

Welcome/ TU KT

-New Series on Spiritual Disciplines, the practical ways we live out our faith.

-PRAY/

1) Spiritual Disciplines Overview

a) What are they?

- i) Don Whitney: Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life. The spiritual disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are habits of devotion, habits of experiential Christianity that have been practiced by God's people since biblical time.
- ii) These things can be both group, or corporate activities, or personal ones. Or sometimes they can be both. PRAYER
- iii) These are activities, they are actions. Not attitudes, or character qualities. They are things that you do.
 - (1) Just like learning to ride a bike, throw a ball, write a report, you have to practice. That's why they are called disciplines, it takes some effort, and intentionality to grow in these things. It won't just happen overnight. (KEVIN/LAURA). It takes time and effort to grow in these things.
- iv) Time, effort, intentionality? This sounds like work. It sounds hard. YEAH! Sometimes it'll be hard, we are going to talk about things that can be a challenge. But if you ever want to grow in anything, some work is required.

b) Why

- i) Spiritual Disciplines are to help us grow in our relationship with Jesus. They are a way to draw us closer to him.
- ii) So step 1 is to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. To believe that your sin, the times you have fallen short of the perfect standard God has set, that has separated you from God.
 - (1) Because of that you are destined to be a rebel and enemy of God and spend eternity separated from him.
 - (2) But because of God's love, he sent Jesus to earth, to live perfect life and die on the cross for our sins in our place.
- iii) The verses we are going to come back to often in this series is 1 Timothy 4:7-8 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.
 - (1) Paul is instructing this young leader Timothy in how to lead the church, and in this chapter he is talking about how some will fall away, and pursue false teachings. He tells Timothy, ignore that, stick with what you know, train yourself for godliness.
 - (2) Train yourself for godliness: Train yourself, the word is *gymnazo* where we get our word *gymnasium*, which means to exercise, to train, to discipline yourself.
 - (3) Paul is saying train, exercise, workout in godliness. Pursue it in the same way you pursue physical training. And while physical training is good and helpful, it doesn't have the same lasting results that training in godliness does.
 - (4) Training in godliness holds promise, in this life and the life to come. That's the goal of the Christian life, to be conformed more and more into the image of Christ.
- iv) That's why spiritual disciplines are important to pursue.

- c) What they are not
 - i) It can be easy to look at things like studying scripture, prayer, fasting, worship, and to make them the end goal. To make them more than they are.
 - (1) To make an idol of these things.
 - (2) Spiritual disciplines are helpful tools. A helpful way to grow in your relationship with Christ.
 - ii) They DO NOT SAVE YOU! Your salvation, your standing with God, are not based on how much of the Bible you have read or not read, it is based on the LDBR of Jesus Christ and your believe in his sacrifice for your sins.
 - iii) They also DO NOT MAKE GOD LOVE YOU MORE OR LESS!
 - (1) We will talk about stuff that you either didn't know about or you feel you haven't really grown in pursuing. That does not mean God thinks less of you or loves you less. GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU IS UNCONDITIONAL. IT IS NOT BASED ON YOUR PERFORMANCE, IT RESIDES COMPLETELY WITHIN HIM.
 - (2) Which also means on the flip side, just because you are doing these things, or start doing them, God will not love you more. God will not love you more if you start tithing or fasting.
 - iv) These disciplines are not a way for you to measure your Christianity against someone else's. You aren't better because of your prayer life, they aren't better because of their service.
 - (1) Doing it with others, healthy and good and church. Comparing yourself to others unhealthy and destructive.
- d) I'm excited about this series
 - i) I want to help you grow. I want CF to grow. And so I'm gonna get as practical as I can with these sermons in this series I want to fill up your tool bag in hopes to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus.
 - ii) Resources on the website to help. If you have something send it to me.

2) Bible Intake

- a) Arguably the most important of all the Spiritual Disciplines.
 - i) Without being engaged in the scripture, all the rest of the spiritual disciplines will be lacking in focus and purpose.
 - ii) Spurgeon: "Visit many good books, but live in the Bible."
 - iii) It is through personal intake of the Bible that we come to know God better, understand His will for our lives, and experience God's transforming presence.
 - iv) Often when we think about the Bible we think about the different authors, we think about Moses, or David, or Paul, what was their intent? What did they mean? Why did they say a certain phrase in a certain way?
- b) But in reality those men were not the true original authors, it as God. God wrote the Bible, that's what we mean when we say it is the word of God.
 - i) 2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the people of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
 - (1) All scripture is breathed out by God. It all comes from him. This book is God revealing himself to us.
 - (2) And all of it is for use for teaching us how to live the abundant life God has called us to live.

