



Spiritual Disciplines
Teaching Notes

Rev. Golden Kyungupengu
Livingstone

Rev. James Adair
Lusaka

LESSON 1: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES & JOURNALLING

1. IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS FOR SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

- a) **Disciple**- a person in a right relationship with Christ and living on a daily basis in dependence on Him and in obedience to his Word.
- b) **Spiritual Disciplines**- habits of a Christian that must become intentional part of daily life in order to facilitate growth in our relationship with God.
- c) There are many disciplines of the Christian faith that you can call a "spiritual discipline" but here are a few common practices:
 - a. Prayer Chasity Silence
 - b. Mediation Study Tithing/Stewardship
 - c. Fasting Obedience Evangelism
 - d. Simplicity Confession Disciple Making
 - e. Journaling Gratitude Solitude

2. DIVISION OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Spiritual disciplines are divided into two groups

- a) Disciplines of abstinence e.g. Fasting, chastity, solitude etc
- b) Disciplines of engagement e.g. prayer, worship and service etc.

Note: Spiritual exercises do not make us godly but God makes us godly. The exercises only put us in a spiritual condition as to receive grace from God.

3. PURPOSE FOR SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

- a) Spiritual disciplines are practices that by design can lead to life transformation. The goal of spiritual disciplines is to aid our spiritual growth as disciples of Jesus Christ and deepen our relationship with God. They are like training exercises for the spiritual life.
- b) The ultimate purpose of Spiritual disciplines is godliness (1 Timothy 4:7-8)
- c) Sin (def.) – these are acts of disobedience, habits and attitudes which hinder efforts at godliness.

Remedies / Solutions

- 1) Will Worship – This is a personal determination to change behaviour. This alone can bring about temporary external agreement but not a genuine change of character (Colossians 2:20-22)
- 2) Transforming grace – True godliness is a gift of grace (Romans 5:17). Spiritual Disciplines allow us to receive grace. For example, in the story of Zacchaeus, the tree did not cleanse him, but it put him in a position to receive grace that leads to godliness.

4. 6 MISCONCEPTIONS OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

- a) **Spiritual Disciplines are for all Christians.** – There is a misconception that Spiritual Disciplines are meant for Monks or Spiritual giants. However, Spiritual Disciplines are meant for all believers in everyday life.
- b) **Spiritual Disciplines increase your joy in faith** – Another misconception is that Spiritual Disciplines destroy joy and celebration. But Spiritual Disciplines are meant to produce freedom from fear and self-interest which produces unhappiness.
- c) **Spiritual Disciplines do not require deep theology to begin.** – Another misconception is that Spiritual Disciplines require deep theological understanding. This is not true. The reality is that Spiritual disciplines require only the willingness to learn as a beginner.
- d) **Spiritual Disciplines are not an opportunity to show people how "holy" you are!**
Many people throughout history have tried to prove their righteousness by practicing a more extreme version of Spiritual Discipline than their brothers and sisters in Christ. If we discipline ourselves in order to be more holy or more righteous than others, we make this an exercise of pride and vanity.
- e) **Spiritual Disciplines do not make us more Holy or more Righteous!**
If you read the definition carefully these practices are about becoming more dependent on God. God alone through Jesus makes us righteous or holy. We practice these disciplines as a form of worship.
- f) **Spiritual Disciplines do not earn you favor with God!**
Some people may think that if they fast for 30 days then surely God will give them what they desire. God does not work in this way. When Jesus fasted for 40 days, He immediately faced His biggest temptations ever, he did not receive anything. He only prepared his body to allow the Holy Spirit to direct His choices.

CONCLUSION

Spiritual disciplines are those practices found in scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are habits of devotion, habits of experiential Christianity that have been practiced by God's people since biblical times.

THE DISCIPLINE OF JOURNALING

1. JOURNALING (Def) –

- a) This is the practice of keeping a written record of Spiritual exercises or experiences including insights from scripture, prayer needs and answers, personal goals and important needs.
- b) A Spiritual diary is an ordinary, honest record of what is going on in your life, how you feel about it and your awareness of whether God is in it all. It does not need to be written in a fancy book or to be written in good English because, it is not being handed in for marking. It is purely a private document.
- c) The key thing about writing a journal is that it's a place to spiritually share yourself with God and with yourself.

The Bible in Exodus 17:14 says "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heaven'"

Other Scripture Reference – Psalms 52, Jeremiah 12:1 or 20:8, 9

2. IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING A SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

- a) A Spiritual journal achieves three things: it is a **record** which aids **reflection** and thus becomes a means of **responding** to God's call to deepening discipleship. If we really do 'live and move and have our being' in God (Acts 17:28), then there is no part of our day that is out of bounds for such reflection.
- b) Keeping a spiritual journal helps you to remember the important things God says to you and the things He does in your life.

3. VALUE OF THE SPIRITUAL DIARY

The value of a Spiritual diary is that it captures things that would otherwise just vanish in the busy-ness of life.

- a) **Record** - It allows you to build a record of what is going on so that you can reflect, over time, on your growth as a disciple.
- b) **Evaluation** –It helps in self – evaluation as the spirit reveals areas of sin, patterns of behaviour, progress or decline.

- c) **Meditation** – It helps us to investigate insights into scripture carefully, aids concentration.
- d) **Expression** – It allows expressions of feelings. Joys and sorrows may be reviewed to humble or encourage us.
- e) **Reminder** – It serves as a reminder of answered prayer, past deliverances etc
- f) **Goals** – The diary helps a person to set goals and evaluate the progress.
- g) **Discipline** – The diary helps us to record our performances in spiritual disciplines.

4. WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A JOURNAL

a) Testimonies

This section of your diary records what God is doing in, around and through your life

b) Daily / Weekly Reviews

This section records summaries of what God is saying to you through His word, prayer, circumstances and the church daily or weekly. It can also include summaries of adjustments that God wants you to take, directions, steps of obedience and others responses God may be calling you to make to him.

c) Prayer Requests and Answers.

This can be divided into four categories to include such as: personal requests, requests for the group members, requests for the church and other special requests.

5. HOW TO KEEP A SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

There are no rules to keeping a Spiritual Journal. Find a system that works for you and be willing to adapt it as you go, so that it keeps working. If it enables you to record your day, reflect on God's involvements and respond in some way, then it is working! Having said that, here are a few thoughts to help you think through your own approach.

a) Find The Best Format For You.

Some people like to buy a special book to keep as their Spiritual journal: others might use an old exercise book: others may go straight to their lap top or Pad. One factor is portability. Sometimes, it is good to go away and reflect on your journal. So don't use a format that is too big to take for a walk.

b) Find The Best Rhythm For You.

It doesn't have to be daily: weekly could work well – but try to develop a rhythm. If it is too random, it could disappear from your radar altogether.

c) Find The Best Time For You.

Many like to end the day writing in their journal. There is a certain logic to that, and it allows your journal to naturally lead you into prayer as you close your day. If you write your journal weekly, then how about making it part of keeping Sunday special?

d) Find The Best Expression For You.

If you are so inclined, and it helps you record, reflect or respond, then you could include poems, drawings, songs, prayers or others forms of creative expressions.

e) Find The Path To Prayer.

Try to develop the habit of your spiritual journal naturally leading you to pray about what you have written and reflected on.

CONCLUSION

One final thought: Although the journal is a private document, it could help you develop this habit – and perhaps reflect on your journal entries – if you shared your ‘journal journey’ with a close spiritual friend.

Keeping a spiritual journal in company with others allows you to learn from one another’s experience and to support one another in developing the practice.

LESSON 2: FASTING & SIMPLICITY

THE DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

1. FASTING

- a) **Term (Def)** – Fasting is voluntary abstinence from food and sometimes drink for a spiritual purpose, not for health or political purposes.
- b) **Requirements** – The practice of fasting must be voluntary and private, rather than coercive or public.
- c) **Application** – The Bible speaks of Abstinence from food and sometimes drink, but the principle of fasting can apply to any normal activities e.g. overnights (Abstinence from sleep), Abstinence from sex between wife and husband etc.

2. IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

- a) **Devotion** – Fasting aids our devotion to God and intimate prayer and fellowship with God. It simply means putting God first in a very intense way for a period of time and for a very definite purpose.
- b) **Prayer** – Fasting is an aid to prayer, but it is not a religious act to please God. Fasting can grant more urgency to prayer, but not to coerce God. We can pray without fasting but we cannot fast without praying.
- c) **Guidance** – Fasting aids in seeking guidance from God (Esther 4:16)
- d) **Expressions** – fasting is largely associated with mourning. It shows an expression of grief (2 Samuel 1:11-12), of sorrow over sin of others (1 Samuel 20:34). It is an expression of broken heartedness and desperation, usually over sin or over some danger (Matthew 9:14-15).
- e) **Humbleness** – Fasting humbles self before God (Psalms 35:13).
- f) **Benefits** – fasting helps to cleanse our relationship with God and others. Right relations are essential (Isaiah 58:3-7).

3. TYPES OF FASTING

- a) **Normal fast** – Abstinence from food, not drinks. This is the most common type of fasting.
- b) **Absolute fast** – Abstinence from both food and drink e.g. Esther (Esther 4:16)
- c) **Partial fast** – Limitation of amounts of food and not taking certain foods e.g. Daniel (Dan 1:8).

4. THE PRACTICE OF FASTING

- a) **Importance** – The practice is largely ignored due to lack of instructions and abuse during early period of the Christian history (Middle Ages).
- b) **Command** – There is no New Testament command requiring fasting but the Bible expresses an assumption or expectation that Christians will fast. Fasting is mentioned more often in the New Testament than Baptism.

- c) **Sermon on the Mount** – Jesus expresses an assumption that they will be fasting, with the same word, he applies to prayer (Matthew 6:5-7) and Alms (Matthew 6:2-3).
- d) **Bridegroom** – Jesus declared that His disciples will fast when the Bridegroom is gone (Matthew 9:14-15). This means that the disciples will engage in fasting after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, including the present up to the second coming. There is no record of the Apostles fasting until the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. PURPOSE OF FASTING.

- a) The primary purpose of fasting is to remove distraction and focus the attention on God (Zachariah 7:4-5).
- b) The secondary purpose of fasting include the following:
 - 1) **Revelation** – Revelation of inner forces which control us e.g. Pride, self – centred, attitudes etc.
 - 2) **Reminder** – Fasting reminds us of the fact that we are sustained by God (John 4:32)
 - 3) **Priorities** – Fasting helps us to focus upon essential things.

6. WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS ENGAGE IN FASTING

- a) For personal holiness (Psalms 69:10; Matthew 5:4)
- b) For God to hear the deepest spiritual desires of our hearts (Ezra 8:23)
- c) To avert divine judgement (2 Samuel 12:16-21; 1 Kings 21:20-29, Jonah 3:5-10)
- d) To solicit divine intervention in the moments of trouble (Esther 4:13)

THE DISCIPLINE OF SIMPLICITY

1. SIMPLICITY (Def)

- a) **Term** – This is an inward commitment to God resulting in an outward simplified lifestyle. It is gained by seeking the kingdom of God above all.
- b) **Revelation** – Simplicity is revealed in speech, attitude towards possession and freedom from anxieties.
- c) **Moderation** – simplicity is a middle way between Materialistic greed and Legalistic Asceticism.

2. LIFESTYLE CHOICES

- a) **MATERIALISTIC GREED** – The cause of materialistic greed is lack of peace with God and effort to find security in possessions.

Biblical Response

- 1) The Old Testament rejects the idea of absolute individual ownership of property. For Example: The year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25). Every 50 years,

all debts were forgiven, all slaves freed, all property returned to God- the original owner. Everything belonged to God.

- 2) The New Testament builds on the same idea (Acts 2:41-47). Jesus said, you cannot serve God and Mammon (wealth) (Matthew 6:24). Paul calls for trust in God’s provisions and generosity.

- b) **LEGALISTIC GREED** – The cause of legalistic greed is unbiblical division (Separation) of life into an evil material world to be abandoned and a good spiritual world to be sought.

Biblical Response – The Bible looks at God as the source of abundant blessings meant to be enjoyed (Deuteronomy 8:7-9; 1 Timothy 6:17).

- c) **SIMPLICITY** – The cause of a simplified lifestyle is a commitment to the kingdom of God, not anywhere else. Commitment to God’s Kingdom leads to simplicity in certain areas of life e.g. in message (1 Corinthians 2:1-3); in relationships (1 Corinthians 7:8); Tasks (Philippians 3:7-8); Possessions (Philippians 4:12).

COMPARISON OF THE THREE LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Materialism	Legalistic Asceticism	Simplicity
1. Worship Possession	Renounce Possessions	Put Possession in Proper Place.
2. Never Content	Content only when humbled or without	Content in all things (Philippians 4:11-12)

GUIDANCE – Acquire goods for usefulness, not status or prestige. Avoid things that produce addiction (undisciplined desire). Use simple speech – brief and truthful. Appreciate the beauty of creation.

LESSON 3: THE DISCIPLINES OF BIBLE READING & CONFESSION

1. BIBLE READING (Def)

- a) Bible reading is the study of the Bible by people as a personal religious practice or Spiritual Discipline.
- b) Bible study refers to all the different ways we come into contact with the Bible. We can read it, study it, listen to it, memorize it, and meditate on it.
- c) Bible study coupled with Christian prayer is known as doing devotions or devotional acts.

2. THE NECESSITY OF BIBLE STUDY

- a) Bible study is the most important spiritual discipline. A Christian simply cannot grow without God's word.
- b) Bible intake is not only the most important discipline, it is also the broadest. It actually consists of several sub disciplines.

3. METHODS OF BIBLE READING.

- a) Studying is more than memorizing, it is learning and actually understanding the information.
- b) The purpose of all the methods of Bible reading is to do what God says and grow into Christlikeness.

4. TOOLS OF BIBLE READING

- a) **MEDITATION** (Def.) – This is the biblical term that means reflection (focussed thoughts) to create sensitivity to God and obedience leading to the application of scripture. The more you listen from God, the more you hear.

STEPS IN MEDITATION

- 1) **Guidance** – Begin by recognizing that this is God's word and seek the Holy Spirit's leadership.
- 2) **Choice** – choose from the passage an object of meditation. It could be the subject of the passage, an important word or phrase, or an idea relating to a personal concern.
- 3) **Imagination** – see or hear the words or events in your mind.
- 4) **Emphasis** – repeat the passage several times, emphasizing different parts.
- 5) **Paraphrase** – repeat the object of meditation in different words with the same meaning.
- 6) **Prayer** – Pray through the passage or word, using the passage according to its meaning.
- 7) **Application** – Relate it to your life. Look for ways to apply your discovery.

b) **MEMORIZATION**

- 1) This is the process of committing something to memory or learning something by heart. It is a mental process undertaken in order to store in memory for later recall visual, auditory or tactical information.
- 2) Memorization makes information readily available for deeper learning and making connections to new materials.
- 3) Memorized material significantly aids students' understanding and application of new information learned.

STEPS IN MEMORIZING

- 1) **Establish** – establish a list of verses to memorize.
- 2) **Locate** – locate the verse in your Bible
- 3) **Read** – read the passage loudly and understand it (use sight and hearing)
- 4) **Write** – write out the passage several times. You can think faster than you can speak and write. So writing slows your thinking and focusses attention to the passage.
- 5) **Repetition** – repeat the passage several times a day
- 6) **Accountability** – Be accountable to share the memory verse with others.

