

# How to Put the Most into Worship

Disciplining myself to worship God as He wills  
(Study notes compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

- A. Answering the issues of worshipping God in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
  1. "I need to go to church somewhere else because I just don't get much out of worship here." Consumer Christianity
  2. "I can worship God just as well or better alone at home. I don't need to go to a bricks and mortar church building to worship God." Convenience Christianity
  3. While this represents a common and growing spirit among professed disciples of the Lord, it does not reflect the teaching of the New Testament for Christians who worship in spirit and in truth.
- B. What is wrong with these attitudes toward worship?
  1. Worship isn't about what I get out of it. Never has been. It is about God, and what I put into honoring Him and His directions for our lives.
    - a. Cain and Nadab and Abihu tried to worship God according to what they wanted in worship, rather than by what God told them He wanted in worship.
    - b. Worship isn't about me; it's about God. It's not what I get out of it; it's what I put into it.
  2. Worship is about what I put into fellowship, encouragement, and edification of my fellow worshipers; not what they do for me.
    - a. I can't do that alone at home in perpetuity - Heb. 10:23-25
    - b. I am commanded to help others in their worship and growth; therefore, I must be with others to do so.
    - c. Online interaction with family and friends will never be a satisfying substitute for being there with them
  3. The first consideration in worship is God, the second consideration in worship is the well-being of other worshipers, and then and only then are my needs in worship fulfilled.
  4. In fact, by attending to the first, worshipping God, and second, edifying others, I will find that I have had my own needs in worship fulfilled.
- C. I expect this study to take up three class periods, in which we will consider:
  1. Disciplining myself to worship God as He wills
  2. Dedicating myself to encouraging and edifying others in worship
  3. Determining to content myself with what God wills for me to receive from worship
- D. Self-discipline in worship is the ability to purposefully keep one's entire being centered on the matter of glorifying God, building up one another in fellowship, and growing in the faith while assembled in worship
  1. Understanding how to worship and how we benefit from worship is incomplete until and unless we are able to train our hearts and minds to engage and remain in awe of God and in harmony with each other

2. A study of self-discipline in worship naturally flows from a general understanding of self-discipline for all facets of our lives
- E. 1Tim. 4:7 - "Exercise yourself toward godliness" (NKJV)
1. Compare translations
    - a. "Train yourself for godliness" (ESV, NET)
    - b. "Train yourself to be godly" (NIV, NLT)
    - c. "Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (NASB)
  2. Consider commentators
    - a. "Cultivate piety, and seek to become more holy" (Barnes Notes)
    - b. "As an athlete trains his body, so the Christian must train his soul" (Barclay)
    - c. "Such exercise involves reading and studying the Bible, prayer, and meditation" (Burkitt)

## I. WHAT IS SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE?

- A. Discipline: "Any training intended to develop moral character, or produce a pattern of behavior" (Wikipedia)
1. "Training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character" (Merriam-Webster)
- B. Spiritual discipline: "A spiritual discipline is, when practiced faithfully and regularly, a habit or regular pattern in your life that repeatedly brings you back to God..." (<http://www.spirithome.com/spirdisc.html>)
1. "Spiritual disciplines can be described as behaviors that facilitate spiritual growth" ([www.wcg.org/lit/spiritual/group/discip1.htm](http://www.wcg.org/lit/spiritual/group/discip1.htm))
  2. Spiritual disciplines are spiritual exercises one engages in habitually which bring him or her closer to God, resulting in becoming more godly in knowledge, understanding, character, and behavior
- C. Forms of spiritual discipline
1. Prayer, in which one spends time talking to God - Dan. 6:10; Col. 4:2
    - a. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his personal prayers? An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
    - b. How can habitual, quality prayer increase self-discipline and character? An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.
  2. Meditation, in which one contemplates God's Word or other worthy considerations - Psalm 1:1-2; Phil. 4:8
    - a. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his meditation? (IBID)
    - b. How can habitual, quality meditation increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
  3. Fasting, usually accompanied with prayer, in which one abstains from food or other physical needs for a predetermined period of time
    - a. Neh. 1:4; Acts 13:2-3, 14:23

- b. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his fasting? (IBID)
  - c. How can habitual, quality fasting increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
- 4. Singing, through which one can praise God and be personally edified and refreshed - Psalm 71:23; Acts 16:25
  - a. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his praise in song when alone? (IBID)
  - b. How can habitual, quality singing in with the spirit and understanding increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
- 5. Giving, by which we please God and are blessed (It is when we help others, regardless of personal cost, that we find our greater sense of accomplishment and fulfillment; contrast with helping ourselves) - Heb. 13:16; Acts 20:35
  - a. How can one increase the regularity and generous quality of his gifts? (IBID)
  - b. How can habitual, generous giving increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
- 6. Assembling, where we can exhort one another and be exhorted (Is exhortation unidirectional?) - Psalm 122:1; Heb. 10:24-25
  - a. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his assembling for exhortation? (IBID)
  - b. How can habitual, quality assembling for exhortation increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
- 7. Hospitality, showing kindness to strangers, without concern for a reciprocal blessing - Heb. 13:2
  - a. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his love and care for strangers? (IBID)
  - b. How can habitual, quality hospitality increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
- 8. Teaching, benefiting the teacher, as well as the student - Heb. 5:12-14
  - a. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his teaching? (IBID)
  - b. How can habitual, quality teaching increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
- 9. Confession, to ourselves, God, and if public, to others - James 5:16
  - a. How can one increase the regularity and quality of his confession? (IBID)
  - b. How can habitual, quality confession increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
- 10. Celebration, the discipline of rejoicing. It is especially needed by those who take life too seriously. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Reverent joy empowers and keeps one sweet, sane, and strong - Phil. 4:4
  - a. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his Christian joy? (IBID)

