

Spiritual Disciplines

Tools that leverage connection with God.

Toolbox illustration

Meditation

Problem

Noise, hurry and crowds

Key Differentiation

Secular meditation and some forms of religious meditation are about emptying the mind. It is about detachment. Christian meditation is about filling the mind. It is about attachment. Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on His law day and night. 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers. 4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction. Psalm 1

Simple Definition

Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God's voice and obey His

Word. Richard Foster - Celebration of Disciplines

Purpose

To enter the life of Christ. To move from talk to walk.

Forms

1. Meditate on Scripture
2. Meditate on releasing and receiving
3. Meditate on Creation
4. Meditate on the times and their significance

Fasting

Define

Abstaining from food for spiritual purpose

Purpose

1. Fasting must forever center on God. It must be God-initiated and God-ordained
2. Reveal things that control us.

Fasting is actually Feasting

How

Key Verse - Matthew 6:16

Replace time you spend eating with mediation and prayer

Walk before you can Run

Outward you will perform your regular duties, while inward you will be in prayer and adoration

Cultivate a gentle receptiveness to divine breathing

Don't overthink it, follow Jesus's council

The ones who should know that you are fasting are those who have to know.

Become the master of your stomach/appetite, not the slave

Don't settle for cheap grace.

Reflection Question:

What are you a slave to? Is God calling you to Fast?

Simplicity/Frugality

It is an inward reality that sets an outward life-style.

I. Inward - a joyful unconcern for possessions, a right order of first things first — seeking God's Kingdom first Matthew 6:25-33

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Mathew 6:25-33

Counteract

Complexity and consumerism

II. Outward - simplicity/frugality will affect how you live

Possible Expressions of Simplicity/Frugality

- 1. Buy things for their usefulness**
- 2. Reject what produces an addiction**
- 3. Develop a habit of giving**
- 4. Refuse to be sold on the new gadgets that make promises**
- 5. Enjoy things without owning them**
- 6. Develop a deep appreciation for creation**
- 7. Avoid buy now pay later schemes**
- 8. Use plain, honest speech**
- 9. Reject that which exploits others**
- 10. Shun anything that distracts you from seeking first His kingdom**

Application

Adopt the mindset of seeking first the Kingdom of God.

What simplicity expression will you implement immediately?

Solitude and Silence

A shift from loneliness to solitude

Solitude is a state of mind and heart more than a place

We don't fear being alone or in a crowd, because it does not control us.

Solitude is not about being away from people, but to hear the divine whisper of Christ.

Silence and Solitude are inseparable

We learn when to speak and when to refrain from speaking

Silence is intimately related to trust

Seeking solitude was a regular practice for Jesus

(Mark 4:1-11, Luke 6:12, Matt 14:3, Matt 14:23, Mark 1:35, Mark 6:31, Luke 5:16, Matt 17, Matt 26:36-46)

Step into Solitude

Take advantage of the little solitudes that fill our day

Find your Quiet Place - it can be a time of day or a location

Strive to find joy and meaning in these moments, (Reorient yourself)

The fruit of solitude is increased sensitivity and compassion for others

Key Question -

What noise are you trying to drown out?

Where is your quiet place

Servanthood

What is Service? _____

Three levels of Serving

Servitude - Forced act of serving another person - Body

Service - Decided act of serving another person - Mind

Servanthood - Attitudinal act of serving another person - Soul

Key Verse - John 13: 1-17

True service is a lifestyle

Self righteous service is insensitive to others

True service can withhold the service as freely as perform it

Service is:

Hiddenness: service that remains unseen

Small Things: simple assistance in trifling external, matters

Guarding the reputation of others: refuse to allow others to speak despairingly of others

Being served: an act of submission

Common Courtesy: acknowledge others and affirm their worth

Hospitality: be together and share life

Listening: offer compassion and and patience

Bearing the burdens of others: Weeping with others can be more powerful than words

Sharing the word of Life: offer your revelations from God with others

Christ beckons us to the ministry of the Towel

“Lord Jesus, as it would please you bring me someone today whom I can serve”

Celebration

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.” Luke 2:10

I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. John 15:11

Challenge

We live in times where celebration has been forgotten.

Key Thought

The joy of the Lord is your strength. Nehemiah 8:10

Celebration Definition

Rejoicing and remembering what God has done and sharing this joy with others.

Luke 2:10, John 15:11

Benefits

- It keeps us from taking ourselves too seriously.
- It can be an antidote for sadness.
- It gives perspective.

Practice of Celebration

1. Set time aside to celebrate God’s provision.
2. Be willing to laugh.
3. Celebrate the creativity of God and others.
4. Make some noise in celebration of God. Psalm 150

Path to Joy

Joy is linked to obedience.