

Dancing with God



DANCING WITH GOD

The Practice of the Spiritual Rhythm of Life

A Disciple Workbook Introducing "The Rhythmic Community"

by Jon D. Gilbert

Featuring

Holiness Day by Day

by Jerry Bridges

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DANCING WITH GOD

We are often intrigued by King David leaping and dancing before God in a rather ostentatious display of exuberant joy. Though his performance was to glorify God, it is seen by some as being extravagant and definitely inappropriate for a king, not the least of whom was his wife Michal, who "despised" rather than applauded his actions. However, it is certainly not out of character for David, who is seen in Psalms as a person with a joyful relationship with God.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;

Come into His presence with singing.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving,

And His courts with praise,

Give thanks to him, bless His name." (Psalm 100 1
2,4)

"Clap your hands, all you peoples;

Shout to the Lord with songs of joy." (Ps. 47: 1)

It is only natural that he should "leap and dance" before the Lord. However, that is as far as he could go. He could dance before the Lord, not with the Lord.

Though his relationship was meaningful, it was limited. He could not have the kind of personal, intimate relationship that results from a conversion experience, as we who trust Jesus do. Though he was aware of his sins and confessed them, he still had a fallen, unredeemed nature, so his relationship with God could only be with his mind and emotions. He was still spiritually dead in sin. He had not been converted, born again. The Holy Spirit was yet to be "poured out" on Jesus' followers. But we who have been born from above of the Spirit can have the kind of intimate relationship that comes from being able to dance with the Lord, not just before Him.

Dancing with another person, especially in a "ballroom" style, creates intimacy where the two seem to move as one. It is genuinely a rhythmic motion. My wife enjoys dancing. When I played in a dance band, so did I, even though I was playing for others to dance most of the time and did not dance myself. We had been married about 15 years when she decided that we should take ballroom dancing lessons. Having given up playing for dances and even dancing, I really was not too enthused about this. However, I reluctantly took the classes with her since it was her desire. Though I had rhythm, we did not seem to be able to flow smoothly together because I was not a strong "leader". Yet we did learn enough to enjoy this rhythmic activity. Though we learned several dance styles, we enjoyed the "jitterbug" most. We even tried our hand at square dancing.

Though we no longer dance, I have learned to "dance with God". I can do either the two-step, fox trot, or waltz through the day with Him. No fancy tangos or jitterbugs. It's really simply being willing to set aside short periods with Him at least two or three times a day focused on listening to His word thus establishing a two or three beat "rhythm" by practicing Spiritual Disciplines which enable me to become Holy like Him, to be as one with him, ("... so that they may be one, as we are one." John 22:17b.), to experience an intimacy that only comes as I "dance" with Him.

These divine appointments in His presence, listening to His word, become the daily rhythm needed to renew my mind and thus obey the commandment of Romans 12:2b "... do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." How odd that the rhythm necessary for dancing, which I associated with living according to the world and from which I turned away to follow Jesus as Lord, is the vehicle through which I now experience an intimate relationship with God. Are you ready to learn how to "dance with God" through your day?

An inmate wrote the following as he studied this workbook and learned to "dance with God":

"It is like ballroom dancing. You must get to know your partner so that you are not tripping and falling over each other. The more that you get to know your partner, the better you are able to know how they are going to move through the feeling of the other's muscles. They can communicate with you without actually speaking verbally. Just as in ballroom dancing, where there is a leader and a follower, so it is as we dance with God. He is the Leader to whom we must submit as we dance. We must learn to obediently follow even the slightest movement, "touch" as He leads. As we dance with God, we get to know God. He wants to be our dance partner and is waiting for us to accept His offer. We must decide if we are going to stand back and just sway with Him or get up close with Him to do the salsa.

Of course, there is always the possibility of someone wanting to "cut in" and have this dance. If you consent, this person has now come between you and your partner, has replaced your partner, and could even control or lead. When God is our partner, we must never let anyone or anything "cut in" or come between us. He alone must always be our Partner, our Leader. Remember the old cliché that anything that comes between you and God can become a "false idol". The Gospel Song "Nothing Between" enumerates many worldly attractions that become "cuts" wanting to "have this dance" and thus replace your partner. Most of us are usually on guard to prevent this from occurring. However, it's easy to be caught off guard when the enemy deceives us by drawing us into a "religious" practice that initially seems to aid the "dance," when actually it is coming between Jesus and us.

As you learn to practice the Spiritual Disciplines in The Rhythmic Community Disciple workbook two to three times daily you will soon begin to experience a rhythm that will continue the formation of the intimate, personal, relationship began with God when you were converted and through the power of His word and the power of the Holy Spirit be transformed into being Holy set apart from the world unto God your forever Father and dance Partner. What's the point? Let's not just dance before the Lord; let's dance with the Lord!!

THE RHYTHMIC COMMUNITY PROJECT

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Survey (p. 82)

B. Purpose Statement (p. xi)

II. PRESENTATION

A. The Study

1. Five Sessions based on Romans. 12:1-2.
2. Introduction of a lifetime discipleship process.
3. Based on personal experience.

B. The Thesis: Salvation is God's process, through Jesus's sacrifice, to transform and restore humanity to

1. His image: Holiness
2. His Family: The Chosen.
3. His Desire: An intimate, personal relationship with Him.
4. His Army: The "restored dead" (We were all dead in our sins and trespasses, Eph. 2:21)

C. The Benefits: Learn to

1. Daily prioritize God rather than "busyness" (including church activities).
2. Read the Bible
 - a. In "depth"(meat) rather than "width" (milk).
 - b. To feed yourself, rather than being spoon-fed by others.
 - c. Meditative Bible Reading: His way to read His Word.
3. Listen to God in prayer.
4. Give priority to being (character) more than doing (conduct).
5. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
6. Teach as Jesus taught His followers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Woody Wooldridge was the first to suggest publishing and copyrighting this study so Chinese students could use it. Knowing I needed help with editing and publishing, but having no idea where to turn, I emailed Rob Moll, with whom I had corresponded when first writing *The Rhythmic Community*. He had said then that he hoped someone would use the book to establish a Bible study. While Rob initially thought he would be able to help with *the Rhythmic Community* project, he eventually had to decline. As I continued to pray for someone to edit and publish the manuscript, I turned to Jane Ann Knowles, who edits the monthly newsletter of First Baptist Church, Mountain Home, Arkansas. She referred me to Susan Webb, our church financial secretary, an experienced editor and published author. I shared the project with her and she agreed to be our editor. I told her she was an answer to prayer! Then I contacted my friend Brian Mooney in Mountain Home, Arkansas, who had a publishing business. I showed him the incomplete manuscript. He indicated that he would be interested in publishing this study. God wondrously and bountifully provided for this project. My pastor, Dr. Tad Rogers, read and gave helpful suggestions on the manuscript. My good friend Steve Dunn also made corrections and additions. I greatly appreciate Charles Summers, retired high school career counselor and friend from Arkansas State University, Mountain Home, Arkansas, introducing me to the concentric circles diagrams he uses with students, which were incorporated into the “Two Ways of Living” session.

A debt of gratitude also goes to the following remnant of the original August 2015 Rhythmic Community Life Group at First Baptist Church, Mountain Home, Arkansas, who have gone through this workbook at least three times. Their feedback has been invaluable: Don Gramm, Forrest Meyer, Robin Stow, John and Donna Uhrhammer, Richard and Margo Argo, Patsy Clarke, and my wife Deanna, who patiently tolerated the many hours I spent writing and rewriting this manuscript and was glad when I finally was near the end of this endeavor. I also owe a great debt of gratitude to my long-time family friend Stephany Woods for the workbook’s final editing. Without all of these, this project would not have progressed as it did.

A note concerning Jerry Bridges’ devotionals in *Holiness Day by Day*: In 2005, our team was asked to read Bridges’ Pursuit of Holiness in preparation for a mission trip to Brazil. I was not acquainted with either Bridges or his writings. However, I found the book challenging, practical, and excellent spiritual preparation for the mission. So when I began writing *The Rhythmic Community*, I was already reading his devotionals, *Holiness Day by Day*. As I wrote, I began to see how the devotionals supplemented and illustrated the points being made, especially since the objective of this study is to become holy as

He is holy. Therefore, each session features several of Bridges' daily devotionals. I consider Jerry Bridges' writings on holiness as important and helpful as Andrew Murray's writings on prayer. Jerry Bridges is our teacher on living the transformed life of holiness, just as Andrew Murray teaches the value of intercessory prayer. Both Bridges and Murray are foundational writings for *the Rhythmic Community* project. I sincerely urge you to begin reading their books now. This study contains portions of each.

There would also not have been any progress if Kevin Moore, Minister to Senior Adults at First Baptist Church, Mountain Home, Arkansas, had not asked me to finish teaching his Spiritual Disciplines class, or Woody Wooldridge had not asked if I had ever written a curriculum. So both of these fellow followers of Jesus were catalysts for this workbook. Truly, God does work in remarkable and timely ways.

Finally, thanks to Michael Najjar of Pioneer Missions for making some very helpful suggestions for revising the October 2020 manuscript, which was the basis for the first printing of this workbook.

PREFACE

The Spiritual “Rhythm of Life” studies were never intended to be used beyond First Baptist Church, Mountain Home, Arkansas. However, in the summer of 2018, Woody Wooldridge of Bridging the World, with whom I had been in contact about the possibility of working in China, called to ask if I would be interested in his “crazy idea” of prayer walking in China. I said, “Yes, keep me posted.” After several months, with no further word from him, I called to ask about the status of the mission. By then, he had already enlisted two friends and felt the team was complete. But when he told me they were going to pray walk the Guangxi Autonomous Region, including Liuzhou (where I had visited twice on a Christmas in China mission), he said, “You need to come with us.”

The trip was scheduled for October 5-19, 2018. Bud, a 76-year-old retired professor from nearby Nixa, Missouri, who pastored a small church in Springfield, Missouri, would fly with me to Chicago, where we would meet Woody and his friend Steve. This 55-year-old business owner had worked with Woody and Bridging the World in China. He had also worked with Bud. Since Steve and Bud knew each other, they would be rooming together on this venture, leaving Woody and me in our 80s to room together. From Chicago, we flew to Beijing and then to Guilin, where we would stay overnight and begin praying and walking the city the next day.

As Woody and I settled in our room, we chatted idly. Suddenly, out of the blue, Woody asked if I had ever written a curriculum. I thought, “What kind of question is this? I do not really know Woody. I have never met him before. I’ve only spoken with him by phone, and he’s asking this.” Then Woody told me he had been asked to write a new curriculum for the Chinese students who attend Bridging The World Summer English Camps held for 22 years in 13 Provinces throughout China. Although he had read several books in preparation, he did not really have an idea how to proceed. I replied that I had just finished a curriculum and was testing it in a class I was teaching. Then I asked him the “Invitation to Mentoring” questions for “Rhythm of Life.” (pgs. 71-72.) He was very excited to learn the focus was on “being” (character) before “doing” (conduct). He said he needed to learn this, his church needed this, and the Chinese students needed this because all they had ever addressed was “doing” rather than “being.” I agreed to teach him the basics during the two weeks we would be together, and for the next ten days, I mentored him in “The 4 R’s” and Invitational (Contemplative) Prayer. As he practiced these, he was beginning to establish a rhythm of life that would continue the transformation into holiness God intended for him when he was converted. He was learning to “be” and “do.”

THE RHYTHMIC COMMUNITY

Purpose Statement

Jesus said that if you love me, you will keep my commandments. Romans 12:2 states a negative commandment, "... do not be conformed to the world ..." and a positive commandment, "... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ..." As we obey the positive commandment, we will obey the negative. The transformation process begins at conversion and should continue for the rest of our lives.

1 Peter 1:14-16 states the transformation objective: "Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct, for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." This is just one of eight New Testament verses that tell us what God desires for us to BE rather than what He desires for us to DO because our conduct (doing) comes from our character (being).

Paul states that the transformation comes as our minds are renewed (Romans 12:2b), thus stating a fact science is just now recognizing: the brain can be rewired (renewed). "Through prayer, worship, and study, God makes us into new creatures as he rewires our brains and renews our minds. Traditional spiritual practices seem to be rooted in the fact that modern science is only now discovering how brains change. When we give focused attention and regular practice, whether through prayer, study, meditation, journaling or other means of attending to the presence of God, we can experience God in profound ways that lead to permanent changes in our lives. "What Your Body Knows About God", p.170, Rob Moll.

The Rhythmic Community presents a method by which Spiritual Disciplines become a regular (rhythmic) part of daily life, enabling the practice of the presence of God and His Word in a more intentional, life-changing manner. The method is based on the First Century Jewish Community rhythm of three daily prayer times, which the early church continued. Each time provides an opportunity to "practice" a Spiritual Discipline as daily downbeats, thus establishing a "rhythm" of practicing the presence of God. As in music, where the downbeat establishes the rhythm of a measure and thus the musical composition, so in life, the spiritual downbeat establishes the rhythm for time with God and thus the spiritual composition of life or the Rhythm of Life.

The Rhythm of Life can only be experienced as the Holy Spirit touches your heart as well as your head, causing you to hunger to go deeper into the transformation process through the renewing of your mind by the dynamic of His word. God's desire for you to be holy as He is Holy, to change your character, becomes your desire.

The Rhythmic Community, based on the spiritual Rhythm of Life, is a disciplined community in which participants help one another through accountability to attain and maintain a daily rhythm of practicing the Spiritual Disciplines.

THE RHYTHMIC COMMUNITY

ORIENTATION

WORKBOOK OBJECTIVE: To learn to practice transforming Spiritual Disciplines in a regular, rhythmic, daily regimen and participate in a small group (community) that will hold each other accountable for this practice.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU BEGIN THIS STUDY:

1. This is a workbook, not a devotional, although it does contain Jerry Bridges's "Holiness Day by Day" devotionals from The Navigators as supplements to each session.
2. Please read the questions on page 3 carefully. If you cannot answer "yes" to all, do not proceed. Answering "yes" to Question 1 is for your protection. To attempt the "rhythm" disciplines in addition to your regular Quiet Time materials may result in confusion and frustration. When you conclude Session 5, you may continue with your regular Quiet Time materials.
3. Please read "The Rhythmic Community Project", page v.
4. Please complete the Survey on p. 80, scan it, and email it to bcmasu@yahoo.com. You can also mail it to Jon Gilbert, 37 Windsong Pl., Mountain Home, AR. 72653.

Questions? Ph. 870-491-5605, text 870-405-6961, or use the above mail addresses.

INTRODUCTION

Most of us do not begin a journey without knowing when to start and where we are going. However, all of us who trust Jesus as our Savior have done that. At the moment we answered Jesus' call to follow Him, a journey began. Since He said that "He was the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him" (John 14:6) and the Father is in heaven, we may have thought, as Jesus followers, we were headed for a place: heaven. But what if we were headed for a relationship? What if Jesus wanted to lead us to an intimate relationship with Father that begins now and can be cultivated and enjoyed on earth rather than waiting until you die and go to heaven to know "Our Father"? A relationship that transforms you into the very character of God: Holy. A relationship that results in your being set apart from the way of the world to the way of the Word.

To understand the answer to that question, we need to look at the journey of those who left Egypt, having been delivered from a 400-year bondage in slavery. They left not knowing that they were beginning a 40-year journey that would end in the death of all adults over 20, but life in the "promised land" for all 20 and younger. This journey would include learning to obey commands stipulating how God, who had delivered them from slavery, wanted them to relate to Him and each other. Commands that are obeyed will teach them a new way of life full of God's blessings. This deliverance becomes the framework for our understanding of "salvation," which means our deliverance from slavery to self, sin, and Satan, where we all begin our "journey of life". Deliverance from slavery always requires a deliverer. For the slaves in Egypt, God chose Moses, and for us, He chose His son Jesus. These former slaves did not know they were going on a journey, nor when the journey would begin or where it would end.

Deliverance is a robust understanding of salvation. Of course, we know this journey ended in the land promised to Abraham and his descendants. However, to occupy the land, they had two things to do: engage in a battle to clear out the inhabitants living in abhorrent sin and live as God had instructed them through the teachings He gave Moses, recorded in the Torah. Therefore, the destination for these emancipated slaves was not only a place but a way of life which would result in their being set apart as a peculiar people holy unto God.

This journey began with being set free (delivered) from Egyptian slavery, continued with 40 years of life in the desert, and concluded in the land promised to Abraham and his descendants, part of which comprises the current nation of Israel.

This three-part journey parallels and provides the context for The Salvation Process (p. 39), which also has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. It commences with conversion (Justification), continues with transformation (Sanctification), and concludes when we arrive in the presence of Jesus, at the place that He has prepared for us (Glorification). The Exodus, the wandering in the desert, the arrival at the Promised

Land, and our salvation experience of commencing, continuing, and concluding the process are the same journey.

Initially, when, as a nine-year-old, I trusted Jesus as my Savior, there was no evidence of conversion. Instead, I continued in a life dominated by music rather than the Lord. Only years later did I realize the decision was the commencing of a life-long spiritual journey made possible because I had been set free from slavery to self, sin, and Satan and that my baptism was a symbolic burial of the death of my old nature (Rom. 6:6) and I was indeed a new person set apart for God to live daily for His glory as He had instructed. Nor did I know that as the journey continued, I would be engaged in a spiritual battle due to the desires of the flesh trying to have dominion over me. Just as Israel was engaged in a continuing struggle to rid the Promised Land of the dominion of the enemies with which it was occupied. Nor did I know that I was supposed to be learning how to experience being transformed, by renewing my mind, into Holiness rather than being conformed to the world.

Years after responding to God's call to serve first as a Minister of Music and then as a Pastor/Church Planter, earning graduate degrees in music and theology, then serving for 53 years as a career minister, I understand God wanted Jesus followers, His disciples, not just to be delivered (saved) from a life of slavery, but be transformed into a life of Holiness. They should consistently conduct themselves with His character and be like Him and imitate Him. Finally, I was able to understand and know what to do to reach my journey destination: cultivate the intimate relationship established at conversion, with the Creator of this vast universe who loved me enough to send His only Son Jesus to pay the penalty for my sins as well as redeem me from a life of slavery to self, sin, and Satan.

To those raised in an evangelical culture, this journey sounds familiar. It emphasizes the narrative of being saved from sin's penalty so that when you die, you can go to heaven rather than hell, become a new person, have a new life and a purpose for living, and be part of God's forever family. All of that is true, but secondary. The primary is the fact that now, because your sins are forgiven, you can have the intimate relationship with God that was inaugurated in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:7-8), demonstrated in the life of Jesus (John 15), and will be consummated at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9). This relationship is possible because at conversion, you were sanctified and set apart for God to be made holy as He is HOLY. Sanctification is the second, or continuing, part of The Salvation Process (pgs. 40-41), which Paul addresses when he states that we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). It mirrors Israel's battles to live in the Holy Land, the land of promise.

