

# Spiritual Formation

Growing Into the Image of Christ



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## Session 4: Discipline

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## Main Idea

- The means that God uses to sanctify us are the spiritual disciplines.

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## How can the Man/Woman of God Grow Spiritually

- How do we become the kind of person we learned about in the Sermon on the Mount?
  - The answer is the spiritual disciplines



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# Discipline

- Thought experiment
- What do you think the point is of this example?



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# The Goal of Discipline

- If you forget the goal of your discipline, then it becomes drudgery
- **DON'T EVER FORGET THE PURPOSE OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES!**



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## What is the Goal?

- Look at Romans 8:28-30.
  - We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. <sup>30</sup> And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.
- Verse 29– the words “so that” reveal the purpose.
- God is so committed to the goal, He predestined it.

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 THESE HE ALSO GLORIFIED

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT VERSES TWENTY EIGHT THROUGH THIRTY

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## Hebrews 12:14

- Hebrews 12:14—Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness—without it no one will see the Lord.
  - Pursue = διώκω
- Without pursuing sanctification, you will not see the Lord.
  - Sanctification is necessary for salvation.
  - When the Holy Spirit indwells any flesh and blood creature, He brings with Him His holy nature.
  - This creates within us, holy hungers.
- Every believer pursues sanctification at a difference pace.
- How do you think believers are to pursue sanctification?



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# Discipline as a Command of God

- How do we pursue holiness? The answer is in 1 Tim 4:7.
  - “But have nothing to do with pointless and silly myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness”
- The word train (γυμνάζω) means to discipline oneself.
  - What kind of discipline? The Spiritual Disciplines.
- There are two categories of Spiritual Disciplines
  - Personal and interpersonal
- There are two other categories as well
  - Biblical and Sufficient



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# Disciplines = Activities, Not Attitudes

- They are not a state of mind or way of thinking
  - They are concrete actions that we do
  - It is doing rather than being
  - “Being” is the goal, but we get there by “doing”
  - Disciplines are the means, not the ends
  - Holiness is the end; spiritual discipline are the means
- This distinction avoids the self-righteousness of the Pharisees



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## Defining Godliness

- **It's conformity to Christ**
  - It must be both an inward and outward conformity

- **Do you understand the difference between activities and attitudes? Can you give an example of a good activity that will lead to a good attitude?**



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## Discipline as the Means of Sanctification

- **There are other ways that God sanctifies us too**
  - Other people (Proverbs 27:17) and circumstances (Romans 8:28)
- **There is a big difference between how God uses people and circumstances to grow us as opposed to spiritual disciplines.**
  - Outside in vs Inside out
- **The Point?**
  - If you will not grow by the means that you can control, then God will grow you by the means you cannot control.
- **Colossians 1:29**
  - "For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."

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# The Disciplines Put You on the Path

- There are specific works that God uses to pull you into the path of sanctification



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## 1 Timothy 4:7

- The spiritual disciplines are expected by the Lord
  - Training is a command
- The 10,000 hour rule as an illustration



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## Final Implications

- **First, you might exhibit no spiritual fruit if you neglect the spiritual disciplines**
- **Second, freedom comes from embracing the spiritual disciplines**
- **Third, God invites all Christians to enjoy Himself and all His things. So pull yourself into God's path.**
- **The Spiritual Disciplines we will study in this course are: Bible Intake (reading and meditation); prayer; fasting; solitude and silence; and the Lord's Day**



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## Personal Application

- **Get with a partner and answer the following questions to each other.**
- **What spiritual disciplines do you already do regularly? How has it helped your walk with Christ?**  
:
- **Which disciplines have you neglected? How has it hindered your walk with Christ?**

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# Group Assignment

**This is a case study that I want us to discuss together**

**A member of your church meets with you for counseling. He complains that he has been a believer for fifteen years but has not grown much. He is asking you to help him grow in his walk with Christ. What will you tell him? Put together a plan for him that will grow him greatly if he follows it. Present that plan to the class.**