

DISCIPLINES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

May 9, 2021
Week 4: Guidance
Scripture: Proverbs 6:20–23

When we discipline our heart, soul, and mind, we grow in God's grace. This transformational process takes practice. When we work at these spiritual disciplines, we can experience peace, joy, and freedom. This week, Lead Pastor Christian Andrews focused on the discipline of Guidance.

Definition of Guidance

Guidance is practical direction. It is teaching and advice that comes from someone who knows better, has more experience, and is more capable.

Spiritual Guidance is direction aimed at progress on God's pathways. This is a discipline because it requires the conscious and consistent effort to receive wisdom, to be humble, to be teachable, and to put the direction we receive into practice.

Introduction Questions

1. Silly Question: If you were going on a quest for the Holy Grail, who would you want to guide you?
2. Follow-up from last week: How did you practice Solitude this last week?
3. What is one piece of advice you wish you could go back and follow instead of ignore?
4. Who is someone who has given you guidance in life?

Scripture Study Questions: Have someone read Proverbs 6:20–23

1. What might it look like to practically “bind commandments on our hearts always” and to “tie them around our neck?”
2. In 6:23, how are the commandments described?
3. What images and benefits come when you keep the commandments and teaching? Who in your life has influenced, modeled, or inspired you to follow Jesus most closely?

Guidance Questions

1. What gets in the way of you seeking or receiving guidance from others?
2. If our guides are the people who help shape our lives in a particular way, who are some of the guides that you listen to? (podcasts, commentators, news agencies)
3. How do we discern if someone is a good person to rely upon or not?
4. One way we discern if someone is a reliable guide, we look at the fruit in their lives. What are some qualities/fruit you might want to see in a guide's life?

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Challenge:

1. Take time and make a list of “trustworthy friends,” “faithful small groups,” and “mature disciples.” Reflect on what made them suitable to go to for guidance. Make another list of people who *could* be those people for you. Pray for them.
2. Ask someone to mentor you or guide you. Ask God if he has someone that you can disciple and guide. If someone comes to mind, invite them into that relationship.
3. Think about those things that get in the way of you pursuing guidance. Ask God to help you be more humble and teachable so that you can grow.

Pray for your group to be a place for guidance and for God to help us grow.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Below are some curated resources from the Renaissance Church staff that have been helpful in our journey through studying and growing in spiritual disciplines. These are just a few of the resources out there! To find more, check the bibliography and endnotes of each resource. That is where the true gold is found!

Spiritual Disciplines:

- *Celebration of Discipline*, by Richard J. Foster
- *Sacred Rhythms*, by Ruth Haley Barton
- *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

Prayer:

- *Discovering How to Pray*, by Hope MacDonald
- *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, by Richard J. Foster

Study:

- *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
- *How to Read the Bible Book-by-Book*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
- The BibleProject: This has great scripture study resources and is produced by a great scholar and pastor in Portland, OR. Helpful for setting the context, diving into specific passages, and providing personal encouragement.
bibleproject.com

Solitude:

- *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, by John Mark Comer
- *Silence and Solitude*, by Ruth Haley Barton

Guidance:

- *Soul Friend*, Kenneth Leech—provides a great overview of Spiritual Direction and the links to psychology
- *The Dark Night of the Soul*, St. John of the Cross—a classic on the spiritual life showing God's guidance and teaching in the experience of stillness and quiet