



Life Practices

Following the Way of Christ: Spiritual Disciplines that Will Help You as You Pursue Christ #7 The Spiritual Discipline of Giving

Introduction: Discipleship means _____.

“Discipleship means discipline...without discipline we are not disciples...in an undisciplined age when liberty and license have replaced law and loyalty, there is greater need than ever before that we be disciplined to be His disciples.” (C. S. Lewis)

A mature disciple of Christ actively applies _____ to his/her life. These spiritual disciplines were modeled by Jesus (Luke 2:40, 52). We can study the rhythm of His life and see these disciplines at work. He prayed (Mark 1:35), He rested (Mark 6:31-32), He fasted (Matt. 4).

Spiritual disciplines are _____. They are something that we intentionally do to help us mature in Christ. When we do these things, we are connected to a power that is much greater than our own will power. _____ might be paraphrased as “Don’t try. Train!”

Spiritual disciplines are not just attitudes, they are _____. There are personal and _____ spiritual disciplines. They are a means to an _____. The purpose of practicing spiritual disciplines is _____.

There is no one set of spiritual disciplines in the scripture.

Richard Foster in his book *Spiritual Disciplines* lists three categories:

1. Inward Disciplines: _____, _____, _____, _____.
2. Outward Disciplines: _____, _____, _____, _____.
3. Corporate Disciplines: _____, _____, _____, _____.

Dallas Willard in *The Spirit of Disciplines* has two main categories:

1. Disciplines of Abstinence (self-denial)-“ways of denying ourselves something we want/need in order to make space to focus on and connect with God.” (Bill Gaultiere)
_____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.



2. Disciplines of Engagement: "ways of connecting with God and other people, conversing honestly with them in order to love and be loved." (Bill Gaultiere)

The Spiritual Discipline of Giving

The spiritual gift of giving is for a FEW. The spiritual discipline of giving is for EVERYONE.

Some Biblical Examples:

Abraham gave to Melchizedek (Gen. 14-18). The poor widow that gave her last two mites (Mark 12:41-44). Joseph of Arimathea gave Jesus his tomb (Matt. 27:57-60). Women supported the ministry of Jesus (Luke 8:3).

Why should we develop the habit of giving?

1. We recognize that we don't own our 'stuff.' It all belongs to God (I Chron. 29:14, Ps. 24:1).
Even our ability to work is a gift from the Lord- See Deut. 8:18
2. We fully understand that the Lord takes care of all our needs (Phil. 4:19).
3. We have grateful hearts (II Cor. 9:11) and that perspective brings peace (Proverbs 11:25).

How should we give?

1. Our attitudes are open, free, cheerful. Not constrained or pressed. It is a JOY to give.
"...it is more blessed to _____ than to receive." (Acts 20:35)
See II Cor. 9:7
2. Our giving springs out of a spirit of love and devotion, not compulsion.
See I Cor. 13:3
3. Our giving comes from our _____ not the leftovers.
See Proverbs 3:9
4. Our giving is done quietly, without fanfare or a desire for "credit."
See Matt. 6:2

When should we give?

Regularly... tithes into the storehouse (Mal. 3:8-12)



Often...whenever we see a need, whether we have been asked or not.
See Prov. 3:27 and Luke 6:30

How much should we give?

Interestingly, the OT scriptures seem to teach at least two tithes, and many commentaries see a third tithe for the poor.

The first yearly or Levitical tithe: Num. 18. It provided sustenance for the Levite and Aaronic priests.

The second yearly or festival tithe: Deut. 12:1-9, 14:22. It was brought to Jerusalem for the celebration of the feasts.

The third year or "Poor Tithe:" Deut. 14:28-29, 26:12-13. This is for the stranger, fatherless and the widow which were within their gates.

The New Testament principles:

- Go the "second mile" — going over and above duty (Matthew 5:41)
- Give to one who asks or wants to borrow, without thought of being repaid (Matthew 5:42; Luke 6:30, 34-36)
- Note the "widow's mites" sacrificial giving (Luke 21:1-4)
- Notice how they sold possessions and goods to supply the needs of the brethren (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37)
- Pay attention to the daily food distribution to widows (Acts 6:1)
- Watch how they collected funds for needy Christians at Jerusalem/Judea (Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:26-28; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4)
- See how giving to others in need was encouraged (Ephesians 4:28)

Bottom Line: Ask the Lord. You cannot out give Him! But a 10% tithe is just a beginning point. Try John the Baptist's suggestion on for size: Luke 3:11.

Resources to Consider

1. *Spiritual Disciplines* by Richard Foster
2. *The Treasure Principle and Giving is the Good Life* by Randy Alcorn

For the Over Achievers Among Us

1. Memorize Luke 6:38



2. Challenge yourself in your giving. What are you doing now? Pray and ask the Lord how to begin to stretch that. For a month, keep a journal of what you give away (time, money, possessions). What did you learn?

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