

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Spiritual disciplines are practices we do regularly that can help us change, with the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, our sinful habits into good habits that make us more like Christ and connect us closer to God. Accountability with someone we trust can also be advantageous as we endeavor to apply the necessary spiritual disciplines to help us grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

POPULAR SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES ARE:	BIBLICAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES ARE:
For self improvement	For the spiritual maturity of each person and the community as a whole.
For self-realization – the fulfillment of one’s abilities and potential.	For realization of the fruit of the Spirit in one’s life
For self-sufficiency	For dependence on God and interdependence with other believers within God’s body.
Based on one’s own work and dedication	Based on the work of the Spirit in our lives, the support, and encouragement of all believers, and the effort of each believer.

Disciplines in any part of our life aren’t always easy. It takes perseverance and a determination. As we endeavor to practice spiritual disciplines, we can rely upon God’s grace to give us the help we need to be over comers, to be strengthened and to grow. The spiritual disciplines that we practice help us to deepen our relationship with Christ which is what He desires with us. Below is a list of common spiritual “disciplines” which many Christians have used throughout the centuries.

1. Bible reading/study
2. Prayer
3. Fasting
4. Worship
5. Service
6. Solitude
7. Discernment
8. Evangelism

Disciplines Today:

1. Reading the Bible
2. Memorization of important Scriptures/promises
3. Meditating upon Scriptures we read
4. Learning to study the Bible in a way that it will be meaningful and help us in being transformed.
5. Prayer which is a commandment we find in the Bible. Christ gave us the pattern of how to pray in the Lord’s prayer.
6. Be accountable
7. Be persistent

8. Fasting which can be training in self-control. It also is important for our reliance upon God, compassion, and gratitude. Fasting doesn't always need to be food. It can also be anything that might take away from time that we could use to spend with the Lord.

9. Worship: This is more than an activity we do on Sunday or some other time. It is a way of life. Worship can also be a time we just sing our praises to the Lord (another form or prayer).

10. Service: Jesus taught that true greatness come by serving others. He is our example. Service is not to be self-serving (to make ourselves feel good, or to just gain gratitude from other people). It is to be done expecting nothing in return. Motivation in our actions is important to God and an area we will answer for when we stand before Him at the judgment. Our service must come out of an attitude of love and gratitude...doing it as unto the Lord.

11. Solitude: The hectic lifestyles that many of us live causes us to often miss God's voice because we are so distracted. Just as our physical bodies need rest, our minds, hearts and souls need emotional and spiritual rest as well. Turn everything off and take those times to just be quiet before the Lord....training yourself to be able to hear His voice.

12. Discernment: We become wise and discerning as we learn from God's Word His wisdom. It is important to be able to have discernment based upon His Word so that we might be able to distinguish truth from falsehood and therefore become deceived.

13. Evangelism: It is Christ's command for each of us to go and make disciples. It should become a natural overflow of the Christian life. A spiritual conversation can be simply telling others your own story about how you came to new life in Jesus. Pray for Him to open up the opportunities for you to share with others.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES SHOULD NOT BE:

1. Heavy loads of impossible, unrealistic, or unfair expectations.
2. Individualistic attempts to be holy or perfect.
3. A measure of anyone's spiritual stature and strength.
4. A way to hide our sins with good works.
5. A "benchmark" to determine anyone's spiritual level of maturity.