

Isaiah's Reality

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Isaiah's Reality

A MENTORING GUIDE FOR WORSHIP LEADERS AND TEAM
MEMBERS

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THIS 8-WEEK STUDY ADDRESSES:

- The heart of a worshipper
 - Practical preparation of worship
 - Development of God-given talents and acquired skills
 - Understanding the biblical perspective of worship
-

OVERVIEW OF ISAIAH'S REALITY

Introduction

- a. Introduction Video: Teachers Guide and Introduction - Amy Frazier
- b. Course Outline
- c. Identify Your Mission and Vision (Appendix, page 1)

Week 1: A Worshippers Response

Week 2: Setting the Stage

Week 3: Keeping Your Obedience

Week 4: Maintaining Your Spiritual Disciplines

Week 5: Continually Seeking God

Week 6: Building Your Set List and Understanding Posture

Week 7: Why Excellence is Important

Week 8: Know Yourself Before Leading Others

Week 9: Overview

All materials and included assessments are referenced.

WEEK ONE - A WORSHIPPER'S RESPONSE

Question: How do you define worship?

1st

Watch

Video: Episode 1 "Being Marked"

2nd

Group Study

Complete Week 1 Handout

3rd

Read & Discuss

Biblical Moment with Partners "Know Your Calling"

4th

Review

Review Handouts of "X-Factor" and "Know Yourself to Lead Yourself" (Appendix, pages 17 & 18)

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WEEK 1

Week 1 Handout

Please read the following passages with your team and have them fill in the blanks:

Isaiah 6

Isaiah - Chapter 6 (The time period is found in 2 Kings 15-21 and 2 Chronicles 26-33.)

Isaiah encountered a Holy God and Worshipped! The process of that experience is outlined in scripture of his response to each moment regarding his vision and communion with God through Isaiah 6.

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple." (Isaiah 6:1, ESV)

"And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His Glory!" (Isaiah 6:3, ESV)

1. Isaiah recognized God's position in verse 1.
2. Isaiah recognized God's attributes, God's holiness in verse 3.

"And I said, 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5, ESV)

3. Isaiah recognized his uncleanliness, his lack of reverence to a Holy God and his lowly position. He was undone in verse 5.

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“And He touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” (Isaiah 6:7, ESV)

4. Isaiah experienced God's grace and forgiveness. Righteousness given or imparted by our Holy God. This is a beautiful picture of our salvation and atonement for sins in verse 7.

“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me!’” (Isaiah 6:8, ESV)

“And He said, “Go and say to this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.” (Isaiah 6:9, ESV)

5. Isaiah experienced a command to go and to encourage others also in the pursuit of the Great Commission in verses 8 and 9.

“Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.” (Isaiah 6:10, ESV)

“And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump. (Isaiah 6:13, ESV)



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6. Isaiah understood the consequences of sin and the need for repentance as well as the overwhelming love of Christ for His people in verses 10 and 13.

Before Isaiah had his reality, Uzziah became proud and is noted in 2 Chronicles 26. (Right in the timeline of Isaiah 1 -5).

Isaiah started saying to those around him, “woe to you...” But in Isaiah 6, Isaiah is saying, ‘woe is me’. We see a shifting in Isaiah’s perspective of his sin.

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Biblical Moment Knowing Your Calling

Please have your team split in partners and read together and answer questions at the end:

Psalm 73:23 (ESV), "Nevertheless, I am continually with You; You hold my right hand."

Everyone had gone for the day; the sanctuary was quiet. You could literally hear a pin drop. He sat on the front row of chairs staring at the stage. As he sat there, he prayed that his leadership would continue and his heart would strive every day

to be closer, in word and deed, to his Savior. His mind focused on all the events that had developed that morning. He had many thoughts reflecting on how he fell short in love to others, his family and his efforts in ministry. He thanked the Lord for the privilege to serve, even when his heart and will wasn't always right where they needed to be. As he continued in prayer, tears of joy covered his face because he knew God had erased each one of his question marks, even as he sat there in His presence.

Asaph, worship leader, singer and poet, had many questions about the prosperity of the wicked and his current disappointments in ministry. However, Psalm 73:17, (ESV), says, ***"until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end."*** When Asaph entered into God's sanctuary, he entered a place in his heart where all his questions ended because they were explained by a mighty God. The word "sanctuary" in this passage isn't a building or a place.



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God resides in our hearts as believers, charging us to stay in truth and abide in Him.

Many scriptures reference our hearts. Matthew 15:18 (NIV), says, ***"But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them."*** Also, Luke 6:45 (NIV) says, ***"A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."*** Love these scriptures because it hits on the 'infamous heart problem.' Are we guarding what enters our minds? What our eyes see? Who and what we talk about? Be sure of this, our enemy is seeking for those to devour, distract and destroy. Be alert, and most importantly, be absorbed in the things that reflect God.

I am a thinker. I tend to analyze everything, and often go to the negative instantly. Since my mom passed, I've noticed just how frequently I see the glass half empty. I've been making more efforts to recognize and replace my thoughts and conversations and to be centered on the characteristics of Christ. For example, if an event in my life overwhelms me, I focus on a promise God completed in Scripture. It took time, but I recorded those promises I researched in God's Word in the Notes app on my iPhone. I'm now a 'frequent flyer' on this app. Slowly, I'm changing. Slowly, Christ is changing me.

Many of us live between Psalm 73:2-16. We never experience an awakening because we don't dwell in the presence of God, read His Word, live life with fellow believers, and thereby, understand who He is. When we enter His



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sanctuary, when our hearts gain an understanding of His greatness, it's there that a definitive moment marks us and creates a turning point in our lives.

Asaph goes on to say that even when he was at his worst, like a brutal beast before the Lord, God was, nevertheless, with him! Despite his inconsistencies, his questions and disrespect, his anger; God never left. Yes, God Never Left! What a beautiful picture of grace and unconditional love only God can give.

Psalm 73:23-25 also shows us a faithful God, always fulfilling His promises. I've been involved in numerous Bible studies through Bible Study Fellowship. It has revealed God's character, taught me many biblical principles, and how to apply these attributes in my life. Presently, we are studying the Promise Land. The Israelites struggled in their obedience. After time in the wilderness and a generational change, they entered the land God promised them. They saw God revealed in a promise kept after years of doubting. How interesting it would've been to be a 'fly on the wall', to have seen the reaction as they entered and witnessed this promise come to fruition! Though we forget our own answered prayers, we have detailed accounts in God's Word proving His loyalty.

As the psalm writer continues his thoughts, we see a new direction, a new heart, and a new attitude of gratefulness. This is what God does for His children. When we surrender our will to Him, openly confess in repentance and accept His guidance, ALL things become new in the eyes of a weary worshipper, even Asaph.



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Questions with Partner: What is your heart saying right now? Has there been a time where God has “marked” you by His presence or changed your outlook on something? If so, explain.

WEEK TWO - SETTING THE STAGE

Question: Are you praying for clean hands and a pure heart?

1st

Watch

Video: Episode 2 "Mimicking Others and Women in Leadership"

2nd

Group Study

Complete Week 2 Handout

3rd

Read & Discuss

Biblical Moment with Partners "Finding the Heart of a Worshipper"

4th

Review

Timeline of Old Testament Kings (Appendix, page 3)

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Week 2 Handout

Please read the following passages with your team and have them fill in the blanks:

2 Kings 15 (Azariah (Uzziah) Reigns in Judah)

2 Kings 16 (Ahaz Reigns in Judah)

Glancing back into the chapters of Isaiah 1 through 5 from last week.

The time period of Israel's history is told in 2 Kings 15 through 21 and 2 Chronicles 26 through 33. ("Enduring Word" commentary)

At that time, we see King Uzziah reigned for 52 years in Jerusalem. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away and the people still sacrificed and worshipped on the high places. During that time, other kings were serving in Israel who were not following the Lord. They were assassinating each other to gain a position of power. King Uzziah died of leprosy and his son, Jotham, became king. He too did right in the eyes of the Lord just as his father Uzziah had done but did not take down the high places of idol worship. When Jotham died, his son Ahaz, became king of Judah.

Fast forwarding to the next chapter, we see Ahaz is completely disobedient to the Lord, even sacrificing his own son in the fire. He was proud, irreverent and sought his own pleasures, even making an exact copy of the altar from Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria.



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2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NLT), which says, “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding on to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power. Avoid such men as these.

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Biblical Moment

Finding the Heart of a Worshipper

Please have your team split in partners and read together and answer questions at the end:

"...but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

Psalms 1:2-3 ESV

The phrase, "*trees planted along the riverbank*," continues to leap off the page as I read this passage.

When something leaps off the page, I have to research it. I learned some interesting things you might find interesting, as well. If trees are planted along a riverbank, it can be very complicated for them to thrive amid soil erosion, flooding, disposition and rechanneling. River water can carry chemicals and other harmful substances that can damage healthy plant life. In this passage, God describes, us (those who don't heed the advice of sinners or stand in alliance with them) as being trees planted along the riverbank, in tough places, challenging atmospheres, hurtful situations, and damaging environments, by bearing fruit every season!

Regardless the season we find ourselves, a drought, a crippling emotional flood, or an abundance of blessings, we are able to remain rooted while proclaiming the strength of our God! May our foundation always be in Him, bearing fruit



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despite any environment, because we are delighting and meditating in the Word and letting the Holy Spirit transform us.

Questions with your Partner: Can you remember a time when you had seasons of soil erosion, tough places and challenging atmospheres? How did you handle those situations? Was there a time you didn't stay rooted well? If so, explain.

WEEK THREE - KEEPING YOUR OBEDIENCE

***Question: Why do you think there is a lack of revival
in our churches?***

1st

Watch

Video: Episode 3 "Revival"

2nd

Group Study

Complete Week 3 Handout

3rd

Read & Discuss

Biblical Moment with Partners "Thirsty for the Living
God"

4th

Watch

Video of Poem "Hem of His Garment"

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Week 3 Handout

Please read the following passages with your team and have them fill in the blanks:

2 Kings 17 (Hoshea Reigns Over Israel)

This is a time when God's people suffered captivity yet again after being freed from Egypt. It seems the Israelites couldn't understand that God was the only One who could satisfy, not some foreign god among them. King Hoshea from Samaria became a vassal (subordinate) to King Shalmaneser of Assyria and was forced to pay tribute. After some time, Hoshea tried to undermine Shalmaneser and Shalmaneser found out about it, which contributed to Hoshea's fall and all of God's people.

For the Israelites were warned many times to turn from their evil ways but refused. They were exiled from Samaria to Assyria into captivity and foreigners possessed the land they once owned in Samaria. The foreigners didn't worship the Lord so God sent lions to devour some of them. When King Shalmaneser heard of this, he sent a high priest that was held captive to go to Samaria to teach the people how to worship God rightly.

Even though the foreigners were taught to worship the true God, they also bowed down to their idols.



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Biblical Moment

Thirsting for the Living God

Please have your team split in partners and read together and answer the questions at the end:

“O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.” Psalms 63:1 NKJV

All he could hear for miles were their feet hitting the sand and the wind's gentle breeze. He could smell the sweat on every person accompanying him as the heat was pressing in on every side. There were many moments to think and meditate during their stay. As he reflected, words drifted out from his innermost being, Psalm 63.

Many biblical commentators say that David wrote Psalm 63 during the record of I Samuel 24. If that is accurate, then his temporary breakthrough was just around the corner with Saul. David's time in the wilderness drew him closer to his Savior. He was mesmerized in knowing God. There was nothing else that would or could fill the gap and the longing he had for Him.

Verse one describes David's heart as seeking God (*the attempt to find or to have and achieve*) early in the day. He was also seeking God with an earnest heart (*with intense search, and seriousness*).