In the fall of 1974, I sat with a remnant of the Williamsport Baptist Chapel, which met in an old three-story house in S. Williamsport, Pa. The founding pastor had left in the summer, disillusioned, believing that the small congregation would soon die. My wife Deanna and I had been appointed missionaries with the SBC Home Mission Board as Pastor/Director for the North Central Pennsylvania Association, where we were responsible for pastoring the Williamsport Baptist Chapel and planting churches in a five-county area. As I sat with this small group, I realized we needed each other, and I needed

to be disciplined. Though several pastors on my journey had loved and encouraged me to follow the Lord, no one had ever systematically mentored me.

Knowing there was help available from the Home Mission Board, I requested a three-month summer internship. This resulted in Keith Boulware, who had just finished his Junior year at Ga. Tech, working with me to establish a regimen of disciplines employing Navigator material. For two months, Keith, young enough for me to be his father, rigorously mentored me. He “fathered” me in the faith. I was taught to memorize God’s word systematically. I also began to use Andrew Murray’s Helps for Intercessors. Though this was my first introduction to a disciple-making process, it did not introduce me to God’s expectation for me to walk in Holiness. However, at the end of the 2 months, I did have a disciplined daily routine of Bible reading, Intercessory Prayer, and scripture memorization. Though I sporadically continued practicing these Spiritual Disciplines, they never became a regular part of my daily journey. Nor did I connect them with being transformed by renewing my mind into the Holiness God desired in me to experience the intimate relationship He wanted with me. Nor did I connect them with the regular, daily Jewish community rhythm of three prayer “hours” (periods) of the 2nd Temple Jerusalem era. A practice that continued with the First Century Gentile followers of Christ and was later adopted by Benedict of Nursia as his “Rule of Life,” which I refer to as a “Rhythm of Life.” This community rhythm is the framework template for practicing the Spiritual Disciplines taught in The Rhythmic Community Disciple workbook. They are foundational for a follower of Christ to establish the discipline necessary as a disciple, learning to obey all the commands He gave us. Now I know that the journey's destination began when I was nine is more a daily relationship with the God of this Universe than a place in the universe we refer to as Heaven. It is not so much where in the universe we go when we die, but how we lived on Earth in relationship with the One who created the universe while "on the go": Holy as He is Holy!

After 35 years of career ministry, 25 as a church planter, in 1994, we moved to Mountain Home, AR, where I continued for 18 more years as a career minister in two local churches. Initially, we began attending East Side Baptist Church, where our Sunday School class was studying EXPERIENCING GOD by Henry Blackaby. The session on prayer made me consider that, like many people, most of my praying was a one-sided conversation with God. I was doing all the talking! It wasn’t much of a conversation. I needed to learn to be quiet and listen; I was unsure how.

Several years earlier, at a silent retreat sponsored by the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C. I had begun to understand the importance of silence in communicating with God, but it was not a part of my prayer discipline. The retreat made me realize a need for a Spiritual Director. Myra Flood, the retreat director, offered to serve in that capacity. This began with weekly written reports concerning my prayer discipline. In a newsletter I received from attending the retreat, reference was made to Contemplative or Centering Prayer, a way to pray that included “listening to God.”

As I reflected on my prayer practice during the EXPERIENCING GOD study, I realized I was still talking, not listening. This resulted in writing an instructional brochure on Contemplative Prayer, which I soon began practicing daily.

After writing “The Rhythmic Community,” I added the Spiritual Discipline of Meditative Bible Reading employing the 4 R's method, which easily transitions into Contemplative Prayer, referred to in this study as Invitational Prayer. These two basic Spiritual Disciplines form the foundation of the introduction, now known as The Rhythmic Community Disciple Workbook, to “The Rhythmic Day.” That introduction and the nine-session study of Rob Moll’s What Your Body Knows About God and Romans chapters 12 through 15 comprise “The Rhythmic Community” Discipleship workbook.

ROB MOLL DEDICATION

Rob Moll died July 19, 2019, at age 41 in a fall while hiking in Mount Rainier National Park, Washington. He left behind Clarissa, his wife of 17 years, as well as four young children.

He was an award-winning journalist and editor-at-large with *Christianity Today*. His work appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. He also served World Vision as Communication Officer as well as U.S. Opportunity International and Eventide Funds.

He graduated from Cedarville University in 2001 and for the next 18 years dedicated his professional career to “advancing the church’s mission to walk in the way of Christ”¹

He is the author of *The Art of Dying* as well as *What Your Body Knows about God*. It is this latter book that served as the inspiration for *The Rhythmic Community* workbook, a mentoring method enabling converts to Christ to not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of the mind and thus walk in His way, the way of holiness. It is my prayer that God will use this workbook to accomplish the object of Rob’s dedication: “advancing the church’s mission to walk in the way of Christ.”

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is —
His good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:2)*

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¹ Obituary, Maple Valley Presbyterian Church, Maple Valley, WA.

THE RHYTHMIC COMMUNITY

The Practice of the Spiritual Rhythm of Life



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THE DISCIPLE PROCESS

While walking down the hall to a classroom to teach a lesson on “The Hard Sayings of Jesus” from Luke 14:27-33, suddenly the thought came that being a disciple of Jesus is a process that begins with the call to follow and continues through a lifetime commitment to the sanctification that began at conversion. Just because a person answers a call to follow Jesus does not automatically make him a disciple. That is just the beginning.

Basically, the lesson was on "the cost of discipleship". I was interested in how the class of 70- to 85-year-olds would define a disciple and its cost. Both the Leader's Guide and the Student Study Guide defined a disciple as a “follower, learner, or imitator.” I had planned to list those definitions vertically on the whiteboard. However, as I asked the class for their definitions, instead of making a list, I drew a timeline indicating a beginning point and a point of completion.

Most everyone in the class agreed that being a disciple first meant being a follower. Though crowds were always following Jesus, what was their motivation? The class responded with “curiosity” or because they “wanted to be fed or healed.” Were these crowds of "disciples", or did some in the crowds seriously want to become a disciple of Rabbi Jesus? Matthew implies that disciples of Jesus were already in the crowds (Matt. 10:1). Mark stated that it was from these that Jesus chose twelve to “be with Him that He might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:13-14). Whether chosen specifically to be one of the twelve or not, all of these were followers. He also chose some to follow as apostles who were not in the crowd but were still working at their occupations, such as the fishermen Peter, Andrew, James and John, and the tax collector Matthew. In Jesus' day, what did being a disciple mean? To understand this, we need to understand the education system of first-century Judaism.

First, discipleship was a “well-established primary institution of higher religious education” which began with a person deciding that he would like to study with a particular rabbi. Basically, a disciple was a student of the rabbi to whom he attached himself as a follower/learner. According to David Stern in the Jewish New Testament Commentary, "The English word 'disciple' fails to convey the richness of the relationship between a Rabbi and his talmidim in the first century C. E. Teachers, both itinerant like Yeshua and settled ones, attracted followers who wholeheartedly gave themselves over to their teachers. . . . The essence of the relationship was one of trust in every area of living, and its goal was to make the talmid like his rabbi in knowledge, wisdom, and ethical behavior" (p.23). That was the first step of this educational process and could be

analogous to our enrolling as college freshmen. The main teaching method was to memorize the rabbi's words or lessons. In Jesus' case, He taught in the context of an event such as healing an individual, feeding a crowd, or exorcising a demon. This was usually followed by several parables to illustrate the teaching, followed by the basic lesson. As you learned this lesson, you would be considered a student or learner (a Sophomore), the basic definition of disciple. You would begin to learn how to apply the words you had memorized. Since memorization is a challenging exercise, as a person continued in this discipline, he was considered a serious follower or disciple of the rabbi and would begin to learn not only the truths of the rabbi's teachings, but also the rabbi's traditions. Next would be imitating the rabbi's actions and attitudes (a junior). Finally, you became a practitioner (a senior) of the rabbi's teachings to the degree that you could say as Paul did, "Therefore I urge you to imitate me" (1 Cor. 4:16) and "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). (See Appendix p.67 for more Scripture references on imitating Godly followers of Christ.) Therefore, as a Rabbi, Jesus would have possibly used this process with the twelve chosen as apostles. One similar to the following:

Follower Learner Imitator Practitioner

Each of these stages would build upon the previous one, requiring a time commitment, which brings us to the Disciple Process in "The Rhythmic Community" workbook. Does this process reflect both the one Jesus used when He taught the twelve as well as what He stated in The Great Commission? Just exactly what did Rabbi Jesus expect to happen when he said: "go... and (make) disciples"? Before we can answer this question, we need to understand precisely what Jesus was telling us as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20.

First, we know this was given to those chosen(called) to be apostles and were thus taught by Rabbi Jesus for three years. A translation of the key Greek words according to the RSV Interlinear Greek-English New Testament 1958 (Zondervan Publisher) reads as follows: First: "Go" (Gr. poreuthentes) implies "as you go" as a "follower". The second key word, "learner" (Gr. matheteusate, "from a root indicating thought accompanied by endeavor"), usually translated "make disciples" (however, the Greek does not support the word "make"), is those who have a desire to learn what the Rabbi is teaching. This may give insight into why Jesus chose the twelve. In each, He may have seen a desire to learn what He had to teach. They are to be from all ethnic (Gr. ethne) groups. They are people with a common cultural heritage as well as a geographical location. These learners are to be immersed and instructed. The third key word, "teach" (Gr. didaskotes, more through an example to imitate than instructions to follow), to "observe" (Gr. tereo), the fourth key word, "keep", implies practicing as in a practitioner. In other words, teach them to "keep,

observe, do, practice" all that Jesus commanded. From this analysis of the Greek text, we see the following:

- Go=Follower, Learn=Learner, Teach=Imitate (not just impart information but demonstrate lifestyle change), Observe (as in keeping, obeying)=Practitioner. In summary, Jesus expects us, as we go, wherever that may be, to enlist people from all ethnic groups. Then teach these to observe (keep, practice) all of His commands. From this, it is evident that in stating The Great Commission, Jesus reiterated a disciple process common to his culture. Using The Great Commission keywords that focus on its beginning and objective, the following process emerges:
 1. "As you are *going* . . .
 2. . . . Enlist *learners* (disciples) from all ethnic groups. . .
 3. . . . whom you are to *instruct*. . .
 4. . . .to *observe* (as practitioners) all Jesus commandments", resulting in being transformed to live set apart ("Holy"), rather than be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2). This analysis of The Great Commission enables us to see that Jesus did expect this well-known process to be followed by His disciples as they proclaimed the Gospel.

We also see that this process is the same as the four stages of the Disciple Process (pg.xvii) in The Rhythmic Community workbook. A process that results in Followers of Jesus becoming Practitioners of His way of life through the transformation occurring as the mind is renewed by the power of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit (" . . .according to the power at work within us . ." Eph. 3:20) through the practice of basic Spiritual Disciplines such as

1. Meditative Bible Reading
2. Memorizing Bible verses.
3. Intercessory Prayer
4. Invitational (Contemplative) Prayer
5. Journaling.

Establishing “The Rhythmic Day” (Session 2) and becoming part of “The Rhythmic Community” (Session 5) begins with *memorizing* Romans 12:1-2, the key verse for “The Rhythmic Community” study. Then, as disciples, we learn “How Life Works” (Session 3). Learning continues with a brief analysis of Romans 12:2 and Psalm 1, both of which address “Two Ways of Living” (Session 4). As we *memorize* other verses, such as 1 Peter 1:13-16 and Colossians 3:1-4, we begin learning Spiritual Disciplines that are integrated into our daily lives by using a community pattern or rhythm that existed in first-century Judaism and Christianity, thus imitating the spiritual lifestyle of Jesus. As our minds are being rewired through *memorizing* and *meditating* on Scripture, we begin to experience being set apart, becoming holy as God commanded us to be. To some degree, this, too, is a process of *imitating*. It is not so much “What would Jesus do?” as “What would Jesus be?” He was like His Father and He said that we should be like Him. Finally, as we progress in Spiritual Disciplines (a disciple is most definitely a person practicing disciplines), we become “*practitioners*” – those now able to disciple whomever Jesus has called and are starting to follow Him as a disciple.

In the life of Paul, also a rabbi and a disciple of Rabbi Gamaliel, we see evidence of this process. First, on the road to Damascus, Jesus called him to be a *follower*/apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Second, Paul quoted extensively in his letters from the Hebrew Scriptures to the extent that one writer stated that “Paul often gives the impression of quoting from memory” (Keith Hunt’s review of E. Earle Ellis’ *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament*). Although Paul does not state that a disciple should memorize Scripture, he gives ample evidence of having mastered this discipline, so common in his day, as part of the learner/disciple process. Next, we know that he spent at least three years in Arabia (Gal. 1:17-18) getting to know Jesus better so he could *imitate* his lifestyle. Then, as already noted, he often encouraged others to imitate him as he was imitating Jesus (1 Cor. 11:1, Phil. 3:17, 4:9). Finally, we know that he was an earnest *practitioner* of the faith that he had received. So, from being a *follower* to a *learner* to an *imitator* of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1) and then a *practitioner*, Paul is the prime example of the process of becoming a disciple of Jesus. This being the case, why not follow his example? How can we ever improve on the discipleship process of Jesus and Paul?

Currently, this process among evangelicals, who follow the Great Commission, emphasizes proclaiming the Gospel to all nations: ethnic groups. (Matthew 24:14). with the objective of conversion as though that completed the process. However, that is just the beginning. Conversion is to the Great Commission as a first base hit is to baseball, and a fourth down conversion to football: a beginning step towards reaching home plate or the goal line. Until the convert has been taught to learn to obey (observe, keep) Jesus’ commands, fulfilling the Great Commission is incomplete. We are not home yet. The

goal has not been reached. The process is incomplete, only half finished. Perhaps this is because the Gospel is usually presented more as a way to obtain heaven than a way to learn to obey Jesus' commands while on earth. We address people's desire to be "saved", delivered from an afterlife of hell, more than learning how to live now, separate from the influence of the world's system. It should not be so much "Do you want to go to heaven when you die?" as "Would you like to have an intimate relationship now, as you live, with the Creator of the universe?" Those who are attempting to fulfill the Great Commission should, as their goal, be teaching Jesus followers to obey God's command to be Holy as He is Holy.

A word of caution: Remember, Jesus gave both the Great Commission and the admonition in Acts 1:8 to witness to men who had just completed three years of Rabbi Jesus' "School of Kingdom Living." They were graduates. We need to ensure that new converts continue in the Disciple Process while they "go" and become holy, like Jesus, as they learn to obey His commands. The "Rhythmic Community" workbook is designed to begin to accomplish these objectives.

You should now be ready to begin experiencing this Disciple Process, rhythm of life, as a follower of Jesus, learning to "not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2a).

NOTES

SESSION 1: THE RHYTHM OF LIFE



Introduction: Do You Have Rhythm?

From the beginning, God has desired an intimate relationship with us. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve heard Him walking in their midst. (Gen 3:8). Jesus “pitched His tent” on the terrain of Israel for 33 years, and Revelation 21:1-3 tells us that God will one day return to be with us when New Jerusalem descends to Earth. But we don’t have to wait ‘til then to experience this intimacy. Establishing a daily rhythm of Spiritual Disciplines by regularly separating segments of our life from everyday activities enables the cultivation of an intimate relationship with God.

Our English word “rhythm” is a translation of the Greek *rhythmus*, meaning “measured motion.” The motion or movement of music is measured by groups of beats (two, three, four, five, six, eight) separated by vertical bar lines into measures. The number of beats in a measure indicates the time in which the music is played. For instance, two beats per measure indicates the music is played in two-beat time; if three, then three beats (as in a waltz); if four, then four beats or Common Time; and so forth.

Rhythm is generally thought of as a musical term, but all of life is rhythmic in that we live with measured motion. We are surrounded by rhythm, as captured in the song “Rhythm of Life” (Appendix, p. 72) from the Broadway musical *Sweet Charity*. Genesis 1:16 and Psalm 136:8 state that the sun is to “rule by day.” The daily rotation of our planet gives the sun its rising and setting, and our planets’ “rhythm of days.” The rhythmic ticking of a clock can measure the moments of the day. Our months are calculated by the rising and setting of the moon, which was given to “rule the night” (Gen. 1:16).

Do you have rhythm? Take your pulse. It measures the rhythmic beating of the heart that pumps blood through our bodies. When it is out of rhythm, we have the medical condition known as “arrhythmia”. When your heart stops, unless it is mechanically or electrically started, your life is over. The rhythmic movement of our lungs, measured by the inhaling and expelling of air, measures the breaths we take. We speak of being short of breath and are encouraged to take long, deep breaths. When we cease to breathe, unless artificially started, we are no longer alive.

Our rhythmic breathing measures life in terms of the air pulsing through our lungs from the first to the last. Your body has a variety of rhythms necessary for life. When the rhythmic beating of our heart ceases, so does our life. When the rhythm of our breathing stops, so do we. When the clock ceases to tick, it has stopped working. When the beat of the music stops, it is finished (fine) unless there was a planned silence. If planet Earth were to stop rotating, interrupting the rising and setting of the sun, our planet would die. Rhythm is life, and life is rhythm. Rhythm gives order to life. A life lived in rhythm has order. A life lived without rhythm is disorderly and chaotic.

SESSION 1

"Follower"

This is the first stage of The Disciple Process (R.C. Disciple Workbook, pgs xvii-xix, paragraph 4). The Great Commission begins "Go..." implying following something or someone. What or who are you following? If it is the desires of the flesh (drop off the "h", spell backwards= SELF) or self you will be led into sin, (Gal. 5:16). If it is your heart (emotions) you will be deceived ("...the heart is deceitful above all things Jeremiah 17:12). If it is your thoughts or mind you will be involved in a mental battle since the enemy has you lying to yourself (2 Cor. 10:5). If it is friends they will lead you astray. If it is a philosophy or lifestyle, you may be greatly disappointed. If it is a spiritual leader, you may be trapped in mass suicide!

Rabbi Jesus frequently asked men to follow Him. In Jesus' day, following a "recognized" Rabbi was how men continued their education ("The Disciple Process", pgs. xvii-xix). Being addressed as Rabbi attested to Jesus being a recognized teacher in His community. Therefore, when He invited men to follow Him, He was asking them to sign up, enroll in His "School of the Kingdom of God." The Rhythmic Community is comprised of people who have answered Jesus' invitation to "Come, follow me," resulting in conversion to the Kingdom of God and adoption into His family.

The Great Commission is one of the two Bible verses on which The Rhythmic Community Disciple Workbook is based. The second is Romans 2:1-2. The premise is that through the power of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the daily practice of Spiritual Disciplines, you begin to experience the renewing (rewiring) of your mind necessary to be transformed into a life of being "set apart" from the world unto God: "be Holy as He is Holy." (Leviticus 19:2)

Before beginning the following outline, be sure you have completed the Rhythmic Community Project Survey, pg. 77 and answered the question: "How were you discipled?"

TEACHING OUTLINE

I. Basic Questions

1. Are you willing to lay aside, be separated from, all your current quiet time materials, except the Bible? Rhythm transforms quiet time.

