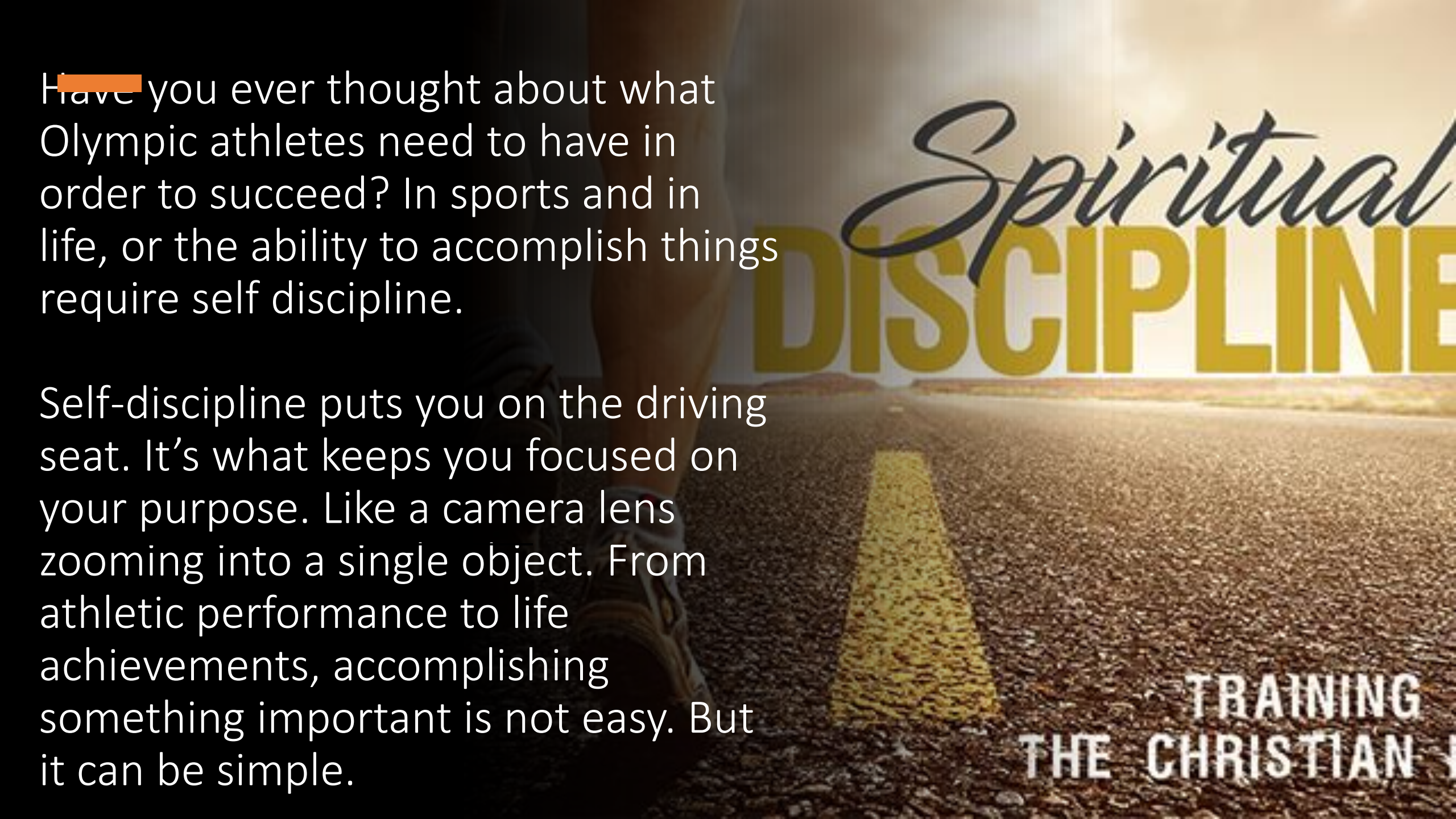




Spiritual **DISCIPLINES**

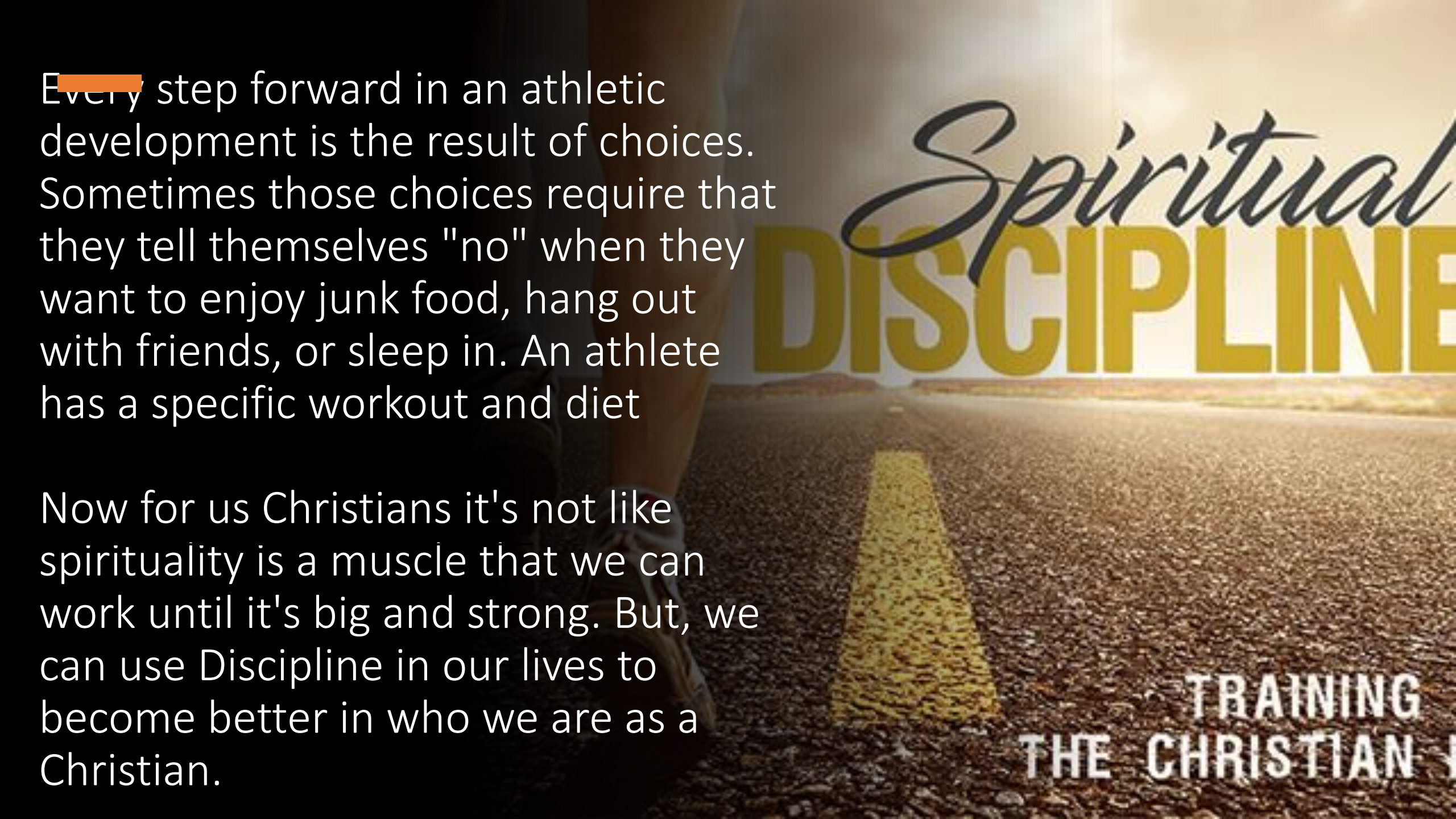
TRAINING FOR
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The background image shows a person's legs and feet running on a paved road. A yellow dashed line runs down the center of the road, receding into the distance. The words "Spiritual" in a cursive font and "DISCIPLINE" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font are overlaid on the right side of the image. The overall tone is motivational and focused on personal growth.

Have you ever thought about what Olympic athletes need to have in order to succeed? In sports and in life, or the ability to accomplish things require self discipline.

Self-discipline puts you on the driving seat. It's what keeps you focused on your purpose. Like a camera lens zooming into a single object. From athletic performance to life achievements, accomplishing something important is not easy. But it can be simple.

