



A Class on Spiritual Disciplines

pursuing His Presence



What are spiritual disciplines?



“The disciplines are simply practices that help us abide in Christ, positioning us before God so he can transform us.” ~ *Dallas Willard*

“The spiritual disciplines are intentional ways we open ourselves to God’s transforming grace.” ~ *Richard Foster*

“Spiritual disciplines are a way to arrange our lives so we regularly open ourselves to God’s presence and power.”
~ *John Mark Comer*



Why should we care about or pursue spiritual disciplines?



Spiritual Disciplines...

- Are the God-given practices that help us abide in Christ
- Help us receive His transforming grace
- Help us grow in holiness
- Help us to resist sin
- Help us love others well
- Help us become the person God created us to be



Everyone is formed by *something*...

- Habits (good and bad)
- Routines (practice, practice, practice makes permanent)
- Media: advertisements, news, entertainment, social media
- Culture/environment: friends, family, social norms
- Stress: fears, hurry, worry, anxiety, concerns

Spiritual disciplines are a means to combat negative formative forces



Pursuing God Through Scripture

Week 1



God's Word Feeds Our Soul

“Man does not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord” (Matt. 4:4)

“The words I have spoken to you are spirit and are life...” (John 6:63)

“Long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Peter 2:2)



God's Word Feeds Our Soul

“Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart.” (Jer. 15:16)

“The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.”
(Psalm 19:7)

“My soul cleaves to the dust; revive me according to Thy word.” (Psalm 119:25)



God's Word Feeds Our Soul

I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and **how my inner man may be nourished...** I saw that the most important thing I had to do was **to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it.**

Autobiography of George Muller, compiled by Fred Bergen, (London: J. Nisbet Co., 1906), pp. 152-154

♥ God's Word Enlightens & Equips

“All Scripture is **inspired** by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

When the Bible speaks, God speaks

♥ God's Word Enlightens & Equips

“All Scripture is inspired by God and **useful** for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

The Bible is uniquely valuable & profitable to us.

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“All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for **teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness**, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

The Bible provides many benefits & meets many needs

♥ God's Word Enlightens & Equips

“All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be **adequate, equipped** for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

The Bible equips us to become & do what God calls us to become & do.

♥ God's Word Enlightens & Equips

- God's Word provides wisdom, enlightenment, and warning (Psalm 19:7-11)
- God's Word reveals “wonderful things” about God to us (Psalm 119:18).
- His commandments can “make me wiser than my enemies” (Psalm 119:98)
- God's Word provides “more understanding than all my teachers” (Psalm 119:99)



God's Word Strengthens Souls

“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the **encouragement** of the Scriptures, we might **have hope**.” (Romans 15:4)

*The Bible strengthens us by providing
encouragement & hope.*



God's Word Strengthens Souls

“The whole Bible has this aim and this power: to create hope in the hearts of God's people. And when hope abounds, the heart is filled with joy.”

Desiring God, John Piper, (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1996),
p.128



God's Word Strengthens Souls

“When I am afraid, I will put my trust in
Thee, in God, whose word I praise, in God I
have put my trust” (Psalm 56:3-4)

The Bible helps us confront fear with faith.



God's Word Convicts Us

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart,” (Hebrews 4:12-13)

“Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37)



God's Word Transforms Us

“And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God’s message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also **performs its work** in you who believe.”

(1 Thessalonians 2:13)



God's Word Transforms Us

- God's Word has the power to bring about faith and sustain it (Romans 10:17, 1 Peter 1:23).
- God's Word can give us freedom from sin (John 8:31-32).
- God's Word can silence doubts (Luke 20:39-40).
- God's Word can heal (Matt. 9:22).



God's Word Transforms Us

- God's Word can provide a sure foundation to build our life upon (Matt. 7:24-27).
- God's Word can purify us from uncleanness (John 15:3).
- God's Word can sanctify and set us apart (John 17:17).
- God's Word can raise the dead (John 11:43).



Engage God's Word Regularly

[4] “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. [5] You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. [6] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. [8] You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [9] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4–9 ESV)



Engage God's Word Regularly

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:8 ESV)



Engage God's Word Regularly

[1] Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; [2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

(Psalm 1:1-2)



Engage God's Word Regularly

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another in all
wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual
songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
(Colossians 3:16 ESV)



Engage God's Word Regularly

[5] I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing... [7] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:5–7 ESV)



*If there are so many good reasons
to read, meditate upon, study, &
memorize Scripture, why don't we
do it?*

*What are the most common
obstacles?*

♥ Practical Suggestions: Process

- Know your why & revisit it regularly.
- Select the time & place that will optimize your consistency & attention capacity.
- Start small and build up slowly.
- Incorporate prayer before, during, & after Bible reading.
- Seek out accountability – for motivation & encouragement not legalism & guilt.
- Make a study plan; don't wing it.

✚ Practical Suggestions: Content

- Select a book of the Bible and read through it repeatedly (10x, 25x, or 50x in a row)
- Select a topic or theme you're interested in and trace it throughout Scripture (forgiveness, love, God's holiness).
- Trace a theme through a specific book (i.e. "glory" in Gospel of John).
- Do a Bible read-through (OT, NT, whole Bible)
- Bible study written by a Christian author (Life of David, book study, Life Change, etc.)



Practical Suggestions: Vitality

- Mix it up occasionally – consistency is good, but we need to guard against empty routine.
- Use a journal as a means to: (1) engage with the text & (2) to record your progress and “aha” moments.
- Share & discuss what you are learning with a spouse, friend, mentor, etc.
- Create a trigger or cue that will remind you to read (with morning coffee, lunch break, alarm, before meal, etc.)
- Add a healthy reward (favorite drink, music, progress tracker, new book or journal, etc.)



*What is your next step so you
can pursue His presence
through the Scripture?*



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