

Principle

5



FIVE PRINCIPLE WORLDWIDE TRAINING MANUAL

Principle: Spirituality

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Note to Trainer

The spirituality section focuses on the spiritual development of leaders. This section addresses spiritual identity, how to develop yourself as a leader, and the spiritual disciplines. Note that the curriculum is organized in such a way as to allow you to teach the material in a shorter (HD=50–59 minutes) or a longer (FD=75–84 minutes) time period.

Dear Youth Leader,

One of the dreams of the Youth Ministry and Youth Network Teams for all of us in youth ministry is that we work together to help raise up a new generation of Christ-centered leaders around the world.

The 5 Principle Training system, developed in conjunction with the SHAPE initiative of the Church Of God, is intended to help train youth leaders around the world. It was developed with the belief that the five principles of vision, leadership, knowledge/culture, relational/connectivity, and spirituality apply across all cultural lines.

In January 2008, the principles were piloted with leaders in Africa; in 2009, the training materials were revised and updated, with the revised materials posted in January 2010.

The dream is that this system will be a tool that local, state/provincial, regional, and national leaders everywhere can use. Feel free to use all or portions of these lessons to teach and train your leaders.

The material can be used in a full-day or half-day training or as standalone training. If you see the symbol indicating a full day , each of the lessons will take 75–84 minutes. If you see the symbol indicating a half day , each of the five individual training sessions will take 50–59 minutes.

Committed to raising up a new generation of Christ-centered leaders,

The Youth Ministry and Youth Network Team

Overview (Table of Contents)

I. Investigate Your Spiritual Identity

- A. Opening Activity
- B. Distorted View of Self vs. Biblical View of Self
- C. Distorted View of Christ vs. Biblical View of Christ

II. Developing Yourself as a Spiritual Leader in the World

- A. Promises and Responsibilities
- B. Living for an Audience of One
- C. Our Intimate Relationship with God
- D. Identity in Christ
- E. Internal Holiness vs. External Holiness
- F. Spiritual Leadership vs. Natural Leadership
- G. Worship
- H. Obedience

III. Rediscovering the Spiritual Disciplines

- A. It's Not a Checklist
- B. Three Areas of Spiritual Disciplines
 - 1. Breathing In
 - 2. Breathing Out
 - 3. Serving
- C. Application: Putting It Together

Key (Follow according to the time you have allotted.)



HD: Half Day (if you have 50–59 minutes)



FD: Full Day (if you have 75–84 minutes)

Investigate Your Spiritual Identity

Pass out student handouts for section one before starting this section.



A. Opening Activity (HD/FD 3 minutes)

A story is told of a two year-old girl who voiced her first prayer. She sat on the floor with her doll, folded her doll's hands in her lap, and then prayed, "God, thank you for me...and for my health." The woman telling the story said, "We laughed as we thought about it, loving that the first thing she thanked God for was herself; however, it then struck us how profound this little prayer was. As an adult, I am critical of myself. I am my own worst critic because I know my own thoughts, see all my flaws, and am there every time I blow it! Usually when I pray to God about me, I am asking for help, clarity, discernment, wisdom, guidance, discipline, blessings, or a fix. I can't even remember the last time I thanked God for just making me, me."

A major issue facing the church today is identity crisis. Too many believers, adults and teens, fail to see themselves through the eyes of Christ. Instead, they see themselves through the eyes of the world.

Two Reasons for Identity Crisis

1. Distorted View of Self
2. Distorted View of Christ

B. Distorted View of Self vs. Biblical View of Self



Distorted View of Self (HD 3 minutes; FD 5 minutes)

There is constant pressure to measure up to the world's standards. Adults and teens alike feel this pressure from their peers, jobs, family and media to conform to the world's standards.

In 1 Samuel 16:1–13, we find the story of Samuel anointing David. The Lord had rejected Saul as king over Israel, and he had sent Samuel to Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint one of his sons as the new king. When Samuel saw Jesse's first son, Eliab, he knew he must be the one. However, God had different plans.

1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV): "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Seven of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel before David came and was anointed.

The truth of God's Word is relevant for all time. God does not look at the physical form as the world does. The world stresses physical appearance, possessions, and position. God looks at the heart.



