

Keys to the Kingdom Series

**Experiencing God's Grace &
Presence through the Spiritual
Disciplines**



with Natasha Brown Watson

The spiritual disciplines are a gateway to the gift (or grace) of God's righteousness.

"We cannot attain or earn this righteousness of the kingdom of God; it is a grace that is given." - Romans 5:1 7

US → GRACE → GOD

(Our sins & issues)

(Spiritual Disciplines)

(His Presence, Power, Righteousness, Character)

- Because we cannot make ourselves righteous and it is by grace alone, it does not mean that we cannot do anything. To believe this is to be in error as well. Our response to the grace that is available to God is to engage in the spiritual disciplines, which "allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us." – Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

Galatians 6:8 - He who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

The spiritual disciplines are God's means of Grace.

The purpose of the disciplines are freedom, not the individual disciplines in themselves. Every spiritual discipline has a corresponding freedom. They are not the answer; they merely lead us to the answer.

INWARD DISCIPLINES

MEDITATION



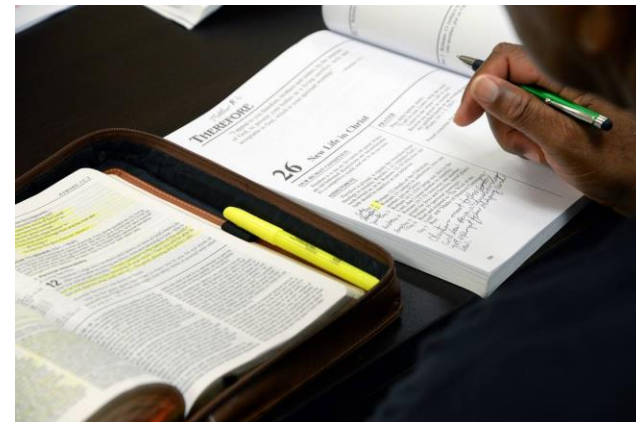
PRAYER



FASTING



STUDY



OUTWARD DISCIPLINES

SIMPLICITY



SOLITUDE



SUBMISSION/SELF-DENIAL



SERVICE



CORPORATE DISCIPLINES

CONFESSION



WORSHIP



GUIDANCE



CELEBRATION



THE DISCIPLINE OF MEDITATION

Quieting our hearts, contemplating on God/His Word/His Works



Psalm 119:97; Gen. 24:63; Psalm 63:6; Psalm 119:148; Psalm 1:2, Joshua 1:8

I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love,
and I will meditate on your statutes.

Psalm 119:48

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. **Joshua 1:8**

THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

Communicating with God



**1 Thessalonians 5:17, Mark 1:35, James 4:3, 2 Chron. 7:14, Psalm 63:1, Acts 6:4,
Luke 11:1, John 15:7, Matthew 6:7-13**

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place,
and there he prayed.

Mark 1:35

Meditation introduces us to the inner life, fasting is an accompanying means, study transforms our minds, but it is the discipline of prayer that brings us into the deepest and highest work of the human spirit. Of all the spiritual disciplines, prayer is the most central because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father.

THE DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

Abstaining from food for spiritual purposes



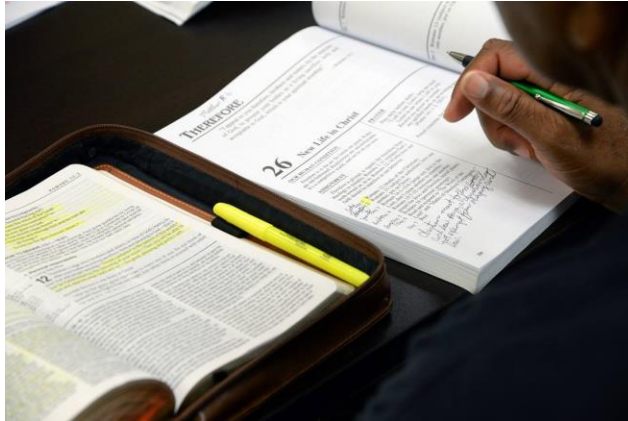
Matthew 6:16, Esther 4:16, Luke 4:2, Daniel 10:3, Ezra 8:21-23, 2 Corinthians 11:27, Isaiah 58:6-8

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from
your own flesh?

