



Growing Through Discipline

Introduction

First of all let me just give you a big WAY TO GO for desiring to learn more about the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life! My experience has taught me that any time I discipline myself in my walk as a Christ Follower, I always have grown spiritually. My experience is not the only way I have learned this, because, even the Bible teaches us to discipline ourselves for spiritual reasons.

Consider these Scriptures:

1 Timothy 4:7 -Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. NIV

2 Peter 1:5 - For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; NIV

God has provided all we need to grow spiritually. He just wants us to desire it. He could make us grow but He wants our hearts to be our motivation. The fact that you are reading this booklet reveals your hearts desire to grow. A desire to grow along with a commitment to disciplining yourself through the spiritual disciplines will produce great steps of growth in your life.

What are the spiritual disciplines?

Generally the spiritual disciplines are some basic practices of the Christian life. They are the things we often would say "I know I should do more of," but more often find ourselves neglecting. The disciplines or practices are very basic but essential to our daily progress and growth.

Some of the disciplines are:

Bible Intake	Prayer
Worship	Sharing Your Faith
Serving	Giving
Fasting	Journaling
Connecting with Other Believers	Solitude

How to develop the spiritual disciplines:

"THE DISCIPLINE OF PERSONAL WORSHIP"

Some Basic Understandings:

- also called your devotions or quiet time
- personal worship is a lifestyle, not a Sunday service
- we are to be walking worship services
- worship defined: a heartfelt response to the revealed truth of God.
- Practicing this discipline means to 'daily' learn about God and to 'daily' respond to him from your heart.
- Practicing this discipline is best seen in a daily 'connection' time with God (quiet time, devotion, etc.)

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Developing A time To Connect To God

1. Choose a time and place that best fits you.

Tips:

- Give the Lord your BEST time. Your best time might be morning, or afternoon, or evening. The best time is when you are awake! Whatever time you choose, protect that time to connect with God.
- Start with 15 minutes and let it grow.
- Don't watch the clock!
- Emphasize quality, not quantity!

2. Choose a special place.

Mark 1:35 - 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. -NIV

3. Have a Plan to get going.

Ideas:

- Gather any resources you might need (use a bible reading plan, a devotional book, read the chapter in Proverbs that is the day of the monthly calendar, read through the Psalms, etc)
 - Use a Bible with a readable print / translation.
 - Notebook/journal - to write down what the Lord speaks to you about, and to keep your prayer list.
 - Songbook/instrument - if you want to sing.
4. Approach God with an appropriate attitude...
- Reverence - not hurried, rushed or frustrated (Ps. 46:10)
 - Teachable - ask Holy Spirit to speak to you (Ps. 119:18)
 - Willingness - want to vs. have to (Matt 6:33)
 - Humility - confess and repent from your sins (James 4:7-10)



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A suggested plan to get you started:

"FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH GOD"

1. RELAX. (1 Minute)

Be still and quiet! Slow down! Prepare your heart. Take a few deep breaths and wait on God. Pray a short prayer of confession and ask God to speak to you.

2. READ. (4 Minutes)

Begin reading where you left off the day before. Read until you feel God has told you something. Then stop and think about it.

3. REFLECT. (4 Minutes)

Ask the Application type Questions - "what should I do with this?"

4. RECORD. (2 Minutes)

Write out a personal application by journaling what you reflected about.

5. REQUEST. (4 Minutes)

Conclude your Quiet Time by talking to God about what He has shown you.



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The Discipline of Bible Intake:

Types of Intake:

1. HEARING God's Word (Rom. 10:17)

Ways to Hear God's Word:

- The Bible on tape or CD
- Church/worship services
- Bible studies
- Message tapes or CDs

2. READING God's Word. (Rev. 1:3)

Suggestions:

Read it everyday.

Read it systematically. (Old Testament, New Testament, Cover to Cover)

Read the Bible verses before any study notes in your Bible.

Read it in different translations and versions...

Examples: New Living Translation, New International Version, New American Standard, Good News, Living Bible, New Century, The Message

Read it aloud quietly to yourself.

Choose a reading plan and stick with it.

“If you read approximately 15 minutes a day, you can read through the Bible once a year.”

Check out other reading plans at websites such as...

www.discipleshipjournal.com / www.crosswalk.com



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The Discipline of Bible intake:

Types of Intake:

3. STUDYING God's Word (Acts 17:11)

“The difference between reading and studying the Bible is that you use a pencil when you study. “

Tips:

- Underline or color code key verses/words, repeated words.
- Try to Answer 5 'w's' and an 'h'
 - What does this Bible passage tell me about...
 - Who does this Bible passage tell me about...
 - Where does this Bible passage take place....
 - When does this Bible passage happen...
 - Why does this Bible passage tell me what it does...
 - How does this Bible passage speak to my life....
- Use a Study Bible:
 - "Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible"-AMG
 - "The Life Application Bible" (Tyndale)
 - "Thompson Chain Reference Bible - NIV (Kirkbride)
 - "The NIV Study Bible" (Zondervan)
- Use Bible Handbooks:
 - "Richard's Complete Handbook" (Word)
 - "Haley's Bible Handbook" (Zondervan)
 - "Eerdmans's Bible Handbook" (Eerdmans)
- Other Helpful Study Tools:
 - "Parallel Bible" (different translations side by side)
 - "Strongs Concordance" (every word in the Bible listed)
 - "Quickverse" or "PC Study Bible" (computer programs)
 - "The New Bible Dictionary" (Eerdmans)
 - "The Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible" (Baker)
 - "The New Bible Commentary" (Eerdmans)
 - "The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands" (Moody)



