

WELCOME TO A STUDY OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES.

Email matthew@discoverrevo.com With Any Questions Or Comments

Leader Notes:

- Each week you will watch a video and discuss the video using these questions.
 - Feel free to add, take away, or replace any questions with your own, because you know your group better than anyone else!

- Each week you will also have a “put it into practice” section. This is the group’s homework for the next week. Since we are talking about spiritual disciplines it will be helpful for you to put each discipline into practice as you talk about it.
 - Because you will be giving them homework, it might be helpful to follow up with your group members throughout the week to see how they are doing. Or put some sort of accountability structure in place to ensure everyone gets the most out of this study as possible!

- Week 2 is also called week 1.5 because it is not a required video session. Instead, it is a short discussion on a defense of the trustworthiness of the Bible. It was a detour that I took with my group, because I thought it would be helpful to put our feet on solid foundation of trusting the Bible as our source for the study. Feel free to skip it or include it in your study.
 - For a little more information, click play on the video for “week 2” and watch the first 2 minutes to see if you want to watch that video with your group.

- I sometimes give you more questions/information than you may be able to fit into your time slot. If that’s the case, just pick and choose questions/information you feel are most applicable. I’d rather you have too much than not enough!

- There are only 10 videos. I have included one additional week’s worth of content on the last pages of this document if you’d like more. It is a guided prayer for your group to pray through together as an example for what Bible meditation and prayer can look like. This is taken straight from my own personal study, because I find it helpful to see the ways others organize their time spent with God. It was AWESOME for my rGroup to do it together.
 - I’d recommend inserting this after the prayer video (#4).

Session 1: Our Purpose

1. What are some goals that you have set for yourself in the past that you succeeded in meeting? How did it feel to meet and set a goal?
2. What goals would you like to set for your spiritual life over the next season?
3. When you think about doing the “Spiritual Disciplines”, what is your purpose behind that practice?
4. What do you think about godliness as the goal of spiritual disciplines? Why do you think it’s important to have that as your primary goal?
5. If you’re a Christian, what does Satan use the most in your life to quench your “holy hungers”?
6. What do you think about the idea of treasuring God above all else as a purpose behind practicing Spiritual Disciplines?
7. Are you more inclined toward the personal or interpersonal disciplines? Why?
8. Why is it so important that we look to the Bible as our guide for how to best grow spiritually?

Put it into Practice:

- For next week, read and journal any notes on these 3 passages: Psalm 19, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Session 2: Can we Trust the Bible?

1. Have you ever wondered if you could trust the Bible as God's Word?
2. Have you ever heard anyone doubt the reliability of the New Testament? If so, what did they say? What did you think about it?
3. What was the most interesting fact you learned from the section about what the Bible says about the Bible?
4. For further study read 1 Tim. 5:18 and 2 Peter 3:16. Any guesses at why these are significant as we look at the trustworthiness of the Bible?
 - a. *Leader Note: 1 Tim. 5 quotes Deut. 24:5 and Luke 10:7. What this shows us is that 1 - the Gospel of Luke was written before the death of Paul and 2- that Paul equated Luke's Gospel with the authority given to Old Testament Scripture. 2 Peter 3:16 shows that Peter lumped Paul's writings into the category of Scripture.*
 - i. *So at the VERY least, Paul and Luke are considered as Holy Scripture by the Bible. And even if that is the only parts we decide to trust, that is over 50% of the New Testament! Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts. Paul wrote Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1&Timothy, Titus, Philemon and maybe Hebrews.*
5. What was the most interesting fact that you learned about the reliability of the New Testament?

Put it into Practice:

- Focus on Psalm 19:7-11 and what it says about the Word of God. For more in depth study read a little bit of Psalm 119 each day

Session 3: Bible Intake

1. When you think of the spiritual discipline of “Bible Intake”, what practice(s) comes to your mind?
2. If any, what sort of Bible Intake did you grow up with in your household? How do you think the presence of that or the lack of that has shaped you?
3. What do you expect out of a sermon/message? Are your expectations even important?
4. Read Matthew 4:4. Think about the importance of food to you and your daily life. What would change if we saw God’s Word as the food by which we live?
5. What is the most common barrier to you spending time in God’s Word on a routine basis?
6. Do you have any practices that you currently do or have done in the past that have been helpful in Bible Intake? Which one of the 3 (time, plan, meditate) discussed in the video would help you the most if you tried it out?

