

BEN WASHINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

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## **BIBLE STUDY**

**Are you Disciplined to be Spiritual?**

**The Purpose of Spiritual Disciplines – Part 1**

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# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

## BIBLE STUDY SERIES SCHEDULE

**Week #1 – February 4, 2026**

“The Purpose of Spiritual Disciplines”

**Week #2 – February 11, 2026**

“The Discipline of Bible Intake”

**Week #3 – February 18, 2026**

“The Discipline of Bible Study & Meditation”

**Week #4 – February 25, 2026**

“The Discipline of Prayer”

**Week #5 – March 4, 2026**

“The Discipline of Fasting”

**Week #6 – March 11, 2026**

“The Discipline of Worship”

**Week #7 – March 18, 2026**

“The Discipline of Fellowship & Accountability”

**Week #8 – March 25, 2026**

“The Discipline of Service & Stewardship”

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

The purpose of **spiritual disciplines** is to intentionally cultivate spiritual growth, transform one's inner self, and deepen a relationship with God (or a higher power) by developing habits like prayer, scripture study, and fasting. They are not the goal itself but rather spiritual "exercises" or training tools, much like athletic training, that build spiritual strength, foster reliance on God, and help align one's life with divine will, leading to greater likeness to Christ and spiritual maturity.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

## Key Purposes

**Spiritual Growth & Maturity:** Disciplines like reading scripture, prayer, meditation, and worship build spiritual health and maturity, helping individuals grow closer to God.

**Deepen Relationship with God:** They foster a more profound, intentional connection with the divine, moving beyond mere ritual to genuine experience.

**Transformation:** The ultimate aim is transformation of the heart, mind, and spirit, becoming more Christ-like.

**Spiritual Strength & Reliance:** They train the spirit, much like physical exercise trains the body, increasing dependence on God rather than self-sufficiency.

**Clarity & Guidance:** Practices like fasting and silence can increase spiritual clarity, helping individuals discern God's will and receive guidance.

**Focus & Discipline:** They help focus the mind and emotions, enabling self-control and perseverance in living a life that honors God.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Discipline is defined as **"training expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior."** Discipline is not part of the sin nature, but it is a natural component of the Christian life. In fact, almost nothing of any significance in our lives is ever accomplished without it. Spiritual disciplines can be described as those behaviors that augment our spiritual growth and enable us to grow to spiritual maturity. This process of spiritual growth and development begins to take place the moment a person encounters the risen Christ and comes to Him for salvation.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

**7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;**

**8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and [also] for the [life] to come.**

1Timothy 4:7-8 (NASB)

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

The purpose of spiritual discipline is the development of our inner being, that which has been transformed by Christ at salvation (2 Corinthians 5:17). **Redeemed believers** have experienced the total renewal of the whole person from within, involving differences in thought, feeling and character that may be slower to be evident in our outward behavior. This is what Paul had in mind when he spoke of taking off the "old self" and putting on the new, "which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Colossians 3:9-10).

# **SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

The foremost of the disciplines is that involving the **Word of God** and constitutes the **reading**, **study**, **memorization**, and **meditation** of Scripture. If this discipline is neglected, no other effort to discipline ourselves will be successful because we simply do not have the power to overcome the resistance of the sin nature in which our new natures reside. Nor do we have the power to overcome the resistance of demonic influences whose aim is always to separate us from the only means of spiritual growth, the Word of God.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Paul reminded Timothy of the inherent nature of Scripture, that it is literally from the mouth of God, i.e. “God-breathed,” and, as such, contains the very power of God. He also refers to the gospel as the very “power of God” (Romans 1:16) and exhorts Christians to take up “**the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God**” as our only offensive spiritual weapon against demonic forces (Ephesians 6:17). We must begin any effort at spiritual discipline with the only source of power, the Word of God.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

**Scripture memorization** is also essential. We always have the freedom to choose what we place in our minds. With that in mind, memorization is vital. If we truly believe that the Bible is the Word of God, how can we not memorize it? Memorization enables us to keep it constantly in the forefront of our minds, and that makes it possible to react to all life circumstances according to its precepts. One of the most powerful passages of Scripture regarding the necessity of memorization is found in Joshua 1:8.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

**“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”**

**Joshua 1:8**

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

It is through the discipline of memorization that we are enabled to pray more effectively and to meditate. This in turn enables us to “be prosperous and successful” as God defines “success” for us. When we are walking in His ways and in His will, we are imbued with a new Spirit-filled inner being, one with a heart like God’s.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

**"Spiritual disciplines"** are lists of activities that various authors have culled from the Bible to help us become more spiritually mature. While the Bible does guide us as to how to live a Christian life, spiritual disciplines are not prescriptive in the Bible. Instead, we see a variety of spiritual disciplines. Various biblical figures practiced spiritual disciplines, each reflecting a personal devotion to God and a desire to align with His will.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

For example, prayer is exemplified throughout Scripture, with Jesus often retreating to pray (**Mark 1:35**) and heartfelt prayers of praise, lament, and petition in the Psalms. Fasting is another discipline, seen in the lives of Moses (**Exodus 34:28**), Daniel (**Daniel 9:3**), and Jesus Himself (Matthew 4:2), as an act of dependence and humility before God. Studying Scripture is emphasized through figures like Ezra, who devoted himself to the Law of the Lord (**Ezra 7:10**), and Paul, who encouraged believers to let the Word of Christ dwell richly in them (**Colossians 3:16**).

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

**Worship** is highlighted in the lives of David, who praised God through psalms and songs (**Psalm 95:1-7**), and the early church, which gathered regularly to worship together (**Acts 2:42-47**). **Serving others** is demonstrated in Jesus' teaching and actions, as He washed His disciples' feet (**John 13:14-15**) and called His followers to love and serve one another (**Mark 10:45**). These disciplines allow believers to draw closer to God while shaping their lives in His likeness.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Spiritual disciplines are not meant to be legalistic rules but tools that bring us closer to God. Strict or even casual adherence to any of the disciplines is not necessary for salvation. We are encouraged to practice spiritual disciplines in our daily lives, not as empty rituals but as ways to draw closer to God, reflect His character, and live out His purposes in the world. God will use our time with Him as we practice these spiritual disciplines to deepen our relationship with Him and to transform us to be more like Christ.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Questions?