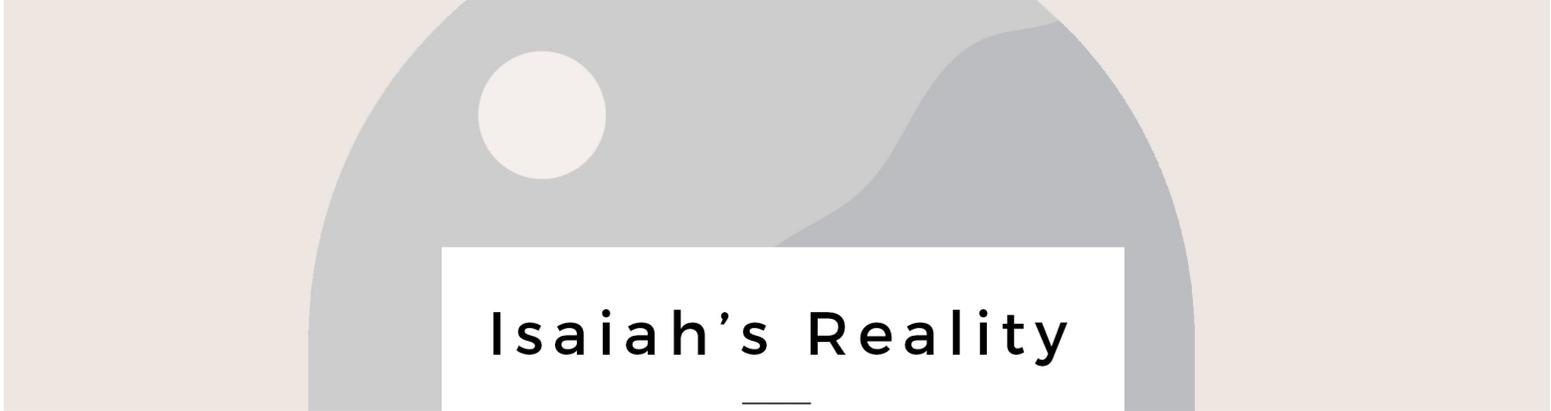
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David knew what the wilderness was like because he spent many days and nights there. In those moments, He heard God quite frequently. Being in a spiritual, mental or physical wilderness can usually lead us to a desperate heart. When we reach a place where survival is imperative to getting out and, in the getting out, we learn where to plant our feet, where to find rest and gain nourishment. In the wilderness, we have a longing to escape and the only way is through the power of the Holy Spirit living within us. Our stay time, however, depends on what we do with that power.

Many times, being in the wilderness can change us. It often takes longer for some to understand that being in the wilderness can transform us. Some of the survivor tools are never picked up, let alone known of their usage. This process of giving up and giving in to the surroundings can kill thousands rather than shaping many.

David knew his surroundings were dry (*bare and lacking adornment*). I love doing word searches, I know it sounds weird, but when I spend time researching a word or two, beautiful conversations with God happen and my meditation with Him is sweeter. The word “dry” can also be used in a theatrical setting as a slang word meaning forgetting one’s lines in a play or musical. In a spiritual sense, being “dry” is apparent to other believers. The “dry” believer isn’t always familiar with scripture or its context. Perhaps boundary lines are not as they should be in relationships. We can sense thought patterns that don’t align to God’s Word. A healthy spiritual perspective is betrayed by the words and actions they choose to pursue.



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Have we become dry? Have we forgotten the true love of our life? Have we blended in with our surroundings? We have all been through this. For myself, it sometimes seems I'm on a perpetual pendulum.

As we continue to look further in verse one, David saw the wilderness as weary (*tired, bored and sick of unending sameness*). When we are in love with Jesus, we never get sick or tired of Him. We want more and more of Him! Anything contrary to God will leave us lacking. Like David, we'll begin to see this sickness present in others as well who are trying to avoid the same condition.

Dying to self is difficult at best because we are at God's mercy. Even as I write this, I realize that dying to self also proves how much I trust in God's sovereignty, His inherent nature to love me and supreme power to act on my behalf. It's easy to say, "Yes God, I'm ready to die". But am I? Why spend 40 years getting out of the wilderness when there was only 11 miles in the journey? Let God lead you and instruct you.

Ask yourself the tough questions. Evaluate your present spiritual condition today and yearn for God only, rather than the comfort of the wilderness. This is hard to do! I have pondered these questions quite frequently lately. I remember someone telling me that if I wanted out of the wilderness, I needed to make the decision to leave...

Questions for your Partner: Have you ever been dry in your spiritual walk? If so, how did you know? Who was affected by it? Is knowing Jesus truly your number one desire?



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Poem

The Hem of His Garmet

One, two now three
This might be the death of me
For my disgrace is too great to bear
Why isn't my life fair?
I'm tired of being the target
If only I could touch the hem of His garment

For I truly felt His power
Cleanse me through like a shower
It gave me much freedom
As if I was a cupbearer to His Kingdom
For I gathered the grains of His harvest
Just by touching the hem of His garment

Oh, could it be
That He would be searching for me?
Exposed and seen like never before
To be accepted and fully restored!
For I wasn't rejected by my Artist
But rather noticed, when I touched the hem of His garment

WEEK FOUR - MAINTAINING YOUR SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Question: When was the last time you were in a season of fasting?

1st

Watch

Video: Episode 4 "Spiritual Disciplines"

2nd

Group Study

Complete Week 4 Handout

3rd

Read & Discuss

Biblical Moment with Partners "Taking Captive our Thoughts"

4th

Review

Spiritual Disciplines Handout (Appendix, page 19-51)

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Week 4 Handout

Please read the following passages with your team and have them fill in the blanks:

2 Kings 18 (Hezekiah Reigns Over Judah)

2 Kings 19 (Isaiah Reassures Hezekiah)

Hezekiah was king at this time when the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. So, Hezekiah sent word to the king of Assyria and said he had done wrong and asked him to withdrawal from them. The king demanded payment from Hezekiah, so Hezekiah took silver from the Lord's temple and gold from the king's palace and gave it to the king. Then the king of Assyria sent word to Hezekiah asking him what he was relying on.

The people were basically mocking Hezekiah and God. The people of Judah did not respond to the king but obeyed Hezekiah's orders where to say nothing. When Hezekiah heard this news, he sought godly counsel from Isaiah the prophet. He then was confronted by another threat and what did Hezekiah do? He took it to the Lord in prayer! Laying out the threatening letter before the Lord in His temple, Isaiah came with God's answer of prayer for Hezekiah.

An angel of the Lord killed 185,000 people in the camp of the Assyrians. The king went back to his home and there he was killed by his own sons who by one took his kingship.

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WEEK 4

Biblical Moment

Taking Captive Our Thoughts

Please have your team split in partners and read together and answer the questions at the end:

Psalm 73:17 (ESV) "until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end..."

It was a Wednesday night. My sister and dad were going to church in Joplin, Missouri, where they live, and asked me to join them. I was there visiting for a few weeks to spend time with dad after mom's passing. I was delighted to go, so we headed over to the church rather quickly.

We arrived late. The room was packed, but we were able to find seats in the very back. The pastor was teaching from Psalm 73, a psalm written by Asaph. Asaph was a Levite who some describe as a prophet. He was also a worship leader and skilled in singing and poetry. Many say that Asaph was not only very gifted, but a man who understood where his gifts came from. He used his music to praise the Lord amongst a needy world.

As we began to read Psalm 73, it sounded somewhat familiar to my heart, as if I were writing it myself! Asaph was in a stage of descent. He was questioning God about events and circumstances that overwhelmed him and it was shaking his faith to the core. He began to describe God's faithfulness to His people, to those who were pure in heart, yet Asaph was seeing the wicked prosper in his generation. The wicked were becoming richer and appeared to live a life of ease



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continuing in their unbelief. He proclaimed the wicked to be full of pride even as he was envious of their successes. He was honest and straightforward in his thinking and struggles with God.

Asaph describes in Psalm 73 how he was living his life in innocence for nothing, to no avail or advancement, but to continually have God's scrutiny on him twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, giving him more obstacles to overcome. Asaph uses the word "all" many times, which obviously isn't accurate. He wasn't living a pure life ALL in vain or for nothing, nor was he rebuked ALL day long by the Lord. He was understandably self-absorbed. When we focus inwardly, we tend to exaggerate the truth. Everything seems more of an issue to us, because it is about us. In Asaph's defense, he was overwhelmed. This is normal when questioning life, especially doubts that attack our faith.

This next passage, however, is where the focus changes for Asaph and where it changed for me as I read it. Psalm 73:15 (ESV) says, ***"If I had said, 'I will speak thus,' I would have betrayed the generation of your children."*** In Asaph's heart, he was questioning the circumstances around him, and whether God was going to address or change them. But before he reacted with the frustration and disappointment, he considered the negative consequences to that action. If he spoke against the Lord out of anger and bitterness, he could have betrayed the next generation by attempting to discredit an all-capable and all-powerful God. Other believers might have questioned their own circumstances as well, harming their spiritual growth and development. Even though Asaph still had his questions, he kept silent, speaking with no one but the Lord and Him alone.



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Asaph later explains in verse 17, that all the defending, all the striving and all his question marks came to an utter end as he entered the sanctuary. The Lord changed his perspective from “self” to “eternal.” Wow! Just one decision to arise changed the focus from self and stopped the downward spiral. This can only happen when we are in God’s presence.

The word “arise” doesn’t mean to stand up, put on armor and set out with force to fight the enemy. It’s the absolute opposite. Arise really means to kneel down in complete SURRENDER to the King of Kings, asking Him to change our perspective and to give us His power to do so, because there is nothing in us that can. It’s in reaching the end of ourselves that we find the true beginning in our Savior. Only when we realize there is a bigger picture in life, can we ever arise. This is becoming the child of God we need to be so He can reveal His greatness through us to a lost and dying world. That is life changing!

Some commentaries explain Psalm 73:17, by saying, Asaph realized a shift in his focus which allowed God to transform his heart. He understood life was not for him to prosper in his own accomplishments. Asaph rather understood that man’s existence on earth reflected a pilgrimage, here but a moment, desiring to follow Christ in the journey, making God known.

I find it funny that writers of the scripture did not know they were living to be noted. They didn’t realize their very lives were being recorded to encourage us today. I praise the Lord for giving us true life documentaries to demonstrate how to prosper in life when life doesn’t make sense.



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May we never define God by our circumstances but rather define our circumstances by our all sufficient, all powerful, all knowing, unquestionable Savior who is more than capable of conquering within us and around us for His Glory.

Questions with your Partner: Have you ever been frustrated by life's circumstances? Has it ever rocked your faith in God? Looking back, how would you have changed your responses?

WEEK FIVE - CONTINUALLY SEEKING GOD

Question: *Should there be a physical change, or an outward expression shown in you when you worship through song?*

1st

Watch

Video: Episode 5 "Worship Posture"

2nd

Personal Study

Complete Week 5 Handout

3rd

Read & Discuss

Biblical Moment with Partners "When We Wrestle with God"

4th

Watch

Video: Worship Leaders Explaining Posture

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WEEK 5

Week 5 Handout

Please read the following passages with your team and have them fill in the blanks:

2 Kings 20 (Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery)

2 Kings 21 (Manasseh Reigns in Judah)

Hezekiah became terminally ill. God told him, through prophet Isaiah, that he was going to die and to get his affairs in order. As Hezekiah wept bitterly and began to pray requesting long life to the Lord, Isaiah came back and said to Hezekiah that the Lord will grant your request for 15 more years.

When God granted Hezekiah another 15 years, his son Manasseh wasn't born yet. When Hezekiah died, his son took reign when he was 12 years of age. Manasseh did what was evil in the Lord's sight, including idol worship. He rebuilt the high places that his father, Hezekiah, took down and built altars in the Lord's temple. Because of his continued sin, God brought disaster on Jerusalem and Judah in great detail.