TRAINING
THE CHRISTIAN

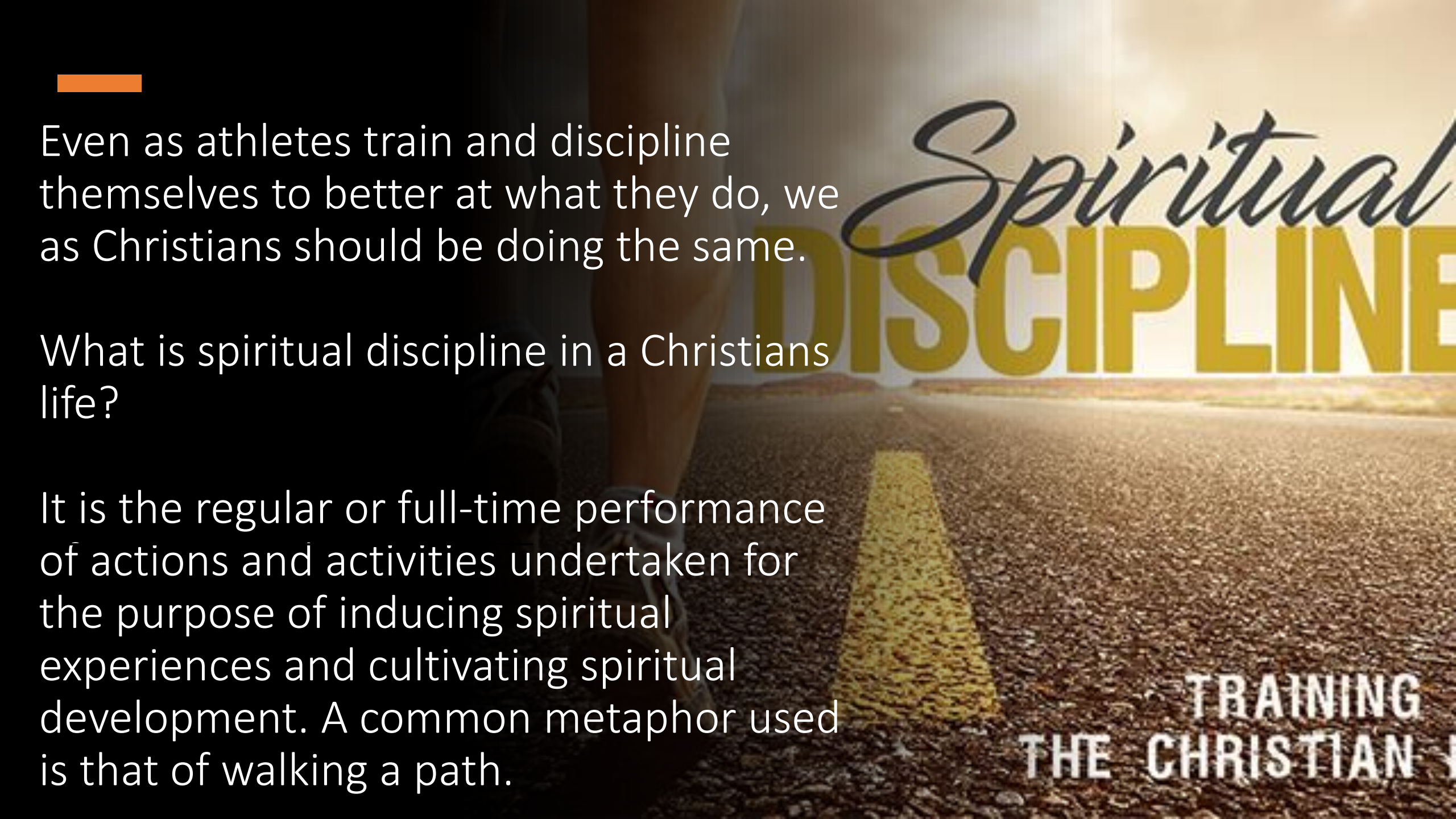


Every step forward in an athletic development is the result of choices. Sometimes those choices require that they tell themselves "no" when they want to enjoy junk food, hang out with friends, or sleep in. An athlete has a specific workout and diet

Now for us Christians it's not like spirituality is a muscle that we can work until it's big and strong. But, we can use Discipline in our lives to become better in who we are as a Christian.

Spiritual DISCIPLINE

TRAINING
THE CHRISTIAN



Even as athletes train and discipline themselves to better at what they do, we as Christians should be doing the same.

What is spiritual discipline in a Christians life?

It is the regular or full-time performance of actions and activities undertaken for the purpose of inducing spiritual experiences and cultivating spiritual development. A common metaphor used is that of walking a path.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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THE CHRISTIAN**

Some spiritual disciplines are personal, inward exercises that are practiced alone; others require interpersonal relationships and are practiced in community.

A number of practices have been proposed that might be considered spiritual disciplines.

These include: Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Simplicity, Fellowship, Chastity, Stewardship, Submission/Obedience, Study, Contemplation, Self-Examination just to name a few.

Spiritual
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Self Def:

Spiritual disciplines are habits, practices, and experiences that are designed to develop, grow, and strengthen certain qualities of spirit — to build the “muscles” of one's character and expand the breadth of one's inner life.

They structure the “workouts” which train the soul.

TRAINING
THE CHRISTIAN

We read in Hebrews chapter 11 over 10 examples of people who lived by faith (called the “great cloud of witnesses”) These men and women were disciplined in their faith which helped them do amazing things for the kingdom of God.

Three reasons to discipline ourselves:

1. Spiritual Discipline helps lay aside the weight of any personal sin you carry
2. Spiritual Discipline helps us mature (grow) in our faith
3. Spiritual Discipline helps increase joy

Spiritual DISCIPLINE

TRAINING
THE CHRISTIAN

1. Way For Spiritual Discipline is: Discipline Your Devotions

1 Timothy 2:8 says - I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

What happens, many fail in the Christian life. They do not discipline themselves when it comes to their daily devotions. Folks we must make time for God—to read, to pray, and to meditate on God's Word each day, giving Him first place in our lives. Why?

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

**TRAINING
THE CHRISTIAN**

The background of the slide features a person's legs and feet running on a paved road. A large, stylized graphic of the words 'Spiritual Discipline' is overlaid on the right side. 'Spiritual' is in a dark blue script font, and 'Discipline' is in a large, bold, yellow sans-serif font. The road has a yellow dashed line in the center, and the scene is lit with a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset.

1. Way For Spiritual Discipline is: Discipline Your Devotions

Matthew 6:33 tells us - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

So the more we Discipline our Devotions to serving him, as in accordance to his words, the more that's added to us in doing so.

TRAINING
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2. Way For Spiritual Discipline is: Discipline Your Doubts

Matthew 21:21 - And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.

Some people nurture negative thoughts and doubts. This causes discouragement and failure. Discipline our thinking, refusing to allow doubts to linger too long. We drive away doubts by replacing them with thoughts of faith.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

**TRAINING
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2. Way For Spiritual Discipline is: Discipline Your Doubts

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Do not let Doubt master you and your thoughts, Let Jesus master them instead.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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3. Way For Spiritual Discipline is: Discipline Your Desires

Colossians 3:2 says - Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

We live in a materialistic society. The souls of millions have been captured by affluent living: Selfish, sensual, and sinful goals.

Some pursue the things of the world to gratify themselves and the enemy uses those things of the world to draw you away from staying close to God. So to fend off these things we must discipline our desires.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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3. Way For Spiritual Discipline is: Discipline Your Desires

We must continually discipline ourselves to focus on eternal realities, instead of the temporal realities of this earth. A Christian's life is no longer dictated by this world but is hidden with Christ.

This is why we must do as James instructs us to do in, James 4:7-8 - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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THE CHRISTIAN**

3. Way For Spiritual Discipline is: Discipline Your Desires

Here James is telling us 4 ways we are to do this and they are:

1. Humble yourselves before God
2. Resist the devil
3. Wash your hands . . . purify your hearts”
(that is, lead a pure life)
4. Let there be tears for what you have done, Meaning Godly sorrow produces repentance. Where 2 Corinthians 7:10 says
- For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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4. Way For Spiritual Discipline is: Discipline Your Duties

First, we have a Christian duty to serve each other. 1 Peter 4:10 - As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

It is in our service that all will see God's grace in our actions as we demonstrate our faith, because a lack of discipline causes many to waste time or spend it selfishly. They neglect church attendance and fail to accomplish God's work. They fail to live like Jesus.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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4. Way For Spiritual Discipline is: Discipline Your Duties

We must be faithful to God, allowing and making time for His work. We must witness to the lost and seek to bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ including you who are called by Christ Jesus. Don't waste what he has given you folks.

Spiritual
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Types of spiritual discipline.

There are many different spiritual disciplines that can be developed. Let's look at four of the most crucial:

A. Personal devotions. It is very important that as believers we set aside a time to spend with God daily. Regular devotional or quiet time as it is also called helps the believer to make spending time with God a priority, helps them develop a close relationship with the Lord, and receives strength and wisdom for daily situations and challenges.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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A productive devotional time must have the following

- **A consistent time**: Early morning hours or even at night. It depends!
- **A quiet place free from distraction**: Phone, computer, social media, etc.
- **Tools**: A Bible, pen, and journal to write down notes.
- **Time spent in praise and worship**: Read a passage of scripture and spend time meditating in it. End with a time of prayer.
- The amount of time spent is not as important as the quality of time spent.

