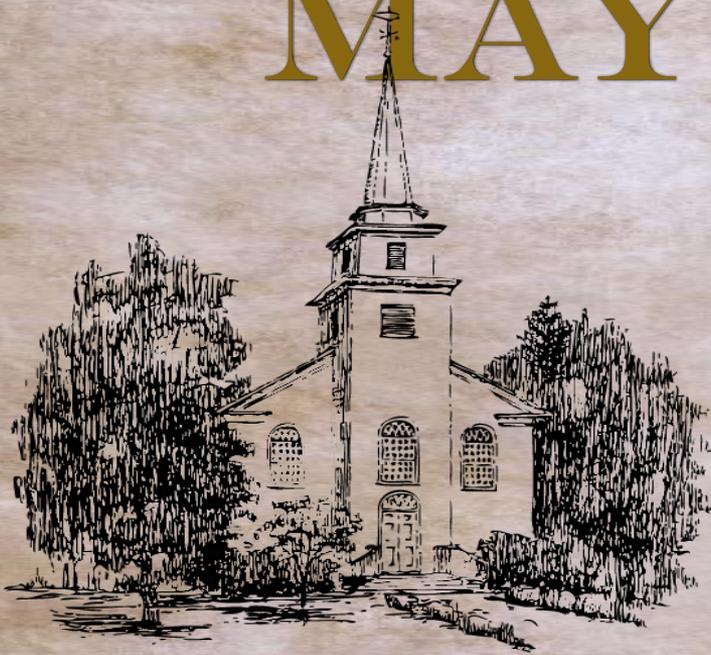


PASTOR'S CLASS

MAY 28, 2017

LIBERTY  
CHURCH



# Introduction

## Relational Spirituality – Three Lesson Series

- ✔ **October 23 - Loving God Completely**
- ✔ **October 30 - Loving Ourselves Correctly**
- ✔ **November 6 - Loving Others Compassionately**

# Introduction

**As a communion of three persons, God is a relational being. He originates a personal relationship with us, and our high and holy calling is to respond to his loving initiatives.**

- **By loving God completely, we discover who and whose we are as we come to see ourselves as God see us. In this way, we become secure enough to be others centered rather than self-centered, and this enables us to become givers rather than grabbers.**
- **Romans 8:29 gives us the most concise revelation of God's ultimate intention for those who have put their trust in him:**  
**<sup>29</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.**

# Introduction

**His purpose is nothing less than that we become “conformed to the image of his Son”.**

**This process of growing conformity to Christ was conceived before the foundation of the world. It is being realized as a divine human process in the present, and it will be fulfilled when we stand in the presence of his glory.**

**Jude 24 To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy**

# Disciplined Spirituality

Discipline should work in concert with dependence, since grace is not opposed to effort but to earning. The multiple benefits of the time tested disciplines of the faith contribute to spiritual formation in the same way the training prepares us for skillful endeavor.

## Lesson Objective

- A balanced view of both dependence and discipline
- An appreciation for the multiple benefits of the spiritual disciplines

# Two Extremes

**The first extreme overemphasizes our role and minimizes God's role.**

**This position is characterized by the mentality of striving for and living for Jesus.**

**It emphasizes knowledge, rules, rededication efforts, and human activities and virtually ignores the ministry of the Holy Spirit.**

# Two Extremes

**The second extreme overemphasizes God's role and minimizes our role.**

**This position is characterized by a let go and let God passivity.**

**It stresses experience, the supernatural, and the person of the Holy Spirit and down plays the human element.**

# Two Extremes

The biblical balance is that the spiritual life is both human and divine.

Paul places these elements back to back in Philippians 2:12-13

12Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

# Dependence

**The life of Christ can be reproduced in us only by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

## **John 15:4**

4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

## **Acts 1:8**

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

# Dependence

Therefore it is crucial that we develop a conscious sense of dependence upon the Spirit's power in all that we do.

## **Galatians 5:16**

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

## **Galatians 5:25**

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

# Dependence

We were never meant to create life but to receive and display Christ's life.

## **John 6:57**

57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.

## **John 14:10**

10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

# Discipline

Dependence is critical, but there is no growth in the Christian life apart from discipline and self-control.

This is why Paul uses the metaphors of an athlete, a soldier, and a farmer to illustrate the discipline of the Christian life.

## 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. 27 No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

# Discipline

The Bible comes alive when its precepts are put into practice, but this does happen apart from human choice.

We must choose to have our minds and emotions guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

# **The Benefits of the Disciplines**

**The book of Proverbs (Read Chapter 2) , for instance, argues that far from limiting our freedom, personal disciplines enhance it and give us options we could never have had otherwise.**

**Wisdom is a skill that is developed through instruction and discipline, and this skill in the art of living under the Lord's dominion frees us to become the people God intended us to be.**

# **The Benefits of the Disciplines**

**In the New Testament, a quick survey of the Gospels through the lens of discipline reveals the Jesus engaged in all the classic disciplines, such as solitude, silence, simplicity, study, prayer, sacrificial service, and fasting.**

**Jesus understood that these practices were not optional for those who have a passion for the Father's pleasure and honor.**

# The Benefits of the Disciplines

Our Lord did not engage in these disciplines as in themselves but as means to know and obey his Father.

They moved him in the direction of the foremost commandment

## Deuteronomy 6:5

5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

# **The Benefits of the Disciplines**

**To ask the question “what would Jesus do” without practicing the habits we know he practiced is to attempt to run a marathon without prior training.**

**The spiritual disciplines are the product of a synergy between divine and human initiative, and they serve us as a means of grace insofar as they bring our personalities under the lordship of Christ and the control of the Holy Spirit.**

# **The Benefits of the Disciplines**

**By practicing them we place our minds, temperaments, and bodies before God and seek the grace of his transformation.**

**To summarize, here are a few of the benefits of practicing the spiritual disciplines:**

- 1. They encourage imitation of Christ and allow us to act in ways that are centered in God's will.**
- 2. They connect us with an ongoing tradition of time tested ways of incarnating the spiritual life.**
- 3. They give us the rule of conduct that directs us in the path of growing skill in living before God.**
- 4. They bestow a controlled freedom to respond to changing circumstances in a more biblical manner; they allow our lives to be dominated more by the things above rather than the things below.**

- 5. They remind us daily that the spiritual life is a balance between radical dependence and responsible action; both grace and self-discipline are required for spiritual maturity.**
- 6. They are vehicles for internal transformation. Given enough time, an average person who consistently practices spiritual disciplines will achieve spiritual productivity and proficiency.**
- 7. They replace habits of sin by cultivating habits that lead to character (integrity, faithfulness, and compassion).**
- 8. They increase our willingness to acknowledge the daily cost of discipleship and remind us that whatever comes quickly and cheaply is superficial, while the insights that we learn from pain will endure.**

# Conclusion

**These disciplines are both active and passive, both initiatory and receptive; they connect us to the power of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who manifests the life of Christ in us and through us.**

**We should work hard but receive everything we are and have by God's grace.**

**It takes the touch of God on our lives for us to form habits that are alive and pleasing to him.**

# Next Time

**We will look at a number of these disciplines and focus on disciplines of solitude, silence, study, meditation, and prayer.**