5 min

Group Discussion

(FD 5 minutes)

In groups, ask students to brainstorm what influences Christians to see themselves through the world's eyes instead of through God's eyes.



3 min



3 min

Biblical View of Self

(HD 3 Minutes; FD 5 Minutes)

Scripture is very clear: we were created in the image of God! We were wonderfully made to enjoy a special relationship with him. After sin entered the world, God put together a plan that would restore that relationship that we were created to have.

Genesis 1:26–27 (NIV): "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Psalms 139:13–16 (NIV): "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your words are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body.

All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

1 John 3:1a (NIV): “How great is the love the father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are!”

1 John 4:10 (NIV): “This is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

John 3:16 (NIV): “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

C. Distorted View of Christ vs. Biblical View of Christ



5 min



5 min

Distorted View of Jesus

(HD 5 Minutes; FD 7 Minutes)

Note to Trainer: After each distorted view, you will find a scripture that will rebut that view.

If believers don't have a biblical view of Jesus Christ, they will not be able to know their true identity. Let's look at some distorted views of Jesus

1. The Distant Jesus: This view sees Jesus as distant, far away. It views him as being too busy to care for our needs. How can he care for me? He really doesn't want to be involved in my life.

Matthew 23:37 (NIV): “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”

Here Jesus was showing his concern for those who wouldn't receive it. Jesus wants to protect us if we are willing to come to him. Who knows our needs better than our Creator? Jesus is willing.

2. The Inspecting Jesus: This view sees Jesus as looking at us through a microscope and pointing a finger at us. This Jesus always expects us to do things to please him.

John 10:10 (NIV): “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Jesus came so that we could have an abundant, full life here on earth. He doesn't watch over us ready to smash us if we fail. He wants to guide us through our lives, daily.

Also, the story of woman at the well from John 4 illustrates a non-inspecting Jesus; Jesus knew her lifestyle, but he never condemned her.

3. The Disappointed Jesus: This view sees Jesus as being disappointed with us. We could always do better. We are not good enough, no matter how hard you try.

Mark 12:41–44 (NIV): “Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, ‘I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.’”

This is a beautiful example of how the Jesus who gave his life shows compassion on those whom he loves. This woman gave from all that she had, and that was good enough. He didn’t show disappointment in her little amount. He praised her willingness to give. Christ doesn’t go around looking for our shortcomings.



3 min



5 min

A Biblical View of Christ

(HD 3 Minutes; FD 5 Minutes)

Read the story of prodigal son from Luke 15:11–32. In this story, we can see the person of Christ in the father.

First, the father allows the son to make the decision to leave.
 Second, the father anticipated the son’s return and ran out to meet him.
 Third, the father celebrated the son’s return.
 Fourth, the father–son relationship was restored.

Knowing that we are made in God’s image provides a solid basis for self-worth. Human worth is not based on possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or public acclaim.



Developing Yourself as a Spiritual Leader in the World



5 min



5 min

A. Promises and Responsibilities

(HD/FD 5 minutes)

Opener: Read Joshua 1:5–9. God’s words to Joshua include some amazing promises. These kinds of promises build confidence, enabling us to dream dreams and capture God-sized visions. There are also some implied responsibilities that Joshua must carry out to receive these promises and reality in his life. If we are to continue to be the spiritual leaders that God has called us to be, we must incorporate these disciplines into our lives and be reminded of these promises. Ask students to turn to Joshua 1:5–9 and read for themselves the scripture and circle the promises and underline the responsibilities. Ask them what they circled and underlined. Talk about the importance of these promises and responsibilities.

“No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:5–9 NIV).



TEACHING

B. Living for an Audience of One

(HD/FD 5 minutes)



4 min



4 min

Opener: Whenever we are involved in ministry to others, it is easy to become focused on the encouragement and affirmation of others. We can be so focused

that their voice (praise and criticism) becomes more important and takes more of our energy than our private disciplines with God. Read the following passages and let them remind you of the significance of the private disciplines we must keep to be effective spiritual leaders.

“Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws’” (Matthew 7:21–23 NLT).