2. Are you willing lay aside, be separated from, your current Bible reading plan to learn a new way of reading the Bible?

Rhythm transforms the way you read the Bible.

3. Are you willing to set aside daily time to learn how to listen to God while praying?

Rhythm transforms how you pray.

4. Are you willing to "clean your plate," separating yourself from all non-essential "busyness" (doing)? Busyness is the enemy of holiness. (See "Essential or Expected", p.29)

Rhythm transforms you from doing "busyness" into being holy.

PROCEED ONLY WHEN ALL OF THESE CAN BE ANSWERED “YES.”

II. The Rhythm

1. Read the words to “Rhythm of Life” (Appendix 1, p.70) while watching a YouTube video of a church choir singing this selection, or watch the movie “Sweet Charity” from the Broadway musical by the same name.
- 2 . Read Bridges devotional “Be Transformed” (p. 18).

III. The Spiritual Disciplines (The Transformation Process)

1. “The 4 R’s” Meditative (Thoughtful) Bible Reading Method.
 - a. Review pages 5-6. Explain how to use “The 4 R’s” method of reading the Bible.
 - b. Choose a short paragraph from the Bible.
 - c. Identify the groupings for 2 or 3 verses which comprise the thoughts of this passage.
 - d. Read using “The 4 R’s.” (See "Biblical M & M's", p.12)
2. Invitational (Contemplative) Prayer
 - a. Read pages 8-9.
 - b. Make sure you understand each section.

III. Homework

1. Memorize Romans 12:1-2 and Psalm 62:5-6, the Invitational Prayer transition (III, p.9)
2. Read and answer Reflection Questions 1-3 (p. 9).
3. Read Bridges devotionals "Be Transformed“ (p.18), Planned Prayer” (p.19) and “Sanctification by Consensus” (p. 20).
4. Read Session 2 pgs. 22-34

IV. The Weekly Report p. 75

1. Introduce
2. Begin using daily
3. Introduce and Review "The Rhythmic Day Worksheet", p.25

MEDITATIVE (THOUGHTFUL) BIBLE READING

(THE "4 R'S" METHOD)

Many times, Biblical words or phrases are repeated for emphasis. It is as if God says, "You need to pay attention and listen to this." For example, in Isaiah 6, when the seraphim said, "Holy, holy, holy," that is holy to the third power! That is as holy as you can be. Or when a phrase or verse is stated on one line and then repeated on the following line with just a slight variation, this is known as Hebrew parallelism and can be a device for emphasis. So, can we read the Bible in a way that every word, phrase, sentence, or verse has emphatic weight? Or is the emphasis only for where it is obvious? Meditating on Bible verses requires repetition. What would happen if we read the Bible with thoughtful repetition? What would be the effect? Would it have more impact on our lives?

What if we read each phrase, verse or passage at least four times? What if we read only a few verses at least four times? Have you ever noticed that Bible verses seem to be grouped in twos and threes? Usually, it takes two to three verses to complete a thought, an idea, and multiple thoughts to complete a paragraph. Try it right now. Turn to any passage in the Bible and look for verses in sequence in the paragraph that seem to be paired together. Then look for those that seem to be in groups of three. When you consider the fact that versification was added many years (A.D. 1557) after the Bible was written, it is truly remarkable that these groupings are so obvious, as though on purpose. Just as notable is the fact that these verse groupings are complete thoughts. In one sense, we are reading God's thoughts as recorded in His word. Proverbs 23:7 says of man: "as he thinks within himself, so is he," or as the more familiar KJV states: "as a man thinketh within his heart, so is he." Therefore, the very process of thinking addresses our existence. Or as the philosopher Descartes stated, "I think, so I am." We could say we live according to or by our thoughts. Since we live thought by thought, why not read God's Word thought by thought?

First, *read* the verses aloud as they would have been read in a synagogue worship service or even a first-century house church gathering. The book of Revelation pronounces a blessing on whoever reads it aloud (Rev. 1:3). Paul wrote that his letters are to be read aloud publicly (1 Tim. 4:13).

Next, reread those same verses, phrase by phrase, emphasizing each word. Each is so weighty that you have to hold it awhile before letting it go and moving to the next word. Examine each word as if it were a precious jewel, as the old gospel song says: "Thy word is like a deep, deep mine, and jewels rich and rare are hidden in its mighty depths for every searcher

there.”² Meditate as Joshua was instructed to do (Joshua 1:8), *reflecting* on each word (Josh. 8:34-35). "Now let me think about that". What has God revealed to you that furthers your intimate relationship with Him? You want to listen to what He says, which will enable you to get to *know* Him rather than *know about* Him. It is the difference between information, which is the basis for theology (knowledge about God), or formation, which is the basis for continuing the intimate relationship with God begun at conversion. As Paul writes, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection. . ." (Phil. 3:10-11) and the New Covenant as stated in Jeremiah 31:34 reads: "No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. . .'" Reading with this objective requires a change of thinking because we usually read for information, not formation. It is more an intellectual pursuit (religion) of God through the mind rather than the pursuit of God from the heart (relationship). An objective of the mind, not the heart. Therefore, pray "Father, reveal to me what you want me to see of you that will enable me to KNOW you and continue to GROW in the formation of the intimate relationship I have with you".

Now, reread the verses, thinking about how you would *respond* to what you read. Is this something you need to consider doing or being? Is it something you need to think about further? Or do you need to thank God or praise Him? Put yourself into these verses.

Finally, read the verses and *rest*. Consider what you think God is saying to you. What is His message to you? Converse with Him through the verses as a listener. What do you hear? Be a listener who is resting in, abiding in, savoring each of God's words.

Reading several verses four times from four different perspectives will impact your mind in a manner that you may not have experienced before while reading God's Word. You have READ the verses aloud, REFLECTED or meditated on them, RESPONDED to them, and then RESTED, relaxed, abided in them, enjoying the refreshing, reviving Word of God. Reading Scripture in this manner is a centuries-old Spiritual Discipline practiced by those who wanted to enter into a conversation with God as a listener, not just a reader. This is "The 4 R's" method of reading the Word meditatively.

To review:

First, *read* aloud a brief passage.

Next, *reflect* (meditate) phrase by phrase on the 2 or 3 verses you see that comprise one or more thoughts.

Then, read again and *respond*. What do I need to do or be?

Finally, read and *rest* in what God says to you.

READ ALOUD

² Edwin Hodder, "Thy Word Is Like a Garden, Lord," in *The New Sunday School Hymn Book* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1863), 33.

REFLECT (phrase by phrase. These are the “bites” on which you “chew”)

RESPOND (What does God want me to be or do as a result of reflecting?)

REST

These are the four R's.

Be sure you precede Meditative Bible Reading with prayer, asking God to reveal what you need to see that will continue the **formation** of the intimate relationship begun with Him at conversion. Reading for **formation** focuses on **relationship**, *knowing God*, while reading for **information** focuses on **theology or religion**, *knowing about God*. Though God does want us to know about Him, from the time of His creating us in the Garden of Eden 'til His return to us as recorded in Revelation 21, He desires to be with us so we can know Him. **Reading for formation requires, for most of us, changing the objective of our Bible engagement, whether reading, listening, or studying, from information to formation.**

In summary, however you engage the Bible, receiving only information (knowledge) without a continuing Spiritual Formation runs the risk of spiritual stagnation and no transformation, through the "renewing of your mind", into living set apart (holy) from the world. (Romans 12:2) Your way of life becomes more of a religious practice than the experience of an intimate relationship with God.

Why This Method?

1. God's word is wide, but also deep.
 - a. Reading to get to *know* God intimately (deep) rather than just *knowing about* God (wide).
 - b. Becoming intimate (the heart) rather than just being informed (the head).
2. God's Word is sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12).
 - a. A *marchaira* (Greek) is the standard double-edged blade short sword of the Roman soldier.
 - b. A double-edged cut. A deep incision.
 - c. It pierces and divides soul and spirit, bones and marrow, and thoughts and intentions.
3. God's word is transformational.
 - a. It is used to renew (rewire) our minds (thoughts).
 - b. This requires meditating on and memorizing God's Word which He uses as a divine scalpel for life-transforming mental surgery.

The **meditating** on and **memorizing** of God's word are "Biblical M & M's", pg. 12-13, which "melt" and are absorbed in your heart and mind. Memorizing God's word guards against unwanted thoughts and enables us to practice Intercessory Prayer as we daily review mentally the scriptures being memorized and then pray them.

INVITATIONAL PRAYER

We often associate prayer with the words we say. Invitational Prayer is a way of being with God that does not depend upon giving the Holy One information about what we would like done in His world. Just as friends can enjoy one another in silence as well as conversation, or when conversing, in the silence of listening as each other speaks, so Invitational Prayer is a way of being with God through listening rather than talking. In Invitational Prayer we rest and wait, keeping our hearts alert and awake to the presence of God and His Word. We listen. Psalm 131 contains a wonderful image of a child in his mother's arms. The psalmist writes, "But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content." This is our position in Invitational Prayer.

Invitational Prayer requires patience. It is not the intense work that Intercessory Prayer can sometimes be. It is our response to Jesus' declaration to abide (John 15:4-7) or remain in Him, to become more receptive to the mystery of the Gospel: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Though we know He is in us, we now take time to pause and invite Him to sit awhile with us as we listen to Him speak to us through His word. (See Instructions III. Transition, p.10)

Instructions

Find a comfortable chair and sit upright with your back straight. Determine 20 minutes.

- I. Praise: Begin with praise, for God inhabits the praise of His people (Ps. 22:3b). For example: "Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit," "The God who was and is and is to come at the end of the ages" (Rev. 1:4, 8)—repeat aloud or sing songs of praise.
- II. Invitations: Continue by inviting God to come as:
 - A. "The Lover of my soul," who loves me with a love that is compassionate, unconditional, comforting, correcting, and continuous.
 - B. "My Head," who has complete control of me, giving guidance and direction, and is the very Source (as in the headwater of a river) of the abundant life He came to give (Eph. 1:22-23).
 - C. "My Security": therefore, I have no anxiety about anything. Still, in everything through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, I will make my requests known to Him so that His peace, which passes all understanding, will keep my heart and mind in Him. (Phil. 4:6-7) "Thank you, Lord, for being my Keeper" (Ps. 121).
 - D. The One who does not change, but who is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8) and therefore is the immovable, unshakable, stable, solid **foundation**, which is "sealed" with this inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and 'Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness'" (2 Tim. 2:19), and on

which my “tent”, (earthly dwelling) 2nd.Cor. 5:1 and the (tabernacle of the Holy Spirit) 1st. Cor. 6:19 is pitched.

III. Transition

Continue by saying, “Maranatha” (Come, Lord Jesus). “My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken” (Ps. 62:5-6 NAS). Count silently for one minute to release your thoughts to God (“take every thought captive for Christ” that intrudes. 2nd Cor. 10:5). Then mentally focus for 15-20 minutes on what God revealed as you listened to Him during “The 4 R’s” rest. *Continue to rest, abide in God's word.* John 15:7.

IV. Conclusion: Conclude with either Psalm 23 or some other Scripture of your choice.

Reflection Questions

1. Is your praying mostly a one-sided monologue with God? Does your praying mostly dictate to God what you would like to see happen? Do you make your requests with thanksgiving?
2. What does it mean to “remain in Christ”?
Do you believe that being in the presence of God is a prerequisite for prayer?

KNOWING GOD'S THOUGHTS

Though the Bible tells us that God's thoughts are not ours, for they are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9), Does that mean that it is impossible to know His thoughts? Amos 4:13 states, "... and reveal His thoughts to man..." David says, "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand." Ps. 139:17-18a. NIV.

How does God reveal His thoughts to us? On what basis could David say, "How vast is the sum of them... they... outnumber the grains of sand. . ."? How did David know this? The Bible tells us that God spoke His word by the Holy Spirit to men. 2 Peter 1:19-21 states, "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain. . .Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had it's origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (NIV). In other words, the Bible is the words that God spoke. What He thought, He spoke. What was spoken was written. David is one of the many to whom God spoke and then wrote what he heard. Prophecy is always a word spoken from God, which might be truths that need to be proclaimed or words about the future that need to be revealed. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, "the prophesying of the N.T. prophets was both a preaching of the Divine counsels of grace already accomplished and the fore-telling of the purposes of God in the future. (p.222). So, as has been said, prophecy is not just foretelling, but also "forth-telling": a proclamation. In 2 Peter 1:19-21, Peter is using prophecy in the sense of forth-telling. Thus, every message proclaimed, every sermon preached from God's Word, every forth-telling is "prophetic," and every person who preaches is a prophet as long as the message originates from God's Word and is understood and proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit. God reveals His thoughts through His word. That's how David can say that God's thoughts are precious to Him and as vast and numberless as grains of sand. Therefore, it is possible to know God's thoughts as we read His word. The key is reading according to the grouping of the Bible's verses.

Originally, there were no chapters or verses in the Bible. Around A.D. 1227, the Bible was divided into chapters, and then in A.D. 1448, verses were added to the Old Testament and in A.D. 1568 to the Bishops' Bible translation. Before versification, it may not have been evident that two or three consecutive verses usually compile a thought. Consider the following:

1. Ps. 139:17-18, when read as a two-verse group (couplet), essentially tells us, in several different ways, that God's thoughts are as vast as the sand, yet David is aware of their weight and impact on him. Because of their magnitude, they are impersonal, and yet because of their effect, they are personal. So God's thoughts can be impersonal and vast as well as intimate and personal.

2. 2nd. Peter 1:19-21, when read as a three-verse group (triplet) about prophets and prophecy, conveys God's thoughts about the communication of His word to us. Amazingly, the majority of Bible verses seem to have been written as couplets or triplets hundreds of years

before the Bible was versified. This may be because the Bible existed first orally, making it easier to memorize and remember when 2 or 3 verses communicate a thought or thoughts. Verse groupings also make it easier to grasp the meaning and memorize or meditate on the idea.

How do we interpret the Bible in light of God's perspective?

First, select a short passage of Scripture. Psalms is a good place to start. Read slowly to see how consecutive verses are connected, grouped either as couplets or triplets. These groupings usually convey an obvious thought. The majority are couplets. Many of the verse groupings form brief paragraphs. You may need to read the section to see the groupings and understand the context.

Next, think, reflect, and meditate on each phrase of the verse group until you begin to understand the general, impersonal meaning of the thought. Then try to understand the specific, personal revelation of the thought to you. What is God's thought for you? Continue reading the entire paragraph or section, even a book, by the 2 or 3 verse groups that comprise one or several thoughts. You are now reading slowly, thoughtfully, meditatively, God's words. You are reading the Bible thought by thought. Granted, this is a slow, reflective, meditative way of reading the Bible. But it is more than worth the time invested. It is not a Bible reading plan, as in reading the Bible through in a year, but a Bible reading method. It is possible to know God's thoughts because God desires to reveal His thoughts to us so we can know Him, have an intimate relationship with Him, rather than know about Him. We live by our thoughts, so why not read and live by God's?

Biblical “M & M’s”

Most of us like M&M’s, the hard-coated chocolate candy that melts in your mouth, not your hand. Did you know that there are Biblical “M&M’s” that melt in your head and your heart, not in your hand? The hand offers a classic illustration of how to grasp God’s word as well as “grasp” you. If you literally grasp a Bible with your thumb and index finger, it can easily be pulled away from you. That illustrates your grasp of God’s word when you hear the Bible. However, if you grasp the Bible with your thumb, index finger, and middle finger, your grasp is strengthened and thus harder to remove from your hand. Thus, the grasp is strengthened when you read the Word. Now grasp the Bible with four fingers by adding your ring finger; thus, the grasp is greatly strengthened by meditating on God’s word. Finally, grasping it with five fingers by adding the little finger represents memorizing God’s word. Your grasp is so firm that the Bible may not be taken from you.

Both memorization and meditating on the word are essential in practicing the Spiritual Disciplines you learn in The Rhythmic Community study. They are the Biblical “M & M’s” which, when placed in, grasped by your mind, will begin the renewing (rewiring) process necessary for you to experience the transformation to which Paul refers in Rom 12:2. Therefore, it is necessary to understand these disciplines which give access to God’s powerful, transforming word.

MEDITATING ON THE WORD: “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” (Ps. 1:2) “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, . . .” (Joshua 1:8).

One of the Hebrew picture words for meditating is a cow chewing its cud. Therefore, we learn to meditate on God’s word as a cow chews its cud: bite by bite or phrase by phrase

1. Read the phrase aloud. Thus, take a bite.
2. Reflect on, chew on, mull over, think about the bite. (“Now let me think about that”) until you begin to understand what it says to you.
3. Respond or “swallow” the phrase. Take it into your mind as knowledge about God or into your heart (feelings, emotions) as if something to further develop an intimate relationship with Him (knowing Him).
4. Rest by abiding in God’s word to you. Simply be refreshed, renewed in Him. Later (maybe right after Invitational Prayer), record (journal), write in a small notebook what God has shown you, what you are “digesting”. This completes the meditative process.

Each of these 4 steps begins with an “R”. Thus, this is the 4 "R's" Bible Reading Method to which you have already been introduced. However, since you are meditating phrase by phrase only on the 2 or 3 verses that comprise a thought, it is also learning to read the Bible “thoughtfully”. Therefore, meditating on God’s word is the thoughtful reading of His word, which, unfortunately, is not often practiced or taught. Usually, we are taught to read “wide” by reading chapters, books, or even the entire Bible in a designated period of time, rather than reading “deep”. However, there is a place for both.

Commenting on the “. . .daily intake of God’s Word . . .” Dr. Don Whitney, Professor of Biblical Spirituality, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and author of more than a dozen books including Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, suggests “Read big, meditate small. . . By that I advocate the reading of a large (chapter or more) of Scripture, then returning to it to meditate on a small part (such as a single phrase or verse)”.

He continues, “I believe it’s a good practice to do both the big (but not hurried) reading of Scripture and the meditative intake of part of it daily. If we do only the former, we tend to forget what we’ve read and feel nothing and do nothing; if we only meditate, we miss the context and can forget the narrative of Scripture and can too easily make a verse mean something it doesn’t. Either one without the other is incomplete. I compare the former to crossing a lake in a motorboat. You get the big picture of the lake and its surroundings. I compare the latter to going across the same lake slowly in a glass-bottomed boat. There you see depth, clarity, and detail. To fully understand the lake, you need both. You get the big picture of the lake, and Its surroundings.

He concludes: “. . . I think meditation is the greatest need for most of our folk. If it were within my power to change the devotional life of every Christian on the planet it would be in the area of meditation.

MEMORIZATION OF THE WORD: “Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.” (Ps. 119:27). Many times, people say they cannot memorize Scripture. However, the following phrase-by-phrase procedure enables you to do so. It takes time and effort. However, this works!

Memorizing Romans 12:1:

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God . . .this is your true and proper worship. “ NIV. There are at least 4, if not 5, phrases in this verse.

