than the movement of the HS, even if it is uncomfortable or painful
  - Seasonal & circumstantial challenges:
    - \_\_\_\_\_ – Your stage of life carries different activities, time, and relational commitments.
    - \_\_\_\_\_ – On vacation, crunch time at work, lack of sleep, holidays.
    - \_\_\_\_\_ – God may be working in an area of your life where you need to focus your attention

### What disciplines should I engage in?

- 2 Categories
  - **Spiritual** \_\_\_\_\_ – Classical disciplines that help maintain an ongoing turning of the heart toward God and away from the world and the flesh.
    - Examples: Solitude, Bible study and meditation, Prayer, Stewardship

- **Spiritual** \_\_\_\_\_ – Time-boxed, specific plans to grow with the Spirit in an area of Godliness
  - Ask this question – What \_\_\_\_\_ must I become to live out this command from the heart?
- Creating a Plan
  - Keep it simple – Simple is sustainable. Long term faithfulness is what leads to change.
  - Think through your schedule – Daily, weekly, monthly, yearly
  - Write it down!
  - Share it

### Resources

- Donald Whitney, *Disciplines for the Christian Life*
- Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*
- Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*
- John Coe - <http://open.biola.edu/collections/spiritual-formation-lecture-series>
- Steve Macchia – *Crafting a Rule of Life*

### Disciplines

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Solitude</li> <li>● Simplicity</li> <li>● Silence</li> <li>● Fasting</li> <li>● Secrecy</li> <li>● Study</li> <li>● Meditation</li> <li>● Memorization</li> <li>● Worship</li> <li>● Celebration</li> <li>● Service</li> <li>● Evangelism</li> <li>● Prayer</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sabbath</li> <li>● Retreat</li> <li>● Fixed-Hour Prayer</li> <li>● Confession</li> <li>● Submission</li> <li>● Journaling</li> <li>● Guidance / Spiritual Direction</li> </ul> |
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## Assignment

This week you will practice creating a spiritual regimen to grow in a specific area. Follow the steps below to create your regimen, then practice it for a week. Upon completion, write a brief reflection (250-300 words) on the experience.

### **Steps to create are spiritual regimen**

1. Find time (20-30 min) and a place away from distraction. Get a pen and paper.
2. Pray – *Lord Jesus, I consecrate myself and this time to you. Please lead me. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, oh Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Ps 19:14)*
3. Remain in silence for 2-3 minutes so your thoughts can settle. If any to-do's come to mind, jot them down on a piece of paper and place it aside.
4. Ask the Lord if there is any area of your life where you need to grow in the fruit of the Spirit or other spiritual virtue. Write it down.
5. Prayerfully write out how you can practice that virtue/fruit in a concrete way, depending on the Holy Spirit, each day this week.

### **Examples**

- Grow in love of God – Take a different attribute of God each day. Read an associated scripture 2-3 times. Meditate on that scripture for 10 minutes, considering how you and others have encountered God in this way. How does this aspect of His character impact you?
- Grow in humility – Practice secrecy by seeking out a way to serve someone each day without being noticed or thanked.
- Grow in joy – Take 5 minutes at the end of each day to write out what you are thankful for from the day. Pray and praise God for these things and for His goodness.
- Grow in contentment – Fast from media during in-between times for a week. Instead of filling the void with noise, fill your heart and mind with scripture. Select 2-3 passages to memorize and meditate on when you would normally listen to music or read your phone.

### **Reflection**

Reflect on your experience with creating and practicing a spiritual regimen. Write your response in 250-300 words and send to Scott via Realm or print/write out and drop off in your table folder.

- What was easy about this experience? What was challenging? Anything surprising?
- How might you practice creating a spiritual regimen on a more regular basis?