



CODE BLUE

TRAINING FOR LOCAL LEADERS

MODULE THREE

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Session 1 - Spiritual Journey

Session 2 - Spiritual Disciplines

Session 3 - Spiritual Gifts



PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL

The Salvation Army

Australia Territory



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

SESSION 2: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

AIM:

This session will concentrate on the personal spiritual disciplines of a disciple, emphasising that spiritual growth can be a result of practising these disciplines.

This session introduces participants to the practice of spiritual disciplines & outlines their place and importance in a Christian's life.

LESSON FROM PAUL

It would be difficult to dispute that any of our daily discipleship struggles would come close to what the apostle Paul went through. The book of 2 Corinthians graphically outlines some of these struggles in an attempt to encourage new Christians to persevere in their faith. Consider the following scripture:

"I've worked much harder, been jailed more often, beaten up more times than I can count, and at death's door time after time. ²⁴I've been flogged five times with the Jews' thirty-nine lashes, ²⁵beaten by Roman rods three times, pummeled with rocks once. I've been shipwrecked three times, and immersed in the open sea for a night and a day. ²⁶In hard travelling year in and year out, I've had to ford rivers, fend off robbers, struggle with friends, struggle with foes. I've been at risk in the city, at risk in the country, endangered by desert sun and sea storm, and betrayed by those I thought were my brothers. ²⁷I've known drudgery and hard labour, many a long and lonely night without sleep, many a missed meal, blasted by the cold, naked to the weather. ²⁸And that's not the half of it, when you throw in the daily pressures and anxieties of all the churches. ²⁹When someone gets to the end of his rope, I feel the desperation in my bones. When someone is duped into sin, an angry fire burns in my gut".

(2 Corinthians 11:23-29, The Message)

Questions for group discussion:

1. What is your first reaction when you read that scripture?
2. How do you think Paul maintained his sanity?
3. Does Paul strike you as a disciplined person? What daily things may have Paul practised to enable him to persevere?

CHEAP GRACE VERSUS DISCIPLINED GRACE: 2 VIEWS

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Christian pastor living in Germany during Hitler's time, wrote a book entitled, *The Cost of Discipleship*.

In this book he introduces a concept (a problem, really) called 'cheap grace'. He explains:

"Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipline, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ living and incarnate."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Questions for group discussion:

1. How can one profess being a disciple and not engage in discipleship?
2. What does it mean to practise discipleship?

Author and Pastor Richard Foster, in his classic book *Celebration of Discipline* outlines the concept of 'disciplined grace', from where he springboards the idea of the practice of spiritual disciplines.

Consider the concept introduced in the following quote:

"God has ordained the Disciplines of the spiritual life as the means by which we place ourselves where he can bless us. In this regard it would be proper to speak of the 'path of disciplined grace'. It is 'grace' because it is free, it is 'disciplined' because there is something for us to do...We must always remember that the path does not produce the change; it only places us where the change can occur"

Pastor Richard Foster

Questions for group discussion:

1. How does Foster's definition of discipline compare to your own definition? (if you have one).
2. How can "disciplined grace" provide an answer to the problem of "cheap grace"?
3. Spiritual disciplines are the next natural step for a disciple to take. Do you agree with this?

Earlier, we briefly looked at an introductory comment from Richard Foster, Author of *Celebration of Discipline* and founder of the Renovare movement. For the purpose of this seminar, we will look at some of his ideas as well as some newer teaching from John Ortberg and Jan Johnson.

We should remember that the disciplines have no power in themselves, rather the practice of them puts us in a place where we can hear from God with more clarity.

The reality for most people is that they struggle with discipline in any part of life. Many Christians may have regular prayer and bible study times but may not have considered other disciplines as ones they would engage in daily.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES?

