I. RESOURCES

*Streams of Living Water – Richard Foster
Celebration of Discipline – Richard Foster
Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life – Dallas Willard

II. INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

A. There are Personal and Interpersonal Disciplines.

Spiritual disciplines and spirituality is not something we just do by ourselves. Some we do by ourselves, others we do engaging others, some both.

B. Disciplines are not attitudes they are actions. They are not the fruit of the Spirit, they are activities empowered by the Spirit.


The goal is not to accomplish a task, but to be like Jesus. They must be purposefully Godward in focus.

SCRIPTURE

- 1 TIMOTHY 4:7
- 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27
- PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

C. Spiritual Disciplines are practices taught or modeled in the Scripture.

It is tempting, usually as a way of avoiding discipline, to categorize something you are inclined towards as a spiritual discipline.

E.g. hunting/being in nature, resting for the lazy, reading for the book worm, etc.

D. Spiritual disciplines push us deeper into the gospel, not graduate us to a higher plane from the gospel.
They are not a “deeper spirituality” than the gospel. They do not create a higher-class Christianity.

E. Spiritual disciplines are a means to godliness, they are not godliness.

Warning: Mtt 6:1-6, 16-18

**Bonus Note: Spiritual discipline of Journaling**
This discipline won’t be covered in this course, but may be a good idea for you as you discover some disciplines impact you more than others.

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The Spiritual Disciplines of Contemplation and Prayer

I. Contemplative/Prayer

A. Need and Power of Prayer

Luke 5:16
Mark 1:35
Matt 14:22-23
Mark 6:46
John 6:15
Acts 12:6-17

B. What is Contemplation/Prayer?

Setting aside time for contemplation (thinking about God) followed by prayer. Being intentional in times of prayer.

Play a game of minutes, small prayers throughout the day (set a timer to build the habit.)

Or schedule a vigil (extended time of prayer, usually overnight)

II. Benefits of this Discipline

A. Fan the flames of our first love. Rev 2:4
B. Moves knowledge from head to heart
C. Emphasizes quiet – get to the presence of God and rest there.
D. Teaches us to enjoy God and His presence
E. Personal discipline of solitude (quiet) in a world of noise

III. Dangers
A. Affirms isolation for those prone to be introverts
B. Be careful not to enjoy quiet for quiet’s sake... rather than reflection on God and prayer.
C. Can lead to mysticism/love without and in rejection of intellectual pursuit.

IV. Practical Implementation

A. CONTEMPLATION

• Experiment various venues - take a predawn walk. Listen to nature come alive looking for God’s common grace.
• Limit speaking for a day. You will discover much about yourself and others. Use the desire to speak, to speak to God. Take a silent retreat.
• Observe the public in a public place. Observe their lives, allow God to break your heart for the state of the world. Pray for them and for God to move.

B. INTENTIONAL PRAYER

• Pray the scriptures.
• Step by step through the Church.
• Pray through sermon notes.
• Vigil.

C. PLAY

• Sacrifice productivity to rest in the Lord.
• Go enjoy life for the gift that it is.
• Trust the Lord with your “work.”
• Be sure to do it with a spiritual focus!