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B. Studying the Bible

The Bible is God's word. Jesus says in John 6:63, "My words are spirit, and they are life." There are **three levels of study of God's word** that we as Christians should partake of:

- **Read**. It is a good habit to spend time just reading the Bible to get a general overview of it. Many Bible reading plans can be found online, through Bible apps or you can develop your own plan. For example, you may decide to read through the Gospels, the epistles, or the historical books of the Bible.

Spiritual
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B. Studying the Bible

Meditate. To meditate is to mutter- to say over and over again. It carries the idea of a cow chewing its cud—the cow chews, swallows, regurgitates, and chews again.

In the same way, meditation involves reflecting on a portion of God's word, thinking and processing it in the mind, saying it aloud until you understand it on a deeper level and until the truth sinks into your heart.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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THE CHRISTIAN**

B. Studying the Bible

Think of the word of God as an onion- you can peel away layer after layer of meaning and understanding as the Holy Spirit reveals it. The word of God is called a seed- like a natural seed, the word must be planted in your heart until it becomes rooted and grounded in you. Through meditation, our thinking is changed into conformity to God's word—our minds are renewed. Remember that the goal of meditation as well as all other forms of Bible study is to become doers of the word rather than mere hearers (James 1:21-22, Joshua 1:8)

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B. Studying the Bible

Benefits of meditation

(Proverbs 4: 20-24; Joshua 1:8; Mark 4)

- The word of God becomes rooted in one's heart.
- The word of God will bear fruit.
- The word of God will keep you from sin.
- The word of God is medicine.
- The word of God will produce success and prosperity.
- The word of God will cause transformation.
- The word of God will bring freedom

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Whereas reading gives you a precursory understanding of the Word of God, studying the Word is more in-depth.

Bible study seeks to answer the following questions: who wrote it, to whom is the passage or book written, why was it written, when was it written and where was it written, or the conditions of the one writing and those receiving it. For an in-depth Bible study, it is essential to have a Study Bible- at least one that gives a brief synopsis of each book. Another good tool that is beneficial to have for Bible study is a concordance.

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The languages of the Bible are Hebrews for the Old Testament and Greek for the New.

A concordance is used to locate passages in the Bible. An exhaustive concordance will have every word in the Bible and all passages where the word can be found. A good concordance will also have the words of the Bible in the original languages, Hebrews and Greek. You can look up the English word and find the meaning of the word in the original language. Nowadays you can download Bible apps on your phone and many of these apps have concordances included

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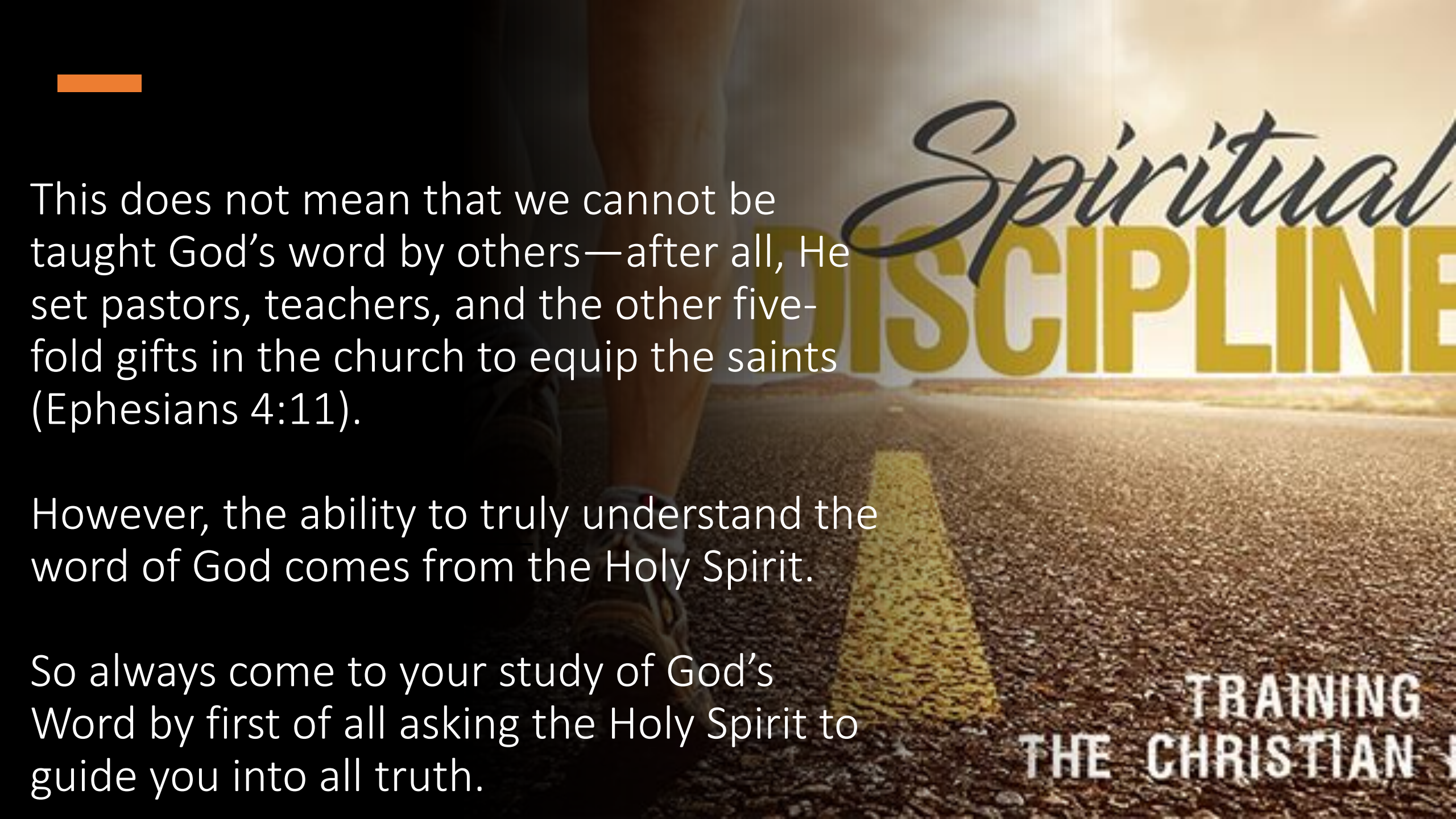
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Other helpful tools for study include a biblical dictionary and commentaries. A Bible dictionary helps us to understand the culture, language and peoples talked about and commentaries are written by ministers and biblical scholars to help us understand the meanings of passages and verses.

Reading a commentary will help you understand a passage or verse and get different perspectives. Whether we are reading, meditating in or studying God's Word, it is important that we rely on the Holy Spirit to teach and guide us into the truth of the word. It says in 1 John 2:27 (Please read it).

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This does not mean that we cannot be taught God's word by others—after all, He set pastors, teachers, and the other five-fold gifts in the church to equip the saints (Ephesians 4:11).

However, the ability to truly understand the word of God comes from the Holy Spirit.

So always come to your study of God's Word by first of all asking the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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A person is running on a paved road that stretches towards a bright, hazy horizon. The person's legs and feet are visible in the foreground, wearing athletic shoes. The road has a yellow dashed line down the center. The sky is bright and hazy, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall tone is inspirational and hopeful.

Spiritual **DISCIPLINE**

2nd Week of Study on Spiritual Growth

Dr. Josef Howard, Facilitator

**TRAINING
THE CHRISTIAN**

C. Prayer

Prayer is communication with God. Through prayer we commune/ have fellowship with the Father.

When mankind sinned, fellowship with God was lost. Through the sacrificial death of Jesus, we have been restored to a place of communion with the Father. Now that we have been purged from sin through the blood of Jesus, we can come boldly into the very presence of God (Hebrews 4:16).

We can come boldly before the throne of grace to find mercy and grace to help us in our times of need.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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C. Prayer

Through prayer, we can bring the Father our requests, our questions, our concerns, petitions on behalf of others as well as pour out our hearts in adoration and praise to Him (Philippians 4:6). Jesus warned against making prayer a ritual or a vain work (Mathew 6:7). True prayer is a two-way conversation. Go expecting God to speak when you pray. God speaks most likely through His word, a witness in our hearts, through other people, and less often, more spectacularly through dreams, visions, prophecy, or other supernatural means

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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C. Prayer

The background of the slide features a person's legs and feet running on a paved road. A yellow dashed line runs down the center of the road. Overlaid on the right side of the image is the word 'Spiritual' in a large, elegant, dark blue script font, and the word 'DISCIPLINE' in a large, bold, yellow sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, the words 'TRAINING THE CHRISTIAN' are written in a smaller, white, bold, sans-serif font.