“I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don’t tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. You have patiently suffered for me without quitting. But I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each other as you did at first! Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don’t, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches” (Revelation 2:2–5 NLT).

“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father” (John 15:1–8 NLT).

Being intimate with God is not an optional activity. We must prioritize this relationship with God so that we don’t get carried away by all of the external voices that exist in our world and in our ministries and churches. We can become so busy doing the work of ministry that we forsake the work of God in us.



15–20 minutes

C. Our Intimate Relationship with God

(HD/FD 20–30 minutes)



Here are some very specific ways to maintain an intimate relationship with our Father so that we know him and his heart. This relationship will not take care of itself any more than getting married and hoping the marriage relationship grows without any effort will. We must be very intentional in keeping a growing relationship with our Father.

We must know and own our personal transformation story. We must never forget where God has brought us.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV): “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

1 Corinthians 1:29 (NIV): “...so that no one may boast before him.”

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NIV): “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Ephesians 3:17 (NLT): “Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.”

To cultivate and deepen our relationship with God requires time with him on a regular basis, just as in any other relationship. Enoch “walked” with God. The original Hebrew word is *yada*, which is descriptive of the intimacy Enoch found in his walk with God (Genesis 5:24 NIV). His walk with God was so intimate that Scripture says that “He was no more, because God took him away” without dying a natural death. This intimacy is one deeper than spouses have with one another, which is referred to in places throughout the Old Testament using the Hebrew word meaning *know* (e.g., Adam *knew* Eve; Abraham *knew* Sarah). So it is a deep intimacy that is achievable through intentionally investing time with the Father.

Some very practical ways to develop this kind of intimate relationship is in the use of the following four words.

1. **FIND:** Find a place where you will meet with God every day. It might be on a trail in the woods, in a room in the house, at a place on the beach, or in some other creative environment where you go privately to meet with God.
2. **FIGHT:** Fight prayer hindrances. When you set up a place and a time to meet with God, the enemy of our souls will do all he can to prevent you

from going to that place to meet with God. He does this because he knows the power that is available when you meet one on one with God. You will have all kinds of seemingly significant emergencies that will try to prevent you from getting alone with God, so you must fight prayer hindrances.

3. FEED: Feed on God's Word. Much of what God wants to tell you is already written in his Word, so be sure to listen and confirm every direction or guidance given with the Word of God before acting on it. If it goes directly against God's Word, it is not from God.
4. FOLLOW: Follow a prayer plan on how you should spend time with God. There are a variety of plans; one written by Dick Eastman and provided in a book called *The Hour That Changes the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978) is useful.

Here is an idea with twelve areas, spending five minutes in each; in doing these you will spend a full hour with God every day. This hour will help cultivate a deep relationship with your heavenly Father, and the fruit that will be produced throughout your life will exceed your wildest imagination. Another idea is to start by spending one minute in each area. The idea is not to be legalistic but to have a scheduled intentional time to spend with Jesus.

1. PRAISE: Take a few moments and just thank God for who he is, for what he has done, and for what he is doing. Remember his many names. Here are a few.