- (3) It is helpful for reproof and correction: Teaching us right from wrong, showing us where there is error or sin in our lives. Instead of trying to use culture, or just personal preference to find what is wrong and right, we have the written word of God to guide us in that.
- (4) It is used for training in righteousness, in growing and maturing in our relationship with God being transformed more and more into the image of Christ.
- ii) Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- iii) The only way that this book can be profitable for teaching, reproof, and correction and training. The only way it can be living and active, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The only way it can be and do these things is if it comes not from regular men but from the creator of all existence.
- c) This is how God choose to connect with us, to reveal himself to us, to guide us. And yet we are more concerned with the box score of the game last night, or binge-watching a show we've watched a dozen times on Netflix, or just scrolling instagram for cute puppy pictures.
 - i) Those things are nice and cute, but they do not hold the same weight and importance to how we live as scripture does.
- d) I realize that might be part of the problem, the Bible can seem overwhelming.
 - i) When we view scripture for what it is, God revealing himself to us, that can be kind of intimidating. Couple that with how old it is, and the different genres and all of a sudden it can be easy to look at this and say, I don't know what to do with this thing.
 - ii) It's a book. Open it. Engage with it.
- e) Hear/Read/Study
- f) Hear: Deuteronomy 31:10-11 And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, **11** when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.
- g) Just listening to something and letting it wash over you, whether it be a piece of music, a great speech, or someone reading a book or poem, the art of intentional listening can help us to view things differently. (Riding in the car listening to NT: Jesus was with people, always, he loved people)
 - i) Here in 2018 we have more access to the Bible than ever before. There is no reason you can't listen to the Bible being read or a sermon being given. Where can you redeem some time? Where can you put some time to use by letting God speak to you through his word?
- h) Read: Similar to hearing the word, this isn't about word studies or commentaries. This is more about reading out of the joy of knowing God more. Reading to ingest it, to have it in us. This ties closely with meditating on scripture which we are going to talk more about next week when we talk about prayer.
 - i) Reading plans can help you with structure. #2YearJourney.
 - ii) Quality reading should be the goal. You want to engage mentally with what you are reading. If that means you are reading smaller sections, or have to re-read the passage a few times that's a good thing!
 - iii) Just skimming a few verses to check off "read my Bible today" from the to-do list isn't helping or impressing anyone.
 - (1) Scripture is God revealing himself, it's how you can draw closer to knowing him. If instead of talking with Sarah and interacting with her I just scrolled her twitter or facebook timeline quickly

to get the cliff notes on what was going on in her life, our relationship would not be healthy or strong.

(2) Or if I was just asking her questions out of duty, because I had to, and there is no genuine interest that would make her feel unloved, why would we treat our relationship with God that way?

iv) Things that can help:

(1) PRAY. Pray before you read. Pray for clarity, pray for understanding. Pray after you read. Pray.

(2) Writing out scripture. Read it and then write it. You'll be amazed at how God reveals things to you when you slow down enough to write it out.

(3) Find a spot and time where you aren't distracted. This might mean making some sacrifices to have that time.

i) Study

i) This is reading to understand, reading to get to the roots of what scripture is saying. This is doing some leg-work and processing through the text.

ii) There are different methods and ways of doing this. (a few different ones on the website)

iii) I want to highlight one of those ways.

j) Inductive Bible Study

i) Observation, Interpretation, Application

ii) What does the text say?, What does the text mean?, How does it apply to me?

iii) Use IBS notes

3) Conclusion

a) The Bible is the Word of God. Written to us his creation. To guide us, challenge us, inspire us, comfort us, rebuke us, convict us, teach us. It's for us!

b) It is a gift and tool to be used, do not waste it. Do not ignore it. If you dig into this book. If you are willing to pursue God in it, he will show up, he will reveal himself to you.

c) Oh that we would become a people who like David writes in Psalm 119.

d) In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces. Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

e) It is a light, a sword, a help, a gift, it is God revealing himself to you, teaching you about who he is. And that's why it's important, it isn't the book itself, it isn't the habit of reading it that is the most important, it is the God we read about. That's what's the most important. Because as you read this book you will encounter God he will show up he will speak to you. Because this book is living and active, it is breathed out by God himself, he has a message for you, will you read it?