There are many kinds of prayer (Ephesians 4:18, 1 Timothy 2:1):

- Praise and thanksgiving: When we bless and thank God for His goodness towards us and exalt Him for who He is. (Hebrews 13:15)
- Petition: Bringing our requests to the Lord (Mark 11:24)
- United prayer: Joining with other believers in prayer (Acts 4:23-24)

C. Prayer

There are many kinds of prayer (Ephesians 4:18, 1 Timothy 2:1):

- Intercession: This is when we come to God on behalf of other people and situations.
- Consecration: Prayer of surrender to God's will (Matthew 26:39, 42).
- Binding and loosing: Prayer exercising authority over the works of the enemy (Matthew 18:18)

Spiritual
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Keep in mind:

The number one reason these exercises are important is also the most compelling. Jesus was the only perfect person ever to live, and he still practiced spiritual disciplines. If Jesus thought it was critical, then they're even more important for us today.

It's easy for us to think that our responsibilities are to avoid bad behavior. And while denying ourselves and making intentional sacrifices is important, we grow when we see that Christian spirituality is an invitation to an intentional life.

Spiritual DISCIPLINE

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Keep in mind:

We're not simply called to avoid bad behavior, but to pursue God's will.

Through spiritual exercises, we embrace the activity of faith. As we train ourselves to be godly, we develop a faith that's diligent and dynamic.

Like athletes that train themselves to exceed their physical limits, spiritual exercises enable us to do what we're unable to do by our own effort. As we invest our energy into developing spiritual disciplines, we partner with God in our growth and transformation.

Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

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C. Prayer

In Matthew 6:13, after seeing him pray one day, Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray.

In response, Jesus gave them what is called today as the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is not a just a prayer, but a model of how to pray. Let's go through it as we glean insights on how to pray effectively



Spiritual
DISCIPLINE

**TRAINING
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Third Week of Studies on Spiritual Growth

Extemporaneous Prayer

How to pray extemporaneously



Extemporaneous Prayer

How to pray extemporaneously



What is Prayer

- 1) An address (such as a petition) to God or a god in word or thought (Source: Prayer Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster)
- 2) Prayer is one of the spiritual disciplines a believer does in his faith journey. It isn't merely a ritual of closing eyes, arms together, with knees hitting the floor. It is a means to communicate with God with devotion and intentionality (Source: <https://faithgiant.com/prayer/>)



What is Prayer

3. Prayer is a form of communication, a way of talking to God or to the saints.

Prayer may be formal or informal.

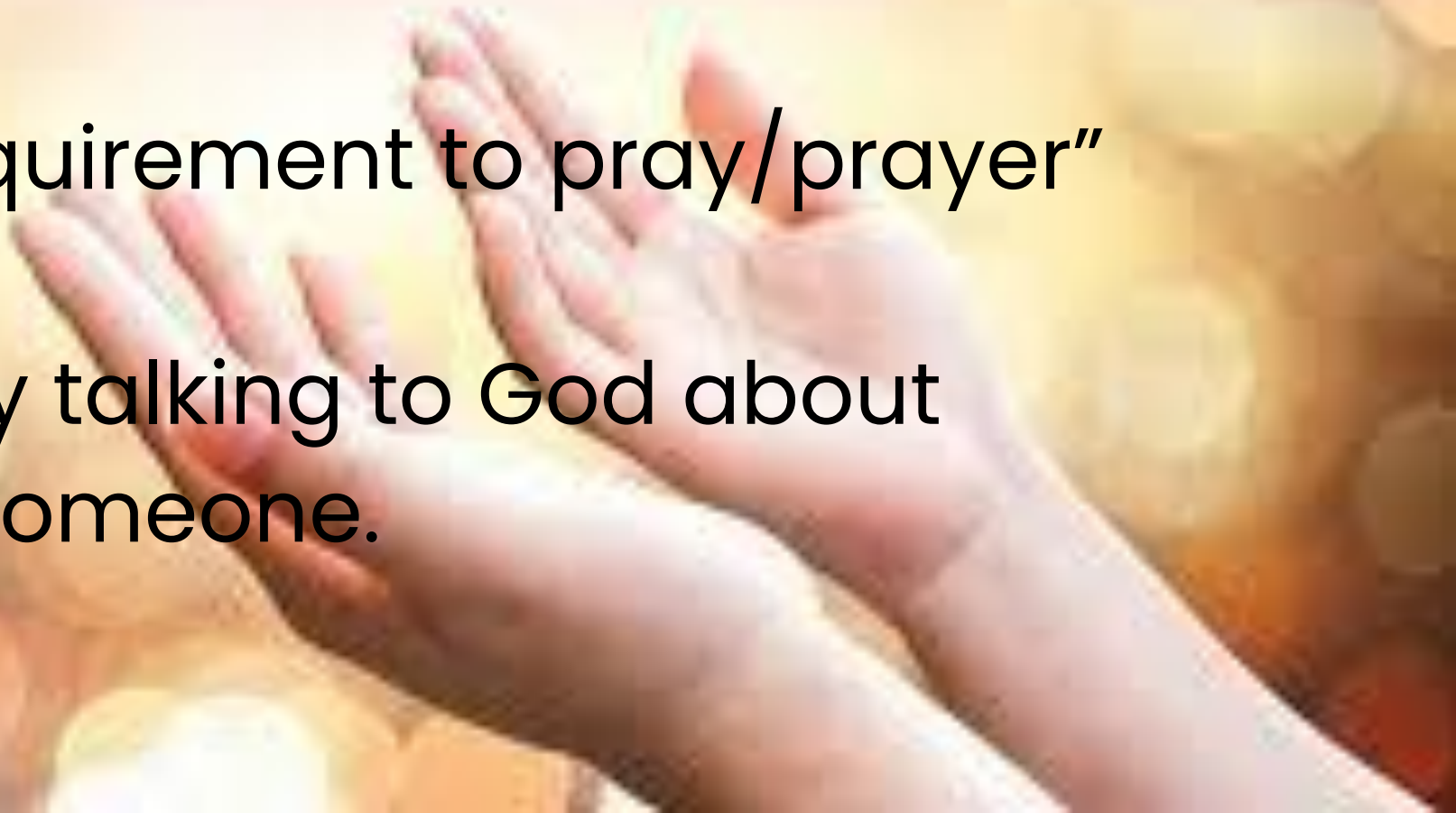
While formal prayer is an important element of Christian worship, prayer itself is not synonymous with worship or adoration (Source: Scott P. Richert. Updated on July 3, 2019 What Is Prayer? A Catholic Definition (learnreligions.com)).

What is Prayer

4. Prayer is not mystical even though it could cause mystical things to happen.

5) There is no “requirement to pray/prayer”

6) Prayer is simply talking to God about something or someone.



Importance of Prayer

It is extremely important to know how to pray. Your life may depend on it.

Mark 1:35, “And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.”

Jesus saw prayer as direct communication with the Heavenly Father. In times of trouble, He always looked to Him for strength.

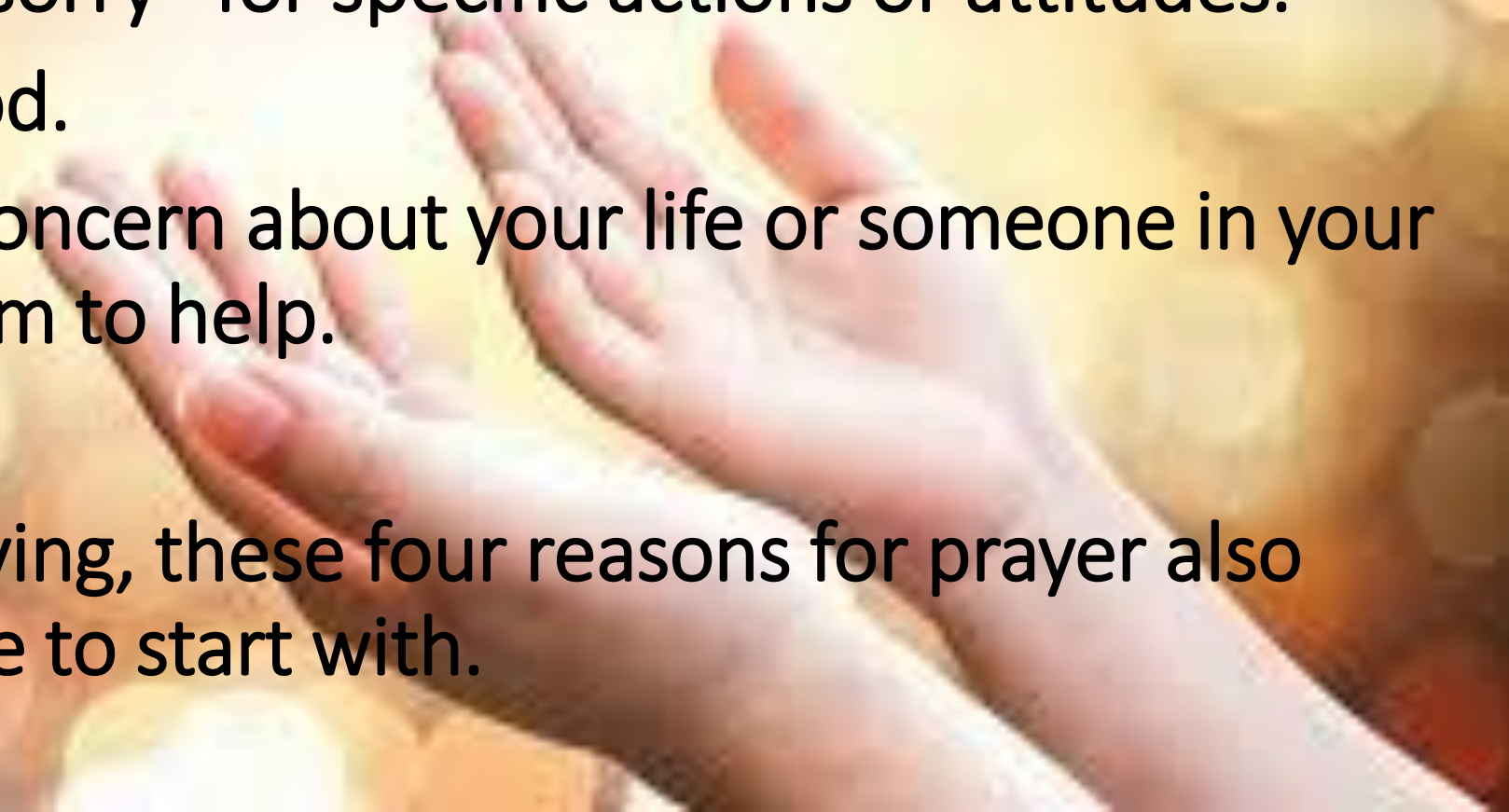
Philippians 4:6, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

