

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:

Characteristics of the Spiritual Disciplines: Spiritual Disciplines are those practices found in scripture that promote spiritual growth...Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Study, Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service, Confession, Worship, Guidance, Celebration, to name a few. The disciplines serve only as a means of setting us before God, and draws us closer to the heart of Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When you practice or participate in the disciplines, you will look like you've been with Jesus, and will manifest through your words, deeds, and character.

- Expressions of inward change, prescribed, and practiced in scripture
- Ordained means of experiencing HIM, growing in HIM, being Like Him - **2 Tim 3:16-17**
- Are the means, not the end
 - We are not godly because we practice the disciplines, we practice the disciplines because we are not.
- Are personal (practiced alone) and interpersonal (practiced corporately)
- Are activities (the thing we do outwardly) not attitudes
- Not about doing, they are about being
 - Being with Christ
 - Being like Christ
 - Christ being in you
- Results in JOY, PEACE, REST, FREEDOM
- Move us beyond surface living, into living a spiritual life, that is not separated from our natural life.
- Sharpens our discernment
- Give us liberty and joy from what weighs us down
- Necessary to transform the inner man (spirit) **Gal 6:8 | Cor. 3**
- A collaborative work between God and humanity

The Spiritual Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us.

The Spiritual Disciplines are a means of receiving God's grace.

- ❖ It is Grace because it is free
- ❖ It is Discipline, because there is something for us to do

GRACE IS FREE, BUT IT'S NOT CHEAP!

Gal. 5 | Col. 3 | Matthew 5:1-12 | 1 Cor. 7:2 | Romans 13:13

The Purpose of the Discipline is, Spiritual Growth.

- To make yourself available to God, Jesus and The Holy Spirit
- To grow in grace through a conscious decision to participate
- A natural and spiritual progression in the fruit of the spirit

The Disciplines are not to be turned into laws (to manipulate & control or the see whose measuring up and who is not)

Inner transformation is a goal worthy of our best effort.

The **OUTWARD DISCIPLINES** are: Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service, and ...*Worship.

The Discipline of SIMPLICITY: The Christian discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. Simplicity begins on the inside of us and is about living from your divine center. Simplicity sets us free to receive the provision of God as a gift--that is not ours to keep but that can be freely shared with others. Focusing on the Kingdom is the means that ends in simplicity.

- If what you have ...
 - GIFT-Received as a gift
 - GOD-Cared for by God
 - OTHERS-Is available to others
- ...Then is is FREEDOM
- If what you have ...
 - EARNED-You have gotten on your own
 - YOURS-You must hold onto
 - SELF-Not available to others

... Then you are anxious

GIFT:

We work but we know that it is not our work that gives us what we have
We live by grace even when it came to receiving our daily bread
We depend on God for everything from the simplest to the most profound
When we think that what we have is only a result of our personal effort it
only takes one incident to prove us wrong.

GOD:

God is the protector of what we have.

We take precautions (we do the possible)

God does the protecting (He does the impossible)

OTHERS:

When our possessions are not available to others, then they are stolen goods... because we fear the future, we cling to our possessions instead of sharing them--Because we are anxious about tomorrow **Matt. 6:25-34**

-If we trust that GOD is, who Jesus says He is, then we know that he is our supplier, source, sustainer.

-Shun anything that distracts you from seeking 1st the kingdom of heaven

The Discipline of SOLITUDE: settle yourself in solitude and you will find both you and Jesus

Jesus is calling us from loneliness to solitude. Loneliness is inner emptiness, Solitude is inner fulfillment.

Solitude is an inner state of mind & heart that can be maintained at all times.

When you possess inward solitude you do not fear being alone... because you know that you are never alone.

Jesus lived in inner heart solitude- 40 Days Matt.4:1-11, Matt. 14:13 and 14:23, Mattt. 17:1-9, Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 1:35, Mark 6:31; Luke 5:16 and 6:12.

The Steps toward solitude

1. Tiny snatches of time

2. Find a silent place
3. Do deeds without words of explanation

Like Jesus we must go away from people, so that we can be fully present when we are with people.

The Discipline of SUBMISSION:**Matt 16:24-26** The ability to lay down the burden of always needing to get our own way and control the outcome. Our aim is freedom. The biblical rendition of submission relates to the spirit of which we view people **1 Peter 2:18**.

“Released to, drop it” - people leave churches, jobs, relationships because they don’t get their own way and do not have the freedom to give into each other (one way to handle most encounters of submission is, to say nothing)

WHAT SUBMISSION DOES:

True submission frees us to value other people

True submission loves people unconditionally, by giving up the demand that they return our love.

True submission no longer feels the need to be treated a certain way

True submission discovers that it is far better to serve our neighbor to have our own way **PHIL 2:3**

True submission frees us from anger, bitterness, strife, envy,

True submission frees us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute you **Matt. 5:44**

True submission allows you to surrender the right to retaliate **Matt. 5:39**

True submission knows that self-denial is not the rejection of our individuality, that self-denial is simply coming to the understanding that we don't have to have our own way, that our happiness is not dependent on getting what we want, how we want. We don’t lose our identity or our worth by submission, but power and leadership is discovered in submission.

Submission is a posture of the heart, out of reverence for Christ.

The Acts of Submission:

- To the FATHER-we yield body, mind, and spirit

- To the SON-we hear, receive, obey
- To the HOLY SPIRIT-inspire, interpret, apply
- To family-we make allowances, listen, share
- To neighbor-need, kindness, sharing
- To church-time, talent, treasure, service
- To the broken-we identify (be among them-James 1:27)
- To the world-we determine to live as a responsible member in an irresponsible world
- We show courtesy, compassion, and respect to the office of those who live in contradiction to the cross.

The Discipline of SERVICE: some things to think about when it comes to service...

- True service lives in hiddenness **Matt.6:4-6**
- True service does not look for results, but delights in opportunity
- True service does not pick and choose whom to serve **James 2**
- True service is a lifestyle that responds to needs not feelings
- True service disciplines feelings rather than feelings controlling service
- True service and serve enemies and friends **Matthew 5:43-44 Luke 6:27-29**

The Discipline of WORSHIP: is the **ultimate** expression of reverence

- adoration, glorification, glory, exaltation, devotion, praise, thanksgiving, honor, and magnification
- Worship involves the totality of our lives in totality
- our worship expands to include everything we do, everywhere we are, and with everyone we meet
- Richard Foster begins both his chapter on worship and the video vignette with the following quote from Archbishop William Temple: To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty

of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God. (emphasis added)

- What seems most striking about Temple's beautiful description is the way he captures the holistic nature of worship. In worship a person becomes keenly aware of the presence of the resurrected Christ (Celebration of Discipline, p. 158) and responds to his overtures of love. In worship the heart of God touches the human heart and affects every aspect of the person

REFERENCES:

<https://thecrosschurchrr.org/wp-content/uploads/Celebration-Discipline.pdf>

https://lifespringsresources.com/media/wysiwyg/Celebration_of_Discipline_Resource_Guide.pdf