

WRAPPING UP THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES SESSION:

Two Classes of Disciplines:

- Disciplines of abstinence (solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice)
- Disciplines of engagement (study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission).

If you fail at a discipline, you haven't sinned.

- **Prayer** is not just a discipline. It's a command. It's essential.
- **Worship** is not just a discipline.
- They ARE disciplines, but they are not JUST disciplines.

A discipline is an activity I engage in, in order to be able to do what I cannot do directly.

- Prayer practiced is a life transforming discipline. It is a primary part of the method of learning how to love those who hate you.
 - If you want to be able to love your enemies, start by praying for them, and serving them. That doesn't mean doing what they want!

Don't make laws out of illustrations.

Secrecy is the practice of refraining from letting your good deeds be known.

- There's nothing wrong with letting your good deeds be known. What's wrong is doing good deeds so *that* they will be known.
 - **Matthew 6:5-6** *"When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you."*
- Jesus wasn't saying that you shouldn't pray publicly. He was saying, don't pray *to be* seen of men.
 - You must read Jesus as if he were a smart, capable person.
- Secrecy is designed to break us off our dependance on praise.

Chastity is the practice of refraining from sexual thoughts, feelings and actions, to see if you can still breathe.

- This can be practiced both in marriage and out of marriage. It's a wonderful thing to liberate our marriages from sexual bondage.
- You don't practice it because there's anything wrong with sex, any more than you don't practice fasting because food is bad. Food is good.
 - *Bondage* to food is not good!

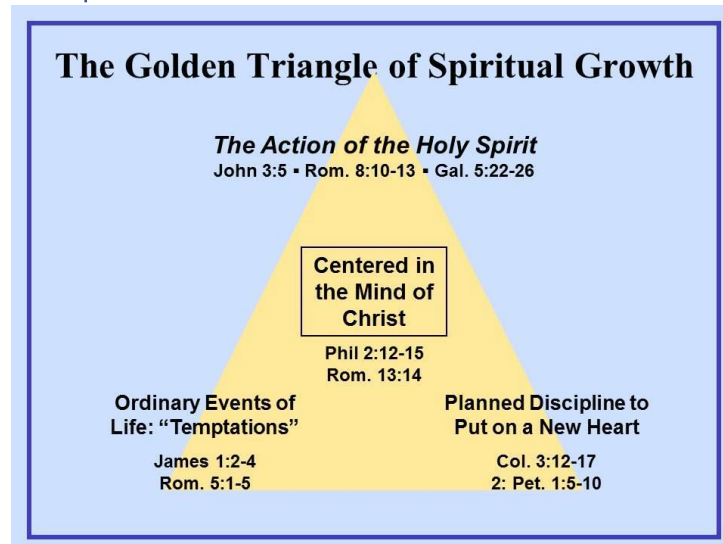
Fasting is the practical affirmation of the reality of the Kingdom of God.



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- The Word of God is itself a substance.
- **Deuteronomy 8:3** "...man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord."
- Bread isn't the only substance.

The Golden Triangle of Spiritual Growth



1. The Action of the Holy Spirit
2. Ordinary Events of Life – also called "Temptations"
 - a. Temptations are not solicitations to do something wrong. They are trials and troubles.
3. Planned Disciplines to Put on a New Heart.
 - a. "heart" = "bowels" or "guts"
 - b. That's what we live from.
 - c. If you find you can't be patient...do something that would help you be patient the next time.
 - d. These are activities that help us deal with life, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in ordinary circumstances.

This Triangle will bring to fullness in us the mind of Christ that is described in Philippians 2 and Romans 13:14.

Romans 13:14 "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lust thereof."

- He doesn't mean not to take care of your natural needs, but rather not to do it *just because of* the fulfillment of your desires and wishes and intents.

God's side is the Spirit, the Kingdom. Your side is the disciplines.

This all works! But many people in this world don't think it works. They're planning to live in Romans 7 until they die and perhaps exalt something called brokenness.