BENEFITS OF MEMORIZATION

- 1) Make Bible memory a regular practice because:
- 2) Helps in dealing with temptations (Matthew 4:1-11) and trials (Matthew 27:46, Psalm 22:1 or Luke 19:46 and Jeremiah 7:11)
- 3) Useful in witnessing and counselling (Matthew 26:24). At Pentecost, Peter helped explain to the people of what was happening to the disciples by quoting Joel 2:28.
- 4) Memorized passages can provide guidance – Isaiah 61:1-2.

c) **APPLICATION**

- 1) This is putting into practice what a person has learned or known (Mark 4:24, Hebrews 5:14).
- 2) Applying the Bible is deeply personal – unique for each individual. It is making a relevant truth a personal truth, and involves developing a strategy and action plan to live life in harmony with the bible. It is the biblical 'how to' of life.
- 3) A good application focusses on the truth of God's word, shows the reader what to do about what is being read, and motivates the reader to respond to what God is teaching. All the three are essential to applying the Bible.

STEPS IN APPLYING THE BIBLE

- 1) **Expectation** – expect to find specific applications from the passage.
- 2) **Understanding** – grasp the main idea or command in the context of the passage by asking questions such as: 'Is this a general or specific command?' 'Is it something to do? Change of attitude about? Believe? etc

- 3) **Response** – identify one specific act of application. You can apply the Bible to your life by remembering key truths (Remembering promises, principles, commandments and prayers)

5. HOW TO PROFIT FROM BIBLE STUDY

- 1) **Time** – have a regular time
- 2) **Place** – Decide on a regular place
- 3) **Practice** – obey God’s word. Do the things that it says you should do.
- 4) **Plan** – Have a plan on how to read the Bible. Divide the Bible into three major sections and read one chapter from each section per day (Monday to Saturday). Then in one year, you will finish reading through the Bible.
- 5) **Study** – record insights and pages where you got the information for easy remembrance.
- 6) **Accountability** – share the insights with others.

THE DISCIPLINE OF CONFESSION

1. CONFESSION

- a) **Definition** – The word ‘confession’ comes from the compound Greek term ‘*Homologeō*’. It has two words. The Greek word ‘*Homo*’ means one or same. The other word is ‘*logeō*’ which means ‘to speak a word.’ Putting the two together, the word ‘confession’ or ‘*homologeō*’ means ‘to speak the same word or agree.’
- b) **Agree** - Confession means to agree with God that He is right and we are wrong.
- c) **Relief** - Genuine confession brings relief and healing to the individual soul

2. RECIPIENT OF CONFESSION

- a) God in case of private confession (1 John 1:8-9, Psalms 51:4)
- b) Other persons in case of public confession (James 5:16)
- c) The church in the case where the church is made aware (Matthew 18:17)

3. COMPOSITION

- a) Examination of the conscience or heart.
- b) Godly sorrow that leads to repentance
- c) Determination to avoid the sin (Repent).

4. TWO TYPES OF SINS

- a) **Sin of commission (Def)** (Deuteronomy 5:17-21) – doing what God forbids or does not authorize In other words, the sins of commission are those Sins resulting from a sinful action)

- b) **Sin of Omission Def)** – A sin committed by neglecting to do what is right or failing to do what is good (James 4:17, Matthew 25:45-46)

5. NATURE OF CONFESSION

Disciplined Grace

- a) **Grace** – confession is a grace in that it is made in response to conviction by the Holy Spirit. The confession opens us to Christ's atonement.
- b) **Discipline** – confession needs to be practiced regularly and it includes our action.

6. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONFESSION

- a) **Private** - Private confession may be made to God alone through the mediation of Christ (1 Timothy 2:5)
- b) **Public** – Public confession may be made before other believers in some circumstances (James 5:16). Believers serve as supportive fellowship of forgiven sinners. Believers stand in the place of Christ and make His forgiveness visible / tangible (John 20:23)

7. ADVANTAGE OF PUBLIC CONFESSION

- a) **Responsibility** – Public confession requires a person to accept responsibility without making excuses.
- b) **Forgiveness** – A word of forgiveness can be audibly and publicly announced.
- c) **Penance** – Public confession allows acts of penance to express the seriousness of the sin (“some acts of restitution to the offended”). Confession is truly the remedy for sin

8. STEPS TO RECEIVING CONFESSION

- a) **Sin** – Deliberate disobedience to God. We all share in the deliberate unbelief which is the essence of sin. If someone confesses sin to you, the truth above should free you from shock and superiority.
- b) **Prayer** – Pray for compassion and discernment.
- c) **Patience** – Be quiet and listen to avoid being an obstacle to the confession. Don't express embarrassment, humour or minimize the offense.
- d) **Response** – Pray audibly for the person confessing and lay hands on him or her. Announce the reality of the forgiveness.

LESSON 4: PRAYER

1. PRAYER

- a) **Definition** – Prayer is communication with the Almighty God. It is pouring our hearts to the God of the heavens and the earth.
- b) The discipline of prayer is the foundation of all spiritual disciplines - It is the central component in worship, the atmosphere surrounding effective Bible study and the power behind witnessing.
- c) God insistently commands prayer in the Bible (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Philippians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:1; Ephesians 6:18-19 etc.
- d) Prayer is God's appointed way for Christians to get things done (James 4:2). A Christian is to ask God.
- e) Prayer is God's way for Christians to have the fullness of joy (Proverbs 10:28).
- f) Prayer is the way out of all trouble, the cure for all our worry and anxious care (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7; Psalms 55:22).
- g) Prayer is asking (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 18:14; 23:42). The answer to prayer is receiving (Matthew 7:7-8; John 16:24; James 4:2). Answered prayer is the only answerable argument against scepticism, unbelief, modernism and infidelity.

2. PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

- a) **Prayer Is Learned (Matthew 6:9-13)** – we learn to pray as beginners and do not have to begin as experts. We must be free to experiment, question and fail. If we tried something that does not work, then we would have learned a lot.
- b) **Methods of Learning** – read about prayer, pray with others (Prayer partners), pray regularly and use meditation.
- c) **Prayer Is Answered** – God answers prayer (Jeremiah 33:3)
- d) **Prayer & Providence: The Dilemma** – the Bible affirms that God's plan is fixed (Matthew 26:24) and that prayer brings about change (James 5:16, Isaiah 38). The major question is: if the Bible affirms both statements, how can both be true? If God's plan is fixed, how can prayer bring about change? Or if Prayer changes things, how can God's plan be said to be fixed?

Well, the answer is that God's plan includes prayer and therefore, prayer is not in conflict with God's plan. Prayer changes events by working through God's plan, and God calls us to pray (i.e. to join Him in His plan). Therefore, an important part of prayer is listening to God's direction of the prayer.

- e) **Partnerships** – God has purposed to work in partnership with us in prayer through our faith (James 4:3). In this partnership, God honours and responds to faith (Matthews 14:22-23). God does not respond to lack of faith (Matthew 6:4-6).
- f) **God's will** – Using the Phrase 'thy will be done' is proper when seeking God's will and surrendering to Him. But it is not a substitute for faith.

- g) **In Jesus Name** – To pray ‘in Jesus Name’ means to pray in agreement with God’s character and His plan (Exodus 20:7; 2 Timothy 2:19; Acts 19:13-23). It means submitting requests to Christ and seeking His intercessions. So we are partners with God (John 15:16; 2 Corinthians 1:20).

Important Note: “In Jesus Name” is not a magic or power phrase which assures that whatever you are praying will be done. Repeating this phrase frequently does not strengthen a prayer or make it more acceptable to God. Instead, when we pray the word, “In Jesus name,” we should be expressing our heart’s true desire that whatever we have asked would be done only as it is in perfect agreement with the holy and perfect will of Jesus.

- h) **Effects** – If our prayers are not effective, then we need to look for obstacles such as wrong motives, request not in God’s will and Personal Sin. We should seek guidance before we pray. To love the enemies is to pray for them and to do good things to them, but not doing what they do.
- i) **Amen** – the word ‘Amen’ simply means ‘Let it be so’ as it has been prayed.

3. OBSTACLES TO PRAYER

- a) **Sin / Lack of Christian Living** (Psalms 66:18; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 59:2)
- b) **Lack of Discipline** (1 Corinthians 9:27; Ephesians 5:16 - The Apostle Paul calls this as ‘the flesh’ (Rebellious spirit / heart). The major issue is on how to use time, because we all have equal amount of time.
- c) **Lack of Instruction** – some people suffer from lack of instructions on how to pray effectively and in a simple way.
- d) **Lack of Accountability** – accountability provides a sense of responsibility and encouragement.
- e) **Lack of Anticipated ‘Feelings’** – Prayer is not based on feelings but is based on God’s truth and promises.

4. 6 REASON TO PRAY

1. The discipline of prayer is the foundation of all spiritual disciplines - It is the central component in worship, the atmosphere surrounding effective Bible study and the power behind witnessing.
2. God insistently commands prayer in the Bible (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Philipians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:1; Ephesians 6:18-19 etc.
3. Prayer is God’s appointed way for Christians to get things done (James 4:2). A Christian is to ask God.
4. Prayer is God’s way for Christians to have the fullness of joy (Proverbs 10:28).
5. Prayer is the way out of all trouble, the cure for all our worry and anxious care (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7; Psalms 55:22).
6. Prayer is asking (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 18:14; 23:42). The answer to prayer is receiving (Matthew 7:7-8; John 16:24; James 4:2). Answered prayer is the only answerable argument against scepticism, unbelief, modernism and infidelity.

5. READ THESE 2 POWERFUL PRAYERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

1. The Lord's Prayer – Matthew 6:9-13

- a. This prayer provides us with a powerful example of true prayer from the heart.
- b. What types of things does Jesus pray about?
- c. How does this pray differ from prayers you might have heard these days?

2. Tax Collector and Pharisee- Luke 18:7-17

- a. What is this parable communicating to us about prayer?
- b. If you only pray in public or in a group setting, what does this reveal about your prayer life?

6. WHY PRAY FOR EXTENDED PERIODS

- a) To have uninterrupted fellowship with God
- b) To evaluate what God has been doing in your life
- c) To hear what God is saying to you.
- d) To solidify Christ's Lordship over all aspects of your life
- e) To receive guidance for future plans or ministries
- f) To concentrate with God on a major concern or problem you face.
- g) To intercede for others.

LESSON 5: SOLITUDE & GUIDANCE

1. SOLITUDE

- a) **Withdrawal** – Solitude is a voluntary, temporal withdrawal into privacy for a spiritual purpose.
- b) **Discipline** – Solitude often aids other disciplines and is often associated with silence (withdrawal from speech for spiritual purpose e.g. Trappist Monks)
- c) **Value** – Solitude controls speech, aids in listening and deepens our relationship with God.

