**Study Series: Spiritual Disciplines**

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**Lesson Title: “Spiritual Disciplines…for the Purpose of Godliness” (pp. 68 - 77)**

January 10, 2021 Session 06

**The main point of this lesson is:** Spiritual disciplines are necessary for attaining godliness.

Focus on this goal: To help adults appreciate the value of spiritual disciplines.

Key Bible Passage: 1 Timothy 4:7

To the Leader: Keep the spiritual disciplines poster you create for Step 1 displayed throughout this entire study.

Before the Session

**List** the following down the left side of a poster board: Bible Intake; Prayer; Worship; Evangelism; Serving; Stewardship; Silence/Solitude. (Step 1)

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Invite adults** to identify actions they take that require discipline.

**Write** responses on the board.

**Ask:**

1. Do you always find these disciplines pleasant or easy?
2. Then why do them?

**Invite reactions** to the first sentence of Day One (p. 68): “Discipline without direction is drudgery.”

**Draw attention** to the actions on the board and **ask**: What is the direction for these disciplines you exercise?

**Assert** discipline is fulfilling when we see where that discipline will take us.

**Draw attention** to the poster you created and **note** the group is beginning a study on spiritual disciplines.

**State:** This first session emphasizes spiritual disciplines can be a delight, rather than a drudgery, because they have a glorious direction.

**Step 2. Day One – Discipline with Direction**

**Discuss** Day One, activity 1 (p. 68).

**Invite a volunteer to read** the Day One paragraph (p. 68) that begins, “God’s eternal plan ….”

**Ask:** If God is going to make us like Jesus one day, why exercise spiritual disciplines to become more like Jesus?

**Read** 1 Timothy 4:7. Write “For the Purpose of Godliness” on the right side of the spiritual disciplines poster.

**Declare:** God has given us spiritual disciplines so we can pursue this great purpose.

**Step 3. Day Two – The Spiritual Disciplines – The Means to Godliness, Part 1**

**Encourage adults** to define spiritual disciplines (the first two Day Two sentences, pp. 69-70, and margin/pull quote, p. 71, can help).

**Brainstorm** other spiritual disciplines besides those listed on the poster.

**Emphasize** what is most important about any spiritual discipline is its purpose.

**Invite adults** to read/quote 1 Timothy 4:7 (p. 69) in unison.

**Use** Day Two remarks (p. 70) to **examine** the first two primary catalysts God uses to conform believers to Christlikeness.

**Examine** how the catalyst of spiritual disciplines differs from people and circumstances.

**Assert** that, as we consider our control over spiritual disciplines, we need to be careful to remember the balance between God’s sovereignty and our responsibility.

**Note** that spiritual transformation is supernatural work that “is from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18), however it does require something of us.

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 2 (p. 71).

**Step 4. Day Three – The Spiritual Disciplines – The Means to Godliness, Part 2**

**Explain** the meaning of the Greek word for “discipline” (p. 71).

**Express** that it emphasizes the believer’s responsibility to labor and strive in the pursuit of godliness.

**Ask a volunteer to read** 1 Timothy 4:8.

**Determine** benefits of training the physical body.

**Explore** how those benefits are limited.

**Discuss** Day Three, activity 1 (p. 72).

**Explain** Day Three relates two well-known instances from Scripture to illustrate how spiritual disciplines operate in our lives.

**Discuss** Day Three, activity 2 (p. 72).

**Discuss:**

1. How did each man labor and strive to put himself in Jesus’ path?
2. Did their laboring and striving bring about their transformation? What did?
3. How do spiritual disciplines put us on a path to encounter Jesus?
4. What can we be assured of if we put ourselves on that path?

**Step 5. Day Four – The Spiritual Disciplines – The Lord Expects Them**

**Read** 1 Timothy 4:7.

**Ask:** Is this a suggestion, a good idea, or a command?

**Request a volunteer read** Matthew 11:28-29.

**Determine** what Jesus offers and expects of His followers.

**Ask:** Can we take Jesus up on His offer and abide by His expectation by default, or does it require intentional discipline? Explain.

**Read** the Day Four paragraph (p. 74) that begins, “Many professing Christians ….”

**Explore** intentional steps believers can take to move away from dabbling and toward disciplined.

**Step 6. Day Five – More Application**

**Draw attention** to the board on which you recorded ways adults regularly exercise discipline (Step 1).

**Ask:**

1. What is the danger of not exercising discipline in these areas?
2. What is the danger in not exercising spiritual disciplines? (Samples: accomplish little; waste gifts, don’t grow)
3. What is the reward of exercising discipline in our physical lives?
4. How does that bring freedom?
5. Why is it liberating to practice spiritual disciplines for the pursuit of godliness?

**Draw attention** to the Day Five margin/pull quote (p. 76).

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 1 (p. 77).

**Assert** the joy of a spiritually disciplined life is for every person who has trusted in Christ.

**Invite a volunteer to read** 2 Peter 1:3-4.

**Declare:** One hundred percent of Christians have one hundred percent of God’s resources to discipline themselves for the purpose of godliness.

**Invite responses** to Day Five, activity 2 (p. 77).

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Urge adults** to consider the purpose for every discipline they engage in this week, giving special attention to those disciplines that spur them in the direction of becoming more like Jesus.

**Close in prayer,** asking God to help participants experience the delight of spiritual disciplines.