

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small green plant with a ball of dark soil. The background is a blurred garden with various flowers and greenery. The image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent box containing text.

Transformation Series Notes

The Lamp's Transformation Series presents the five main spiritual disciplines, of Christianity, in such a way as to emphasize the believer's role in transformation. The spiritual disciplines are tools in the hands of Christian who desires to be shaped more and more into the image and likeness of Christ.

Notes

Introduction

1 - Matt. 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

2 - "God has given us the disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving His grace. The disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us" (Richard Foster.)

What: The goal of this series is to present the spiritual disciplines as a practical means by which you can seek the transforming hand of God. Too often the idea of transformation is offered in lofty platitudes. The atmospheric heights of God's supernatural transformation seem to leave us without hope of oxygen or the ability to attain such majestic a thing. We are told to "hunger and thirst for righteousness" and we will be satisfied (Matt. 5:6). We are told to "approach the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). We are told to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." We are instructed to participate with the Holy Spirit in be/being sanctified and transformed (2 Cor. 3:17-18). But how!? How do we do we do this? How do you "train yourself to be Godly" (1 Tim. 4:7)?

The answer: with the spiritual disciplines. Richard Foster defines the concept of spiritual discipline as "God has given us the disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving His grace. The disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us." This is confirmed by Don Whitney; "the spiritual disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They are habits of devotion, habits of experiential Christianity that have been practiced by God's people since Biblical times." *As you can see from these definitions, the spiritual disciplines are the practices in which people participate to strengthen their relationship with God and position their hearts to be further transformed.*

Definitions --

"The spiritual disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are habits of devotion, habits of experiential Christianity that have been practiced by God's people since biblical times" (Don Whitney).

"The purpose of spiritual discipline is the development of our inner being, that which has been transformed by Christ at salvation (2 Corinthians 5:17)" (gotquestions.org).

"God has given us the disciplines of the spiritual life as a means of receiving His grace. The disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us" (Richard Foster).

Scripture --

1 Tim. 4:7, "Train yourself to be Godly."

Rom. 7:19-20, 24 "I do not do what I want... wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

Notes

Gal. 5:17, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do."

It has probably become obvious to you that discipline fights against our flesh and our fallen nature. Training ourselves to partake of the things of the Spirit is difficult, because the flesh wars against the Holy Spirit. Our fallen nature wants to remain fallen and disobedient to God. This is why it is so important to engage the spiritual disciplines, and develop habits and practices that pursue God and sanctify us.

Prayer:

Martin Luther, "to be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than being alive without breathing."

"Christian prayer, then, shared a simple belief that God could be petitioned to intervene and effect changes in nature and in the course of world events. The immediate source of this confidence came from the teachings and examples of Jesus himself, such as the model prayer he offered (Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4) and his assurance that one had only to ask the Father in order to receive what was needed" (BST.com).

...

"Thus, prayer was unquestioningly believed to be an effective cause of God's actions such that a difference resulted in human events" (BST.com).

"True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance. It is far deeper than that - it is spiritual transaction with the Creator of Heaven and Earth"

(Charles Spurgeon).

"Prayer - secret, fervent, believing prayer - lies at the root of all personal godliness"

(William Carey).

"To fail to pray. . . is not to merely break some religious rule—it is a failure to treat God as God" (Tim Keller).

What (Define):

Notes

Prayer is much more than a petition! In Matt. 6:9-13, Jesus gave a pattern of prayer to His disciples. This reveals that prayer is much more than just simple petition. Here, Jesus shows how prayer is founded upon a relationship with God ("Our Father"), and it can contain elements of praise and worship ("hallowed [holy] is your name"), confession ("forgive us our debts"), thanksgiving ("your kingdom come your will be done"), and supplication/petition ("give us this day our daily bread"). This seems to demonstrate how Jesus understood prayer. Prayer is not to be limited to the occasion of need. According to this pattern, there is occasion for prayer in every moment, season, and situation. Perhaps, if we view prayer as only the opportunity to ask God for a particular thing, we miss out on the fullness of it!