1. While looking, write the first phrase. “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters,”
2. Without looking, repeat the phrase aloud.
3. Continue repeating and writing until you can write the phrase perfectly from memory.
4. Continue this procedure with each phrase until you are able to write the entire verse from memory, including the reference.
5. Daily review the verse from memory.

Memorization of God’s Word and meditating on God’s Word are the sweet, Biblical “M & M’s” of God’s Word in which you will learn to delight and savor as you study The Rhythmic Community workbook.

READING THE BIBLE

Recently, I attended a funeral at a church facility. On each seat was a Welcome card and a New Testament Challenge to read the entire NT in 63 days. My first reaction was, "Why so fast? "What is the purpose, the objective? What is supposed to be achieved by this plan, similar to reading the Bible through in a year? Why so fast? "

Why does the Bible tell us to "meditate on these words" (Joshua 1:8, Ps. 1:2)? Is it not because God is more interested in engaging us in a conversation or telling us something we really need to hear rather than our being able to say how many times we have "read through" a portion or all of the Bible? Or have we done our daily Bible reading?

Meditating on the word is done best while reading alone, silently or aloud, though it can be done if you are given time to think about what you just heard after listening to a reading. However, it is still best to reflect, mull over, chew, and digest what the Lord says when you read, alone or with another. However, is that how we usually read the Bible, especially when using a Bible Reading **Plan that requires at least 2-3 chapters daily? At best, we read through and skim through the text. When finished, do we really know what we have read or received a revelation from God, especially for us?**

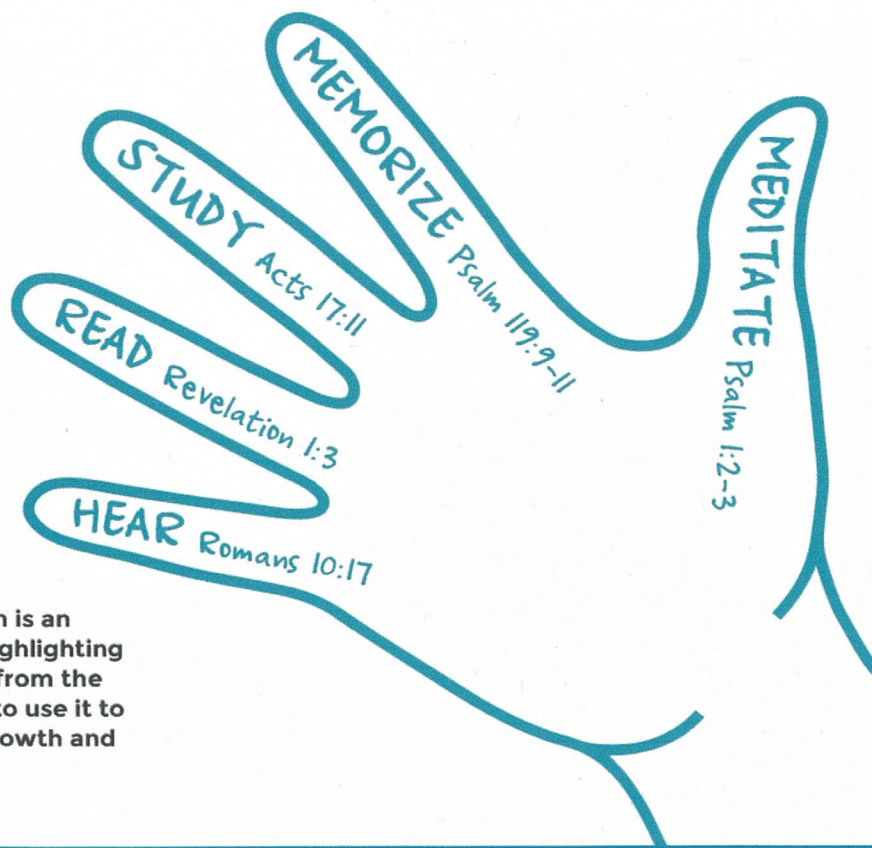
Meditative Bible reading should involve listening to God speak to us so that the intimate relationship that began at conversion can be formed daily, resulting in transformation through the renewal of our minds. Reading the Bible without meditating on what we have read usually, at best, results only in obtaining information or knowledge, while meditating on what we read results in formation. Reading without meditation may result in spiritual stagnation regarding the formation of our intimate relationship with God.

Unfortunately, most preaching, Bible studies, and devotionals are designed more to inform than to form, focusing more on applying or "doing" than on character or "being." They fall into the category of information or knowing about God rather than formation or knowing God.

Therefore, we need not only to encourage people to read the Bible but also to ensure they understand that God desires we meditate, think deeply, and reflect on what we read. Otherwise, His two-edged sword will not accomplish His objectives for its use (Hebrews 4:12-13).



Navigators Discipleship Tool



The Word Hand illustration is an easy-to-remember tool highlighting five methods of learning from the Bible. We encourage you to use it to spur your own spiritual growth and to inspire others.

THE WORD HAND

HEARING pastors and teachers teach from the Word provides fresh insight into the Scriptures. The weakest finger (the pinkie) represents hearing, because we retain only five percent of what we hear. *Romans 10:17*

READING gives us an overview of the Bible and is the foundation of a daily quiet time. This is represented by the ring finger. We generally retain 15 percent of what we read. *Revelation 1:3*

STUDYING the Scriptures deepens our convictions. It requires greater time and effort but results in increased knowledge of the Bible. Most people retain 35 percent of what they study. This is represented by the middle finger. *Acts 17:11*

MEMORIZING God's Word enables us to use Scripture, "the Sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17), to overcome temptations and to have verses readily available for ministering to others. The index finger, our strongest finger, represents memorization. We remember 100 percent of what we memorize if we consistently review it. *Psalm 119:9-11*

MEDITATION is the process that accompanies each of the other four methods of Scripture intake. This is why meditation is assigned to the thumb. Only the thumb can touch all the other four fingers. By meditating on God's Word as we hear, read, study, and memorize, we discover its transforming power at work in us. *Psalm 1:2-3*



navigators

THIS TOOL IS MEANT TO BE SHARED. To download a copy visit navlink.org/word-hand

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

Today's Scripture: Colossians 3:16

Read it online: [NIV](#) [ESV](#) [KJV](#) [The Message](#)

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

To influence our minds with the Word of God, there's simply no better way than through the discipline of Scripture memorization. I know it requires work and is sometimes discouraging when we can't recall accurately a verse we've worked hard to memorize. The truth is, however, all forms of discipline require work and are often discouraging. But the person who perseveres in any discipline, despite the hard work and discouraging times, reaps the reward the discipline is intended to produce.

The example of Jesus' use of Scripture when he was tempted by the devil in the wilderness is often used as a challenge to us to memorize Scripture.

Three times he was tempted, and three times he answered Satan's temptation by resorting to the Scriptures, saying, "It is written" (Matthew 4:1-11). It's obvious he had memorized these Old Testament commands that he effectively used to thwart Satan's assaults. But it should also be apparent to us that Jesus knew more than a few isolated verses of the Mosaic law.

Rather, his mind was steeped in the Scriptures. If you and I are going to be holy as he is holy, our minds must also be filled with Scripture.

Christ's use of specific Scriptures to thwart Satan's temptations should be instructive to us. He brought particular passages from the Old Testament to bear on the particular temptations he faced. So I encourage you to memorize Scriptures that deal with the particular temptations to which you are especially vulnerable. (I again encourage you to identify specific temptations to which you are vulnerable, list them on a private prayer page, and make specific commitments regarding these areas of vulnerability.) Then ask the Holy Spirit to bring these passages to your mind at times of temptation. (Excerpt taken from *The Discipline of Grace*)

GOD'S WORD

IS

"... living and active, sharper than any TWO-EDGED SWORD, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Hebrews 4:12, NRSV

"...USEFUL for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 2 Tim. 3:16, NRSV

CHARACTER REVEALED

CHARACTER REFORMED

What is your hearts intention? "knowing about God" (knowledge, information)

OR "knowing God" (Continuing forming the intimate relationship with God began at conversion)

RESULTS

RESULTS

Religion, theology, doctrine, dogma

Relationship, intimacy with God

NOTE:

1. Unless taught, revealed by Holy Spirit, all of the RESULTS will be in the flesh, rather than the Spirit.
2. Engaging God's Word : reading, listening(regardless of medium), studying (either alone or in a group)that results in information without formation leads to spiritual stagnation. Without giving priority to the relationship with God, engagement with God's word may lead to misunderstanding, misinterpretation and misapplication of the truth. The continuing formation of the relationship with God must be given priority over information about God. Relationship with God always trumps information about God. Again, information (knowledge) without Spiritual Formation leads to spiritual stagnation.
3. The Spiritual Disciplines of Meditative Bible Reading, Contemplative Prayer and Scripture Memorization are effective tools to enable the Spiritual Formation of Jesus Disciples.

Jon Gilbert, 9/10/2023

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

BE TRANSFORMED

Today's Scripture: Romans 12:2
"Be transformed by the renewal of your mind."

The verb *be transformed* in Romans 12:2 is a command to do something. This indicates that we as believers are not passive in this transforming process. We're not like blocks of marble being transformed into a beautiful sculpture by a master sculptor. God has given us a mind and heart with which to respond to and cooperate with the Spirit as He does His work in us.

That thought leads naturally to a classic statement in Scripture of the working together of the believer and the Holy Spirit within: "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose" (Phil. 2:12-13).

Paul urged the Philippian believers to apply themselves diligently to working out their salvation. He urged them to display the evidence of salvation in their daily lives through their obedience to God's commands and through putting on the godly character traits that Paul elsewhere called the fruit of the Spirit. And, according to William Hendriksen, the tense of the verb *work out* indicates "continuous, sustained, strenuous effort." Here again we see that sanctification is a process and a process in which we, as believers, are very actively involved.

But Paul's strong exhortation to the Philippians is based on the confidence that God's Spirit is working in them, working to enlighten their understanding of His will, to stimulate in their emotions a desire to do His will and to turn their wills so they actually obey. He gives them the enabling power so that they're able to do His will.³

³ Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2008).

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

PLANNED PRAYER

Today's Scripture: Psalm 109:4

"I give myself to prayer."

We need to set aside time each day for planned, protracted, persevering prayer. We need to lay before the Lord any areas of persistent sin in our lives such as gossip, irritability, impatience, lack of love and impure thoughts. These sins need to be the object of earnest prayer that God would work in us and enable us to deal with them. We are the ones who must deal with these sins, but the Holy Spirit must enable us to do it.

Note the dependent discipline Paul teaches in Romans 8:13b: "But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." This is the discipline of putting to death the sins of the body, but we do this "by the Spirit." This means continual, fervent prayer for the Spirit to enable us to do our duty. As John Murray said, "The believer is not endowed with a reservoir of strength from which he draws. It is always 'by the Spirit' that each sanctified and sanctifying activity is exercised."⁴

It is precisely because we aren't endowed with a reservoir of strength that we need to pray daily for the Spirit's enabling work in us. Holiness requires continual effort on our part and continual nourishing and strengthening by the Spirit. Unless you plan to pray, however, and set aside a specific time to do it, you'll find that you won't carry out your good intentions. So if you do not already have this practice, why not stop and make your plan now? I also find it helpful to write down on paper (for my eyes only) the specific sins I need help to deal with and the specific virtues of Christian character in which, as far as I can tell, I most need to grow.⁵

⁴ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. 1, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 294.

⁵ Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006).

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

SANCTIFICATION BY CONSENSUS

Today's Scripture: Ephesians 5:17

"Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

In many evangelical circles it seems that we have morality by consensus. We may not be doing what society around us is doing, but neither are we living according to biblical standards. Instead, we live according to the standard of conduct of Christians around us. We not only have morality by consensus, we have sanctification by consensus. We expect to become holy by osmosis, by the absorption of the ethical values of our Christian peer group.

If we're going to make progress in the pursuit of holiness, we must aim to live according to the precepts of Scripture – not according to the culture, even Christian culture, around us. But how can we do this if we don't know what those precepts are? It isn't sufficient for us to hear one or two 30-minute sermons a week. We must be exposed to Scripture on a daily basis if we hope to live under its authority.

To pursue holiness, one of the disciplines we must become skilled in is the development of Bible-based convictions. A conviction is a determinative belief: something you believe so strongly that it affects the way you live. Someone has observed that a belief is what you hold, but a conviction is what holds you. You may live contrary to what you believe, but you cannot live contrary to your convictions (this doesn't mean you never act contrary to your convictions, but that you do not consistently violate them). The discipline we're talking about is the development of convictions, not mere beliefs. Convictions, of course, can be good or bad, so we want to make sure our convictions are Bible-based, that they are derived from our personal interaction with the Scriptures.⁶

⁶ Ibid.

NOTES

SESSION 2: THE RHYTHMIC DAY



Introduction

The Rhythmic Community study was based not only on Moll's book, *What Your Body Knows about God*, and Romans, chapters 12 through 15, but also on the first-century Jerusalem community's daily rhythm of three prayer periods. The first prayer was in the evening (when the Jewish day began), the second at dawn, and the third at noon or as late as 3:00, patterned after Daniel's practice of facing Jerusalem three times a day and praying (Dan. 6:10-28). These daily prayer periods established a rhythm that continued in the early Messianic community through the ensuing years and into the following centuries, shaping the daily lifestyle of the followers of Jesus. Psalm 55:17a says, "Evening and morning and at noon will I pray."

Establishing a daily habit or routine of Spiritual Disciplines involves setting aside regular practice times, referred to as "downbeats," as in a musical measure. These downbeats then establish a daily personal Spiritual Discipline "rhythm." A person with two downbeats has a "two-beat" or two-step rhythmic pattern for their day. Three downbeats, a "three-beat" or waltz pattern, etc. Establishing these patterns as individuals and as a community is the objective of "The Rhythmic Day" and thus the foundation of *The Rhythmic Community*. When the downbeats are considered as "appointments," they become "dancing with God".

SESSION 2

“LEARNER”

The second important word (Gr. “matheteusate) in The Great Commission is usually translated as “make disciples.” However, there is no support in Greek for “make.” Instead, this one word is best translated as “learner.” (See The Disciple Process, pg. xvi, R.C. Disciple Workbook.)

The following Session outline helps you continue learning the two basic spiritual Disciplines introduced in Session 1.

Teaching Outline

I. Review

A. Memorize Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 1:14-16 and Colossians 3:1-4.

Write these verses from memory.

B. Disciplines

1. “The 4 R’s” method. (Meditative Bible Reading)

a. Read verses using “The 4 R’s” method., (pgs.,5-7) plus read "Biblical M&M's", (pgs. 12-13.)

b. Review questions and suggest improvements based on your experience.

2. Invitational (Contemplative) Prayer, (pgs. 10-11)

a. Be sure the five parts (praise, invitation, transition, contemplation, conclusion) are correctly practiced.

b. Be sure the transition Scripture from Psalm 62:5-6 has been memorized.

c. Be sure the one-minute countdown helps clear the mind. When "trains of thought" come, don't hop aboard. Derail with “Maranatha” ("Come, Lord Jesus") OR take the thought captive for Christ and turn it over to Him, 2 Cor. 10:5. At the end of the 60 seconds, say aloud “Release” (5th “R”) indicating you are to now ready to REST, abide, in what God has revealed to you.

II. The Rhythmic Day (see worksheet, p. 25).

A. Three main “beats” (“4 R’s”, Invitational Prayer, Intercessory Prayer)

1. When are you trying to do these?

2. The three Jewish prayer periods are times when any of the three can be done.

B. Additional beats (Spiritual Disciplines)

1. Review: Journaling: (Record: 6th R.) What God revealed to you during the 4 “R’s”.

2. Complete “The Rhythmic Day” worksheet, p. 25. (See SAMPLE p. 26)

3. Read “Essential or Expected”, pgs. 29-30 to help determine when to have your daily appointments with God.

III. Commitment

A. "Commit yourself to God" (p. 31).

1. Discuss emphasized paragraphs.
2. To what or to whom are you committed?

B. "Sin and self-esteem" (p. 32).

1. Discuss emphasized paragraphs.
2. Look up New Testament verses about "putting off" and "putting on" (Col. 3:5-14).
This can be done as homework.

C. "Holy and assured" (p. 33).

1. Discuss emphasized paragraphs.
2. Discuss questions listed at the top of the page.

D. "What is your intention?" (p. 34). Read and discuss.

IV. Homework

A. Read Session 3, "How Life Works," pgs. 36-49

B. Daily practice of Spiritual Disciplines

THE RHYTHMIC DAY

WORKSHEET (MAY BE REPRODUCED)

This Rhythmic Day worksheet is based on the community prayer hours of the Jewish faith that would have been observed by Jesus and His disciples and continued for centuries by His followers. The prayer periods gave rhythm to individuals and the entire faith community, both Jewish and Christian.

This worksheet prioritizes Intercessory Prayer as the work of the day. It enables a person to establish a daily rhythm. That rhythm gives order and balance to the work of mediation and measures the day like the sun's rising and setting, measuring the beginning and end of the day, or the ticking of a clock measures minutes as they become hours. Each designated prayer time serves as a downbeat for measuring the day. Observing the rhythm of the day makes spending time with God and intercessory prayer priorities for the life of a follower of Jesus.

Jewish Hour	Roman Time	Description (Jewish Day)	Downbeat (My Day)
1st	6:00	Dawn: Second Prayer Period	First ("4 R's"/Inv. P, begin IP)* Time: _____
2nd	7:00		
3rd	8:00		
4th	9:00		
5th	10:00		
6th	11:00		
7th	12:00	Third Prayer period	Second (Continue IP) Time: _____
8th	1:00		
9th	2:00		
10th	3:00		Optional afternoon 4 R's/Inv. P Time: _____
11th	4:00		
12th	5:00		
	6:00	Sundown: Jewish day ends	(Conclude IP)
	7:00	and a new day begins: First Prayer Period	Time: _____

The Jewish day began at sundown and consisted of 24 hours. David said, "Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice" (Ps. 55:17). Daniel's custom also was to pray three times a day (Dan. 6:10): "Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." The Roman day began at midnight and also consisted of 24 hours. We use Roman time. The objective is to establish a daily rhythm of spiritual disciplines based on the three Jewish prayer periods (a community rhythm). Community rhythms are any repeated (hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly) activity in which a community regularly participates, which serves to bring cohesion and a sense of togetherness to its inhabitants

* 4 R's = Meditative Bible reading, Inv. P = Invitational Prayer, IP = Intercessory Prayer

THE RHYTHMIC DAY

SAMPLE

This sample is based on my current Spiritual Discipline practice. I use the Jewish Prayer periods as a guide to establish at least three periods (Beats). I am in 3/4 or Waltz time. Therefore, I am "waltzing" (dancing) through the day with God. I have customized the schedule to accommodate what I believe is essential in my day as I practice the Disciplines. Therefore, it does not reflect precisely the Jewish Prayer Periods.

