

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

### Core 52 Week 9

#### Chapter 20 - Prayer

These practices serve as \_\_\_\_\_ through which we invite God to \_\_\_\_\_  
our hearts and draw us closer to Him.

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you...” James 4:7-8a

#### Myths about Christian Growth

The goal of the Spiritual Disciplines is Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_.

“Spiritual Formation is the process of transforming the inner reality of the self in such a way that the overall life with God seen in the Bible naturally and freely comes to pass in us. Our inner world becomes the home of Jesus, by his initiative and our response. (Foster in Graybeal and Roller, p. xi, xii).

#### **What are the Spiritual Disciplines that bring about this Spiritual Formation?**

The primary requirement for investing ourselves in the Disciplines is a \_\_\_\_\_ after God.

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?... Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.” Psalm 42:1,2, 7

"Everybody thinks of changing humanity and nobody thinks of changing himself." -Leo Tolstoy

#### **Struggles we face with the Spiritual Disciplines**

Ignorance.

Turning the Disciplines into Mechanics.

Turning the Disciplines into Laws.

Seeking an Experience.

Trusting Willpower.

Bearing little spiritual fruit.

“...Spiritual gifts must be developed by discipline in order to bear spiritual fruit.” (Whitney, p. 23)

## Why study the disciplines?

They are a Means of \_\_\_\_\_ Grace

“The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life”  
Galatians 6:8

“As we place ourselves in them to seek communion with Christ, His grace flows to us and we are changed.”  
(Whitney, p. 19)

They are a Means of \_\_\_\_\_ Godliness

“...discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness...” 1 Timothy 4:7

Revelation of False \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of our heart

“Becoming aware of what is true and false about us is essential for spiritual growth, and it is not always comfortable.”  
(Calhoun, p. 19)

Jesus Expects us to \_\_\_\_\_

“Throughout the centuries the disciplines of prayer, confession, worship, stewardship, fellowship, service, attending to Scripture and the Lord’s Supper have remained constant channels and disciplines of grace. These time-resilient disciplines give the church in every age and culture ways to keep company with Jesus.” Calhoun, p. 18

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”  
Matthew 11:29

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the Disciplines For Us.

“Jesus was the most disciplined Man who ever lived and yet the most joyful and passionately alive. He is our example of discipline.” (Whitney, p. 24)

## REFERENCES

Albecht, Charles & Susie. [www.wcg.org/lit/spiritual/group/discip1.htm](http://www.wcg.org/lit/spiritual/group/discip1.htm)

Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 2005, InterVarsity Press.

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline Special 20th Anniversary Edition*, 1998, Harper Collins.

Graybeal, Lynda L. and Roller, Julia L. *Learning From Jesus*, 2006, Renovare, Inc.

Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life*, 1991, NavPress.

RICHARD FOSTER'S LIST OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES  
(FROM CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE)

1. *The inward disciplines*
  - *Meditation*
  - *Prayer*
  - *Fasting*
  - *Study*
2. *The outward disciplines (inward realities resulting in outward lifestyles)*
  - *Simplicity*
  - *Solitude*
  - *Submission*
  - *Service*
3. *The corporate disciplines*
  - *Confession*
  - *Worship*
  - *Guidance*
  - *Celebration*

It is helpful to have a list and brief explanation of some of them. This can act as a short reference as well as a springboard. This list and classification come from Dallas Willard. Though not comprehensive, it is a very helpful list. The two categories are important. The first, "Disciplines of Abstinence," are designed to help us remove destructive and unhelpful things from our lives through acts that force us to stop, wait, remove, or eliminate. The "Disciplines of Engagement" are intended to build the right kinds of attitudes and habits into our daily lives.

<i>Disciplines of Abstinence:</i>	
<i>Solitude:</i>	<i>The practice of spending time without any others or any distractions.</i>
<i>Silence:</i>	<i>No noise or conversation. Just you and God.</i>
<i>Fasting:</i>	<i>Abstain from food, media, entertainment, or anything else that occupies your time.</i>
<i>Frugality:</i>	<i>Use your money for purposes outside your own needs for a time.</i>
<i>Chastity:</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 7:8, "Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."</i>
<i>Secrecy:</i>	<i>Do not allow anyone to know of the deeds you do or the money you give in order to avoid doing them for the wrong motivations. Only God needs to know.</i>
<i>Sacrifice:</i>	<i>Stretch your sense of what you can do without for the sake of those who have less.</i>

<i>Disciplines of Engagement:</i>	
<i>Study:</i>	<i>Memorize Scripture and expand your universe of biblical study helps.</i>
<i>Worship:</i>	<i>Engage in corporate worship and include worship in your own prayer time.</i>
<i>Celebration:</i>	<i>Practice being grateful and thankful both in your own relationship with Christ and with other believers. Express encouragement and thankfulness to others.</i>
<i>Service:</i>	<i>Give your time to the church and/or to others. Ponder tithing your time.</i>
<i>Prayer:</i>	<i>Take deliberate steps to pray regularly and with purpose. Praying through the Psalms is a good way to increase your "prayer vocabulary."</i>
<i>Fellowship:</i>	<i>Hebrews 10:25, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."</i>
<i>Confession:</i>	<i>Practice confessing your sins to trusted people who will pray with you and be spiritual allies.</i>
<i>Submission:</i>	<i>Submit to the proper people in the proper ways—fight against the sin of pride.</i>