

Sunday, October 23, 2022

DiscipleDisciplines

As we are coming close to the end of our specific focus on Discipleship, I want us to address two important final topics:

- (1) Spiritual Disciplines
- (2) Spiritual Gifts

I have addressed these at different times in the past, but I want to bring them in at the close of this series and remind us of their importance. Both of these subjects needs several weeks to get an indepth understanding, so these two messages are designed to be a brief overview and a motivation for you to do additional study. If you want some deeper resources for both of these, sene me an email at pastormoak@fcbroussard.com with your request, and I will forward you more detailed studies in these areas.

Today we will look at Spiritual Disciplines and then next Sunday, October 30 we will look into Spiritual Gifts. I want to remind you that these two need to work hand-in-hand if we are going to grow in our faith and our service. If you miss any of these messages I encourage you to go to our website www.fcbroussard.com

A key word that ties these two together is ‘Spiritual’. Spirituality is a buzz-word that is thrown around a lot in our society today. Don’t get confused or concerned here, I am not talking about Eastern Meditation, Zen Buddhism, or shakhras or other such nonsense. What I am talking about is a Biblical Based – God focused spirituality.

Let’s clarify some basic terms and definitions so we are on the same page.

- **Spiritual** – of or relating to the Spirit of God. According to GotQuestions.org... “Christian spirituality involves a choice we make to “know and grow” in our daily relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ by submitting to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives”.
- **Disciple**: A follower and learner whose ultimate goal is to live life the way Jesus would have us live.
- **Disciplines** – exercises, activities, habits, training designed to bring about a specific pattern of behavior or character trait. They help us to become true, godly and mature Disciples of Christ.
- **Disciplined Person**: Someone who can do what needs to be done when God needs it to be done.

Key Verses:

1 Timothy 4:7, 8... *⁷But have nothing to do with worldly, foolish fables, instead, **DISCIPLINE** yourself for the purpose of godliness, ⁸for bodily **DISCIPLINE** is some benefit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

1 Corinthians 9:27...²⁴ *Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize.* ²⁵ *Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. However, they do it to receive a crown that will fade away, but we a crown that will never fade away.* ²⁶ *Therefore I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air.* ²⁷ *Instead, I **DISCIPLINE** my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

Guidelines to Follow:

First, practice the right disciplines – Those that are Biblically-based, gospel-centered and, Holy Spirit empowered spirituality

Second, practice the right disciplines with the right goal – “with Jesus as the focus, pursuing intimacy with Christ and conformity (both inward and outward) to Christ. To put it more succinctly, by means of the biblical spiritual disciplines seek to be with Jesus and like Jesus”. (Whitney)
...Emphasis here is on training to live like Jesus, not just trying.
...The true goal of spiritual life is not just **INFORMED** people, not **CONFORMED** people, but **TRANSFORMED** people. (John Ortbert)

Spiritual Disciplines

(Adapted from Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline)

The Inward Disciplines

Meditation – Memorization - Prayer & Fasting –
Study/Reading Scripture – Gratitude/Thankfulness

The Outward Disciplines

Simplicity/Sacrificial Living – Solitude/Silence –
Submission – Stewardship - Service - Evangelism

The Corporate Disciplines

Confession – Reconciliation – Guidance - Fellowship –
Worship/Celebration

Spiritual Disciplines

(From Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline)

The Inward Disciplines

Meditation - Memorization - Prayer – Fasting - Study

➤ We Must Guard Our Heart:

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life,” Solomon admonished in **Proverbs 4:23**. The Hebrew word for “keep” is *natsar* and the main verb for “guard” or “set a watch.” **Psalms 119** uses *natsar* 10 times to demand our careful “watch” on our obedience and use of the Word of God.
The promise is: ***“Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart”*** (**Psalms 119:2**).

“The foremost of the disciplines is that involving the Word of God and constitutes the reading, study, memorization, and meditation of Scripture. If this discipline is neglected, no other effort to discipline ourselves will be successful because we simply do not have the power to overcome the resistance of the sin nature in which our new natures reside. We must begin any effort at spiritual discipline with the only source of power, the Word of God”. (<http://www.gotquestions.org/spiritual-disciplines.html#ixzz3a2ecycqb>)

➤ **Meditation** is **FOCUSED THINKING** about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply its truth to my own life. “The discipline of reflecting on Scripture for a period of time to discover what God is saying and how to apply it to your life. “What happens in meditation is that we create the emotional and spiritual space which allows Christ to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart”.—Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

WHY MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURE?

1. **It will help us conform to the ‘Image of Christ’.**
2. **It establishes fertile ground for a dynamic prayer life.**
3. **It will help us live a fruitful and fulfilled life.**

➤ **Memorization -**

the discipline of committing scripture to memory on a consistent basis.

➤ **Prayer-**

the discipline of communicating with God about your relationship with Him and with others. Christian prayer is to be prayed "in the name of Christ"; is mediated by Christ; is prompted and guided by the Holy Spirit. It is God’s gift to His followers to be able to communicate with Him and build a loving relationship.

➤ **Fasting**

the discipline of abstaining from eating either partially or completely. A modern day application could include abstinence from other things such as television, computer, phones, etc. For unmarried individuals fasting or abstinence from sexual activity (chastity). “Your motive in fasting must be to glorify God, not to have an emotional experience and not to attain personal happiness. When your motives are right, God will honor your seeking heart and bless your time with Him”. (Cru.org. Fasting Guide)

➤ **Study/Reading Scripture**

the discipline of engaging with Scripture through regular reading and consistent study in order to guide us, give us wisdom, spiritual strength and protection.

