

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES-BASED DISCIPLESHIP
CURRICULUM FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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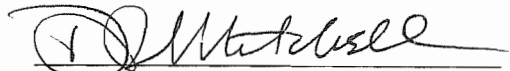
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ABSTRACT

A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES-BASED DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

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The practice of the spiritual disciplines in local Baptist churches is in decline, and there does not exist a curriculum designed to implement the disciplines into the public teaching ministry of the local church. The purpose of this project is to design, implement, and evaluate such a curriculum, with respect to participants' understanding of, motivation to practice, and perceived effectiveness in, ten key spiritual disciplines. The curriculum is evaluated by a diagnostic tool based on Bloom's Taxonomy, and is intended to measure increases in knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness.

Abstract Length: 88 words

This thesis is dedicated with gratitude to my loving family:

Dawn, without whose support I could never have finished it;
Isaac and Dorian, who have waited patiently for its completion;
Silas- may I be faithful to Christ until we see each other again.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

Introduction

The mission of the local church is summed up in the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...”¹ Many Baptist churches have become adept at soul-winning, expository preaching, and missions, and have developed tools and resources to educate and train their members in these vital kingdom activities. These resources have proved valuable in enabling pastors and teachers to bring a unified, tested curriculum to the pulpits and classrooms of churches throughout the world. As a result, Baptists have built some of the largest publishing houses of any church, and have earned a reputation as a people of the Book, a church that values Bible study.

Perhaps, however, in all our emphasis on knowledge, we have fallen victim to a subtle heresy. Perhaps we have unconsciously agreed with the platonic idea that to know the good is to do it- that ethics and epistemology are coterminous. We educate our people on the teachings of Jesus and the travels of Paul; the intricacies of the law and the mystery of prophecy, yet face frustration when biblically literate people have extreme

¹ Matthew 28:19-20a, NASB. Unless otherwise stated, all scripture references come from the New American Standard Bible.

difficulty living holy lives. Perhaps we have overlooked the disconnect between epistemology and spirituality. Paul, versed in the Old Testament and author of thirteen books of the New Testament, wrote:

For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.²

In Paul's experience, as in our own, knowledge of, even joyful agreement with, the Word of God did not alleviate the struggle between the Holy Spirit and the sinful flesh.

The answer to this conflict, Paul wrote in Galatians 5:24, is the crucifixion of the flesh with its passions and desires. In this line of thought, he urged Timothy to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness."³ A discipleship curriculum, which neglects the theology and implementation of the spiritual disciplines for the purpose of godliness, is incomplete and negligent at best. At worst it enters into the heresy of gnosticism- the idea that knowledge alone produces godliness. Complexity haunts the people of our churches because we teach them the Word of God, but offer little instruction in the tools God has given for the mortification of the flesh and the strengthening of the spirit- the spiritual disciplines.

This author's interest in the spiritual disciplines was first aroused as a student in theology at the Florida Baptist Theological College, during a course on spiritual growth. The textbook was Donald Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*- arguably one of the best modern books on the subject, second only perhaps to Richard

²Romans 7:19-23.

³I Timothy 4:7.

Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*. The author was further enlightened and encouraged in the importance of the spiritual disciplines during the course of study for the Master of Divinity degree at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, taking two pastoral theology courses that teach the spiritual disciplines. The author became so convinced of the need for teaching the spiritual disciplines in his local church that he began seeking a discipleship curriculum which focused specifically on the spiritual disciplines from a biblical, evangelical perspective. The author found many good books written for personal reading, but nothing specifically designed for a local church instruction program. The purpose of this project is to combine the best modern evangelical writing on the subject of the spiritual disciplines with relevant biblical teaching to create a curriculum, containing a teacher's manual and student guide, for use in the public teaching ministry of the local church.

Statement of the Problem

The problem this project addresses is the lack of an evangelical, biblical curriculum to teach the spiritual disciplines in the local church. The project will attempt to address this problem by writing just such a curriculum. The curriculum will address the biblical and theological issues behind the selected spiritual disciplines, as well as teaching about the implementation of those disciplines into the lives of believers. The curriculum will be evaluated by the use of a diagnostic tool to determine its effectiveness in achieving specific results, which are outlined below.

Goals of Thesis

This thesis has three primary goals: (1) an evaluation of the problem leading up to the construction of a spiritual disciplines-based discipleship curriculum; (2) the

formulation of a ten-week discipleship curriculum; (3) an evaluation of the curriculum by means of a diagnostic instrument.

The first goal is accomplished primarily in this introductory chapter. The statement of the problem section explains the need for a spiritual disciplines curriculum and the lack of such a curriculum. The theological reflection and literature review sections discuss the theological background and relevant contemporary literature that pertain to the problem. The statement of limitations defines the parameters of the project.

The second goal, the formulation of the curriculum, is presented in the appendix in two sections. The first contains the instructor's notes, and the second contains the participant's workbook.

The third goal, an evaluation of the curriculum, is presented in chapters two, three, and four of this thesis. Chapter two explains the methodology of the project, including the goals of the curriculum, Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, the development of the diagnostic instrument, and the goals of the diagnostic instrument. Chapter three presents the results of the curriculum according to the diagnostic instrument. Chapter four provides an evaluation of the results presented in chapter three, along with recommendations for improvement of the curriculum based on the evaluation.

Statement of Limitations

The project will not cover every spiritual discipline. The purpose of the curriculum is to provide an introductory theology of the Christian life, an introductory theology of the spiritual disciplines, and specific instruction in ten disciplines: prayer, fasting, study, journaling, silence, solitude, meditation, worship, ministry, and stewardship. Many other disciplines are taught and practiced. While this author does not deny the validity and efficacy of some disciplines other than those discussed in this study, the disciplines that seem most important for the local church were selected for discussion.

Theological Reflection

Theological Assumptions

The starting point and the *telos* of Christian theology are the person of God as revealed in Scripture. Packer defines theology as “confessing truth and discerning God,” and goes on to say:

Theology is an activity before it’s a set of conclusions. It’s the activity that yields the conclusions. It’s something that you do. It’s an activity of thinking and speaking about God in relation, on the one hand, to the church’s confession... Theology is the discipline whereby the church tests and, where necessary, corrects, adjusts, and expands the proclamation that it’s been making up to this point. Theology is concerned about what’s true.

Theology is also a matter of thinking and speaking about God in relation to the world’s condition.... Theology then takes on the character of wisdom and vision. Theology becomes the activity in which every Christian shares as he or she gives witness to Christ, and certainly the activity in which every pastor shares every time he stands or she stands in the pulpit preaching. It’s the activity of pointing and saying, “Look! Can you see God? This is your God. Let me tell you about Him. Keep looking, and by His grace you will see Him for yourself.”⁴

This project begins with the central theological presupposition of Christian theism- the objective reality of the existence of God. A philosophical proof of the existence of God lies outside the scope of this thesis, though the veracity of many such proofs is assumed. The theological presuppositions of this project fit into the context of both *a priori* arguments for the existence of God (i.e., the moral argument, the ontological argument) and *a posteriori* arguments (i.e., the cosmological and teleological arguments).

From the *a priori* assumption that God is, this project moves to the scriptural

⁴ J. I. Packer, “Theological Reflections” [audiocassette] in the forum, “Whatever Happened to My Call to Ministry?” (South Hamilton, MA: Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, October 16, 1996).

conclusion that “He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”⁵ From its starting point of orthodox theism, this project operates under the assumption that God interacts with humanity, that He, in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism,

still upholds, as it were by his own hand, heaven and earth together with all creatures, and rules in such a way that leaves and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and unfruitful years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, and everything else, come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand.⁶

God created humanity in His image, intending that His creation should “enjoy God” and “glorify Him forever.”⁷ To this end, God gave His creation certain of His communicable attributes, such as intelligence, emotion, and volition. Herschel Hobbs has written, “This divine image means that God created man with a rational, emotional, and moral nature.”⁸ The opening narratives of the Pentateuch reveal God’s purposes for humanity- that they should procreate,⁹ enjoy provision of staple needs,¹⁰ appreciate the beauty of God’s created order,¹¹ act as stewards of God’s creation,¹² obey God¹³ and

⁵ Hebrews 11:6.

⁶ *Heidelberg Catechism*, 400th Anniversary Edition (New York: United Church Press, 1962), Question 27.

⁷ *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Third Edition (Atlanta: Committee for Christian Education & Publications, 1990), Question 1.

⁸ Herschel Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*. Revised Edition (Nashville: Convention Press, 1998), 43-44.

⁹ Genesis 1:28.

¹⁰ Genesis 1:29-31.

¹¹ Genesis 2:9.

¹² Genesis 2:15.

¹³ Genesis 2:16-17.

experience His presence,¹⁴ and live in community.¹⁵

The perfection and felicity of Eden did not remain untainted, however. Adam and Eve's conscious choice to disobey the command of God and partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was destructive not only to the created order, but also to the possibility of an intimate relationship with God.¹⁶ Charles Hodge explains the consequences of the fall thus:

The effects of sin upon our first parents themselves were (1) shame, a sense of degradation and pollution, and (2) dread of the displeasure of God, or a sense of guilt and a consequent desire to hide from His presence. These effects were unavoidable. They prove the loss not only of innocence but of original righteousness, and with it the favour and fellowship of God.¹⁷

The continuing effect of the fall of Adam and Eve is evident in humanity today as well. Humans are sinners by nature, having inherited corruption from the first persons, and by choice.¹⁸

God's solution to the destruction caused by human sin is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is held to be the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of the Father. He is "very God of very God." An orthodox understanding of Christology provides a perspective from which to view Christ in the scheme of corruption and redemption.

Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man.¹⁹ Donald Bloesch correctly asserts,

¹⁴ Genesis 3:8.

¹⁵ Genesis 2:18-25.

¹⁶ Genesis 3:1-19.

¹⁷ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*. Abridged Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 274.

¹⁸ Romans 3:23.

¹⁹ Colossians 2:9.

“While the New Testament indeed teaches the divinity of Christ, it also insists on his true humanity.”²⁰ The hypostatic union of two natures in one person, entirely divine and entirely human, puts Christ in the position of mediator between God and humanity.²¹ As God, he has condescended to humanity through the incarnation²² and atoning death²³ and resurrection. As a sinless man, he has fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law.²⁴ He alone is in a position to be an advocate to the Father for fallen humanity.²⁵

Christ, though without sin, has taken upon himself the penalty for the sins of humanity, has offered himself as the spotless lamb whose blood washes away guilt and restores the relationship between humanity and God. Having died, Christ was resurrected bodily on the third day, and, having manifested himself to many witnesses, ascended bodily to heaven, where he is in session at the right hand of the Father.

God’s plan of redemption does not end with Christ. In Christ’s physical absence from the earth, he has sent the Holy Spirit to indwell believers and to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement. The Holy Spirit is a gift from God to all regenerate persons, and imparts all regenerate persons with gifts to the church, as God is pleased to dispense them.

Christ is represented on earth by his church. The church is composed of regenerate, baptized worshipers who carry on Christ’s witness and his ordinance until he

²⁰ Donald Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord* (Downers Grove, IL., InterVarsity Press, 1997), 55.

²¹ Hebrews 9:15.

²² Philippians 2:6-8.

²³ Romans 5:11.

²⁴ Matthew 5:17.

²⁵ I Timothy 2:5.

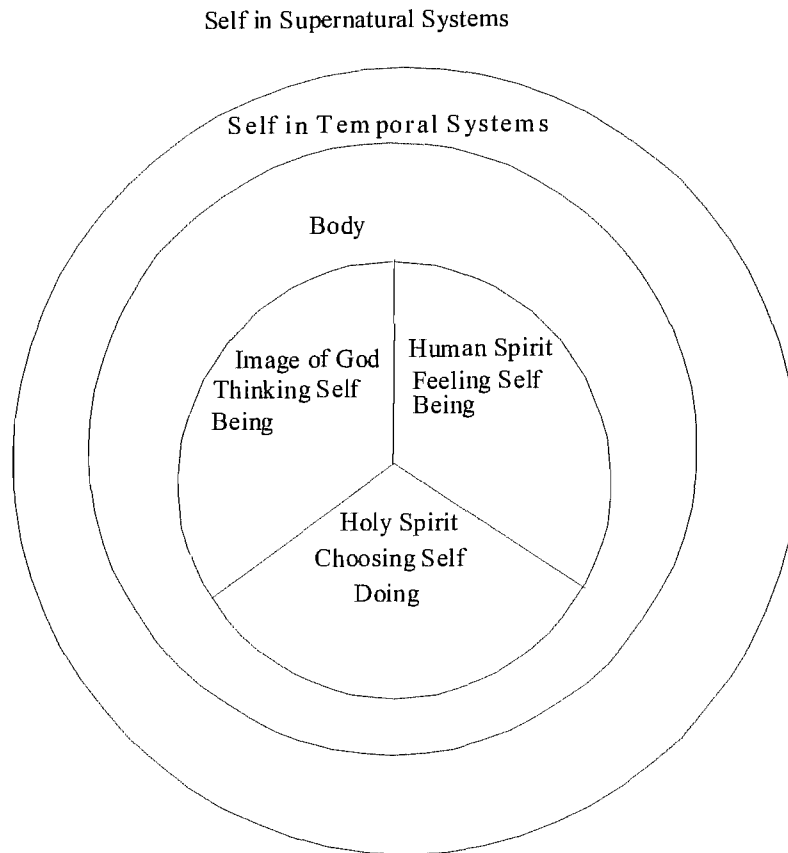
returns. The church has been commissioned by Christ to make disciples in his power, and to initiate these disciples meaningfully into lives of obedience to Christ.

The written record of God's revelation of himself to humanity is the Bible, composed of sixty-six books in two testaments, which record the history and future of God's interaction with humanity for the purposes of creation and redemption. The Bible is inerrant in the autographs, contains no mixture of error, and is entirely true in matters of faith, science, history, and all other things.

These fundamental doctrines of historic Christianity form, along with the preliminary theology of spiritual formation outlined below, the theological structure upon which the project was constructed. There are certainly other doctrines assumed in the formulation of the curriculum, but these are stated explicitly because these- the nature of theological inquiry, the nature of the persons of the Trinity, soteriology, ecclesiology, and bibliology- directly inform the curriculum to a greater extent than, other doctrines, such as eschatology or demonology.

A Preliminary Theology of Spiritual Formation

This project proceeds from a very specific model of spiritual formation. This model comes largely from lectures given by Dr. Ron Hawkins on May 27 and 28, 2004, during a doctoral seminar (PACO 852) at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia. This model of discipleship is based on an understanding of the human self, which is represented by means of a graph, which appears below.

Table One: Hawkins' Model of the Human Self

The graphic is significant, and is worth a detailed explanation. For Hawkins, the self operates in three dimensions, or systems: supernatural systems, temporal systems, and a human body. These, respectively, are represented by the outer, middle, and inner circles. The order of the concentric circles represents the fact that persons operate entirely within supernatural systems- i.e., that “in Him we live and move and have our being.” The other two systems (temporal systems and the body) are subsets of human operation in supernatural systems. Temporal systems are, broadly speaking, social relationships between persons. The body represents human relationship with the self. Within the

context of the body, the person is divided into three aspects: the thinking (rational) self, the feeling (emotive) self, and the choosing (volitional) self. The rational self corresponds to the image of God within humanity. The emotive self represents the human spirit within humanity. The volitional self is the realm of the Holy Spirit.

Discipleship operates in two dimensions: being and doing. The rational and emotive aspects of humanity relate to the dimension of being, and the volitional aspect of humanity relates to doing. With this model of the human self operating in various systems in mind, Hawkins builds a paradigm of discipleship.

The fundamental uniqueness of humanity is divine image-bearing. Humans alone are created in the image of God. Though the fall has tarnished God's image within humanity, the image remains the fundamental ontological basis of human identity. For this reason, the primary goal of Christian discipleship is the restoration of the image of God in regenerated persons.

For Hawkins, the process of discipleship is as follows: Christian instruction is directed to the rational self, which impacts the emotive self, which in turn impacts the volitional self. The way one thinks has bearing on the way one feels, which largely determines one's choices. An illustration may be helpful at this point: a man may feel a natural interest in a beautiful woman based on her appearance, and his feelings may lead to his choosing any number of options that lead to sin. However, the same man feels and chooses differently toward an equally beautiful woman who is his sister or daughter. He understands (rational function of the self) that his relationship with her is asexual, so his feelings (emotive function of the self) are different, which leads to his making different choices toward her,

The central philosophical category for the Christian seeking to live as a restored image-bearer is not so much ethics as it is axiology. It is a question of values. One will choose actions, thoughts, and attitudes based on what he values. Values are largely determined, in the moment of choosing, by feelings. For one to change what he values, he must change his feelings. The primary determining factor for the emotive function of the self is the rational function of the self. This can be summed up as an injunction for spiritual formation: “Change how you think, and you will change how you feel. Change how you feel, and you will choose differently.”

This reasoning is the theoretical basis of the curriculum which this project evaluates. The goals of the curriculum are to educate participants to understand the disciplines under discussion (rational function, which impacts emotive function), and to motivate (volitional function) them to begin practicing the disciplines. The disciplines, as they are practiced, further impact the believer in specific ways which follow the pattern outlined above.

Points of Departure

From the theological background above, this project extrapolates four points of departure, which are germane to the construction of a curriculum of Christian discipleship.

1. God is knowable. God has revealed himself in three ways: internally, in the moral reasoning of every person; naturally, in the beauty and order of his creation, and explicitly, in his Holy Word, the Bible. God’s existence and nature are clearly revealed, and although human ability to know God has been corrupted, it has not been destroyed. God can be known and desires to be known by his creation.

2. Transformation is possible. Though sin has corrupted all human faculties (total depravity), it has not corrupted them totally. Mankind is sinful, but not so far gone that God cannot restore at least a part of his image that has been lost in the fall. It is possible, through the grace of God, for a sinful person to be regenerated, and for a regenerated person to become more like Christ. Because this transformation is possible, efforts can be directed at bringing it about, which is the goal of the present discipleship curriculum.

3. Spiritual disciplines are efficacious. The curriculum rises out of the assumption that specific spiritual disciplines can bring about, through the power of the Holy Spirit, certain beneficial results, just as acts of the flesh bring about specific negative results. The disciplines are taught and practiced because they are efficacious for bringing about transformation.

4. The church is the appropriate context for discipleship. The church, as the body of Christ on earth, is the appropriate context for Christian discipleship and spiritual growth. Growth is organic; the organism grows as its constituent parts grow. The church is the context for evangelism, for the celebration of worship and the observance of the ordinance, for accountability between believers, for financial stewardship, and for hearing and responding to the proclamation of the Word of God. Therefore, the church is the appropriate context for Christian discipleship.

In light of these points of departure, a review of relevant current literature will provide a context in which to understand the present curriculum.

Literature Review

Among the current literature relating to spiritual formation through the spiritual disciplines, several authors stand out.

Richard Foster

Richard Foster is a Quaker theologian and spiritual writer. He formerly taught at Friends University, and is now the founder and leader of Renovare, an organization dedicated to contemplation and spiritual formation. Renovare invites Christians to commit themselves to the following covenant:

In utter dependence upon Jesus Christ as my everliving Savior, Teacher, Lord, and Friend, I will seek continual renewal through:

- *Spiritual exercises,*
- *Spiritual gifts, and*
- *Acts of service.*²⁶

Foster's writings are broad and deep, and have been well-received by Christians of many stripes. His primary work, which could be properly credited with beginning a resurgence of interest in the spiritual disciplines, is titled *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. It was first published in 1978, and has been republished many times in several languages. Foster calls the spiritual disciplines the "door or liberation." Foster separates the disciplines into three categories: the inward disciplines, the outward disciplines, and the corporate disciplines. Foster's inward disciplines include meditation, prayer, fasting, and study. The outward disciplines he discusses are simplicity, solitude, submission, and service. The corporate disciplines are confession, worship, guidance, and celebration. Dallas Willard has written regarding *Celebration of Discipline*:

Celebration of Discipline has quietly asserted itself in the lives of multitudes around the globe, and has taken its place as a guide to the uplands of the spiritual life for the late twentieth century.... If you wish to know in your self the reality of the gracious life of God seen in the Bible, you may find no better counselor than Richard Foster.²⁷

²⁶ <http://www.quakerinfo.com/foster.shtml>; Internet; accessed 18 October, 2004.

²⁷ Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: Harper., 1998), 209-210.

John Wimber says that Foster “writes about an inner life of piety and self-restraint that is both obtainable and desirable.”²⁸

Another of Foster’s books that has become increasingly significant is *Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*, which was published in 1992. In this work, Foster discusses prayer that moves inward, prayer that moves upward, and prayer that moves outward. Other important works by Foster include *Challenge of the Disciplined Life*, *Freedom of Simplicity*, *Prayers From the Heart*, and *Seeking the Kingdom*.

Foster’s Quaker roots are obvious as he writes about sacrifice, discipline, and self-denial. His perspective is not limited to the Society of Friends, however. He is conversant in mystic, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and evangelical traditions of spiritual formation, as well as having a solid grasp of biblical hermeneutics. His writings incorporate the best of ancient and modern wisdom and biblical spirituality.

