

Spiritual Disciplines

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: 1 Timothy 4:7-10

People talk a lot about developing good habits (eating, exercise, etc.). This can be incredibly helpful. It is also beneficial in our spiritual lives, helping us grow to spiritual maturity. To be effective, we need to be intentional about these habits and willing to put in the effort to develop them. These are also things that each of us can do but that no one can do for us. So we are going to consider some spiritual disciplines – regular practices that help our spiritual development.

Bible Study

- The expectation – we are to study to show ourselves approved to God (2 Timothy 2:15); study daily (Acts 17:11)
- The benefit – we will be equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17); we will gain eternal life (John 6:68; Acts 20:32)
- Our personal responsibility – we must study for ourselves (2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11)
- How to make this a regular practice – follow a Bible reading plan, keep a Bible handy, take notes, etc.

Prayer

- The expectation – pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17); make our requests known to God (Philippians 4:6-7)
- The benefit – we receive the peace of God (Philippians 4:6-7)
- Our personal responsibility – “when you pray...” (Matthew 6:5-6); this is something we must do (James 5:13; Colossians 4:2)
- How to make this a regular practice – pray at regular times, pray at a moment’s notice, keep a list of things to pray for, etc.

Meditation

- The expectation – for those who love God’s law (Psalm 119:97); we are to think on certain things (Philippians 4:8)
- The benefit – it increases the benefit of Bible study (Psalm 119:98-100); it is easier to recall information when needed
- Our personal responsibility – our thoughts are our own (1 Corinthians 2:11; Proverbs 16:1); others can impart information, but they cannot process it for us
- How to make this a regular practice – make quiet time without distractions, use notes from Bible study, etc.

Assembling

- The expectation – we are not to forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25); members are expected (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:33)
- The benefit – we gain encouragement from one another (Hebrews 10:24-25; Romans 1:11-12)
- Our personal responsibility – not to forsake (Hebrews 10:25); each part of the body is important (1 Corinthians 12:14-20)
- How to make this a regular practice – plan ahead, decide ahead of time, etc.

Holy Living

- The expectation – be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:13-16)
- The benefit – we enjoy fellowship with God (1 John 1:3, 5-7); avoid the pitfalls of sin (Proverbs 13:15)
- Our personal responsibility – we present ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice (Romans 12:1)
- How to make this a regular practice – look for opportunities to do good, look for the way of escape when tempted, be comfortable being different, remember the example of Christ

Conclusion

- We are to “discipline [ourselves] for the purpose of godliness” (1 Timothy 4:7) – this involves knowing what is right (godliness), being intentional about doing what is right (discipline), and putting in the effort (labor and strive – 1 Timothy 4:10)
- No one can do this for us, but each of us can do it – the reward will be realized in the “life to come” (1 Timothy 4:8)