

DRIVEN OR DRAWN? CHOOSING SPIRITUAL MATURITY

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It is easy to think spiritual maturity “just happens” or perhaps one is born “spiritual.” However, the Bible points to the exercise of our wills as foundational to spiritual growth. This workshop will examine these truths and provide some examples of spiritual “exercises” used by many Christians over hundreds of years in order to follow Jesus “on purpose” and make oneself available and obedient to Christ.

Background/Assumptions

- We all know we need to do something; many of us feel we want to do more than we are
- We all are less than satisfied with what we are doing/practicing
- Our spiritual poverty leave us
 - Fruitless in life and ability, strength and discernment for sharing the Good News of Jesus with others
 - Pushed around by life’s demands
 - Sucked into erroneous thinking that says, “when X happens, I’ll find time to do this right.”
 - At odds with each other many times because we just don’t know what Jesus would do!

Convictions

- As we are drawn into Christ’s life, we will get ourselves into his “rhythm” for living
- We will experience a deeper center of calm and peace that ...
- Will in turn draw others to us that ...
- Will give us real, sincere opportunity to legitimately share Jesus with people
- I can have the right theology but if my life is a mess – if I live without Christ’s behavior boundaries, I will be a hindrance to the Gospel
- OUR spiritual maturity, our ethical faith is a tool for evangelism.

Ephesians 3: 14-19 (NIV)

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom his whole family^[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may **strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,** ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of

Scripture

← God clear has the _____
in our transformation.

I Timothy 6: 11-16 (NIV)

¹¹But you, man of God, flee from all this, and **pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.** ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

However, God gives us a _____
_____ in our transformation, our
becoming like Jesus. →

The Role of Will or Choice

- We can _____ ourselves available to the Lord.
- We cannot _____ the Lord do a particular thing to or for us.
- The _____ for choice is, in reality, rather _____.

Place of Boundaries

- They are _____
- They are _____ by you.

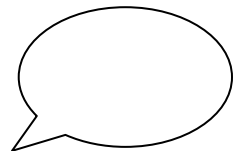
General Practices

- Regular place, regular time, prayer, Scripture, “music” or “praise,” listening/reflection
- Additionally – journaling, communion,
- A regulated life
 - Prayer
 - Work
 - Study – one is ...
 - pointed toward relationship with God
 - pointed toward improving oneself
 - pointed toward contribution to others/the world.

Many of these speak of “recreation” or doing something that renews ones WHOLE self. In older writings, it comes out most clearly in walking in the natural realm if possible but in a place of beauty for sure – labyrinths.

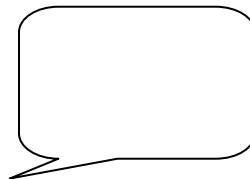
Place

- Jesus – similar places – solitude, without distractions
- Apostles – temple/synagogue schedules
- The question is this: Do you have a _____? Where is it?



Time

- Morning
- Noon
- Evening
- Extended



The question is this: what _____ have you set aside?

Beginnings

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-
-

EXAMPLE: From the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Daily Ways to Pray: Week One

Day One

Luke 16:13 --"you can't serve two masters." Ask the Lord to help you be free of all addictions that keep you from serving the Lord. Name those addictions.

Day Two

Luke 8:21. Jesus wants us to hear His word and obey, to find the right way to live our lives. What do you hear the Lord saying to you?

Day Three

What is it you want from these days of prayer? Look at Mark 11:24 and do it.

Day Four

How much time will you spend in prayer daily?

Day Five

The right attitude to have in doing this retreat is taught in Matthew 5:23-24.

Day Six

Matthew 6:5-8. The Lord talks to you about prayer. Talk to Him about the best time and place for you to pray.

Day Seven

Think on this: What makes you happy? What makes you sad? John 16:20

<http://www.nwjesuits.org/JesuitSpirituality/dailyWaysToPray/Dailypray01.html>

Main site: <http://www.nwjesuits.org/>

Then "spiritual resources", then "our spirituality," then "daily ways to pray"

Note: in exploring these examples of guidance to pray and the explanations, do remember that the writers are Roman Catholic and, therefore, there will be references to Mary and the saints. You are encouraged to simply set these aside and make use of the items which will help you focus on talking with and being present with Jesus.

Resources

A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants by Rueben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck (Nashville, Tennessee: The Upper Room 1998).

Pray: A Study of Distinctively Christian Praying, by Charles Francis Whiston. – out of print but available through www.barnesandnoble.com or www.amazon.com

Disciplines for the Inner Life, by Bob Benson, Sr. and Michael W. Benson (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989) – seems to be out of print.

Listening for the Heartbeat of God by J. Philip Newell (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1997).

Spirituality for Everyday Living: An Adaptation of the Rule of St. Benedict by Brian C. Taylor (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1989).