Practical Tips Not Included In The Video:

3 ways to engage the Bible that payoff:

1. Memorize
 - a. Google memorization tips
 - b. Write the verses over and over
 - c. Write them on sticky notes and place them in common areas. Then read/recite every time you see it.
2. Meditate - use the P.R.O.S.P.E.R method - very simple breakdown of how to meditate on the Bible (just one method of many)
 - a. Pray - (it can be short or long. Just focus on God being the one who helps you understand and gives you desire, direction, and ability):
 - i. Ex. “God, thank you for your Word. I know that you love me, you want me to know you, and you want to be the source of my joy. Teach me through your Word, open my eyes to understand it, and my ears to hear you speak. Help me find joy in this reading today.”
 - b. Read - As you read, stop when something stands out to you. Meditate on that. Pray over that.
 - c. Observe

- i. If you've read a few verses and nothing stood out, go back re-read and observe it. Ask who, what, when, where, and why. Simplify the story.
 - d. Study
 - i. This is the deep dive into meanings of words, cross-references, concordances, etc.
 - e. Pray - as God gives you truth, pray over that truth
 - f. Exercise - Now, find out how you will apply it
 - g. Repeat - do that for multiple verses, or if you've run out of time, repeat this process the next time.
3. Apply - Read Psalm 1:1-3 and James 1:25. What do you see here as benefits of applying/doing what you read?
 - a. Expect to find something
 - b. Understand the text - find authors original intent and how audience would have read it
 - i. Why? Because misinterpretation = misapplication
 - c. Meditate for the purpose of finding application
 - d. S.P.E.C.
 - i. Sin to avoid
 - ii. Promise to claim
 - iii. Example to Follow
 - iv. Command to Obey
 - e. Create an "I will" statement
 - f. Application almost always requires accountability

Put it into Practice:

- For next week, decide a method or two you want to try out and then do it! Journal your thoughts on the method and how it worked or didn't work for you. Share your thoughts with others!
- Or choose a 7 day Bible reading plan on a Bible app you all use and read through it together for that week.

Week 4: Prayer

1. Let's be honest with each other. How often do you pray throughout the week?
2. What are your top 2-3 biggest distractions/reasons for not praying?
3. What is prayer to you? Define it. Explain it. What do you think that prayer is?
4. Why should prayer be important to Christians?
5. What do you think about the idea that we are involved in a spiritual war and prayer is how we fight? If this is true, how should it change the way you act/react to circumstances?
6. From the acronym F.A.D.E.S, which one do you do the most?
7. Which one do you think would be most helpful for you to try out?

Put it into Practice:

- Write down 3 ways we can pray for you specifically. Include some spiritual requests - ways we can go to war with you. Then exchange with someone else. Now, pray each day for your assigned person. If you're really feeling crazy, text them during the week for updates and anymore requests.
 - *Leader Note: It may be helpful to split into smaller groups for this. If you're a mixed group, you could split into girls and guys.*

Week 5: Worship

1. Worship is a spiritual discipline. What is worship to you?
2. Worship is derived from the old English word “worthship.” It is also defined as the God-centered focus and response of our soul. What does this definition tell you about true worship?
3. A.W. Tozer said, “If you will not worship God 7 days a week, you do not worship Him on 1 day a week.” What do you think it means to make worship a spiritual discipline, and do it every day of the week?
4. What do you think it looks like to worship “in spirit and in truth”?
5. Why is it important for Christians to be worshipping from the inside out rather than just on the outside? What could that look like in our cultural context?
6. How can you practically apply worship as we talked about it as a daily discipline in growing you into being more like Christ (transformation) and love Christ more (treasure)?

Put it into Practice:

- Worship is a whole life thing. It’s got a huge scope. To accomplish the big things we have to start small. So, pick a spiritual discipline from one of the past few sessions to put into practice as an act of worship. Make a plan, tell the group, and commit to do it this week.

Week 6: Evangelism

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “evangelism”?
2. Our definition for evangelism is “communicating the Gospel.” Have you ever communicated the Gospel to someone?
3. “Your job is not the opportunity or the outcome, but the obedience.” This statement should be freeing. Is it freeing to you? Why or why not?
4. What are the reasons why you/Christians in general don’t share the Gospel frequently?
5. The best way to communicate the Gospel is living a life that delights fully in God. Is your relationship with Jesus attractive to an unbeliever? Why or why not?
6. How would you explain the Gospel to someone who is not a Christian?
7. Do you have a preferred method of evangelism? If so, what is it?
8. Try it out right now! Pick an evangelism method and practice it with each other.

Put it into Practice:

- Share the Gospel with someone. Literally any human being. Practice on your friend who is a Christian and get them to rate it. If there’s someone specific you have been wanting to share with, tell the group and we will hold you accountable.