Adonai-Jehovah—The Lord our Sovereign

El-Elyon—The Lord Most High

El-Olam—The Everlasting God

El-Shaddai—The God who is sufficient for the needs of his people

Jehovah-Elohim—The Eternal Creator

Jehovah-Jireh—The Lord our Provider

Jehovah-Nissi—The Lord our Banner

Jehovah-Rophe—The Lord our Healer

Jehovah-Shalom—The Lord our Peace

Jehovah-Tsidkenu—The Lord our Righteousness

Jehovah-Sabaoth—The Lord of Hosts

Jehovah-Rohi—The Lord our Shepherd

2. WAITING: Sit in silence. Be totally quiet before the Lord. Listen to what God is saying to your heart and head.

3. **CONFESSION:** Take this time to seek God's forgiveness for actions you failed to do or actions you shouldn't have taken. Seek his complete forgiveness for anything that stands between you and God.
4. **READ THE WORD:** Read God's Word. Read through a book of the Bible. Read a chapter out of Psalms or Proverbs.
5. **PRAY THE WORD:** Pray the scriptures that you just read in such a way that they are implemented into your life.
6. **PRAY FOR OTHERS:** Pray through your prayer requests and concerns. Keep a list of your prayer requests and note when they are answered.
7. **PRAY FOR ME:** Pray for yourself. Pray for your needs, your concerns, and your desires. Pray that God will use you in his ministry and guide your steps.
8. **MEDITATION:** Reflect on scriptures that you have committed to memory. Reflect on scriptures that are underlined or highlighted in your Bible.
9. **LISTENING:** Spend time listening for God's voice. Be still and listen. Be quiet and hear what God is saying to you. Listen to hear who you are to be and what you are to do.
10. **THANKSGIVING:** Recount all of God's blessings to you, your family, your friends, your ministry, your church, and so forth. Thank him for the good and difficult times.
11. **SINGING:** Spend some time worshiping God with singing. Sing your favorite hymn, song, or something that reminds you of God's majesty.
12. **PRAISE:** Close your time by giving God a great big "hug," an embrace for the deep relationship you share.

This hour, or twelve minutes, or whatever time you set, goes quickly. You may want to write the four good F words mentioned earlier (find, fight, feed, follow) in the front of your Bible along with this prayer plan to give some guidance to your time alone with the Lord. Regardless of the prayer plan, this one or another, it is essential that time is set aside to commune with God in order to develop a strong relationship with him and for him to be able to use us to the fullest in his work. This is not our work but his work. We are God's servants and set aside for a task that we *cannot* do without his power at work within us. Don't leave this relationship behind to do the work of ministry. Don't forsake

your first love. May we never forget that our real power comes through abiding in the vine.

Speaking to a skeptic, William Temple said it best: “When I pray, coincidences happen. When I stop praying, coincidences stop happening.”

When we burn out in ministry, it is a spiritual problem because we don’t take time to get relit, refreshed, or refueled.

D. Identity in Christ

The more we understand and own who we are in Christ and what he has to say about us, the more his thoughts and truth will form our fundamental identity. We too often make the mistake of adopting the words spoken into our lives by others and by ourselves to form our identity rather than who we are in Christ. When we do not understand who we are in Christ, we are destined to pick up a false identity.

Read Matthew 3:13 to 4:3 so you can gain a better understanding of just how important it is to understand your true identity.

“After his baptism, as Jesus came out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with him’” (Matthew 3:16–17 NLT). And then, just three verses later, the Devil came to Jesus and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread” (Matthew 4:3 NLT).

Three verses later, Jesus is tempted to forget his identity. The devil still uses the same tactics two thousand years later. If we do not know who we are in Christ, we will be tricked by the devil into forgetting who and whose we are. The “Who Are you” handout found in the student handout section is a great reminder of our identity in Christ.

E. Internal Holiness vs. External Holiness.

A transformation of the heart reminds us who has done the redeeming work in our lives. In active ministry it is easy to get addicted to the “atta boys” or “atta girls” we hear. We preach a great message and someone says, “Way to go, Pastor!” We take part in a great evangelistic campaign and someone says, “I am so glad you are here!” Someone comes to Christ and says, “You have changed my life!” It is easy to focus all of our attention and energy toward these external signs of holiness and to neglect those areas that are as critical, if not more critical, to our long-term effectiveness in the eternal not just the temporary.

Look at the chart below and assess what gets most of your attention and energy and which area is the most neglected.

INTERNAL HOLINESS	EXTERNAL HOLINESS
The Word of God	Preaching
A consistent prayer life	Teaching
Receiving spiritual direction	Administration

Our effectiveness for God in public is dependant on who we are in private. We must spend time reading God’s Word for ourselves and not just for sermon and teaching preparation. Our time spent in prayer with our heavenly Father and the desire we have to hear from God directly affects our ability to lead his church and people. Someone said it this way, “Our ministry should not be a distraction from time with Jesus but a reflection of time spent with Jesus.”

F. Spiritual Leadership vs. Natural Leadership

Some people are naturally gifted leaders and able to lead out of their own giftedness and abilities. Oswald Sanders provided a chart that helps us contrast these two areas and see just how different they are. (These are from his book *Spiritual Leadership*, Chicago: Moody Press, p. 29).