Charles Stanley Gives these “Ten Ways to Listen to God's Word”:

1. **Eagerly** (Neh. 8:1-2). When you come to a worship service, ask God to speak to your heart.
 2. **Attentively** (Neh. 8:3). Your attention span is determined by your desire to know God and His will for your life.
 3. **Trustingly** (Neh. 8:4-5). Our world is unpredictable. We must place our faith in something that gives us assurance—and God's Word is trustworthy.
 4. **Expectantly** (Neh. 8:5). In Nehemiah's day, the people couldn't understand the original languages of the scrolls. But they stood in anticipation of hearing God's Word.
 5. **Prayerfully** (Neh. 8:6). The people bowed low and worshipped the Lord.
 6. **Patiently** (Neh. 8:7). The people listened for hours as God's Word was read.
 7. **Humbly** (Neh. 8:6). The people fell on their faces in humility because of their ancestors' sins, which had caused them to miss the Lord's blessings.
 8. **Purposefully** (Neh. 8:12-17). They wanted to gain insight into the Law. Each time you come to church, ask God for insight about His character.
 9. **Happily**. There was great joy when the people listened to the Law. You are responsible for your own attitude toward church.
 10. **Repentantly** (Neh. 9:1-3). The people listened with repentant hearts. If the Lord brings something to your attention, don't blame the preacher. Be honest with God.
- http://www.intouch.org/resources/sermon-outlines/content/topic/how_to_listen_to_the_word_of_god_sermon_outline

➤ **Gratitude/Thankfulness**

The discipline of having a positive perspective on all that God has done and is doing as well as on the promises He has made for the future to be more appreciative and thankful. Gratitude helps put us in right relationship with God and with others; it leads to a life of genuine service and a chain of goodness; it also helps us to develop and live out a grace-filled life. This discipline correlates with Journaling and Sacrificial Living.

The Outward Disciplines

➤ **Simplicity/Sacrificial Living**

the discipline of saying “no” to your wants and desires in order to put God’s wants and desires first. To abstain from using money or goods at our disposal in ways that merely gratify our desires or hunger for status, glamour, or luxury. It also entails an understanding that we are to put God first in our lives and then to consider the needs and concerns of others. Sacrificial Living is not a self-centered or focused lifestyle, it is one of humility, compassion, grace and love.

➤ **Solitude/Silence**

the discipline of quiet in one’s life. This happens through abstaining from speaking and/or removing other sources of sound for a period of time in order to be more in tune with God.

➤ **Submission**

the discipline of recognizing the authority, wisdom and power of God in all areas of your life, and to respect those people of authority in your life, accepting that they are there by God's design and purpose. It is the act of intentionally seeking to put other people's needs in front of yours, based on the example of Christ.

➤ **Stewardship**

The faithful management and usage of God's gifts of Time, Talents and Treasures for His glory and His Will.

➤ **Service -**

the discipline of humbly serving others in order to show them God's love and compassion.

➤ **Evangelism -**

the discipline of sharing verbally with others the Good News that God has a plan to bring hope and peace and joy to our lives through Jesus Christ. It also includes a visible living witness, where our daily walk matches our talk.

The Corporate Disciplines

➤ **Confession**

the discipline of revealing sin in your life to God and to safe and trusted believers for the purpose of forgiveness, restoration, and accountability.

➤ **Reconciliation**

the discipline of restoring broken relationships between you and someone else or between others. There is also reconciliation between us and God, but for this study we are focusing on the need to resolve tension, disagreement or disharmony with others in a loving, kind and non-judgmental manner. There is a difference between reconciliation and forgiveness, though both should be our goal.

➤ **Guidance**

Acts 2:42 states "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread (communion) and to prayer". Disciples should gather and listen and learn from godly, gifted Teachers and Pastors

➤ **Fellowship –**

the discipline of mutual caring and ministry in the body of Christ. "It is a mutual bond that Christians have with Christ that puts us in a deep, eternal, relationship with one another" (J. Piper). It is based off the Greek word *Koinonia* is a Greek word that occurs 20 times in the Bible and the primary meaning is "fellowship, sharing in common, communion."

➤ **Worship -**

the discipline of going before God in celebration and appreciation and in trust that He is in control and worthy of our devotion and praise. Praising God's greatness, goodness, and beauty in words, music, ritual, or silence. (We can worship God privately or in community.)

Worship should never be about our comfort, but rather about what glorifies God. We worship an INFINITE God, don't make your worship a FINITE experience of the same old same old. Offer praise and adoration to God DAILY. His praise should continually be on our lips and in our thoughts. Daily read psalms, listen and/or sing hymns and worship music, have worship music playing at work or in the car. Keep praise ever before you as you think of God's mighty deeds in your life. The GOAL is to develop a lifestyle of appreciation and adoration of God in your daily life.

I urge, encourage, request, plead that you commit yourselves to 'Intentionally, Deliberately, & Consistently' allowing the Holy Spirit to transform you into the Image of God and the Image of Christ through utilizing Spiritual Disciplines to help us



References

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Got Questions. <http://www.gotquestions.org/spiritual-disciplines.html#ixzz3a2bLtGDK>

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