Jewish Hour	Roman Time	Description (Jewish Day)	Downbeats
1st	6:00	Dawn: day continues (early birds)	First, *("4 R's,/ Inv.P, begin IP)
		Second Jewish prayer period	Time: <u>6:45-7:30</u> <u>45 min.</u>
2nd	7:00		
3rd	8:00		
4th	9:00		
5th	10:00		
6th	11:00		
7th	12:00	Third Jewish prayer period	Second, Intercessory Prayer
9th	2:00		Time: <u>11:00-11:15</u> <u>15 min.</u>
10th	3:00		Second 4R's, Invitational Prayer
11th.	4:00		Time: 3:00-3:40 <u>40 min.</u>
12th	5:00		
	6:00	Sundown: current day ends,	Third (Conclude IP)
	7:00	the next day begins. First Prayer	Time: <u>6:30-7:00</u> <u>30 min.</u>
		Period (night owls)	Total: 2 hr, 10 min.

The Jewish day began and ended at sundown and lasted 24 hours. David said, "Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice" (Ps. 55:17). Daniel's custom also was to pray three times a day (Dan. 6:10): "Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." The Roman day began at midnight and lasted 24 hours; we use Roman time. The objective is to establish a daily rhythm of spiritual disciplines based on the three Jewish prayer periods, which established a community rhythm.

* "The 4 R's" Meditative Bible Reading, Inv. P: Invitational Prayer, IP: Intercessory Prayer

The "beats" in music keep occurring unless a pause or rest is indicated, thus establishing a rhythm. So should the beats that comprise your Spiritual Disciplines continue to occur, thus establishing a rhythm. Your goal is frequency rather than length of time.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

I. As A Conversation

Conversational Prayer by Rosalind Rinker has always been one of my favorite books on prayer because not only do I think of prayer as being a conversation with God, but Rinker approaches talking with God just as we usually talk with one another: short sentences on the same subject which is especially helpful when praying in a small group where the tendency is long prayers by one or two on many subjects which can be intimidating to a person just learning to pray.

Whether in a group or alone, prayer is a conversation with God. Our part of the conversation is Intercessory Prayer, for we are bringing to Him petitions, supplications, and requests on behalf of others. We intercede with confidence for 1 John 4:14-15 states, “And this is the confidence which we have before God that, if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests we have asked of him.” However, as already pointed out in Invitational Prayer, we must also learn to listen to God speak.

All prayer begins in the heart of God, who places in our hearts the desire to intercede for another person, situation, government (1 Tim 2:1-2), etc. Though it begins with God, it involves Jesus seated at His right hand as our Intercessor (Romans 8:34) and the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26-7). Therefore, it is also a cycle.

II. As A Cycle

Intercessory Prayer: a cycle that begins with God, then continues with the Holy Spirit, then Jesus, us, and back to God. How do we know prayer starts with God? Because we pray His word: the scriptures. That’s why it is important to memorize scripture. When you have hidden His word in your heart by placing it in your head, you not only do not sin against Him, but you repeat His words back to Him. If we still do not know how to “pray as we ought,” we have the promise of Rom. 8:26 that the Holy Spirit will help us.

III. Continuously

How often are we to intercede? In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Paul admonishes us to “pray without ceasing” and in Ephesians 6:18-19 to “pray at all times in the spirit,” which seems to be a directive difficult to fulfill, a commandment hard to obey. Is it even possible? Yes, if we understand that, as Jesus’ followers, Intercessory Prayer is our “work,” our vocation (calling).

In John 14:12, Jesus declares that his followers will do even greater works than He has done. The Greek word “*ergon*,” translated as “works,” means employment and is the root of our word “energy.” Therefore, work can be considered the use of energy to occupy time, as in a workout, your job, a task, or even Intercessory Prayer. Though Jesus was trained by his earthly father to spend his time as a worker in wood or stone, he spent his time proclaiming the Kingdom of God, healing the sick, casting out demons, feeding the hungry, and, above all else, praying. His employment was not in his trained occupation but rather in his calling and vocation. What he was sent to do was because of who he was, as well as time spent with His heavenly Father in prayer. Paul tells us that Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God, our Father, working for us as our Intercessor.

So, how should we spend our time and energy? As followers of Jesus, it should be the same as while He was with us: communion with His Father so He could serve the people. In other words, He did the essential work (prayer) to do the expected work (ministry). John 17-18 is an excellent example of Jesus' essential work (intercessory prayer). The Gospels contain many examples of His expected work.

The following are two suggestions for following these examples:

First, decide that the essential way, as a Jesus practitioner, is to occupy time and expend energy in Intercessory Prayer, beginning with your morning Quiet Time, the first Prayer Period, and continuing 'til you retire at the day's end. Deciding this is our "work" means that anything else we are expected to do interrupts the essential thing we must do. This requires a complete change of mind concerning life's priorities. Until I decided that Intercessory Prayer was my daily "work," I would do the things expected of me for the tasks at hand and then continue praying when I finished. I interrupted, praying to do the tasks. Now, I interrupt the tasks to pray because Intercessory Prayer is my work! It is the essential way I occupy time and expend energy. Anything else is expected of me as a husband, father, friend, etc.

Second, memorizing scripture and compiling a mental list of people, concerns, and situations I am interceding with enables me to pray consistently. When I have a task that may interrupt praying, I know where I stopped and where to continue. Memorization also allows me to do tasks while praying as Bro. Lawrence indicates in his classic "Practicing The Presence of God" that he prayed while cooking in the kitchen, washing dishes, etc. We can do likewise. Intercessory Prayer is our speaking to God. Invitational Prayer is listening to God speak to us through His word. Prayer and conversing with God include both. Intercessory Prayer is also one of our main weapons in spiritual warfare. Combined with fasting, it is a guaranteed way to defeat the enemy.

Finally, just as the continuous ticking of the clock indicates the daily passing of time, continuous Intercessory Prayer indicates the daily passing of the Jewish prayer hours, the times at which we pause to practice Spiritual Disciplines. Intercessory Prayer links or bridges the periods. Just as the minutes continue "ticking" 24 hours a day, so Intercessory Prayer continues during the day, the night or through the night. It is the one spiritual discipline with no set "practice" period. It truly is the Spiritual Discipline practiced "without ceasing."

ESSENTIAL OR EXPECTED?

Luke 10:38-42

The challenge of establishing a daily Rhythm for practicing the Spiritual Disciplines, according to the Jewish Prayer period pattern of three times daily, can be met with the Rhythmic Day Worksheet. When in the midst of days overflowing with activities, do we find time to practice the disciplines? Can't we just have a meaningful morning Quiet Time and then go about "busyness" as usual?

The story of Jesus and his disciples visiting the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus provides insight for answering this question. Martha decides to prepare a meal for what may have been as many as sixteen. A major undertaking for one person. As she began this time-consuming endeavor, Mary continued sitting at Jesus' feet, listening to His teaching. Rather than calling Mary to help, Martha asks Jesus if he does not care that Mary is not helping her and tells her to do so. Jesus tells Martha that she is anxious about many things (especially that Mary isn't helping as Martha had expected). Mary's decision not to do so is based on what is essential rather than what is expected. The Complete Jewish Bible translates Jesus' answer: "Mary has chosen the essential." The words expected and essential are guides in determining when to practice Spiritual Disciplines.

First, not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by renewing our minds, requires deciding what is expected and what is absolutely essential. This may seem simple if we believe expectations are what others think we should do at home, at work, at church, or in society. We believe these expectations help us act in a civilized and responsible way. However, that is simply living from the Outside In, being influenced by the world's expectations. When in reality, the "self," our fleshly desires, has expectations of what we should be doing and whom we should be pleasing and obeying, that is really the determining factor. The danger is that the self desires to be pleased, look good in the eyes of others, and always do what is right, best, and "expected". These are the "fleshly (selfish) desires" in which, according to Paul, we are not to walk.

Self is the "default" system with which we are born, and unless we are filled continuously by the Holy Spirit, we automatically revert to walking in the flesh (self), satisfying its desires rather than the Spirit. Self also is the manifestation of ego desiring to be recognized, complimented, and "stroked." All of this comes into play in determining when to practice Spiritual Disciplines. Expectations easily consume the time needed to practice the disciplines, leading us to believe we do not have time. It is gone. Martha expected Mary to help her. But Mary remained sitting at Jesus' feet. Martha's expectation of her sister was not important enough to Mary for her to leave the feet of Jesus. She did not do as Martha expected. We must see expectations for what they are and decide their importance in our daily lives. What are your "self" expectations? How important are they? Martha can be seen as all who clamor for help, whether it is the church, friends, strangers, family, etc. As much as they may need help, is it essential that we do so?

Jesus said that, in choosing to continue to sit at his feet, Mary had chosen the essential rather than the expected, which would not be taken from her. Martha could not tell Mary what to do. In Mary's choice, we see that anytime we choose, through a Spiritual Discipline, to sit at Jesus' feet, not only have we chosen the essential that will not be taken from us, but we have chosen the

heart desire of Jesus for us to take time for Him and have placed our self-expectations in proper perspective. Always choose the essential over the expected!

Weekly, when I served as a hospital Volunteer Chaplain's Assistant, I was expected to visit patients who had requested a visit from the Chaplain. When I am doing this and the time comes to do a Spiritual Discipline, I take a brief break to read a few verses, meditate, and pray. To do what is expected, I must choose to do what is essential.

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

COMMIT YOURSELF TO GOD

Today's Scripture: Psalm 37:5
"Commit your way to the Lord."

When Paul turned his attention from his masterful exposition of the Gospel in Romans chapters 1-11 to practical issues of Christian living, the first thing he did was call for commitment: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship" (Rom. 12:1).

As we look at Paul's call to commitment we can see one obvious difference between the commitment of the devoted athlete and the commitment Paul called for. *The athlete's commitment is to himself or herself, or perhaps to the team. The commitment Paul urged upon us is to God.* Commit yourself to God. Offer your body to Him as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to Him.

When we commit ourselves to the pursuit of holiness we need to ensure that our commitment is actually to *God*, not simply to a holy lifestyle or to a set of moral values. The people of my parents' generation were generally honest, chaste, sober and thrifty. They were committed to those values, but they were not necessarily committed to God. Many of them were outstanding moralists and even church people, but they were not all committed to God. They were committed to their values, but not always to God.

As believers we need to be careful that we don't make a similar mistake. We can be committed to a set of Christian values or to a lifestyle of discipleship without being committed to God Himself. But Paul said to offer yourselves to God and in doing that commit yourselves to the pursuit of holiness in order to please Him.

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

SIN AND SELF-ESTEEM

Today's Scripture: 2 Peter 1:5

"Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue."

We should not seek holiness in order to feel good about ourselves, to blend in with our Christian peer group or to avoid the sense of shame and guilt that follows the committing of persistent sin. Far too often our concern with sin arises from how it makes us feel. Sinful habits, sometimes called "besetting sins," cause us to feel defeated, and we don't like to be defeated in anything, whether it's a game of Ping-Pong or our struggle with sin.

I once spoke at a retreat on the importance of putting on Christ-like character while at the same time seeking to put off sinful habits. After my message, four or five people came to me asking for personal help in dealing with some particular sin in their lives, but no one came asking for help in putting on any Christ-like virtues. As I pondered the possible reason for this, I realized that sinful habits make us feel guilty and defeated. The absence of Christ-like character usually doesn't have a similar effect, so we feel less motivated to seek change in our lives.

We need to work at ensuring that our commitment to holiness is a commitment to God, not to our own self-esteem. Frederick W. Faber, a nineteenth-century British writer, showed great insight into this tendency. Again, for the sake of clarity I will paraphrase:

"When we sin we are more vexed at the lowering of our self-esteem than we are grieved at God's dishonor. We are surprised and irritated at our own lack of self-control in subjecting ourselves to unworthy habits . . . The first cause of this is self-love, which is unable to stand the disappointment of not seeing ourselves in time of trial come out beautiful, erect, and admirable." (Emphasis added.)

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

HOLY AND ASSURED

Today's Scripture: Romans 8:14

"All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

Holiness is necessary for our assurance of salvation – not at the moment of salvation, but over the course of our lives. True faith always shows itself by its fruits. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come" (2 Cor. 5:17a).

I recall a young man, a fairly new Christian, whose father was visiting him. He hadn't seen his father for several years and not since he'd become a Christian. He was eager to share his newfound faith with his dad, and we prayed together that he might be an effective witness to his father.

Afterward I asked him how it went with his witness. He told me his dad claimed to have trusted Christ as his Savior when he "went forward" at age 10 in an evangelistic meeting. I asked the young man, "In all the years you were growing up, did you ever see any evidence your father was a Christian?" His answer was "no." What reason have we to put confidence in that man's salvation? He was almost 60 and had never once given his son any evidence that he was a Christian.

The only safe evidence that we're in Christ is a holy life. John said everyone who has within him the hope of eternal life purifies himself just as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3). If we know nothing of holiness, we may flatter ourselves that we're Christians, but we don't have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

Everyone who professes to be a Christian should ask himself, *"Is practical holiness evidenced in my life? Do I desire and strive after holiness? Do I grieve over my lack of it and earnestly seek God's help to be holy?"*⁷ (Emphasis added.)

⁷ Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*.

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

WHAT IS YOUR INTENTION?

Today's Scripture: Romans 12:1

"I appeal to you . . . to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."

How do we respond to the challenge to commitment – to present our bodies as living sacrifices, to take an oath to obey God's righteous laws, to resolve to allow no exceptions to our obedience? I suspect all of us think first of the impossibility of totally keeping such a commitment. We're also reluctant to make a commitment we know we won't keep. But the question still persists: are we willing to make that our aim, our goal in life? Are we willing to commit ourselves to a goal of obedience without exception? Such a commitment is necessary if we are to make progress in the pursuit of holiness.

In his classic work, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, William Law commented on why a particular sin was so common: "Now the reason . . . is this, it is because men have not so much as the intention to please God in all their actions."⁸ How about us today? Is it our intention to please God in all our actions? That's the commitment Paul called on us to make when he urged us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God.

The intention to please God in all our actions is the key to commitment to a life of holiness. If we don't make such a commitment to obedience without exception, we'll constantly find ourselves making exceptions. We'll have a "just one more time" syndrome in our lives. But the truth is, the "one more time" manner of thinking undermines our commitment. Every time we give in to a temptation, even though it may seem small and insignificant to us, we make it easier to give in the next time.⁹ (Emphasis added.)

⁸ William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, Inc.), 6.

⁹ Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*.

NOTES

SESSION 3: HOW LIFE WORKS



Introduction

From the time I was born, my parents took me to Sunday School and church, where I heard that God loved me and Jesus had died for my sins. However, this was simply the information I had tucked inside my head. When I was about seven, my parents began to quarrel incessantly and talk of divorce. Eventually, for her health's sake, my mother divorced my father (in answer to my prayers, after 20 years of being single, they remarried!), which I am sure devastated him but resulted in my publicly trusting Jesus as my Savior. I have always believed that knowing God loved me (and at this point in my life, feeling a need to experience God's love in my heart and my head) motivated me to make this decision. I was nine. However, music was my life, not Jesus. I gave no thought to Him having a life for me. I had my own life and was not about to give it up. Even though I began life with my body in a crib and my head at my mother's breast, I also started it with my soul (the ability to think, make decisions, and have feelings) on a pedestal and my spirit dead to God, under the influence of the enemy. Though I should have been living from the Inside Out (p.35), I was living from the Outside In (p.34): the two ways of life, the ways we can live, and the way life works.

As we study Session 3, "How Life Works," we will see these ways very clearly in Psalm 1 and Romans 12:2b.

OUR THREE-DIMENSIONAL NATURE

God told us to do one thing: “Go and *disciple all ethnic groups*.” Matt. 28:19. He told us to be one thing: “Be holy (set apart from the world for Him) because I am Holy.” Yet, because of the way He made us, the world works against our being holy and developing the intimate relationship God desires for us and with us. We must understand our three-dimensional nature to understand why life works against our being holy.

Just as God is triune, so are we. We have a *body* with which we relate to the world, a *soul* with which we relate to others, and a *spirit* with which we relate to God. See concentric circle diagrams, pages 43,44.

The body relates to the physical world through four sense-related “receptors”: eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and four “projectors”: two arms and two legs. The soul, our “hard drive” through which we relate to others, comprises our intellectual ability with which we think, our emotional ability with which we feel, and our will or volitional ability with which we make decisions. The spirit relates to God. We are born with a spirit that, due to sin, is dead to God. To relate to God, it must be “born again” into the kingdom of God, baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit that manifests the nature of Christ characterized by the fruit of the Spirit.

With this in mind, we can see two ways we may live. One is from the “Outside In” where the world impacts us through our receptors. This is where, as infants, we start life (diagram 1, p 43). The other is from the Inside Out,” where we are impacted from within by the Word or whatever philosophy or “life perspective” we may have (Diagram 2, page 44). It is here that we grow up or mature as adults.

Psalms 1 references these two ways of living. Verses 1 through 3 illustrate living from the Outside In and Inside Out. Let’s look at those verses analytically:

Psalms 1:4-6 (Outline, page 45)

Although it is possible to vacillate between these two ways of living, those who do so are like waves being tossed to and from (James 1:6). These people are volatile and prone to contradiction and dualistic personalities. Their lives are on a continual roller coaster with daily ups and downs that practically immobilize any effort to live consistently from the Inside Out.

SESSION 3

"IMITATOR"

The third keyword of the Great Commission, “. . . *teach*. . .” from the Greek “didaskotes,” denotes more through examples to imitate than instructions to follow. This is not so much about presenting a lesson through speaking as about being a visual aid, an example. (First paragraph at the top of p. xvii is “The Disciple Process”). This results in imitating the Rabbi’s actions, traditions, and attitudes, which Paul repeatedly encourages Jesus’ followers to do, since he himself imitated Jesus. Imitating your Rabbi was a ubiquitous teaching tool in Jesus’ day. Paul’s letters are sprinkled with admonitions to “imitate” him. Until I learned that this was a standard teaching tool of the Rabbis of his day, I considered Paul rather arrogant in telling people to imitate him, such as “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.” Philippians 3:17,4:9. We learn to imitate Jesus by living according to the WORD, “inside out” (Diagram, Inside Out, p. 44) rather than the WORLD “outside in” (Diagram Outside In, p. 43). See page 75 for additional “imitation” Bible references.

Teaching Outline

I. Review

- A. Memorize Romans 12:1-2 and 1 Peter 1:14-16.
- B. “The 4 R’s” Bible Reading method
 - 1. Are you seeing and using the verse groupings?
 - 2. Are you listening to what God has revealed in which you will *rest* (the fourth R)?
- C. Invitational Prayer
 - 1. Are you sitting in a comfortable chair?
 - 2. Are you open to inviting Jesus into this time of listening to Him through His word?
 - a. Praise (“God inhabits the praise of His people.”)
 - b. Invitations (“Come, you who are . . .”)
 - c. Have you memorized the transition? (Psalm 62:5-6)
 - d. Are you doing a one-minute countdown to clear your mind of any “trains of thought”?
- D. Journaling
 - 1. Do you write daily in a small notebook what you hear from God during *rest* (the fourth R) and Invitational Prayer?
 - 2. Are you filling in the weekly report form daily?

