

9 Spiritual Disciplines (10/18/26)

Part 2: Talking & Listening to God

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Weekly Prayer Group: 9:30 AM Sundays, Noon & 6 PM Wednesdays.
- Fight Club: 10/24, 10/31 & 11/7 at 8:30 AM at the Church. Please pay and sign up.
- KID'S CHURCH
 - *One week from today (10/25) there's a mandatory meeting for all kids church volunteers, immediately after service.*
 - Ages 3-7 in back room.
 - Ages 8-12 in old Sanctuary
 - SIGN UP SHEET (for 3-7) will have 2 columns: Teacher and Helper.
 - If we don't have 2 people per class for 3-7, we won't have kids church that day.
 - Teachers have the right to send a disruptive child out of class back to parents.

1. Solitude DAILY!
2. *Prayer, thanks, praise & worship DAILY!*
3. Bible Reading DAILY!
4. Self-examination & Repentance DAILY!
5. Sabbath (doesn't have to be Sat).
6. Controlling the Tongue
 - a. Glorifying God
 - b. Edifying the Saints
7. Witness/Testimony to unbelievers.
8. Community/Gathering of Saints & service
9. Tithing/Offering/Generosity

- All 9 of these hang on the 1st one: solitude.
- The 5 are internal and form our "foundation" with solitude as the chief cornerstone.
- The last 4 are external and build our "house."
- The last 4 depend on the first 5.

Question: **how many of time spent solitude time with God since last Sunday?** How many of you did it every day?

TODAY: **is it necessary to take time every day to pray, give thanks, praise, and worship Jesus?**

Let me ask it a different way: **what if that weren't an obligation, but something we wanted to do?**

Allow me another question: **what happens if we get up one day and we're not in the mood? Not feeling the inspiration?**

How many married people in the room? Let me ask you a series of questions:

- * You interact every day vs ignoring each other.
- * Get to know each other better, or just assume you already know everything.
- * Hear requests from your spouse or not.
- * Make requests to your spouse or not.
- * Thank your spouse for who they are and what they do.
- * Praise your spouse when they accomplish something.

I was married on June 6th 1998...**am I any more married now than then?** No.

What if I've done nothing to improve my marriage? Change myself for the better, so I'm more like Christ?

I was Saved on June 27th, 1997...**am I any more Saved now than then?** No.

What if I've done nothing to improve my relationship with Jesus? Allow Him to mold me to become more like Him? Obey Him and live out His righteousness?

We're in a marital relationship with Jesus:

2 Corinthians 11:2: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

In Ephesians 5, Paul speaks of husbands loving their wives, and wives submitting to their husbands: marriage. Paul then says this in the next verses:

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Right before the 2nd coming is a **grand wedding celebration in heaven**, where the ceremony takes place!

Revelation 19:7-9: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

- Jesus is our God, but we are also being joined together with Him.
- Jesus is our King, but He is also sharing everything with us like a husband does his wife.
- Jesus is our Creator, but He is also choosing to elevate us to the status of His bride.

He loves us, pure and simple. He is the Source of His own love for us, so we never have to compete, fight, or strive for it... because He will never withdraw or reduce that love and He has plenty for all.

What is the greatest commandment?

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. (Mark 12:30)

This command isn't meant to be a burden or obligation, but inspiration. Don't people like to say that we love with actions as well as words? Spending time with Jesus, talking to Him, listening to Him talk, thanking Him, praising Him, and worshipping Him as Lord: ***aren't these acts of love?***

- I will never increase my Salvation or decrease it and I have it forever.
- God's love for me will not increase or decrease.
- My closeness with Him ***will*** increase or decrease, however.
- The more time I spend with Him, the closer I am to Him.

This sermon series is about following Jesus.

- Relationship with Jesus is the most important aspect of following Him.
- This sermon series is about picking up our crosses and denying ourselves.
- We deny the pursuits of the world and the flesh, but we grab hold of pursuing our relationship with Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (ESV)

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

When we ask God to reveal His will for our lives, do we tend to focus on external things like job, where we live, finances, etc?

What are we learning in this series? **The internal must come first.** When the internal is aligned with Jesus, the external comes into focus.

What is the will of God for our lives? 1) Rejoice in God. 2) Give thanks to God. 3) Pray to God.

***Philippians 4:6–7* (ESV)**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

What are our requests aimed at? Usually external things like job, where we live, finances, etc. The internal must come first and when it's aligned with the Holy Spirit, the external starts to become clear. (Doesn't mean it always works out!)

How about our prayerful requests be aimed at internal transformation vs external provision?

[Mat 6:31-33 ESV] – 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

In our solitude time with God, let us seek HIM! His Kingdom! His righteousness! As we do so, we will transform from glory to glory and shine with His Light! Imagine how that will affect the external?! The stuff we tend to pray about?

Ephesians 5:20

Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 4:2

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

1 Corinthians 15:57

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough's influential 2003 paper

("Counting Blessings Versus Burdens") randomly assigned participants to list things they were grateful for, daily hassles, or neutral events. Those in the gratitude conditions reported higher positive affect, greater optimism, more exercise, fewer physical symptoms, and (in one sample with neuromuscular disease) better sleep quality and duration compared with control groups. [Pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

Summary of Typical Benefits

Reported benefits from the literature commonly include:

- Higher positive emotions and life satisfaction
- Modest reductions in anxiety and depression symptoms
- Better sleep quality in some studies
- Stronger social relationships and prosocial behavior
- Greater optimism

Let's give PRAISE to God:

Hebrews 13:15

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

James 5:13

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

Two things from these verses:

1. ***Praise is a sacrifice*** and here's what that means: when we pray and ask Him for something, He's giving to us. ***When we offer something to God w/o asking for anything, it's a sacrifice because we're giving to Him.*** In the OT this was called "ministering" to God and was done by the Levite Priests.
2. If you're in a good mood, then literally praise the Lord!

Psalm 34:1

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalm 100:4

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!

WORSHIP HIM as He is God, our Creator, our Lord, and our King!

Hebrews 12:28

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.

Psalm 95:6

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

Psalm 29:2

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.

Psalm 96:9

Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth!

1 Chronicles 16:29 — Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.

Psalm 99:5 — Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he!

SUMMARY. All of these things are done in our solitude with Jesus. Every day. Non-negotiable. Whether we're in the mood or we aren't.

TIP:

- If I'm not in the mood and I do this anyway, my mood gets better.
- If I'm in an ok mood and I do this, my mood turns to good.
- If I'm in a good mood and I do this, it turns to great!
- If I'm in a great mood and I do this, I start speaking in tongues, prophesying, and declaring!!!

PRAYER?