Dallas Willard

Dallas Willard is a professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California and an ordained Southern Baptist minister. He has been credited by Richard Foster as a primary influence in Foster’s spiritual development. Writing about Willard’s teaching, Foster says

it was life-based teaching that always respected the classical sources and always sought to give them contemporary expression. Those teachings gave me the *Weltanschauung*, the worldview, upon which I could synthesize all my

²⁸ Ibid., 210.

academic and biblical training.²⁹

Willard's best known work is titled *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. In this book, Willard goes beyond a discussion of specific spiritual disciplines to examine the theology behind the disciplines. His ideas may be summarized in the following statement:

The necessity for such disciplines comes from the very nature of the self in the image of God, discussed earlier. Once the individual has through divine initiative become alive to God and his Kingdom, the extent of integration of his or her *total* being into that Kingdom order significantly depends upon the individual's initiative.³⁰

Willard highlights the importance of the disciplines when he writes "I believe that the misunderstanding of the spiritual disciplines' place in life has been responsible for Protestantism's adopting "cheap grace" as the dominant mode of its recent existence."³¹

Willard's great strength is his ability to get behind the false pretenses and even hypocrisy of the contemporary church. His writings are permeated with searching statements like the following:

The "open secret" of many "Bible believing" churches is that a vanishingly small percentage of those talking about prayer and Bible reading are actually doing what they are talking about. They have not been shown how to change their life as a whole, permeating it with appropriate disciplines, so that prayer and Bible

²⁹ Ibid., xiv.

³⁰ Dallas Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: Harper., 1990), 68.

³¹ Ibid., 25.

reading will be spiritually successful.³²

Willard discusses spiritual disciplines in two categories: the disciplines of abstinence and the disciplines of engagement. Willard's disciplines of abstinence include solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice. His disciplines of engagement include study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission. The fact that Foster and Willard offer a different set of disciplines divided into different categories illustrates the fact that there is no standardized set of disciplines accepted and practiced by most Christians. Neither Willard nor Foster attempt to explain this lack of standardization. It is this author's contention that several factors work against the standardization of disciplines. One is that standardization leads to exclusion. When a standardized list of disciplines is presented and authorized, disciplines not listed in it are excluded and abandoned. Another reason is that certain disciplines hold greater value and meaning depending on the culture in which they are practiced. A desert nomad, for instance, who lives in silence with his sheep may find that the discipline of fellowship is especially meaningful, while a Christian living in a crowded barrio may cherish times of silence and solitude. A third strike against the standardization of a set of disciplines is that legalism results from such standardization. Within the disciplines, there is enough risk of legalism without placing an *imprimatur* on a given set of disciplines.

Unique elements of Willard's writings include a discussion of the spirituality of poverty (referring to mendicant poverty- that which is self-imposed for spiritual purposes), a theological treatment of the role of the human body in spiritual formation and an examination of Paul's psychology of redemption. Though Willard covers the

³² Ibid

same territory as many other spiritual writers, he does so with the depth and rigor of a philosopher trained in analytic and systematic thought and steeped in the classical writers- a perspective unfortunately not shared by many spiritual writers whose training and practice is primarily or entirely ecclesiastical.

Willard's other works include spiritual writings *In Search of Guidance* and *The Divine Conspiracy* and a philosophical work in the subject of epistemology, titled *Logic and the Objectivity of Knowledge*.

Donald Whitney

Donald Whitney is professor of spiritual formation at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the first such position in the seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention. He earned the Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and as of the writing of this thesis, was writing a dissertation for the Doctor of Theology degree in Christian Spirituality from the University of South Africa.

Whitney's primary contribution of the subject of the spiritual disciplines is *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. In this book, Whitney discusses ten disciplines, which he does not divide into categories like Foster and Willard do. The disciplines are Bible intake, prayer, worship, evangelism, serving, stewardship, fasting, silence and solitude (considered together as one discipline, under the premise that solitude is usually a prerequisite of silence), journaling, and learning. Whitney prefaces his discussion with a brief discussion of the purpose of the disciplines, which he defines as godliness. He writes: "I will emphasize that Godliness is the goal of the Disciplines, and when we remember this, the Spiritual Disciplines will become a delight instead of

drudgery.”³³

Whitney defines spiritual disciplines as “those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth. They are the habits of devotion and experiential Christianity that have been practiced by the people of God since biblical times.”³⁴

He closes his discussion with a chapter on perseverance in the spiritual disciplines. In this context he discusses the role of the Holy Spirit, the importance of *koinonia* among believers, and the role of struggle in the spiritual life, and offers advice for practical application. Unlike Willard, Whitney offers little background to the theology of the spiritual life to buttress his discussion of the disciplines, but he develops his understanding of the individual disciplines to a greater degree than Willard. He is not as compelling a writer as Foster, but is much more practical.

Whitney’s other significant contribution to recent spiritual literature is a book titled *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health*. As the title implies, this book is intended to assist Christians in self-evaluation by means of ten questions. The questions are as follows:

- Do you thirst for God?
- Are you governed increasingly by God’s Word?
- Are you more loving?
- Are you more sensitive to God’s presence?
- Do you have a growing concern for the spiritual and temporal needs of others?

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Donald Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 13-119.

- Do you delight in the bride of Christ?
- Are the spiritual disciplines increasingly important to you?
- Do you still grieve over sin?
- Are you a quicker forgiver?
- Do you yearn for heaven and to be with Jesus?³⁵

These questions are significant to the contemporary discussion of the spiritual disciplines in that the importance of the disciplines to individual believers is postulated as a diagnostic component of spiritual health. In addition, key spiritual disciplines such as Bible intake, fellowship, and ministry are implicit in several of the diagnostic questions.

Richard Taylor

Richard S. Taylor is professor emeritus of theology and missions at the Nazarene Theological Seminary. In 1962, his *The Disciplined Life* was published, issuing a clarion call to discipline and restraint in an era of increasing license. Taylor discusses discipline as the key to power, both for nations and for persons. He describes discipline as the mark of maturity. In this context, he takes up such subjects as appetites, emotions, moods, speech, priorities, and adjustment to authority.

Realizing that discipline can be taken too far, as in the totalitarian regimes of his day, Taylor also discusses some of the perils of discipline, such as asceticism and “undisciplined discipline.” Taylor then comes to the portion of his thought that bears most directly on the subject of spiritual discipline, as he takes up the subject of discipline in its relation to holiness. Surprisingly, he postulates that discipline is not holiness, it is

³⁵ Ibid., 13-119.

not a substitute for holiness, and it is not the way to holiness. This is surprising to many evangelicals and fundamentalists, who would assert that Taylor's first two ideas are correct, but contest his third, that discipline is not the way to holiness. Taylor clarifies his thought, though, and asserts that holiness is the proper foundation for discipline. He then discusses random thoughts on the path to discipline in Christian living, which range from punctuality to gluttony to prayer.

Jerry Bridges

Jerry Bridges is Vice-President for Corporate Affairs of the Navigators, an evangelical discipleship ministry in Colorado Springs, Colorado. His most influential books relating to the spiritual disciplines are *The Pursuit of Holiness* and *The Practice of Godliness*. In *The Pursuit of Holiness*, Bridges discusses the place of holiness in the life of a believer, the holiness of God, and the path to personal holiness. He relates holiness to the believer's body, spirit, and will, which is reminiscent of Hawkins' model, discussed above. In a chapter titled *The Place of Personal Discipline*, Bridges presents a diagram of how the Spirit works through discipline to make Christians holy:

The Spirit wrote → We learn → The Spirit brings to our → We apply what He
the Scripture the Scripture mind what we learn brings to mind³⁶

For Bridges, "discipline toward holiness begins... with the Scriptures— with a disciplined plan for regular intake of the Scriptures and a disciplined plan for applying them to our daily lives."³⁷ The intake of Scripture leads naturally to its application, and

³⁶ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1978), 100.

³⁷ Ibid.

application is a result of meditation. Bridges writes “the objective of our meditation is application—obedience to the Scriptures. This too requires discipline.”³⁸

Another area in which Bridges’ thought relates to the spiritual disciplines is his teaching on holiness of body as a necessary aspect of holiness of soul. He writes:

True holiness includes control over our physical bodies and appetites. If we are to pursue holiness we must recognize that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that we are to glorify God with them.³⁹

The relevance of this idea to the subject of the spiritual disciplines is obvious. Discipline is required to glorify God with the body. The disciplines each have specific physical components, whether controlling the tongue, the appetite, the eyes, posture, etc. Bridges’ work in particular, in addition to the work of the Navigators in general, may be credited with assisting many thousands of believers in their pursuit of holiness.

Avery Willis

Avery T. Willis, Jr. is a former pastor and missionary with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He served as president of the Indonesia Baptist Theological Seminary, and has also served stateside with the International Mission Board in Richmond, Virginia, and as director of the Adult Department of the Discipleship and Family Development Division of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. Before writing *MasterLife*, he introduced the Lay Institute for Equipping, a series of detailed discipleship courses for the local church.

³⁸ Ibid., 103.

³⁹ Ibid., 110.

MasterLife is Willis' best-known and most influential creation, and it bears Detailed examination in the context of this project because of all the Baptist study material available for the local church, *MasterLife* most closely parallels the curriculum developed for this project.

MasterLife is a twenty-four week program which takes participants through four six-week stages. Each of those stages is outlined below.

The Disciple's Cross

The Disciple's Cross introduces the six spiritual disciplines which form the basis of *MasterLife*: spend time with the Master, live in the Word, pray in faith, fellowship with believers, witness to the world, minister to others.⁴⁰

"Spending time with the Master" relates to the practice of maintaining a daily quiet time with Christ. Each week contains five days of material. Week one is as follows:

- Day One: The First Priority- establishes that the first priority for a disciple is the giving of everything to Christ.
- Day Two: Under Christ's Control- discusses the necessity of keeping one's priorities under Christ's control.
- Day Three: Connected to the Vine- an examination of the parable of the vine and the branches, and communicates the importance of constant connection to the Source of our spiritual life.
- Day Four: Learning Obedience- discusses learning obedience as followers of Christ.
- Day Five: Challenges to Obedience- concludes the week with a discourse on

⁴⁰ Avery T. Willis, Jr., *MasterLife, Book One: The Disciple's Cross* (Nashville: Lifeway, 2004), 10-114.

challenges to obedience that might impede a believer.

“Living in the Word” relates to the discipline of Bible study. It is presented as follows:

- Day One: A Close Relationship- establishes the reason for daily Bible study- a relationship with Christ.
- Day Two: Guidance for Daily Decisions- a discussion of how the Bible provides practical wisdom.
- Day Three: Petitioning for Needs- counsel for memorizing Scripture and using it to meet specific needs.
- Day Four: Abide and Obey- the relationship between abiding in Christ through His Word and living a life of obedience.
- Day Five: A Daily Discipline- a discussion the time, place, and procedure to be followed in the daily reading of the Word.

“Pray in faith” relates to the discipline of prayer. The week is structured as follows:

- Day One: Praying for what God Wants- a discussion of the will of God in prayer.
- Day Two: Enter His Gates with Thanksgiving- a treatment of thankfulness in prayer.
- Day Three: Enter His Courts with Praise- a study of several names of God, with relation to praising Him.
- Day Four: The Altar of Confession- a study of the confession of sin to God in

prayer.

- Day Five: In God's Presence- a review of the week's study on prayer.

"Fellowship with Believers" relates to the discipline of developing and engaging in Christian community. The five days of week four are arranged thus:

- Day One: The Mark of a Disciple- a discussion of Christian love as the mark of a disciple.
- Day Two: The Gift of Accountability- a study of ways that accountability helps to grow a Christian's faith.
- Day Three: Help for Withered Christians- a study of the support network that Christian community provides to believers
- Day Four: What Christ Expects- a study of the mandate of Christ to love others.
- Day Five: The Model of Friendship- an examination of Jesus as the Model Friend.

Week Five, "Witness to the world," is a discussion of the discipline of evangelism.

It is arranged as follows:

- Day One: Bearing Fruit for Christ- a study of the kinds of fruit Christians bear in Christ.
- Day Two: Relying on Christ- a study of the power of God in evangelism.
- Day Three: Every Disciple's Orders- a discussion of the universal mandate of the Great Commission.
- Day Four: Compelled to Tell- a study of the natural desire believers should have to express their faith in Christ.

- Day Five: The Price of Bearing Fruit- a sobering study of the cost of discipleship.

Week six, “Minister to others,” is a discussion of the discipline of service. It is arranged as follows:

- Day One: Take Up Your Cross- a study of ministry as a basic function of Christianity.
- Day Two: Ministry in Christ’s Name- a discussion of the motives that underlie a Christian’s ministry to others.
- Day Three: More Ways to Minister- a discussion of the ministry of nurture.
- Day Four: The Demands of Christ- a study of rejection in ministry and the promise of the presence of God in ministry.
- Day Five: A Disciple Indeed- a discussion of the importance of being true disciples.

The Disciple’s Personality

Having explained the six disciplines in some length in *The Disciple’s Cross*, Willis focuses on the transformation of a Christian into increasing Christlikeness through the Holy Spirit’s work through the disciplines in *The Disciple’s Personality*. It is not necessary to expound the content of this book in as much detail as *The Disciple’s Cross*, since Willis’ main on the disciplines is contained there. In *The Disciple’s Personality*, Willis presents six weeks of material: doing God’s will, renewing the mind, mastering the emotions, presenting the body, the filling of the Spirit, and victorious living.

The Disciple's Victory

The third segment of *MasterLife* is *The Disciple's Victory*, a six-week study of spiritual warfare. The disciplines presented in *The Disciple's Cross* are discussed as keys to spiritual victory in *The Disciple's Victory*. The six week material contains studies on overcoming the enemy, truth and faith, reliance on God's Word, faithful prayer, looking to Jesus, and standing victorious.

The Disciple's Mission

The fourth and final six-week study in *MasterLife* is *The Disciple's Mission*. In *The Disciple's Mission*, Willis discusses the process of reproducing disciples. He discusses righting wrong relationships, witnessing and discipling through relationship, establishing spiritual children, maturing as disciples, training disciples, and ministering as collaborators with other disciples.

MasterLife and the Present Curriculum

Though *MasterLife* and the current curriculum cover many of the same areas of discipleship, and share a similar philosophy of discipleship, they differ in many respects, which warrant the development and implementation of the current curriculum. The two curricula differ in scope, utility, and duration.

The scope of *MasterLife* is very broad. Willis discusses six spiritual disciplines in the first book, and the remainder of the curriculum is dedicated to the further development of those disciplines in one's personal discipleship and in reproducing disciples. The curriculum developed for this project introduces ten disciplines, and does not commit as much time to the development of those disciplines as Willis does for his six disciplines.

MasterLife is designed for small-group discipleship. A small group of persons is asked to enter into a covenant to work through the process together. The workbook contains daily readings and responses, and the small group comes together weekly for discussion of the study individual members have completed through the previous week. The present curriculum is designed for public instruction, such as a Sunday or Wednesday evening Bible study in a Baptist church.

MasterLife is a twenty-four week long, very detailed discipleship curriculum. It requires significant commitment by participants, and can be expected to yield high results. The curriculum related to this project is a ten week introductory curriculum. Where *MasterLife* is detailed and deep, the present curriculum is designed to be broad.

The present curriculum is not intended to replace *MasterLife*. *MasterLife* is a valuable and effective tool for discipleship. It has been used in this author's church with positive results, and will likely continue to reap benefits for God's kingdom for many years to come. The present curriculum is designed as a counterpart, rather than an alternative, to *MasterLife*. A viable scenario for the implementation of both curricula in a local church might involve using the present curriculum for ten weeks of Sunday or Wednesday night Bible studies, and when an interest has been established in the spiritual disciplines, the formation of small groups working through the *MasterLife* curriculum.

In summary, many resources of high quality exist within the contemporary evangelical scene in relation to the spiritual disciplines. There is a need, however, for a unified, effective, biblical curriculum to introduce the spiritual disciplines through the public teaching ministry of the local church. The present curriculum is designed to meet this need.

Justification of Diagnostic Tool

The effectiveness of the curriculum was determined by a diagnostic tool, which is explained in detail in chapter two, below. Before proceeding to the methodology of the diagnostic tool, it will be beneficial to examine the biblical justification for a tool such as the one used in this project.

The diagnostic tool was developed to measure three factors: the participants' knowledge of the individual disciplines, their motivation to practice the disciplines, and their perceived effectiveness in the practice of the disciplines. Because it is an educational tool, it is keyed to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Bloom's Taxonomy, however, could be used to evaluate other factors than these three. The purpose of this section is to justify the factors of knowledge, motivation, and perceived effectiveness as worthy of consideration in evaluating a spiritual disciplines-based curriculum.

To set forth a comprehensive biblical case for the appropriateness of these factors would require a dissertation in its own right, and space is not sufficient here to set forth every scriptural argument, but some arguments are obvious and worthy of explicit statements. This thesis shall limit itself to the Pauline corpus, since Paul arguably offers the most developed and concise theology of discipleship in the New Testament church.

Paul wrote in Colossians 1:9-11:

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience...

As Paul praises the Colossian church for their faithful devotion to Christ, he prays for three categories of benefits to be bestowed upon the church. First, that they be filled with knowledge of God, spiritual wisdom and understanding. Second, that the church may walk in a worthy manner, pleasing God and bearing fruit. Third, that their work would increase knowledge, strengthen the church with power, and the attainment of steadfastness and patience.

The correspondence between this passage and the categories is not difficult to discern. Paul prayed that the church would have knowledge of God, that they would have motivation to walk in a manner worthy of God, and that their walk would be efficacious to honor God and edify the believers.

Of course, one cannot fully understand this passage apart from the context provided by other Scriptures. Paul addresses the factors of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness elsewhere, and cautions that they not become extremes which create an unbalance in the Christian life. Regarding knowledge, for example, he writes in First Corinthians 8:1-3:

Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

Knowledge is important for discipleship- one can follow Christ only to the extent that one knows Christ- but knowledge alone does not produce Christlikeness. Richard Foster has said:

One word of caution, however, must be given at the outset: to know the mechanics does not mean that we are practicing the Disciplines. The Spiritual Disciplines are an inward and spiritual reality, and the inner attitude of the heart is

far more crucial than the mechanics for coming into the reality of the spiritual life.⁴¹

The same principle applies to motivation and perceived effectiveness. Paul constantly battled the Judaizers, who were highly motivated to require that the law be kept, yet were misguided in their motivation. The earliest heretics in the church were Gnostics, who believed that their secret knowledge would be effective in producing godliness. The lesson is clear: knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness are essential for Christian discipleship, but each can be misused or misguided. In Aristotelian terms, these elements may be called necessary conditions for spiritual formation, but not sufficient conditions.

There is no biblical test for knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness, so an extra-biblical test must suffice. Chapter two provides an outline of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, a tool that has proven useful in evaluating educational materials in a number of different contexts. It is this author's assertion that a diagnostic tool based on Bloom's Taxonomy is the most productive approach to evaluating a curriculum such as this. Therefore, the diagnostic tool was constructed to evaluate the elements of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness, with a structure based on Bloom's Taxonomy.

⁴¹ Foster, 3

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

This chapter explains the development of the diagnostic tool, the specific goals of the curriculum, and the relation of the diagnostic tool to the specific goals of the curriculum in relation to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives and the theological objectives the curriculum. The methodology involved in the implementation of the project is also discussed.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

The accepted standard of educational objectives in both religious and secular education is the taxonomy developed by Benjamin S. Bloom. Bloom divided educational objectives into six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This project is designed to operate on the first four levels. These are outlined below, and a following section explains the relation of Bloom's taxonomy to the diagnostic instrument used to evaluate the curriculum.

Knowledge

Bloom defines knowledge as "the recall of specifics and universals, the recall of methods and processes, or the recall of a pattern, structure, or setting."¹ Under the

¹ Benjamin Bloom, ed. Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Book 1: Cognitive Domain (New York: Longman, 1984), 201.

general heading of “knowledge of specifics,” Bloom identifies knowledge of terminology and knowledge of specific facts. Knowledge of terminology is defined as “knowledge of the referents of specific symbols (verbal and non-verbal).”² Knowledge of specific facts relates to knowledge of dates, events, persons, places, and similar data. Of this knowledge, Bloom writes, This may include very precise and specific information such as the specific date or magnitude of a phenomenon. It may also include approximate or relative information such as an approximate time period or the general order of magnitude of a phenomenon.³

Under the umbrella of “knowledge of ways and means of dealing with specifics,” Bloom lists knowledge of conventions, knowledge of trends and sequences, knowledge of classifications and categories, knowledge of criteria, and knowledge of methodology. He defines knowledge of conventions as “knowledge of characteristic ways of treating and presenting ideas and phenomena.”⁴ Knowledge of trends and sequences is defined as “knowledge of the processes, directions, and movements of phenomena with respect to time.”⁵ Classifications and categories are “classes, sets, divisions and arrangements which are regarded as fundamental for a given subject field, purpose, argument, or problem.”⁶

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 201-202.

⁴ Ibid., 202.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 203.

Knowledge of criteria relates to “the criteria by which facts, principles, opinions, and conduct are tested or judged.”⁷ Knowledge of methodology is defined as

Knowledge of the methods of inquiry, techniques, and procedures employed in a particular subject field as well as those employed in investigating particular problems and phenomena.⁸

Bloom also discusses “knowledge of the universals and abstractions on a field.”

Subsets of this category include knowledge of principles and generalizations and knowledge of theories and structures. Knowledge of principles and generalizations is “knowledge of particular abstractions which summarize observations of phenomena.” These observations are of value in “explaining, describing, predicting, or in determining the most appropriate and relevant action or direction to be taken.”⁹ Knowledge of theories and structures is a knowledge of “principles and generalizations together with their interrelations which present a clear, rounded, and systematic view of a complex phenomenon, problem or field.”¹⁰

Comprehension

The second level of educational objectives specified by Benjamin Bloom is comprehension. Comprehension is the lowest level of understanding.¹¹ Bloom describes comprehension thus:

It refers to a type of understanding or apprehension such that the individual knows what is being communicated and can make use of the material or idea being

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 204.

¹¹ Ibid.

communicated without necessarily relating it to other material or seeing its fullest implications.¹²

There are three levels of comprehension: translation, interpretation, and extrapolation.