Week 7: Serving

(shorter discussion so you can spend more time on the activity in question 5)

1. Think about the words “serve God.” What does that mean to you as defined in the video?
2. What are some ways that you have served in the past or are serving right now?
3. What motivates you to serve?
4. What are your biggest challenges to serving?
5. Click the following link and have everyone in your group do this “Spiritual Gifts” assessment. While this is not a perfect way to know what your spiritual gifts are, it is a good start!
 - a. <http://brewsterchurch.com/resources/spiritual-gift-assessment>

Put it into Practice:

- Find a way to serve in the community or church you’re in. If you’re at REVO, go to www.discoverREVO.com, click the next steps tab, and click “volunteer.” Find something you think you want to try and go for it!

Week 8: Stewardship

1. What is your most prized possession?
2. Stewardship is defined as: “the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property.” What does that mean to you?
3. What do you think about the idea that God gives not equally, but according to our ability?
4. One of our points in the video was “It is not the amount given, but the faithfulness that matters.” How can that be applied to your life?
5. What do you think making the best use of time looks like? Or what does wasting time look like?
6. What do you think faithful stewardship of your time and your things looks like for you?
7. For further study of the idea that obedience leads to joy: Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14. How should the belief that God’s ways for your life are better than anything else impact your daily living?

Put it into Practice:

- Find one ministry (REVO, non-profit, other ministry) to give to financially on a regular basis. And/or find out what your biggest time-wasting activity is and replace it with another spiritual discipline.

Week 9: Fasting

1. You're on death row. You get to choose anything you want for your last meal - what is it?
2. What do you know about fasting? Have you ever done it before? If so, what did you think about it?
3. The definition of fasting was "a believer's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes." What stands out to you most in that definition?
4. Why do you think many Christians have not and/or do not fast?
5. Out of the 8 purposes of fasting given in the video, which ones stand out to you and why?
6. If not fasting from food, what would be something that would be spiritually advantageous for you to fast from? What would it take for you to fast in some form this week?

Put it into Practice: *Let's fast together. Pick a specific time period on a specific day and all fast together. List one specific prayer request we can present to God that aligns with one of the purposes of fasting we discussed. Pray for each other during the fast.*

Week 10: Friendship

1. Who are a few of the best friends that you've ever had? What made them your best friend?
2. What characteristics define a friend in your opinion? What characteristics make for a bad friend?
3. Your friends either hold you back, keep you stagnant, or push you forward. How would you characterize your friends in the past and the present in those categories?
4. Would you call your current friendships wide or deep? Why?
5. Have you ever felt like your worst is THE worst? Why did you feel like that?
6. Of the 5 Practical Tips for forging Christ-centered relationships, which ones are you best at?
7. Which ones are you worst at? How can you work to get better in those areas?
8. How can Matthew make this study better? What should he keep in it? What should he take out? What should he add? Email matthew@discoverREVO.com with your thoughts or questions!

Put it into Practice:

- Don't let the past 10 weeks be wasted! Remember to seek Christ-likeness and love for Christ above all else in your pursuit of the Spiritual Disciplines. Make someone in this rGroup a Christ-centered friend and persevere through the off-season in that friendship.

Additional Week of Group Prayer:

Different colored text helps to see how God spoke to me through His Word. Use this as a guide, not a rulebook for how it must be done.

Blue text = forced - I had to stop and study before God gave me His Word

Red text = found - Immediate quickening in my spirit - always followed by testing according to other Biblical truths

- Ultimately all truth pulled from scripture is found. Meaning it's given by God and never discoverable on our own w/o His help. Language of forced and found is just helpful to know when something struck me immediately vs when I needed to stop and study before God opened my eyes.

Bible Meditation Method: P.R.O.S.P.E.R

- Pray, Read, Observe/Study, Pray, Exercise, Repeat

Start with prayer (it can be short or long. Just focus on God being the one who helps you understand and gives you desire, direction, and ability):

- “God thank you for your Word. I know that you love me, you want me to know you, and you want to be the source of my joy. Teach me through your Word, open my eyes to understand it and my ears to hear you speak. Help me find joy in this reading today.”

