

Spiritual Disciplines

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, **train yourself to be godly**. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.
1 Timothy 4:7,8 (NIV)

Feeding Your Spiritual Hunger

"People who think that they are spiritually superior because they make a practice of a discipline such as fasting... are entirely missing the point. The need for extensive practice of a given discipline is an indication of our weakness, not our strength. As a rule of thumb: if it is easy for us to engage in a certain discipline, we probably don't need to practice it. The disciplines we need to practice are precisely the ones we are not 'good at' and hence do not enjoy."
Dallas Willard

Spiritual Disciplines

Definition: What I do that puts me in a place where God can change my heart and life.

"An activity undertaken to bring us into more effective cooperation with Christ and his Kingdom ... a means to that grace and also to those gifts ... activities undertaken to make us capable of receiving more of his life and power without harm to ourselves or others."
Dallas Willard

"This is the outbreathing and inbreathing of spiritual training."
Dallas Willard

Recommended Books for further study

Celebration of Discipline, Richard Foster
The Spirit of the Disciplines, Dallas Willard
The Life You've Always Wanted, John Ortberg

Disciplines of Abstinence or Letting Go

Solitude—Spending time alone to be with God. Find a quiet place to be alone with God for a period of time. Use the Bible as a source of companionship with God. Listen to Him. Remain alone and still.

Silence—Removing noisy distractions to hear from God. Find a quiet place away from noise to hear from God. Write your thoughts and impressions as God directs your heart. Silence can occur even in the midst of noise and distraction. But you must focus your attention on your soul. This could mean talking less or talking only when necessary. And it could mean turning off the radio and the TV. This is also a good place to use the "Exemine" that is on the website.

Fasting—Skipping a meal(s) to find greater nourishment from God. Choose a period of time to go without food. Drink water and, if necessary, take vitamin supplements. Feel the pain of having an empty stomach and depend on God to fill you with His grace. Spend time in prayer and study during meals.

Frugality—Learning to live with less money and still meet your basic needs. Before buying something new, choose to go without or pick a less expensive alternative that will serve your basic needs. Live a simple, focused life, to more fully steward your finances for Kingdom purposes.

Chastity—Voluntarily choosing to abstain from sexual pleasures for a time (those pleasures that are deemed morally right in the bond of marriage) to find higher fulfillment in God. Decide together as a couple to set aside time to go without sexual pleasures in order to experience a deeper relationship with God in prayer.

Secrecy—Avoiding self-promotion, practice serving God without others knowing. Give in secret. Serve "behind the scenes" in a ministry that you are assured few will know about.

Sacrifice—Giving of our resources beyond what seems reasonable to remind us of our dependence on Christ. Choose to give your time or finances to the Lord beyond what you normally would.

Disciplines of Engagement or Activity

Study—Spending time reading the Scriptures and meditating on its meaning and importance to our lives. We are nourished by the Word because it is our source of spiritual strength. Choose a time and a place to feed from the Word of God regularly.

Worship—Offering praise and adoration to God. His praise should continually be on our lips and in our thoughts. Read psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs, or sing to the Lord daily using a worship CD from The Fellowship. Keep praise ever before you as you think of God's mighty deeds in your life.

Prayer—Talking to and listening to God about your relationship with Him and about the concerns of others. Find time to pray to God without the distraction of people or things. Combine your prayer time with meditation on the Scriptures in order to focus on Christ.

Fellowship—Mutual caring and ministry in the body of Christ. Meet regularly with other Christians to find ways to minister to others. Encourage one another.

Confession—Regularly confess your sins to the Lord and other trusted individuals. As often as you are aware of sin in your life, confess it to the Lord and to those you may have offended.

Submission—Humbling yourself before God and others while seeking accountability in relationships. Find faithful brothers or sisters in Christ who can lovingly hold you accountable for your actions and growth in Christ.

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**.
Mark 1:35 (NIV)

Practicing the Disciplines in LIFE

Listen

I will **instruct you** and **teach you** in the way you should go; I will **counsel you** and watch over you.
Psalms 32:8 (NIV)

Inquire

You will **seek me** and **find me** when you seek me with all your heart.
Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV)

See S.O.A.P LIFE JOURNALING document

Faith

let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. **Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful**. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:22-25 (NIV)

Experience

Now that you know these things, **you will be blessed if you do them**.
John 13:17 (NIV)

"To escape the error of salvation by works we have fallen into the opposite error of salvation without obedience."
A.W. Tozer

"**My food**," said Jesus, "is **to do the will of him who sent me** and to finish his work."
John 4:34 (NIV)