- Our religious culture, a part of it, has elevated and glorified brokenness as the ultimate spiritual condition.



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- The point of brokenness is to get put together again.
- That's what the path of discipleship and discipline is.
- Disciplines are for disciples.

Session 8: Being a Disciple of Jesus Not Just a Christian

CHRISTIAN BUT NOT DISCIPLE

The word "Christian" is used in the Bible only three times. We live in a period now where Christians may not be disciples.

If we bring disciplines into church, and all we have are Christians, it won't accomplish much.

This explains why many Christians are no different in character and power from many non-Christians.

- Some Christians are different; they are those following Christ, that have become his disciples.
- You must be earnest about learning from Jesus.
- Eternal life now is something we learn.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

"I have been given say over all things in heaven and on earth. As you go, make disciples of all kinds of people, surround them in Trinitarian reality, and teach them to do all things I have commanded you. And now look: I am with you always, until the job is done." **Matt. 28:18-20**

- *"I've been given say over everything in heaven and earth..."* – Jesus has all authority.
- *"As you go..."* – i.e., wherever you go.
- *"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit..."* – i.e. "Surround them in Trinitarian reality."
 - It's talking about drawing disciples together, under God. In community.
 - Baptism means "to surround in"

You cannot teach people to do the things that Jesus commanded them, unless they have become disciples, and are living in the Presence.

Co-mission – it is a mission together! The heart of it is making disciples.

THREE PARTS OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

1. Make disciples; apprentices to Jesus in Kingdom living.
2. Submerge them in the Trinitarian life that flows in the community of disciples of Jesus.
 - a. Bring people together in the community...invoke the Presence. Expect the Presence.
3. Teach these disciples how to do – show them how to do - everything that Jesus said.
 - a. That's not legalistic! Don't try to get people to not look lustfully.



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In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is indicating the natural outflow of the Kingdom life that he is illustrating.

- The New Testament is not a book of law.
- You don't have to teach them everything. You just get two or three and they'll have the rest.
- You're not dealing at the action level; you're dealing with the source of action.

WHO IS THE DISCIPLE?

The basis of discipleship is complete confidence in Jesus.

A disciple of Jesus is someone who is with him, learning from him, how to lead their life in the kingdom of God as he would lead their life, if he were they.

What am I going to do about my life?

- Jesus knows your life whatever that is, and he can teach you or me how to lead our lives.
- I'm learning from Jesus how to do ordinary activities of daily life.
- Jesus would do it in righteousness, in the power of the Kingdom of God.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN CHRIST

Christian spiritual formation is the process of transforming all essential dimensions of the self toward Christlikeness.

Mark 12:30-31 "Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself."

- Spiritual formation is a process.
- **Spiritual formation is not about spiritual formation.** It's about the transformation of the essential dimensions for the self
- This is the only way to keep out of legalism, with reference to {spiritual disciplines}....those practices fall in the category of means. But that's not what it's about.

It's about the transformation of the dimensions of the self, so that the heart, the mind, the body, LOVE GOD.

Love is intelligent: love wills what is good.

- A part of willing what is good is finding out how to do it.



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- Love includes knowledge. Knowledge is not something independent of love. Love is not something independent of knowledge.

Spiritual formation presupposes the birth from above and the constant action of the Holy Spirit.

- It also presupposes relentless action by the individual, in obedience to the Word, and that is discipleship.

Spiritual formation is the process that the person in the status of a disciple is going through...out of the end of that comes mature persons in Christ.

- They still have room to grow. But they have made tremendous progress.

THE THREE MAIN ASPECTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

1. Learning how to do what Jesus taught.
 - a. For example, how to remain vulnerable to people who have mistreated you.

You're coming to a place where you routinely and easily do what Jesus said. because now you're different on the inside.