Importance of Prayer

Four great reasons why we need to pray as Christians:

1. You want to tell God how much you love Him and why.
2. You want to say “I’m sorry” for specific actions or attitudes.
3. You want to thank God.
4. You want to bring a concern about your life or someone in your life to God and invite Him to help.

If you struggle with praying, these four reasons for prayer also provide a good template to start with.



Does God always answer my prayer?

It's a trick question. The reason question should be, How does God answer us when we pray, and will we always know or like the answer? Prayer should not be offered to manipulate God. It is to get answers.

We need to pray consistently:

- A) Until God answers: (Luke 11:9 “Ask and you will receive....” & Luke 18:1-8—Story of the persistent widow)
- B) Until God changes our prayer: (Luke 1—Story of Zachariah from wanting a child to dealing with humility and Luke 9:51-56 calling down fire from heaven)
- C) Until God changes us: Genesis 32—Story of Jacob who became Israel

Praying publicly can be scary?

Praying, especially publicly can be scary. (Illustration: When I was first asked to preach)

It's scary because:

- **You are put on the spot.**
- **You feel inadequate or ill-prepared.**
- **You don't know what to say.**
- **You don't feel it's fair.**
- **You have a different view of prayer.**



Tips on How to Pray

I like acronyms. It helps a lot. Using acronyms to remember how to pray can make praying easy and proficient. It will improve your prayer skills.

The first Acronym to remember is called **CAPS**.

Call
Attribute
Petition
Sign off



CALL

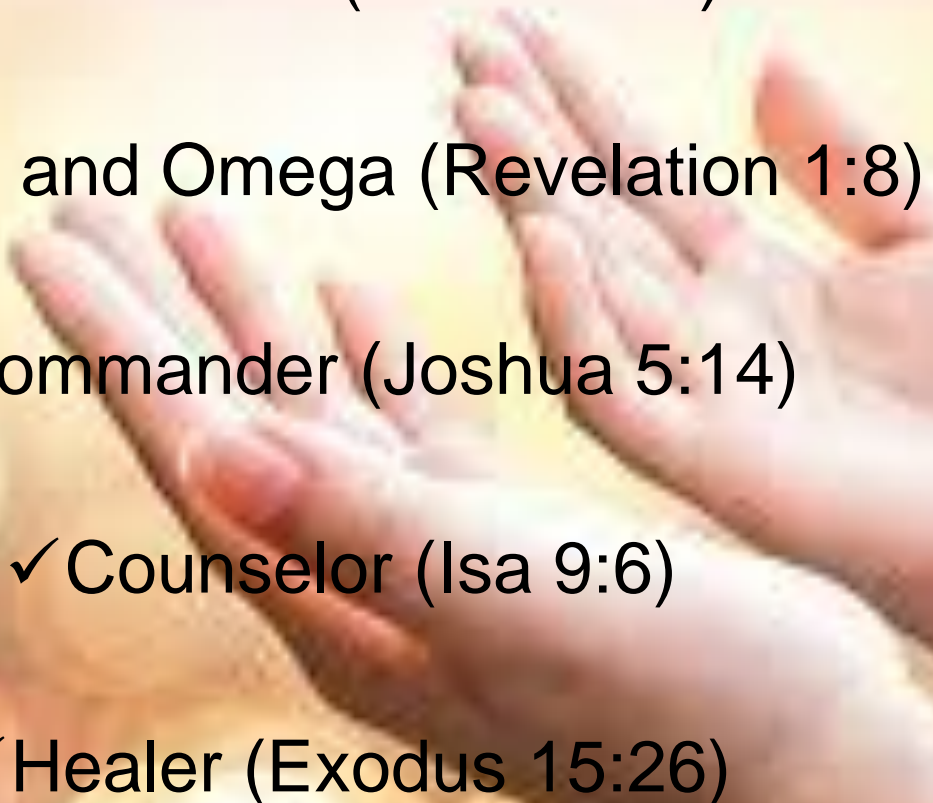
It starts with calling on God. Jesus referred to God as "Adda", "Father".

How do you call Him? Can you learn some of his names or attributes?

Many just say, God our Father.



CALL

- ✓ I AM (Exodus 3:14)
 - ✓ Advocate (1 John 2:1)
 - ✓ Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8)
 - ✓ Commander (Joshua 5:14)
 - ✓ Counselor (Isa 9:6)
 - ✓ Healer (Exodus 15:26)
- 
- A close-up photograph of two hands, palms facing up, raised in a gesture of prayer or supplication. The hands are positioned in the lower right quadrant of the frame, with fingers slightly spread. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of warm, golden-yellow and orange light spots, creating a serene and spiritual atmosphere.

CALL

✓ Holy One (Acts 3:14)

✓ Life (John 14:6)

✓ Light (Isaiah 60:1)

✓ Pioneer (Heb 2:10; 12:2)

✓ Provider (Psalm 68:10)

✓ Redeemer (Jeremiah 50:34)

CALL

- ✓ Rock (Genesis 49:24)
- ✓ Savior (1 Timothy 2:3)
- ✓ Servant (Philippians 2:7)
- ✓ Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4)
- ✓ Teacher (Job 36:22)
- ✓ The Way (John 14:6)



Attribute

Then quickly move to His attribute.

Do the best you can to relate that attribute to the situation for which you are praying.

Let's say you are praying for insight as you make hard economic decision. Instead of calling on, 'Father God,' you could call on 'God of all knowledge.'

This combines the calling on God part and the attribute of God for which you are calling.

CALL and ATTRIBUTE

Another example: Praying for a sick member in the hospital or for yourself.

One attribute of God is healing. So, you could say, 'God you are a healer.' Or you could say, 'Jesus, Our great physician.' Psalm 103:3 "Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases."

The calling upon the specific attribute of God fits the context of the prayer.

PETITION

Then you add the request or petition. In the economic decision example, you might say, "God of all knowledge. I need your insight. I don't know what to do. I am helpless, confused, frustrated, .."

Or in the hospital example, 'Jesus, Our great physician, we know you are a great healer. Please show mercy to"

Here you have the attribute of God as it relates to the situation. You use the attribute to call on God. Then you petition God based on the need.

