

Pray Together

Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

Read Together

Do you know that you have more control over your spiritual growth than you might think?

In his classic work *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* author Dallas Willard defines a spiritual discipline as “an activity undertaken to bring us into more effective cooperation with Christ and His Kingdom.” Willard goes on to say...

Full participation in the life of God's Kingdom and in the vivid companionship of Christ comes to us only through appropriate exercise in the disciplines for life in the spirit. Those disciplines alone can become for average Christians “the conditions upon which the spiritual life is made indubitably real.” It's true. And if this point can be made as convincingly as its truth and its importance deserves, the practical effects will be stunning. There will be a life-giving revolution in our personal lives and in our world.

Are you ready to move from an average spiritual life to an extraordinary one? A life-giving revolution awaits you... but it requires hard work and personal commitment. The question you'll need to grapple with is easy to ask but difficult to practice: “Is it worth it?” Is the potential outcome worth the day by day practice of the disciplines that will bring about spiritual growth?

Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.

- In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul describes the ministry of Christians living in a fallen world. Suffering will be a reality for disciples of Christ—Paul, himself, was experiencing pain and suffering and the decay of his physical body. Yet in the midst of this, Paul says, “Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.” (4:16) In a discussion that largely focuses on ministry in a fallen world, what value does verse 16 contribute?
- Why is devotion to Christ an internal and ongoing process rather than a one-time event?
- While Scripture does not contain an all-inclusive list of spiritual disciplines, it does identify many practices by which disciples can grow in Christ. Indeed, any activity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that brings us into more effective cooperation with Christ and His Kingdom can be considered a spiritual discipline.
 - Sometimes disciples practice spiritual “disciplines of abstinence”. In doing so, disciples willingly abstain to some degree and for some time from pursuing satisfaction from normal and legitimate desires. Disciplines of



abstinence can help correct good desires gone wrong. These disciplines may include: solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, sacrifice, etc. How do you practice the disciplines of abstinence. How do these disciplines shape you and strengthen your devotion to Christ? Share a specific way you have grown up through the regular practice of these disciplines?

- Another category of spiritual disciplines are the “disciplines of engagement”. Through the active pursuit of these disciplines, disciples can connect with God and with other believers. Disciplines of engagement can include: study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, submission, etc. How do you practice disciplines of engagement. How do these disciplines connected you to God and to others? Share a specific way you have grown up through the regular practice of these disciplines?
- While it would be a mistake to claim that every disciple should practice all spiritual disciplines in a consistent manner, three disciplines of engagement have come to be understood as non-negotiable for growing Christians. These three disciplines are: study, meditation, and prayer. Read the following passages below and discuss why these disciplines are essential for growing disciples.
 - The Discipline of Study: Psalm 119:9-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:11-13
 - The Discipline of Meditation: Joshua 1:8-9; Psalm 1:1-2; Colossians 3:1-2; Philippians 4:8
 - The Discipline of Prayer: Psalm 116:1-4; Ephesians 6:16-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- What would happen if you committed to a day by day exercise of spiritual disciplines? How would your life be different? Is the potential outcome worth the effort it takes to achieve it?

Do Life Together

These questions are designed to be asked in a smaller group of 2-4 people. The smaller setting will provide better opportunity for authentic responses. In your smaller group time, take notes to help others remain accountable to their answers. Grow together!

- How is God calling you to “grow up” in Christ this week?
- How can Jesus redeem this area? How has Jesus proven that in Scripture?
- Who will keep you accountable to this commitment this week?

Pray Together

Pray through Colossians 3:9-10.

