

THE 12 SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

**TOOLS TO DISCERN THE
KINGDOM OF GOD**

THE 12 SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

**TOOLS TO DISCERN THE
KINGDOM OF GOD**



INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCIPLINES

The spiritual disciplines are means by which individuals and communities can very literally "practice" their faith. They are tools by which Christians seek to know God, yield to the Holy Spirit's sanctifying power, and surrender to the Divine Will in their lives. The disciplines can be instrumental tools as we seek to "tune" ourselves to God's desires and see his kingdom as he sees it. These holy actions have been practiced by believers since the earliest times, and are firmly rooted in Christ's commands and examples in the Gospels.



**RICHARD FOSTER
IDENTIFIES 12 CRUCIAL
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

**THESE ARE FURTHER ORGANIZED
INTO SECTIONS: INWARD,
OUTWARD, AND CORPORATE
PRACTICES**

THE 12 DISCIPLINES - AN OVERVIEW

DISCIPLINES OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Prayer - communicating with God
- Meditation - focusing on God and his will
- Fasting - a reminder of the source of all nourishment
- Study - careful attention to the reality that God reveals to us, especially through Holy Scripture

THE 12 DISCIPLINES - AN OVERVIEW


DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE TO THE BODY OF CHRIST

- *Simplicity - seeking God's Kingdom first*
- *Submission - placing God's will above one's own*
- *Solitude - withdrawing from the world to spend time with God*
- *Service - supportive action toward others*

THE 12 DISCIPLINES - AN OVERVIEW

DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE WITH THE BODY OF CHRIST

- *Confession - acknowledging one's sin with and to others in the community of faith*
- *Guidance - giving and receiving direction from others along the journey with Jesus*
- *Celebration - taking joy in what God has done*
- *Worship - giving God glory through attitudes and actions*



**THE DISCIPLINES CAN HELP
MOVE OUR PERSPECTIVE
FROM A NATURALISTIC
POINT OF VIEW ONE THAT IS
MORE HOLY**



THE NATURAL MAN

- is ignorant of God's ways
- is arrogant concerning his place in the universe
- is busy making his own plans
- constantly invites noise into his life
- denies his sin
- is attracted to idols



ALL OF THIS OBSTRUCTS OUR VIEW OF JESUS...

...the one who is worthy of attention, honor, praise, and worship, **because of who he is and what he has done.**

The disciplines can help clear the path and bring us back into line-of-sight with the Savior. Here are some examples:



THE DISCIPLINED MAN

- can know God's ways though *study*...
 - Soaking in Scripture, becoming intimately familiar with its message
 - Learning the history of God's church
 - Understanding the practical implications of theology
- is reminded of the source of all blessing and sustenance through *fasting*...
 - Abstaining from food
 - Abstaining from time commitments and distractions
 - Abstaining from anything that takes focus from Jesus



THE DISCIPLINED MAN

- can slow down through *simplicity*...
 - Seeking the kingdom of God first ultimately causes the believer to cast aside anything that is not holy. The pursuit of wealth and power are the antithesis of the kingdom that Jesus models.
- can hear God's voice more clearly through *solitude*...
 - Alone time with God helps provide room for silence, waiting on God, and hearing the sometimes still, small voice of his Spirit.



THE DISCIPLINED MAN

- can slow down through *simplicity*...
 - Seeking the kingdom of God first ultimately causes the believer to cast aside anything that is not holy. The pursuit of wealth and power are the antithesis of the kingdom that Jesus models.
- can hear God's voice more clearly through *solitude*...
 - Alone time with God helps provide room for silence, waiting on God, and hearing the sometimes still, small voice of his Spirit.



THE DISCIPLINED MAN

- is grieved by sin through *confession*...
 - Personal and corporate confession provide a way to confront, admit, be convicted of, and deal with sin in the context of a supportive community and ministers of grace.
- puts God in the highest place through *worship*...
 - The believer joins with others in praise and thanksgiving, placing Jesus in the supreme place of honor in his or her life

CONCLUSION

Each of the 12 spiritual disciplines that Foster recognizes helps to combat the sinful nature and our naturalistic world view. They help to bring the believer into a mental, emotional, and spiritual state of higher awareness of God, his nature, and his kingdom. These tools are one way for individuals and communities to begin to bring their focus back to the Holy One and seek his will.

References