Natural	Spiritual
Self-confident	Confident in God
Knows men	Knows God
Makes own decisions	Seeks God’s will
Ambitious	Humble
Creates methods	Follows God’s example
Enjoys command	Delights in obedience to God
Seeks personal reward	Loves God and others
Independent	Depends on God

These lists provide a great way for us to do inventory and see what kind of leader we are most like. We are called to be *spiritual* leaders. Take a moment and, using the above chart, examine the areas where you need to work to becoming a stronger spiritual leader. The ultimate goal is to be formed into the image of Christ, which happens as we continue to pursue God’s heart for his church.

G. Worship

Ultimately, it comes down to learning to live for an *audience of one*. In Matthew 6:33, right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls us to seek his kingdom and righteousness first, and then all things will be given to us. We are reminded throughout Scripture that the most important thing is to seek God first, both corporately and privately. Corporate worship is a special time of joining with the body of Christ to adore God. Private worship occurs when we make every act of our lives a tribute to God. To do this we must take time to worship him alone.

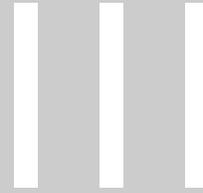
Is it any wonder why the verse that is right in the middle of the Bible is Psalm 118:8: (NIV): “It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.” God is reminding us that he must always be the focus of our attention and energy.

H. Obedience

Jesus came to do the work that his Father sent him to do. He did not come to accomplish his own work but the work of the Father. You hear this stated over and over again in the Scriptures. It is so easy to take control and start going in a direction we believe is the best when we see God beginning to work through us and the church beginning to grow and flourish. Read Jesus’ words toward the end of his physical life here on earth, in John 14:30–31 (NIV): “I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. Come now, let us leave.”

I love my Father so much that I will do *exactly* what he tells me to do! If we are to be the spiritual leaders God has called us be, then we must do exactly what he tells us to do as the writer in says in Hebrews 3:15 (NIV): “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

1 Chronicles 28:8–10 (NIV): “So now I charge you in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God: Be careful to follow all the commands of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever. And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a temple as a sanctuary. Be strong and do the work.”



Rediscovering the Spiritual Disciplines



A. It's Not a Checklist

- Pray... check ✓
- Read my Bible... check ✓
- Oh, remembered to pray for Ms. Jones... double check ✓✓
- Fast? Maybe some other time...

Does the above sound like your normal day—a checklist with God? Well, let's learn together that God isn't concerned with doing the list! In fact, he has created us to be human "be-ings" and not human "do-ings," emphasis on the being. So to get a better perspective on how to have a more intimate relationship with God, let's go deeper.

When you hear the term *spiritual discipline*, what is it that you think of?

Let's define spiritual discipline. We'll start with each word individually. (If in North America, we can use the dictionary as a resource.) According to Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary*, *spiritual* is defined as "of the soul or its affections as influenced by the divine Spirit; pure; holy;—as opposed to carnal. Of sacred things or the church; sacred matters." *Discipline* is defined as "instruction; a branch of knowledge involving research; training which corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects."

But when you put them together, what do you get? (Ask the group to come up with their own definition.)

I have to admit that spiritual discipline doesn't sound particularly exciting on the surface. What you want to consider, though, is the exciting change that comes about from practicing those spiritual disciplines.

Richard Foster, a leading contemporary writer and speaker on Christian spirituality, defines the need for spiritual discipline in this way: “The detachment from the confusion all around us is in order to have a richer attachment to God. Christian meditation leads us to the inner wholeness necessary to give ourselves to God freely” (*Celebration of Discipline*, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1998, p. 21).

Definition: For our discussion, the spiritual disciplines are anything, any personal practice, that draws us closer to the awareness of the presence of God.



5 min



5 min

Gathering the Spiritual Disciplines

(HD/FD 5 minutes)

Break into small groups or table groups of four to six persons. If you have a small number, stay together as a group.

Consider the following: Which practices would they put together to create their own areas of spiritual discipline? What would be included as your discipline? Would you start with prayer or establishing a time alone with God? Will you meditate on Scripture, study God’s Word, journal your thoughts as prayers? As you prioritize, what do you do first?