Sign Off

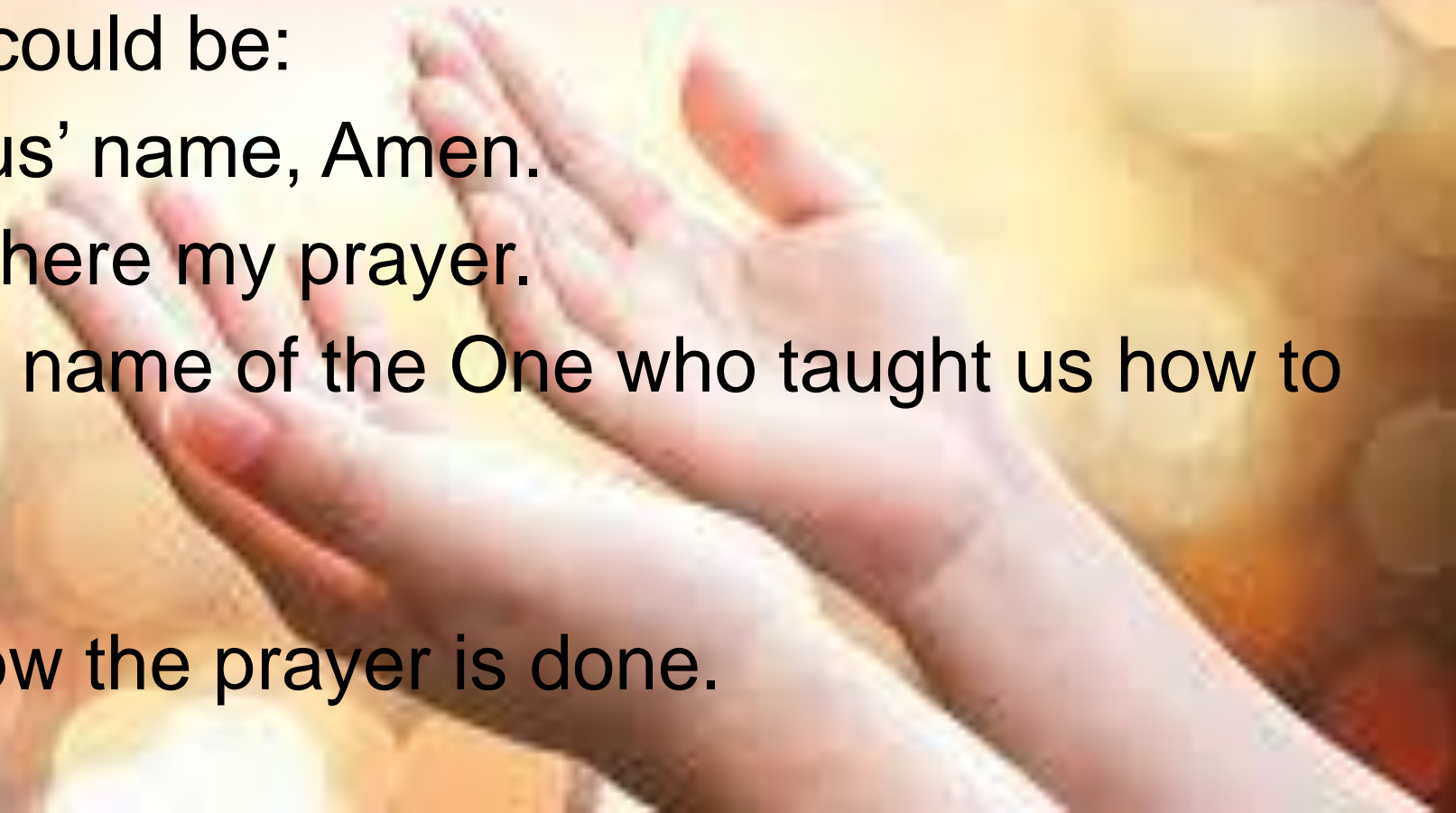
Finally, you simply sign off.

The most common sign off is Amen, which means we agree.

Others like to sign off could be:

- We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.
- Lord in your mercy, here my prayer.
- I have prayed in the name of the One who taught us how to prayer...

This lets everyone know the prayer is done.



Note

Prayers don't have to be long and complex. I think they are better if they are quick and to the point. Jesus said, "In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words" (Matthew 6:7).

This is what CAPS does.

It Calls on God's Attribute as it relates to the Petition of prayer and then Signs off.

Here is another example. It's thanksgiving. You are asked to pray.



Note

You remember that God created the Garden of Eden and all people. Then you can give thanks asking God to bless the food and the family gathered.

It may sound like this, 'Creator God, you created the garden and the first people and called your creation good. It is good to be gathered here. Bless this food and this family. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.'

Short, sweet and easy. Relate the prayer context to a story of God and ask for what you need.

2nd Tip on How to Pray

Remember that there are two different types of prayer: formal and informal.

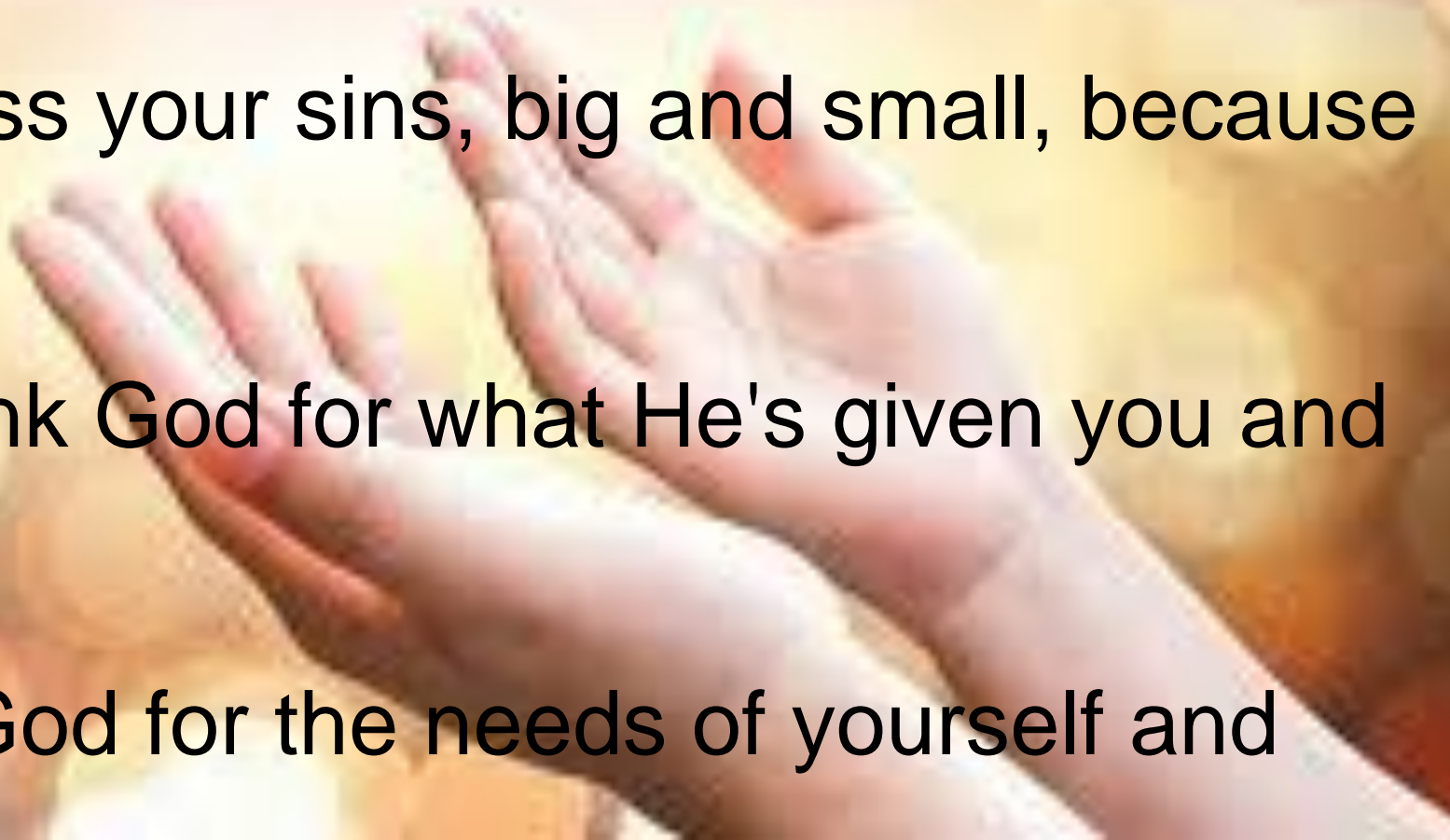
You can pray to God as though He is a friend, or in a more formal manner.

You can pray to God for any number of reasons.

What is important to keep in mind is that prayer is about a relationship. It's about allowing the will of the Father to be done here on earth. It's about understanding that God decided to limit his authority on earth and empowering you to act.

So you need to. Prayer is a **MUST** not an **OPTION**.

2nd Tip on How to Pray: ACTS

- Adoration: Adore God and love him with heart, mind, and soul.
 - Confession: Confess your sins, big and small, because they all matter.
 - Thanksgiving: Thank God for what He's given you and what He hasn't.
 - Supplication: Ask God for the needs of yourself and others.
- 
- A close-up photograph of two hands raised in a gesture of prayer or supplication. The hands are positioned with palms facing upwards, fingers slightly spread. The skin tone is light. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of warm, golden-yellow and orange light spots, creating a serene and spiritual atmosphere.

When you pray....

1) You will recognize that you are not God. Every time you pray, you are saying, “In my own strength, I cannot do all that I want to do. I need something more, someone else.”

2) You will realize the world doesn't begin and end with you.

Whether you are praying for yourself or others, you're acknowledging someone else is the center of the universe.

3) You will gain strength from outside of yourself.

Prayer is a way of inviting a higher power to enter into your life's struggles. Prayer can be a source of strength, wisdom and inner peace.

When you pray....

