

DEEPER

THE DISCIPLINE OF MEDITATION



INTRODUCTION

- Ask your group members to list and describe different spiritual disciplines with which they are familiar.

SERMON REVIEW

- As we begin to go deeper, don't let the fear of the unknown keep you from diving.
- What are spiritual disciplines? They're not new, nor are they man-made commodities. They're ancient traditions, rooted in the Word of God.
- They promote spiritual growth among believers in Jesus Christ. They're habits of devotion, of experiential Christianity.
- Disciples are those who follow the way of their master or their teacher, and learn from them - applying their teaching in everyday life.
- The habits we practice on a regular basis shape the decisions we make and the lives we lead. Our practices reveal our priorities!
- What's the end result? We draw closer to God, hear from the Holy Spirit, and live more like Jesus.
- Let's take meditation as our first example. While Eastern meditation is about emptying and detaching oneself, biblical meditation fills and attaches the disciple to God, primarily through the truth found in His word.
- Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God's voice and obey his word.
- Meditation quiets our souls; it gets us away from the noise to hear God; it brings clarity, wisdom, and peace; and it realigns our hearts with the Father's.
- Three elements of biblical meditation: draw near, listen, and obey.
- "Draw near" by meditating on Scripture, re-centering (palms up, palms down), and contemplative prayer (remembering him and what he has done).
- It's time to go beyond shallow Christianity!

DISCUSSION

- What tends to keep you from practicing spiritual disciplines? What is the greatest obstacle you face in prayer, meditation, simplicity, fasting, etc.?
- What is the purpose of practicing spiritual discipline, and what impact should that purpose have on the obstacles you face?
- Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-26. Does anything from that passage stand out to anyone?
- Why do we tend to oppose such "strict training" that Paul describes?
- How does the comparison to athletics aid your understanding of spiritual discipline?
- Compare and contrast common preconceptions of meditation with the practice of biblical meditation. How does meditating as a follower of Jesus differ from meditating as a Buddhist or atheist, for example?
- Read Psalm 143:5 and Philippians 4:8. According to verses such as these, how does one practice meditation? What does it entail?

- What is the benefit of biblical meditation?
- What potential challenges or difficulties do you foresee as you consider this discipline? How can you work around those in order begin practicing it?

CHALLENGE

- Introduce meditation into your routine this week, whether it be in the form of contemplation or re-centering prayer. Start with five or ten minutes a day!

CLOSING PRAYER