Manasseh died and his son Amon took his place. Amon did what was evil just like his father had done. Amon's servants killed him but the common people killed the servants who killed Amon. In the end, Amon's son, Josiah, took kingship.



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Biblical Moment

When We Wrestle with God

Please have your team split in partners and read together and answer the questions at the end:

Genesis 32:24 (ESV), "And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day."

The air must have been cold and brittle that night as random thoughts played in his mind continuously. He was worried about the outcome, worried about meeting his brother he had failed and hurt years ago. He must have replayed his mistakes over and over that day when he selfishly pursued his own benefit by stealing his brother's blessing. Soon he would discover how his actions shaped a hurting soul. Soon he would encounter what was owed him just beyond this brook.

Something in his heart prompted him to stay behind as his family continued the journey to safety. Perhaps he needed time to reflect, to cry out to God on behalf of himself and his family. Whatever caused him to remain behind also made him struggle deeper within. He fought all night for his rights, his way, his hurts and the discontentment he had held for so long. He decided to face his failures, pain and resentment that night by the brook. He fought and fought until daybreak, determined to be heard. There was a consequence of permanent impairment to his wrestling but also a name change and a blessing because he realized he couldn't live his life without God.



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No doubt, as Jacob left that place of struggle, the Mightiness of an All-Powerful God who always wins, who never lets up, but keeps fighting with us and for us, so we don't lose sight of His true character, was revealed to him. God always wants to show us His Power in a world that searches for its own.

Jacob was a man of struggle. His tainted ambitions revealed his character unbecoming to a child of God. Only God was able to meet him at his point of need. It's been said that real growth comes with great pain and suffering, because in these moments, our limitations are revealed, and God's Hand is seen.

Many of us struggle with the journey. Sometimes they're short getaways and others they're long extended stays. However long the road, we will eventually intersect to a crossroad. Proverbs 3:5-7 (NLT) says, ***"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil."***

In our struggle, like Jacob, our own logic tells us our "will" or "desire" to do what we've been called to do should look exactly like what we had planned. The crisis of belief comes when we release those ideas and plans by trusting God's infallible wisdom. This decision removes the disappointment of our struggle. It affords rest, even though the questions are still present, as we learn to struggle rightly.

I recently read a book by Lysa Terkeurst entitled, "It's Not Supposed to Be This Way," in which she describes a creative way to wrestle well. She writes, "And we must learn to live and love in the imperfect rhythms of our clunky humanity,



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trying to stay on beat within a symphony of divinity. We will get the words to the song wrong sometimes; we will go off-key and offbeat. We will go sharp, and we will fall flat. But if God's symphony continues to play loud and strong as the ultimate soundtrack of our lives, we will sense how to get back on track. We will feel how to get back in rhythm. We will hear how to get back in tune."

She then describes the disadvantages of lowering the volume when singing along with a well-produced track. We let our preferences take hold of the melody and the loudest voice fades, the One Voice we should be hearing above everything else. This causes us to miss the important key changes, which in turn spiral us out of control.

You may be like me. In my struggles, I long to see God's true character revealed even in my deficiency to recognize it.

May we always strive to listen to the loudest voice on the track, knowing we are a work in progress, even with our questions, even in our wrestling.

Questions with your Partner: Are you or have you ever wrestled with God about something? Who won? What did you learn?

WEEK SIX - BUILD YOUR SET LIST

Question: *How do you prepare yourself for Sunday morning?*

1st

Watch

Video: Episode 6 "Preparing Set Lists"

2nd

Group Study

Complete Week 6 Handout

3rd

Read

Words of Wisdom by a Mentor, Tom Poe

4th

Review

Complete Spiritual Gifts Test (Appendix, page 6-16)

Isaiah's Reality

WEEK 6

Week 6 Handout

Please read the following passages with your team and have them fill in the blanks:

Building your set list of songs

Based on Isaiah 6, we have a good formula to work from. This is just one way to organize a set list. Always be in prayer for how the Lord wants to guide you.

It's always important to remember a few things about the congregation you are leading when creating your set list.

- 1) Who is your audience? What are their ages? Is there a range of ages? If so, you will need a more diverse set list. Be sure to ask these questions.
- 2) What is their doctrine or beliefs? If not your denomination, find out their core values and beliefs. Be prepared and research their church website or organization.
- 3) Where are you leading worship? Do they have the resources for a full band or more acoustic set up? Who is running your sound? How is managing lyrics for the congregation? Do you need to hire someone to fulfill these roles?
- 4) How much is their budget? This will obviously determine who you take with you. You can be super creative here and use software sounds/tracks to compensate those absent players. Also, you can bring another vocalist for harmonies.

Isaiah's Reality

WEEK 6

- 5) What does your audience know? Does the church support a contemporary or traditional service? What style of music are they accustomed to? Make sure to consult with the person requesting you, of any special requests. Examples, certain song they would like, passage of scripture that will be discussed, etc.

Once the questions have been answered, you are ready to plan your set list. This is one way you can plan, but obviously, not the only way. Always listen to the Holy Spirit. Let Him guide you in all Truth.

Let's begin with our set list from the first song to the end.

- When looking at opening songs, choose songs that witness to the greatness of a Holy, Powerful, Loving God. Songs that focus on His attributes, His character and explain the authority of His position in a believer's heart and life.

Examples of this would be: "How Great Is Our God," "God of The Promise," "The Passion," "The Glory Is Yours," and "Glorious Day." Remember, opening songs really don't need to be upbeat. This is when we lean on the Holy Spirit to guide our song selection while adhering to this formula. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will guide you to deviate, then absolutely deviate!

- When preparing for mid-set songs, choose those which are prayers and confessions to God, recognizing our dependence on His



Isaiah's Reality

—
WEEK 6

Holiness. Prayer language songs that speak to our weakness and focus on our need for righteousness, are good here.

Examples of this would be: "Another In The Fire," "Nothing Else," "So Will I," "Come Thou Fount," "Tremble," "He Will Hold Me Fast," "Build My Life," and similar ones. I love prayer songs! As a writer, those easily come first. It's your heart language to God. Again, the Holy Spirit may direct you to another heart language, maybe for those in the room. Listen closely for God's voice. When you hear the right prayers being sung, it's a powerful worship time.

- You are possibly still in the middle of your set. Choose songs that speak into God's forgiveness and the rewards of a repentant heart, such as songs about God's grace, His Sovereignty and power to make all things new. Sometimes songs can overlap, and that's ok. It's really important to know beforehand what songs this group of people know.

Examples of this would be: "Great Are You Lord," "So Will I," "Mighty God (Hallelujah)," "Lord I Need You," "Call Upon the Lord," "Amazing Grace," "Wherever He Leads, I'll Go"

- You are almost to the finish line. Choose songs that command us to share our faith. Focus on evangelism and proclaim the message of God's renown and the freedom we have in Christ.

Examples of this would be: "Here I Am," "Living Hope," "Salvation Spring Up from the Ground," "Savior of the World," "Just as I Am"



Isaiah's Reality

—
WEEK 6

- Now you are truly at the finish line. Choose songs that cry out for continual repentance and outpouring of God's holiness. Songs that repeat the love and forgiveness of God, the believer's identity in Christ, and God's Power, add emphasis to our understanding.

Examples of this would be: "Who You Say I Am," "Great Are You Lord," "Run to The Father," "Holy Spirit," "Amazing Love," "King of my Heart," "Never Let Me Go," "All To Jesus I Surrender," "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Isaiah's Reality

WEEK 6

Week 6 Mentor Advice

Unity with others ONLY happens when we are in Unity with God. It starts first with us and our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Some helpful advice from a fellow Worship Minister in OKC, my friend, Tom Poe.

- 1) Your private worship is so important! It needs to be louder than your corporate worship. You must be in God's presence to take your congregation there.
- 2) Read good books, such as, "New Morning Mercies" by David Paul Trip. Also, "Every Man's Battle" by Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker. These are good for women as well.
- 3) Keep a prayer journal for your personal prayer life as well as your worship team. See answered prayers along your journey.
- 4) Meet with a mentor about issues you encounter in ministry. Be willing to mentor as God leads you.
- 5) Spend time every week praying in your prayer closet wherever that may be.
- 6) Do a reading plan that takes you through the Bible every year. Read and repeat.
- 7) Spend time doing physical exercise daily or at least weekly.
- 8) Invest money in a retirement account offered by your church.
- 9) Make time for your spouse and family.
- 10) Continue to date your spouse.
- 11) Serve in other ministries besides worship ministry.



Isaiah's Reality

—
WEEK 6

Find your community in your church and live life with other believers.

- 12) Attend conferences to have fun with your teams.
- 13) Meet at a house or just hang out to build relationships.
- 14) Provide songwriting within your worship team

WEEK SEVEN - WHY EXCELLENCE IS IMPORTANT

Question: *Are you developing a new skill or spending time crafting your current skill?*

1st

Watch

Video: Episode 7 "Keeping Skills Sharp"

2nd

Group Study

Complete Week 7 Handout

3rd

Read

Take 5 Voices Test (Appendix, page 4)

Isaiah's Reality

WEEK 7

Week 7 Handout

Please read the following passages with your team and have them fill in the blanks:

Below are passages of scripture that outline the importance of skill or being skilled.

Proverbs 22:29 (ESV) *"Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand in the presence of kings . He will not stand in the presence of unknown men."*

Psalms 33:3 (ESV) *"Sing to Him a new song, play skillfully with a shout of joy!"*

I Samuel 16:16 (ESV) *"Let our Lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand, and you will be well ."*

Exodus 35:35 (ESV) *"He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple and in scarlet material, and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs."*

Isaiah's Reality

WEEK 7

I Corinthians 12:5-6 (ESV) *“There are different ministries, but the same Lord. And there are different activities, but the same God who activates each gift in each person.”*

- 1) Proverbs 22:29 explains that if we want to excel in ministry or any good work, we must be skilled. If you lack in skill, you will lack in opportunities.
- 2) Psalm 33:3 tells us to sing new songs. How exciting! Because of this command, we must be skilled in playing and directing these new songs. We need to know the heartbeat of the church. This psalm also commands us to play skillfully.
- 3) I Samuel 16:16 is one of my favorite scriptures addressing excellence. God uses the talents He has given us for His Glory. We are ministers to His people. That means we are servants to His people.
- 4) Exodus 35:35 tells us that God is more than capable to fill us with skill and determination to complete a task. As scripture tells us, He equips those He calls and leads them according to His purpose. (Exodus 4:10-11, Deuteronomy 31:8)

WEEK EIGHT - KNOW YOURSELF BEFORE LEADING OTHERS

Question: *What is God telling you to do in your walk with Him?*

1st

Watch

Video: Overview with Bloopers

2nd

Watch

Video of Poem "The Wind"

3rd

Personal Study

Complete 16 Personality Test (Appendix, page 5)



Isaiah's Reality

—
WEEK 8

Week 8 Poem

The Wind....

Nothing was the same after the wind changed
It came out from nowhere and it left us all estranged.
Bent, broken and stretched;
It took us to a place so far-fetched

Is anything ever the same after playing this "life game"?
Many say no, but we learn as we grow.
We never win by fighting against the wind,
Rather, if we bend, we will truly win in the end
For when the East wind comes
We will surely become
More like our Father's daughters and sons
Keeping our branches strong,
For our day won't be long.

So, let the wind stretch, move and bend you,
As you become new in all the seasons
You're allowed to go through

Appendix

Mission Statement

Worship Team of First Southern Del City

We as a worship team at FSBC are looking for members who demonstrate the following and abide by what we know God is calling our team to be.

Mission Statement:

W.O.R.S.H.I.P.

“A Wonder for God to Open our hearts and Reflect His truth. We will Sing unto the Lord while Helping and Influencing others to worship and Praise Him.”