This may be further seen by looking at the example of Jesus. Not only was prayer a regular part of Jesus' life and ministry, it seems to be a lifestyle! Jesus' earthly and heavenly example proves prayer to be lifestyle of promise, power, and relationship (Eph. 5:1-2). ...

Why (why is it important and why does this lead to our transformation): VERY simply, prayer connects us to God - the Source of all good things.

Let us look at what some of our E-Fam have to say:



Tam Solo

It's my direct link to God! When I pray, I know I'm in His presence.

10h

[Like](#)

[Reply](#)



Renee Berry GOD says be ye holy as I am...



Peter N Kristin McGregor

Prayer brings my heart in line with God's will! -Kristin

21h

[Edited](#)

[Like](#)

[Reply](#)



Notes



Josh Lasquete

Prayer is a one on one conversation with our Heavenly Father. He wants to hear from us often (the good, bad, and the ugly) . It's a time to acknowledge His greatness, listen to Him, thank Him, praise Him. The more we do the stronger our relationship becomes with Him.

22h [Like](#) [Reply](#)



As is confirmed by our E-fam, Prayer is of undying importance to our lives and our transformation because it is one of the ways we participate in our relationship to God.

Prayer, not only petitions God for the things we need, it seeks intimacy with the Almighty; it requests grace for change; it transfers our cares and burdens to the Lord; it touches the Father's Heart with praises of gratitude.

"Prayer - secret, fervent, believing prayer - lies at the root of all personal godliness"

(William Carey).

2 Cor. 3:18, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

It truly changes us!

Finally, it also supplies us with certain graces for certain situations: prayer can beseech God for healing (James 5:14-15), for daily provision (Matt. 6:11), for deliverance (Matt. 6:13), for wisdom and discernment (James 1:5-6), for revelation and insight in regard to God's will (Eph. 1:16-18), for boldness and confidence (Acts 4:29-31), for power (Eph. 3:14-16), etc...

Notes

The fact of the matter is our God is not made by the hands of man - made of wood or stone - deaf and inanimate. God is alive, and He reigns as sovereign King. ...

How (examples):

Praying Scripture. This is an incredible way to learn how to pray if you are new to the faith. It also helps easily develop a good habit of prayer. Also, this is a great practice if you simply cannot think of anything to pray. This practice allows the Bible's inspired Text to set your mind on God and get the ball rolling.

Lastly, it is important to devote a certain time each day to prayer. ... just like Jesus.

Study!

"The purpose of the spiritual disciplines is the total transformation of the person. They aim at replacing old destructive habits of thought with new life-giving habits. Nowhere is this purpose more clearly seen than in the discipline of study" (Richard Foster).

What is it (define):

Study is the practice of carefully reading the Word of God so as to be instructed by it!

What is the Bible?! It is the revelation of God. The nature of it is twofold: it is historical and spiritual.

It is a historical document that needs study to ascertain the ways in which God intervened and interacted with mankind throughout history... this helps us understand how He moves today...

It is a spiritual document that has been inspired (breathed out) by God with the purpose of giving life to the student (2 Tim. 3:16)...

Hebrews 4:12 states, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

It is NOT Bible memorization with which we can impress our friends and pastors...

Why is it important to our transformation:

"Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction. Remember, the mind will always take on an order conforming to the order upon which it concentrates" (Foster).

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect"(Romans 12:2).

Notes

Study allows us to see the example of Jesus Christ that we may be conformed to His image! (Hebrews 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:4)

"In their case the god of this world [satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God"

(2 Corinthians 4:4).

How do I practice it:

1) Repetition

2) Concentration

3) Reflection

4) Humility

(Foster).

A Bible, a quiet place, a reflective attitude, a fiery hunger for the Lord, and a teachable spirit are all you need to begin the discipline of study.