Translation is “comprehension as evidenced by the care and accuracy with which the communication is paraphrased or rendered from one one (sic) language or form of communication to another.”¹³ Interpretation, on the other hand, is “the explanation or summarization of a communication” which involves a “reordering, rearrangement, or a new view of the material.”¹⁴ Extrapolation is defined as

the extension of trends or tendencies beyond the given data to determine implications, consequences, corollaries, effects, etc., which are in accordance with the conditions described in the original communication.¹⁵

Application

The third level of Bloom’s taxonomy is application, which he defines as “the use of abstractions in particular and concrete situations.” These abstractions may be represented by general ideas, rules of procedure, or generalized methods.¹⁶ Bloom does not propose any subcategories of abstraction.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 205.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Analysis

The fourth level of Bloom's taxonomy, and the highest level to which this project applies, is analysis. Analysis is

the breakdown of a communication into its constituent elements or parts such that the relative hierarchy of ideas is made clear and/or the relations between the ideas expressed are made explicit.¹⁷

Bloom postulates three kinds of analysis: analysis of elements, analysis of relationships, and analysis of organizational principles. He defines the analysis of elements simply as "identification of the elements included in a communication."¹⁸ Analysis of relationships is a little more complex, involving the "connections and interactions between elements and parts of a communication."¹⁹ Analysis of organizational principles is still more complex. It is analysis of "the organization, systematic arrangement, and structure which hold the communication together."²⁰

The Scope of the Project and the Final Two Levels of Bloom's Taxonomy

The project relates to the first four of Bloom's six levels of educational objectives. A word is in order on the reason that all six objectives were not considered in the construction, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum. The fifth level of Bloom's taxonomy is synthesis, or "the putting together of elements

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 206.

²⁰ Ibid.

and parts so as to form a whole.”²¹ Indeed, this is the overarching goal of the discipleship curriculum: that the participants incorporate the various disciplines into a systematic, structured way of living. This fifth level was not evaluated, however, because it is beyond the scope of the project. Such a synthesis would require a length of time and an element of trial and error that would be impractical for the diagnostic process needed for a project of this kind.

The sixth level of Bloom’s taxonomy is evaluation, or “judgements about the value of material and methods for given purposes.”²² This, too, is outside the range of a project such as this. Participants will make evaluations over time as they practice the various disciplines as to whether the disciplines deliver on their promises.

Development of Diagnostic Instrument

Goals

In light of the specific information outlined above regarding the first four levels of Bloom’s taxonomy, four goals are set forth for the curriculum. These are specified below.

For the first level, knowledge: “To provide a survey of biblical and practical knowledge concerning the various spiritual disciplines.”

For the second level, comprehension: “To encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines.”

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

For the third level, application: “To encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines.”

For the fourth level, analysis: “To provide participants an opportunity to utilize and integrate various elements of biblical teaching on the spiritual disciplines in their spiritual formation practices, and to reflect meaningfully on that utilization and integration.”

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in accomplishing these goals, a diagnostic tool was constructed and implemented. The remainder of this chapter explains the development of this diagnostic instrument, and the methodology of its implementation.

Rationale

The diagnostic instrument contains two elements: an objective section containing statements to which participants are asked to select an option on a Likert scale which corresponds to their attitudes, and statements to which participants are asked to indicate a “true” or “false” answer to evaluate their knowledge; and a series of subjective questions which ask participants to write out in detail their analysis of the material.

Questions on the survey given to participants were ordered to correspond to the sequence of the material presented in the curriculum, rather than the order of Bloom’s taxonomy. This order is maintained here. The survey questions are given, along with an explanation of the rationale for asking them, and their relation to Bloom’s taxonomy.

Likert and True/False Questions

Many questions utilize a Likert scale. The participants' instructions and scale appear below, as given to the participants:

Instructions: Please circle the number that best applies to each of the following statements.

1. Emphatically agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Emphatically disagree
5. Not applicable

1. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of prayer in my spiritual life.

This question arises from the assumption that many Christians pray without a specific understanding of the biblical and practical purposes of prayer. They have been conditioned by cultural and religious influences in the church and the Christian home to pray, and they find comfort, grace, and answers in prayer. They may or may not pray effectively, but they pray for reasons other than a clear, rational understanding of biblical prayer.

This question relates to level two of Bloom's taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their understanding of the purpose of prayer, which includes theological and practical considerations.

2. I feel motivated to pray often.

This question is designed to feel out the degree to which Christians feel motivated to pray. The objective is to determine the extent to which a greater biblical knowledge of prayer leads to a higher motivation to pray.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the discipline of prayer.

3. God answers my prayers.

This question is designed to interact with questions one and two. It is hoped that the relationship can be explored between knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in prayer, and that these relationships can be positively impacted by the curriculum.

This question relates to level four of Bloom's taxonomy: analysis. The goal of the curriculum in relation to level four of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide participants an opportunity to utilize and integrate various elements of biblical teaching on the spiritual disciplines in their spiritual formation practices, and to reflect meaningfully on that utilization and integration." This question is structured to determine participants' reflection on their application of the discipline of prayer.

4. Is prayer an action or a reaction? Action Reaction (Pick one)

This question was prompted by the writings of Eugene Peterson, which were discussed in the curriculum. Establishing prayer as a reaction to God's actions sets the stage for understanding spirituality as a response to God's initiative.

This question relates to level one of Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge. The goal of the curriculum for level one of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide a survey of biblical and practical knowledge concerning the various spiritual disciplines." This question was drafted to diagnose participants' knowledge of biblical and theological data presented in the curriculum in relation to the discipline of prayer.

5. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of fasting in my spiritual life.

This question arises from the assumption that most Christians do not fast, and that they do not fast because they do not understand the practical benefits of fasting.

This question relates to level two of Bloom's taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their understanding of the theological and practical aspects of fasting.

6. I am motivated to fast.

This question is designed to evaluate the degree to which Christians feel a motivation to practice the discipline of fasting. The results of this question will be compared to the results of questions four and six to attempt to determine the relationship between knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in fasting.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the discipline of fasting.

7. God honors my fasting.

This question relates the questions four and five. It is designed to interact with those questions in the manner discussed above, and also to interact with question three, in an attempt to discern the relationship of effectiveness in prayer and effectiveness in fasting.

This question relates to level four of Bloom's taxonomy: analysis. The goal of the curriculum in relation to level four of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide participants

an opportunity to utilize and integrate various elements of biblical teaching on the spiritual disciplines in their spiritual formation practices, and to reflect meaningfully on that utilization and integration.” This question is structured to determine participants’ reflection on their application of the discipline of fasting.

8. Fasting is usually an act of legalism. True or False

This question is designed to gauge participants’ perception of fasting, which many Christians identify with legalism and asceticism.

This question relates to level one of Bloom’s taxonomy: knowledge. The goal of the curriculum for level one of Bloom’s taxonomy is “to provide a survey of biblical and practical knowledge concerning the various spiritual disciplines.” This question was drafted to diagnose participants’ knowledge of biblical and theological data presented in the curriculum in relation to the discipline of fasting. It is worded specifically as a “true or false” question because the answer is explicitly taught in the curriculum.

9. Fasting is important for my spiritual life. True or False?

This question is designed to gauge participants’ perception of the importance of fasting for their spiritual formation. The answers can be compared with the answers to question 8 to determine the relationship between participants’ perception of fasting as an act of legalism and their perception of its importance.

This question relates to level two of Bloom’s taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom’s taxonomy is “to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines.” This question is included to measure participants’ comprehension of the importance of fasting, which is asserted in the curriculum. This is specifically worded as a “true or false” question

because the answer is explicitly taught in the curriculum.

10. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of study in my spiritual life.

This question is designed to interact with questions 11 and 12 to discern the relationship between knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the discipline of study.

This question relates to level two of Bloom's taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their comprehension of the theological and practical aspects of the discipline of study.

11. I feel motivated to study.

This question is designed to relate to questions 10 and 12 as described above, and also with the data discerned from questions 1, 2, and 3 and 5, 6, and 7 to discern similarities and differences in the patterns of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in prayer, fasting, and study.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the discipline of study.

12. God shapes my character through study.

This question relates to questions 3 and 7, and works on the assumption that the purpose of study is to shape a Christian's character. If this is the case, then effectiveness in study can be measured in terms of the relationship of study and character

development.

This question relates to level four of Bloom's taxonomy: analysis. The goal of the curriculum in relation to level four of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide participants an opportunity to utilize and integrate various elements of biblical teaching on the spiritual disciplines in their spiritual formation practices, and to reflect meaningfully on that utilization and integration." This question is structured to determine participants' reflection on their application of the discipline of study.

13. Study is part of Christian holiness, or separation from the world. True or False

This question relates to level one of Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge. The goal of the curriculum for level one of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide a survey of biblical and practical knowledge concerning the various spiritual disciplines." This question was drafted to diagnose participants' knowledge of biblical and theological data presented in the curriculum in relation to the discipline of study. It is worded specifically as a "true or false" question because the answer is explicitly taught in the curriculum.

14. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of journaling in my spiritual life.

This question is designed to interact with questions 15 and 16 to discern relationships between knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the discipline of journaling.

This question relates to level two of Bloom's taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their comprehension of theological and practical aspects of fasting.

15. I feel motivated to journal.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the discipline of journaling.

15. Journaling allows me to detect patterns of spiritual growth.

This question arises from the assumption that the purpose of journaling is to detect patterns of spiritual growth. Therefore, the detection of these patterns is equated with effectiveness.

This question relates to level two of Bloom's taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their comprehension of theological and practical aspects of journaling.

17. Journaling is a discipline of the modern church; it is not in the Bible. True or False

This question relates to level one of Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge. The goal of the curriculum for level one of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide a survey of biblical and practical knowledge concerning the various spiritual disciplines." This question was drafted to diagnose participants' knowledge of biblical and theological data presented in the curriculum in relation to the discipline of journaling. It is worded specifically as a "true or false" question because the answer is explicitly taught in the curriculum.

18. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of silence, solitude, and meditation in my

spiritual life.

This question is designed to work with questions 19 and 20 to discern the relationships between the categories of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the practice of the disciplines of silence, solitude, and meditation.

This question relates to level two of Bloom's taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their comprehension of theological and practical aspects of silence, solitude, and meditation.

19. I feel motivated to practice silence, solitude, and meditation.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the disciplines of silence, solitude, and meditation.

20. Silence, Solitude, and Meditation help me to focus on my spiritual formation.

This question equates focus on spiritual formation with effectiveness in the disciplines of silence, solitude, and meditation. The position of this curriculum is that focus on spiritual formation is the purpose of silence, solitude, and meditation.

This question relates to level two of Bloom's taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their comprehension of theological and

practical aspects of silence, solitude, and meditation in its application to their spiritual formation.

21. Introspection is vital for understanding the world around us. True or False

This question relates to level one of Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge. The goal of the curriculum for level one of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide a survey of biblical and practical knowledge concerning the various spiritual disciplines." This question was drafted to diagnose participants' knowledge of biblical and theological data presented in the curriculum in relation to the discipline of introspection. It is worded specifically as a "true or false" question because the answer is explicitly taught in the curriculum.

22. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of worship in my spiritual life.

This question is designed to interact with questions 23 and 24 to discern the relationship between knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the discipline of worship.

This question relates to level two of Bloom's taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their comprehension of theological and practical aspects of worship.

23. I feel motivated to worship.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the discipline of

worship.

23. I worship with my whole person: my imagination, my mind, my heart, my will.

This question arises from the assumption that “effective” worship is that which incorporates the entire person- the imagination, mind heart, and will- into contact with God.

This question relates to level three of Bloom’s taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom’s taxonomy is “to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines.” This question is designed to gauge participants’ motivation to practice the discipline of worship.

25. Worship is the key to fulfilling my purpose in the world. True or False

This question relates to level one of Bloom’s taxonomy: knowledge. The goal of the curriculum for level one of Bloom’s taxonomy is “to provide a survey of biblical and practical knowledge concerning the various spiritual disciplines.” This question was drafted to diagnose participants’ knowledge of biblical and theological data presented in the curriculum in relation to the discipline of worship. It is worded specifically as a “true or false” question because the answer is explicitly taught in the curriculum.

26. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of ministry in my spiritual life.

This question is designed to interact with questions 27 and 28 in order to discern the relationship between knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the discipline of ministry. The data gathered will be compared with similar data from other disciplines to understand trends and patterns across the disciplines.

This question relates to level two of Bloom’s taxonomy: comprehension. The

goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their comprehension of theological and practical aspects of ministry.

27. I feel motivated to minister to others.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the discipline of ministry.

28. I find that ministry to others is a duty for every Christian.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the discipline of ministry.

29. I minister to others *for* Christ, but not *with* Christ. True or False

This question relates to level one of Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge. The goal of the curriculum for level one of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide a survey of biblical and practical knowledge concerning the various spiritual disciplines." This question was drafted to diagnose participants' knowledge of biblical and theological data presented in the curriculum in relation to the discipline of ministry. It is worded specifically as a "true or false" question because the answer is explicitly taught in the curriculum.

30. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of stewardship in my spiritual life.

This question is intended to relate to questions 31 and 32 to measure the relationships between knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the practice of the discipline of stewardship.

This question relates to level two of Bloom's taxonomy: comprehension. The goal of the curriculum for level two of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage participants to learn the theological and practical data relating to the spiritual disciplines." This question is included to measure participants' perception of their comprehension of theological and practical aspects of stewardship.

31. I feel motivated to practice stewardship with my money, talents, and time.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the discipline of stewardship.

31. God blesses me when I use my money, talents, and time for Him.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the discipline of stewardship.

33. God never allows people to test Him. True or False

This question relates to level one of Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge. The goal of

the curriculum for level one of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide a survey of biblical and practical knowledge concerning the various spiritual disciplines." This question was drafted to diagnose participants' knowledge of biblical and theological data presented in the curriculum in relation to the discipline of stewardship. It is worded specifically as a "true or false" question because the answer is explicitly taught in the curriculum.

Essay Questions

34. For the disciplines you began to practice, what motivated you to begin practicing them?

This question is designed to encourage participants to consider the factors that motivated them to begin practicing certain disciplines. These factors will be helpful to participants in determining their priorities in the application of the disciplines.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' motivation to practice the specific disciplines which they chose to begin practicing.

35. For the disciplines you did not begin to practice, why did you choose not to begin practicing them?

This question arises from the assumption that participants will not implement all of the disciplines, but will select certain disciplines to practice. This question is designed to determine what factors discouraged Christians from practicing certain disciplines.

This question relates to level three of Bloom's taxonomy: application. The goal of this curriculum in relation to level three of Bloom's taxonomy is "to encourage the participants to begin or continue to practice the various spiritual disciplines." This question is designed to gauge participants' reason for declining to begin practicing the specific disciplines they do not adopt.

36. For the disciplines you did begin to practice, what results have you seen in your life?

This question is designed to encourage participants to analyze the results of the spiritual disciplines which participants chose to practice. It is hoped that such an analysis will help to provide a context for understanding the effectiveness of the disciplines in the overall life of a believer.

This question relates to level four of Bloom's taxonomy: analysis. The goal of the curriculum in relation to level four of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide participants an opportunity to utilize and integrate various elements of biblical teaching on the spiritual disciplines in their spiritual formation practices, and to reflect meaningfully on that utilization and integration." This question is structured to stimulate participants to reflect in writing about the results of their utilization and integration of the material taught in the curriculum.

37. Are there any insights or connections between the disciplines you began to practice and other disciplines or other areas of your life? How does what God is teaching you through the disciplines relate to what you already know about God or yourself?

This question relates to level four of Bloom's taxonomy: analysis. The goal of the curriculum in relation to level four of Bloom's taxonomy is "to provide participants an opportunity to utilize and integrate various elements of biblical teaching on the

spiritual disciplines in their spiritual formation practices, and to reflect meaningfully on that utilization and integration.” This question is structured to determine participants’ reflection of the integration of what is learned through the practice of the disciplines into the overall life of the believer.

38. Which features of this study were most helpful? Which were least helpful?

This question is not related to Bloom’s taxonomy, or to the specified goals of the curriculum, although the findings may be germane to these goals. This question is designed to solicit written feedback on the participants’ perspectives about the structure and content of the curriculum, for the purpose of considering improvements to the curriculum.

Implementation of Project

The project was designed and implemented as part of the author’s pastoral ministry at First Baptist Church of Connelly Springs, North Carolina. Participants were asked to complete the diagnostic instrument before beginning the curriculum, participate in the ten-week curriculum, and complete a second, identical copy of the diagnostic tool. The answers were averaged on the pre-curriculum and post-curriculum surveys, and the results were compared to determine the extent of change after the participants complete the curriculum. The pre-curriculum surveys were taken to establish a “base-line,” and the post-curriculum surveys indicate the extent of progress or regress from the base-line.

The following chapter contains the results of the pre-curriculum and post-curriculum surveys. The fourth chapter offers an analysis of those results. The teacher guide and student guide of the curriculum are contained in the appendix.

CHAPTER THREE

Results

Likert Scale Results

The survey provided thirty-three statements to evaluate the effectiveness of this curriculum. Participants were asked to select a number from a key to indicate the extent of agreement with each statement. The statements were worded positively, so that the greater the extent of agreement, the more favorably the results were viewed. In some instances, participants are asked to judge whether a statement is true or false. These statements have direct relation to the curriculum materials, and are intended to judge comprehension of the data presented, rather than participants' attitudes. In such cases, correct answers are viewed positively. The statements are provided below, along with averages from the surveys taken before and after the participants undertook the curriculum. The Likert scale numerical values were as follows:

1. Emphatically agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Emphatically disagree
5. Not applicable

Below are the questions, with their average answers, and the difference between the before and after curriculum surveys. The lower the average, the more participants agreed with the statements.

1. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of prayer in my spiritual life.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 3.125 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.5 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.625 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 52% improvement.

2. I feel motivated to pray often.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.875 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.375 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.5 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 52% improvement.

3. God answers my prayers.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.5 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one

chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.375 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.125 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 45% improvement.

4. Prayer is an action.

Prayer is a reaction

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: Five participants chose "Prayer is an action." Three participants chose "Prayer is a reaction." The correct answer, according to the curriculum, is that prayer is a reaction. Therefore, this data is quantified as 62.5% incorrect answers, 37.5% correct answers.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: Two participants chose "Prayer is an action." Six participants chose "Prayer is a reaction." The correct answer, according to the curriculum, is that prayer is a reaction. Therefore, this data is quantified as 25% incorrect answers, 75% correct answers.

The findings indicate a 16% increase in correct answers.

5. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of fasting in my spiritual life.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.5 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. Six participants gave answers within the range of 1-4. Two participants chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.625 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of .875 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 35% improvement.

6. I am motivated to fast.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 3.0 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. Six participants gave answers within the range of 1-4. Two participants chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.375 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.625 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 54% improvement.

7. God honors my fasting.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.57 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. Seven participants gave answers within the range of 1-4. One participant chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.375 on a scale of 1-4,

with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.195 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 46% improvement.

8. Fasting is usually an act of legalism. True or False

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: Seventy-one percent of participants who answered answered "false," which is the correct answer according to the curriculum. Twenty-nine percent of participants who answered answered "true." One participant did not answer this question.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: One hundred percent of participants answered "false," which is the correct answer according to the curriculum.

The findings indicate 41% increase in correct answers.

9. Fasting is important for my spiritual life.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: Seventy-five percent of participants answered "false," which is incorrect according to the curriculum. Twenty-five percent of participants answered "true."

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 87.5% percent of participants answered "true." 12.5% of participants answered "false."

The findings indicate a 71% increase in correct answers.

10. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of study in my spiritual life.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.75 on a scale of 1-4,

with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.25 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.5 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 54% improvement.

11. I feel motivated to study.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.75 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.125 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.625 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 59% improvement.

12. God shapes my character through study.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.25 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.125 on a scale of 1-4,

with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.125 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 50% improvement.

13. Study is part of Christian holiness, or separation from the world. True or False

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 75% of participants answered "true," which is correct according to the curriculum. Twenty-five percent answered "false."

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 100% of participants answered "true," which is correct according to the curriculum.

The findings indicate a 33% increase in correct answers.

14. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of journaling in my spiritual life.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 3.16 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. Two participants chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.5 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.66 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 52% improvement.

15. I feel motivated to journal.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 3.0 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. Two participants chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.5 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.5 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 50% improvement.

16. Journaling allows me to detect patterns of spiritual growth.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.85 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. One participant chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.5 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.35 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 47% improvement.

17. Journaling is a discipline of the modern church; it is not in the Bible. True or False

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 62.5% of participants answered "true," which is incorrect, according to the curriculum. Thirty-seven and one-half percent answered false.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 62.5% of participants answered "true," which is incorrect, according to the curriculum. Thirty-seven and one-half percent answered false.

The findings indicate no change in group attitudes to this statement.

18. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of silence, solitude, and meditation in my spiritual life.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.875 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.25 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.625 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 56% improvement.

19. I feel motivated to practice silence, solitude, and meditation.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 3.125 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.375 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.75 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 56% improvement.

20. Silence, Solitude, and Meditation help me to focus on my spiritual formation.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 3.0 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.375 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.625 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 54% improvement.

21. Introspection is vital for understanding the world around us. True or False

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 75% of participants answered "true," which is correct according to the curriculum. Twenty-five percent of participants answered "false."

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 100% of participants answered "true," which is correct according to the curriculum.

The findings indicate a 47% increase in correct answers.

22. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of worship in my spiritual life.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.375 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one

chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.125 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.25 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 52% improvement.

23. I feel motivated to worship.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 1.714 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable. One participant did not answer this question.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.0 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of .714 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 41% improvement.

24. I worship with my whole person: my imagination, my mind, my heart, my will.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.125 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.0 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one

chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.215 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 53% improvement.