2. Learning to handle the ordinary events of daily life within the principles and powers of God's rule.
 - a. E.G. business, a committee meeting, writing a research proposal, hiring,
 - b. The home is a fundamental place of discipleship – really the most basic place for discipleship.
3. Learning to act in God's power; learning to act and pray with a power that is not your own.
 - a. It's not just signs and wonders.
 - b. Signs and wonders were a great part of Jesus's ministry and the ministry of the early church, and they are a natural expression of the presence of the Kingdom.
 - c. The presence of the Kingdom comes with power and we need to learn how to use that.
 - d. Learn how to pray, speak, and act with power.

These things don't come separately. They come together because they're a part of one thing, which is life and the Kingdom of God with Jesus.

THE PLACE OF DISCIPLESHIP

The place of discipleship is wherever I am now, and whatever I am doing now.

- I am learning from Jesus how to do everything I do in the Kingdom of God. (Col 3:17)
- Our work/job is of special importance in discipleship, for that is where we put most of our time and effort. To leave God out of that is to exclude Him from most of our life.



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You must have planned activities, so when you find yourself not succeeding...you can find out why it didn't work.

Sleep is an essential spiritual discipline, because when you go to sleep, like when you go into solitude, you have to release your kingdom.

- If you can't sleep, it's because you haven't turned your kingdom loose.
- Generally, people cannot sleep because an alarm is going off in their souls; they're unable to release something.
 - Locate the alarm and pray specifically for that.
 - When did this start? What happened around that time?

Good things are what really pull the spiritual life.

Stay after it. Don't give up. Be patient with yourself. God will be patient with you.

DISCIPLINES ESSENTIAL TO DISCIPLESHIP

- Learning to live in the Kingdom of God requires activities that make us available for the action of the Kingdom in our lives and the transformation of our habits.
- Jesus subjected his apostles to long periods of disciplines as part of their training.
- Study, Scripture memorization, and fasting
 - Scripture memorization: take passages of Scripture into you. They will direct your life without you even knowing it.
 - Have children memorize Scripture. They will remember it and it will direct them.
 - **Psalm 119:105** "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light unto my path."
 - **Psalm 119:9** "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed to the Word of God."

VIM REQUIRED TO LEARN THIS REALITY

Growth in discipleship will depend upon the Vision, your Intention, and the Means.

Your vision is of life in the Kingdom of God.... a life without fear, life with love flowing, life with power adequate.

- INTENTION: The strength of the intention is going to turn on the strength of the vision. (e.g. exercise, learning a foreign language)
- The VISION of discipleship is important for us to understand. The good news of life now in the Kingdom of God, which comes to us through Jesus's gospel, can lead us.... into a life of development as a disciple, where our life becomes an eternal kind of life.



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THE FOLLOWING ARE FROM DALLAS'S ORIGINAL NOTES, ALTHOUGH HE DIDN'T SPEAK DIRECTLY TO THEM IN THE SESSION:

THE GOOD NEWS: LIFE NOW IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- If we would live in the resources of Jesus, we must preach what he preached in the manner he preached it.
- “Repent, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is right here now (“at hand”).” Matt. 4:17
- His three-fold practice: Preach, Manifest, and Teach. Matt. 4:22 & 9:35, Luke 4:43.

JESUS' GOSPEL

- Leads into whole-life discipleship—learning to live our lives in the Kingdom of God as He would lead our lives if He were we—
- Not just Consumer Christians.
- And into the progressive transformation of human personality from inside out, all the dimensions of the self.
- Yielding a radiant church, the saints in light. Col. 1:12 & Eph. 5:8-9.



Questions & Comments

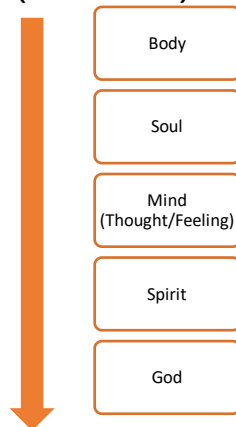
Q: What practical advice can you give to parents as they raise their children....