4. You will surrender control to somebody else. Prayer allows you to admit to God that you need Him in the driver's seat of your life.

5. You will communicate your real feelings. Prayer is a safe way to process your thoughts and feelings. Are you trusting, afraid, confused, worried, unsure, troubled....? Pray allows you to be honest.

6. You will trust that God is with you. Unless you're happy to admit that you talk to floors or ceilings, when you pray, you're believing that someone or something is listening — and might even do something about the things you're talking about.

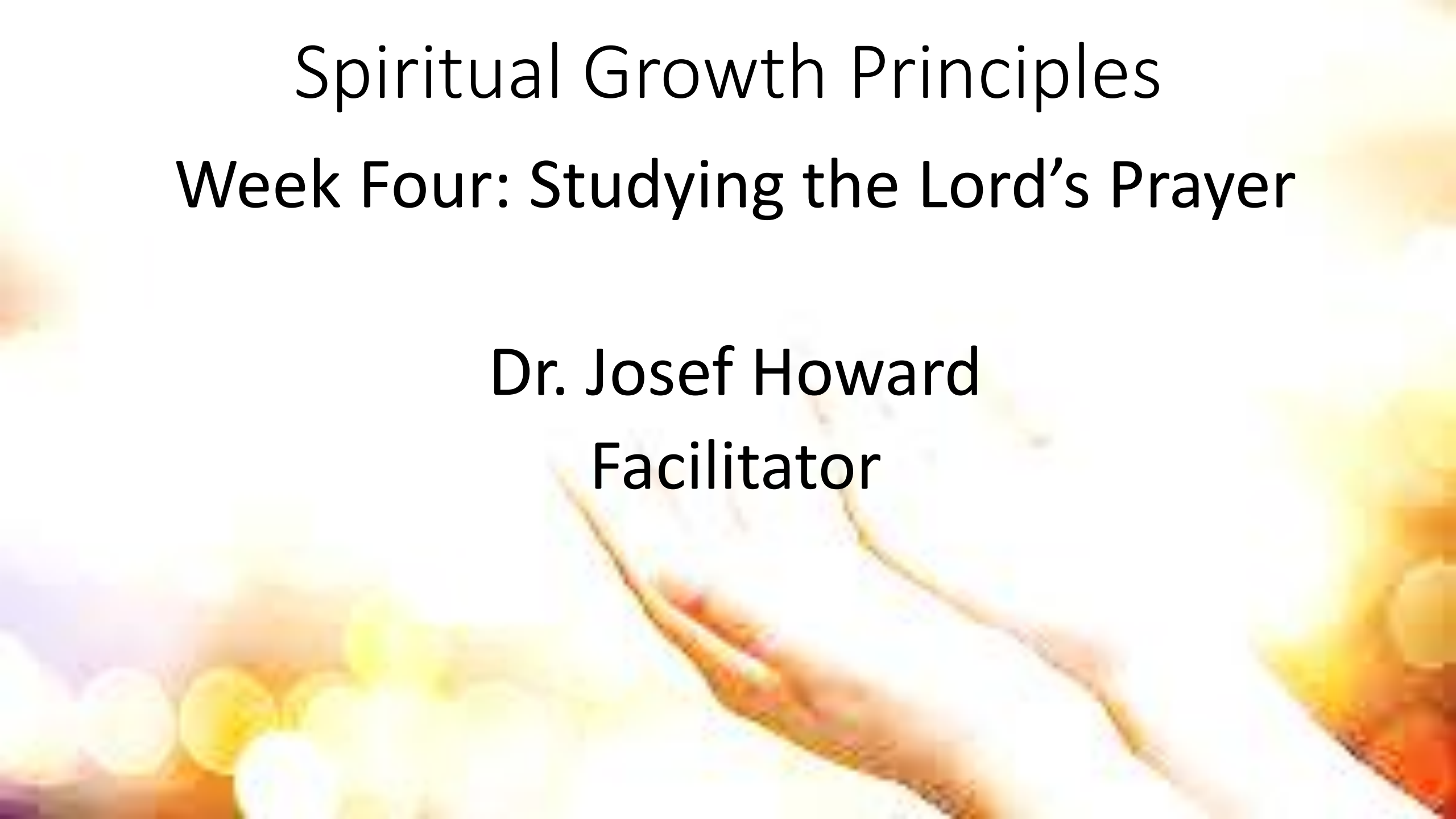
And So What!

- Praying doesn't have to be scary.
 - It's personal and you aren't speaking to man anyway. You are speaking to God and that's what matters.
 - Praying is simply talking to God by using an acronym like CAPS or ACTS.
 - Your skill can be perfected. Let us begin perfecting it now!
- 
- A pair of hands is shown from the wrist up, palms facing upwards in a gesture of prayer or offering. The hands are positioned on the right side of the frame, with the fingers slightly spread. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of warm, golden-yellow and orange light spots, creating a serene and spiritual atmosphere.

Spiritual Growth Principles

Week Four: Studying the Lord's Prayer

Dr. Josef Howard
Facilitator



The Lord's Prayer

John 17:1-5

Background

- First, be reminded of the importance of prayer
 - It is how we communicate to God
 - A spiritual indicator
 - If Jesus prayed as often as He did, what does that say about its importance to us?

Background

- I call **John 17** the Lord's prayer. The traditional "Lord's prayer" of **Matthew 6:9-13** is a model prayer.
- The prayer of Jesus in our text demonstrates the greatness of His work on earth. Sometimes called the "High Priestly prayer" as Jesus intercedes for His followers

Background

- We have reached the culmination of His earthly work.

The occasion is likely at the conclusion of the “last supper”, where the Lord’s supper was instituted and He taught about service, their future work and the coming of another Helper.

This is either at that time OR on the way to Gethsemane (**Jn 18:1**)

Background

- This prayer consists of 3 parts:
 - Jesus prayed for Himself (**1-5**)
 - Jesus prayed for His apostles (**6-19**)
 - Jesus prayed for all believers (**20-26**) - including us!

“I have finished the work” (1-5)

- *Father, the hour has come*
- It is finally time
This is what His entire life and work has led up to
- It is the time frame upon which all of history centers (even our dating system)

“I have finished the work” (1-5)

- *Glorify Your Son, that He may glorify You* (1)
- The life of Jesus was about glorifying the Father
- While Jesus was praised and He praised many, He was despised by many who plotted to put Him to death in a humiliating way. What He was to endure was far from glorifying!

“I have finished the work” (**1-5**)

- *Glorify Your Son, that He may glorify You*
- However, when Jesus was raised on Sunday and ascended to heaven, He was glorified (and vindicated)

(**cf. John 7:39, 1 Peter 1:21, Philippians 2:9-11**)

“I have finished the work” (**1-5**)

- *Given authority over all flesh*
- Jesus had authority on earth
(**Matthew 11:27, John 5:22, 26-27, 3:35**)
- After He arose, He again declared His authority - **Matthew 28:18, Colossians 1:18**

“I have finished the work” (**1-5**)

- *That He should give eternal life...*(**2-3**)
- As Christ is glorified, He can give eternal life
- salvation.

He is the source of eternal life (**John 14:6, 15:5, etc**).

Also see John 3:16, Titus 3:4-7, 1 John 5:11, etc.

“I have finished the work” (**1-5**)

- *That He should give eternal life...*(**2-3**)
- Eternal life calls for:
 - Obedience - **Matthew 25:46, 7:21, Hebrews 5:9**
 - Endurance - **Romans 2:7, 1 Timothy 6:12**

“I have finished the work” (1-5)

- *That He should give eternal life...that they may know You (2-3)*
- Knowing God is about understanding and relationship. Believing Him and approaching Him with awe -
 - 1 John 2:3-4** - keep His commandments
 - 3:6** - living without sin
 - 4:6** - hear and believe
 - 4:8** - loving God and others

“I have finished the work” (1-5)

- *I have glorified You on earth* (4)
- In everything He did Jesus glorified the Father
 - Example - **1 Peter 2:21-22**
 - Thankful - **Matt. 11:25, John 11:41-42**
 - Praised the Father - **Matthew 6:9, 11:25-27**
 - Revealed the Father's word - **John 14:24, 7:16**

“I have finished the work” (1-5)

- *I have glorified You on earth* (4)
- In everything He did Jesus glorified the Father
 - Respected the Father's authority - **John 8:55, 15:10**
 - Sought to win others - **Luke 19:10,**
“Follow Me...” **Matthew 4:19, 8:22, 9:9,**
16:24, 19:21)
 - By sacrificing Himself on the cross

“I have finished the work” (1-5)

- *I have glorified You on earth* (4)
- How do we glorify the Father?
 - In all we do - **1 Peter 4:11**
 - By example - **Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 2:12**
 - Being thankful - **2 Corinthians 4:15, Colossians 4:2**
 - By praising God
 - By sharing His word

“I have finished the work” (1-5)

- *I have glorified You on earth* (4)
- How do we glorify the Father
 - By respecting His authority - **1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17**
 - By bearing fruit - **John 15:8**
 - By sacrifice - **Romans 12:1-2, Hebrews 13:15-16**
 - By sanctification - **1 Peter 1:15-16, 3:15**

“I have finished the work” (1-5)

- *I have finished the work* (4)
- Jesus completed everything necessary to accomplish His mission on earth. All that remained was to die, which he had resolved He would do!