25. Worship is the key to fulfilling my purpose in the world. True or False.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 62.5% of participants answered "true," which is correct according to the curriculum. Thirty-seven and one-half percent of participants answered "false."

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 100% of participants answered "true," which is correct according to the curriculum.

The findings indicate a 60% increase in correct answers.

26. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of ministry in my spiritual life.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.75 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.25 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.5 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 55% improvement.

27. I feel motivated to minister to others.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.25 on a scale of 1-4,

with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.125 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.125 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 50% improvement.

28. I find that ministry to others is a duty for every Christian.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.375 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.0 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.375 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 58% improvement.

29. I minister to others *for* Christ, but not *with* Christ. True or False.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 50% of participants answered "false," which is correct according to the curriculum. Fifty percent answered "true."

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 50% of participants

answered "false," which is correct according to the curriculum. Fifty percent answered "true."

The findings indicate no change in group attitudes toward this statement.

30. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of stewardship in my spiritual life.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.625 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.375 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.25 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 48% improvement.

31. I feel motivated to practice stewardship with my money, talents, and time.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.625 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.25 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.375 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 52% improvement.

32. God blesses me when I use my money, talents, and time for Him.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 2.375 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 1.125 on a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating emphatic agreement and 4 indicating emphatic disagreement. No one chose number 5: not applicable.

The findings indicate an improvement of 1.25 points on a scale of 1-4, or a 53% improvement.

33. God never allows people to test Him. True or False.

Results of survey taken before participation in curriculum: 62.5% of participants answered "false," which is correct according to the curriculum. Thirty-seven and one-half percent of participants answered "true."

Results of survey taken after participation in curriculum: 75% of participants answered "false," which is correct according to the curriculum. Twenty-five percent answered "true."

The findings indicate a 20% increase in correct answers.

Subjective Results

The diagnostic instrument provided questions to discern subjective impressions on the effectiveness of the curriculum. These questions were not included in the survey

taken before the curriculum, but were designed to provide post-curriculum reflection.

The questions are provided below, with the answers provided by the participants. The answers have been edited for spelling, but are reproduced here otherwise exactly as they are written on the surveys.

34. For the disciplines you began to practice, what motivated you to begin practicing them?

A . I have done some prayer journaling and fasting in the past but this study convicted me of the need to journal in a more dedicated way and to fast and pray on a regular basis for specific needs such as our presidential election and our nation.

B. I had considered journaling for some time- this study gave me the encouragement I needed to get started.

C. Study- curiosity; driven to 'know.'
Giving- sense of duty
Ministry- a call felt

D. To bring more meaning to my life as a Christian.

E. In order to have a true and whole relationship with God I felt I must practice all of the disciplines. Otherwise I would be a hearer only and not a doer of the Word.

F. After taking this study course, I now know it is important for me to put these disciplines into practice on a more consistent basis.

G. I feel the class has helped me relate to and to understand the disciplines I need to practice more.

35. For the disciplines you did not begin to practice, why did you chose not to begin practicing them?

A. Meditation- inconvenient; could not define a purpose
Fasting- Tried it, lost interest; motivated to go back, however.

B. Circumstances- no time to focus- for example on fasting. Disciplines that require time for concentration, study, thought also require time to do them.

C. I did try all of the disciplines. The hardest to begin was fasting because I wasn't used to it- I had never tried it. I almost didn't do that one.

D. I know these disciplines are very important for me to practice. I have not set aside a time at this point to start some of them. If I do not make time for something worthwhile such as these disciplines, it will be such a waste of God's precious time, he has given to me.

E. Have not felt the need yet but I feel they're important now.

36. For the disciplines you did begin to practice, what results have you seen in your life?

A. It has drawn me closer to the Lord and made me more aware of His activity in my life.

B. It has caused me to be more aware of God's activity in my daily life in a more specific way.

C. All- sense of satisfaction, comfort, peace

D. More focus on spiritual development.

E. Prayer- I don't just feel like I'm reciting a 'to do' list to God. I really feel connected with Him.

Fasting- To deny myself actually draws me closer to Christ. When I am hungry I pray and thank God for dying on the cross for me.

Study- As I study the Scriptures it unlocks great knowledge of the Bible I never before understood like why they do the things they do because of the laws God gave in the Old Testament.

Journaling- When I write out my prayers it gives more purpose and meaning to them. I feel I have more focus.

Silence, Solitude, and Meditation- When I am quiet before God, He speaks to me like I can only imagine.

Worship- As I empty myself out to Him totally, He simultaneously fills me back up.

Ministry- Acts of ministry are now not just something I do; they involve me emotionally, spiritually, and totally.

F. Silence, solitude, and meditation- It has enabled me to worship God at a greater depth. This has increased my desire to see the needs of other people and to serve God by serving other people.

G. Prayer- God answering prayer. God fulfilling my needs through His children and placing them in my midst when I need them most.

37 . Are there any insights or connections between the disciplines you began to practice and the other disciplines or other areas of your life? How does what God is teaching you through the disciplines relate to what you already know about God or yourself?

A. I feel that by journaling and fasting there is a greater need for silence, solitude, and meditation and the study of God's Word. I feel a greater need to minister to those in need. This is teaching me more about God's love and causes me to show love in a more positive way.

B. Praying and journaling causes me to see God in more specific ways as opposed to His activity in a general way.

C. The specific disciplines studied constitute a new level of spiritual growth; I am motivated and eager to try new disciplines.

D. I already keep a journal- I've added thoughts about my Christian development. God wants us to be closer and closer to Him, through practice of these disciplines- I didn't know the means of getting closer.

E. I have taken the prayer and fasting disciplines to help me with a problem in my life. It is the only thing that has helped me overcome this sin. God is teaching me He will always be there for me. I already knew this with certainty, but what I've learned about myself is that I really can always be there for Him, too. I just need to have the discipline.

F. Through meditation it is easier to follow God's voice and obey Him.

G. Began to practice journaling. This has helped me become more focused on what I'm needing to talk with God about.

38. Which features of this study were most helpful? Which were least helpful?

A. I liked the format of the study with having a workbook that I was able to fill in the blanks and take notes. The study was thought-provoking and the material was presented well. The progression was good. I needed to study some of the disciplines more than others but realize it takes them all to make me the complete Christian witness I need to be.

B. I find it helpful to fill in the blanks with words. It causes me to give more attention and to concentrate more. I like the way the material is arranged. It gives good progression and spiritual sense. The two areas I found most helpful were journaling and silence, solitude, and meditation.

C. Good instruction; learned new concepts and insights; encouraged to practice new disciplines; want more time for discussion to fill out concepts.

D. Explanations of the purpose of fasting was *most* helpful. Study as a *discipline* was a surprise but I understood the principle (*italics original.*)

E. I enjoyed all of the aspects of this study and feel I benefited from them all. I only wish I could have been present for the study rather than hear them through homebound ministry tapes. The interaction with the group participants would have been a delight.

F. I enjoyed learning about all of the disciplines and how I need to put them into practice. Week nine: Ministry- was the most helpful to me. It made me refocus my perspectives on how important this is in my walk with Christ. It is the simple things we do for people that means so much. This is how we show God's love toward each other.

G. (1) Journaling; (2) Fasting; (3) Meditation. None were least helpful.

Summary of Likert and True/False Results

The following tables depict the results of the Likert scale and true/false questions, arranged according to their respective levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

**Table Two: Results of Curriculum in Relation to Bloom's Taxonomy
Level One: Knowledge- Average Percent of Increase: 27%**

Question Number	Percent of Increase
4	16%
8	40%
13	33%
17	0%
21	47%
25	60%
29	0%
33	20%

**Table Three: Results of Curriculum in Relation to Bloom's Taxonomy
Level Two: Comprehension-Average Percent of Increase: 52.36%**

Question Number	Percentage of Increase
1	52%
5	35%
9	71%
10	54%
14	52%
16	47%
18	56%
20	54%
22	52%
26	55%
30	48%

**Table Four: Results of Curriculum in Relation to Bloom's Taxonomy
Level Three: Application- Average Percent of Increase: 52%**

Question Number	Percentage of Increase
2	52%
6	54%
11	59%
15	50%
19	50%
23	41%
24	53%
27	50%
28	58%
31	52%
32	53%

**Table Five: Results of Curriculum in Relation to Bloom's Taxonomy
Level Four: Analysis-Average Percentage of Increase: 47%**

Question Number	Percentage of Increase
3	45%
7	46%
12	50%

CHAPTER FOUR

Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

The curriculum presented in the appendix of this dissertation is the author's attempt to provide biblical, practical, and useful material to teach the spiritual disciplines in the local church. The goals of the curriculum were to educate and motivate Christians in the practice of ten important spiritual disciplines. The goals of this dissertation were more detailed: to evaluate the problem which gives rise to the need for a curriculum of the nature presented, to construct the curriculum, and to evaluate its effectiveness by means of a diagnostic instrument. The problem has been evaluated in the first chapter, and the complete curriculum is presented in the appendix. This chapter contains an evaluation of the raw data presented in chapter three. The goals of this chapter are as follows: (1) to review the original intent of the project; (2) to discern relevant trends from the raw data gleaned from the diagnostic instruments given to participants before and after taking part in the curriculum; (3) to arrive, based on the trends discerned, at some useful implications for discipleship ministries in the local church; and (4) to indicate directions for further study.

The curriculum developed for this project arose from a desire to provide Christians with a useful, concise, and biblical curriculum to introduce them to an important and often overlooked aspect of Christian spirituality. The author found a great

many well-written books that are profitable for a Christian to read to increase his understanding of and motivation to practice the spiritual disciplines, and many of these books are featured in the text of the curriculum, in the hope that participants will be motivated to take them up and read them themselves.

It has become evident, however, that the current literature is not getting the job done. Christians today are as ignorant as they have ever been of the meaning and importance of the spiritual disciplines, in spite of the sincere and competent attempts of spiritual authors. This deficit is not in the current literature, nor in the classics handed down to us by our ancestors. The depth of Dallas Willard, the imagination of John Bunyan, the passion of David Brainerd, the grace of John Owen, the insight of Richard Foster, the sacrifice of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and the clarity of Elmer Towns are great gifts to the church, but are largely ignored by most Christians in the pews because they do not realize the intricate value of a consecrated life beyond church attendance, prayer, witnessing, and Bible study.

The present curriculum was written to serve an introductory and connective function- to introduce Christians to the theology and practice of the disciplines, and to connect them to fountains of God-given wisdom passed down through holy men and women who have poured out their hearts through their pens, exposing their experiences with Christ so that the rest of us may grow closer to Him.

This curriculum does not arise from the hubris of an author desiring to speak a final, authoritative word on Christian spirituality, but is a humble effort to point Christians to practices and perspectives that have the potential to radically reshape their spiritual lives.

To that end, this project began with specific goals, and a diagnostic instrument was developed to measure progress in relation to these goals. Below is an evaluation of the data gathered from the diagnostic instruments. This evaluation will indicate the effectiveness of the curriculum in accomplishing the goals set out in chapter one. This chapter contains the following sections: an evaluation of trends within disciplines- primarily an examination of the elements of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the practice of given disciplines; an evaluation of general trends arising from the data; a discussion of implications the conclusions may have for the process of spiritual formation and religious education within the church; directions for further study; and final words of appreciation for individuals who have made various contributions to the project.

Trends Within Disciplines

Relationships Between Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Prayer

One purpose of the survey was to evaluate the relationship between participants' knowledge of biblical principles related to prayer, their motivation to pray, and the effectiveness of their prayer lives. Survey results indicate that before participating in the curriculum, participants rated their knowledge of prayer at 3.125 (on a scale of 1 to four, with one indicating the highest level of knowledge). Their motivation to pray was rated at 2.875, and their perceived level of effectiveness was 2.5. After participation in the curriculum, participants rated their levels of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness as 1.5, 1.375, and 1.375, respectively. The areas of knowledge and motivation each registered a 52% increase, while effectiveness registered a 45% increase.

Table Six: Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Prayer

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before Curriculum</u>	<u>After Curriculum</u>	<u>Percent of Change</u>
Knowledge	3.125	1.5	52%
Motivation	2.875	1.375	52%
Effectiveness	2.5	1.375	45%

From the above data, several trends were discerned. First, participants' knowledge and motivation increased more than their effectiveness in prayer. Thus, effectiveness in prayer is not necessarily a function of knowledge and motivation. Additionally, participants' perception of their effectiveness in prayer before participation in the curriculum was 2.5- better than their perceived levels of knowledge or motivation. After the curriculum, participants' level of effectiveness was rated at 1.375, equal to motivation, and better than knowledge. Thus, they began the pray with a level of effectiveness that was higher than their levels of knowledge and motivation. Though the percentage of increase is lesser in the area of effectiveness than in knowledge or motivation, the ratings for effectiveness were higher overall than the other two categories. One further fact emerges: both before and after taking part in this study, there is a closer relationship between effectiveness in prayer and motivation to pray than between effectiveness and knowledge. It appears that God is more interested in blessing the intentions of one's heart than the knowledge of one's head.

Application for the church is evident from the last point. In order to increase the effectiveness of prayer, knowledge is useful, but motivation more so. If we who lead the church wish to produce Christians who pray effectively, we must motivate them to pray.

Fortunately, this curriculum was as effective in increasing motivation as in increasing knowledge (52% improvement in each case), so motivation can be enhanced by the teaching ministry of the church, though it is intuitively evident that this is not the only means of increasing motivation. Mentoring, testimonies, accountability, and many other ministries can also be quite effective in motivating Christians to pray.

Relationships Between Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Fasting

As with prayer, the survey attempted to measure the relationships between the elements of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in fasting. Before participating in the curriculum, participants indicated their level of knowledge as 2.5, their level of motivation as 3.0, and their effectiveness as 2.75. After participating in the curriculum the numbers were 1.625, 1.375, and 1.375, respectively.

Table Seven: Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Fasting

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before Curriculum</u>	<u>After Curriculum</u>	<u>Percent of Change</u>
Knowledge	2.5	1.625	35%
Motivation	3.0	1.375	54%
Effectiveness	2.75	1.375	46%

Several trends emerge from this data. First, before taking part in the curriculum, participants indicated that their level of knowledge (2.5) was higher than their level of motivation (3.0). They knew more about fasting than they were motivated to implement. After the curriculum, the reverse is true: their level of motivation (1.375) was higher than

their level of knowledge (1.625). Apparently, although the curriculum was effective in increasing participants' level of knowledge significantly (35% improvement), it increased their level of motivation even more (54%).

A second trend appears, which is similar to the findings regarding prayer, discussed in A, above. The level of effectiveness in fasting is equal to the level of motivation, and this is higher than the level of knowledge. As with prayer, the most important factor indicated by this research in the effectiveness of fasting is motivation. Again, God seems to honor the intention of the heart more than the level of technical or biblical knowledge.

Relationship of Prayer and Fasting

The survey was also designed to gauge the relationship between prayer and fasting, which are often taken together both in Scripture and in practice. Is there a relationship between an increase in knowledge, motivation, or effectiveness in one discipline and a corresponding increase in the other? Apparently this is the case. Several trends appear from the data.

First, and rather surprising, is the fact that participants indicated a greater level of knowledge of fasting (2.5) than of prayer (3.125) before undertaking the curriculum. After participating in the curriculum, the level of knowledge of prayer and fasting was quite similar (1.5 and 1.625, respectively). Given that Christian instruction in the local church today places so much emphasis on prayer and so little on fasting, it is surprising that participants perceive a greater knowledge of fasting than prayer. Second, participants indicated both before and after taking part in the curriculum that the level of effectiveness in fasting and prayer were very much the same. Before the curriculum, the

average level of effectiveness in prayer was 2.5, in fasting it was 2.75- both in the mid-range of the Likert scale, and statistically very close to each other. After the curriculum, the average level of effectiveness in fasting and in prayer was exactly the same: 1.375. Additionally, as was mentioned earlier, the level of motivation for fasting and prayer after the curriculum was identical to the level of effectiveness in these two disciplines: 1.375. This occurs in spite of the wide variation in levels of knowledge before taking part in the study.

This seems to provide empirical evidence that prayer and fasting are related in at least one important respect: the effectiveness of each discipline is related more to the level of motivation to practice it than the level of knowledge about it. It is not evident (and probably not discernable from a study such as the present one) whether the similar increase in effectiveness in fasting and prayer is due to the relationship between the two disciplines, or the effectiveness of the curriculum. Did the level of effectiveness of fasting increase because the effectiveness of prayer increased, or vice versa? This question cannot be answered from this research, but is certainly worthy of further research.

Relationships Between Perception of Fasting as Legalistic and Perception of Fasting as Important

A working assumption of the present curriculum is that a number of the participants would enter the curriculum experience with a perception of fasting as an act of legalism. It was desirable to measure the relationship of a Christian's perception of a practice as legalistic with his perception of its importance. Before taking part in the curriculum, 29% of the participants indicated that they believed fasting to be an act of

legalism. After the curriculum, this error was corrected, and 100% of the participants gave correct answers indicating that fasting is not necessarily an act of legalism. Before the curriculum, only 25% of the participants believed that fasting was important for their spiritual lives, while afterward, 87.5% believed fasting was important. The results are evident: when nearly one-third of the group perceived fasting as an act of legalism, one-fourth of them did not think it was important. When they all understood that fasting is not usually an act of legalism, nearly nine-tenths of them perceived that it was important.

Table Eight: Perceptions of Legalism and Importance in Fasting

<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>	<u>Percentage of Change</u>
29%- legalism	0% -legalism	41%
25%- important	87.5%- important	71%

The results of this data may perhaps be extrapolated to apply to other desirable disciplines which church leaders wish their parishioners to adopt, such as tithing and regular church attendance. There appears, in the case of fasting at least, to be a converse relationship between the perception of legalism in a discipline and the discipline's importance in the spiritual life of the Christian. People do not place great importance on actions they perceive as arbitrary, legalistic, or conformist. When these actions are presented in the light of grace and obedience, they are viewed as more important. Motivation to practice them increases as well.

Relationships Between Knowledge, Motivation,
and Effectiveness in the Discipline of Study

One purpose of this survey was to evaluate the relationship between the elements of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the discipline of study in a manner similar to those relationships discussed regarding prayer and fasting in A and B, above. Before taking part in the curriculum, participants indicated their level of knowledge as 2.75, their level of motivation as 2.75, and their level of effectiveness in character transformation through study as 2.25. After participation in the curriculum, the numbers were 1.25, 1.125, and 1.125, respectively. As with prayer and fasting, motivation was the factor most affected by the curriculum. The results indicated a 59% increase in motivation, with a 54% increase in knowledge, and a 50% increase in effectiveness. The trends discussed above in relation to prayer and fasting appear to be relevant to study as well.

Table Nine: Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Study

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before Curriculum</u>	<u>After Curriculum</u>	<u>Percent of Change</u>
Knowledge	2.75	1.25	54%
Motivation	2.75	1.125	59%
Effectiveness	2.25	1.125	50%

Relationships Between Knowledge, Motivation,
and Effectiveness in Journaling

Specific patterns have already been established regarding the relationship of

knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and study. The patterns so far indicate that (a) the curriculum is more effective in increasing motivation than in increasing knowledge, and (b) motivation is a more significant factor than knowledge in the effective practice of a spiritual discipline. The findings for the discipline of journaling continue this trend.

Before undertaking the curriculum, participants indicated an average of 3.16 for their understanding of the discipline of journaling, which indicates poor understanding on the Likert scale. They also showed averages of 3.0 for motivation and 2.85 for effectiveness. These numbers are all on the low end of the spectrum, and indicate significant room for improvement. This improvement is evident: after undertaking the curriculum, the participants indicated levels of 1.5 for each of the three categories. As with the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and study, participants' level of motivation and effectiveness after undertaking the curriculum is exactly identical. Unlike those other disciplines, the level of knowledge is equal to the level of motivation and effectiveness.

Table Ten: Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Journaling

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before Curriculum</u>	<u>After Curriculum</u>	<u>Percent of Change</u>
Knowledge	3.16	1.5	52%
Motivation	3.0	1.5	50%
Effectiveness	2.85	1.5	47%

Relationships Between Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness
in the Disciplines of Silence, Solitude, and Meditation.

The pattern, which emerged from the evaluation of the disciplines of prayer,

fasting, study, and journaling continues with the disciplines of silence, solitude, and meditation. Once again, the level of motivation after undertaking the curriculum is exactly equal to the level of effectiveness: 1.375. A significant difference is that after undertaking the curriculum, the level of knowledge was higher (1.25) than the level of motivation and effectiveness. With the other disciplines, the level of knowledge has been lower than the other two categories. Another unique aspect of the data is that each of the categories of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness showed an identical rate of improvement after the implementation of the curriculum: 56% improvement. It is not clear why this is the case, but the relationship between motivation and effectiveness in each of the disciplines may be significant.

Table Eleven: Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Silence, Solitude, and Meditation

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before Curriculum</u>	<u>After Curriculum</u>	<u>Percent of Change</u>
Knowledge	2.875	1.25	56%
Motivation	3.125	1.375	56%
Effectiveness	3.0	1.375	56%

Relationships Between Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in the Discipline of Worship

One purpose of this survey was to evaluate the relationship of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the discipline of worship, as with the other disciplines. Up to this point, a specific pattern has become evident in the relationship between motivation and effectiveness after undertaking the curriculum. In the case of all the

disciplines previously discussed the level of motivation and effectiveness have been perfectly identical. This pattern continues with the discipline of worship. After undertaking the curriculum, participants indicated a perfect 1.0 score for both motivation and effectiveness, and a 1.125 score for knowledge. Again, the level of motivation and effectiveness is slightly higher than the level of knowledge. A significant trend is that before undertaking the curriculum, the level of motivation (1.714) was significantly higher than the level of effectiveness (2.125), and the level of knowledge was moderate to low (2.375) Though participants were fairly well motivated to worship, they did not perceive that their effectiveness in worship was equal to their motivation. After undertaking the curriculum, they showed a 41% increase in motivation, but a 53% increase in effectiveness. This indicates that before undertaking the curriculum, participants experienced a level of effectiveness in worship that did not meet their level of motivation, and that their knowledge was fairly low. After undertaking the curriculum, the participants' level of knowledge (1.125) and motivation (1.0) were higher, as was the level of effectiveness (1.0).