II. The Salvation Process pgs. 40-41

III. Our Three-Dimensional Nature, p. 37

1. Outside In diagram (p. 43, WORLD)
2. Inside Out diagram (p. 44, WORD)
3. Scripture analysis
 - 1) Psalm 1 (p. 45)
 - 2) Romans 12:2b Expository Analysis (p. 46), Commentary, (p. 47)

IV. Homework

- A. Memorize 1 Peter 1:14-16.
- B. Read and reflect on the following devotionals by Jerry Bridges:
 1. “An Everyday Delight” (p. 48) Relates to two ways of life.
 2. “Ignoring God” (p. 49) Relates to the necessity of practicing the spiritual disciplines.
 3. “Choosing Our Mental Direction” (p. 50), Relates to “The 4 R’s” and Memorization.

V. Progress

By now, you should:

- A. Know how to use “The 4 R’s” Meditative (thoughtful) Bible reading method.
- B. Use the praise and invitations of Invitational Prayer from memory.
- C. Say the transition (Psalm 62:5-6) from “The 4 R’s” to Invitational Prayer from memory.

Have you subscribed (free) to the Navigators’ *Holiness Day by Day*? Are you using it during your quiet time?

THE SALVATION PROCESS

SALVATION IS A PROCESS. IT HAS A BEGINNING, MIDDLE AND END: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. THEREFORE, WE CAN SAY WE "HAVE BEEN SAVED, ARE BEING SAVED, AND WILL BE SAVED. "

Just as a caterpillar has to go through a transformation process (metamorphous) to become a butterfly, we, too, go through a transformation process to experience being "a new creation." "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold the new has come." (2 Cor. 5:17). The three phrases of Romans 6:22 indicate the three stages.

1. SALVATION PAST: I am saved from sin's penalty. "But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God," Rom. 6:22a (The Process commences)

Salvation begins when you respond to God's call to follow Jesus and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are born again. At that point, you repent of your sins, change your mind, deciding you will no longer follow yourself but instead Jesus. The word in the original language of the N.T., which means to change your mind or to repent, is "metanoia"(meta: change, noia: mind). Because on the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for your sins, He has now saved or delivered you from that penalty. You now trust him as your Savior and Lord. Though this was at a time in your life in the past, your spiritual birth is the beginning of the process of salvation.

2. SALVATION PRESENT: I am being delivered daily from sin's POWER. I am being saved from sin's power" (sanctification) Rom. 6:22b. (The Process continues)

As you go through life, you realize it is easy to conform to this world and be pressed into its mold. However, the Bible says we are not to be conformed (Rom. 12:2). To do so is to stay in the world's "cocoon," be in its likeness and image, and live from the Outside In, from a worldly point of view. (p. 42). Instead of being conformed, you need to be transformed. The Greek word for this transformation is metamorphose ("meta": change, "morphus": form). Romans 12:2 tells us that this transformation occurs as our mind is renewed because all sin begins in the mind, our thoughts. God's word renews our minds as we meditate on it and memorize it. Memorizing and meditating (Biblical M&M's) take time and work. However, they result in our being delivered (saved) daily from sin's power, usually called sanctification.

It is this aspect of salvation to which Paul was referring when he wrote in Philippians 2:12 for us to ". . . work out our salvation with fear and trembling..." He addresses our part in the ongoing sanctification (becoming set apart or Holy) that began at your spiritual birth. Paul writes that the Bible tells us that when you trust your life to Christ, He begins to affect your soul (thoughts, feelings, decisions). Your soul, the essence of your being, now belongs to Him. We are being transformed not only by the renewal of our minds through the power of God's word but also by the power of the Holy Spirit in us from the influence of sin around us in the world. We are learning to live from the Inside Out (p.44), from a Biblical point of view. Salvation present is being delivered from Sins POWER. It is at this stage that the daily practice of the spiritual disciplines becomes so essential.

In Romans 5:10, Paul writes, "For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life."

We know His death saves us from sin's penalty, and now His sinless resurrected life saves us from sin's power. Through the manifestation of that life by the indwelling Holy Spirit, Jesus now saves and delivers us from the dominion or POWER of sin. That is salvation present. That is where we now live and is the dimension of salvation we need to experience the most. That happens to the extent that we experience the transforming power of God's word through the practice of the Spiritual Disciplines.

SALVATION FUTURE: I will be saved, delivered, from sin's PRESENCE. "The end is eternal life" (Rom 6:22c) (The Process Completed). Ultimately, we will not be living in this sin-darkened world. When that time comes, we will be saved from the very presence of sin and come into the presence of Jesus. The process is finished. Our salvation is complete.

Because of The Salvation Process, I can truthfully say, "I am saved, I am being saved, and I will be saved." There's more to salvation than just the decision made to trust Jesus which began the process.

WORKING OUT YOUR SALVATION

“THE SALVATION PROCESS”

STAGE 2

Have you ever wondered exactly how to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18a) or become “conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. 8:29)? Do you know how to “take off the old self” and “put on the new self” (Col. 3:5-12)? Salvation is a gift of grace you did not work to achieve, but working out your salvation “with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12) takes willpower and discipline if you are to experience the daily benefits of being delivered from the effects of the old nature to which you were enslaved before conversion. Without them, you will never become a true disciple of Christ.

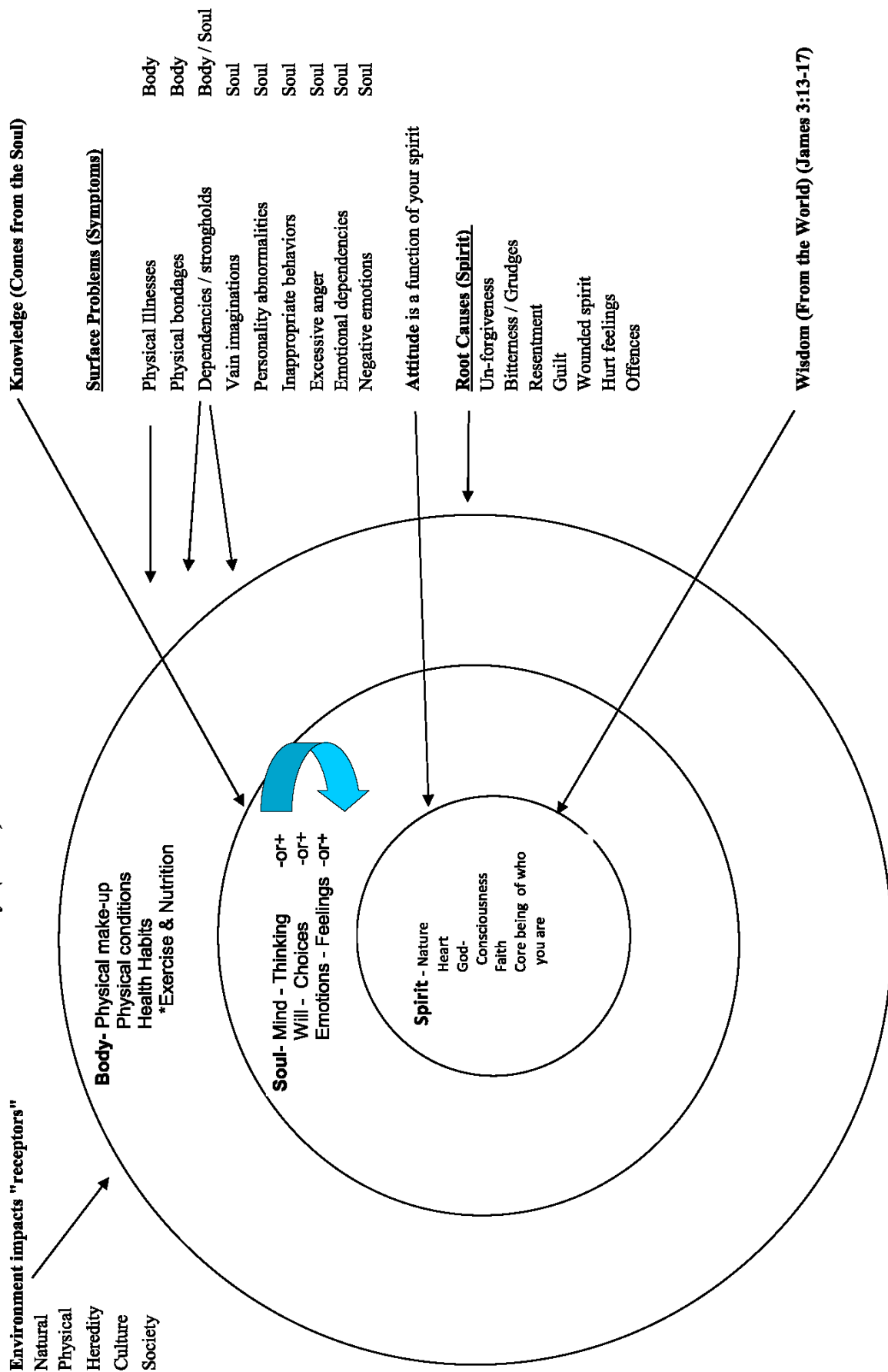
According to Romans 12:2b, life can be lived either from the Outside In (conformed “to the pattern of this world”) or the “Inside Out” (“transformed by the renewing of your mind”). Living from the Outside In means going through the wide gate of Matthew 7:13. It requires little effort to conform to the world. You “go with the flow.” Living from the Outside In allows your current culture to shape your thoughts, attitudes, speech, and actions. This happens to those who are either still dead in their sins or have allowed carnal nature to be back in control of their lives. They are fascinated by the lusts and pride of this world. Paul admonished Christians not to be conformed to this world because he knew Satan would use the world to confuse, defeat and destroy them.

Conversely, living from the inside out means going through the small gate and staying on the narrow path (Matt. 7:14). It is swimming against the current. It is putting your life under the control of the Holy Spirit, who will manifest the nature of Christ in you, transforming you by renewing your mind by rewiring your brain. It is you who impact your culture, rather than your culture impacting you. Every believer has the potential for this transformation, but it does not occur automatically upon spiritual birth. It requires placing your soul in the presence of God through a daily rhythm grounded in the continuous practice of traditional Spiritual Disciplines. That is where the effort must be exerted. That is where the battle takes place.

Practicing the basic disciplines introduced in Session 1 will put you on your way to developing a daily rhythm of “The 4 R’s” and Invitational Prayer. These disciplines will incline your ear toward God so that His Word can be at work in you. By growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will see people as He sees them and become a more effective witness for Christ and ambassador for His kingdom. This lifelong journey of being transformed into His Holiness began when you said “yes” to Jesus’ invitation to follow Him.

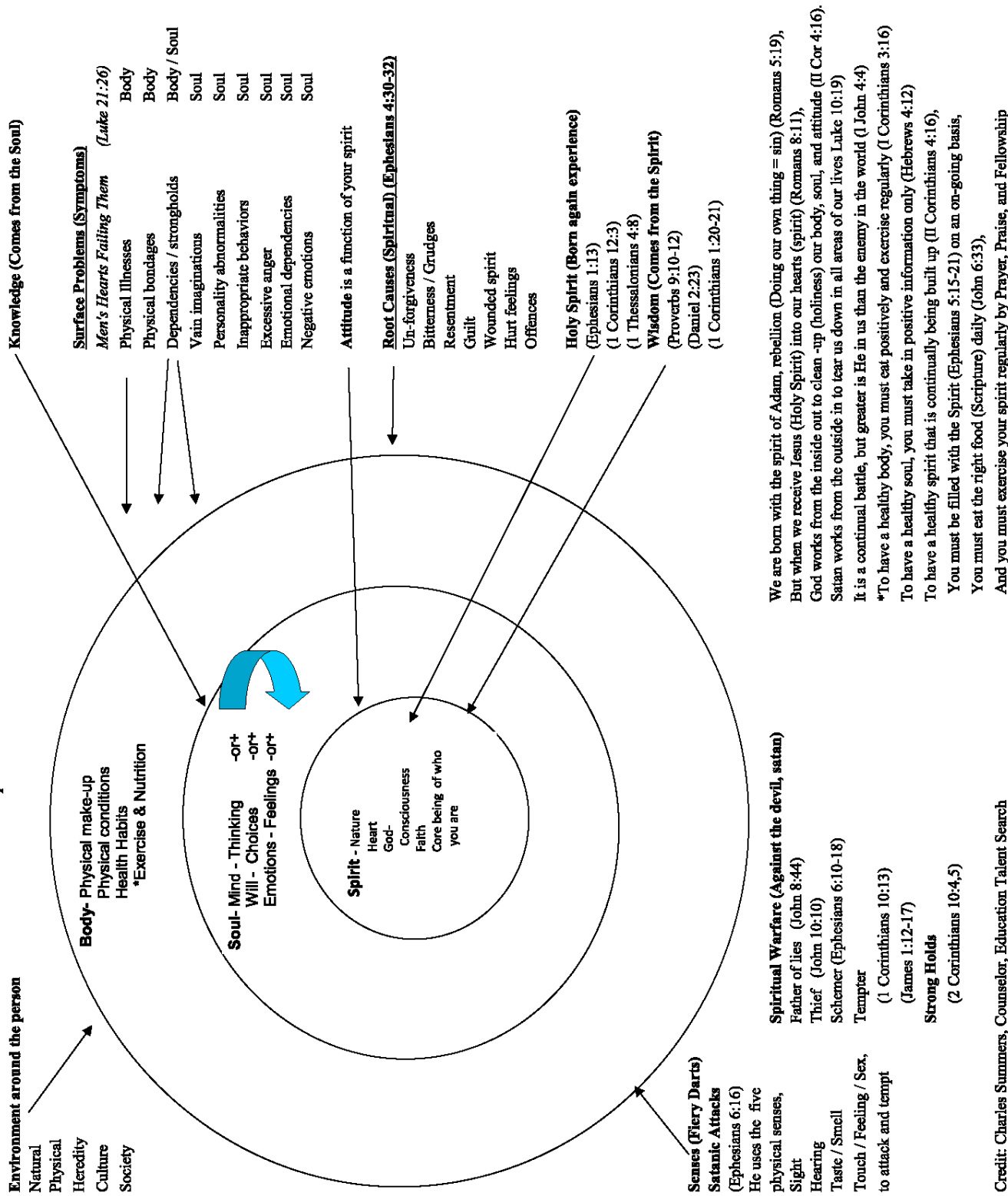
According to the world

DIAGRAM 1 - OUTSIDE IN
Personality
Unconverted/"Worldly" (Carnal) Christian



According to the word

DIAGRAM 2 - INSIDE OUT
A Personality (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
Converted/"Spiritual" Christian



PSALM 1:1-3

Outside In / Inside Out

I. "OUTSIDE IN" LIVING is to . . .

- A. *Walk* in the counsel of the wicked. (Live according to the desires of the heart and the flesh.)
- B. *Stand* in the path of sinners. (“takes a stand” with those who knowingly disobey God's word (the Torah).)
- C. *Sit* in the seat of scoffers! (“Keep company” with those who make fun of the principles of God’s word.)

II. "INSIDE OUT" LIVING: *But ... His delight is in the law (Torah) of the Lord*

- A. In His law, he meditates day and night (He “chews on” the Torah.)
- B. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water. (The palm tree in the oasis bends but does not break in the storm’s winds.)
- C. Which yields its fruit in its season (The fruit of the Spirit is always in season)
- D. And its leaf does not wither (The palm tree is evergreen; it's forever living)
- E. And in whatever he does, he prospers. (Experiences abundance in every aspect of his life).

Romans 12:2b (Analysis page 46) also explores both ways of living:

Although it is possible to vacillate between these two ways of living, those who do so are like a wave being tossed to and fro (James 1:6). These people are very unstable and prone to incongruity and a dualistic personality. Their lives are on a continual roller coaster with daily ups and downs that practically immobilize any effort to live consistently from the inside out.

EXPOSITORY ANALYSIS OF ROMANS 12:2b

A Negative (Outside In) Command:

“Do not be ...”

“... conformed ...”

(*suschematizo*: transitory, changeable, unstable)

OUTWARD

“... to ...”

“... this world” (*aiwni*: age)

A Positive (Inside Out) Command:

“...but be ...”

“... transformed ...”

(*metamorpho*: change from)

INWARD

“... by ...”

“... the renewing (*anakainowsei*: again, renew) ...”

“... of ...”

“the mind

(*nous*: purposes of the mind of God)”

“The adjustment of the moral and spiritual vision and thinking to the mind of God which is designed to have a transforming effect upon the life.” VINES EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY (p. 69)

ROMANS 12:1-2

Commentary

When Paul wrote to the Romans, “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice . . .”, he was using temple worship terminology that Jewish readers, and perhaps some Gentiles, would understand. If the Gentiles did not, the Jews would be happy to explain it.

Have you ever wondered why Paul asked us to “present our bodies as a living sacrifice” rather than our minds or souls? Is it because temple worship required the presentation of an animal's body without spot or wrinkle, totally unblemished, as a sacrificial sin offering?

When we come to worship, whether in private or in public, alone or in a gathering, we are in our bodies - the same bodies in which, with our eyes, ears, tongues, hands, feet, and other body parts as well as with our minds, we sin. However, if our minds are being renewed or rewired and transformed rather than conformed, we should be able to come to worship with a minimum of sin, which, of course, we need to confess and ask God to forgive.

Do we ever come to worship having confessed the minimum of our sins, much less the maximum? If we are to present our bodies (in which we sin) as a “living sacrifice,” they need to be without spot or blemish: sinless. We need to enter into worship after confessing our sins. Only then can we present our bodies as a “living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable worship.” Romans 12:1.

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

An Everyday Delight

Today's Scripture: Psalm 119:15

“When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies.”

We believers are being influenced by both society and the Word of God. We can think of these two opposing influences as representing the two extremes of a continuum – sinful society at one end and the Word of God at the other.

All believers are on that continuum, partially influenced by sinful society and partially influenced by the Word of God. What determines whether we're moving toward one end or the other? Psalm 1 gives us the answer: our attitude toward the Word of God and the time we spend thinking about it.

The person who's living toward the “God's Word” end of the continuum is described first of all as one whose “delight” is in the law of God (Psalm 1:2). Like Paul, this person has determined that God's law is “holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12). He or she sees that God's law is not onerous or burdensome but is given to help us please God and live productive and satisfying lives – “like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers” (Psalm 1:3). One who delights in the law of God sees the Bible not as a book of difficult rules but as the Word of our heavenly Father, the God of all grace.

This person “meditates” on God's law “day and night” (Psalm 1:2). In Scripture, the word meditate means to think about a truth with a view to its meaning and application to one's life. It includes reflection on one's own life to determine what conformity, or lack of it, there is between the scriptural truth and one's character or conduct. (*Excerpt taken from THE DISCIPLINE OF GRACE*)

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

Ignoring God?

Today's Scripture: John 14:24

“The word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.”

