



INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION + SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

“And the Lord - who is the Spirit - makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.”

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

“

The path of spiritual growth in the riches of Christ is not a passive one. Grace is not opposed to effort. It is opposed to earning. Effort is action.

Dallas Willard

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**With all the
Spiritual
Practices,
you can
understand
them in your
head, but
they don't
become real
until you
do them.**

For followers of Jesus, spiritual formation refers to the Holy Spirit-driven process of forming the human spirit (heart; character) in such a way that it becomes like the character and heart of Jesus himself.

Spiritual Practices (also known as Spiritual Disciplines or Means of Grace) are activities within our power that allow us to open to the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Spiritual Practices are one of the means the Lord uses to impact our spiritual formation and spiritual growth. However, we must choose to engage with them and open ourselves up to the transformational work of the Holy Spirit.

A Spiritual Practice is something we repeatedly do that involves our body, soul, and the Holy Spirit. The act of doing of these practices is in our power and as we do them repeatedly, we are forming a habit over time. In this we are opening our hearts to the work of the Holy Spirit who transforms us spiritually, fills us with his presence and, by doing so, conforms us more and more to the image of Christ.

Our spiritual formation involves our engagement with what the Holy Spirit is already doing in us. We do not simply want to just “try” the Spiritual Practices, but we want to engage with them as a form of training. If we just “try harder” we often end up where we currently are. However, if we want to see more change and formation over time, the key to change is an intentionality sort of training with Jesus.

PRAYER & PRACTICE

About 10 minutes:

- Ask the Lord, *“Lord, what kind of person must I become to live like Jesus from my heart, by the Spirit as a habit?”*

About 10 minutes:

- Ask the Lord, *“Lord, what do I need to do (what kind of training) to become that kind of person?”* It will be essential to set some sort of short-term plan to begin to try to practice this with the Lord.

About 10 minutes:

- Ask the Lord, *“Lord, how do I honestly feel about the Spiritual Disciplines? What is my history with them? What is your invitation for me now?”*