Table Twelve: Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Worship

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before Curriculum</u>	<u>After Curriculum</u>	<u>Percent of Change</u>
Knowledge	2.375	1.125	52%
Motivation	1.714	1.0	41%
Effectiveness	2.125	1.0	53%

Relationships Between Knowledge, Motivation,
and Effectiveness in Ministry

Continuing the approach taken to the previous eight disciplines, the research attempted to discern the relationship between perceived levels of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in the practice of the discipline of ministry. Before undertaking the curriculum, participants indicated their perception of their level of knowledge at 2.75, their perception of their level of motivation at 2.25, and their level of perceived effectiveness at 2.375. After participating in the curriculum, those levels were 1.25, 1.125, and 1.0, respectively.

Table Thirteen: Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Ministry

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before Curriculum</u>	<u>After Curriculum</u>	<u>Percent of Change</u>
Knowledge	2.75	1.25	55%
Motivation	2.25	1.125	50%
Effectiveness	2.375	1.0	58%

With the discipline of ministry, the trend of exactly similar perceived levels of motivation and effectiveness after taking the curriculum does not continue, though those levels are quite similar (1.125 and 1.0, respectively.) Though the numbers are not the same, the statistical closeness of the two indicates a continued trend toward the relationship between motivation and effectiveness. Also significant is the fact that the level of perceived effectiveness was the most improved (58%, compared with 55% for knowledge and 50% for motivation.)

Relationships Between Knowledge, Motivation,
and Effectiveness in Stewardship

As with the other disciplines previously evaluated, the data compiled for the discipline of stewardship shows a very close correspondence between the level of motivation (1.25) and the level of effectiveness (1.125) for participants after taking the curriculum. The point will not be labored here, having been discussed above, but it should suffice to say that the trends discerned for the previous disciplines apply to the discipline of stewardship as well.

Table Fourteen: Knowledge, Motivation, and Effectiveness in Stewardship

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before Curriculum</u>	<u>After Curriculum</u>	<u>Percent of Change</u>
Knowledge	2.625	1.375	48%
Motivation	2.625	1.25	52%
Effectiveness	2.375	1.125	53%

General Trends

Having examined the relationships between knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness in each of the disciplines discussed, the data may be summarized into the following general trends:

The Curriculum and Motivation

The curriculum was as effective or more effective in increasing motivation as in increasing knowledge. This was unexpected, because the primary focus of the

curriculum was aimed at imparting knowledge. The structure of the material, as well as the personality of the teacher, do not lend themselves to a “pep-rally.” In addition, the length of time between the earliest weeks of instruction and the final diagnostic instrument was as much as ten weeks, so any emotional motivation generated by artificial means should be expected to have worn off.

Given that the curriculum was aimed at cognitive development rather than motivation, it is useful to determine why the curriculum was more effective in increasing motivation than in increasing knowledge. It is the author’s opinion that the answer lies not in the structure or presentation of the curriculum, but in a biblical principle of knowledge and motivation found in the book of Proverbs.

There is a significant biblical relationship between knowledge and motivation. Proverbs 1:28-29 says “Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me, because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD.” In this passage, hatred of knowledge (they hated knowledge) is connected with motivation (and did not choose). The ones who hated knowledge were not motivated to fear God. A converse relationship is implied: if they had loved knowledge, they presumably would have chosen to fear the Lord. This passage also puts knowledge and motivation into the context of effectiveness. The people spoken of called on God, but received no answer, and sought God but could not find Him, because of their hatred of knowledge had affected their motivation. This principle is not an isolated proverb. Other biblical texts attest to it as well. For example, David writes in Psalm 14:2 “The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if

there are any who understand, who seek after God.” Understanding (knowledge) leads to seeking (motivation.)

The biblical pattern is that knowledge produces motivation, and motivation determines effectiveness. Like most biblical principles, this is not empirically verifiable. It is held to be true because of the foundational assumption of the inerrancy of the Bible, but it is often not possible to clearly demonstrate in a given instance whether or not this biblical principle, or another biblical principle, or an unknown cause, accounts for a given phenomenon. This causal indeterminacy indicates that one cannot know with certainty, when he encounters this given state of affairs, that this principle from Proverbs and other scriptures is the cause. However, it is the author’s contention that this biblical principle most likely accounts for the fact that the curriculum was so effective in motivation, though that was not its primary purpose. As knowledge was promoted, motivation increased, and led to greater effectiveness in the disciplines.

Motivation and Effectiveness in the Disciplines

There is a closer relationship between the level of motivation and effectiveness than the levels of knowledge and effectiveness of the spiritual disciplines. The biblical principle discussed above establishes a connection between motivation and effectiveness. This connection is not difficult to understand. It is easier and more common for a person to act in opposition to their knowledge than to act in opposition to their motivation. A person may knowingly act in opposition to a rule or standard he understands, but if he does so, he is acting according to the motivation of the moment. Many a person has, for instance, overeaten at a holiday meal, knowing that such indulgence will be regretted

later. This knowledge, valid in itself, is ignored because some other motivating factor overrides it. Motivation has a closer relationship to action than knowledge, because all action stems, at some level, from a motivating factor which may or may not be connected to one's knowledge. Motivating factors may be epistemological, but they may also be emotive, or presumably even biological.

Because motivation is more closely connected to action than knowledge, it follows that motivation is more closely connected to effectiveness. Effectiveness, by definition, describes an action, not an emotion or a cognitive function. When discussing the effectiveness of the disciplines, the assumption is that the disciplines are being practiced to some extent. Since the practice of the disciplines, like any other action, arises more from motivating factors than from pure knowledge, the effectiveness of the disciplines is more closely related to motivation than knowledge. One writer explains the process as follows:

Knowledge and mastery ideally lead to development of confidence in one's skill and ability, and confidence supports the efforts to master new skills, the achievement of which in turn buttresses confidence. Thus self-confidence is a *sine qua non* of competence growth as it provides the basis for taking risks and for expanding one's skills into new areas.¹

Another author clarifies the idea of mastery, as it is used in this sense:

It is important to note that mastery is used here to mean the student's sense of effectiveness in dealing with personal learning; functionally, this refers to how the student perceives how proficiently she/he is personally causing and affecting learning in a chosen task that has personal meaning and value.²

¹ F. Nardine, "The Development of Competence." Psychology and Educational Practice (Edited by G. Lesser). (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1971), 337.

² Raymond J. Wlodkowski, Motivating and Teaching: A Practical Guide (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1978), 137.

It appears that the curriculum was so effective in increasing motivation because it covered material that the participants found interesting, and because it provided them with practical, applicable knowledge. Because they perceived the disciplines discussed to be important, and because they perceived that the curriculum enabled them to affect the effectiveness of their practice of the disciplines, they were motivated to begin or to improve upon the practice of the disciplines.

Implications for Discipleship in the Church

The above trends discerned from the diagnostic instruments lead to practical, helpful implications for church leaders and educators. These are spelled out below in the form of four injunctions: educate to motivate, evaluate spiritual conditions before and after instruction, dedicate significant time to teaching the disciplines, and incorporate the writings of Christian authors into the teaching ministry of the church. Along with each injunction, this author provides practical ideas for implementation.

Educate to Motivate

The close relationship between motivation and effectiveness in the practice of the disciplines dictates that if Christian educators and church leaders desire to produce disciples who are effective in their practice of the disciplines, motivation should be a significant element of a local church spiritual formation program. The curriculum developed for this project was not intended primarily to provide motivation, so motivational techniques were not prominent in its structure. If legitimate motivational techniques were a primary component of the curriculum, the effectiveness of the curriculum would presumably be magnified.

Legitimate motivational techniques which lend themselves to the teaching of the spiritual disciplines include, but are certainly not limited to, accountability groups, the making of vows and commitments, partnership in the practice of certain disciplines (such as praying together, attendance and participation in small group Bible studies, etc.), and church-wide emphases. The data specifically indicate that when participants viewed fasting as an act of legalism, they did not see it as important, and were not highly motivated to practice it. Legalism is not an effective motivator, nor is it biblical. Whatever methods are used for instruction, positive motivation should be a key factor.

Evaluate Spiritual Conditions Before and After Instruction

The most surprising data this author found was that the participants in the study, before participating in it, perceived their knowledge about fasting to be higher than their knowledge about prayer. Connelly Springs First Baptist Church is a small, traditional Southern Baptist church, in a very traditional, predominately Baptist area. This author would have assumed that participants would have perceived their knowledge of prayer, which is often emphasized and practiced, than their knowledge of fasting.

The word “perception” is not inserted casually. This author’s contention, based on the responses gathered from the final diagnostic instrument, and from questions asked during the presentation of the material, is that participants knew considerably more about prayer than fasting. More likely, they knew enough about prayer to know that their knowledge was incomplete, but assumed that they knew as much as they needed to know about fasting. The point here is not the specific degree of knowledge of a given discipline, but the perceptions Christians have about their knowledge. An evaluation of perceptions of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness will yield data, which may help

church leaders understand the conditions of their people before undertaking a given curriculum, which can be helpful in identifying specific concerns that can be addressed in the content of the curriculum. Gathering and analyzing information afterward can help to gauge the effectiveness of the discipleship and educational process.

There are different levels at which evaluation may be made. A pastor may allow a few moments of public discussion that provide him a picture of his congregation's thoughts on a given subject, he may permit feedback and questions during and after his teaching ministry, he may closely watch the lives of his people for application of the principles he is teaching, or he may use a detailed diagnostic instrument of the sort employed in the present research.

Dedicate Significant Time to Teaching the Disciplines

The data gathered from the pre-curriculum diagnostic instruments yield the following averages across the disciplines: knowledge of the various disciplines averaged 2.77 out of four (with 1 indicating the highest level, and 4 the lowest), motivation to practice the various disciplines averaged 2.66 out of four, and perceived effectiveness in the various disciplines averaged 2.528 out of four. After taking part in the curriculum, participants indicated their average knowledge of the various disciplines as 1.359, their motivation to practice the disciplines as 1.265, and their perceived effectiveness in the disciplines as 1.234. A table below summarizes the data:

Table Fifteen: Average Levels of Knowledge, Motivation, and Perceived Effectiveness Before and After the Curriculum

	Before	After
Knowledge	2.77	1.1359
Motivation	2.66	1.265
Effectiveness	2.528	1.234

If the averages before taking part in the curriculum are accepted as a baseline, it is significant to note that before participants studied the curriculum, their average levels of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness were all below the 50% line (2.0 out of 4.0.) After taking part in the curriculum these averages were all above the 75% line (1.5 out of 4.0.) Since the participants were all intelligent adults with significant histories of participating, learning, and worshipping in the local church, it may be deduced that the baseline is a product of the usual teaching ministry of the church which does not emphasize the disciplines in any specific way. The curriculum dramatically increased participants' levels of knowledge, motivation, and effectiveness.

The immediate implication for the teaching and discipleship ministries of the local church is that specificity in instruction produces specificity in results. If it is desired to produce disciples who understand and practice the disciplines effectively, then time must be given in the teaching ministry of the church to focus on the spiritual disciplines. The effectiveness of the curriculum indicates that it is worth dedicating precious teaching time to the spiritual disciplines.

A pastor may emphasize the disciplines in a number of ways. The most obvious, and probably the most effective, is an "immersion" approach such as the present curriculum. In addition, he may incorporate various disciplines into his preaching and teaching ministries as they arise in the texts being studied. Pastors must be selective when exegeting and explaining a text. The richness of most texts cannot be explained at one sitting and pastors tend to emphasize the ideas they favor. Thus, in a given text, a spiritual discipline may be mentioned, but the pastor does not focus on it during his

teaching. A shift in emphasis can allow the pastor to give the disciplines their due emphasis without a significant paradigm shift in his approach to teaching.

Incorporate the Writings of Christian Authors into the Teaching Ministry of the Church

A significant aspect of the curriculum is that it contained, in addition to biblical exegesis and application, illustrative material drawn from significant spiritual writers of the Christian faith, from such ancients as Thomas A' Kempis and Brother Lawrence to contemporaries such as Eugene Peterson, John Piper, and Henri Nouwen. The writers selected represented a broad range of spiritual persuasions consistent with evangelicalism. The writers quoted in the curriculum were all unknown to the participants, with one exception (one of the participants had read some of Bonhoeffer's writings.)

One of the premises that predicated this thesis project is that the church has been given a great gift in the writings of spiritual giants, both of our own era and of the past, but that this gift has been neglected by the laity (and, in many unfortunate cases, by the clergy as well.)³ Christian laypersons take their cues from the pulpit (or so it is hoped,) and if the pulpit does not resound with words of wisdom from holy men and women, it is no surprise that the people in the pew are more concerned with John Grisham than C. S.

³ *Christianity Today* magazine has compiled a list of the one hundred books most responsible for "shaping contemporary religious thought" and having "enduring significance for the Christian faith and the church." This list is printed, among other places, in David L. McKenna. *How To Read a Christian Book* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 135-138. This author has completed an undergraduate degree in theology from a Baptist theological college, an M.A. in philosophy from an evangelical seminary, an M.Div. from a Baptist seminary, and, at the time of this writing, more than half the course requirements for the D.Min., and was conversant with only 8 of the 100 books listed. Of the 8, only 2 had been assigned reading at college or seminary. Of the hundreds of books read during seminary, the majority are textbooks selected for clarity, not classics selected for significance or impact.

Lewis; with the latest Hollywood production than with ancient wisdom for holy living. The writings of spiritual giants are useful for spiritual growth, but many believers will not read them until the teaching and proclaiming ministries of the church whet their appetite for spiritual and intellectual stimulation.

There are many ways the writings of great authors can be incorporated into the ministries of the church. Several are suggested below. First, church small groups can have monthly “biography” reports. A member of the group could read a Christian biography, and present a report to the other members about the life of the person studied, the trials of their faith, and applications of their experiences to the contemporary lives of the small group members. The advantages of this method are that the group members are introduced to the great biographies, and compelled to read at least one and think meaningfully about application of spiritual principles across time and culture.

Another idea, related to the first, is the formation of spiritual book discussion clubs. Book clubs are increasing in popularity, and there is no reason the church cannot adopt the format to read and discuss the writings of spiritual authors.

Homebound and hospital visitation provides another opportunity for the church to introduce great writers to its members. A small paperback book brought as a gift (or a loan from the church library) to a person who is hospitalized or homebound may be a welcome break from the monotony of convalescence. It may also provide the encouragement and inspiration needed to find hope in times of illness.

The public worship of the church also provides opportunities for promotion of great literature. At regular intervals during the announcements that precede many worship services, attention may be drawn to a new (or old) book in the church library or

bookstore. Of course, the pastor should use illustrative material from the lives and writings of the saints, and provide enough specificity in his references that members can follow up by reading the materials that interest them.

Directions for Further Study

The research conducted for this thesis project is limited and narrow, focusing on a specific problem, and offering and evaluating a specific solution. During the course of the research, other problems presented themselves, which were beyond the scope of this project, and were deemed worthy of further study. They are discussed briefly below.

Relationships Between Prayer and Fasting

Prayer and fasting are often connected in Scripture, yet also presented occasionally as standing alone, which indicates they are related, yet distinct, disciplines. The exact relationship between the two is beyond the scope of this project, although it was seen that they share a pattern with the other disciplines; i.e., that the level of effectiveness in practice is more closely tied to the level of motivation than the level of knowledge. It would be a worthy project to explore the biblical, theological, historical, and psychological connections between prayer and fasting.

Relationships Between Motivation and Perceived Effectiveness

The most significant fact discerned by the data collected for this research project is that there is a close, and in the majority of cases (80% in this study) direct correspondence between the level of motivation participants had to practice given

disciplines, and their perception of their effectiveness. A solution, based on a biblical principle, has been presented to provide a preliminary accounting for these phenomena. It would be interesting, however, to see research into the psychological and spiritual connections between motivation and efficacy, not only in the practice of the disciplines, but in other human activities as well. Perhaps such a study relative to motivation and efficacy in technical skill or artistic accomplishment would yield insight for those seeking to understand the practice of the spiritual disciplines.

Appreciation

Appreciation must be expressed to many people who have made various impacts on the ministry which led to the development of this dissertation. Dr. Sam Tate, the pastor who ushered me into to the ministry, Dr. Paul Robinson, who taught me to think broadly and wisely about spiritual formation through his teaching and example, Dr. Bill Cook, Dr. Judson Vaughn, and Dr. J. W. Lee, who first opened for me the riches of serious study in the Scriptures, all deserve mention, as do my colleagues in the ministry whose minds and hearts have contributed tremendously to the development of this project: Rev. David Hamlyn, Rev. Andrew Brown, and Rev. Jim Hamby. The churches I have served as pastor- Esto Baptist Church of Esto, Florida and First Baptist Church of Connelly Springs, North Carolina- have each contributed to my understanding of the redemptive work of Christ and the ministry of His church, as has my home church, Cheek Memorial Baptist Church in Americus, Georgia.

At Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Frank Schmitt went out of his way to assist me in arranging my studies, Dr. Rod Dempsey helped to keep my research

grounded in the reality of spiritual formation in the local church, Dr. Daniel Mitchell contributed the keen thoughts of a theological scholar to challenge me to deepen and broaden my research, and the entire faculty provided instruction which was grounded in the Word of God and useful to the local church.

My wife, Dawn, and sons, Isaac and Dorian, have endured this project with patience and grace. They have encouraged me and believed in me, and they may never know the depth of my gratitude. My father, Dr. Walter Mathews, provided a sympathetic ear and wise counsel during the construction of this dissertation, as one who has written a dissertation and lived to tell about it.

Above all thanks, praise is due to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the abundance of His grace in providing the free gift of salvation to all who believe, and for His call to a life of meaning and purpose through vocational ministry. It is in His name that this dissertation is humbly submitted to the faculty of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Ministry.

APPENDIX ONE

The Instructor's Notes

This chapter contains the instructor's notes for the *Disciplines of A Disciple* discipleship curriculum. The material was taught directly from the outlined notes presented below, with exposition by the pastor. Great care was taken to avoid intellectual detours from the material that might affect the accuracy of the diagnostic tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum as presented below. Underlined words represent blanks in the students' note packet, which are to be filled in by students as part of the note-taking process.

The curriculum is designed to achieve several distinct purposes in relation to Christian discipleship and to the practice of the spiritual disciplines. The primary intent of this curriculum is to educate and motivate participants to understand and practice the spiritual disciplines discussed as part of a healthy, balanced life of Christian commitment in thought and practice. However, several secondary purposes were also considered in the preparation of this curriculum. One of these is to introduce participants to a wide range of authors so that they may expand their range of familiarity with Christian thinkers. To accomplish this, quotations are used throughout the curriculum. It is hoped

that this will whet the participants' appetites to explore the ideas in more detail than can be offered in a curriculum such as this.

Another consideration in the design and implementation of this curriculum is the need for creative expression of oneself in the disciplines. The curriculum was not written to lay out rigid parameters for the practice of the disciplines, which leads to formalism and legalism, but to offer enough instruction in the disciplines that the participants can begin practicing them within biblical parameters according to the dictates of their consciences, the pace of their lifestyles, and the uniqueness of their personalities and temperaments before God.

To facilitate thought and discussion, questions are provided at the conclusion of each week's lecture notes. These questions are designed to encourage the participants to assimilate the material into their existing body of knowledge about spiritual formation, and to begin the process of applying the disciplines to their lives.

Except where noted, all Scripture references in the curriculum are taken from the New International Version of the Bible.

Week One: The Christian Life

Purpose: To describe the Christian life from biblical and practical points of view.

I. A Life of Grace

Dietrich Bonhoeffer has written:

For how shall he who has fallen away from Christ still have communion with Christ except through the grace by which Christ holds the renegade fast and preserves him in communion with Him? There can be recognition of guilt only because of Christ's grace and because He stretches out His hand to save the one who is falling away. In this recognition of guilt there begins the process by which man is conformed with Christ.¹

A. Grace for Salvation

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.
(Ephesians 2:8-9)*

B. Grace for Service

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them— yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10)

C. Grace for Sanctification

1. Definition of Sanctification: The process by which God sets us apart to make us holy.

I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing! (Galatians 2:21)

2. Two kinds of righteousness:

a. imputed righteousness- God views us as righteous because we are

¹ Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, Ethics (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 111.

forgiven

b. practical righteousness- holy living; putting off sin

II. A Life of Discipline

Richard Taylor writes:

It is easy for some of us to say glibly that all that is needed is a genuine experience of entire sanctification.... Our people too often get an emotional experience of 'sanctification' which is totally unrelated in their thinking to any form of rugged self-denial.²

A. Discipline from God

Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord, the man you teach from your law; you grant him relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked. (Psalm 94:12-13)

B. Discipline with God

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather train yourself to be godly. (I Timothy 4:7)

Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (I Corinthians 9:26-27)

Jerry Bridges has written:

.. the concept of discipline is suspect in our society today. It appears to run counter to our emphasis on freedom in Christ, and often smacks of legalism and harshness. Yet Paul says we are to train or discipline ourselves to be godly... If an athlete disciplines himself to obtain a temporal prize, he said, how much more should we Christians discipline ourselves to obtain a crown that lasts forever.³

² Taylor, Richard S., The Disciplined Life: The Mark of Christian Maturity. (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002), 15.

³ Bridges, Jerry, The Pursuit of Holiness (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1978), 99.

