

Spiritual Disciplines – The Means for Becoming an Authentic Person
Authentic Leader Series – Part 4
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1. We are not in bondage to disciplines

- If you keep the triangle in mind, you'll never get into bondage to disciplines.
- The disciplines are not legalized practices.
- They don't earn _____.
- They are _____.
- When you're practicing disciplines and you think you failed, *you have not sinned*.
- We look at what Jesus did on the cross where He died for us, and we say, "Forget about merit."

2. Put off the old person and put on the new person

- a. Do that by the power of the _____.
- b. Do that in ordinary life right here and right now.
 - If I don't receive the kingdom of God with what I am doing right here and right now, there's no reason to suppose I can do very well with it anyplace else. So, that must be my intention.
 - I will have difficulties with that because of all the stuff that is built up in me that is pulling me down. So, I have to learn, plan, act in such a way that I can bring what I want to do and what I actually do together. That is where the planned disciplines come in.
- c. Practice planned disciplines

The disciplines of _____ are, basically, to unhook us from all the things that occupy us in various ways and that keep us on the old strings and buttons that will not allow us to change.

The list of Dallas Willard's Spiritual Disciplines is on the following page.



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DALLAS WILLARD'S SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	
Disciplines of Abstinence	Disciplines of Engagement
Solitude	Study
Silence	Worship
Fasting	Celebration
Frugality	Service
Chastity	Prayer
Secrecy	Fellowship
Sacrifice	Communion
Watching	Submission

Note: This is not a complete list of spiritual disciplines.

3. How to think about spiritual disciplines

- a. Think of simply _____ into his practices.
 - Look at what Jesus did, and then you do that, too.
- b. Think of them as means of _____. Grace is a reality. It is a power. It is God acting in our lives.
- c. Think of them as ways of using our body to reprogram our whole self and our whole soul in cooperation with the grace of God.
- d. The main thing is to get the idea of spiritual disciplines and to find those activities which are in our power that enable us to do what we _____ do by _____ effort. When you do that, you will become a disciplined person.
 - A disciplined person is a person who is able to do what _____ to be done _____ it needs to be done. You escape the old mind – the things that I would, that I do not, and the things that I would not, that I do. What characterizes an authentic person is that they're able to do that.

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4. Live and teach discipleship to Jesus

The gospel today is about believing the right things about Jesus and going to heaven after we die. Many preachers explain the gospel in terms of the theory of atonement. Atonement is very important, but it's a gross mistake to suppose that's the only thing that is at issue. There is no connection to discipleship, and ordinary life is not connected to the gospel. So, our situation today is that we, basically, have salvation as going to heaven when we die. Our religious culture has ingrained thoroughly that, to be a Christian, you don't have to be a disciple.

What is a disciple? A disciple is someone who is _____ from _____. Disciple means student or apprentice.

As a disciple of Jesus, I am learning from him how to _____ my life as _____ would lead my life if _____ were I. I'm not learning to lead his life. He's already done that. I'm learning how to lead my life. I'm learning from him how to lead my life as He would lead my life. In other words, I'm learning to live in the kingdom of God.

a. Make disciples

Jesus said, "Make disciples. Surround them in the reality of the Triune Name. Baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" [See Matthew 28:19].

After you've done that, you "teach them to do everything I command" [see Matthew 28:20]. That's discipleship.

Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom. That is the _____ of life in the _____ through _____ in _____. That's the only gospel He preached.

- If you preach the gospel of the kingdom of God, if you invite people to enter the kingdom, you have a natural progression. You have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:13). This naturally leads to seeing my whole life as the place of _____ and to discipleship as learning from him how to lead my life as He would.

How do you do that? Spiritual disciplines.

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b. Practice and teach spiritual disciplines

These disciplines are regular, well-tested means for bringing the kingdom into our life. With all the disciplines, you want to work into them gently. Don't try to be miserable. That is very counterproductive. It will nearly always get you into some sort of _____ thinking.

- Secrecy: practicing not letting your good deeds be known. There's nothing wrong with them being known. It's only if we do them to *be* known. Doing them to be known comes out of a deep _____ for _____, and practicing good deeds without letting them be known _____ from the need for approval. It enables you to live before an audience of one – that is, God.
- Chastity: purposefully re-training from sexuality and thought or feeling and action, if we're married, for a period of time, so that we are not dominated by it.
- Solitude: to step aside from human society for a long period of time. I learn how to be alone. I learn how to not be constantly _____ and _____ by the ordinary things of life that obsess me, and I go alone and spend long periods of time with God.
 - When you go into solitude, you want to aim to do _____. The aim of solitude is to get you where you can do nothing. We need to be able to simply have no agenda. Just be there. Find a place where you can simply be _____, and do nothing.
 - It's in solitude that you begin to find yourself once again. You begin to realize that there is something to you, that you actually have a soul, and you begin to learn who you are.
- Silence: no noise; not talking. Silence goes with _____.

When you combine solitude and silence, you have something that has a re-forming character that will open you to God. God will not _____ for our attention. He will wait!

Silence and solitude begin to drive the wedge into the concrete of one's alienated existence where you're just being driven by all of this stuff that comes at you from all around you. When you step into solitude and silence, all of that begins to break away.



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You have to have a gospel that focuses you back on your whole life. You put these into practice, and they are like a mighty engine which will move you onward in your spiritual growth. And you will be able to give them to others. The gospel of Jesus Christ and the reality of his kingdom is the greatest thing on the face of the earth. No hype. This is it!

5. Take control of your life

All of this is there – the fullness of life, the authenticity of a life that is just plain love, and the power of the kingdom – all of that is there, but we have to choose to use our time in such a way that we can access it. *Now, how we choose to use our time is the biggest test of our faith that we will ever have.*

In order to make our choices right, we have to have these four things in a proper relation:

- 1) Your job
 - 2) Your ministry
 - 3) Your work
 - 4) Your life
- a. Your job is what you get paid to do. We need to do that job well, but we don't want to sell our soul to the job, and we don't want to _____ ourselves with the job.
 - b. Your ministry is the part of God's work in our time that He has allotted to us. You enter human history, and you begin to exercise that kingdom reign. You begin to learn. You are here _____ for reigning. You are going to be in charge of many important things in God's universe, and He's getting you ready for that. Hopefully, your job would be integrated with that, but, in many cases, it might not be.
 - c. Your work consists of all the _____ that you will produce in your lifetime. For many of you, your children will be a major part of your work in life. For some of you, administration, building buildings, doing whatever needs to be done to produce things of value. They're not all religious things. If you're an artist and you produce a work of art, that's a part of your work.... Of course, a major part of your work is what you contribute to the lives of others.
 - d. Your life – that's you. This is what it's really all about. God is _____ interested in your life than He is in your work or your ministry or your job. The most important thing that will come out of your effort is the people you become. Matthew 5:13-14 *You are the light of the world; you are the salt of the earth.*

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You are of interest in your own right. God comes to us in our life. To step into the kingdom is to take our whole personality into the kingdom of God. It is to allow Jesus to be our friend, our master, our teacher throughout our lives. That's where genuine sanctification comes in.

6. Sanctification

Sanctification is an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus. It's my friendship with him. The most important thing about my identify as a person. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I am learning from him how to lead my life. We learn to live with the disciplines; we learn how to take our failures and to lead life according to Jesus' teachings.

The secret is not "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." It is "If at first you don't succeed, find out what went wrong, fix it, and then try again." That's how we grow. The secret is not trying, but training.