The great thing about practicing spiritual disciplines is that you make the decision how to be obedient to God! How is he calling you? How does God reach out to you so you can grow closer in your relationship with him? The number of things you can do is quite large, but it’s not about doing a number of things or working the list. It is about developing a practice that leads you to a real relationship with Jesus.

Have them get in groups of three and instruct them to talk together and decide upon the disciplines they personally feel called to practice. In following through, you will begin developing the intimate relationship with God that he desires with you. (If you care to and have time, inspect Psalm 139 and discuss the relationship between you and the creator. Consider 1 John 3:1 and Ephesians 3:16-19 as well. This introspection would lead to a great discussion answering the question, Why does God desire to spend time with us?)

Spiritual disciplines are tools to draw us closer to God. Here is a suggestion: beginning on the inside, each of us is called to “drink in” God; that’s a great place to start. As we come close to God, God in turn “breathes into” us and then asks us to “breath out” into the community of believers. Finally, as our relationship with God empowers us, we are called to serve his kingdom.

B. Three areas of Spiritual Disciplines

1. Breathing In
2. Meditation
3. Serving



TEACHING

Teaching

(HD 3 minutes; FD 5 minutes)



3 min



5 min

Here are just some of the many scriptures that deal with spiritual disciplines. (All scriptures taken from the NIV.)

Psalm 39:12—“Hear my prayer, O LORD, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were.”

Psalm 66:19–20—“But God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love for me!”

Acts 2:42—“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Psalm 19:14—“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

Psalm 104:34—“May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.”

John 1:1–2—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.”

Luke 8:21—“He replied, ‘My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.’”

John 16:24—“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”



5 min

Study of Enoch

(FD 5 minutes)

Check out the benefits of having that close personal relationship with God by studying Genesis 5:18–24 and discussing what it must be like to *walk with* God. Here are a few questions to get you started. Use these as a starting point to share the biblical story of a person who had an intimate relationship with God.

- Who is this scripture passage about?
- What are the key facts this passage tells you about him?

- From the passage, what is the difference between Enoch and yourself?
- What is the one single most important conclusion you can draw from these few verses?
- In your own words, how would you describe how Enoch and God relate to each other?



3 min



5 min

Discussion

(HD 3 minutes; FD 5 minutes)

Let's consider the spiritual disciplines that we've been talking about. What if we could put them into different categories so that we could understand and practice them more? It could look something like this...

Breathing In

Meditation
 Quiet Time with God
 Bible Study
 Prepared Study (Life Application, etc.)
 Inductive Process (InWord, etc.)
 Communion

(These practices invite God into your life.)

Meditation

Prayer
 Intercession
 Journaling
 Fasting

(These practices lead you and others through you to God's presence.)