Worship Ministry’s Vision: “At First Southern we desire to know God and to make Him known within our worship team and our church by building up worshippers who will impact the world.”

Vision Passage: Psalm 63:1-5 (ESV)

“O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So, I have looked upon You in the sanctuary, beholding Your power and glory. Because Your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise You. So, I will bless You as long as I live; in Your Name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise You with joyful lips.”

Core Values: Grow, Reflect, Excellence, Honor and Community.

It is very important that our team grows in unity. We will think of others before ourselves and honor one another. We will continue to grow in our talents and gifts by bettering ourselves and understanding of our gifts; always willing to learn. We will reflect God’s love as we sing by smiling, portraying confidence in our presence on stage and being sincere in our worship to God. We will continue in “expressions of praise” by encouraging others to praise Him in our congregation. We will not be a

Appendix

distraction on stage but will know our parts in our worship sets and be ready, not using our team time as practice time. We will support our team members and vision to all members of our church and outside our church body. We will depend on the strength of our Lord to live and walk in obedience daily by reading God's Word and abiding in it. We will be seekers of reconciliation and repentance continually.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I would love to hear from you.
amy@firstsouthern.tv

Amy Frazier, Worship Leader
First Southern Baptist Church, Oklahoma City

Appendix

Old Testament Timeline for the kings of Judah and of Israel

Created By www.biblesanity.org

Kings of Judah	Bible	Good/Bad	Kings of Israel	Bible	All Bad								
Rehoboam	1 Kings 11-14	BAD	Jeroboam I	1 Kings 12-14	BAD	General Chronological Line-up of Prophets to Kings							
Abijam	1 Kings 14-15	BAD											
Asa	1 Kings 15	Good	Nadab	1 Kings 15	BAD								
			Baasha	1 Kings 15-16	BAD								
			Elah	1 Kings 16	BAD								
			Zimri	1 Kings 16	BAD								
			Omri	1 Kings 16	BAD								
			Ahab	1 Kings 16	BAD								
Jehoshaphat	1 Kings 22	Good	Ahaziah	1 Kings 22	BAD					Prophet	Est. Year BC From/To	Period	Address
Jehoram	2 Kings 8	BAD	Jehoram	2 Kings 1	BAD					Obadiah	848	841	Pre-Exile
Ahaziah	2 Kings 8-9	BAD				Joel	835	835	Pre-Exile	Judah			
Athaliah	2 Kings 11	BAD	Jehoahaz	2 Kings 9-10	BAD								
Joash	2 Kings 11-12	Good											
			Jehoash	2 Kings 13-14	BAD								
Amaziah	2 Kings 14	Good	Jeroboam II	2 Kings 14	BAD	Jonah	782	753	Pre-Exile	Assyria			
				Zechariah	2 Kings 14-15	BAD	Amos	760	753	Pre-Exile	Israel		
Azariah	2 Kings 15	Good	Shallum	2 Kings 15	BAD	Hosea	755	715	Pre-Exile	Israel			
Jotham	2 Kings 15	Good	Menahem	2 Kings 15	BAD	Isaiah	740	680	Pre-Exile	Judah			
			Pekahiah	2 Kings 15	BAD								
			Pekah	2 Kings 15	BAD								
Ahaz	2 Kings 16	BAD	Hoshea	2 Kings 15-17	BAD	Micah	735	700	Pre-Exile Judah , Israel in Exile	Judah			
Hezekiah	2 Kings 18-20	Good	Assyrian Captivity - No return										
Manasseh	2 Kings 21	BAD				Nahum	664	654	Pre-Exile Judah , Israel in Exile	Assyria			
Amon	2 Kings 21	BAD				Zephaniah	632	628	Pre-Exile Judah , Israel in Exile	Judah			
Josiah	2 Kings 21-23	Good				Jeremiah	627	580	Pre-Exile Judah , Israel in Exile	Judah			
Jehoahaz	2 Kings 23	BAD				Habakkuk	609	605	Pre-Exile Judah , Israel in Exile	Judah			
Jehoiakim	2 Kings 23	BAD											
Johoiachin	2 Kings 24	BAD											
Zedekiah	2 Kings 24-25	BAD											
Babylonian Captivity - 70 years						Daniel	605	535	Judah also in Exile	Judah			
Restored from Captivity						Ezekiel	593	571	Judah also in Exile	Judah			
						Haggai	520	520	Post-Exile	Returned Jews			
						Zechariah	520	480	Post-Exile	Returned Jews			
						Malachi	432	424	Post-Exile	Returned Jews			
Followed by 400 "Silent Years" between the OT & NT, then the life of Christ & Apostles, followed by the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and organized nation in 70 A.D.													

Appendix

5 VOICES



Nurturer

Champion of... People, relational harmony and values

43%
of the population

Present Oriented

Creative

Champion of... Future ideas, innovation and organizational integrity

9%
of the population

Future Oriented

Guardian

Champion of... Due diligence, resources, and efficient systems and processes

30%
of the population

Present Oriented

Connector

Champion of... Relational networks, collaboration, and effective communication

11%
of the population

Future Oriented

Pioneer

Champion of... Strategic vision, results-focused, and problem-solving

7%
of the population

Future Oriented



Appendix

Personality Test

<https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>



SPIRITUALGIFTSTEST.com

ADULT SPIRITUAL GIFTS TEST

Instructions:

Romans 12:3 says, "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned."

For the best results answer each statement below according to who you are, not who you would like to be or think you ought to be. How true are these statements of you? What has been your experience? What do others tell you? To what degree do these statements reflect how you live your life every day? Each question is very important, so try not to miss out on any. You will calculate your score at the end of the test.

Respond to each statement according to the following 1-5 point scale:

1 = Very Inaccurate

2 = Moderately Inaccurate

3 = Neither Accurate nor Inaccurate 4 =

Moderately Accurate

5 = Very Accurate

Begin:

1. _____ I am skilled at organizing people to accomplish many different tasks and objectives.
2. _____ I want to establish and equip new churches and/or ministries.
3. _____ I can easily determine whether a statement is true to Scripture or not.
4. _____ I can clearly and effectively communicate the Gospel to others.
5. _____ I seek to inspire others who are facing difficulties in their faith.

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6. _____ I live confidently knowing that God is intimately concerned and involved with my life.
7. _____ I live a simple lifestyle so that I can give a larger portion of my income to The Lord's work.
8. _____ People often ask me my perspective or interpretation of specific passages of Scripture.
9. _____ Others tend to follow my lead.
10. _____ I have great empathy for those who are facing difficult life challenges.
11. _____ I am very protective of the spiritual well-being of others.
12. _____ At times God has given me a message for an individual or group and compelled me to speak it to them.
13. _____ I enjoy doing everyday tasks that support the various ministries of the church.
14. _____ I spend large amounts of time studying the Word of God knowing that my effort will make a difference in someone's life.
15. _____ I often have helpful insights into situations that have not been made clear to others.
16. _____ I can clearly see what needs to be done and implement a plan to make it happen.
17. _____ Cultural boundaries do not hinder my work to expand the kingdom of God.
18. _____ I pay attention to what people say and how they say it, particularly those who teach.
19. _____ I feel a burden of compassion for those who are lost without Jesus.

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20. _____ When people are discouraged, I remind them of the power and promises of God found in Scripture.
21. _____ I trust God completely to answer my prayers according to His perfect will.
22. _____ I consistently and joyfully give of my income - often more than a tithe.
23. _____ The Spirit has brought to my mind information that I have been able to use to minister to others effectively.
24. _____ I have a vision for my church or ministry and I know what needs to be done to accomplish it.
25. _____ I see the sick or needy as those who most need the love and comfort that Jesus offers.
26. _____ I love spending time nurturing and guiding others in their faith.
27. _____ There have been occasions that I have received a revelation from the Lord and spoken it to the church.
28. _____ I readily volunteer to help in church when I know it will fill a practical need.
29. _____ I effectively communicate the Bible in ways that influence and motivate others to learn more.
30. _____ I have learned through my experiences in life and can often guide others who are facing similar difficulties or challenges that I have had.
31. _____ I am good at delegating responsibility and trust others to "do their jobs."
32. _____ I can minister to people in different cultures effectively.

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33. _____ I am a quick and accurate judge of character.
34. _____ I seek ways to build relationships with non-Christians so that The Lord will use me to share the Gospel with them.
35. _____ I am compelled to challenge and inspire growth in those whose faith is stagnant.
36. _____ I know God will come through even if I don't see any possible solution to my problem.
37. _____ When I give it brings me great joy knowing that more people will be served and touched with the Gospel.
38. _____ I study the Bible regularly in order to share truth with others in and outside the church.
39. _____ I am not afraid to take risks to advance the kingdom of God through my church or ministry.
40. _____ I care deeply about those who are hurting and want to help them navigate through their tough times.
41. _____ I desire to help the wounded and lost find healing and shelter in Jesus Christ.
42. _____ The Lord has spontaneously given me information about an individual that I felt obligated to confront them with in order to restore them to God.
43. _____ I like to serve the Lord "behind the scenes."
44. _____ I am able to explain deep theological truths in ways that even a child can understand them.

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45. _____ I often help people by offering Scriptural lessons and principles as solutions to life's various challenges.
46. _____ I like to create ways to make things run efficiently in my life and work.
47. _____ God has given me influence over several different ministries and/or churches.
48. _____ I can readily sense the enemy or a demonic influence in a situation.
49. _____ I love to memorize Scripture to share with those who don't know Jesus as their Savior.
50. _____ I am not afraid to challenge someone if I know it will foster spiritual growth and boldness in their life.
51. _____ I will boldly move forward in a situation if I sense God's calling and provision to do so.
52. _____ I believe I have been blessed financially so that I may be a blessing to the church and her mission to reach the lost and help the poor.
53. _____ I retain most of what I learn and can recall it quickly when the need arises.
54. _____ I can readily identify leaders and love to help them grow in their gifts and abilities.
55. _____ I love to see people through the storms of life and show them the compassion that Jesus did.
56. _____ I care about the church and do all I can to see it grow and be built up in love.
57. _____ God has put in my mind urgent matters that were otherwise unknown that I have announced to the church.

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58. _____ I set aside time in my week to help those in need in my church and community.
59. _____ I enjoy communicating the important details of Scripture to others.
60. _____ I can see where a group or individual's decisions and actions will lead them, and I offer to guide them in the right direction.
61. _____ Details matter to me and I pay special attention to make sure things are done correctly.
62. _____ I am qualified and able to establish and lead a new church or ministry.
63. _____ I can often tell if someone is being deceitful or dishonest before it becomes apparent to others.
64. _____ I love to share what Christ has done in my life and how He has changed me.
65. _____ Others have told me that my words have compelled them to step out and grow in their faith.
66. _____ Even when times are tough, I trust God completely to comfort me and provide for my needs.
67. _____ Stewardship is an important discipline in my daily walk with Christ.
68. _____ I like to share the truth and insights God has shown me with others.
69. _____ People often look to me to lead a group or project.
70. _____ I have been known to "care too much" and help others in their time of need.
71. _____ I long to see each person in the church fulfilling the Great Commission.

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72. _____ I have suddenly received a message from God specific to our congregation and shared it for the edification of the entire church.
73. _____ If I recognize a need in the church I simply fill it without being asked.
74. _____ Others have shared that my teaching is helpful and easy to understand.
75. _____ It is humbling to me when someone asks for my guidance, so I take great care to help them.
76. _____ I manage my time wisely.
77. _____ I have a strong desire to raise up leaders and pastors who will equip the church.
78. _____ I have a strong "radar" for false teaching.
79. _____ I am not afraid to plead with people to believe that Christ died for their sin and to confess Him as Lord and Savior.
80. _____ When others are faced with difficult situations, I boldly tell them of the faithfulness of God towards His people.
81. _____ I don't often worry because of my confidence in God's ability and willingness to see me through every circumstance.
82. _____ I seek ways to help others financially and share the love of Christ with them.
83. _____ I am able to relate the truth and realities of the Gospel to all aspects of life.
84. _____ I am not afraid to step up and take charge in a crisis situation.
85. _____ I seek out those who are deemed "lost causes" and aid them in restoring their lives.

