

Introduction

Disciplines of the Faith

- ✔ Disciplined Spirituality – May 28
- ✔ Disciplines: Solitude and Silence – June 18
- ✔ Disciplines: Study, Meditation, Prayer – June 25

Introduction

There is no standardized list of spiritual disciplines, but some are more prominent in the literature than others.

Some writers have developed a threefold typology in

1. Inward Disciplines
 - Meditation
 - Prayer
 - Fasting
 - Study

Introduction

2. Outward Disciplines
 - Simplicity
 - Solitude
 - Submission
 - Service
3. Corporate Disciplines
 - Confession
 - Worship
 - Guidance
 - Celebration

Others Divide Them into Two Classes

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Disciplines of Abstinence<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solitude• Silence• Fasting• Frugality• Chasity• Secrecy• Sacrifice | <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Disciplines of Engagement<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study• Worship• Celebration• Service• Prayer• Fellowship• Confession• Submission |
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Last Week

Last week we looked at two disciplines (solitude and silence).

The Discipline of Solitude

Even a casual look at the Gospels reveals that solitude was indispensable practice in the life of the Jesus

Mathew 14:13

²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone,

The Discipline of Solitude

Mark 1:35

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Luke 5:16

¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

John 6:15

¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

The Discipline of Silence

Silence is a catalyst of solitude; it prepares the way for inner seclusion and enables us to listen to the quiet voice of the Spirit.

Solitude and Silence are companion disciplines; silence gives depth to solitude, and solitude creates a place for silence.

Isaiah 30:15

15 This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says:
"In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.

The transformational discipline of silence encourages us to grow in quietness and trust; by being hushed before God so that we can listen with our spirit to him and enjoy his presence.

Today – Study, Meditation, and Prayer

Study

- The discipline of study is the central process of renewing the mind in such a way that we can respond appropriately to the truths of God's Word.
- Study of scripture involves not only reading but also in active involvement in observation, interpretation, and application of its contents.
- It also includes devotional reflection on the beauties and intricacies of nature as well as exposure to gifted writers and teachers of the past and in the present.

Study

Since the study of Scriptures is the primary vehicle for laying hold of a divine perspective on the world and our purpose in it, this discipline is pivotal to our spiritual nourishment and growth.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God^[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Study

Many helpful resources offer useful methods and can guide you through the process of effective Bible study.

But a brief list of principles and suggestions may help you.

1. Be open and honest before the Word so that you will be disposed to gain new insights and change of your thinking.
2. Be responsive and be willing to apply and obey what you learn.
3. Be consistent, this may mean you have to study even if you don't feel like it.

Study

4. Approach Bible study with the proper attitude of reverence, care, and receptivity.
5. Be systematic in your choice of topics, chapters, and books that you study so that your input will come from all parts of Scripture and touch upon every aspect of your life.
6. Have a plan for daily readings so that so that you get a comprehensive exposure to Scriptures. Reflect on your readings and respond to them in a personal way.
7. Use a card to write down key passages that speak to you, and carry them with you. By reviewing these cards from time to time, you can memorize a significant number of verses.

Meditation

- Meditation is a close relative of the disciplines of prayer and study, and it also depends on the disciplines of solitude and silence.
- Meditation has become such a lost art in the West that we typically associate it with Eastern religions.
- Far from emptying the mind, however, biblical meditation focuses the mind on the nuances of the revealed Scripture so that its truth can sink deeply into our being.

Meditation

Listen to this old proverb

Sow a thought, reap an act
Sow an act, reap a habit
Sow a habit, reap a character
Sow a character, reap a destiny

Meditation

The more we take root downward, the more fruit upward

Isaiah 37:31

31 Once more a remnant of the kingdom of Judah will take root below and bear fruit above.

Joshua 1:8

8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Psalms 1:2-3

2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.

Meditation

The apostle Paul underscored the importance of the believers thought life when he instructed the Colossians to set their minds on the things above

Colossians 3:1-2

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Romans 8:5

5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Meditation

Similarly, Paul exhorted the Philippians to engage in a biblical form of positive thinking.

Philippians 4:8

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

The only way you will develop skill in meditation is by doing it, even when it does not seem to be effective.

Prayer

- Prayer is a personal communication and dialogue with the living God.
- Seen from a biblical perspective, prayer is an opportunity and a privilege rather than a burden or duty.
- It is the meeting place where we draw near to God to receive His grace, to release our burdens and fears, and to be honest with the Lord.
- Prayer should not be limited to structured times but should also become an ongoing dialogue with God as we practice his presence in the context of our daily activities.

Prayer

John Piper observed in “The Pleasures of God”, “Prayer is God’s delight because it shows the reaches of our poverty and the riches of His grace.

Why should we pray?

There are many reasons why we should make this discipline the centerpiece of your spiritual journey. Today we will look at seven.

Prayer

1. Prayer enhances our fellowship and intimacy with God (Psalm 116:1-2)
2. The Scriptures commands us to pray (Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18; I Thessalonians 5:16-18; I Timothy 2:1)
3. We receive special help from God when we pray. (Hebrews 4:16)

Prayer

4. **Prayer develops our understanding and knowledge of God. (Psalm 37:3-6; Psalm 63:1-8 ;Ephesians 1:16-19)**
5. **Our prayers and God's answers gives us joy and peace in our hearts. (John 16:23-24; Philippians 4:6-7)**
6. **Prayer helps us understand and accomplish God's purposes for our lives. (Colossians 1:9-11)**
7. **Prayer changes our attitudes and desires. (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)**

Prayer

Here are some suggestions on enhancing your practice of Prayer

Choose the best time - Usually mornings are best, be consistent

Choose the best place

- Get away from your phone
- Get away from your office
- Try taking a walk if weather permits.

Set a minimum time

- Be realistic
- Start with a few minutes

Prayer

Focus on the person of God

- You may want to read a scripture and meditate on it for a few minutes then pray

Come before the Lord in humility - Understand who God is

Strive for a balanced diet

- Our prayers should incorporate all the elements of confession, adoration, supplication (intercession and petition), and thanksgiving.

Do not do all the talking, practice the discipline of silence.

Prayer

Here is a quick guide that may help you to engage all three of these disciplines of the faith into your daily walk with the Lord.

1. Select a very short text and ingest it by reading it several times. (Study)
2. Take a few minutes to reflect on the words and phrases in the text you have read. Ponder the passage by asking questions and using your imagination. (Meditation)
3. Having internalized the passage, offer it back to God in the form of personalized prayer. (Prayer)