Serving

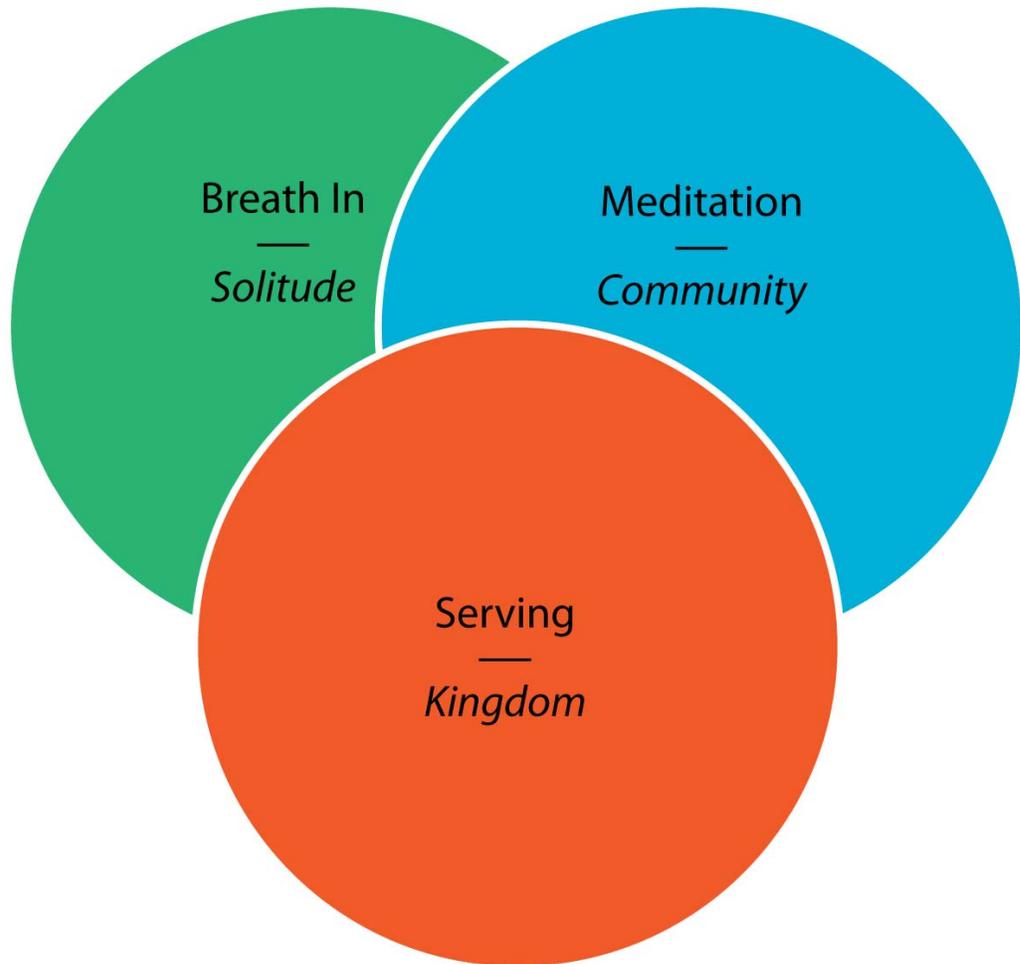
Footwashing
 Serving
 Holiness
 Investing in Others

(These practices focus God's power through you to serve the kingdom, bringing you closer to God and affecting others in the same way.)

What are some other spiritual disciplines that could be added and where would they be placed on this chart?

Use the handout included at the end of this study, or ask each group to draw three circles that overlap in the middle. (Consider an extra five minutes of group time if you use the handout in small groups.) Label them accordingly to our discussion. Then using a pen, pencil, marker, or even something like a label

or sticky notes, take the spiritual disciplines each group has come up with in the earlier exercise and assign them to one of the three areas. This should give a graphic model of a balanced use of spiritual disciplines that are used to not only better relate to God but to also let God mold and form the person into expressing personal faith in the kingdom.



Place the spiritual disciplines in the appropriate circle. (This is a great discussion-starting tool.)



APPLICATION.....

C. Application: Putting It Together

(HD 3 minutes; FD 5 minutes)



3 min



5 min

Now let's practice a few of these spiritual disciplines for ourselves right now. Depending on the amount of time you have available, select a few of the spiritual disciplines that are outlined below or apply a few that the group came up with on their own. In either case, take a few minutes with two or three

spiritual disciplines so that students can practice those disciplines and gain confidence in how they can be applied in their own lives.

Some possibilities

PRAYER

Move away from other people right now, get comfortable, and assume whatever kind of prayer posture that you feel most comfortable using. (This could be eyes closed and head down, kneeling or standing with outstretched arms, lying prostrate, etc.—your choice). Take some time to be quiet and listen to God.

Psalm 46:10 encourages us to “be still and know that I am God” (NIV). This is a difficult concept most of the time, so let’s just see how long that will be for us. Can we do one minute of quiet listening to God? Now how much are you going to hear from God in sixty seconds? How about three minutes? How about five or ten minutes? Today, though we don’t have that unlimited time, let’s take that verse (Psalm 46:10) and practice it. Make that your special and unique prayer for the next three minutes.

INTERCESSION

Now let’s move ahead in a simple, natural progression. Join together with one or two other individuals and, as you know them, ask them what you can genuinely pray for them about. Do they have a praise, a hurt, are they struggling with something, or you may already know something you can pray to God on their behalf. Take one or two minutes each to pray for each other, lifting someone else up before our loving Father God.

