

DISCIPLINES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

June 13th, 2021

Week 9: Celebration

Scripture: Philippians 4:4–9

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 through Christ. This week, Lead Pastor Christian Andrews talked about the spiritual discipline of confession.

Celebration

When we believe in Jesus, we can choose to rejoice. It's difficult to rejoice at times, especially when we look at the pain of our past, the pressure of the present, and the uncertainty of our future. There are moments when it feels impossible to be joyful, but our relationship with Jesus changes the way we look at the circumstances of our lives.

Introduction Questions

1. What's the best party you've ever been to? What's your usual M.O. at a party?
2. What's your favorite kind of cake?
3. If you could through a party and invite five famous people, living or dead, who would they be, and why?
4. Who is the most joyful person you know? Why do you think they are like this?
5. Did you do anything this week to practice service—even a small act?

Scripture Study: Read Philippians 4:4–9

1. Discuss these verses. What stands out?
2. What keeps you from being joyful?
3. What do you need to let go of to experience joy?
4. What are you presently experiencing that you pray God would help you get through?
5. What is something you need to trust God with right now?
6. What guidance does Paul gives to help us when we are anxious? What is the promise that comes when we follow this guidance?
7. Why do you think Paul gives the advice to think on positive things. How does this lead to joy?
8. What role do you think our minds play in making us joyful or not?

Challenge

1. Take turns naming something that you can think on that is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy.
2. Pray together and find a way to celebrate together as a discussion group.

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

Worship

- *Wholeness in Worship*, Thomas and Sharon Neuffer Emswiler
- *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, by Eugene H. Peterson (presents the core tenants of a life of a Christian disciple.

Confession

- *Celebration of Discipline*, chapter 10, by Richard Foster
- *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective*, by Richard Rohr and Andreas Ebert.

Simplicity

- *Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World*, by Richard J. Foster
- *The Wisdom Pyramid*, by Brett McCracken
- *Be the Parent, Please: Stop Banning Seesaws and Start Banning Snapchat: Strategies for Solving the Real Parenting Problems*, by Naomi Scheafer Riley
- *An Experimental Mutiny Against Excess*, by Jen Hatmaker