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86. _____ The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundation of my life and ministry.
87. _____ Others have recognized that often God has spoken clearly and directly to them through a message I have shared.
88. _____ I believe there is eternal significance in performing mundane tasks and service.
89. _____ I love discovering how the Gospel is woven throughout the entire Bible as I increasingly spend time in study.
90. _____ I can easily see which plan or strategy is the best one in a given circumstance.
91. _____ My desk or workspace is set up so I can access whatever I need quickly.
92. _____ Other pastors and leaders often come to me for help and guidance.
93. _____ Others have told me that my perceptions or judgments of people, situations, or statements have proved trustworthy.
94. _____ Most of my conversations with non-Christians lead to me speaking about my faith in Jesus.
95. _____ If a person or a group is stumbling or deviating from the life God has intended for them, I will speak up and press them to remember and return to joyful life in Christ.
96. _____ I consistently encourage others to trust God in everything.
97. _____ I give generously and without pretense to the ministry of God's people.
98. _____ I can usually recall a Scripture verse or passage that applies to a given situation.

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99. _____ I am more "visionary" than detail oriented. I concentrate more on the big picture than the day-to-day particulars.

100. _____ Others have showed appreciation that I have comforted and ministered to them at a low point in their lives.

101. _____ I build others up to be more like Jesus.

102. _____ I can recall times the Lord gave a specific message to His church through me.

103. _____ I find joy in being a helper and assisting others in their ministries.

104. _____ Often the Holy Spirit gives me just the right words to say when I am teaching an individual or group.

105. _____ I can often see through the confusion or conflict in a situation and provide a practical and Scriptural solution to it.

Appendix

Scoring Instructions:

Write your score (from 1-5) for each question in the box with that question number. Add up each column and write your total scores above the corresponding Gift Code. Once you have done this you can check the key below to see what spiritual gift each Gift Code represents. **The highest score for any gift is 35.** The higher the score, the stronger you are in that spiritual gift based on your responses. A score of **29 or higher** in any gift is a strong indicator of the presence of that gift in your life. Scores between **22 and 28** could indicate a spiritual gift in the “seedling” stage, particularly if one or more of your top three scores are in this range.

Scoring Matrix:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	
Total Scores															
Gift Codes	Ad	Ap	Di	Ev	Ex	Fa	Gi	Kn	Le	Me	Pa	Pr	Se	Te	Wi

Appendix

Gift Codes:

Ad = Administration

Ap = Apostleship

Di = Discernment

Ev = Evangelism

Ex = Exhortation

Fa = Faith

Gi = Giving

Kn = Knowledge

Le = Leadership

Me = Mercy

Pa = Pastor/Shepherd

Pr = Prophecy

Se =
Serving/Ministering

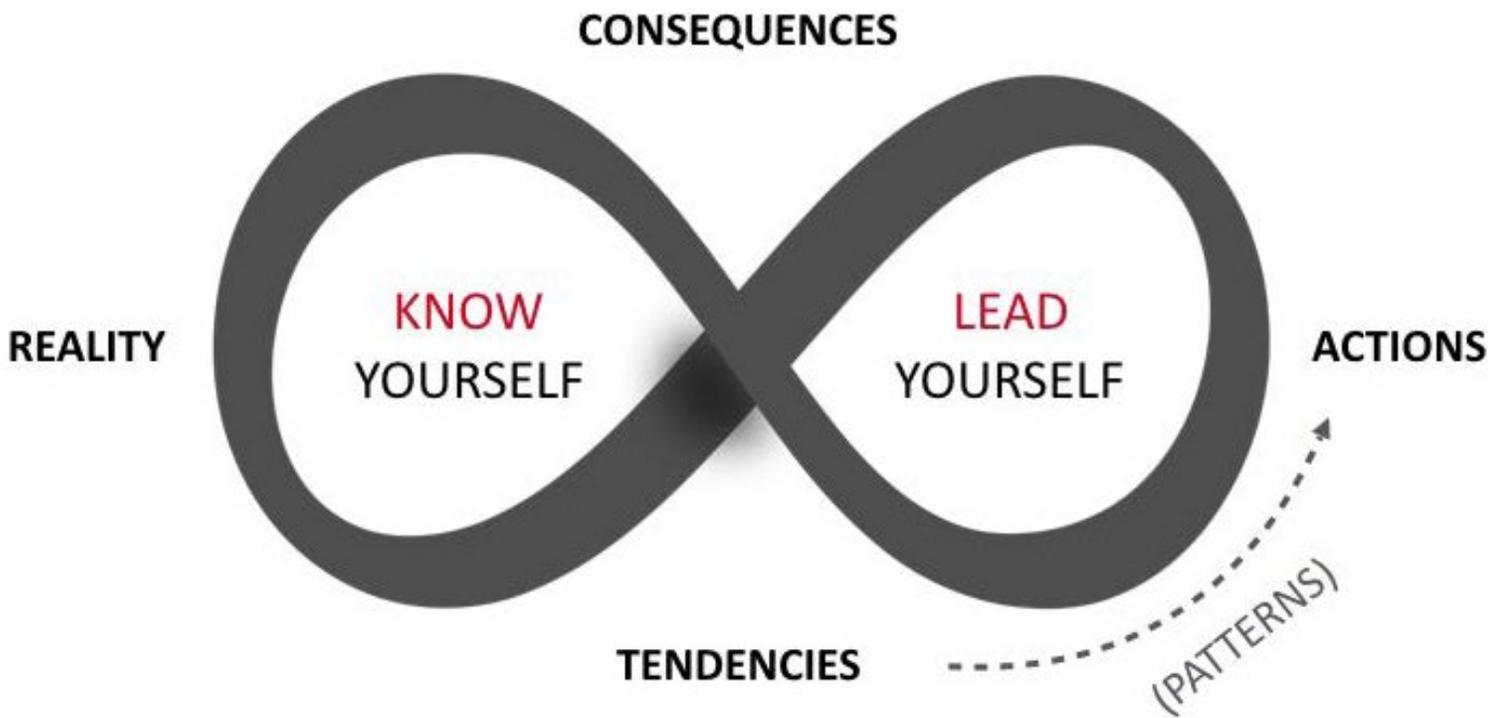
Te = Teaching

Wi = Wisdom

X-FACTOR



KNOW YOURSELF TO LEAD YOURSELF



Spiritual Disciplines

*“A discipline is an activity within our power
that enables us to accomplish
what we cannot do
by direct effort.”*

- Dallas Willard

There are many different spiritual disciplines that can help us to grow and mature in Christ. The following pages describe many, but not all of the spiritual disciplines that are referred to in Scripture and that have been practiced throughout church history. Dr. Michael Bischof, from Souleader Resources, explains the following twenty disciplines. These explanations are used by permission. Explore the use of these disciplines to help you grow in the grace of God. Spiritual discovery awaits you!

Disciplines of Engagement

Worship
Celebration
Confession
Guidance
Fellowship
Journaling
Meditation
Mourning
Prayer
Service
Study

Disciplines of Abstinence

Solitude
Silence
Fasting
Secrecy
Simplicity
Frugality
Chastity
Sacrifice
Submission

Appendix

Worship

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.” – John 4:23

If the focus of silence is *listening to God*, the focus of worship is *experiencing God*. Worship starts with who God is, not music, not our emotions, not our feelings. Worship is about giving God the worth that he is due. God is so approachable, and worship prompts us to approach him with regularity. Worship puts God in his rightful place as the worshipper reflects on who God is and all he has done. It might be somewhat difficult to think of worship as a discipline, since the first thing that usually comes to mind when people think of worship is the singing that takes place during a church service. This perception can cause problems, though, for several reasons. First, worship is much more than just singing. Worship can include prayer, silence, reading, dancing, clapping, and many other expressions of praise and adoration. Worship is also a cleansing experience. So it is important to move beyond any stereotypes you might have about worship. Worship has also become one of the most hotly debated topics in many churches because of the tensions between worship styles. So it is also important to move beyond a perception of worship as a reflection of generational styles or cultural preferences.

Richard Foster says,

To worship is to experience reality, to touch Life. It is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community . . .

Worship is human response to divine initiative. . . Worship is our responding to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father

. . . It is kindled within us only when the Spirit of God touches our human spirit.¹

In reality, people are used to worshipping many kinds of things such as sunsets, art, music, celebrities, athletes, etc. So as you spend time in the discipline of worship, seek to move beyond worship as you have ever known it before, and make sure that God is the object of your worship.

- One of the most important prerequisites to effective worship is getting rid of distractions. So whatever it is that might be a distraction to you, make sure you identify it and do whatever it takes to eliminate it.
- If you like to sing, plan a time to sit in the presence of God singing to him your favorite songs of praise and worship.

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- If singing is not something you prefer, you might try listening to recorded praise and worship music. As you begin to learn the words of the songs, you find them very easy to adapt as prayers to God as part of your personal worship.
- It is good to learn to worship without music and singing. There are countless ways you can do this. You might enjoy reciting the names of God, reading Scripture out loud, creating a dance, or even worshipping in silence. The important thing is to have a heart focused on God.
- Many people enjoy worshipping God in nature. If you can take a walk in the forest or mountains, carefully observe all that God has created and spend time worshipping him for each one.
- It is often helpful to include as many of the senses as possible in worship. Think of ways you can worship using sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.
- As you experiment with worship, feel free to use your imagination in new and creative ways. Allow your imagination to draw you into the presence of God.
- If you are not familiar with liturgical worship, you might find it refreshing and enlightening to explore the liturgy, recite various creeds, explore the Book of Common Prayer, etc.
- Visit a church that is outside of your worship style preference and enjoy the different flavor.

¹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 138.

Appendix

Celebration

“A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God.” – Ecclesiastes 2:24

According to Dallas Willard, celebration is one of the most important disciplines of engagement, yet it is one of the most overlooked and misunderstood. He says, “We engage in celebration when we enjoy ourselves, our life, our world, *in conjunction with* our faith and confidence in God’s greatness, beauty, and goodness. We concentrate on *our* life and world as God’s work and as God’s gift to us.”ⁱ

Celebration is often thought of in terms of worship, yet celebration differs from worship. In worship, we ascribe greatness and glory to God. In celebration, we are thankful to God and calling to mind the things he has done for us, our people, our family, etc. In a sense celebration is the completion of worship. It is remembering what God has done, because it is so easy for us to forget.

- Spend some time reading the following passages, and in your own words describe how you see celebration:

Exodus 15:20

Judges 5

2 Samuel 6:12-16

John 2

Deuteronomy 14:22-29

Ecclesiastes 3:12-23; 5:18-20

- One way to exercise the discipline of celebration is with your family. Determine a place that your family really enjoys and spend some time there. Reflect on what God is doing in each of your lives as well as in your family. You might need to schedule a celebration event such as this. Consider having a time of celebration as part of a family tradition or holiday gathering.

Appendix

- Since we are at the half way point of *Journeying in Community*, it would be fun to plan a party for those in your community as well as their families. As you plan this event, plan it in such a way that you will be able to exercise the discipline of celebration.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 179. © 2005 Michael Bischof, Souleader Resources. All rights reserved. Copies may be made for personal or group use only.

Appendix

Confession

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” – James 5:16

Confession is the practice of letting other safe and trusted people know our deepest weaknesses and failures. One of the best ways to receive nurture and grace from others is through the practice of confession. There is also no more effective way to deal with sin in our lives. Over the centuries, confession somehow became a practice between an individual and God. But in the Bible, confession is both a practice between an individual and God (1 John 1:9) and an individual and other supportive believers (James 5:16 is one example).