2. IMPORTANCE OF SOLITUDE.

- a) The Bible in Isaiah 32:18 says “And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places”
- b) Everyone needs regular time to reflect and allow the soul to quiet down. Being alone and enjoying quiet time is very healing to the soul.
- c) Time alone in prayer and meditation helps the mind and emotions to settle and level out. The mind needs rest. It needs to experience the peace that is found in solitude. Emotions needs time to settle and level out. They need time to recover from the daily pressure.
- d) When you feel weary and as if you cannot go on, solitude helps to find the determination you need to finish the course with joy.
- e) Solitude also helps to be refreshed and strengthened. Jesus regularly went off by Himself into the Mountains to be alone. He was refreshed and strengthened through solitude.
- f) In the quiet time, we hear from God and we are reassured of the direction He wants us to take in life.

3. PURPOSE OF SOLITUDE

- a) **To Follow The Example Of Jesus.** He regularly was alone in the midst of His ministry (Mark 1:35), Matthew 14:23, Luke 4:42). Regularly ministry allows us to be alone in order to minister profitably.
- b) **To Develop Skills In Listening.** The constant noise in our world discourages listening and makes us suspicious of silence.
- c) **To Seek Salvation / Deliverance.** It is a two way fold. It may be believers seeking deliverance from trials or unbelievers seeking salvation (Lamentation 3:25-28).
- d) **To Find Restoration And Spiritual Perspective.** This may be both physical and spiritual restoration. In theology, there is something referred to as ‘the dark night of the soul’. This is a time of spiritual depression, lack of excitement, lack of a sense of God’s nearness, which is not the result of sin, but it is Grace from God to focus our attention on Him (Isaiah 50:10).
- e) **To Control Speech** – The control of the mind and speech privately in solitude helps us to control them publicly.

- 1) **Foolish Speech** (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2) – The effort to control others, defend ourselves, express excitement or confusion (Mark 9:5-6), such speech is refrained by a heart at peace. Jesus never said anything to defend himself before Pilate.
- 2) **Wise Speech** – This results from an inner peace (Proverbs 17:27-28). We trust God to deal with situations and defend us.

THE DISCIPLINE OF GUIDANCE

1. GUIDANCE (Def) -

- a) **God's Will** – Guidance is the practice of discerning and sharing God's will for our lives. God has promised to guide us (Psalms 32:8-11)
- b) **Means** – Guidance may be gained through scripture and reason. There are also exceptional means like dreams and vision etc.
- c) **Corporate Guidance** – The western individualism has encouraged emphasis on direct guidance from God. But the Bible speaks about God's will as coming to us through others / group.

2. MODELS OF CORPORATE GUIDANCE

- a) **Friends** – Ask help of a believing friend in finding God's will
- b) **Group** – The congregation may join in seeking guidance for an individual (Acts 13:1-3)
- c) **Spiritual Director** – This may be a Mature Person who helps to direct another believer (Prayer Partner). He or she must be Spiritually Mature, a good Listener and Courageous to speak honestly.
- d) **Business Meeting** – Alternative Business Session. This is a discussional commitment to God's will until the group reaches consensus.

THE DISCIPLINE OF SERVICE

1. SERVICE (Def)

- a) Term – Christian service is helping others who need assistance. It is the response made by a regenerate soul unto the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the voluntary and hearty subjecting of oneself to Christ's dominion and the carrying out of His revealed will.
- b) It consists of full obedience unto God and it is the demonstration of who we are in Christ. When we serve others, we imitate Christ and we feel useful.
- c) Jesus said, 'I'm among you as one who serves' (Luke 22:27). As a true follower of Christ, we also must serve others. Christ like service grows out of genuine love for the saviour and out of love and concern for those whom He gives us opportunities and direction to help.

2. LIBERATION THROUGH SERVICE

- a) **Freedom** – Service frees the individual from the worldly love of status, fame and positions.
- b) **Authority** – Service does not deny the value of leadership, neither does it declare that all have equal authority. Service teaches that true authority grows out of character and function. Spiritual authority varies from one person to the other.

3. NATURE OF SERVICE

a) SELF – RIGHTEOUS SERVICE

- 1) A person decides when to serve
- 2) It relies on human effort, big programs
- 3) It requires attention / reward / visibility.
- 4) May hinder personal growth
- 5) Discourages a sense of community (One person being the vivid figure).

b) GENUINE CHRISTIAN SERVICE

- 1) It is a lifestyle of constant service to God.
- 2) It relies on commitment to God, any size of a program is carried out.
- 3) Does not require attention / reward / praise from people.
- 4) It promotes spiritual growth (Faith in little, faith in much)
- 5) It encourages group participation. Every member has a sense of responsibility and enjoys serving together with others.

Note: Appreciating those who are committed to Christian service is important in our churches today, but if attention becomes the most important thing, then it becomes self – righteous service.

4. PRODUCTS OF SERVICE

- a) Service produces genuine humility and weakens ‘the flesh’ which leads to resist the leadership of God out of self-centeredness.
- b) The Bible in 1 John 2:16 talks about ‘the lust of the flesh’ (self – centeredness) and ‘the Pride of the eyes’ (impressed by outward appearance). Genuine Service weakens these as mentioned above and it replaces the flesh with humility – especially hidden service.
- c) Serving is a form of worship, a way to express gratitude for what Jesus has done for us and to share. (Colossians 3:23-24; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

THE DISCIPLINE OF SUBMISSION

1. SUBMISSION

- a) **Nature** – Submission is a voluntary surrender of something for Christ's sake, especially in attitude towards responsibility and requires self-denial for the individual and mutual submission to one another in a group.
- b) **Value** – Submission liberates us from the bondage of always having things done our way. It allows us to carry out our responsibilities joyfully and willingly.