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The Discipline of Bible Intake:

Types of Intake:

4. MEMORIZING God's Word (Ps 119:11)

Benefits:

- helps resist temptation and sin. (Ps. 119:11)
- helps make wise decisions. (Ps. 119:105)
- strength when I need power to push through. (Ps. 119:49)
- comforts when I'm sad. (Jer. 15:16)
- helps witness to unbelievers. (1 Peter 3:15)

Tips:

1. Pick a verse that speaks to your life and circumstances.
2. Say the reference before and after the verse.
3. Read the verse aloud 5 or 6 times.
4. Break the verse into segments, a phrase at a time.
5. Meditate on it (Emphasize key words when quoting the verse)
6. Write out the verse on a flash card.
7. Carry some cards with you at all times for review.
8. Display your verses in prominent places.
9. Always memorize it exactly.
10. Get an accountability partner so you can check each other.

Choosing verses to memorize:

- Related to issues in your life (sin, family, work, struggles)
- Use a "Navpress Topical Memory System"
- Something God has taught you (from a bible study, quiet time, sermon)



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The Discipline of Bible Intake:

Types of Intake:

5. MEDITATING on God's Word (Ps. 1:2-3)

Definition: focused thinking about a Bible verse throughout the day.

Suggestions:

- Picture it! - Visualize the scene in your mind.
- Pronounce it! - Say the verse aloud, each time emphasizing a different word.
- Paraphrase it! - Rewrite the verse in your own words.
- Personalize it! - Replace the pronouns or people in the verse with your own name.
- Pray it! - Turn the verse into a prayer and say it back to God.
- Probe it! - Ask yourself "What's it say about... God, me, others?"

6. APPLYING God's Word (James 1:22)

Application Questions:

Is there ...

- Sin to confess?
- A promise to claim?
- A prayer to copy?
- A critical error to avoid?
- Something I need to thank God for?
- A Christ-like example to follow?
- A commandment to obey?
- An attitude to correct?
- A crucial truth to believe?

*Other Suggestions:

Pray a passage of Scripture back to God.

Place your name in the verse:

(ex.-Phil 4:19 - "My God shall supply all of [Your Name] needs")



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The Discipline of Prayer:

Prayer is nothing more than talking to God. So, talk to Him in a humble, personal and genuine way. Follow the guidelines Jesus gave in Matthew 6:9-13.

1. PRAISE

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name .."

(Celebrate Who God is through Adoration and Thanksgiving and focusing on God's character, nature and attributes)

2. PURPOSE

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ..."

(Praying for God's will to be done ... in my family ... my church ... my ministry ...my job ... my future ... my city ... the nation ... the world.)

3. PROVISION

"Give us today our daily bread ..."

(Praying about my needs, all needs)

4. PARDON

"Forgive us our debts ..."

(Asking Holy Spirit to open your eyes to reveal all your sin, Confess each sin specifically, Seeking others forgiveness for how you have wronged them, if necessary, accepting God's forgiveness)

5. PEOPLE

"... as we have also forgive our debtors."

(Make a prayer list of people you want to pray for)

6. PROTECTION

"And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one."

(asking for help with overcoming life's temptations)



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The Discipline of Prayer:

Other models:

P-praise God
R-repent from sin
A-ask for needs
Y-yield your will

A-adoration
C-confession
T-thanksgiving
S-supplication (requests)

Other Spiritual Disciplines:

I. Fasting/Silence/Solitude

· **What is fasting?**

-Abstaining from something, usually food, for spiritual purposes.

· **Why fasting?**

- to focus on God and to center our attention on Him.
- to reveal things that control us and take precedence in our lives
- to increase the effectiveness of prayer
- guidance from God in decisions
- help our physical wellbeing
- better focus and concentration
- deliverance for those who are in various bondages

· **Different types of fasting**

- absolute fast: no food or water for a period of time
- normal fast: only water, but no food or other drink
- partial fast: usually only water, juices, and sometimes fruit
- Lent fast: giving up something specific for the duration of Lent (40 days leading up to Easter)
- other things to fast from: people, media, telephone, certain activities/habits, etc.



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Other Spiritual Disciplines:

2. Evangelism

- sharing your faith & telling others about Jesus
- intentionally telling others about Jesus
- investing in friendships & inviting them to your church
- sharing your personal story / testimony
- doing Servant Evangelism or Random Acts of Kindness in Jesus' name.

3. Serving

- using your spiritual gifts by joining a ministry team in your church that fits the way God wired you for ministry

4. Stewardship

- Managing (stewardship) Life's Resources
 - 4 T's— managing God's Time (your schedule), God's Temple (your body), God's Talents (your abilities), God's Treasure (your money)

5. Journaling

- A spiritual diary; as often as necessary writing out how God is working in your life, your experiences, your learnings, your struggles, etc. A biblical example of a journal- the Psalms of David



Growing Through Discipline

a guide through the spiritual disciplines

Next Steps:

What do I do now?

Now that you have some idea of how to focus on the spiritual disciplines by which to grow spiritually, you must decide what will be your “next step” and make a commitment to it.

Will you make the following commitments:

I commit to spiritual growth as a lifestyle, from this day forward with no looking back.

I commit to ‘disciplining’ myself for the purpose of Godliness through the spiritual disciplines of:

Bible intake

- hearing
- reading
- studying
- memorizing
- meditating
- applying
- hearing

Prayer

Personal worship (a daily connection time with God)

Evangelism –sharing my faith

Serving

Stewardship (management of life)

Fasting/silence/solitude

Journaling

”....Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow,....”

2 Corinthians 10:15