A huge part of confession is forgiveness. Richard Foster has said, “It is God who does the forgiving, but often He chooses human beings as the channel of His forgiving grace.”ⁱ It is important to understand confession as a process. Since forgiveness is a process and almost always takes a significant amount of time, the practice of confession becomes an integral part of this process. There is nothing more healing for sin than bringing it into the light. The best way to bring sin into the light is through confession.

It is also very important to be sure that confession is practiced in an atmosphere of safety and grace. If confession is done with people who are judgmental, critical, or attempt to “fix” you as a person, it will only exacerbate the problem. So prior to spending time in confession, be sure the other people involved are as committed to giving grace, love, and forgiveness as you are.

- Read and meditate on 1 John 1:9. Choose an area of sin that you need to tell God about. As you share it with him, picture God’s face full of compassion and love. Allow yourself to feel and experience God’s grace and forgiveness of this area.
- Choose a friend who knows you better than anyone else. If you have never discussed confession together, spend some time exploring how the two of you might benefit from sharing the deepest parts of yourself. If you have mutual agreement about sharing issues of struggle and sin, share an area of your life that has been in the darkness and needs to be brought into the light. Allow yourself to feel your friend’s acceptance and grace. Spend some time praying for each other with what you have shared.

Appendix

- If you are part of a small group that is very safe, consider how you might practice confession in the context of community. If you are not part of a small group, consider sharing with your Journey Community an area of your life that would benefit from the practice of confession.

ⁱ Richard J. Foster, *Richard J. Foster's Study Guide For Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1983), 59.

Appendix

Guidance

“One reason why we fail to hear God speak is that we are not attentive. We suffer from what might be called ‘spiritual mindlessness.’” – John Ortberg

In our process of *Journeying in Community* we have strongly emphasized the importance of how to listen to God and live our lives in response to God’s leading. The discipline of guidance helps us to learn that guidance and direction for our lives comes both in individual and in corporate ways.

The discipline of guidance teaches us that prayer and interaction with God is as much about listening to God as it is about speaking to God. The disciplines of solitude, silence, prayer, and meditation all prepare us for listening to God. The discipline of guidance helps us to develop the spiritual ears and eyes that are necessary for hearing and seeing God’s direction for our lives.

An important aspect of the discipline of guidance is learning to listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit through what others in the body of Christ are saying and doing. Richard Foster says, “God does guide the individual richly and profoundly, but He also guides groups of people and can instruct the individual through the group experience. Perhaps our preoccupation with private guidance is the product of our Western individualism. The people of God have not always been so.”ⁱ

It is easy to stray in this discipline so that it becomes a “fleece” for determining the will of God. But it is important to understand that it has more to do with character than tasks. John Ortberg says, “God’s purpose in guidance is not to get us to perform the right actions. His purpose is to help us become the right kind of people.”ⁱⁱ

- Make the conscious effort as you interact with people this week to listen for promptings from the Holy Spirit. Don’t just listen to what the people are saying, but also try to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying. This will help you to be with people in the same way that Jesus was with people.
- An excellent way to practice the discipline of guidance is through the influence of a spiritual director. If you do not already have someone who functions as a spiritual director in your life, consider finding one as soon as possible.

Appendix

- Spend some time intentionally reviewing your times of prayer. Reflect on what you find yourself saying, what you sense God communicating, what you feel, what is easy, what is difficult, etc. Learning to be more reflective in the area of prayer will assist you in the area of guidance.

ⁱ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 151.

ⁱⁱ John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 143.

Appendix

Fellowship

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” – Acts 2:42

While fellowship is a very common word among Christians, the intentional practice of fellowship as a discipline is not so common. The discipline of fellowship involves purposefully engaging in community building activities with other believers. Many of these activities are also other disciplines, such as worship, study, prayer, celebration, and service.

While fellowship can be experienced as part of a large group, the inner dynamics of fellowship are best experienced when the group is small enough for you to be known by everyone else in the group. Therefore, involvement in a small group, cell group, bible study, or something like this is very instrumental to the practice of fellowship.

The practice of your spiritual gift(s) is also important to the realization of true fellowship. Dallas Willard says:

The diverse gifts or graces of the Spirit – all of which are needed in some measure by each person from time to time – are distributed among the separate members of the body of Christ, the church. The unity of the body rightly functioning is thus guaranteed by the people reciprocating in needs and ministries. There are no “oughts” or “shoulds” or “won’t-you-pleases” about this. It is just a matter of how things actually work in the new life.ⁱ

- If you are not already part of a small group of believers who meet consistently for the purpose of fellowship, find a group that you can join. Share with this group your desire to be intentional about fellowship.
- Spend some time meditating on the list of “one another” verses from this module. Choose one or two that you would like to practice more regularly, and spend some time doing it in the context of fellowship.

Appendix

- Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. Consider a new way in which you might use your spiritual gift that will enhance your experience of fellowship.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 187.

Appendix

Journaling

Spiritual journaling grows out of reflection, contemplation, and prayer. It is an open expression through writing or some art form of one's insights and observations about God, oneself, and what is transpiring in one's relationship with Jesus Christ.

There are many kinds of journaling:¹

- recording reflections on scripture (which is best integrated with other forms of journaling), nature, oneself and others;
- writing one's thoughts, feelings, motivations and dreams honestly to God knowing that grace accepts all;
- writing words of adoration, thanks, confession, or petition;
- recording what God seems to be saying to the journaler which must be tested by biblical revelation, time, and the counsel of mature, discerning believers;
- writing narrative;
- recording evidences of God's activity in personal or corporate experience;
- recording one's wrestling with God or spiritual issues.

How does one journal? It is often helpful to read the journals of others. One place you can start is to read the sample journal reflections written after extended times with God (EPCs) found at the end of Appendix A. It might also be helpful to interact with others who journal. Feel free to experiment and find your own style. Even if you do not like writing, try some form of journaling realizing that it may never be a significant part of your spiritual life.

- Some people never journal because they don't have a place to write their thoughts. You might benefit from going to the store and buying a small spiral bound pad of paper that you can use as your journal.
- It is helpful to start small. At the conclusion of a time with God, spend a few minutes jotting down thoughts and feelings that come to mind.
- Whenever you come across a quote, verse, phrase, or idea that had an impact on your life, write it down in your journal. In this way it can become a treasure chest of your spiritual growth.

¹ Information on Journaling adapted from Paul Jensen, "Spiritual Journaling," unpublished paper in Course Syllabus *Spirituality and Discipleship in College and Young Adult Settings*, Fuller Theological Seminary, Fall 1997.

Appendix

Meditation

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” – Joshua 1:8

Meditation is a wonderful place to start for a person who desires to receive nurture from God. It is intentional vertical connection that is both spiritually nurturing and emotionally healing. Richard Foster says, “That is why meditation is so threatening to us. It boldly calls us to enter into the living presence of God for ourselves. It tells us that God is speaking in the continuous present and wants to address us.”ⁱ

While meditation can always be done in a place of solitude, it is important to find places to integrate it into our normal daily routine as well. Here it is important to find a place that is quiet and free from interruption. It might also be helpful to have a consistent place versus trying to find a new place each time.

It is important to understand the difference between meditation and study. Thomas Merton has defined this well: “By study we seek the truth in books or in some other source outside our own minds. In meditation we strive to absorb what we have already taken in.”ⁱⁱ

- Select a portion of Scripture. You might find it helpful to use a translation or paraphrase that you are not as familiar with so that the words are fresh. Try repeating it several times. Each time you repeat it, emphasize a different part of it. You might consider writing it on an index card and placing it somewhere to remind you over the next week.
- A similar exercise to the one above is praying the Scripture. Choose a passage that is simple and practical. Read the passage very slowly, only a portion at a time. Do not focus on how much you read, but the way you are reading. One author has described this as the difference between a bee that merely skims the surface of a flower and one that penetrates into the depths of the flower. As the Scripture begins to sink in to your soul, spend time interacting with God about what the passage is saying to your life.

Appendix

- Think about some of the new principles you have recently taken in. Choose a phrase or a concept which you desire to become a deeper part of you life. Sitting in quiet, focus on the this phrase or concept. Consider taking this concept with you into your day.
- Go somewhere to be in nature. Spend at least 30 minutes contemplating all that is around you. As you take this in, thank God for his creation. Allow the beautiful surroundings to nurture your soul.
- One very helpful exercise suggested by Richard Foster is called “palms down, palms up.”ⁱⁱⁱ You begin by placing your palms down as a symbolic indication of your desire to turn over any concerns you may have to God. Pray about your concerns as you do this. Next, turn your palms up as a symbol of your desire to receive from the Lord. As you meditate in this posture, pray in a way as if receiving directly from the Lord. There is something very helpful about using our hands to illustrate what is going on in our heart.

ⁱ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 19.

ⁱⁱ Thomas Merton, *Spiritual Direction and Prayer* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1960), 53.

ⁱⁱⁱ Foster, 24.

Appendix

Mourning

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. – Matthew 5:4

It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting . . . Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart. – Ecclesiastes 7:2-3

Mourning is the process of feeling and expressing deep grief or sorrow. Mourning is an ideal practice for the issues in this module since it is a process of healing and letting go. The concept of mourning is found over a hundred times in the Bible.

In a psychological sense, mourning is closely associated with the process of grieving. An understanding of the grief process can be helpful to the one who desires to practice mourning as a discipline during a time of loss or intense pain. The normal stages of the grief process are:

1. shock and denial
2. anger (anger turned outward)
3. depression (anger turned inward)
4. bargaining
5. sadness
6. resolution, acceptance, and forgiveness

Since grief or mourning is a highly individualized process, it is important to understand that people experience it very differently. The stages listed above are only general categories of the way people generally process grief.

- Designate a period of time to spend in mourning. Some people choose a day or two. Some choose a week or more. The goal is to allow yourself to be sad and to grieve over issues of sin and loss in your life. You might want to choose an issue in your life that was addressed in the module. During this time, avoid feeling pressured by others to be happy. Allow yourself to remain in a process of mourning as long as you need to.

Appendix

- If you have difficulty crying, allow yourself to watch a movie or read a story which you know is sad and will prompt these deep seated emotions in your soul. As you watch or read, allow yourself to feel the sadness. If this brings you to the point of tears, allow yourself to weep as long and as hard as you need to.

Appendix

Prayer

“pray continually.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:17

It is not difficult to view prayer as an integral part of our spiritual life. It might be hard to learn prayer as a spiritual discipline. It is slightly different than the other disciplines because it almost always must involve other disciplines and spiritual activities if it is to be effective in our lives.

Dallas Willard says:

But prayer will not be established in our lives as it must be for us to flourish, unless we are practicing other disciplines such as solitude and fasting. In many Protestant churches prayer and Bible study are held up as the activities that will make us spiritually rich. But very few people actually succeed in attaining spiritual richness through them and indeed often find them to be intolerably burdensome.¹

Of all the disciplines, prayer is probably the one we feel most comfortable with. We are just not that good at it. Therefore, the goal of practicing prayer as a discipline is to explore it in fresh ways. For example, many have only experienced prayer as talking to God. One of the most joyful revelations is to experience the reality that prayer is just as much *listening to God*.

If this kind of listening prayer is new to you, you might be concerned with how to know what you are hearing. Is it God’s voice? My voice? Satan’s voice? There are several guidelines as you listen to assist you in this area. First, it is important to ask if what you are hearing is in harmony with Scripture. Second, is it persistent. In other words, does the prompting keep coming back. Third, if you are still having difficulty determining, seek the counsel of other wise and mature Christians.

A problem in prayer is that we have a tendency to view it merely as something that we do, rather than someone we are with. Prayer is relational. It is just as relational as walking and talking with a friend.