II. A Life of Freedom

John Piper expresses himself well:

We are the freest of all people. And the Bible is unmistakable in what this freedom is for: ‘You were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.’ (Galatians 5:13)⁴

A. Freedom from Sin

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. (Romans 6:11-14)

B. Freedom for Obedience

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey— whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves of sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. (Romans 6:15-18)

III. A Life of Specific Action

Philosopher and spiritual writer Dallas Willard says:

Even of Jesus it is true that ‘he learned obedience through the things which he suffered,’ as Hebrews 5:8 states. Obedience, even for him, was something to be *learned*. Certainly we cannot reasonably hope to do his deeds without adopting his form of life. And we cannot adopt his form of

⁴ Piper, John, The Passion of Jesus Christ (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2004), 97.

life without engaging in his disciplines– maybe even more than he did and surely adding others demanded by our much more troubled condition.⁵

A. God Has Been Specific Toward Us

... He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. (Galatians 2:13-14)

B. We Must Be Specific in our Relationship With God

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25)

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does God give grace for daily living? Be specific.
2. In what ways should we be “set apart” for holiness? Be specific, but not legalistic.
3. When does self-discipline become legalism?
4. What are some ways our freedom in Christ expresses itself in our spirituality?
5. Can we ever become too free?
6. What do you think are some of the specific actions that will help us grow in Christ?
7. In what ways can Christians support each other in the matters we have discussed?

⁵ Willard, Dallas, The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1990), 29.

Week Two: Spiritual Discipline and Spiritual Growth

Purpose: To understand the process of spiritual growth, and the place of spiritual discipline in this process.

I. The Great Commission

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20)

A. The Goal of Christian Teaching: To prepare God's church for judgement.

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. (Colossians 1:28)

B. The Goal of Christian Learning: To practice the Word of God

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it— he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

It is no mistake to desire moral purity. There can scarcely be too much of it. And the Holy Spirit will bring purity when he indwells God's people.⁶

II. The Formation of a Disciple

A. The Process of Discipleship

1. Regeneration

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:5-7)

⁶ McGavran, Donald, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 237.

- Lack power to control sexual appetites
- Be open to connection with evil spirits
- Depend for happiness on people, places, and things other than God and, when they fail to come through for us, we will be devastated
- Find it impossible to get along at intimate levels due to jealousy, tensions, fits of rage, and a spirit of inner-ring exclusion
- Yield to our impulses to feel good now, regardless of the long-range outcome

The Upper Room:

- Find ourselves wanting to bless people more than use them
- Discover an unshakable joy that survives the most crushing disappointments
- Notice a patient and kind gentleness nudging aside our irritation with people
- Experience ourselves as solid and whole in the presence of those who used to intimidate us.⁷

D. Image and Imitation

Robert P. Meye has written:

... the imitation of Christ is both a fundamental means and the glorious goal of Christian formation.⁸

⁷ Crabb, Larry, The Safest Place on Earth (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999), 67.

⁸ Gangel, Kenneth O., and James C. Wilhoit, eds., The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation (Wheaton: Victor, 1994), 199.

Discussion Questions

1. What role should the Great Commission play in a believer's life?
2. Is there any value in learning the Bible if it is not put into practice?
3. Can you think of a specific time in your life when you were born again?
4. What kind of fruit should a believer's life show? Be specific.
5. How is Christian living different than simply having good, moral habits?
6. Do you think most Christians ever go to the upper room? How often?
7. In what ways can Christians support each other in the matters we have discussed?

Week Three: Prayer

Purpose: To understand some ways in which prayer shapes our spiritual formation, and to meet several holy men and women of prayer.

I. Prayer Gives Significance to Otherwise Insignificant Moments

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. - Matthew 6:6

Eugene Peterson writes:

But when we venture into prayer every word may, at any moment, come to mean just what it *means* and involve us with a holy God who wills our holiness. All we had counted on was some religious small talk, a little numinous gossip, and we are suddenly involved, without intending it and without having calculated the consequences, in something *eternal*.⁹

II. Prayer is a Reaction to God's Actions

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord." James 5:13-14

Again, Eugene Peterson:

The appearances mislead: prayer is never the first word, it is always the second word. God has the first word. Prayer is answering speech; it is not primarily 'address' but 'response.'¹⁰

III. Prayer is Life-Creating and Life-Transforming

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. - I Timothy 4:4-5

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be

⁹ Peterson, Eugene, Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 30.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.- Romans 12:9-13

Henri Nouwen has written:

Prayer is a radical conversion of all our mental processes because in prayer we move away from ourselves, our worries, preoccupation, and self-gratification—and direct all that we recognize as ours to God in the simple trust that through his love all will be made new.¹¹

Another writer says:

We try to fill up that ghastly hole in the pit of our stomachs that is really in our souls. We try to fill it with food, with power, with sex.... We begin to realize that this hunger will never be satisfied, not in this life. It is the hunger for the Face of God, and the only possible food is prayer.¹²

IV. Examples of Prayer

When we read the lives of the saints, we are struck by a certain large leisure which went hand in hand with a remarkable effectiveness. They were never hurried; they did comparatively few things, and these not necessarily striking or important; and they troubled very little about their influence. Yet they always seemed to hit the mark; every bit of their life told; their simplest actions had a distinction, an exquisiteness which suggested the artist. The reason is not far to seek. Their sainthood lay in their habit of referring the smallest actions to God. They lived in God; they acted from a pure motive of love towards God. They were as free from self-regard as from slavery to the good opinion of others. God saw and God rewarded: what else needed they? They possessed God and possessed themselves in God. Hence the inalienable dignity of these meek, quiet figures that seem to produce such marvelous effects with such humble materials.¹³

¹¹ Nouwen, Henri, Clowning in Rome (Garden City, N.Y.: Image, 1979), 73.

¹² Ross, Maggie. quoted in Crabb, Larry, The Safest Place on Earth (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1999), 38.

¹³ Herman, E., Creative Prayer (Cincinnati: Forward Movement, n.d.), 16.

A. Samuel Logan Brengle- evangelist for the Salvation Army

Brengle's biographer, C. W. Hall, quotes Brengle's prayer journal:

Keep me, O Lord, from waxing mentally and spiritually dull and stupid. Help me to keep the physical, mental, and spiritual fibre of the athlete, of the man who denies himself daily and takes up his cross and follows Thee. Give me good success in my work, but hide pride from me. Save me from the self-complacency that so frequently accompanies success and prosperity. Save me from the spirit of sloth, of self-indulgence, as physical infirmities and decay creep upon me.¹⁴

B. Eric Liddle- Scottish olympic athlete, missionary imprisoned in China, subject of movie *Chariots of Fire*

What was his secret? Once I asked him, but I really knew already, for my husband was in his dormitory and shared the secret with him. Every morning about 6 a.m., with curtains tightly drawn to keep in the shining of our peanut-oil lamp, lest the prowling sentries would think someone was trying to escape, he used to climb out of his top bunk, past the sleeping forms of his dormitory mates. Then at the small Chinese table, the two men would sit close together with the light just enough to illumine their Bible and notebooks. Silently they read, prayed, and thought about what should be done. *Eric was a man of prayer not only at set times—* though he did not like to miss a prayer meeting or communion service when such could be arranged. *He talked to God all the time, naturally, as one can who enters the "School of Prayer" to learn the way of inner discipline.* He seemed to have no weighty mental problems: his life was grounded in God, in faith, and in trust.¹⁵

C. Teresa of Avilla- Mystic nun and founder of fourteen monasteries

Mark Galli and Ted Olsen quote from Teresa's writings and summarize her life:

"Whoever has not begun the practice of prayer, I beg for the love of the Lord not to go without so great a good. There is nothing here to fear but only something to desire."

Once when praying about her many trials and sufferings, she thought she heard God say, "But this is how I treat my friends." Teresa replied "No wonder you have so few friends."

¹⁴ C. W. Hall, Samuel Logan Brengle: Portrait of a Prophet (Chicago: Salvation Army Supply and Purchasing Dept., 1933), 237.

¹⁵ Magnusson, Sally, The Flying Scotsman (New York: Quartet, 1981), 165.

For Teresa, prayer is the source of Christian life and the wellspring of all moral virtues. Prayer is not everything, but without prayer, nothing else is possible. By prayer does the soul enter the Castle, and by prayer does the soul continue the journey. Under this umbrella of prayer, God works, in mysterious, often unpredictable ways, and the soul works strongly.¹⁶

Discussion Questions

1. Is prayer the only legitimate reaction to God's actions?
2. How might different kinds of prayer have different effects on spiritual growth? (Praise, petition, intercession, etc.)
3. What elements of spiritual life can be created only by prayer?
4. What are some dangers of prayer?
5. How broad a diversity is allowable in styles of prayer?
6. In what ways can Christians support each other in the matters we have discussed?

¹⁶ Galli, Mark and Ted Olsen, 131 Christians Everyone Should Know (Nashville, Broadman, 2000), 265.

Week Four: Fasting

Purpose: To understand three areas of temptation, and how the discipline of fasting helps us to overcome temptation in these areas.

I. Three Areas of Temptation

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does— does not come from the Father but from the world. - 1 John 2:15-16

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. - Genesis 3:6a

A. The Lust of the Flesh- *the cravings of sinful man*

1. -The First Sin- *the fruit of the tree was good for food*
2. - Definition of the lust of the flesh: A desire to fulfill the natural appetites of the body beyond the boundaries God has set for us to enjoy them.
3. - Examples of the lust of the flesh:

B. The Lust of the Eyes- *the lust of his eyes*

1. - The First Sin- *and pleasing to the eye*
2. - Definition of the lust of the eyes: Seeing beauty or worth in the wrong things.
3. - Examples of the lust of the eyes:

C. The Pride of Life- *the boasting of what he has and does*

1. - The First Sin- *and also desirable for gaining wisdom*
2. - Definition of the pride of life: Exalting oneself to the position of God.
- 3- Examples of the pride of life:

II. The Temptations of Jesus

A. Jesus' preparation for temptation: Fasting

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said...- Matthew 4:1-3a

1. The lust of the flesh-

"If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." - Matthew 4:3

2. The lust of the eyes-

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." - Matthew 4:8

3. The pride of life-

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" - Matthew 4:5-6

III. Benefits of Fasting

1. A time of fasting is a spiritual landmark to look back to and move forward from.
2. Fasting raises control of life about the material level.
3. Fasting converts theoretical knowledge into experiential knowledge.

4. Fasting helps us “redeem” our days. (Time does not slip away.)
5. Fasting refocuses our priorities from care of the body to care of the soul.
6. Fasting teaches us who we really are when we become uncomfortable.
7. Fasting brings something tangibly holy into the secular affairs of daily life.
8. Fasting provides a sense of long-range spiritual strategy and commitment to long-range spiritual goals.
9. Fasting for certain things gives specific content to our prayers.
10. Fasting provides a transition time to begin new, Christ-honoring habits.
11. Fasting breaks us so that God can put us together again.
12. Fasting helps us to identify with Biblical persons.
13. Fasting builds self-discipline.
14. Fasting with another person creates a shared spiritual experience.
15. Fasting breaks our taste for foods to which we may be addicted.
16. Fasting can be a lead-in to practicing other disciplines.

IV. Perspectives on Fasting

A. E. M. Bounds:

It would not do to say that preachers study too much. Some of them do not study at all; others do not study enough. Numbers do not study the right way to show themselves workmen approved of God. But our great lack is not in head culture; not in lack of knowledge, but lack of holiness is our sad and telling defect— not that we know too much, but that we do not meditate on God and His Word and watch and fast and pray enough.¹⁷

B. William Bramwell:

The reason why the Methodists in general do not live in this salvation is, there is too much sleep, too much meat and drink, too little fasting and

¹⁷ Towns, Elmer L., Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough (Ventura, CA.: Regal, 1996), 208.

self-denial, too much conversation with the world, too much preaching and hearing and too little self-examination and prayer.¹⁸

C. Wesley L. Duewel:

But fasting is still God's chosen way to deepen and strengthen prayer. You will be the poorer spiritually and your prayer life will never be what God wants it to be until you practice the privilege of fasting.¹⁹

D. Douglas Porter:

As a Boomer, I have been conditioned to enjoy the best the world has to offer. Fasting speaks boldly to consumerism, one of my generational core values. To set aside what I want to encourage personal spiritual growth is what it means to deny myself and take up my cross daily in the nineties. I suspect it would be difficult for me to rise to the challenge of discipleship and live a consistently Christian lifestyle without practicing the discipline of fasting.²⁰

E. D. L. Moody:

If you say 'I will fast when God lays it on me,' you never will. You are too cold and indifferent. Take the yoke upon you.²¹

Discussion Questions

1. Are Christians required to fast?
2. Must fasting be kept secret?
3. Should fasting be limited to food?
4. Does temptation usually arise from within us, or does it arise with demonic forces?
5. Could Jesus have sinned, if He had not fasted?
6. How long and often should a believer fast?
7. In what ways can Christians support each other in the matters we have discussed?

¹⁸ Ibid., 209.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 212.

²¹ Ibid.

Week Five: Study

Purpose: To understand how the discipline of study transforms our character by renewing our minds.

I. Study Sets us Free: The Process of Freedom

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."- John 8:31-32

- A. **Discipleship**- *you are really my disciples*
- B. **Knowledge** of the Truth- *Then you will know the truth*
- C. **Freedom**- *and the truth will set you free*

II. Study Builds Christian Character

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy— think about such things. - Philippians 4:8

- A. **Truth**- A right understanding of God, ourselves, and the world around us.
- B. **Nobility**- A right attitude toward the truth.
- C. **Rightness**- Outward conformity to the truth.
- D. **Purity**- Inward cleansing that results from our conformity to the truth.
- E. **Loveliness**- A quality of attraction to other people because of our attitude and conformity to the truth.
- F. **Admirableness**- A character that deserves to be emulated.

III. Perspectives on the Discipline of Study

A. Anti-Intellectualism's Impact on the Church:

1. A misunderstanding of faith's relationship to reason.
2. The separation of the secular and the sacred.

3. Weakened world missions.
4. The spawning of an irrelevant gospel.
5. A loss of boldness in confronting the idea structures in our culture with effective Christian witness.²²

B. Ten Great Ideas from Church History:

1. Martin Luther's theology of the cross can deepen the faith of your congregation.
2. John Calvin's model of holiness can combat "me-centered" Christianity.
3. Jeremiah Burrough's denominational theory of the church can be a tremendous force for unity within your congregation.
4. William Perkin's idea of assurance through true conversion can overcome the extremes of apathy and anxiety within the church.
5. Richard Baxter's directions for delighting God can revitalize worship.
6. Jonathan Edwards' vision for revival can defend the church against the attacks of secularism.
7. John Wesley's strategy of small groups can turn slumbering churchgoers into zealous disciples.
8. William Carey's model of missions can inspire boomers and busters to fulfill the great commission.
9. William Wilberforce's paradigm of evangelical social action can guide Christians in opposing the evils of our time.
10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's vision of Christian community can bring your people together and counter the tribalization and radical individualism of postmodern life.²³

²² Moreland, J. P., Love Your God with All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997), 25-31.

²³ Shaw, Mark, Ten Great Ideas from Church History (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997), 11-12.

C. Richard Foster's Four Keys to Learning:

1. Repetition
2. Concentration
3. Comprehension
4. Reflection²⁴

Discussion Questions

1. Do most Christians move through the process of discipleship, knowledge, and freedom?
2. What should a Christian study, in addition to the Bible?
3. What kinds of freedom is Christ speaking of in John 8:32?
4. What are some ways the secular and the sacred become blurred through lack of understanding?
5. Which Christian authors have been especially meaningful to you?
6. Is the discipline of study limited to print media?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

²⁴ Foster, Richard, Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998), 64-66.

Week Six: Journaling

Purpose: To understand how journaling helps us evaluate our lives, and to learn some different formats for writing a journal.

I. Biblical Foundations for Journaling

A. The Psalms- The spiritual journal of David, Moses, and others.

B. The Gospels and Acts- Journals of people who had experienced Jesus or His disciples.

C. The Epistles- Journals of Christian doctrine, morals, and experience

The Bible can be considered God's "journal" of His interaction with humanity.

II. Spiritual Benefits of Journaling

A. Evaluation

The journal is a helpful tool for spiritual evaluation. Edmund S. Morgan has written:

The fact that many Puritans kept diaries of this kind helps to explain their pursuit of social virtue: diaries were the reckoning books in which they checked the assets and liabilities of their own souls in faith. When they opened these books, they set down lapses of morality with appropriate expressions of repentance and balanced them against the evidences of faith. Cotton Mather made a point of having at least one good action to set down in his diary on every day of the week.²⁵

B. Concentration and perspective

All my life long I've thought I should keep a journal. But I never did until a few years ago, when the discovery that my husband, Harold, had cancer suddenly plunged us into the middle of an intense learning experience, facing things we'd never faced before. Confronted with agonizing decisions, we would cry out to the Lord, "Where are you in the middle of this?" It suddenly occurred to me that unless I made a record of what was

²⁵ Morgan, Edmund S, The Puritan Family (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 5.

going on, I would forget, the events, details, and people of those painful days could easily become a blur. So I started to write it all down.²⁶

C. Prayer

Maurice Roberts writes:

There will be no marked growth in Christian holiness if we do not labor to overcome our natural disinclination toward secret spiritual exercises. Our forefathers kept honest diaries where the soul's battles were recorded. Thomas Shepherd, Pilgrim Father and founder of Harvard, wrote in his private papers, 'It is sometimes so with me that I will rather die than pray.' So is it with us all. But this honesty is not commonplace. Such men climbed high only as they labored with sweat and tears to cultivate the soul. We, too, must "exercise ourselves unto godliness."²⁷

D. Personal History with God

Again, Maurice Roberts says:

A spiritual diary will tend to deepen and sanctify the emotional life of a child of God. There is great value to us of becoming more deeply emotional over the great issues of our faith. Our age is not deep enough in feelings. Biblical men are depicted as weeping copious tears, as sighing and groaning, as on occasion rejoicing with ecstasy. They were ravished by the very idea of God. They had a passion for Jesus Christ— His person, offices, names, titles, words and works. It is our shame to be so cold, unfeeling and unemotional in spite of all that God has done to us and for us Christ... The keeping of a diary might help to put us right in this respect also."²⁸

III. Different Types of Journaling

A. Journaling in Response to Scripture

B. Journaling as Meditation

C. Journaling from the Events of Daily Life

²⁶ Neff, La Vonne, ed., Practical Christianity (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House, 1987), 310.

²⁷ Roberts, Maurice, "Where Have the Saints Gone?" The Banner of Truth October 1988.

²⁸ Roberts, Maurice. "Are We Becoming Reformed Men?" The Banner of Truth, March 1991, p.

D. Journaling as Prayer**E. Journaling from Conversations and Dialogue****Discussion Questions**

1. Do you think of journaling as a primarily masculine or a primarily feminine discipline?
2. Should journaling be done occasionally, as needed, or continually?
3. Should a person limit himself to one format of journaling?
4. How does modern technology intersect with the ancient discipline of journaling?
5. Should journaling always be private, or can believers journal together or share their journals?
6. What are some benefits of reading the journals of other Christians?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

Week Seven: Silence, Solitude, and Meditation

Purpose: To understand how the disciplines of silence, solitude, and meditation shape our perspectives by allowing us to listen to God and ourselves.

I. Biblical Foundations for Silence, Solitude, and Meditation- Psalm 119

A. Meditation produces purity- vs.9- 16

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have declared all the judgements of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

1. The heart that seeks God will go to His Word. (Vs. 10)

With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments.

2. Internalization of the Word leads to joy. (Vs. 11-14)

Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have declared all the judgements of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches.

3. Joy leads us to meditation. (Vs. 14-15)

I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.

4. Meditation leads to proper use of the will. (Vs. 16)

I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

B. Meditation produces wisdom- vs. 97-100

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your

testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts.

Consider some other passages that show us the source of wisdom:

For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright....- Proverbs 2:6-7a

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.- Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility.- Proverbs 15:33

C. Meditation brings personal revival- vs. 145-149

I cry out with my whole heart; Hear me, O LORD! I will keep Your statutes. I cry out to You; save me, and I will keep Your testimonies. I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your word. My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word. Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; O LORD, revive me according to Your lovingkindness.

II. Perspectives on the Disciplines of Silence, Solitude, and Meditation

A. Dallas Willard:

As a pastor, teacher, and counselor I have repeatedly seen the transformation of inner and outer life that comes simply from memorization and meditation upon Scripture.²⁹

We not only read and hear and inquire, but we *meditate* on what comes before us; that is, we withdraw into silence where we prayerfully and steadily focus on it. In this way its meaning for us can emerge and form us as God works in the depths of our heart, mind, and soul. We devote long periods of time to time to this. Our prayer as we study meditatively is always that God would meet with us and speak specifically to us, for ultimately the Word of God is God speaking.³⁰

B. Brother Lawrence:

²⁹ Willard, 510.

³⁰ Ibid., 177.

