

Greater Pleasant Branch Baptist Church

Connect learn Grow

Wednesday Bible Study- Theme: Practicing Spiritual Disciplines

Lesson # 1- The Spiritual Disciplines for the purpose of Godliness

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I. Central Idea

The only road to Christian maturity passes through the practice of Spiritual Disciplines. These personal and interpersonal activities given by God in the Bible have been practiced by God's people since biblical times. They are the sufficient means Christians are to use in the Spirit-filled pursuit of godliness, that is, closeness to Christ and conformity to Christ. Jesus modeled them for us and expects us to pursue them. In doing so, we will taste the joy of a spiritually disciplined lifestyle.

II. The fruit of Spiritual Disciplines

1. Scripture reminds us that self-control, such as that expressed through the Spiritual Disciplines must persevere before it ripens into mature fruit of godliness.
2. The sequence of development in 2 Peter 1:6 expresses the point of #1 above: "and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness."
3. Godliness, therefore, is a lifetime pursuit.

III. Persevering in the practice of Spiritual Disciplines

1. There are at least three principles that are indispensable in helping believers persevere in the practice of the Spiritual Disciplines: the role of the Holy Spirit, the role of fellowship, and the role of struggle in Christian living.
2. The role of the Holy Spirit is to produce within believers the desire and the power for the Disciplines that leads to godliness. That the Spirit develops this in every believer is evident from 2 Timothy 1:7. The Holy Spirit will be ever faithful to help believers to persevere to the end in those things that will make us like Christ.
3. The role of fellowship: If believers measure progress in Christlikeness only in terms of growth in his or her fellowship with God takes an incomplete measurement, for spiritual maturity also includes growth in fellowship with the children of God.
4. New Testament fellowship is with both the triune God and his people, so spiritual growth incorporates both a vertical and horizontal dimension-see 1 John 1:3.
5. Biblical fellowship encourages the persevering practice of the personal Spiritual Disciplines.

6. The role of struggle: Discipline and struggle go hand in hand. We cannot separate the two because we live in a sinful world.

7. Because of the world, the flesh and the Devil, practicing the Spiritual Disciplines and progressing in godliness will be accompanied by struggle- see Colossians 1:29 and I Timothy 4:10.

8. The victory that believers experience in life over the forces opposing our progress in the Disciplines comes through the practice of the Disciplines.

IV. Questions and Applications

1. What single purpose unites the Spiritual disciplines ?

2. What does I Peter 1: 15-16 say about the importance of holiness in believers' lives ?

3. Often God brings people into our lives whose input leads us to become more Christlike. Read Proverbs 27:17 and describe a time when God used someone to file away your rough, ungodly edges.

4. We have all faced trying circumstances that God used to make us more like himself. What does Romans 8:28 say about our difficult circumstances ?

5. Review Luke 18: 35-43, what strikes you about the response of Bartimaeus to Jesus , how did Bartimaeus place himself in the path of Jesus and seek him?

6. How did Zacchaeus in Luke 19: 1-10 pursue Jesus , what does his example teach us about placing ourselves before Jesus through the Spiritual disciplines in order to become more like him ?

7. Describe a time when you placed yourself in Christ's path and his grace transformed you ?

8. Read 2 Peter 1:3-6. Why must self-control persevere before the mature fruit of godliness ?

9. What does each of the following verses say about Jesus and his pursuit of the spiritual Disciplines : Matthew 4:2, Luke 2:46-47, John 13: 2-6, 17:4 ?

10. How does what Jesus said in Luke 9:23 relate to the practice of spiritual disciplines ?

11. What are some practical steps you can take to begin building Spiritual Disciplines into your life ?