Firstly, there is no exhaustive list of disciplines nor is any list explicitly given in scripture. However we do see these disciplines practised by people in scripture, including Jesus. In his book, Foster groups disciplines into 3 categories, demonstrating how they develop in different parts of our lives:

Inward Disciplines (those practised in private)
Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Study

Outward Disciplines (those practised as outward lifestyle)
Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service

Corporate Disciplines (those practised with others)
Confession, Worship, Guidance, Celebration

Some of these disciplines may be described with other names. Eg
solitude/silence,
service/servanthood,
celebration/community

John Ortberg (teaching pastor at Willow Creek Community Church) in his book *The Life You've Always Wanted* defines spiritual disciplines as: "Any activity that can help me gain power to live life as Jesus taught and modelled it."



This helps us understand that the list of spiritual disciplines is never ending. Consider that we can turn almost anything we do in everyday life into a “training exercise” for connecting with God!

HOW DO SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES HELP US CONNECT WITH GOD?

Jan Johnson in her Spiritual Disciplines bible study series, provides some practical insight:

- They build our relationship with God as we a_____ o_____ with the ways of God (but it’s possible to do these disciplines in a legalistic way and never bond with Christ).
- They build our t_____ in Christ. Some disciplines are uncomfortable. You have to go out on a limb. (You try fasting, and you don’t die. You serve someone, and it turns out to be fun and enriching.)
- They force us to make “little decisions” that m_____. Your little decision to abstain from watching a television show helps you to deny yourself and love others in all sorts of ways.
- They r_____ our i_____ so that obedience is more natural.
- They help us e_____ behave like Christ – but this is by God’s miraculous work, not our direct effort.
- They teach us to trust that God will d__ t__ w_____ in our inner being through the power of the Spirit. Your spirituality is not about you; it’s the work of God in you. You get to cooperate in God’s “family business” of transforming the world.

Taken from "Community & Submission" (SDBS) by Jan Johnson.
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Questions for group discussion:

1. How do these definitions change/alter/form your view of spiritual disciplines?
2. What do you think are the biggest misconceptions?

KNOWING WHERE TO START

John Ortberg writes about ‘starting where you are’ when it comes to working out how to go about implementing disciplines into daily living.

One of the reasons we struggle with disciplining ourselves in certain ways is because it stands in direct opposition to our natural personality type. Imagine the difficulty of a chatterbox engaging in the discipline of silence, or a busy, driven person engaging in the discipline of slowing. It’s naturally easier to do the things that suit us. The problem is there is little discipline attached to that!

We will spend the next few moments working together on this very point! Hopefully, it will help you see what disciplines you could make a start with.

Personality and Spiritual Disciplines

Listed below are:

- Spiritual disciplines, with a brief outline of each*.
- 4 basic personality types, with a brief outline of each.



THE DISCIPLINES

Meditation

The practice of hearing God's voice and obeying - particularly through the written Word

Prayer

Spoken and unspoken conversations with God

Fasting

The abstaining from food or specific lifestyle activities for spiritual purposes

Study

The pursuit of knowledge, as by reading, observation, or research

Simplicity

The practice of freeing ourselves from the tyranny of self, things and people

Solitude

Retreating from the demands of daily living to wait on God

Submission

The practice of laying down self-will for the good of another

Service

Working for others with a servant spirit

Confession

Deliberately revealing personal failures and shortcomings to God and others

Worship

Actively connecting with the Spirit of God both privately and corporately

Guidance

Receiving direction from the Spirit of God both personally and corporately

Celebration

Corporately acknowledging God's goodness and acting upon it

[A note about personality types](#)

The study of personality is a detailed science. Ideas and insights to theories given in this session are merely an overview. This information should not be used for participants to "discover" their personality type. Many participants would, at some stage (perhaps in Code Blue Module 1 [Leadership](#).) have reflected on their personality type – perhaps through tools such as DISC, SHAPE or Keirsey/Myers-Briggs.

The goal of this exercise is to show how resonance with a particular personality style may give insight into preferred spiritual disciplines.