SERVING

Can we go out from here to perform acts of service? Possibly, but for our purpose today, let’s practice serving one another. [For this section, you’ll need a few small bottles of a hand lotion. Travel bottles work well and are relatively inexpensive. You might elect to get one large bottle, maybe with a pump type dispenser, and have everyone use that.] Pair up with someone different than before. Taking a small amount of lotion, massage their hands while speaking powerful words of God’s grace and affirmation into their lives. Then let the other person return the blessing. If lotion isn’t desired or available, try a simple hand massage. This is a low-risk, high-reward illustration of what happens during footwashing. Check out John 13 and see if it doesn’t work the same way for you. Make sure this is same-gender experience: guys speaking to guys and girls to girls.

If you want to, you could also plan an inductive Bible study. If you’ve never done this or are not sure what the inductive method is, you can check out InWord ideas and materials at www.inword.org.

Summary and Closing

So where do we find ourselves? You now have a better understanding of *what* spiritual disciplines are, what they look like, and how to practice a few of them. (By the way, if those particular spiritual disciplines don't work for you but something that the group came up with does, feel free to practice them instead.)

Now what are we left with? Do you feel that you have a firm understanding of what spiritual disciplines are? Have you discovered any that you can practice so that you can grow in your relationship to God? What are they? Can we agree together to practice the disciplines that we've talked about and even to find other practices to grow in our discipleship? I hope the answer to all of these questions is a resounding "Yes!"

Let's begin together right now. Would you pray with me?

Spiritual Discipline Handout

Part I: Spiritual Identity

- A. Opening Activity
- B. Distorted View of Self vs. Biblical View of Self

Distorted View of Self

Biblical View of Self

1 Samuel 16:1–13—Story of Samuel anointing David

- C. Distorted View of Christ vs. Biblical View of Christ

Distorted View of Christ

- The Distant Jesus
- The Inspecting Jesus
- The Disappointing Jesus

Biblical View of Christ

Story of the Prodigal Son—Luke 15:11–32

Who Are You Handout

Who are you?

In Christ ...

You are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13).

You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14)

You are a child of God (John 1:12).

You are a friend of God (John 15:15)

You are chosen by Christ to bear fruit (John 15:16).

You are a co-heir with Christ, inheriting his glory (Romans 8:17).

You are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

You are God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:10).

You are a saint, a holy person (Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:12).

You are part of a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:9–10) .

Natural vs. Spiritual Leadership

Some people are naturally gifted leaders and able to lead out of their own giftedness and abilities. Oswald Sanders provided a chart that helps us contrast these two areas and see just how different they are in his book titled *Spiritual Leadership*.

Natural	Spiritual
Self-confident	Confident in God
Knows men	Knows God
Makes own decisions	Seeks God's will
Ambitious	Humble
Creates methods	Follows God's example
Enjoys command	Delights in obedience to God
Seeks personal reward	Loves God and others
Independent	Depends on God

This chart provides a great way for us to do inventory and see what kind of leader we are most like. We are called to be spiritual leaders. Take time to complete an inventory using the chart above and make a list of the areas where you need to work at becoming a stronger spiritual leader. The ultimate goal is to be formed into the image of Christ, which happens as we continue to pursue God's heart for his church.

Spiritual Discipline Handout

Define: What is a spiritual discipline?

Categorizing the spiritual disciplines:

Breathing In (Inhaling)

(These practices invite God into your life.)

Breathing Out (Exhaling)

(These practices lead you and others through you to God's presence.)

Serving (Applying)

(These practices focus God's power through you to serve the Kingdom bringing you closer to God and affecting others in the same way.)

1) Where would you place these practices?

Meditation, Communion, Intercession, Foot washing, Investing in others, Bible Study, Practicing Holiness, Quiet Time, Fasting, journaling, Prayer,

- 2) Are these all considered spiritual disciplines? Why or why not?
- 3) What others can you add?
- 4) Where would you place them on the chart below? Where do they overlap?
- 5) Which Spiritual disciplines do you already own or practice?
- 6) Which do you need to further develop?