When we are busied, or meditating on spiritual things, even in our time of set devotion, whilst our voice is rising in prayer, we ought to cease for one brief moment, as often as we can, to worship God in the depth of our being, to taste Him though it be in passing, to touch Him as it were by stealth. Since you cannot but know that God is with you in all you undertake, that He is at the very depth and centre of your soul, why should you not pause an instant from time to time in your outward business, and even in the act of prayer, to worship Him within your soul, to praise Him, to entreat His aid, to offer Him the service of your heart, and give Him thanks for all His loving-kindness and tender-mercies?³¹

C. Richard Foster:

Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God's voice and obey His word. It is that simple. I wish I could make it more complicated for those who like things difficult. It involves no hidden mysteries, no secret mantras, no mental gymnastics, no esoteric flights into the cosmic consciousness. The truth of the matter is that the great God of the universe, the Creator of all things desires our fellowship.³²

D. Thomas `A Kempis: "*A Prayer for Mental Light.*"

O Merciful Jesus, send the brightness of Your light into my mind, and banish all Darkness from the sanctuary of my heart. Restrain my many wayward thoughts, and destroy the temptations that beset me with such violence. Let Your great strength be with me in the fight, and overcome the seducing desires of the flesh, that rage in me like evil beasts. By Your power establish peace, and let Your praises be sung in the temple of a pure heart. Command the winds and storm; subdue the fury of the seas and the blast of the north wind, and there shall be a great calm. Send out Your light and Your truth to shine over the world; for until Your light illuminates my soul, I am dull earth, formless and empty. Pour forth Your grace from above, and bathe my heart in the dew of heaven. Supply fresh streams of devotion to water the face of the earth, and produce good and perfect fruit. Inspire my mind, now burdened by my sins, and fix my whole desire on heavenly things, so that having once tasted the sweetness of eternal joys, I may turn with distaste from all the passing pleasures of this world. Release me, and free my heart from all dependence on the passing consolation of wicked things, since none of these things can yield true satisfaction or appease my longings. Unite me to Yourself by the unbreakable bonds of love. You alone can satisfy the soul that loves You, and without You the world is worthless.³³

³¹ Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God with Spiritual Maxims (Grand Rapids: Spire, 1958), 71-72.

³² Foster., 17.

³³ A' Kempis, Thomas, The Imitation of Christ (London: Penguin, 1952), 125-126.

E. David Hume: A Negative Perspective

Celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude, and the whole train of monkish virtues: — for what reason are they everywhere rejected by men of sense, but because they serve to no manner of purpose; neither advance a man's purpose in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of society; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor increase his power of self-enjoyment? We observe, on the contrary, that they all cross all these desirable ends; stupify the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper.... A gloomy, hair-brained enthusiast, after his death, may have a place in the Calendar; but will scarcely ever be admitted, when alive, into intimacy and society, except by those who are as delirious and dismal as himself.³⁴

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways is the discipline of meditation different than the discipline of study?
2. Does our culture fear silence? Why?
3. What do you think of David Hume's comment about a life of spiritual discipline?
4. What other issues in your spiritual life relate to the disciplines of silence, solitude, and meditation?
5. Reflect on Brother Lawrence's comment that we should stop in the midst of prayer and truly meditate on God.
6. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

³⁴ Hume, David, Enquiry Into Morals Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 270, quoted in Willard., 132.

Week Eight: Worship

Purpose: To understand how the discipline worship fulfills the purpose of our lives, and to learn some principles of worship.

I. Worship and the Meaning of Life

A. Meaningfulness

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. - Genesis 2:15

B. Obedience

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil..." - Genesis 2:16

C. Community

The LORD God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." - Genesis 2:18

D. Relationship

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.... - Genesis 3:8

E. Restoration

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. - Genesis 3:21

II. Basic Biblical Principles of Worship

Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD. - Psalm 150

A. Where should we worship?

1. In his sanctuary.

2. In his mighty heavens.

B. When should we worship?

As long as there is breath.

C. Why should we worship?

1. his acts of power.
2. his surpassing greatness.

D. Who should worship?

1. (You) praise the LORD.
2. Everything that has breath.

E. How should we worship?

1. With music- heart
2. With dancing- actions

F. What should I worship?

Praise the LORD.

III. Worship Connects Who We Are and What We Do

A. Worship is an attitude.

B. Worship is an action.

The attitude without the action is empty emotion, the action without the attitude is an empty shell.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways is the experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden a model for what life should ideally be?
2. If obedience is a key factor in worship, at what point does legalism enter the picture of

discipleship?

3. What are some ways that the commonplace events of our lives can become worship?
4. What should the balance be between worshipping God for who He is and for what He does?
5. How can the attitude of worship be developed and maintained?
6. How broad a range of actions are permissible in worship?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

Week Nine: Ministry

Purpose: To understand how the discipline of ministry as a means of obedience and transformation.

I. Ministry and Obedience

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.- John 13:12-17

I. Ministry comes out of our relationship with Jesus as Teacher and Lord. - Vs. 13

"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.

II. Ministry follows the example of Christ- vs. 14-15

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

III. Ministry puts life into proper perspective- vs. 16

I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

IV. Ministry brings the blessings of God.- vs. 17

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

II. Ministry and Transformation

A. Any task we undertake can become ministry.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. - Colossians 3:22

B. Transforming ministry is a matter of perspective.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,- Colossians 3:23

C. Transforming ministry changes our measure of success.

since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.- Colossians 3:24-25

III. Practical Steps for Ministry

Simple Ways to Invest in the Lives of People

1. Share meals together
2. Drop off food - at the birth of a baby, sickness, or death in the family
3. Organize a playgroup
4. Ask real questions- more than “How was your day?” And take time to listen.
5. Offer to babysit- so parents can spend time together
6. Call one person each week that you would not ordinarily talk to.
7. Take notice of what other people do, and cheer them on.
8. Give away some money. Do it anonymously.
9. Pray for people.³⁵

Discussion Questions

1. What percentage of Christ’s life on earth would you say was given to the discipline of ministry?
2. Does Jesus’ status as “teacher” and “lord” tell us anything about the discipline of ministry in relation to our social status?
3. Which is the proper motivation for practicing the discipline of ministry: obedience to God or blessings from God?
4. How does a “working for Christ, not for men” perspective transform mundane tasks

³⁵ Home Life, Vol. 58, No. 10, July 2004., 47.

into ministry?

5. How should we respond to the ministry of others?
6. How much credit should we seek for our ministries?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

Week Ten: Stewardship

Purpose: To understand some biblical teachings on money, and to evaluate our perspectives about material possessions.

I. The Tithe

A. The Tithing Command

1. Failure to Tithe is a personal affront to God.

“Will a man rob God?” Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings.- Malachi 3:8

2. Tithing brings blessings from God.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. -Malachi 3:10

B. The Tithing Command is for Today

1. Tithing Predates the Law

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.- Genesis 14:18-20

Abraham, the father of the faith, paid a tithe to the priest/king of (Jeru)salem.

2. Jesus Taught Tithing

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices- mint, dill, and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law- justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter without neglecting the former.- Matthew 23:23-24

C. Benefits of Tithing

1. Blessings

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.- II Corinthians 9:6-7

2. Opportunities to do good work

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.- II Corinthians 9:8

3. Material and spiritual provision

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.- II Corinthians 9:10

4. Praise of God

You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.- II Corinthians 9:11-12

5. Proof of your ministry (13)

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.- II Corinthians 9:13

6. Giving is a gift (15)

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.- II Corinthians 9:15

II. Perspectives on Money

A. Warning Signals: When Loyalty Shifts from God to Possessions

1. When you go from managing your money to being anxious about it.
2. When envy and jealousy creep into your life.
3. When you lose appreciation for what God has already given you.
4. When you lose the joy of cheerful giving.

5. When you seek things more than God.
6. When you think that things will make you happy.
7. When enough is not enough.³⁶

B. Living in a material world

1. Engage in activities that don't cost anything.
2. Teach your children and show them by your actions that people matter more than things.
3. Maximize your gratitude to God for what you and your family have.
4. Reach out to people in need.
5. Talk about the fact that material items can provide only temporary satisfaction and that happiness and contentment are rarely a result of possessions.
6. Help your children see that it's what's inside a person that counts, not how many things he or she has.³⁷

Discussion Questions

1. Should your entire tithe always go to your local church?
2. In what ways does your checkbook reflect your spiritual priorities?
3. What is a proper motivation for tithing: a desire to see God's work done, a sense of obedience to God's commandment, or a desire for God's blessings?
4. What kinds of opportunities for good works does financial stewardship provide?
5. How does biblical teaching about stewardship with money apply to stewardship in other areas of life?
6. In addition to the warning signs listed, what other indicators do we have that tell us our priorities are out of balance?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage one another in the matters we have discussed?

³⁶ Maxwell, John, Leadership Wired, December 1998 (www.injoy.com).

³⁷ Otis, Don S, Teach Your Children Well (Wheaton: Fleming H. Revell) Quoted in Home Life, Vol. 58, No. 8, May 2004., 10.

APPENDIX TWO

This appendix contains the student guide of the curriculum, which is identical to the teacher's guide in appendix one, with the exception of blanks provided for the participants to fill in important concepts and key words, with the hope of retaining attention and reinforcing the learning of key ideas.

Week One: The Christian Life

Purpose: To describe the Christian life from _____ and _____ points of view.

I. A Life of _____

Dietrich Bonhoeffer has written:

For how shall he who has fallen away from Christ still have communion with Christ except through the grace by which Christ holds the renegade fast and preserves him in communion with Him? There can be recognition of guilt only because of Christ's grace and because He stretches out His hand to save the one who is falling away. In this recognition of guilt there begins the process by which man is conformed with Christ.¹

A. Grace for _____

For it is by grace you have been saved, through _____ –and this not from yourselves, it is the _____ of God– not by works, so that no one can _____ . (Ephesians 2:8-9)

B. Grace for _____

For we are God's _____ , created in Christ Jesus to do good works, Which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without _____ . No, I _____ than all of them– yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. (I Corinthians 15:10)

C. Grace for _____

1. Definition of Sanctification: The _____ by which God _____ to make us _____ :

I do not set aside the grace of God, for if _____ could be gained through the _____ , Christ died for nothing! (Galatians 2:21)

¹ Bonhoeffer, 111.

2. Two kinds of righteousness:

a. _____ righteousness- God views us as _____ because we are _____

b. _____ righteousness- _____ living; putting off _____

II. A Life of _____

Richard Taylor writes:

It is easy for some of us to say glibly that all that is needed is a genuine experience of entire sanctification.... Our people too often get an emotional experience of 'sanctification' which is totally unrelated in their thinking to any form of rugged self-denial.²

A. Discipline _____

Blessed is the man you _____, O Lord, the man you _____ from your law; you _____ him relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked. (Psalm 94:12-13)

B. Discipline with God

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather _____ yourself to be _____. (1 Timothy 4:7)

Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, _____ my body and make it my slave so that after I _____ to others, I myself will not be _____ for the prize. (1 Corinthians 9:26-27)

Jerry Bridges has written:

.. the concept of discipline is suspect in our society today. It appears to run counter to our emphasis on freedom in Christ, and often smacks of legalism and

² Taylor, 15.

harshness. Yet Paul says we are to train or discipline ourselves to be godly... If an athlete disciplines himself to obtain a temporal prize, he said, how much more should we Christians discipline ourselves to obtain a crown that lasts forever.³

II. A Life of Freedom

John Piper expresses himself well:

We are the freest of all people. And the Bible is unmistakable in what this freedom is for: 'You were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.' (Galatians 5:13)⁴

A. Freedom _____

In the same way, count yourselves _____ to _____ but _____ to _____ in Christ Jesus.

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as _____ of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your _____ to him as _____ of _____ . For sin shall not be your _____ , because you are not under law, but under grace.

(Romans 6:11-14)

B. Freedom _____

What then? Shall we _____ because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey as _____ , you are slaves to the one whom you obey— whether you are slaves to _____ , which leads to _____ , or to _____ , which leads to _____ ? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves of sin, you wholeheartedly _____ the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become _____ to _____ . (Romans 6:15-18)

³ Bridges, 99.

⁴ Piper, 97.

III. A Life of Specific Action

Philosopher and spiritual writer Dallas Willard says:

Even of Jesus it is true that ‘he learned obedience through the things which he suffered,’ as Hebrews 5:8 states. Obedience, even for him, was something to be *learned*. Certainly we cannot reasonably hope to do his deeds without adopting his form of life. And we cannot adopt his form of life without engaging in his disciplines— maybe even more than he did and surely adding others demanded by our much more troubled condition.⁵

A. God Has Been Specific _____

... He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the _____ with its _____, that was against us and stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. (Galatians 2:13-14)

B. We Must Be Specific in our _____ With _____

But the _____ of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have _____ the sinful nature with its _____ and _____. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25)

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does God give grace for daily living? Be specific.
2. In what ways should we be “set apart” for holiness? Be specific, but not legalistic.
3. When does self-discipline become legalism?
4. What are some ways our freedom in Christ expresses itself in our spirituality?
5. Can we ever become too free?

⁵ Willard, 29.

6. What do you think are some of the specific actions that will help us grow in Christ?
7. In what ways can Christians support each other in the matters we have discussed?

Week Two: Spiritual Discipline and Spiritual Growth

Purpose: To understand the _____ of spiritual _____, and the place of spiritual _____ in this process.

I. The _____

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and _____ of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and _____ them to _____ I have _____ you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20)

A. The Goal of Christian _____ : To prepare God's church for _____.

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. (Colossians 1:28)

B. The Goal of Christian _____ : To _____ the Word of God

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect _____ that gives _____, and _____ to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but _____ it— he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

It is no mistake to desire moral purity. There can scarcely be too much of it. And the Holy Spirit will bring purity when he indwells God's people.⁶

II. The _____ of a _____

A. The _____ of _____

1. _____

⁶ McGavran, 237.

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of _____ and the _____. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:5-7)

2. _____

It is God's will that you should be _____ : that you should _____ sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to _____ his own _____ in a way that is holy and honorable... (I Thessalonians 4:3-4)

3. _____

You, my brothers, were called to be _____. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather _____ one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)

4. _____

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much _____, showing yourselves to be my _____. (John 15:8)

5. _____ of _____

So whether you eat or drink or _____ you do, do it all for the glory of God. (I Corinthians 10:31)

B. The Place of the _____ in the Process

1. The spiritual disciplines apply to step 2 in the process: _____

2. Sanctification, you will recall, is the process through which God _____ us _____ to be _____.

III. The Process of _____

A. **De-**_____ - saying " _____ " to the _____

B. **Re-**_____ - saying " _____ " to the _____

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; (De-_____) that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable... (Re-_____) (I Thessalonians 4:3-4)

C. Two _____

The _____ Room:

- Lack power to control _____ appetites
- Be open to connection with _____ spirits
- Depend for happiness on _____ , _____ , and _____
other than God and, when they fail to come through for us, we will be devastated
- Find it impossible to get along at _____ levels due to _____ ,
_____ , fits of _____ , and a spirit of inner-ring _____
- Yield to our impulses to feel good _____ , regardless of the long-range

The _____ Room:

- Find ourselves wanting to _____ people more than _____ them
- Discover an unshakable _____ that survives the most crushing

- Notice a patient and kind _____ nudging aside our irritation with
people
- Experience ourselves as _____ and _____ in the presence of
those who used to intimidate us.⁷

D. _____ and _____

Robert P. Meye has written:

... the imitation of Christ is both a fundamental means and the glorious goal of Christian formation.⁸

⁷ Crabb, 67.

⁸ Gangel, 199.

Discussion Questions

1. What role should the Great Commission play in a believer's life?
 2. Is there any value in learning the Bible if it is not put into practice?
 3. Can you think of a specific time in your life when you were born again?
 4. What kind of fruit should a believer's life show? Be specific.
 5. How is Christian living different than simply having good, moral habits?
 6. Do you think most Christians ever go to the upper room? How often?
 7. In what ways can Christians support each other in the matters we have discussed?
-

Week Three: Prayer

Purpose: To understand some ways in which prayer _____ our spiritual formation, and to meet several holy men and women of prayer.

I. Prayer Gives _____ to Otherwise Insignificant Moments

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. - Matthew 6:6

Eugene Peterson writes:

But when we venture into prayer every word may, at any moment, come to mean just what it *means* and involve us with a holy God who wills our holiness. All we had counted on was some religious small talk, a little numinous gossip, and we are suddenly involved, without intending it and without having calculated the consequences, in something *eternal*.⁹

II. Prayer is a _____ to God's _____

Is any one of you in trouble? He should _____ . Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of _____ . Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord." James 5:13-14

Again, Eugene Peterson:

The appearances mislead: prayer is never the first word, it is always the second word. God has the first word. Prayer is answering speech; it is not primarily 'address' but 'response.'¹⁰

III. Prayer is Life-_____ and Life-_____

For everything God created is _____ , and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with _____ , because it is consecrated by the _____ of _____ and _____ . - I Timothy 4:4-5

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be _____

⁹ Peterson, 30.

¹⁰ Ibid., 32.

in hope, _____ in affliction, _____ in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.- Romans 12:9-13

Henri Nouwen has written:

Prayer is a radical conversion of all our mental processes because in prayer we move away from ourselves, our worries, preoccupation, and self-gratification—and direct all that we recognize as ours to God in the simple trust that through his love all will be made new.¹¹

Another writer says:

We try to fill up that ghastly hole in the pit of our stomachs that is really in our souls. We try to fill it with food, with power, with sex.... We begin to realize that this hunger will never be satisfied, not in this life. It is the hunger for the Face of God, and the only possible food is prayer.¹²

IV. Examples of Prayer

When we read the lives of the saints, we are struck by a certain large leisure which went hand in hand with a remarkable effectiveness. They were never hurried; they did comparatively few things, and these not necessarily striking or important; and they troubled very little about their influence. Yet they always seemed to hit the mark; every bit of their life told; their simplest actions had a distinction, an exquisiteness which suggested the artist. The reason is not far to seek. Their sainthood lay in their habit of referring the smallest actions to God. They lived in God; they acted from a pure motive of love towards God. They were as free from self-regard as from slavery to the good opinion of others. God saw and God rewarded: what else needed they? They possessed God and possessed themselves in God. Hence the inalienable dignity of these meek, quiet figures that seem to produce such marvelous effects with such humble materials.¹³

¹¹ Nouwen, 73.

¹² Ross, 38.

¹³ Herman, 16.

A. Samuel Logan Brengle- evangelist for the Salvation Army

Brengle's biographer, C. W. Hall, quotes Brengle's prayer journal:

Keep me, O Lord, from waxing mentally and spiritually dull and stupid. Help me to keep the physical, mental, and spiritual fibre of the athlete, of the man who denies himself daily and takes up his cross and follows Thee. Give me good success in my work, but hide pride from me. Save me from the self-complacency that so frequently accompanies success and prosperity. Save me from the spirit of sloth, of self-indulgence, as physical infirmities and decay creep upon me.¹⁴

B. Eric Liddle- Scottish olympic athlete, missionary imprisoned in China, subject of movie *Chariots of Fire*

What was his secret? Once I asked him, but I really knew already, for my husband was in his dormitory and shared the secret with him. Every morning about 6 a.m., with curtains tightly drawn to keep in the shining of our peanut-oil lamp, lest the prowling sentries would think someone was trying to escape, he used to climb out of his top bunk, past the sleeping forms of his dormitory mates. Then at the small Chinese table, the two men would sit close together with the light just enough to illumine their Bible and notebooks. Silently they read, prayed, and thought about what should be done. *Eric was a man of prayer not only at set times*— though he did not like to miss a prayer meeting or communion service when such could be arranged. *He talked to God all the time, naturally, as one can who enters the "School of Prayer" to learn the way of inner discipline.* He seemed to have no weighty mental problems: his life was grounded in God, in faith, and in trust.¹⁵

C. Teresa of Avilla- Mystic nun and founder of fourteen monasteries

Mark Galli and Ted Olsen quote from Teresa's writings and summarize her life:

"Whoever has not begun the practice of prayer, I beg for the love of the Lord not to go without so great a good. There is nothing here to fear but only something to desire."

Once when praying about her many trials and sufferings, she thought she heard God say, "But this is how I treat my friends." Teresa replied "No wonder you have so few friends."

¹⁴ Hall, 237.

¹⁵ Magnusson, 165.

For Teresa, prayer is the source of Christian life and the wellspring of all moral virtues. Prayer is not everything, but without prayer, nothing else is possible. By prayer does the soul enter the Castle, and by prayer does the soul continue the journey. Under this umbrella of prayer, God works, in mysterious, often unpredictable ways, and the soul works strongly.¹⁶

Discussion Questions

1. Is prayer the only legitimate reaction to God's actions?
2. How might different kinds of prayer have different effects on spiritual growth? (Praise, petition, intercession, etc.)
3. What elements of spiritual life can be created only by prayer?
4. What are some dangers of prayer?
5. How broad a diversity is allowable in styles of prayer?
6. In what ways can Christians support each other in the matters we have discussed?

¹⁶ Galli, 265.

Week Four: Fasting

Purpose: To understand three areas of _____, and how the discipline of fasting helps us to _____ temptation in these areas.

I. Three Areas of _____

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world the _____ of sinful man, the lust of his _____ and the _____ of what he has and does— does not come from the Father but from the world. - I John 2:15-16

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. - Genesis 3:6a

A. The Lust of the Flesh- *the cravings of sinful man*

1. -The First Sin- *the fruit of the tree was good for food*
2. - Definition of the lust of the flesh: A desire to fulfill the _____ appetites of the body beyond the _____ God has set for us to enjoy them.
3. - Examples of the lust of the flesh:

B. The Lust of the Eyes- *the lust of his eyes*

1. - The First Sin- *and pleasing to the eye*
2. - Definition of the lust of the eyes: Seeing _____ or _____ in the _____ things.
3. - Examples of the lust of the eyes:

C. The Pride of Life- *the boasting of what he has and does*

1. - The First Sin- *and also desirable for gaining wisdom*
2. - Definition of the pride of life: _____ oneself to the _____ of

3- Examples of the pride of life:

II. The Temptations of Jesus

A. Jesus' preparation for temptation: Fasting

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be _____ by the devil. After _____ forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said... - Matthew 4:1-3a

1. The lust of the flesh-

*"If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become _____ ."-
Matthew 4:3*

2. The lust of the eyes-

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and _____ him all the kingdoms of the world and their _____. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." - Matthew 4:8

3. The pride of life-

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the _____ point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" - Matthew 4:5-6

III. Benefits of Fasting

1. A time of fasting is a spiritual _____ to look back to and move forward from.
2. Fasting raises control of life about the _____ level.
3. Fasting converts _____ knowledge into _____ knowledge.
4. Fasting helps us " _____ " our days. (Time does not slip away.)
5. Fasting refocuses our _____ from care of the body to care of the soul.