- Establish a home in which there is Kingdom peace.
 - Busyness is a deadly enemy.
 - "Only lazy people are busy." ~ C.S. Lewis / Eugene Peterson
 - If you're not willing to exert the effort and strength to make decisions about time, you will be run ragged. Being run ragged is not a good thing for children.
 - There's nothing children need more than lengthy times of solitude and silence.
 - Children need an atmosphere of quiet, peace, clear intentions on the part of the parents, the ability to say no, teaching.
 - Life needs to be simple for a child. If you don't do that then they will pick up the habit of busyness.
 - It's really important to provide a context for children should be one with explicit teaching about the Kingdom of God.
 - With an older child that has already left...learn ways of being with them that can allow you to bring your Kingdom peace into their presence.
 - You can send your Kingdom peace, your Kingdom joy, into another person.
 - You learn by doing it. Sit with a person and silently send, by the Holy Spirit, the joy and peace that is in you, into another person.
- Quality time is good, but you can't make up for just TIME.
- Busyness is a poisonous thing. Busyness is not a sign of importance.
- For those of us who carry the workload, you can't, in most cases, solve the problem of work and life by working harder. You must make decisions...and in making decisions, you have to trust God.
- Hanging in there with love is a real good thing.

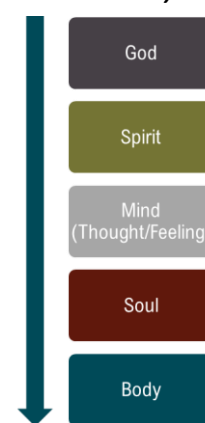
Q: A series of questions about putting the body to death, mortifying the members of the body...can you provide clarity?

- This is a matter of learning how to live, not just from what your body can provide.
- You have to take care of your body, but you can't live for it.
- Remember the Proper and Improper Subordinations:

Improper (Destructive) Subordination



Proper (Constructive) Subordination



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MINISTRIES
Living in the kingdom now

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- You don't kill the body, you mortify it. You let it die – you let its control over you diminish and cease. It does not control you anymore.
- In that process you'll find that the things that are wrong will drop off.
 - **Colossians 3:5** – *fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, wrong desires, evil concupiscence, covetousness*
- We allow our bodies to reflect the glory of the Christ life in us.

Q: Why so often do Christians treat people in the church worse than people outside the church...can you explain this disconnect, the words and pictures not matching, why one moment we say one thing and turn around and do something else?

- People are trying to find their desires and desires are essentially conflictual.
- Paul's statement in Romans 7 is quintessentially the statement on the broken condition of life.
- We don't currently have a vision of what is good and right. A vision in terms of which to organize our desires. We have a society devoted to getting you to please your desires as much as possible. That's a sure way to destruction.
- The basic idea is still the idea that you can live for your desires.
 - The church leader in Colorado found to be into drugs and homosexual contacts...it's sad enough that he did that, but it's sadder that he was living a life in which that was something that was attractive.
- "I've worked hard all my life, and I deserve something."
- The problem comes down to the idea that God's law just has to do with denying you things that are good.

Q: You said in the university setting (as opposed to the church) there's a freedom that allows you to raise issues that could not be raised in the church without being accused of heresy...And you said the place of discipleship is wherever you are; it's your job. As you're going into a college classroom to give a lecture on philosophy, I'd love to know how you do that, when you talk about guys like Hume and Nietzsche.

- In philosophy, you're supposed to pay attention to argument; to be reasonable.
- When you come to people like Hume and Nietzsche, you look at their positions and their arguments and they're nearly always on to God. You have many opportunities to present the arguments.
- Present the four great questions...
- Most of the philosophers in the modern period were doing everything they could to restore a basis to Christianity.
- People don't have anything to offer, except a few leftover fragments of Christianity, and you can't do it that way. So you wind up with things that are essentially Christian, like diversity. Diversity is a Christian notion. You don't find that in nations that were not Christian. (India, Pakistan)
- "Look, Jesus! He's the smartest man that ever lived. Look at him and his consequences. Think about what he means for today."
- Why are you a disciple of Jesus? Well, who else did you have in mind?