- As you begin to practice prayer as a spiritual discipline, try to pray in new and different ways. For example, if you always pray silently, attempt to pray out loud. If you always pray with your eyes closed and head bowed, pray with your eyes open and face raised to God. If you pray with your hands folded, consider praying with your hands open or raised.

Appendix

- Taking prayer walks can be a wonderfully refreshing exercise. If you walk your neighborhood, pray for the people whose homes you pass. If you walk during your work day, consider praying for your co-workers or family. If you walk in a public place, pray for the salvation of those around you. The ideas are only as endless as your creativity allows them to be.
- Consider praying passages of Scripture. Many are familiar with praying the Lord's prayer. It is especially easy to pray the Psalms. Where possible, make these prayers personal by exchanging your name or personal pronouns.
- Find a place that inspires prayer within your heart. Many neighborhoods have a church building that is open for times of prayer.
- You might find it helpful to utilize Richard Foster's three directions of prayer: upward, inward, and outward.

¹ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 186.

Appendix

Service

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”
– Colossians 3:23-24

Service is possibly one of the most familiar of all the disciplines. Most people at some point in their lives have had the opportunity of serving in some way. Fewer have had the experience of service as a discipline. Service as a discipline is the intentional use of our time, abilities, or resources for the good of others. Service may take place in a local church setting, volunteering for a charitable organization, or spontaneously in individual settings. The importance is not derived from the context, but the purpose and transformation that takes place in the heart of the one serving.

Service is a discipline that directly targets many attitudes that are present in our culture today, such as entitlement and pride. Today it is very common to find an expectation of “being served” as opposed to “serving.” Dallas Willard points out that service is an excellent way to “train myself away from arrogance, possessiveness, envy, resentment, or covetousness.”ⁱ In other words, many hard to reach areas of sin are confronted and transformed by this simple discipline.

- Many opportunities for service exist right in one’s neighborhood. Consider serving your neighbor by an act of kindness such as mowing his lawn, washing her car, or raking up leaves.
- Be available to assist others with needs that arise. An example of this would be helping someone move.
- If you are not currently involved in a ministry at your church, talk with your pastor about areas where you might be able to serve on a regular basis.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 182.

Appendix

Study

“... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” – Romans 12:2

Dallas Willard says, “As solitude is the primary discipline of abstinence for the early part of our spiritual life, so study is the primary discipline of engagement.”ⁱ Therefore, it is very important that we understand the practice of this discipline in our lives. It is different than meditation. Meditation is more devotional in nature whereas study is more analytical. Study is the primary way we engage ourselves with the written and spoken Word of God. Study can also focus on the reading of good books. An often neglected area of study involves the observation of things and people. Study can also be enhanced by listening to gifted teachers who help us to understand the Bible in deep and refreshing ways, and challenge us to deeper personal levels of study.

While some might be turned off by the idea of study being a spiritual discipline, it is important to understand both the experiential nature of this type of study and the consequential results. Richard Foster defines study as *a specific kind of experience in which through careful observation of objective structures we cause thought processes to move in a certain way. Perhaps we study a tree or book. We see it, feel it. As we do, our thought processes take on an order conforming to the order in the tree or book. When done with concentration, perception and repetition, ingrained habits of thought are formed.*ⁱⁱ

The discipline of study will provide the basis for knowledge and understanding as you venture on your journey. It is always important to undertake study with an attitude of humility and teachability since any practice of increasing knowledge can have a tendency to feed one’s pride or arrogance.

- Using a concordance (either book form or computer work fine), choose a topic of interest to you that you have been desiring to learn more about. Look up the word/concept in the concordance, reading each portion of Scripture where it is found. After you have done this, write several paragraphs summarizing what the Bible has to say about the topic.
- Obtain a series of tapes on a portion of Scripture by a good Bible teacher. Spend some time listening to these tapes where you can really concentrate, take notes, and reflect on the passage(s) of Scripture being studied. After listening to the tapes, spend some time on your own studying the same portion of the Bible to see what other observations, principles, or application you come up with.

Appendix

- A significant aspect of study is the constant reading of the Bible as a whole. If you read 3-4 chapters a day, you can read the entire Bible in one year. Many people find it helpful to use a Bible reading calendar to keep track. There are also Bibles that are designed and laid out to be read over the period of a year. If you find it difficult reading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, you might try reading a chronological Bible instead.
- Choose a book on a topic of interest. If you do not have one, visit a local bookstore. As you read the book, spend at least a half hour in reflection for every hour you spend reading. Use a highlighter or pen to mark sections of the book you find especially helpful. Write down specific page numbers or notes in the front or back of the book that will help you return to portions you find significant. When you are finished reading the book, you might want to write a one page summary listing six to eight key quotations, as well as a paragraph critique describing how the book has had impact on your spiritual formation.
- One of the easiest ways to begin studying people more closely is to go “people watching.” Go to a mall or some place where there are a lot of people participating in a variety of activities. It is even better if you can hear many of them talking. Spend at least an hour just observing and listening. You might choose to go with someone who you can discuss your observations with. How do the things you have observed support what the Bible says about people? What concepts that you are currently learning can be observed?

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 176.

ⁱⁱ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 55.

Solitude

Solitude is the practice of being alone. While you have already spent some time in solitude as part of your extended times with God, it is crucial to learn the value of solitude as a discipline to be practiced on a regular basis. Solitude needs to have priority among the various disciplines. Dallas Willard says, “Of all the disciplines of abstinence, solitude is generally the most fundamental in the beginning of the spiritual life, and it must be returned to again and again as that life develops.”ⁱ It will provide the foundation for the practice of many other disciplines, such as silence and prayer.

The practice of solitude is easily passed over in the Bible. Many of the most prominent characters in Scripture made solitude a part of their lives. Jesus practiced solitude throughout his life and ministry. At the beginning of his ministry he went to the wilderness for an extended period of fasting and prayer (Matthew 4:1-2). He sought solitude prior to preaching (Mark 1:35-39), after he had healed a leper (Mark 1:45), after hearing about the death of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:13), after his followers had been involved in ministry (Matthew 14:23), and before he chose the disciples (Luke 6:12-16). At the end of his life he sought solitude in the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36ff).

What makes solitude so important? John Ortberg says, “Solitude is the one place where we can gain freedom from the forces of society that will otherwise relentlessly mold us.”ⁱⁱ Henri Nouwen describes solitude as “the furnace of transformation.”ⁱⁱⁱ If Jesus needed time to be with the Father, how much more do we need this time?

The first question people usually have when learning about solitude is: “What do we do during the time?” The best answer to this question is: “Nothing.” While at first you might feel like this is a waste of time, allow these feelings to cause you to consider that your worth is not determined by you always needing to keep busy or be “doing” something. For many it is a temptation to take things with them such as books, tapes, a “to-do” list, your calendar, or even that project you’ve been meaning to get done. You might even be tempted to bring your laptop computer! One of the most important principles to grasp is that solitude is not about doing something . . . it is about *not* doing something. Richard Foster says: “What we must clearly understand and underscore is that our real task [in solitude] is to create a space in our lives where God can reach us. Once that space has been created we wait quietly, expectantly. From this point on, the work belongs to God.”^{iv}

In solitude, it is important to listen . . . to pay attention to what comes to you. Our desire is to hear Jesus, but there will be many voices. One of the greatest challenges of solitude is to sort through these “voices” and learn to put them aside so that we can hear Jesus. A first step here might be to identify these other voices and what it is they are saying. You might even take time to write these down. If you can identify the influence these voices are having on your life, you will have a much easier time moving beyond these influences to the voice of God.

Appendix

There are many ways to build the practice of solitude into your life. These include regular alone times with God, preferably on a daily basis. It is good to plan special times maybe weekly or monthly where we can spend a few hours to a day in solitude. We also need periodic extended times, once or twice a year, where we can have several days. Don't worry if it is very difficult at

first. It becomes easier or more natural each time you practice it. Like recovery from any sickness, healing takes time.

- Solitude rarely happens unless we schedule it. Therefore, the first step is to get out your calendar and schedule the time in. Determine where you might be able to spend some daily time in solitude. Schedule it just as you would an appointment. Then schedule a time where you can spend 4-6 hours alone. If possible, schedule several days where you can get away for an extended time sometime in the next 6 months.
- Think about where you feel most at peace. Some people like the beach, some like the mountains, some might be able to find it in their own back yard. It is important to note that it is usually very helpful to be out in nature, as long as weather permits. Write out several places where you might be able to spend some solitude time:
- Find a place this week where you can practice solitude in the midst of your work day. It might be finding a quiet, peaceful spot during the lunch hour. Experiment with this to see how God uses it in your life.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 161.

ⁱⁱ John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 89-90.

ⁱⁱⁱ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1981), 13.

^{iv} Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline Study Guide* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 45.

Silence

“I have often repented of having spoken, but never of having remained silent.” – Arsenius

As we begin our journey of exploring various disciplines, it is important to grasp from the very start the truth that we are given a conversational relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus wants to speak to us! He will speak to us and we can learn to recognize his voice. This is why silence becomes so crucial. There are two aspects within this discipline. The first is to pursue silence as **the absence of noise**. Many of us are so used to living in noise that we are afraid of silence. We do whatever is necessary to avoid it. Dallas Willard says “silence is frightening because it strips us as nothing else does, throwing us upon the stark realities of our life. . . Think what it says about the inward emptiness of our lives if we must *always* turn on the tape player or radio to make sure something is happening around us.”ⁱ Silence helps us to cut through the voices and distractions of our noisy world and listen for God’s “still small voice.” It becomes rather obvious that if God’s voice is “still” and “small” that we need to be both still and small in order to hear it. The best way to do this is through silence.

A second arena of this discipline is to practice the silence of **not speaking**. Silence is more easily practiced in solitude since it is more difficult to be silent in the presence of others. The Bible’s admonitions about the tongue are important to consider here. James says: “If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless” (James 1:26). Then a little later on he says, “Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.” (James 3:5-6).

The discipline of silence is one of three foundational disciplines in addition to solitude and prayer.

Henri Nouwen has said,

*Clearly silence is a discipline needed in many different situations: in teaching and learning, in preaching and worship, in visiting and counseling. Silence is a very concrete, practical, and useful discipline in all our ministerial tasks. It can be seen as a portable cell taken with us from the solitary place to the midst of our ministry. Silence is solitude practiced in action.*ⁱⁱ

Listening is very important to the discipline of silence. You must pay attention. You must want to hear. This will not come easy for most, so you must persist with this. We often use our ears not to hear, but to sort. We listen merely to identify what is coming that we do not want to hear. Many people only hear what they assume is what they have always heard. Listening through the discipline of silence must get beyond these tendencies.

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- If you want to learn the value of silence, how to recognize God’s voice, and how to distinguish God’s voice from the voices of others, begin by asking God to teach you about this. It is important to persist with this discipline, especially if your mind is racing. It often takes awhile for our minds to quiet down.
- To assist you in cultivating quietness, there are several practices you can experiment with. One is the devotional use of Scripture. Take a verse, such as Psalm 23:1, and repeat it silently. As you repeat it many times, emphasize different parts of the verse and let this speak to you.
- An exercise that might be helpful encourages us to listen more deeply to our surroundings. Start by sitting quietly, listening to your breathing. Then enlarge your listening to include the room you are sitting in. Slowly listen for sounds coming from other places in the building you are in. Then include the sounds outside such as birds, traffic, a lawnmower, etc. By extending the range of your listening in this way, your mind can become less obsessed with particular concerns and more sensitive to the space in which all sounds are happening.ⁱⁱⁱ
- You might attempt to spend a day using as few words as possible, and complete silence if possible. It is best to do this without telling anyone what you are doing. As you go through your day, take note of tendencies such as desiring to fill empty space with talking, how being silent aids you in listening, etc. At the end of your day you might find it helpful to write down what you observed and learned.
- If it is difficult for you to find a place of silence in the midst of your daily work and family life, you might consider getting up in the middle of the night for a short period of time.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 163.

