

## **Spiritual Disciplines for Progress in Godliness**

**1 Timothy 4:7**

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**Main Idea:** Progress in godliness comes through practicing the Biblical spiritual disciplines.

### **Key Points:**

#### **1. What is Godliness?**

- a. Godliness is external conformity to the life of Christ, inward conformity to the heart of Christ, and intimacy with Christ.

#### **2. What are the Spiritual Disciplines?**

- a. Biblical – they are ones that we find in Scripture, like intake of God’s Word, prayer, fasting, worship, etc.
- b. Spiritual – they benefit our souls in both the present and in the life to come (see 1 Tim. 4:8)
- c. A Means – they are a means to godliness, not an end. You are not godly because you practice the spiritual disciplines. They posture you to be transformed by God’s grace.
- d. Personal and Interpersonal – you practice them alone and with God’s people.
- e. Practices – They are practices, not character qualities or fruit of the Spirit.

#### **3. They Require Work**

- a. In Col. 1:29, Paul toiled and worked very hard, struggling with all His energy that worked in him. God’s Spirit worked, but so did Paul.
- b. The word “train” in 1 Tim 4:7 is the Greek word “gymnazo” from which we get the word gymnasium. We should sweat in the pursuit of godliness. Little in life is gained apart from discipline.
- c. The way you can meet God is the way He has ordained—Bible intake, prayer, worship, fasting, evangelism, solitude, serving, participating in the Lord’s Supper, listening to the preached Word, etc.

#### **4. Practicing the Disciplines Is Commanded**

- a. Practicing the spiritual disciplines is not just a good idea; it is a commandment. (“train yourself...”)

## 5. Application

- a. There is danger in neglecting the biblical spiritual disciplines.
  - i. If you don't desire to practice them, you might not be a Christian.
  - ii. You will produce little fruit and have minimal impact for the Kingdom of God.
- b. There is freedom and joy in embracing the Biblical spiritual disciplines.
  - i. Those who can quote Scripture freely are those who have spent hours disciplining themselves to memorize God's word.
- c. There is an invitation to all Christians to enjoy God through the biblical spiritual disciplines.
  - i. The object and goal of these disciplines is to know and to commune with Christ more intimately.

### Fellowship Starters:

1. In 1 Tim. 4.7, Paul commands Timothy to train or discipline himself toward godliness. Why are the biblical spiritual disciplines necessary for us to grow in godliness?
2. What is the difference between personal and interpersonal biblical disciplines? How has the Lord used both to make you more like Christ?
3. Why are the biblical spiritual disciplines a channel of transforming grace and a means of growing in your knowledge of and intimacy with Jesus?
4. What is the spiritual impact of neglecting the practice of biblical spiritual disciplines? Has this ever happened to you?
5. How would you describe your intake of God's word—reading, memorizing, and meditating? Where do you desire to grow?
6. How would you describe your prayer life? Where do you desire to grow?
7. Name one biblical spiritual discipline in which you'd like to grow this year. What specific and practical steps are you going to take to grow in this area?