

March 17, 2019

“Preparing for The Road to Hope”

Gateway’s mission - to lead everyone to become more like Jesus

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT): “...the Lord – who is the Spirit – makes us more and more like him [Jesus Christ] as we are changed into his glorious image.”

Spiritual practices, historically called spiritual disciplines or means of grace, are how we prepare ourselves to recognize and hear the Spirit.

1 Timothy 4:7b-8 (NLT): “⁷...train yourself to be godly. ⁸Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.”

Spiritual training is a long-term (lifetime) endeavor that requires both our efforts as well as the Spirit’s.

Three Images of Spiritual Training (*from Pastor John Ortberg*):

- **Rowboat** - we try to spiritually move by our own efforts
- **Raft** - we throw ourselves entirely upon God’s grace and hope for God to work
- **Sailboat** - we depend on the wind of the Spirit to move us, but a good sailor figures out where the wind is blowing and adjusts the sails accordingly

Jesus: ““Only God’s Spirit gives new life. The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going.”” (**John 3:8** CEV)

We *only* grow spiritually through the work of the Spirit, but we have to cooperate by training through spiritual disciplines or we won’t sense the working of the Spirit.

Spiritual disciplines are activities we decide to do because we really want God to work in our lives, and we know we have to be prepared for when He does work.

Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV): ““You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.””

We want to keep up the momentum of these past weeks and train to walk the road to hope to Easter through a special season of focus on spiritual disciplines.

Brochure: “Prayer, Fasting and More”

THREE PURPOSES FOR THESE FOUR WEEKS:

- **Personal Spiritual Renewal**

- Revival of our Church
- Salvation of the Lost

OUR DISCIPLINES FOR TRAINING DURING THESE FOUR WEEKS:

1. Serve

Jesus: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45 ESV)

2. Tithe

Malachi 3:10 (ESV): “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.”

3. Worship

Psalms 95:6 (ESV): “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!”

4. Read the Gospel of Matthew

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT): “¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”

5. Pray

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NIV): “pray continually”

6. Fast

Joel 1:14 (NLT): “Announce a time of fasting; call the people together for a solemn meeting. Bring the leaders and all the people of the land into the Temple of the LORD your God, and cry out to him there.”

Fasting is abstaining from food (typically) for spiritual purposes.

Pastor Dave Clayton: “Fasting involves our letting go of something in the physical realm to take hold of new things in the spiritual realm.”

Fasting changes us, not God, but it does help us become more open to God’s Spirit and respond to Him as He works in and through us.

God is calling us to be a Gateway to hope for the Bay Area and beyond, but we can’t be that on our own – we need God’s Spirit working in and through us!

These spiritual disciplines may seem too radical for some, but the Biblical record is that God's people did this when they were serious about seeking God and His Will.

Get the *Life Journal* Bible Reading Plan at gateway-community.org/Find-it

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