ⁱⁱ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1981), 30.

ⁱⁱⁱ Roger Housden, *Retreat – Time Apart for Silence & Solitude* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995), 5.

Appendix

Fasting

Fasting is the practice of abstaining from food, or both food and drink, for a specified period of time. While fasting is often practiced for physical reasons, the practice of fasting as a discipline is primarily for spiritual reasons. There will possibly be physical benefits, but this is not the motivation in pursuing the discipline.

Fasting is a discipline that teaches us a lot about ourselves very quickly. It helps us to see our longing for and preoccupation with food. It will indicate to some how food can be used to cover up or anesthetize feelings. It will show you how powerful your body is in seeking to fulfill its desires. Many profound and insightful lessons come out of fasting.

Fasting has a unique way of turning our eyes on God. Dallas Willard says, “Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in him a source of sustenance beyond food.”ⁱ This is why fasting can be very significant when combined with intense or extended periods of prayer.

Fasting is one of the best ways to practice the self-denial that Jesus expected of his followers – “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’” (Matthew 16:24).

- Whenever we practice spiritual disciplines, it may be helpful to consider the interrelationship between them when practiced in combination. For example, solitude and fasting get at the same need. Some combinations may be too much to handle. In this module, fasting has been combined with celebration for a very specific reason: if we cannot celebrate, we should not fast. If we cannot celebrate, our fasting might be too painful. So as you attempt to practice these disciplines, think about how you might practice them in relationship to each other.
- Spend some time reading Isaiah 58. In your disciplines journal write down some characteristics of true fasting that you learn from this passage.
- You might begin to explore fasting by skipping a meal and dedicating the time and money saved to God in some way.

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- A typical fast may last 24 hours without food. Many people like to use juice and water. It is often convenient to fast after breakfast until breakfast the next day.
- If you have some experience in fasting, you might consider trying a fast for several days or more. The purpose should not be the length of time, but what you desire God to do in your life during the time.
- If you have any physical or medical issues, be sure to consult your doctor before fasting. It is usually helpful to do some reading and research as well about the potential effects fasting will have on your body. A good rule of thumb is to start small and increase the amount of time with experience. Also, listen for God's prompting regarding if and when to fast.
- In addition to food, you might want to expand this discipline into other areas of life. Some examples of other kinds of fasts might be television, shopping, exercise, etc. Spend some time thinking through anything in your life that you might have become too dependent on. This is fair game for the discipline of fasting.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 166.

Appendix

Secrecy

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” – Matthew 6:6

In the discipline of secrecy we do not allow our good deeds or qualities to be known by others. The goal is to be involved in ministry, or some form of giving of ourselves, without others knowing what we are doing.

The practice of this discipline will have many powerful results in our life. It teaches us to be secure in only God knowing what we are doing. This security makes us less dependent on the thoughts or approval of others. Dallas Willard says, “as we practice this discipline, we learn to love to be unknown and even to accept misunderstanding without the loss of our peace, joy, or purpose.”ⁱ

People pleasing, or what is sometimes called approval addiction, is a major problem in the church today. John Ortberg describes this addiction more fully:

Some people live in bondage to what others think of them. The addiction takes many forms. If we find ourselves often getting hurt by what others say about us, by people expressing other than glowing opinions about us, we probably have it. If we habitually compare ourselves with other people, if we find ourselves getting competitive in the most ordinary situations, we probably have it. If we live with a nagging sense that we aren't important enough or special enough, or we get envious of another's success, we probably have it. If we keep trying to impress important people, we probably have it. If we are worried that someone might think ill of us should he or she find out we are an approval addict, we probably are.”ⁱⁱ

The discipline of secrecy is a vaccine that targets this pervasive disease. It helps us build our security in what God thinks of us, rather than what others think of us.

There is a lot of hiding that goes on in God's world. Isaiah speaks of God as a “hidden God.” In the ultimate sense, if God were not hidden, human life could not go on. The Bible is an objective witness to things that do not happen every day. God is hidden and his people are hidden. The discipline of secrecy is a discipline of hiddenness.

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- One of the easiest ways to practice this discipline is to do something kind for someone anonymously. You might send someone in need some money. You can also buy something for them and have it delivered. The key is to be sure that they do not know who is doing it.
- Another way to practice this discipline is to participate in some form of ministry without telling anyone what you have done. You might choose to visit a rescue mission or a convalescent hospital, just to be with people who are hurting. After you have given of yourself this way, be sure that no one finds out what you have done.
- A more difficult assignment is to secretly do something kind for someone who has recently criticized you or excelled beyond you. This will directly attack the presence of any approval addiction.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 172.

ⁱⁱ John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 152.

Appendix

Simplicity

“God made man simple; man’s complex problems are of his own devising.” – Ecclesiastes 7:29 (Jerusalem Bible)

Simplicity is one of the most beautiful disciplines, because it helps us to make space in our lives for other disciplines and graces of God. Richard Foster has summarized it well: “Simplicity is freedom.”ⁱ Dallas Willard says simplicity is “the arrangement of life around a few consistent purposes, explicitly excluding what is not necessary to human well-being.”ⁱⁱ Simplicity goes far beyond the concept of money or material possessions to our attitudes and perspectives about everything we “own” and all we do.

So how does one practice simplicity in the daily decisions of life? Decisions like: Where do we eat dinner? What do we do with our free time? Where do I buy new clothes? What do I have that I do not need? What activities am I involved in that I could say “no” to? Two of the best places to start practicing simplicity are our *closets* and our *calendars*. So you might want to try cleaning out your closet (or house for that matter). Enjoy the feeling of giving things away (or throwing things away!). Feel deeply the freedom that comes from having less stuff to be responsible for. Then attack your calendar with an eraser (or the “delete” key). Eliminate all unnecessary appointments and obligations, and make a commitment to only add the most important priorities in your life to your calendar.

- Consider having a “Simplicity Garage Sale.” Go through your home with the mindset of practicing simplicity. Sell anything that will help your life to be less complicated and more simple. Call a local charity to donate whatever is left over from the garage sale.
- As you go through an average day, ask yourself the question: “What can I change that will make my life more simple? Think about the places you go, the transportation you use, the way you eat, what you watch, what you buy, how you spend your free time, and anything else that comes to mind. Whenever you can eliminate something that will make your life more simple . . . give it a try.
- Spend a day without using any modern technological devices. See if this helps you live more simply. You might want to journal your thoughts and experiences.

Appendix

- Review your financial budget with a priority of assisting poor and needy people around the world.

ⁱ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 69.

ⁱⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 170.

Appendix

Frugality

“Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.” – Ecclesiastes 5:10

Dallas Willard says,

In frugality we abstain from using money or goods at our disposal in ways that merely gratify our desires or our hunger for status, glamour, or luxury. Practicing frugality means we stay within the bounds of what general good judgment would designate as necessary for the kind of life to which God has led us.ⁱ

The discipline of frugality is different than the discipline of sacrifice in that sacrifice involves abstaining from what is *necessary* for living, while frugality involves abstaining from what is *extra*. While it is also similar to the discipline of simplicity, it is different in that it specifically involves the area of money, finances, debt, possessions, etc.

- Read Romans 13:8. Financial debt is a bondage directly addressed by the discipline of frugality. Take some time to examine your personal financial situation. If you have outstanding financial debt other than a home mortgage, determine a strategy to pay this off as soon as possible. If you struggle with the use of credit cards, you may want to consider either not using them or getting rid of them. You might consider sharing your commitment in this area with your community so that they might hold you accountable.
- Review your spending habits of the past few months. With a highlighter or pen, mark those expenditures which are not necessary for living. Of these items, which might you choose to eliminate in order to help you practice the discipline of frugality? Write these items below.
- Many times in order to pass along something to others, it requires some kind of giving on our part. What are some ways that the practice of frugality will assist you in a commitment to reproduction? List some ways you can use whatever resources you have so that others can learn to make space for God and grow as disciples in the kingdom of God.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 168.
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Appendix

Chastity

“Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” – 1 Corinthians 7:5

The name of this discipline does not specifically describe what it is. In the discipline of chastity, “we purposefully turn away from dwelling upon or engaging in the sexual dimension of our relationships to others – even our husbands or wives.”ⁱ As the discipline of fasting deals with the hunger drive, chastity deals with the sexual drive. Actually, chastity is the result of experiencing the discipline.

Sexuality is a huge part of our culture today. Sexuality also reaches deeply into the essence of who we are as humans. Because of this, it often has a huge control over us. Therefore, the goal of chastity is not to eliminate or escape sexuality, but rather to help us learn to control it rather than it controlling us.

- If you are married, one of the simplest ways to partake of this discipline is to discuss with your spouse a period of time that you will refrain from sexual relations. Then, purposefully use this time for prayer or ministry to others.
- A very profitable way to exercise this discipline is to consciously abstain from any sexually related thoughts or actions. Choose a period of time wherein you will follow this commitment.
- Spend some time meditating on Matthew 5:27-28. Write out a list of ways that you are guilty of what Jesus describes as “adultery.” Purposefully commit to change in these areas.
- If you struggle with any form of sexually oriented material, take some time to eliminate these stumbling blocks from your life. Allow God’s grace and love to permeate those areas of insecurity and escape. You might even consider sharing this with your community or another member from your community.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 170.

Appendix

Sacrifice

“The cautious faith that never saws off the limb on which it is sitting never learns that unattached limbs may find strange, unaccountable ways of not falling.” – Dallas Willard

The Bible, especially the Old Testament, is filled with examples of sacrifice. For hundreds of years, sacrifices were required for the forgiveness of sins and the worship of God. Today, this type of sacrifice is no longer required, but there is still something very valuable in the concept of sacrifice.

The discipline of sacrifice involves abstaining from the possession or enjoyment of those things that are necessary for living. Dallas Willard says, “The discipline of sacrifice is one in which we forsake the security of meeting our needs with what is in our hands. It is total abandonment to God, a stepping into the darkened abyss in the faith and hope that God will bear us up.”ⁱ

- Read Genesis 22:1-19. What do you learn about sacrifice from this story? What are the things that would be hardest for you to live without?
- Read and meditate on Luke 21:2-4. What do you learn about sacrifice from this story? What might be an equivalent sacrifice in your life that would be similar to what the widow did?
- Choose something necessary in your life that you will go without for at least a week.
- Identify your favorite charity and write a check for whatever amount you have remaining in your check book. Trust God to meet your needs for the rest of the month.
- Pick a material item that you use a lot and feel you need. Give it away to someone who needs it more than you do.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 175.

Appendix

Submission

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” – Ephesians 5:21

Dallas Willard says, “In submission we engage the experience of those in our fellowship who are qualified to direct our efforts in growth and who then add the weight of their wise authority on the side of our willing spirit to help us do the things we would like to do and refrain from the things we don’t want to do.”ⁱ

Richard Foster points out that of all the spiritual disciplines, submission is the one that has been most abused. In many churches, submission has been a controversial topic where power and authority are abused. Submission can be abused in leadership. Submission can be abused in marriage. Therefore, it is crucial to see that the Bible teaches mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21 and Philippians 2:3). The discipline of submission involves the practice of one *freely* submitting himself to the wisdom and guidance of another.

- Create a list of people in your life who you respect because of their wisdom and maturity. These are an ideal place to start in your practice of the discipline of submission.
- Without telling him or her, practice submitting to your spouse in a way that you might not normally.
- In your place of work, when asked to do something that you might usually disagree about or argue with, say nothing and submit to the request that has been made.
- If you have a spiritual director, ask him or her to identify an area of your life where you need to practice submission. Submit to whatever it is you are told.
- Ask your Journey Community or another group to identify an area of needed change in your life. Without arguing or justifying, do what they say.

ⁱ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of The Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 190.