

WEEK 2 - DISCIPLINE(S)

Fall Focus 2023 // Canopy Guide

On Purpose // Spiritual Disciplines

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use the questions below to kickstart a community building, all-play conversation that connects to our weekly topic. If your group meets for dinner, these might be great questions to share around a table.

- What have you sacrificed in order to enhance your walk with God and found the sacrifice to be a positive?
- Do you have any “triggers” or “reminders” that help you get into a rhythm for your spiritual practices?
- What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word “discipline”?

YOUTUBE VIDEO INTRO

[Click here for the YouTube video intro!](#)

STUDY GUIDE

In our opening questions we talked about discipline. This can sound like just more work to do. However, think about how we always enter a specific set of disciplines to achieve a desired goal. We do this when we intend to learn a language, play a specific sport, become a doctor, play an instrument, or grow to be like Jesus.

Once we realize there are disciplines that can help us grow closer to and more like Jesus, they become not chores or tasks, but opportunities for growth. It’s a “get-to”, not a “have-to.”

Christian disciplines are not a new version of the Old Testament law. In his letter to

Timothy, Paul talks about the value of exercising to develop godliness. This is where spiritual disciplines fit. They are practices that enable us to change.

The disciplines are not righteousness in themselves, but we use these practices to draw near to the Lord, develop our focus on the Lord and the life he offers, and live out the life he's called us to in the world around us.

In John 10:10 we hear Jesus teaching and promising that he came to bring us life, abundant life as he calls it. Think of Christian disciplines as the means of connecting with the Lord in a way that enables him to work in our lives, transforming us so that the abundant life he promised is a reality.

The New Testament refers to this process as "sanctification." This simply means becoming more spiritual or holy. Basically, through the indirect effort of the disciplines we open ourselves to the Lord who makes us more like Jesus in our identity and actions.

There are as many Christian disciplines as there are ways of drawing close to Jesus, but Scripture describes many for us. Classic Christian disciplines include items like regular reading of scripture, prayer, fellowship, worship with other Christians, faith-based stewardship of time, service, rest, celebration, helping people in need, and more.

All of these lead us into the discovery of what it is like to really live with and for Christ Jesus.

Scripture to Read

- Colossians 3:1-17
- 1 Timothy 4:7-8 (In verse 8 the idea of training is intended to be heard as repeated. "while bodily training is of some value, (training in) godliness is of value in every way")

Deeper Discussion Questions

1. Think about prayer as a discipline. In what ways does prayer help us draw closer to Jesus and become more like him? In what ways do we express ministry through prayer?
2. What are a couple Christian disciplines you find most impactful in your growth to maturity in Jesus?
3. Talk together about Christian disciplines as 1) a means to growing in Jesus, 2) a way to live in this world in a kingdom-minded way. Use specific disciplines as

examples.

PRAYER

Make sure to claim some time as a group each week to pray specifically for each other.

EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH

1. Great blog by Ben Holden, “Why You Need Discipline in Your Spiritual Life and How to Get It”
<https://www.bereanmn.com/berean-blog/why-you-need-discipline-in-your-spiritual-life-and-how-to-get-it/>
2. This is an excellent, under three minute, introduction from Dallas Willard as to why Christian disciplines are important in our life of faith, and how they impact our day to day lives. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hVreZctdBI>
3. John Ortberg, [The Life You’ve Always Wanted](#). John does an excellent job in this book describing the purpose and value of spiritual disciplines. John says, about the disciplines, that “God can use them to lead us into life.”