

kind, He will take it away.

A Man and Evangelism

The apostle Paul believed that the greatest privilege is to be chosen by God for salvation, and the second greatest privilege is to help someone else experience the same salvation. Paul believed that all men need a savior and that there is no way to heaven except through Jesus Christ. If you want to have an effective discipline of evangelism, believe what Paul believes. Evangelism is taking someone as far as they want to go toward Jesus.

Practice these spiritual disciplines (and any others to which you are attracted) if you want a deeper, richer experience with Christ. As we have already said, they don't improve our standing with Christ, but they do usher us into His presence.

Other Recommended Books on Spiritual Disciplines:

Celebration of Discipline, Richard Foster (1978, San Francisco: Harper & Row)

The Spirit of the Disciplines, Dallas Willard (1988, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco)

Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, Donald Whitney (1991, Colorado Springs: Navpress)

Disciplines of a Godly Man, Kent Hughes (1991, Wheaton: Crossway Books)

A LOOK IN THE MIRROR™

EQUIPPING LEADERS IN THE BATTLE FOR MEN'S SOULS

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A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines

Pat Morley

Spiritual disciplines (or habits) are the means by which we regularly deepen our relationship with Christ. One of the easiest mistakes with the spiritual disciplines is to confuse the means and the ends. The disciplines are the "means," our relationship with Jesus is the "end."

It's important to remind ourselves that disciplines don't earn us any kind of merit whatsoever. The disciplines are not behaviors we perform to make God happy or avoid his wrath. Instead, disciplines are the regular practices of men gripped by deep and humble gratitude for the remarkable privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord, Savior, Counselor, and Friend.

Almost any Christian virtue or duty can be turned into a discipline. For my new book, *A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines* (2007, Chicago: Moody Publishers) I selected 12 disciplines that seemed right for our moment in time: *creation, the Bible, prayer, worship, the Sabbath, fellowship, counsel, fasting, spiritual warfare, stewardship, service, and evangelism*. Here is a brief overview of each one.

A Man and Creation

Nothing fills me with contemplation of God more than a blazing sunrise, a mama duck followed by eight little ducklings paddling with all their might to keep up, or a rugged mountain that soars into the sky. How about you? We have been given the visible creation to reveal the deity of the invisible God. Theologians call creation God's *general revelation*. Nature "reveals" a "general" knowledge about God.

A Man and the Bible

I know of no man whose life has been significantly changed apart from the regular study of God's Word. Like training for a golf swing, if you want to "play well" at Christianity, you have to go into training. The Bible is the starting point for all spiritual disciplines, for all

glorifying of God, for all communion with Christ, and for all growth and sanctification.

A Man and Prayer

Prayer is the conversation that turns our salvation into a personal communion with God. There are three characteristics of men who pray a lot. First, men who pray a lot tend to understand the need for sitting with Jesus in the “school of prayer” – studying passages on prayer and meditating on what they mean. Second, they believe that prayer is the most powerful use of their time – more powerful than labor. Finally, the man who prays a lot has made prayer the first disposition of his heart.

A Man and Worship

The deepest thirst of a man’s soul is to worship His Creator. Worship is being so caught up in God that it’s like going 180 mph down a straightaway and you’re oblivious to everything around you. When you worship, you become keenly aware of your “creatureliness” as you come into the presence of the one true Holy Father and, overcome, commune with, exalt and praise.

A Man and the Sabbath

God has made it “legal” for us to take a day of rest. Exodus 23:12 says, “Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household . . . may be refreshed.” It’s a commandment, but also a right and a privilege we have as Christians. The Sabbath is a beautiful gift from God to His children. But a lot of us suffer from what we might call rest-interval dysfunction – working long hours, maybe too many days in a row, and we start to get a little grumpy and short with our wives and kids.

A Man and Fellowship

At Man in the Mirror, we have learned that the most meaningful change takes place in the context of a small group relationship. 1 Corinthians 12:12 states, “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body.” Why do we need other people? Because I don’t have everything I need. I can’t be a whole person without you. In His wisdom, God has not given any of us everything we need; instead, He chose to give us each other. I have gaps, you have gaps – we fill each other’s gaps. I know Jesus loves me because you love me. We are indispensable parts of each other. Together, we make up the whole.

A Man and Counsel

The goal of seeking counsel is to make good decisions. Decisions come in two flavors: moral decisions and priority decisions. Proverbs 15: 22 says, “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors, they succeed.” The goal of seeking counsel is to seek God’s will about a decision, not permission to do what we’ve already made up our minds to do. There’s a direct correlation between the wisdom of our decisions and the degree to which we have sought the advice other people.

A Man and Fasting

Fasting is a regular practice throughout the Bible. Jesus began His ministry with a 40-day fast. In my own life, I have been blessed and seen others healed after I fasted for a period of time. Fasting is an excellent way to express sorrow to God, to be penitent to the Lord. When you have a difficult decision to make, fasting can help give your clarity of mind. If you are struggling with pride or anger, fasting is a tangible expression of humility before God. If we never do anything as a sacrifice to Jesus, can we be sure we really love Him? Fasting is one thing we can do to express the depth of our love and gratitude.

A Man and Spiritual Warfare

Galatians 5:16 says: “Live your lives according to the Holy Spirit, then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Holy Spirit desires.” You can tell which is winning by the fruit your life bears. Share your struggles with other men in a supportive community. Let them pray with you.

A Man and Stewardship

What does it mean to be a faithful steward? If you think it’s just tithing 10 percent of your income, you’re wrong. A faithful steward devotes 100 percent of his time, talent and treasure to the glory of God. Everything you’ve been given – including that weekend convertible stashed in the garage – is a trust with which you must prove faithful.

A Man and Service

In John 13, Jesus said, “Now that I your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set an example that you should do as I have done for you.” God has penetrated your universe. He has changed you, healed you, and He has put the hot coal on the tip of your tongue. You’ve heard Him say, “Who will go? Whom shall I send?” Give it away or, because He is