Everything I've taught about the disciplines of Bible Study, Scripture memorization, continual meditation, and application of Scripture in daily life has been based on Scripture. I have not developed man-made theories about Christian growth. All I've done is point out what the Scriptures say about these disciplines. And what Scripture says, what God says. If we ignore these disciplines, we're ignoring God.

We must always remember, though, that practicing these disciplines does not earn us any favor with God. It's helpful to distinguish between a meritorious cause of God's blessing and an instrumental cause. The meritorious cause is always the merit of Christ. We can never add to what he has already done to procure God's blessing on our lives. The instrumental cause, however, is the means or avenues God has ordained to use. God has clearly set forth certain disciplines for us to practice in pursuing holiness. As we practice them, God will use them in our lives, not because we've earned his blessing but because we've followed his ordained path of blessing.

We also need to keep in mind that the imperative in Romans 12:2 to be transformed immediately follows the imperative of verse 1 – to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to him. Both exhortations are based on the mercy of God. The discipline of developing Bible-based convictions, then, should be a response to God's mercy and grace to us through Christ. If we truly desire to live by grace, we'll want to respond to that grace by seeking to live lives that are pleasing to God. And we simply cannot do that if we do not practice the disciplines necessary to develop Bible-based convictions. (*Excerpt taken from THE DISCIPLINE OF GRACE*)

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

Choosing Our Mental Direction

Today's Scripture: Psalm 1:2
"On his law he meditates day and night."

If we want to live under the influence of God's word, our minds must be steeped in the Scriptures. We must constantly turn our minds to his Word, continually pondering the meaning and application of its truths to our lives. This may seem unrealistic and unattainable in our busy age when our minds need to be occupied with the various responsibilities we all have. How can we meditate on Scripture when we have to think about our work all day long?

We should not think of the concept of continually as meaning every moment, but rather consistently and habitually. When you can think about anything you want, what do you think about? Is it your problems or a mental argument with someone else? Do you allow your mind to drift into the wasteland of impure thoughts? Or do you begin to meditate on Scripture?

Thinking is our most constant activity. Our thoughts are our constant occupation. We're never without them. But we can choose the direction and content of those thoughts.

Meditation on Scripture is a discipline. We must commit ourselves to be proactive. We must memorize key passages (or carry them on cards) so we can think about them. We must be alert for those times during the day when we can turn our minds to the Word of God, and then we must do it. Even the practice of daily Bible reading is insufficient if we go the rest of the day without meditating on some truths of Scripture. We must choose to meditate instead of thinking about other things or listening to the radio or watching television. We simply have to decide what we want our minds to be influenced by, and take steps accordingly.

SESSION 4

TWO WAYS OF LIVING

Fast forward to 2014, Mountain Home, Arkansas. My wife and I had experienced the usual lively discussion in our Sunday Bible study class as we addressed the Bible's frequent reference to idols. We knew from the Old Testament that God was jealous, exhorting the Israelites to have no other gods before him (Deuteronomy 5:7, 9). It was easy to understand what those gods were in Israel's ancient Near Eastern culture, but it was a bit more challenging in our modern Western culture. The tried and true definition of "anything that comes between you and God is an idol in your life" seemed to help define contemporary Western "gods." In the discussion, we briefly turned to evangelism in Eastern-hemisphere countries where multiple gods and idols are worshipped. Reference was made to a missionary's observation that in those cultures when Jesus was presented, people would "receive" Him and then add Him to the other gods they already had. Their lifestyle did not change; Jesus became just another part of their "god collection."

Driving home, I reflected on the comment about people from polytheistic cultures simply adding Jesus to the gods already in their lives. Suddenly, it dawned on me that I trusted Jesus as my Savior when I was nine, and that was all I had done. There was no noticeable change in my lifestyle for at least the next ten years. I did not *intentionally* add Jesus to the idols already in my life, but the result was the same: no lifestyle change, no evidence of conversion. I was baptized, was a church member, and continued "religious" activities, such as attending Sunday School, worship, and Baptist Young People's Union. Yet Jesus did not affect my life. I did not have a collection of gods in my life, but the several I had were strong, tenacious, and controlling. Among them were music and self, which were my life, not Jesus. It did not occur to me that Jesus had something for me to be or to do with the musical talent He had given me. However, Jesus did have something He wanted to do with me.

When I trusted Jesus as my Savior as a nine-year-old, I did not recall any instructions on following Jesus. Even though the missions education organization for boys I joined did sow seeds for later spiritual growth, the focus was more on things I needed to do (my conduct) rather than on who God wanted me to be (my character). When I enrolled at Florida State University, I joined First Baptist Church on my first

Sunday but did not return until three years later because music was still my life. As I look back on this, I remember concluding that I had been “Christianized” from an “outside-in” religious environment that centered on church activities rather than the “inside-out” by faith. The practice of my faith was all on the outside, nothing on the inside. I had learned to live from the Outside In, being influenced more by the world than by the Word of God. So when I moved from the environment of my home and church, I was a “hollow shell” of a Jesus follower. At no time during my formal education or the education I gained from experience do I recall ever being instructed on what God wants his followers to be. The emphasis was mainly on the Great Commission of “doing” evangelism, “soul-winning,” and participating in church activities. When there was an occasional course on being a disciple or making disciples, there was no emphasis on learning how to “imitate” Jesus or obey His commands – it was always about how to evangelize and the importance of being baptized and involved in church activities.

How often do people unwittingly do just as I did when they decide for Jesus? Regardless of where we are when we make that decision, we all still have our original idol “self” with its fleshly desires on a pedestal. We do not want to deny self, let alone regard, self as “dead” so that we can live the way God wants us to live. We do not want to know Jesus has replaced that self as Lord and Master. We do not want to give up or lay down our lives. Did we simply add Jesus to “self”? Has He just become a part of whatever else for us counts as life: music or other artistic endeavors, spouse, friend, children, possessions, position, accomplishments, business, vocation, occupation, busyness,” food, entertainment, sports, hobbies, substance abuse, ambition or even church activities? What is your life? When Jesus said that if you want to follow him, you must be willing to give up your life, He wasn’t just talking about being crucified but that He must be your life. That apart from Him, you have no life!

Paul wrote that as followers of Jesus, we are not to be conformed to the world but transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2b). Until we can identify and die to the idols of our lives, starting with ourselves, we will not be able to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and thus desire to intentionally spend time with Him, cultivate an intimate relationship with Him, and become like Him, Holy and separated from the world and its influences.

It was not until 2015, when I began teaching the Spiritual Disciplines class and

reading Moll's "WHAT YOUR BODY KNOWS ABOUT GOD" that I began to see the connection between Paul's commands in Romans 12:2 ("...do not be conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ."), which should result in your continuing to experience the sanctification process begun at your spiritual birth towards being Holy as He is Holy, and the concept of establishing a rhythmic day based on Spiritual Disciplines as a means to rewire the brain and renew the mind.

So for that nine-year-old who received Jesus as Savior, it has been an 81-year spiritual journey to discover what God wants from a follower of Jesus: "Be Holy because I, the LORD your God, am Holy." Leviticus 19:2, 1 Peter 1:14-16.

SESSION 4

"PRACTITIONER"

TWO WAYS OF LIVING

The final important word in The Great Commission is in the last phrase, "... teaching them to observe, (obey, do) all that I have commanded you." Are you a Jesus Practitioner? Often, we ask, "Are you a Christian"? Depending on the person's understanding, they may answer, "I go to _____ church". Or, as in The Rhythmic Community Project Survey, "Are you a Jesus Follower?", "Are you a disciple?" Now that I understand the Disciple Process used by Jesus and His fellow Rabbis, the question should be, "Are you practicing Rabbi Jesus' way of life? Are you observing and obeying all that He commanded? What are those commands? Jesus' disciples and all other First Century followers would know that He meant the books of Moses were taught every Shabbat in the synagogues. Or, in other words, the Torah. But of course, this raises the question, "Why observe or obey the Torah?"

Teaching Outline

I. REVIEW

A. Meditative or Thoughtful Bible Reading: Select two verses and read using the "4 R's".

B. Invitational Prayer: 10 minutes

II. TWO WAYS OF LIVING Review

A. Living from the "Outside In" (Diagram, p. 43)

A negative command: "Do not be conformed ..."

1. We all begin life conformed to this world.
2. Basic lifestyle of an unconverted or carnal Christian.

NEGATIVELY we are told, "Do not be conformed" ... (Greek *suschematizo*: transitory, changeable, unstable). This is an OUTWARD action. Everything our "receptors" are exposed to can impact our minds from the outside and thus shape our thoughts, producing our words and deeds. If you want to know a person's thoughts, listen to what they say. Watch what they do. "... to this world" (the world's humanistic, atheistic, agnostic ideology).

3. The Bible describes being conformed to the world as follows:
 - a. Ephesians 2:1-3

- b. Ephesians 4:17-19, 22, 31, 5:3
- c. Galatians 5:16-26

Is there any part of this that does not make sense to you?

B. Living from the “Inside Out” (Diagram, p. 44)

A positive command: “...but be transformed ...”

1. Being transformed by the renewing (rewiring) of your mind (brain) is to experience living our “new life.” 1 Corinthians 5:17
2. The basic lifestyle of the converted, “Spirit-filled” Christian.

POSITIVELY, we are admonished “... but be transformed ...” (Greek *metamorpho*: to be changed from). This is the INWARD action “by the renewing (Greek *awahainowsei*: again, renew) of the mind (Greek *nous*: counsels, purposes of the mind of God). This transformation is accomplished through the renewal of the mind which is the result of being “rewired” through the Spiritual Disciplines. WHAT THE BODY KNOWS ABOUT GOD, p. 170, last paragraph.

C. A “2 for 1” deal. When you obey the second, you automatically obey the first.

D. Transformation requires the “renewing” of the mind (“rewiring the brain”), a scientific fact accomplished through the classical Spiritual Disciplines practiced as part of your daily life rhythms. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-62.

QUESTIONS

1. When did your transformation begin? How would you describe it?

2. Why do we need continuous transformation?

3. Why is the “renewing of your mind” God’s process for your continuing transformation into holiness?

4. What do you need transformed?

5. How is the mind renewed?

III. ADDITIONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

1. Intercessory Prayer
2. Journaling

IV. The Rhythmic Day

1. Worksheet
2. “Essential or Expected”

COMMUNITY RHYTHMS

When God gave Moses the Torah, He instituted rhythms in Israel's community, establishing patterns to keep their lives centered on Him. These patterns consisted of three prayer periods or hours (sundown, dawn, and noon)—first at the tabernacle and later at the temple—establishing a personal and a community daily rhythm; Sabbath observance, a weekly rhythm; and six annual festivals, a *yearly* rhythm. These were the rhythms of the first “Rhythmic Community.”

Based on these individual and community rhythms, the early Hebrews were a three-beat “rhythmic community,” a pattern that Jesus’ disciples followed as they lived “The Way.” The Gospels record this community rhythm in Jesus’ personal prayer life. Acts records the rhythm of the apostles going to the temple for the “hour of prayer” (Acts 3:1). The rhythm is also seen in Jesus being crucified at noon (Mark 15:25) and then giving up his life at 3:00 p.m.

This Jewish community rhythm became one of the many religious factors that kept God’s “chosen” people together over the centuries, even when close to annihilation. Practicing these community rhythms kept God at the center of their lives. The first-century church, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles, continued the rhythmic community practice into at least the second century. “The earliest nonbiblical document we have from church life is called the Didache, which, among other things, details the morning, midday, and evening prayers observed by all Christians in the early church. . . . A shared, daily prayer rhythm was the assumption in the church for centuries. (pg. 196, *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*, Tyler Staton, Zondervan Books). It was later incorporated, through the Rule of Benedict, into the community life of monasteries and convents, becoming known as the “offices” (prayer periods) of the day, thus establishing rhythmic communities. These prayer periods have become foundational for the practice of the Spiritual Disciplines used to establish the personal daily rhythm necessary to develop the intimate relationship with God that He desires for all whom He has called to follow Jesus, and which began at the time of conversion.

Establishing a Daily Personal Rhythm

Of these community rhythms, the most important for us as we learn how to “be not conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of your mind” is the daily personal rhythm. Establishing and maintaining this rhythm individually is possible, but it is easier in a community that practices the same daily disciplines: a rhythmic community. This rhythm is important because it lets us keep our lives centered on God. It is also rooted in the one rhythm

most of us have already established: the daily quiet time of Bible reading and prayer. But for this to be your daily “rhythm,” you need to have several downbeats: periods of practicing Spiritual Disciplines, as appointments with God throughout the day, established as regular as your heart beating, your watch ticking, and the sun rising and setting.

SESSION 5

THE RHYTHMIC COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

In mid-2015, my wife, Deanna, and I began attending First Baptist Church in Mountain Home, Arkansas. Though I did some substitute teaching for Sunday Life Group, I did not regularly teach a class.

When Kevin Moore, our pastor for senior adults, announced starting a class on Spiritual Disciplines, having practiced several of the Disciplines for many years, I checked it out. Kevin's objective was for us to establish a "Rule of Life" based on the Spiritual Gifts outlined in Romans 12:6-8. Kevin and I soon realized we had walked some of the same paths related to Spiritual Gifts and Spiritual Disciplines and were pretty much on the same page. Therefore, Kevin asked me to finish the last few weeks of the class, ensuring everyone had established a daily Rule of Life. I happily agreed.

For Christmas 2014, Deanna had given me Rob Moll's book, *WHAT THE BODY KNOWS ABOUT GOD*. Having read a *Christianity Today* review, I knew it was a book I wanted to read. When I finished the Spiritual Disciplines class, Kevin asked when I would be ready to teach full-time. By then, I had been reading Rob Moll's book, Part 3, *THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES*. In the last paragraph of Chapter 10, Moll writes:

"Through prayer, worship and study, as God rewires our brains and renews our minds, he makes us into new creatures. We can allow God to work his change in our lives by intentionally pursuing encounters with him. Our brains are made to change and to learn based on our experiences and our own efforts. Traditional spiritual practices seem to be rooted in the facts that modern science is only now discovering about how brains change. When we give focused attention and regular practice, whether through prayer, study, meditation, journaling or other means of attending to the presence of God, we can experience God in profound ways that lead to permanent changes in our lives."

When I read this, a flash of insight revealed that when Paul wrote, "Do not be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind," Rom.

12:2, he stated a scientific truth that we are just now beginning to understand: The mind can be rewired, renewed. We see this in the remarkable recovery of stroke victims through physical therapy, where the arduous routine of practicing physical exercises rewires the mind, enabling the body to regain many of its functions. Though Paul tells us we are to renew our minds, he does not tell us how. Nor does he address this in any of his letters. According to Moll's reference to what science knows about how the mind works, it is in the practice of the Spiritual Disciplines that our minds are "rewired," resulting in their renewal and our lives being transformed. For me, this remarkable revelation led me to develop a fourteen-week study based on Romans chapters 12 through 15 and the book *What Your Body Knows About God*, which I titled "The Rhythmic Community". I then taught this to our Life Group class, making adjustments as necessary.

SESSION 5

ESTABLISHING A RHYTHMIC LIFE COMMUNITY

The material in this workbook is based on Romans 12:1-2, which commands us to “... not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” It is also based on the First-Century Jewish Rabbinical teaching process, resulting in disciples of these learned and respected sages (teachers), with whom Jesus was very familiar and used in the training of the Twelve, as stated in the Great Commission. Paul referred to these in his letters as followers, learners, imitators, and practitioners. This process is the basis of Sessions 1-4 of this workbook. In addition, this material is based on the First-Century Jewish community rhythm of three daily prayer periods, which were rigorously observed by Jesus, the First-Century community, and those who were His disciples, and which comprised the First-Century Christian Rhythmic Life Community.

We are now ready to establish a rhythmic life community for those who have completed this workbook and will continue in rhythm for at least the next thirteen weeks.

Teaching Outline

I. REVIEW

A. Memorization: Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 1:13-16, Colossians 3:1-4

1. Write from memory
2. Correct mistakes

B. The Basic Spiritual Disciplines

1. Thoughtful or Meditative Bible Reading
 - 1) Read several verses using the 4 R's method.
 - 2) Review and ensure you have a “word from the Lord” to journal.
2. Invitational or Contemplative Prayer
 - 1) Quote from memory Psalm 62:1-2, 5-6, the “transition verses”, p.9.
 - 2) Praise, Invitations, Transition, 60-second count noting 20-minute start time. Finish by saying “Release” aloud, thus indicating releasing any lingering thoughts to Jesus to abide in the revelation He gave during Reflect/Respond.

II. RHYTHMIC LIFE COMMUNITIES

A. First Century Jewish/Christian

1. Rhythm: 3 periods daily (refer to The Rhythmic Day worksheet, p.25)

2. Communities: family, home, synagogue, temple

B. Early Christian

1. Rhythm: 3 periods daily following First Century Jewish Prayer Periods.

2. Communities: family, home, house church, local gatherings (assemblies).

C. Current

1. Rhythm: 2-3 periods daily practicing basic Spiritual Disciplines.

2. Community: How are you experiencing this? Do you have rhythm?

3. Connections: Those completing this workbook and mentoring need to either form a new community or connect with an existing community.

IV. CONCLUSION

A. Accountability:

1. The Weekly Report Form, p.77

1) “Inspecting what is expected”.

2) Due Weekly to your Mentor or Accountability Group.

B. Testimonials (Appendix, p.81)

C. Feedback/Evaluation.

V. SPIRITUAL WARFARE – Read article pgs. 62-63 and Bridges devotionals as referenced:

1. “Blind Slaves” (p. 66)

2. “Selfish Interests” (p. 67)

3. “Only Two Options” (p. 68)

4. “His Holiness Is Our Holiness” (p. 69)

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

There has been a "Star Wars" occurring for thousands of years. It began in outer space long before either Earth or humans were created. It is the result of an angelic rebellion in God's kingdom. This rebellion was led by the beautiful, talented, and egotistical angel "Morning Star," or, as we know him, Lucifer. The Bible provides an account of this rebellion (Isaiah 14:12-15). One way to understand the Bible is to see it as a spiritual war in our galaxy, played out on planet Earth.

Not long after its creation and the arrival of its first inhabitants, the enemy Lucifer invaded mankind's first earthly abode as a talking serpent, whose strategy was to sow seeds of doubt and distrust in the minds of its inhabitants. Thus, the war on planet Earth began and continues as the enemy bombards the minds of its inhabitants. If the enemy can influence our thoughts to his advantage, he can usually win most battles. His offense is lies, deception (disguised as an angel of light, 2 Cor, 11:14), and false accusations. He is a master at putting these in our minds. (See Bridge's devotional "Blind Slaves," p.65).

