

Inward Spiritual Disciplines Overview

"The biggest problem facing the world today is not people dying in the streets of Calcutta, and not inflation, but spiritual deprivation...this feeling of emptiness associated with feeling separate from God, and from all our sisters and brothers on planet Earth."--Mother Teresa

The inner disciplines are primarily responsible for helping cultivate our relationship with God.

Meditation

Purpose - Ability to hear God's voice and obey it

"What happens in meditation is that we create the emotional and spiritual space which allows Christ to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart." - Richard Foster

Christian Meditation is Not:

- Psychological Manipulation
- Middle Eastern Meditation

Forms of Meditation

- Internalization and personalization of scripture:
 - Contemplation
 - Visualization
- Centering Down (name given by Quakers). Example - Palms down, Hands up
- Internalization of creation
- Internalization of the events of our time in relation to scripture

Prayer

Purpose – Perpetual communication with God

"Prayer – secret, fervent, believing – prayer – lies at the root of all personal godliness" - William Carrey

"I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer." - Martin Luther

Prayer is:

- A Learning Process
- Simple
- Open and Honest

Forms of Prayer

- Focused
- Imaginative
- Popcorn/Flash
- Others

“There is a way of ordering our mental life on more than one level at once. On one level we may be thinking, discussing, seeing, calculation, meeting all of the demands of external affairs. But deep within, behind the scenes, at a profounder level, we may also be in prayer and adoration, song and worship, and a gentle receptiveness to divine breathings.” - Thomas Kelly

Fasting

Purpose – Help us to turn and keep our eyes on our Lord and Savior

The Pharisee Problem

Decline of inward (spiritual) reality which forces one to focus on the outward appearance. Matt. 23:25, Matt. 5:20

A Couple Thoughts

- Jesus said “*When*” you fast, not “*If*” or “*Must*” - Matt 6:16
- Fasting must center on God
- God uses fasting to reveal to us things in our lives that control us
- Fasting is feasting on God and his Word, not only abstaining from food
- Just as praying in tongues can expedite our inner longings unto God, so can fasting expedite our desire for God

Study

Purpose – Transform our thoughts so they are pleasing unto God

Study Allows us to:

- Conform to Romans 12:2
- Know the truth - John 8:32
- Question what we are taught - Example Matt. 23:16-22

Forms of Study

- Books
 - Bible
 - Other Books
- People
 - Ourselves
 - Others

Final Thought

Revelation 3:20 is a personal invitation from Jesus to partake in the inward disciplines. Will you accept or reject it?