2. MISSUNDERSTANDINGS OF SUBMISSION

- a) **Submission Actions** – it should not be a result of self – contempt, caused by the attitude of hatred. Submission helps us to use that value. We are all important in God's sight.
- b) **Renunciation of Desire** – it should not result from renouncing all our desires. Jesus says ask, knock, seek etc but not worship them.
- c) **Spiritual Rank** – submission should not result from Spiritual or hierarchal system or rank. Jesus washed the disciples feet demonstrating that submission does not depend on spiritual rank.

3. BASIS OF SUBMISSION

a) Example of Christ

The 'Cross Life' is the service of submission. By dying on the cross, Jesus opposed the life based on power and status. He showed concern and submission to those considered as lower rank. In Philippians 2:1-13, Jesus submitted himself to the shameful death of the cross designed for criminals.

b) Teaching of the Epistles

- 1) **Command** – The Apostle Paul (in Philippians 2:3) says, we should consider others more valuable than ourselves. We should submit or seek the good of others. The same idea is also in 1 Peter 2:21-23.
- 2) **Application** – The teaching of submission applies to all Christians because it grows out of the example of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:21).
 - i. **First of all**, the Apostle Paul teaches that Submission is required to those of lower status e.g. slaves and wives. He talks about slavery (Ephesians 6:5ff), not primarily because they were slaves, but because they were Christians. He speaks about wives (Ephesians 5:22) that they were to submit to their husbands because Christ reigned in their bodies. Paul says submission was to be done both in attitude and in actions.
 - ii. **Secondly** – The Apostle Paul taught that submission was required from the strong. These included Masters, Husbands, Fathers etc- they were to have the same attitude (Ephesians 6:9). The basis of this submission is commitment to Christ. Believers are to live in an attitude of mutual submission for Christ's sake (Ephesians 5:21).

4. LIMITS OF SUBMISSION

- a) **Destructive** - Submission should not be practiced to the point where it becomes destructive.
- b) **Application** – Believers are to obey the Government unless the Government wants to disobey God (Acts 4:19; Acts 5:29). The Government is appointed by God (Romans 13:1), but that does not mean that they will always do what is right. The wives must submit to their Husbands, but any extreme that destroys the relationship with God is unbearable and cannot be followed.
- c) **Decisions** – Submission requires the leadership of the Holy Spirit in decision making e.g. The Apostle Paul and the Circumcision of the Gentles (Galatians 5:2-6).

APPENDIX 1 – 10-WEEK PRACTICE SCHEDULE OF DISCIPLINES

(Memory Verses in Parenthesis)

WEEKS / DAYS	SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	SCRIPTURE
WEEK 1	THE DISCIPLINES	(PSALMS 42:1-3)
Sunday	Going Deeper	Psalms 42
Monday	Slavery to Habits	Psalms 51
Tuesday	Slavery to Habits	Romans 7:13-25
Wednesday	Outward Righteousness	Philippians 3:1-16
Thursday	Sin in the Body	Proverbs 6:5-19
Friday	Sin in the Body	Romans 6:5-14
Saturday	Victory in Discipline	Ephesians 6:10-20
WEEK 2	BIBLE DISCIPLINES	(PSALMS 1:1-3)
Sunday	Glory of Meditation	Exodus 24:15-18
Monday	Friendship of Meditation	Exodus 33:11
Tuesday	Terror of Meditation	Psalms 1:1-3
Wednesday	Comfort of Meditation	1 Kings 19:9-18
Thursday	Insights of Meditation	Acts 10:19-20
Friday	Joy of Meditation	2 Corinthians 12:1-4
WEEK 3	PRAYER	(PSALMS 103:1-5)
Sunday	Pattern of Prayer	Matthew 6:5-15
Monday	Prayer of Worship	Psalms 103
Tuesday	Prayer of Repentance	Psalms 51
Wednesday	Prayer of thanksgiving	Psalms 150
Thursday	Prayer of Guidance	Matthew 26:26-36
Friday	Prayer of Faith	James 5:13-18
Saturday	Prayer of Command	Mark 9:14-29
WEEK 4	FASTING	(ISAIAH 58:3-6)
Sunday	Example of Christ	Luke 4:1-13
Monday	God's Chosen Fast	Isaiah 58:1-7
Tuesday	Partial Fast	Daniel 10:1-14
Wednesday	Normal Fast	Nehemiah 1:4-11
Thursday	Absolute Fast	Esther 4:12-17
Friday	Gentile Mission	Acts 13:1-3
Saturday	Elders Appointed	Acts 14:19-23
WEEK 5	SIMPLICITY	(AMOS 5:14-15)
Sunday	Singleness of Heart	Matthew 6:19-24