Meditation:

[Watch video](#) featuring Professor Mark Dahlin, the full discussion on Meditation.

Fasting :

(Warning: if you have certain health issues or chronic ailments, it is advised you speak to your doctor before participating in a fast.)

Fasting is a form of prayer and worship that seeks God for spiritual purposes.

"If our fasting is not unto God, we have failed. Physical benefits, success in prayer, the enduing with power, spiritual insights - these must never replace God as the Center of our fasting" (Foster).

What (define):

Fasting is the prayerful abstaining from food for purposes of worship and supplication. (Zech. 8:19; Isaiah 58:1-8; Ezra 8:21)

Notes

There are three types of fasts in the Bible:

1. Standard fast

1. A fast of food, while continuing to drinking water. (Ezra 8:21; Zech. 8:19; Mat. 4:1-2)

1. Partial fast

1. A fast that limits what one eats, but does not restrict food altogether. (Num. 6:1-8; Dan. 1:8-17)

1. Complete fast

1. An extreme fast that abstains from food and water. (Ester 4:16; Exodus 34:28)

(Foster)

Why is it Important to our Transformation:

It helps force the heart, mind, and body on the Savior of our souls. (Joel 2:13, 15)

It reveals the things that are inside of us. When we deny ourselves food, it tends to bring to the surface the carnal and sinful attributes that have taken residence inside us...

□

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Richard Foster stated some of the other blessings and benefits of fasting:

1. Physical benefits

1. Success in prayer

1. Enduing with power

1. Spiritual insight

1. Breakthrough

1. Deliverance for those in bondage

Notes

1. Drawing Near to God (me)

The blessings (or "rewards") of a heartfelt fast is seen in the statement of Jesus in Mat. 6:17-21.

...

"Our seasons of fasting and prayer at the Tabernacle have been high days indeed; never has Heaven's gates stood wider; never have our hearts been nearer the central Glory" (Charles Spurgeon).

Worship:

What is it (define):

The Greek: προσκυνέω (*proskyneō*)

BlueLetterBible highlights how this is used in the Bible as the following:

Outline of Biblical Usage [?]

- I.* to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence
- II.* among the Orientals, esp. the Persians, to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence
- III.* in the NT by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication
 - A.* used of homage shown to men and beings of superior rank
 - i.* to the Jewish high priests
 - ii.* to God
 - iii.* to Christ
 - iv.* to heavenly beings
 - v.* to demons

Strong's Definitions [?] (Strong's Definitions Legend)

GETTING GOD INTO THE FROM TH
READ TH
PARTNER WITH
Multi-Verse Retrieval
For example: Gen 1:1
ESV Retrieve
Let's Connect

... What we can gain from this greek word is that Worship is an outward expression of an inward reality. The Believer's inner love and devotion to the Lord are revealed through worship....

Notes

Worship is a lifestyle of devotion, adoration, and submission to God that is expressed through service, thanksgiving, and moments of spontaneous praise.

In the bible, worship is a lifestyle. It encompasses the entire life of the worshipper, describing the entire experience of devotion to a particular thing....

Worship can be understood in two ways:

1. Moments of praise and celebration

1. Col. 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

1. A lifestyle of devotion and service

1. Rom. 12:1, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

- "Worship... Is not something to be confined to formal worship services, but is a lifestyle. It is to permeate the daily fabric of our lives" (Richard Foster).

Why is it important to our transformation:

Worship, as a spiritual discipline, "is an ordered way of acting and living that sets us before God so He can transform us" (Foster).

In other words, the conscience effort of aligning our lives and actions with the inner reality of our adoration and submission to Jesus Christ keeps us honest to truth and attentive to His reign... This helps to transform us.

Also, Richard Foster highlights that sincere and passionate **worship bares fruit**.

He declares that the fruit of worship is twofold - the practice of worship bares a **holy expectancy and a holy obedience** in the Believer.

Making the effort to allow every aspect of our lives to worship God, we will become more aware of His Presence and His power in our lives....