Throughout His life, He had a mission- **John**
4:34, 5:36,... 19:30

“I have finished the work” (**1-5**)

- *Now,... Glorify Me together with Yourself* (**5**)
- Jesus acknowledges both the Father and His glory. “Let the work be accomplished”
 - With the glory I had before - His eternal nature.
- See **John 1:1-2, 8:58, Philippians 2:5-8**

Jesus finished His work for us.

Will we finish our work for Him?

**It starts with being spiritually
disciplined!**

Spiritual Growth Principles

Week Five: Fasting & some Key Principles

Dr. Josef Howard
Facilitator

Another Key Spiritual discipline is Fasting.
Jesus Instructed His Disciples

Matthew 6:16 (NKJV)

“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Why fast?

Matthew 9:14-15 (NKJV)

14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”

15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

Why fast?

We fast to bring the flesh unto control and help us become sensitive to God. In addition to food, we can fast any other thing that feeds the flesh and prevents us from hearing from God. It is a good practice to make fasting a regular part of your life.

It can be done weekly, bi-weekly, and/or as you feel led to do so. Fasting should always be accompanied by prayer and meditation in God's Word.

What are the different types of fasting?

There are different kinds of fasting:

- **Regular fast:** Fasting until 6:00 p.m. every day for the period of the fast or going 24 hours without food. It is encouraged that you drink water while on this fast to avoid dehydration.
- **Partial Fast:** A fast for just for a certain portion of the day, for example, up until noon, 3:00 p.m.
- **Daniel's Fast:** Like Daniel fasted in the book of Daniel, a person will only eat vegetables until the fast is over.
- **Dry Fast:** A person goes without food or water during the duration of the fast. This fast is highly discouraged as it is not healthy. If you have medical issues, please seek medical advice before going on a food fast

Why Fast and Pray?

We should fast and pray for several reasons: They include:

**Cleansing, Healing, Sanctification,
Consecration, Repentance**

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 (NKJV) 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

Why pray and fast?

1. Get rid of filthiness

2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Why pray and fast?

II. REPENTANCE - Not necessary from sin but from self:
To have a change of mind affecting
our hearts and our behavior.

Fasting and prayer brings us into the presence of God where we have the opportunity to do some “soul searching”. It helps us reflect, refocus and realign our priorities in light of Christ’s will and plan for our lives.

Why Fast?

III. Humble Ourselves Before God

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV) 14 “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Why are we fasting?

IV. Get rid of pride and offenses

1 Peter 5:5-7 (NKJV) Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” **6** Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, **7** casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Why Fast?

V. Here are additional benefits/reasons why we should fast

James 4:6-10 (NKJV) “But He gives more grace. Therefore, He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Therefore, *submit to God*. *Resist the devil* and he will flee from you.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. *Cleanse your hands*, you sinners; and *purify your hearts*, you double-minded. 9 *Lament and mourn and weep*! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 *Humble yourselves* in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

What should we do When we Fast?

1. Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When You Are Fasting

II. Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended and forgive all who have hurt you.

Mark 11:25-26 (NKJV) “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

When You Are Fasting

III. BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT!

Ephesians 5:18-21 (NKJV)

18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, **19** speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, **20** giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** submitting to one another in the fear of God.

When You Are Fasting

IV. Turn Your Faith Loose

Pray with Confidence

Pray According to the Word of God

1 John 5:14 (NKJV) 14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

When You Are Fasting

V. Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV) 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Galatians 5:16-17 (NKJV) 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. **17** For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

When You Are Fasting

VI. Believe God Will Give You Boldness, Healing, Signs and Wonders

Acts 4:29-31 (NKJV) Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” 31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

When You Are Fasting

VII. Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature and passion

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

When You Are Fasting

Meditate on God

His love

Sovereignty

Power

Wisdom

Faithfulness

Grace

Mercy

Compassion

When You Are Fasting

Psalm 103:1-5 (NKJV)

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me,
bless His holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And
forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your
iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems
your life from destruction, Who crowns you with
lovingkindness and tender mercies, 5 Who satisfies your
mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed
like the eagle's.

What to do when you are about to start fasting?

1. Make a Commitment

How long you will fast - one meal, one day, three days five days, a week, several weeks, forty days? (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)

The type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, juices, fruits and vegetables, one meal a day?

What physical or social activities should you restrict?

How much time each day can you devote to prayer and God's Word?
An hour or two? Three, Four or MORE?

What to do when you are about to start fasting?

II. Have an Expectant Heart

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Finish Strong!

STAY WITH IT!

PRAYER AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE THROUGH OUT THE DAY

JOURNAL

GIVE TESTIMONY

STUDY AND SHARE THE WORD OF GOD

BREAK YOUR FAST SLOWLY!

Here is the Conclusion of the
matter!

Spiritual Growth Principles

Hebrews 6:1

In every area of our life, there should be signs of growth. We should experience growth in our marriage, in our families, at our jobs, at our churches, our income, and our relationship with Christ.

In fact, referring to our Christian walk, the writer of Hebrews tells us:

Hebrews 6:1 “Therefore let us leave the ELEMENTARY teachings about Christ and go on to MATURITY...”

- I believe if we are not growing in every area of our life, then these parts can dry up and become stale.

So how do we experience growth in our lives?

1. Big, Better, Best Principles

The Big, Better, Best Principle, relates to being faithful in the small things

- Matthew 25:21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'
- The Big, Better, Best Principle is explained like this: When we have the small things in life, we want the Big. But when we have the Big things, we want the Better, when we finally get the Better, then we can't stand it if we don't have the Best.
- There is nothing wrong with wanting better, however, the problem comes when we despise the small things because they are small.

1. Big, Better, Best Principle

- That happens in all of us: For example, a person says to the pastor, “I want to be in the ministry.” The pastor says to the person, “go and cut the grass.”
- Cutting grass is ministry just like preaching. Cleaning the church is ministry just like teaching.
- Jesus says, “Since you have been FAITHFUL in the little things, I will make you RULER of many things.”
- The key to this principle is Faithfulness to the mission, no matter how great or how small the mission is.

II. Love Me Tender Principle

The Love Me Tender Principle has to do with Loving your neighbor as yourself

- This principle comes from the golden rule
- Matthew 22:36-39 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.
- If everyone would treat people like they want to be treated, and you love your neighbor as yourself, the world would be a better place.
- This is a growth principle. If we could understand this principle, apply this principle, and act this principle out, then we would be BIGGER people.

II. Love Me Tender Principle

- The key to this principle is LOVE. Jesus said, “This is how people will know that you are mine, that you love one another.” John 13:35
- The Bible uses the word LOVE 508 times throughout the entire Bible, 202 times in the New Testament
- Specific examples are given to us on who we are supposed to Love:
 - Love your neighbors
 - Love your God
 - Love your natural family
 - Love your enemies

When you can truly adapt this principle to your life, and look the guy that hates you and the face, and say “I love you,” then you have grown.

III. Don't Worry, Be Happy Principle

It relates to being content without complaining

- This principle is one of the hardest to comply with
- Because we are humans, we live in the flesh. And because we are flesh, we have desires for comfort, and for better things.
- Philippians 4:11 "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

III. Don't Worry, Be Happy Principle

- 1 Timothy 6:6-10 “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

- If we want to grow, we have to learn to stop worrying and be happy with what God has blessed us with.

IV. The Garden Principle

This principle has to do with sowing and reaping.

A farmer's son went out to plant an apple tree. He could not find any apple seeds to plant so he picked up any seeds that he did find, and planted them. Months went by and he watched the little plant come up and he watched the plant develop and to his amazement he had a tomato plant. He asked his dad what the problem was, and his dad said, "whatsoever you sow, that will you reap."

- This principle found in the Bible is a long lost principle!

IV. The Garden Principle

- We live in a world where we want something for nothing
- You can't grow, unless you spend time doing things that create growth
- For example: If I want to grow spiritually, and never read, pray, or go to church – it is impossible
- You want your marriage to grow, but never spend time with your wife – it too is impossible
- You want God to increase your finances, but never invest into the kingdom – that also is impossible
- You want to get rich – but never want to work hard, can't happen
- We live in a “I can't wait to win the lottery” mindset

V. You Wanted it, You've Got it, Principle

This has to do with “to whom much is given, much is required”

- when you have grown your responsibility grows, too.
- Luke 12:48. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.
- After you have grown, you can't still act like a child spiritually
- Hebrews 6:1 “Therefore let us leave the ELEMENTARY teachings about Christ and go on to MATURITY...”

Spiritual Growth Principles