- b. How can habitual, quality focus on Christian joy increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
11. Blessing, the discipline of openly loving others - Rom. 12:14
    - a. Observe an individual person, visually or as a mental image.
    - b. Appreciate them as they are, rather than as you wish them to be.
    - c. Bless them with an open expression and action of good-will.
    - d. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his blessing others (IBID)
    - e. How can habitual, quality blessing others increase self-discipline and character (IBID)
  12. Solitude, taking time to be alone is a prerequisite for most of the other disciplines and is essential to spiritual health
    - a. Six times Jesus chose solitude over people
    - b. To prepare for a major task - Luke 4:1-2, 14-15. After His baptism and before His temptation
    - c. To refresh after hard work - Mark 6:30-32. Limited commission
    - d. To bear with grief - Matthew 14:1-13. Upon hearing news of the execution of His cousin, John the Baptist
    - e. Before making an important decision - Luke 6:12-13. A night alone in prayer
    - f. In a time of distress - Luke 22:39-44. Gethsemane
    - g. To focus on prayer to God - Luke 5:16. Rather than people
    - h. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his solitary moments? (IBID)
    - i. How can habitual, quality solitude increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
  13. Study, the discipline of intentional learning - 2Tim. 2:15
    - a. Repetition - return to the same subject again and again
    - b. Concentration - focus attention
    - c. Comprehension - grasp the truth in what is studied
    - d. Reflection - look for the significance in what is studied
    - e. How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his Bible study? (IBID)
    - f. How can habitual, quality study of God's word increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
  14. Simplicity, freedom from anxiety about things and fear of others' opinions - Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:6-7
    - a. How can habitual, quality study of God's word increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
    - b. How can habitual, quality study of God's word increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
  15. Service, the self-discipline of doing things for someone other than self Mark 10:45
    - a. How can habitual, quality study of God's word increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)

- b. How can habitual, quality study of God's word increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
- 16. Submission, the discipline of freeing the self from the obsession of getting its own way - Eph. 5:21
  - a. How can habitual, quality study of God's word increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)
  - b. How can habitual, quality study of God's word increase self-discipline and character? (IBID)

## **II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE**

A. An undisciplined life leads to:

1. A lack of restraint that produces indulgence in fleshly, carnal desires
2. A lack of respect for authority that produces departure from God's will
3. Overt defensiveness about sinful choices and lifestyles
4. Decline in spiritual and possibly physical health
5. Harm to financial future; rising debt
6. Poor performance at work, failure to advance, or job loss
7. Development of slothful habits and possibly unkempt appearance
8. Reckless manner of speech, declining social skills, loss of relationships
9. Habitual tardiness, procrastination, and undependability
10. Wastes time and resources, blames others or circumstances
11. Loss of influence and credibility
12. Inability to be a faithful and effective Christian. An undisciplined life compromises one's testimony for Christ - 1Cor. 9:27

## **III. WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR SPIRITUAL SELF-DISCIPLINE?**

- A. Have a definite purpose. Goals clarify what disciplines are necessary.
- B. Detach from things that distract from goals.
- C. Pursue objectives with diligence. Reflecting on the worthiness of goals will increase focus on the course.
- D. Be consistent. The full benefits of a self-controlled life can be found only through regular practice.
- E. Practice self-control. Stumbling happens; get up and return to work on self-discipline.
- F. Say "no" both in the heart and with the mouth with conviction to all temptation to ease up or take a break.
- G. Remember accountability; not just accountability to God, but the impact an influence on others and to the self. Write it down and read it often.

## **IV. WHAT ARE THE REWARDS OF SPIRITUAL SELF-DISCIPLINE?**

- A. A more orderly and consequently less stressful life. Self-discipline can increase peace, joy, and confidence.
- B. Improved confidence and self-esteem. Setting and achieving goals will confer a sense of accomplishment.
- C. Increased productivity. A well-planned day is generally more fruitful.

- D. Better health. By eating right, exercising, avoiding drug and alcohol abuse, and getting proper rest, many illnesses can be avoided that hinder attendance, good works, and personal development.
- E. A sound, healthy impact and influence on others. A disciplined life often inspires others toward the same. It can lead to interest and questions about other, deeper spiritual matters.
- F. Eternal reward. The most significant benefit of discipline will come from God.

## **V. HOW CAN SELF-DISCIPLINE BE APPLIED IN WORSHIP?**

A. It should be fairly obvious at this point that if the principles of self-discipline above are adopted and applied by the Christian, he or she will use them in worship as well as in all aspects of life. The things that enhance our focus when alone or in a secular setting will work equally well when assembled for worship. In fact, fellowship with others should facilitate self-control and awareness when gathered together in the presence of the Lord.

B. Remember, worship is about God, not me. It is about me using the word and will of God to serve, praise, and glorify Him; it is not about me being served, moved, or motivated. I motivate and move myself to honor and adore God

Sources:

Disciplines for Disciples by Mark Copeland.

Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth, by Richard J. Foster (Harper & Row, 1988).

Self-Discipline: The Pillars of Christian Character by John MacArthur, Jr., 1998