Isaiah 56:6-7

THE DISCIPLINE OF STUDY

A detailed investigation or analysis of a particular subject or situation



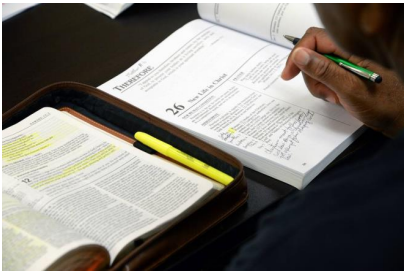
Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:8-9, John 8:31-32, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 Timothy 4:16

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:31-32

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

1 Timothy 4:16



4 Steps of Study

Repetition regularly channels the mind in a specific direction, thus ingraining habits of thought

Concentration is the second step in study. If in addition to bringing the mind repeatedly to the subject matter, the person will concentrate on what is being studied, learning is vastly increased. Concentration centers the mind.

Comprehension is the third step in the Discipline of study. When we repeatedly focus the mind in a particular direction, centering our attention on the subject, but understand what we are studying, we reach a new level.

- **Reflection** is the fourth step of study. Although comprehension defines what we are studying, reflection defines the *significance* of what we are studying. To reflect, to ruminate on the events of our time leads us to the inner reality of those events.
- - Reflection brings us to see things from God's perspective.
- - In reflection, we come to understand not only our subject matter, but ourselves.
- - Jesus speaks often of ears that do not hear and eyes that do not see. When we ponder the meaning of what we study, we come to hear and see in a new way.

THE DISCIPLINE OF

SIMPLICITY – contentment; not asceticism or materialism

Lev. 25:23, Psalm 62:10, Prov. 11:28, Luke 16:13, Matt. 6:21, 19, Matt. 19:16-22, Luke 12:33, Matt. 13:45-46, Phil. 4:12

10 Ways to Practice the Spiritual Discipline of Simplicity

1. Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status.
2. Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you.
3. Develop a habit of giving things away.
4. Refuse to fall into the propaganda of modern devices (i.e. must have new iPhone every year)
5. Learn to enjoy things without owning them.
6. Develop a deeper appreciation for the creation.
7. Be skeptical of buy now pay later schemes.
8. Obey Jesus' instruction about plain, honest speech (Let your yes be yes, and your no be no. – Matt. 5:37)
9. Reject anything that breeds the oppression of others.
10. Shun anything that distracts you from first seeking the kingdom of God.



THE DISCIPLINE OF



SOLITUDE – The freedom to be alone in order to hear the divine whisper better; intentional silence; inner solitude and inner silence go together; being slow to speak... (speaking when necessary)

Solitude: Matt. 4:1-11, **Luke 6:12**, Matt. 4:13, Matt. 4:23, Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, Matt. 25:36-46

Silence: James 3:1-12, Eccl. 3:7, **Prov. 25:11**

THE DISCIPLINE OF



SUBMISSION (self-denial) – Submission first to Christ; making Him Lord. Mutual submission to others....

Submission helps us let things go and discern between genuine issues and stubborn self-will. **Submission frees us to value other people.**

1 Peter 2:18, **Matt. 8:34**, Matt. 5:44, Matt. 5:39, John 21:19, Acts 9:16, Matt. 22:39, **Matt. 10:39**

THE DISCIPLINE OF



Matt. 20:25-28, Luke
9:46-48, John 13:14, 1
Peter 4:9, **Gal. 6:2**

SERVICE – Tending to the needs of others.... Not for self-righteous purposes. Hospitality, self-sacrificial help

“Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition. It will devise subtle, religiously acceptable means to call attention to the service rendered. If we stoutly refuse to give in to this lust of the flesh, we crucify it. Every time we crucify the flesh, we crucify our pride and arrogance.”

- Richard Foster

Homework:

What scriptural examples can you find of the Corporate Spiritual Disciplines? Feel free to share any transformation that you've experienced as a result of these disciplines. Email your answers to nwatson@wvumc.com. We will discuss it during the November Keys to the Kingdom Class.

CONFESSION



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CELEBRATION

