

YOU

Sermon Series: Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus

To be used with: Session 1: The Benefit of Spiritual Disciplines

Sermon Title Possibilities: Growing through Practice

Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:1-10

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus*,” this sermon from 1 Timothy 4:1-10 explains that spiritual transformation comes through spiritual training. Without practicing spiritual disciplines, we will never experience spiritual development.

Introduction: The apostle Paul sent this letter to his younger protégé Timothy to give him some instruction on how to feed and lead the church he entrusted him to pastor in Ephesus. In chapter one, he gave Timothy some instructions on how to handle false teachers/teaching, and how to engage in spiritual warfare through the preaching and teaching of the of God. In chapters two and three Paul gave Timothy some instructions on prayer and the qualifications of leaders in the church.

Here in chapter four, the apostle exhorts Timothy concerning the spiritual growth of the church. He tells him that the pastor and the people must constantly give themselves to the practice of spiritual disciplines to grow more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In our text, he speaks to Timothy—and the Holy Spirit speaks to us—about: ***Those Who are Departing from the Faith***, ***Those Who are Developing in the Faith***, and ***Those Who are Disciple-Making for the Faith***.

1. Practicing Spiritual Disciplines Keeps Us from Departing from the Faith (v. 1-6)

The apostle warned of those who would depart from the faith. The Spirit of God communicated to Paul that those in the church who were not in the Word and prayer would give way to deceptive teachings, demonic influences, and dead consciences. They would practice things that were not biblical and godly.

Paul tells Timothy—and us—to stay in the Word and to teach the Word, so that we and the people we lead could be good servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. The constant engagement with the Scriptures through personal study and pastoral preaching nourishes our faith and helps us become more like Jesus Christ. Biblical preaching initially gets you out of the world, but biblical teaching gradually gets the world out of you. Practicing spiritual disciplines keeps us from departing from the faith.

2. Practicing Spiritual Disciplines Helps Us Develop in the Faith (v. 7-9)

The apostle tells Timothy to “train yourself in godliness.” Athletes don’t get better through trying, they get better through training. You don’t learn to play piano just by professing, you learn by practicing. Likewise, Christians cannot be spiritually transformed without spiritual training. To “train yourself in godliness” means to practice the spiritual disciplines that facilitate growth. When we pray, read the Bible, journal, memorize Scripture, fellowship with believers, and get involved with the work of the Great Commission, we position ourselves for God to mature us.

We can’t cause ourselves to grow, but we can give God the space—through practicing the spiritual disciplines to change us more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Paul told Timothy that bodily training only benefits in this life, but spiritual training benefits you for this life and the life to come. Growth is not automatic. We must practice spiritual disciplines to experience spiritual development.

3. Practicing Spiritual Disciplines Equips Us for Disciple-Making for the Faith (v. 10)

Friends, God saved us for service. The holy Spirit regenerated us for reproduction. Jesus Christ delivered us for disciple-making. We are changed to become world-changers. Paul said “For this reason we labor and strive.” We are to have a great commitment to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). We are to grow-up in Christ and help others grow up in Christ (2 Tim. 1-2).

Paul said, “we have put our hope in the living God,” and the God we serve is “the Savior of all people.” Listen, we don’t have to make ourselves grow, we just have practice spiritual disciplines. And, we don’t have make others grow, we just have train them how to practice the spiritual disciplines. God does the saving and sanctifying. God is the One who delivers and develops. If we do the practicing, the Lord will do the producing.

Conclusion: Author and Pastor, Dr. Robby Gallaty teaches that the life of a growing disciple of Jesus Christ is marked by four disciplines: ***Praying Continuously, Reading and Journaling Daily, Memorizing Scripture Weekly, and Relying the Spirit Consistently***. Friend, while there are many more spiritual disciplines to be practiced, if you practice these four things, you will become more like Jesus Christ. Paul said, “train yourself in godliness,” because we grow through practicing.

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