

# Spiritual Disciplines Part One

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## How Does Spiritual Formation Happen In Us?

1. Trials and tribulations
2. People
3. God's guidance and grace
4. Spiritual disciplines
  - a. "personal and corporate practices that promote Christian growth"
  - b. "Any activity that can help me gain power to live life as Jesus taught and modeled it."
  - c. Just as physical exercises develop physical strength, spiritual disciplines build spiritual strength

*"Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come."*

- 1 Timothy 4:8

## Examples of Spiritual Disciplines

Dallas Willard: Spirit of the Disciplines	Richard Foster: Celebration of Discipline
<i>Disciplines of Abstinence</i> Solitude Silence Fasting Frugality Chastity Secrecy Sacrifice	<i>Inward Disciplines</i> Meditation Prayer Fasting Study
<i>Disciplines of Engagement</i> Study Worship Celebration Service Prayer Fellowship Confession Submission	<i>Outward Disciplines</i> Simplicity Solitude Submission Service
<i>Additional Ideas</i> Compassion Evangelism Journaling	<i>Corporate Disciplines</i> Confession Worship Guidance Celebration  Mentoring Play/leisure Work

## The Heart of Spiritual Disciplines

1. Spiritual disciplines can be done out of various motives.
2. “Spiritual disciplines are only the means to godliness, and not the end in themselves.”
3. Spiritual disciplines take effort.
4. Spiritual disciplines take time.
5. Spiritual disciplines facilitate genuine transformation.

### *Consider:*

- *Think about Jesus, David and Daniel. What kind of spiritual disciplines did they engage in?*

## The Results of Spiritual Formation

1. Spiritual formation makes us more Christ-like.
2. Spiritual formation makes us godly leaders others can follow.
3. Spiritual formation brings true freedom and joy.
4. Spiritual formation allows everyone to be willing to serve others in “downward mobility”.

### *Group Work:*

- *In groups of 3, choose one spiritual discipline. Find examples from the Bible of this discipline in action, and present what it means, and how we can practise it in our lives today.*

## The Spiritual Disciplines (based on “The Life You’ve Always Wanted” by John Ortberg)

### 1. The Practice of Celebration

- a. We need joy in our spiritual lives.

*“... This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!”*

- Nehemiah 8:10

- b. Joy is an intentional choice.

*“Joy is a serious business in heaven.”*

- C. S. Lewis

- c. We choose to discipline our minds to see life from a Biblical perspective!

- d. Suggested ways to practise joy in our lives:

- Finding a “Joy mentor”
- Unplug for a week
- Setting aside a day a week

### 2. The Practice of “Slowing”

- a. Many of us suffer from “hurry sickness”: always speeding up our activities, and trading for it wisdom and depth.

- b. Multi-tasking actually COSTS us!

- Superficiality
- Inability to love

- c. We need to cure ourselves of hurrying, and learn to always be available to God despite the demands on us.

- d. Suggested ways to practise “slowing” in our lives:

- Choosing to slow down
- Practising solitude

### 3. The Practice of Prayer

#### a. Why do people pray?

- They believe their prayers would be answered.
- They believe God is interested in them.
- It's the only thing they can do in their situation.

#### b. Prayer changes things.

*"History belongs to the intercessors – those who believe and pray the future into being."*

- Walter Wink

#### c. Prayer is learned behavior!

#### d. Suggested ways to grow in prayer:

- Start with shorter times of prayer and work to longer times
- Deal with temptations to fall asleep or be distracted
- Pray about things really important to us
- Take it as a relationship first