Monday	Simplicity and Trust	Matthew 6:25-34
Tuesday	Simplicity and obedience	Genesis 15
Wednesday	Simplicity and generosity	Leviticus 25:8-12
Thursday	Simplicity in Speech	Matthew 5:33-37
Friday	Simplicity and Justice	Amos 5:11-15
Saturday	Covetousness	Luke 12:13-34
WEEK 6	SOLITUDE	(MATTHEW 6:5-6)
Sunday	Control of the Tongue	James 3:1-12
Monday	Prayer and Solitude	Matthew 6:5-6
Tuesday	Insights of Solitude	Psalms 8
Wednesday	Night of the Soul	Jeremiah 20:7-18
Thursday	Solitude of the Garden	Matthew 26:26-36
Friday	Solitude of the cross	Matthew 27:32-50
Saturday	Compassion and Solitude	Matthew 9:35-38
WEEK 7	SUBMISSION	(GENESIS 22:11-12)
Sunday	Call to Submission	Mark 8:34; John 12:24-25
Monday	Example of Christ	Philippians 2:1-11
Tuesday	Example of Abraham	Genesis 22:1-19
Wednesday	Example of Paul	Galatians 2:19-21
Thursday	In the Market Place	Matthew 5:38-48
Friday	In the Family	Ephesians 5:21 – 6:9
Saturday	To the State	Romans 13:1-10
WEEK 8	SERVICE	(COLOSSIANS 3:23-24)
Sunday	Call to Service	Matthew 20:20-28
Monday	Sign of Service	John 13:1-17
Tuesday	Commitment to service	Exodus 21:5-11
Wednesday	Attitude of service	Colossians 3:23-25
Thursday	In small things	Matthew 12:9-13
Friday	Service Exemplified	Luke 10:29-37
Saturday		
WEEK 9	CONFESSION OF SIN	(JEREMIAH 31:31-33)
Sunday	Need of Confession	Isaiah 59:1-9
Monday	Promise of Forgiveness	Jeremiah 31:34
Tuesday	Assurance	1 John 1:5-10
Wednesday	Forgiveness in Christ	2 Corinthians 5:21
Thursday	Parable of Confession	Luke 15:11-24
Friday	Authority of Forgiveness	Matthew 18:18
Saturday	Ministry of the Body	James 5:13-16

WEEK 10	GUIDANCE	(ISAIAH 1:18-20)
Sunday	Guidance and faith	Hebrews 11
Monday	Guidance and Providence	Genesis 24:1-21
Tuesday	Guidance and Obedience	Isaiah 1:18-20
Wednesday	God's Truth	Acts 10:1-35
Thursday	Closed Doors	Acts 16:6-10
Friday		
Saturday		

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE COURSE

FINAL EXAM

NAME:

SECTION A. CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER FROM THE OPTIONS GIVEN.

1. What is a Spiritual Diary?
 - a. A written record of spiritual exercises or experiences.
 - b. A record of insights from scripture and prayer needs
 - c. A record of personal goals and important events.
 - d. All of the above.

2. Three of the following are values of a Spiritual diary. Which one is not?
 - a. It helps in self – evaluation.
 - b. It serves as a reminder of answered prayers
 - c. It allows expression of feelings
 - d. It will be marked by God.

3. Three of the following are disciplines of engagement. Which one is not?
 - a. Prayer
 - b. Fasting
 - c. Worship
 - d. Service.

4. Which of the following is an obstacle to prayer?
 - a. Personal sin.
 - b. Lack of instruction
 - c. Lack of discipline
 - d. All of the above

5. What does the word meditation mean?
 - a. Reflection
 - b. Imagination
 - c. Application
 - d. Memorization

6. Which one is a benefit of memorizing scripture?
 - a. It helps in dealing with temptation.
 - b. It is useful in witnessing and counselling
 - c. It is helpful in providing guidance
 - d. All of the above.

7. Which one is a method of learning how to pray?
 - a. Reading about prayer.
 - b. Praying with others
 - c. Praying regularly
 - d. All of the above

8. What is the primary focus of fasting?
 - a. To remove distraction so that we can focus on God.
 - b. To remind us of the fact that we are sustained by God.
 - c. To reveal the inner forces which control us.
 - d. To help us focus on essential things.

9. Solitude is often associated with what?
 - a. Silence
 - b. Listening
 - c. Trials
 - d. Deliverance

10. Which of the following is a nature of self-righteous service?
 - a. A person decides when to serve.
 - b. It requires attention, visibility and reward.
 - c. It discourages a sense of community
 - d. All of the above.

11. What is the mark of genuine service?
 - a. It relies on commitment to God
 - b. Does not require attention
 - c. It encourages group participation
 - d. All of the above.

12. Which of the following is a value of solitude?
 - a. It controls speech
 - b. It aids in listening
 - c. It helps in deepening our relationship with God
 - d. All of the above

13. Which one of the following is a mark of a Spiritual Director?
 - a. Spiritually Mature person
 - b. Good listener
 - c. Courage to speak honestly
 - d. All of the above

SECTION B. WRITE TRUE OR FALSE

1. Spiritual Disciplines require deep theological understanding.
2. A servant of God should have wealth in order to grow spiritually.
3. God speaks to us when we are alone in Solitude.
4. Confession opens us to Christ's atonement.
5. The Bible sees God as the source of abundant blessings meant to be enjoyed.
6. Jesus also used to have time alone in Prayer.
7. Submission allows us to carry out our responsibility willingly and with joy.
8. Jacob was with his family when he wrestled with the Angel of God.
9. Service produces genuine humility and weakens the flesh.
10. True godliness is a gift of grace.
11. Commitment to God's Kingdom leads to a complicated lifestyle.
12. Fasting is mentioned more often in the New Testament than Baptism

SECTION C: MATCH THE FOLLOWING

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Prayer | Practice |
| 2. Addiction | Separation |
| 3. Partial fast | Focused thoughts |
| 4. Coerce | Acts of Disobedience |
| 5. Meditation | Disciplines |
| 6. Division | Communication with God. |
| 7. Sin | Force someone |
| 8. Gymnasium | Daniel |
| 9. Monasticism | undisciplined desire |