This is readily seen in the conversation with Eve. He questions God's motives and plants seeds of distrust to the point that she sees the fruit of the tree as "good for food, a delight to the eyes and desirable to make one wise" (Gen. 2:6). This three-fold observation John repeats when he states that sin's progress begins with the "lust of the flesh" (good for food,) "lust of the eyes" (a delight to the eyes) and "pride of life" (desirable to make one wise)." (I John 2:16). Thus, according to James (1:15-16), we are enticed by our lust, which, when conceived, gives birth to sin. All of this occurs in our minds, which Paul identifies as the battlefield of spiritual warfare.

We were created with a built-in "default" system known as "self," identified in the Bible as "the flesh" or the "desires of the flesh"; in other words, "selfishness, "self-centeredness, and "self-aggrandizement, self-righteousness. Unless filled and led by the Holy Spirit, we will always revert to self, the idol with which we were born and the enemy's only avenue to access our minds. If, when converted, "self" is not dethroned by acknowledging Jesus as Lord, then all we have done when we trusted Him as Savior was add Him to the idol collection beginning with "self," which is still enthroned and in

control. Thus, we continue to fulfill the desires of the flesh (self), which most of the time seem absolutely innocent and harmless because they are the "self" default system with which we were born but which the Bible calls wickedness (See Bridges devotional, "Selfish Interests" p.66).

What does this have to do with "Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"? The enemy wants to conform us to this world so that we will not be transformed by the renewing of our minds and thus become holy. So he continually attacks us from the outside, hoping that we will then live from the Outside In, the world's point of view. However, living from the Inside Out, the Word's point of view, will always defeat his efforts. Establishing a personal daily rhythm based on Spiritual Disciplines, especially the memorizing of and meditating on scripture, as well as daily putting on God's armor, will equip you to be a victorious overcomer in the battle against the enemy. The Word of God and the Armor of God enable you always to fight the good fight as a winner. (see: Bridges devotional, "Only Two Options" p.67).

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

Know Your Enemy

Today's Scripture: Matthew 26:41

"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

If we're going to watch against temptation, we need to be aware of its sources and behavior. To again use an analogy from warfare - and we are indeed engaged in spiritual warfare - we need some intelligence information about the enemy. The Bible speaks of three different sources of temptation waging war against the children of God: the world, the flesh, and the devil. We need to know how they operate and how they tempt us.

The world, or the sinful society in which we live, is characterized by the subtle and relentless pressure it brings to bear upon us to conform to its values and practices. It creeps up on us little by little. What was once unthinkable becomes thinkable, then doable, and finally acceptable to society at large. The devil, or Satan, is the god of this world and the ultimate mastermind and strategist behind all the temptations that come to us from society. Beyond that, however, he often tempts us directly. He "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8, NIV).

As dangerous as the world and the devil are, neither is our greatest problem. Our greatest source of temptation dwells within us. It's what the apostle Paul called the flesh. It's the principle of sin that still remains within us, though it no longer exercises dominion. Paul called indwelling sin a law, or as we would say, a principle, that's at work within us constantly seeking to draw us into sin (Romans 7:21-25). Indwelling sin now wages guerrilla warfare against us, and as any military person will attest, that's the most difficult warfare to defend against. (*Excerpt taken from* THE DISCIPLINE OF GRACE)

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

Blind Slaves

Today's Scripture: Romans 6:17
"You ... were once slaves of sin."

Before we became believers, Paul said we were "following the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). This "prince" is Satan, the devil. We don't like to think we were followers of the devil, but that's what the Bible says.

This doesn't mean we were as wicked as we could be; after all, as Paul said elsewhere, "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). What it does mean is that Satan blinded us to the Gospel: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4). But God "rescued us from the dominion of darkness [Satan's kingdom] and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves" (Colossians 1:13).

Before God delivered us, we were Satan's captives. We could not see the light of the Gospel. This inability was spiritual, not mental. We were spiritually blind, unable to recognize our need of the savior or to see God's gracious provision of him.

Paul also said that "we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). And more specifically: "The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7-8). Note the absolute negatives Paul used.

We were under the dominion of Satan, and slaves of our own sinful natures. And apart from a supernatural work of God in our lives, we were helpless to do anything about our condition.

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

Selfish Interests

Today's Scripture: Romans 15:2

"Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up."

Selfishness is so easy to see in someone else but so difficult to recognize in ourselves. Moreover, there are degrees of selfishness as well as degrees of subtlety in expressing it. One person's selfishness may be crass and obvious, while ours will likely be more delicate and refined.

Several areas of selfishness may be observed in believers. One of them is selfishness with our interests. Paul wrote in Philippians 2:4, "let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." In using the word interests, Paul was undoubtedly referring to the concerns and needs of other people, but I'm going to use it in a narrow sense to mean subjects we're interested in.

What are our interests? At this stage of our lives, my wife and I are interested in our grandchildren. We like to talk about them and show pictures of them to our friends. The problem is that our friends like to do the same. So when we're with them, whose grandchildren will we talk about? The answer, of course, is both if we and our friends are sensitive to the interests of each other. But if one or both couples are not sensitive, the conversation is apt to be one-sided, or else we find ourselves waiting for our turn to share instead of showing a genuine interest in the other couple's grandchildren.

A good test of the degree of selfishness in our interests would be to reflect on the conversation after you've been with someone (or with another couple). Ask yourself how much time you spent talking about your interests compared to listening to the other person. (Excerpt taken from RESPECTABLE SINS).

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

Only Two Options

Today's Scripture: Psalm 119:104

“Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.”

In Romans 12:1, Paul made a strong appeal for us to commit ourselves to live holy lives pleasing to God. In the following verse, he begins telling us how to carry this out: “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).

Paul established a contrast between conforming (or being conformed) to the pattern of this world and being transformed by the renewal of one's mind. He assumed only two alternatives. Our convictions and values will come either from society around us (the world), or as our minds are renewed by the Word of God. There is no third option.

The writer of Psalm 1 stated this truth in a similar fashion: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2). The psalmist envisioned two groups of people. One group is drawn more and more under the controlling influence of wicked people, until at last they themselves begin to negatively influence others. The second group is those who delight in God's law and meditate on it, thinking about it continually. The psalmist presented a contrast between two diametrically opposing influences: the pervasive influence of sinful society or the life-changing influence of the law of God. There's no neutral sphere of influence. We're being influenced by the forces of sinful society, or we're being influenced by the Word of God. (Excerpt taken from THE DISCIPLINE OF GRACE).

Holiness

DAY BY DAY

by Jerry Bridges

His Holiness Is Our Holiness

Today's Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:7
"God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness."

Holiness should be an objective for your daily life. But to live by grace, you must never, never look to the work of the Holy Spirit in you as the basis for your relationship with God. You must always look outside of yourself to Christ. You will never be holy enough through your own efforts to come before God. You are holy only through Christ.

Two parallel passages in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians should encourage all of us: "he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (Ephesians 1:4). "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him" (Colossians 1:21-22).

The common teaching in both passages is that we are holy and blameless in God's sight. It seems like a paradox to state that we are holy in God's sight. How can we who are not only guilty but morally filthy possibly be holy in the sight of one whose gaze penetrates our very hearts, who knows our every motive and thought as well as our words and actions? The answer is that because of our union with Christ, God sees His holiness as our holiness. Arthur Pink said, "In the person of Christ God beholds a holiness which abides his closest scrutiny, yea, which rejoices and satisfies his heart; and whatever Christ is before God, he is for his people."

APPENDIX

RHYTHM OF LIFE

*Lyrics by Dorothy Fields
Arranged by Richard Barnes
Music by Cy Coleman*

When I started down the street last Sunday,
 Feelin' mighty low and kinda mean,
Suddenly a voice said, "Go forth, neighbor!
 Spread the picture on a wider screen!"

And the voice said, Neighbor there's a million reasons
 Why you should be glad in all four seasons!
Hit the road, neighbor, leave your worries and strife!
 Spread the religion of the rhythm of life."

CHORUS: For the rhythm of life is a powerful beat,
Puts a tingle in your fingers and a tingle in your feet!
Rhythm on the inside, rhythm on the street,
And the rhythm of life is a powerful beat!

 (To feel the rhythm of life,)
For the rhythm of life is a powerful beat,
 (To feel the powerful beat,)
Puts a tingle in your fingers and a tingle in your feet!
 (To feel the tingle in your fingers,)
Rhythm on the inside, rhythm on the street,
 (To feel the tingle in your feet!)

And the rhythm of life is a powerful beat!

 (To feel the rhythm of life,)
For the rhythm of life is a powerful beat,
 (To feel the powerful beat,)
Puts a tingle in your fingers and a tingle in your feet!
 (To feel the tingle in your fingers,)
Rhythm on the inside, rhythm on the street,
 (To feel the tingle in your feet!)

And the rhythm of life is a powerful beat!

Go and spread the gospel in Milwaukee;
 Take a walkie-talkie to Rocky Ridge!
All the way to Canton, then to Scranton
Even tell it under the Manhattan Bridge.

You will make a new sensation,
Have a growing congregation,
Build a glowing operation here below!
Like a Pied Piper blowing,
Lead and keep the music flowing,
Keep the rhythm go, go, going; go, go, go!

You will make a new sensation,
Have a growing congregation,
Build a growing operation here below! Go, go!
Like a Pied Piper blowing,
Lead and keep the music flowing,
Keep the rhythm go, go, going; go, go, go!

Flip your wings and fly up high!
Flip your wings and fly up high!
Flip your wings and fly up high!
Fly, fly, fly up high!

You can do it if you try!
You can do it if you try!
You can do it if you try!
Try, try, try to fly!

Like a bird up in the sky!
Like a bird up in the sky!
Like a bird up in the sky!
Fly, fly, fly!

Doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi
(doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi)
Doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi
(doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi)
Doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi
(doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi, doo-bi)
doo!
(doo!)

O, the rhythm of life is a powerful beat,
Puts a tingle in your fingers and a tingle in your feet!
Rhythm on the inside, rhythm on the street,
And the rhythm of life is a powerful beat!

(To feel the rhythm of life,)
O, the rhythm of life is a powerful beat,
(To feel the powerful beat,)
Puts a tingle in your fingers and a tingle in your feet!

(To feel the tingle in your fingers,)
Rhythm on the inside, rhythm on the street,
(To feel the tingle in your feet!)
And the rhythm of life is a powerful beat!

(To feel the rhythm of life,)
O, the rhythm of life is a powerful beat,
(To feel the powerful beat,)
Puts a tingle in your fingers and a tingle in your feet!
(To feel the tingle in your fingers,)
Rhythm on the inside, rhythm on the street,
(To feel the tingle in your feet!)
And the rhythm of life is a powerful beat!

To feel the rhythm of life,
To feel the powerful beat,
To feel the tingle in your fingers,
To feel the tingle in your life! life! life!

Neighbor, you've got the rhythm, rhythm, rhythm, rhythm of life!

SCRIPTURES ON "HOLINESS"

Ephesians 1:4

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

1 Peter 1:14-16

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

2 Corinthians 7:1

Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

1 Thessalonians 3:4

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Hebrews 12:14

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

2 Timothy 1:9

He has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.

All scriptures from HOLY BIBLE, New International Version, NIV Copyright 1973, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.

SCRIPTURES ON “IMITATING”

Hebrews 13:7

Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

2 Thessalonians 3:7

For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you

Philippians 3:17

Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

Philippians 4:9

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

1 Thessalonians 1:6

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in which much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 6:12

So that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Luke 10:37

And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Therefore be imitators of God. . .”

1 Corinthians 11:1 “Be imitators of me as I am of Christ”

All scriptures from Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV Copyright 1973, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.

WEEKLY REPORT

Date: _____

Prayer Times
 Early 5-7 am
 Noon 11-1
 Evening 6-8
 Bed Time

	Intercessory Prayer	Scripture Read Reflect Respond Rest	Invitational Prayer	Prayer Partners	Scripture Memorization	Journal	Bridges Devotional	Fasting
Sunday								
Monday								
Tuesday								
Wednesday								
Thursday								
Friday								
Sabbath								

Weekly Summary / Notes

WHEN YOU PRAY, WHEN YOU FAST

Like the horse and carriage, love and marriage, prayer and fasting go together. However, we would rather ride on the horse than in the carriage and be in love than in a marriage. In other words, today, most followers of Jesus would much rather pray than fast. We talk more about the need to pray than to fast, and we hear more encouragement from our leaders to pray than to fast.

Lent is usually when people become serious about denying themselves something they enjoy. Though I do not observe Lent, I do fast. I began fasting seriously in 1974, when I started observing Intercessors For America's First Friday, a monthly day of fasting and prayer for America. The fast was from sundown to sundown. During the day, I drank an eight-oz. glass of diluted grapefruit juice every two hours. That practice was gleaned from guidelines on fasting. Years later, I still observe First Friday. At other times, I fasted for 2-3 days to achieve a specific objective related to the church-planting ministry in which I was involved. I am sharing this so you know that I am writing about fasting from experience.

"And whenever you pray,"(Matthew 6:6) "And whenever you fast", (Matthew 6:16). "Prayer has to do with our souls, fasting with our bodies" (footnote, p. 1423, NRSV). Jesus expected His followers to do both. Therefore, in this passage in Matthew He gives instructions for both. We would do well to follow His lead.

There are numerous books and instructions on fasting. Usually, we are admonished not to fast if it injures our health. If you have not fasted before, please check with your family health provider to ensure it is all right for you to fast. Then begin with a sundown-to-sundown fast. If you want to go further, continue the same time frame for at least three days. Initially, those are the most difficult. However, after three days, your body seems to adjust, diminishing the hunger pangs, and you instinctively feel you could go longer. Fast as long as you feel you can. Many have fasted 40 days, including the late Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ.

"Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting" by Derek Prince, one of the founders of Intercessors For America, is an excellent book on the results of prayer and fasting. You can watch Derek Prince preach a message by this title on U-tube. Andrew Murray is an excellent source for Intercessory Prayer. I recommend "Helps For

Intercessors" or "Andrew Murray On Prayer," an anthology of his writings. Also, Intercessors For America(<https://www.ifapray.org>) offers numerous valuable resources for prayer and fasting.

Prayer and fasting are the most effective weapons available in the spiritual warfare in which we are daily engaged. As a follower of Christ, we need to be prayer warriors and have on our armor and our bodies trained by the discipline of regular fasting.

I encourage you to take Jesus' admonitions on prayer and fasting seriously. They are to be practiced together. Not only will you experience Jesus' answers to your prayers and be an overcomer of our adversary, Satan, but you will also experience a degree of physical and spiritual health available only through fasting.

MENTORING INVITATION

(Use With Individuals)

ASK: Are you a follower of Jesus as a disciple?

(If the answer is “No,” share the Gospel. Be a witness for Jesus. Tell your conversion story.)

If the answer is “Yes,” ask, “How long have you been a follower/disciple?”

Their answer should refer back to when they started following.

ASK: As a follower/disciple, what have you heard or been taught that you should do?

The answer usually involves the Great Commission, soul winning, or Quiet Time, such as Bible reading and prayer.

ASK: As a follower/disciple, what have you heard or been taught that you should be?

Again, the answer may be related to evangelism, such as “a soul winner,” “witness,” etc. However, these are actually “doing” answers. They address conduct rather than character.

ASK: Which one (“What you should do?” or “What you should be?”) have you heard about most?

Has the emphasis been more on doing or being?

What do you think is most important to God, what you do or who you are?

ASK: Did you know the Bible, especially the New Testament, has more scripture about “being” than “doing”?

What do you think, as followers of Jesus, God wants us to “be”?

QUOTE: 1 Peter 1:14-16: “Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as He who called you is Holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct: for it is written, ‘You shall be holy’, for I am holy” – and –

Romans 12:1-2: “I appeal to you therefore brothers and sisters by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable which is your reasonable worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.” NRSV

Both of these verses command us not to be “conformed to the world,” and Romans commands us to be transformed by the “renewing of our minds” because the life-long transformation process results in our sanctification or living a life of holiness, which is what God wants us to be: HOLY. Tell them your “story” and introduce “The Rhythmic Day.” Tell them this will transform their QT, how they read the Bible, how they pray, and develop a more intimate relationship with God. Thus, becoming like him: HOLY.

THE RHYTHMIC COMMUNITY PROJECT

(Use With Groups or Class)

Survey

Date _____

1. Are you a follower of Jesus?

Yes _____ No _____

2. Are you a disciple of Jesus?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure _____

3. If "Yes," how long have you been a follower/Disciple?

() Less than 10 years () 10-20 years () 20-40 years () more than 40 years.

4. What have you heard or been taught that you should do as a follower?

() Attend church activities () Pray () Tithe () Witness () Be a "soul winner"

() Memorize scripture () Obey Jesus commands () Read Bible () Other _____

5. As a follower, what have you heard or been taught that you should be?

() Obedient to Jesus commands () Transformed () Salt, light () Other _____

6. Which have you heard or been taught the most: What you should do or what you should be? Has the emphasis been more on doing or on being? _____

7. What do you think is the more important to God? What you do (doing, conduct) or who you are (being, character)? _____ Why? _____

8. Did you know that the Bible, especially the New Testament, has more scriptures about being than doing?

9. What do you think, as followers of Jesus, God wants us to be?

"Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as He who called you is Holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct: for it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" (Lev. 11:44), I Peter 1:14-16. Here Peter combines being holy (character) with conduct ("in all your conduct...") because character produces conduct. Therefore primarily we need to be learning how to be holy (character) as we learn how to "preach the Gospel" (conduct) (Mark 16:15, Romans 10:14).

COMMENTS:

TESTIMONIALS

“I definitely enjoyed doing my devotions this way. It felt awkward at first, but the more I sat and tried to listen to God and feel His presence, the more I felt like I was closer with Him. While meditating, I thought about the person He is from the Bible readings for the day, and I saw Him focused on that passage throughout the day. On the days I did these devotions, I felt more patient and loving towards other people, but on the days I didn’t, I seemed to struggle more. Unfortunately, I didn’t do it every day this past week, but I will aim to set aside time in my day for God. I had a difficult finding the same time to do it each day because our schedule was different last week, but I am going to try and do it in the late/early mornings.” – Matt and Kailey Burt, Missionaries to China

“Since spring, I have been relying more on power of the Holy Spirit and Christ than on self. I believe a more intentional observation of the spiritual disciplines is bringing balance to daily life, increased faith and patience. Contemplative prayer continues to be most challenging but is also a time of great sharing. This time takes focus off self and on God. The enemy is good at distractions, but God’s giving me a greater desire to remain focused on Him and the gospel.” – James F. Rogers, Lead Pastor, First Baptist Church, Mountain Home, Arkansas,

“In my opinion after working with Chinese underground churches for 15 years, “The Rhythm” is the way to go! Personal holiness and prayer with emphasis on our daily intimate relationship with Jesus is what is needed! Sacred Reading and Contemplative Prayer! You have the Curriculum which is desperately needed in China! It is needed desperately in my own church in USA! No one is challenged to pray as I have been challenged by you and your curriculum and your introduction of the Navigators Holiness, etc. I am ‘Exhibit A’ for the Prosecution! Your Curriculum has changed my life! Well, God has done it, but through you!” – Dabney E. Wooldridge, III, Retired Marine Major

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