6. Fasting teaches us who we really are when we become _____ .
7. Fasting brings something _____ holy into the secular affairs of daily life.
8. Fasting provides a sense of long-range spiritual _____ and commitment to long-range spiritual goals.
9. Fasting for certain things gives _____ content to our prayers.
10. Fasting provides a _____ time to begin new, Christ-honoring habits.
11. Fasting _____ us so that God can put us together again.
12. Fasting helps us to identify with _____ persons.
13. Fasting builds _____ - _____ .
14. Fasting with another person creates a shared _____ experience.
15. Fasting breaks our taste for foods to which we may be _____ .
16. Fasting can be a lead-in to practicing other disciplines.

IV. Perspectives on Fasting

A. E. M. Bounds:

It would not do to say that preachers study too much. Some of them do not study at all; others do not study enough. Numbers do not study the right way to show themselves workmen approved of God. But our great lack is not in head culture; not in lack of knowledge, but lack of holiness is our sad and telling defect— not that we know too much, but that we do not meditate on God and His Word and watch and fast and pray enough.¹⁷

B. William Bramwell:

The reason why the Methodists in general do not live in this salvation is, there is too much sleep, too much meat and drink, too little fasting and self-denial, too much conversation with the world, too much preaching and hearing and too little self-examination and prayer.¹⁸

C. Wesley L. Duewel:

¹⁷ Towns, 208.

¹⁸ Ibid., 209.

But fasting is still God's chosen way to deepen and strengthen prayer. You will be the poorer spiritually and your prayer life will never be what God wants it to be until you practice the privilege of fasting.¹⁹

D. Douglas Porter:

As a Boomer, I have been conditioned to enjoy the best the world has to offer. Fasting speaks boldly to consumerism, one of my generational core values. To set aside what I want to encourage personal spiritual growth is what it means to deny myself and take up my cross daily in the nineties. I suspect it would be difficult for me to rise to the challenge of discipleship and live a consistently Christian lifestyle without practicing the discipline of fasting.²⁰

E. D. L. Moody:

If you say 'I will fast when God lays it on me,' you never will. You are too cold and indifferent. Take the yoke upon you.²¹

Discussion Questions

1. Are Christians required to fast?
2. Must fasting be kept secret?
3. Should fasting be limited to food?
4. Does temptation usually arise from within us, or does it arise with demonic forces?
5. Could Jesus have sinned, if He had not fasted?
6. How long and often should a believer fast?
7. In what ways can Christians support each other in the matters we have discussed?

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 212.

²¹ Ibid.

Week Five: Study

Purpose: To understand how the discipline of _____ transforms our _____ by _____ our minds.

I. Study Sets us _____ : The _____ of Freedom

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my _____. Then you will _____ the truth, and the truth will set you _____." - John 8:31-32

- A. _____ - you are really my disciples
- B. _____ of the Truth- Then you will know the truth
- C. _____ - and the truth will set you free

II. Study Builds Christian _____

Finally, brothers, whatever is _____, whatever is _____, whatever is _____, whatever is _____, whatever is _____ - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- think about such things. - Philippians 4:8

- A. **Truth-** A right understanding of _____, _____, and the _____ around us.
- B. **Nobility-** A right _____ toward the truth.
- C. **Rightness-** _____ conformity to the truth.
- D. **Purity-** _____ that results from our conformity to the truth.
- E. **Loveliness-** A quality of _____ to other people because of our attitude and conformity to the truth.
- F. **Admirableness-** A character that deserves to be _____.

III. Perspectives on the Discipline of Study

A. Anti-Intellectualism's Impact on the Church:

1. A misunderstanding of faith's relationship to _____.
2. The separation of the _____ and the _____.

3. Weakened world _____ .
4. The spawning of an _____ gospel.
5. A loss of _____ in confronting the idea structures in our culture with effective Christian witness.²²

B. Ten Great Ideas from Church History:

1. Martin Luther's theology of the _____ can deepen the faith of your congregation.
2. John Calvin's model of _____ can combat "me-centered" Christianity.
3. Jeremiah Burrough's _____ theory of the church can be a tremendous force for unity within your congregation.
4. William Perkin's idea of _____ through true conversion can overcome the extremes of apathy and anxiety within the church.
5. Richard Baxter's directions for _____ God can revitalize worship.
6. Jonathan Edwards' vision for _____ can defend the church against the attacks of secularism.
7. John Wesley's strategy of _____ _____ can turn slumbering churchgoers into zealous disciples.
8. William Carey's model of _____ can inspire boomers and busters to fulfill the great commission.
9. William Wilberforce's paradigm of evangelical _____ _____ can guide Christians in opposing the evils of our time.
10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's vision of Christian _____ can bring your people together and counter the tribalization and radical individualism of postmodern life.²³

²² Moreland, 25-31.

²³ Shaw, 11-12.

C. Richard Foster's Four Keys to Learning:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____ ²⁴

Discussion Questions

1. Do most Christians move through the process of discipleship, knowledge, and freedom?
2. What should a Christian study, in addition to the Bible?
3. What kinds of freedom is Christ speaking of in John 8:32?
4. What are some ways the secular and the sacred become blurred through lack of understanding?
5. Which Christian authors have been especially meaningful to you?
6. Is the discipline of study limited to print media?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

²⁴ Foster, 64-66.

Week Six: Journaling

Purpose: To understand how journaling helps us _____ our lives, and to learn some different _____ for writing a journal.

I. Biblical Foundations for Journaling

- A. The _____ - The spiritual journal of David, Moses, and others.
- B. The _____ and _____ - Journals of people who had experienced Jesus or His disciples.
- C. The _____ - Journals of Christian doctrine, morals, and experience

The Bible can be considered God's "journal" of His interaction with humanity.

II. Spiritual Benefits of Journaling

A. _____

The journal is a helpful tool for spiritual evaluation. Edmund S. Morgan has written:

The fact that many Puritans kept diaries of this kind helps to explain their pursuit of social virtue: diaries were the reckoning books in which they checked the assets and liabilities of their own souls in faith. When they opened these books, they set down lapses of morality with appropriate expressions of repentance and balanced them against the evidences of faith. Cotton Mather made a point of having at least one good action to set down in his diary on every day of the week.²⁵

B. _____ and _____

All my life long I've thought I should keep a journal. But I never did until a few years ago, when the discovery that my husband, Harold, had cancer suddenly plunged us into the middle of an intense learning experience, facing things we'd never faced before. Confronted with agonizing decisions, we would cry out to the Lord, "Where are you in the middle of this?" It suddenly occurred to me that unless I made a record of what was going on, I would forget, the events, details, and people of those painful days could easily become a blur. So I started to write it all down.²⁶

²⁵ Morgan, 5.

²⁶ Neff, 310.

C. _____

Maurice Roberts writes:

There will be no marked growth in Christian holiness if we do not labor to overcome our natural disinclination toward secret spiritual exercises. Our forefathers kept honest diaries where the soul's battles were recorded. Thomas Shepherd, Pilgrim Father and founder of Harvard, wrote in his private papers, 'It is sometimes so with me that I will rather die than pray.' So is it with us all. But this honesty is not commonplace. Such men climbed high only as they labored with sweat and tears to cultivate the soul. We, too, must "exercise ourselves unto godliness."²⁷

D. _____ **History with God**

Again, Maurice Roberts says:

A spiritual diary will tend to deepen and sanctify the emotional life of a child of God. There is great value to us of becoming more deeply emotional over the great issues of our faith. Our age is not deep enough in feelings. Biblical men are depicted as weeping copious tears, as sighing and groaning, as on occasion rejoicing with ecstasy. They were ravished by the very idea of God. They had a passion for Jesus Christ— His person, offices, names, titles, words and works. It is our shame to be so cold, unfeeling and unemotional in spite of all that God has done to us and for us Christ... The keeping of a diary might help to put us right in this respect also.²⁸

III. Different Types of Journaling

A. Journaling in Response to _____

B. Journaling as _____

C. Journaling from the Events of _____

D. Journaling as _____

E. Journaling from _____ and _____

²⁷ Roberts, 1988.

²⁸ Roberts, 1991, 6.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think of journaling as a primarily masculine or a primarily feminine discipline?
2. Should journaling be done occasionally, as needed, or continually?
3. Should a person limit himself to one format of journaling?
4. How does modern technology intersect with the ancient discipline of journaling?
5. Should journaling always be private, or can believers journal together or share their journals?
6. What are some benefits of reading the journals of other Christians?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

Week Seven: Silence, Solitude, and Meditation

Purpose: To understand how the disciplines of silence, solitude, and meditation _____ our _____ by allowing us to listen to _____ and _____ .

I. Biblical Foundations for Silence, Solitude, and Meditation- Psalm 119

A. Meditation produces _____ - vs.9- 16

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have declared all the judgements of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

1. The _____ that seeks God will go to His _____ . (Vs. 10)

With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments.

2. Internalization of the _____ leads to _____ . (Vs. 11-14)

Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have declared all the judgements of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches.

3. _____ leads us to _____ . (Vs. 14-15)

I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.

4. _____ leads to proper use of the _____ . (Vs. 16)

I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

B. Meditation produces _____ - vs. 97-100

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your

testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts.

Consider some other passages that show us the source of wisdom:

For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright....- Proverbs 2:6-7a

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.- Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility.- Proverbs 15:33

C. Meditation brings _____ - vs. 145-149

I cry out with my whole heart; Hear me, O LORD! I will keep Your statutes. I cry out to You; save me, and I will keep Your testimonies. I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your word. My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word. Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; O LORD, revive me according to Your lovingkindness.

II. Perspectives on the Disciplines of Silence, Solitude, and Meditation

A. Dallas Willard:

As a pastor, teacher, and counselor I have repeatedly seen the transformation of inner and outer life that comes simply from memorization and meditation upon Scripture.²⁹

We not only read and hear and inquire, but we *meditate* on what comes before us; that is, we withdraw into silence where we prayerfully and steadily focus on it. In this way its meaning for us can emerge and form us as God works in the depths of our heart, mind, and soul. We devote long periods of time to time to this. Our prayer as we study meditatively is always that God would meet with us and speak specifically to us, for ultimately the Word of God is God speaking.³⁰

²⁹ Willard, 510.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 177.

B. Brother Lawrence:

When we are busied, or meditating on spiritual things, even in our time of set devotion, whilst our voice is rising in prayer, we ought to cease for one brief moment, as often as we can, to worship God in the depth of our being, to taste Him though it be in passing, to touch Him as it were by stealth. Since you cannot but know that God is with you in all you undertake, that He is at the very depth and centre of your soul, why should you not pause an instant from time to time in your outward business, and even in the act of prayer, to worship Him within your soul, to praise Him, to entreat His aid, to offer Him the service of your heart, and give Him thanks for all His loving-kindness and tender-mercies?³¹

C. Richard Foster:

Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God's voice and obey His word. It is that simple. I wish I could make it more complicated for those who like things difficult. It involves no hidden mysteries, no secret mantras, no mental gymnastics, no esoteric flights into the cosmic consciousness. The truth of the matter is that the great God of the universe, the Creator of all things desires our fellowship.³²

D. Thomas `A Kempis: "*A Prayer for Mental Light.*"

O Merciful Jesus, send the brightness of Your light into my mind, and banish all Darkness from the sanctuary of my heart. Restrain my many wayward thoughts, and destroy the temptations that beset me with such violence. Let Your great strength be with me in the fight, and overcome the seducing desires of the flesh, that rage in me like evil beasts. By Your power establish peace, and let Your praises be sung in the temple of a pure heart. Command the winds and storm; subdue the fury of the seas and the blast of the north wind, and there shall be a great calm. Send out Your light and Your truth to shine over the world; for until Your light illuminates my soul, I am dull earth, formless and empty. Pour forth Your grace from above, and bathe my heart in the dew of heaven. Supply fresh streams of devotion to water the face of the earth, and produce good and perfect fruit. Inspire my mind, now burdened by my sins, and fix my whole desire on heavenly things, so that having once tasted the sweetness of eternal joys, I may turn with distaste from all the passing pleasures of this world. Release me, and free my heart from all dependence on the passing consolation of wicked things, since none of these things can yield true satisfaction or appease my longings. Unite me to Yourself by the unbreakable bonds of love. You alone can satisfy the soul that loves You, and without You the world is worthless.³³

³¹ Brother Lawrence, 71-72.

³² Foster., 17.

³³ A` Kempis, 125-126.

E. David Hume: A Negative Perspective

Celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude, and the whole train of monkish virtues: — for what reason are they everywhere rejected by men of sense, but because they serve to no manner of purpose; neither advance a man's purpose in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of society; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor increase his power of self-enjoyment? We observe, on the contrary, that they all cross all these desirable ends; stupify the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper.... A gloomy, hair-brained enthusiast, after his death, may have a place in the Calendar; but will scarcely ever be admitted, when alive, into intimacy and society, except by those who are as delirious and dismal as himself.³⁴

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways is the discipline of meditation different than the discipline of study?
2. Does our culture fear silence? Why?
3. What do you think of David Hume's comment about a life of spiritual discipline?
4. What other issues in your spiritual life relate to the disciplines of silence, solitude, and meditation?
5. Reflect on Brother Lawrence's comment that we should stop in the midst of prayer and truly meditate on God.
6. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

³⁴ Hume, 132.

Week Eight: Worship

Purpose: To understand how the discipline worship _____ the purpose of our _____, and to learn some principles of worship.

I. Worship and the Meaning of Life

A. _____

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. - Genesis 2:15

B. _____

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil..." - Genesis 2:16

C. _____

The LORD God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." - Genesis 2:18

D. _____

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.... - Genesis 3:8

E. _____

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. - Genesis 3:21

II. Basic Biblical Principles of Worship

Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD. - Psalm 150

A. _____ should we worship?

1. In his _____ .

2. In his mighty _____ .

B. _____ should we worship?

As long as there is _____ .

C. _____ should we worship?

1. his acts of _____ .

2. his surpassing _____ .

D. _____ should worship?

1. (_____) praise the LORD.

2. _____ that has breath.

E. _____ should we worship?

1. With _____ - heart

2. With _____ - actions

F. _____ should I worship?

Praise the _____ .

III. Worship Connects Who We Are and What We Do

A. Worship is an _____ .

B. Worship is an _____ .

The attitude without the action is empty emotion, the action without the attitude is an empty shell.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways is the experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden a model for what life should ideally be?

2. If obedience is a key factor in worship, at what point does legalism enter the picture of discipleship?

3. What are some ways that the commonplace events of our lives can become worship?
4. What should the balance be between worshiping God for who He is and for what He does?
5. How can the attitude of worship be developed and maintained?
6. How broad a range of actions are permissible in worship?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

Week Nine: Ministry

Purpose: To understand how the discipline of ministry as a means of _____
and _____ .

I. Ministry and _____

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.- John 13:12-17

I. Ministry comes out of our _____ with Jesus as _____ and _____ . - Vs. 13

"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.

II. Ministry follows the _____ of Christ- vs. 14-15

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

III. Ministry puts life into proper _____ - vs. 16

I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

IV. Ministry brings the _____ of God.- vs. 17

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

II. Ministry and _____

A. Any task we undertake can _____ ministry.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. - Colossians 3:22

B. Transforming ministry is a matter of _____ .

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,- Colossians 3:23

C. Transforming ministry changes our measure of _____ .

since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.- Colossians 3:24-25

III. Practical Steps for Ministry

Simple Ways to Invest in the Lives of People

1. Share _____ together
2. Drop off _____ - at the birth of a baby, sickness, or death in the family
3. Organize a _____
4. Ask _____ questions- more than “How was your day?” And take time to listen.
5. Offer to _____ - so parents can spend time together
6. _____ one person each week that you would not ordinarily talk to.
7. Take notice of what other people do, and _____ them on.
8. Give away some _____ . Do it _____ .
9. _____ for people.³⁵

Discussion Questions

1. What percentage of Christ’s life on earth would you say was given to the discipline of ministry?
2. Does Jesus’ status as “teacher” and “lord” tell us anything about the discipline of ministry in relation to our social status?
3. Which is the proper motivation for practicing the discipline of ministry: obedience to God or blessings from God?

³⁵ Home Life, 47.

4. How does a “working for Christ, not for men” perspective transform mundane tasks into ministry?
5. How should we respond to the ministry of others?
6. How much credit should we seek for our ministries?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage each other in the matters we have discussed?

Week Ten: Stewardship

Purpose: To understand some biblical teachings on money, and to _____
our _____ about material possessions.

I. The _____

A. The Tithing _____

1. Failure to Tithe is a personal _____ to God.

“Will a man rob God?” Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings.- Malachi 3:8

2. Tithing brings _____ from God.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. -Malachi 3:10

B. The Tithing Command is for _____

1. Tithing Predates the _____

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.- Genesis 14:18-20

Abraham, the father of the faith, paid a tithe to the priest/king of (Jeru)salem.

2. _____ Taught Tithing

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices- mint, dill, and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law- justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter without neglecting the former.- Matthew 23:23-24

C. _____ of Tithing

1. _____

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.- II Corinthians 9:6-7

2. Opportunities to do _____

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.- II Corinthians 9:8

3. _____ and _____ provision

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.- II Corinthians 9:10

4. _____ of God

You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.- II Corinthians 9:11-12

5. Proof of your ministry (13)

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.- II Corinthians 9:13

6. Giving is a gift (15)

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.- II Corinthians 9:15

II. _____ on Money

A. Warning Signals: When Loyalty Shifts from God to Possessions

1. When you go from _____ your money to being _____ about it.
2. When _____ and _____ creep into your life.
3. When you lose _____ for what God has already given you.
4. When you lose the joy of _____ giving.

5. When you seek _____ more than God.
6. When you think that things will make you _____ .
7. When enough is not enough.³⁶

B. Living in a material world

1. Engage in _____ that don't cost anything.
2. Teach your children and show them by you actions that _____ matter more than things.
3. _____ your gratitude to God for what you and your family have.
4. Reach out to _____ in need.
5. Talk about the fact that material items can provide only _____ satisfaction and that happiness and contentment are rarely a result of possessions.
6. Help your children see that it's what's _____ a person that counts, not how many things he or she has.³⁷

Discussion Questions

1. Should your entire tithe always go to your local church?
2. In what ways does your checkbook reflect your spiritual priorities?
3. What is a proper motivation for tithing: a desire to see God's work done, a sense of obedience to God's commandment, or a desire for God's blessings?
4. What kinds of opportunities for good works does financial stewardship provide?
5. How does biblical teaching about stewardship with money apply to stewardship in other areas of life?
6. In addition the warning signs listed, what other indicators do we have that tell us our priorities are out of balance?
7. In what ways can Christians encourage one another in the matters we have discussed?

³⁶ Maxwell, 1998 (www.injoy.com).

³⁷ Otis, 10.

APPENDIX THREE

Diagnostic Tool

This appendix contains the diagnostic tool, which was given to participants before and after participation in the curriculum. Participants were asked to select a number, ranging from one to four, indicating the extent of their agreement with a given statement, or five, indicating that the statement was not applicable. The Likert scale was as follows:

1. Emphatically agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Emphatically disagree
5. Not applicable

For some questions, participants were asked to select one of two options, or to indicate whether a given statement was true or false.

1. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of prayer in my spiritual life.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I feel motivated to pray often.

1 2 3 4 5

3. God answers my prayers.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Prayer is an action.

Prayer is a reaction

5. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of fasting in my spiritual life.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I am motivated to fast.

1 2 3 4 5

7. God honors my fasting.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Fasting is usually an act of legalism. True or False

9. Fasting is important for my spiritual life.

1 2 3 4 5

10. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of study in my spiritual life.

1 2 3 4 5

11. I feel motivated to study.

1 2 3 4 5

12. God shapes my character through study.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Study is part of Christian holiness, or separation from the world. True or False

14. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of journaling in my spiritual life.

1 2 3 4 5

15. I feel motivated to journal.

1 2 3 4 5

16. Journaling allows me to detect patterns of spiritual growth.

1 2 3 4 5

17. Journaling is a discipline of the modern church; it is not in the Bible. True or False

18. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of silence, solitude, and meditation in my spiritual life.

1 2 3 4 5

19. I feel motivated to practice silence, solitude, and meditation.

1 2 3 4 5

20. Silence, Solitude, and Meditation help me to focus on my spiritual formation.

1 2 3 4 5

21. Introspection is vital for understanding the world around us. True or False

22. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of worship in my spiritual life.

1 2 3 4 5

23. I feel motivated to worship.

1 2 3 4 5

24. I worship with my whole person: my imagination, my mind, my heart, my will.

1 2 3 4 5

25. Worship is the key to fulfilling my purpose in the world. True or False.

26. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of ministry in my spiritual life.

1 2 3 4 5

27. I feel motivated to minister to others.

1 2 3 4

28. I find that ministry to others is a duty for every Christian.

1 2 3 4 5

29. I minister to others *for* Christ, but not *with* Christ. True or False.

30. I have a clear understanding of the purpose of stewardship in my spiritual life.

1 2 3 4 5

31. I feel motivated to practice stewardship with my money, talents, and time.

1 2 3 4 5

32. God blesses me when I use my money, talents, and time for Him.

1 2 3 4 5

33. God never allows people to test Him. True or False.

Short Answer Questions

34. For the disciplines you began to practice, what motivated you to begin practicing them?

35. For the disciplines you did not begin to practice, why did you chose not to begin practicing them?

36. For the disciplines you did begin to practice, what results have you seen in your life?

37. Are there any insights or connections between the disciplines you began to practice and the other disciplines or other areas of your life? How does what God is teaching you through the disciplines relate to what you already know about God or yourself?

38. Which features of this study were most helpful? Which were least helpful?

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