READ 1:1-2 - stop here and get my bearings: a Jewish man and his wives. Only had 2 wives if you could afford it and one didn't provide you children

- Elkanah = wealthy Israelite
- Hannah = barren which means that she was looked down on, sinner, not favored/blessed
- Peninnah = most likely 2nd wife and did her job right, gave Elkanah kids

READ 1:3

- Elkanah is being faithful, following law
- Lord of hosts - study bible says this is the first time Lord of hosts is used even though it is used a lot after this point. Refers to the Lord's greatness (celestial bodies or angelic armies)
- PRAY:

- Praise God, honor Him, give Him glory as great, almighty, creator of the heavens, God of all resources, think of heaven's armies and ask Him to cultivate within you a reverent fear of Him

READ 1:4-7

- Despite failure Hannah was favored by Elkanah
 - The double portion stoked the anger of Peninnah
- Failure/fruitlessness does not lead to loss of favor
- Favor draws criticism. Blessing brings battles.
- **PRAY:**
 - Thank God that His favor is not dependent on our faithfulness. Thank God for Jesus' faithfulness on our behalf. Ask Him for His favor/blessing. Acknowledge that blessing brings battles and ask God to help you acknowledge it as a spiritual battle. Ask that God would make you want Him regardless of the discomfort that may bring. Desire for Christ over the desire for comfort.

Stay in v. 4-7 cause something else stuck out to you:

- The giving and the withholding of children is from the Lord
 - Reminded me of Christen's pregnancy
 - How much faith and trust this must take! God's blessing on some is babies. God's blessing on others is barrenness.
 - So tough.
- **PRAY:**
 - Thank God for the blessing of children in the life of someone you know. Praise Him for His sovereign control. Pray for those who struggle to have children. Think of the things you're asking God for in your own life. Remind your heart of His sovereign control and rest in that truth.

READ 1:8

- Elkanah asks his beloved yet barren wife, "am I not more to you than 10 sons?"
 - Does this not echo the cry of Jesus to His bride, the Church??
- **PRAY:**
 - "Why do you not enjoy me? Are the blessings I have provided not enough? Am I not more to you than 10x whatever it is your heart desires??" Confess the sin of seeking satisfaction in things outside of Jesus. Ask God to cleanse you of those desires and replace them with an all-consuming passion for Jesus. Bring your biggest requests/needs/wants to God. Ask Him to create a desire in you for Him that is 10x greater than those things.

READ 1:9-11

- Hannah makes a Nazirite vow to God that if He gives her a son, she will dedicate Him to the service of God
- **PRAY:**
 - “With the coming of Lent and preparation for Easter, draw me closer to you.” Ask God if there is anything you can give up for Lent that is bad for you and He wants you to trust Him with it. Ask God if there’s anything good that you can up for Lent. Ask His Spirit to bring things to mind that will help better connect you to Him during this time.

READ 1:12-15

- Eli jumps on her for potentially bringing sin (drunkenness) into the presence of God.
 - What unconfessed sin(s) do you need to rid yourself of?
 - Who do you need to confront about sin and it’s harmful consequences to that person and it’s offense to God?

READ 1:16

- Hannah brings her anxiety and hurt to God
 - Reminds me of 1 Peter 5:7
- **PRAY:**
 - **Bring your anxieties, confusion, and hurts to God. He’s big enough to handle them. Ask that God would remove those burdens from you and remind and reassure you of His great love for you.**

READ 1:17-18

- After time spent with God in prayer, Hannah can now eat and not be sad. Reminds me of v. 8.
 - Doesn’t say she was abundantly happy and smiling. But now she was not obviously sad and grieved to the point of not being able to enjoy the blessing of her husband and celebration.
- **PRAY:**
 - **Is there visible change in me because of time spent with God? Do I leave more joyful than when I came? Am I less-burdened? God make that true of me! Ask God to help you find greater joy in life (despite your circumstances) because of the time you spend with Him.**

READ 1:19-25

- Hannah's entire focus was on the promise she had made to God in prayer. Focused on faithfulness.
 - My focus needs to center on faithfulness. There is a time to celebrate, a time to be with family, a time to rest, but focus needs to be on faithfulness to God and His Word.
- **PRAY:**
 - Ask God to set your focus on faithfulness. Ask for His help to show you what He has called you to do through His Word, then ask for the grace to actually do it. Where am I lacking in faithfulness? Ask His Spirit to convict you. Then do something about it.

READ 1:26-27

- Hannah recognizes where her blessings come from and whose they truly are.
 - What do I need to acknowledge is God's and hand it over to Him?
- **PRAY:**
 - Thank God for what He has given you. Be specific in your gratitude. Find a few things you love in or about your life and thank God as the source of those blessings. Ask Him how He wants you to use what He has allowed you to steward. Ask His Spirit to reveal anything else in your life that you need to hold with "open hands."