



# Spiritual Disciplines: A Practical Strategy

Jesus is the way to life—and not just life after death, but life here and now. When he said, “Follow me,” he meant it. In all he did and taught, Jesus conveyed that our spiritual life takes place in our physical reality as well as in the heart. If we believe what he said about the spiritual life, it only makes sense we should do what he did.

The practices of Jesus have been recognized for centuries as the core activities of the spiritual life. In the same way a runner is equipped to compete in a marathon by the discipline of physical training, so training through spiritual disciplines frees us to live each day with the “easy yoke” and “light burden” Jesus spoke of (Matt 11:30).

Disciplines do not earn us favor with God or measure spiritual success. They are exercises which equip us to live fully and freely in the present reality of God - and God works with us, giving us grace as we learn and grow.

Discovering A With-God Kind of Life with Richard and Nathan Foster – October 14 at Harvest:

[www.welcometoharvest.org/withgod](http://www.welcometoharvest.org/withgod)

Experience the Disciplines at Harvest this fall:

[www.welcometoharvest.org/groups](http://www.welcometoharvest.org/groups)

## The 12 Spiritual Disciplines in Celebration of Discipline:

**Meditation: The ability to hear God’s voice and obey his word.**

“What happens in meditation is that we create the emotional and spiritual space which allows Christ to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart.”

**Prayer: The interactive conversation with God about what we are doing together.**

“Our prayer is to be like a reflex action to God’s prior initiative upon the heart.”

**Fasting: The voluntary denial of an otherwise normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity.**

“Fasting must forever center on God. It must be God-initiated and God-ordained.”

(more)

**Study: The mind taking on an order conforming to the order of whatever we concentrate upon.**  
“Remember that the key to the Discipline of study is not reading many books, but experiencing what we do read.”

**Simplicity: An inward reality that results in an outward life style.**  
“Contemporary culture lacks both the inward reality and the outward life-style of simplicity... We are trapped in a maze of competing attachments.”

**Solitude: An open relational space for being found by God and freed from competing loyalties.**  
“Solitude is more a state of mind and heart than it is a place.”

**Submission: The discipline which frees us to let go of the burden of always needing to get our own way.**  
“Jesus calls us to self-denial without self-hatred. Self-denial is simply a way of coming to understand that we do not have to have our own way. Our happiness is not dependent upon getting what we want.”

**Service: The many little deaths of going beyond ourselves which produces in us the virtue of humility.**  
“True service builds community. It quietly and unpretentiously goes about caring for the needs of others. It draws, binds, heals, builds.”

**Confession: Experiencing the grace and mercy of God for healing the sins and sorrows of the past.**  
“God has given us our brothers and sisters to stand in Christ’s stead and make God’s presence and forgiveness real to us.”

**Worship: Entering into the supra-natural experience of the Shekanyah, or glory, of God.**  
“Worship is the human response to the divine initiative.”

**Guidance: Knowing in daily life an interactive friendship with God.**  
“Unity rather than majority rule is the principle of corporate guidance. Spirit-given unity goes beyond mere agreement. It is the perception that we have heard the Kol Yahweh, the voice of God.”

**Celebration: A life of “walking and leaping and praising God” (Acts 3:8).**  
“Celebration comes when the common ventures of life are redeemed.”