

## ***Ingredient 4, Disciplines of the Walk - Matthew 6:1-18*** **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

### **Notes from the Sermon**

Going to the gym once in January is actually very easy. So is a couple days of healthy eating (even with some kale). The hard part is gaining consistency in habits that will lead to a healthy life. Turning a trip to the gym into a habit and rhythm of fitness, cardio-exercise, and weight lifting. And turning our meals from constant feasting into healthy fuel provision for our bodies. It will take a month or two of consistent effort to see results and begin to enjoy the journey. This is the way healthy habits and rhythms work. In the same way, God has provided various activities that are designed to draw us closer to Him in relationship and lead to change in life. We call these activities the spiritual disciplines. In his amazing book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Don Whitney defines spiritual disciplines as:

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

These rhythms of grace are not the sum total of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Yet, without these disciplines it is really impossible for a person to grow as a follower of Jesus. They are vital for disciple making and for discipleship.

We can break the disciplines into two categories. Last week we looked at the disciplines of the Word, those rhythms and habits that get us into the Scriptures and get the Scriptures into us. This week we are looking at disciplines for our walk with Jesus, the habits and rhythms that create conversation and intimacy with our Creator and Redeemer. But we must realize that these two categories of disciplines are not two separate things. Rather, they are two sides of a conversation. God speaks to us and through us in His Word, and when we pray, give, fast, journal, and worship we are joining the conversation.

As part of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6, Jesus addresses both the need and the motivation for these rhythms of grace in the lives of His followers. Jesus is clear, these are things that should be happening regularly in the lives of His disciples. While he does point out that these activities have been wrecked by hyper-spiritual legalists seeking to be recognized by men, Jesus is also clear, these should be integral in the lives of these men. "When you give to the needy (v. 2)." "And when you pray (v. 5, 6, 7)." "And when you fast (v. 16)." Jesus does not say if you pray, but when you pray. Nor does he say when you give, when you fast. Giving, prayer, and fasting are assumed aspects of their spiritual journey with and to Him.

But Jesus also warns them about the motivation for these activities. He warns them to avoid the inclination of the Pharisees, whom he calls hypocrites several times. They make sure they do their disciplines in public places, often wearing elaborate clothing so they can be recognized as holy while they do them. So they give to the poor in a way that would be visible and recognized. They stand in the middle of the synagogue and pray out loud, but not so much to gain the ear of God. Instead they hope to be seen by people and honored for their piety. They fast, oh do they fast, and when they do they wear grubby clothes and put ashes all over their face so you will know they are miserable. But Jesus tells his followers that their motivation needs to be something different. All throughout the passage Jesus refers to God as their Father, and reminds them that their reward and hope come from Him. This is actually so glorious and revolutionary. Prayer and these other disciplines are not just spiritual activities. They are invitations from our Father to know Him in relationship and to experience the blessings of His fatherly kindness and love. He is the

reward, yet, He also uses these disciplines to pour grace into the lives of His followers.

So, two dangers. One is to not do these disciplines, to fail to walk in fellowship with God through these rhythms of grace. The other danger is to do them with any motivation other than a desire to draw near to God and experience His love. Yet, when we start implementing these rhythms in a regular disciplined, and intentional fashion into our lives, well, the blessings are way more glorious than losing a few pounds and gaining some muscle mass. So, lets hit the gym together. As a church we will continue to challenge all of us to live in these rhythms and provide resources to do so. Our hopes is that all of us find our own ways of regular generosity, seeking God in prayer, days or seasons of fasting, times of personal worship and singing, and even journaling for the glory of God.

### **Bible Reading for the Week**

#### **Daily Bible Readings**

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Song of Solomon 5	Song of Solomon 6	Song of Solomon 7	Song of Solomon 8	Habakkuk 1	Habakkuk 2	Habakkuk 3

Reading from this past week: Matthew 6:1-18

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Romans 12:3-8

### **Family Worship**

Song - *The Lord's Prayer (Its Yours)*

[https://youtu.be/G2uPU-NY-sc?si=jFp\\_UYaHkj\\_-FIMk](https://youtu.be/G2uPU-NY-sc?si=jFp_UYaHkj_-FIMk)

#### **Gospel Project**

Unit: The Church is Opposed

Story: The Apostles were Arrested

Big Picture Question: Why did Jesus become human?

Answer: Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.

Scripture: Acts 5

#### **New City Catechism**

Question 10: What does God require in the Fourth and Fifth Commandments?

Answer: Fourth, that on the Sabbath day we spend time in worship of God. Fifth, that we love and honor our father and our mother.

Verse: Leviticus 19:3

#### **Scripture**

Matthew 6:1-18

- Why would Jesus focus his attention on the motivation for the disciplines while teaching His followers about their importance?
- What are the disciplines mentioned in the text? What other disciplines did Pastor Mike mention in his sermon? What other disciplines might we list?
- How are the spiritual disciplines similar to our physical fitness? How can we get started in them, and what can we do to maintain these rhythms of grace?
- What are some ways you have or currently are integrating these spiritual disciplines into your life?

#### **Prayer**

\*Pray that our church would grow in the rhythms and disciplines of grace, such as prayer, fasting, giving, and worship.

\*Yield yourself and all that you have in prayer, asking God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done in you.