

PART THREE: RESTORE // Practicing Spiritual Disciplines

//INTRODUCTION//

Welcome back to Life Groups, we are in week three of our new series called “Restore.” This week we are looking at practicing spiritual disciplines. We experience God directly and grow in our individual relationship with Him by routinely engaging in spiritual disciplines such as praying, fasting, daily devotions, solitude, Sabbath-keeping and scripture memorization.

//WEEKEND REWIND//

As you have had time to reflect and think about this past week’s message, what are the things that either challenged you or caused you to take action in your own life?

//GETTING TO KNOW YOU//

Your God story is great way for people to truly get to know you and understand who you really are. Your God story is all about the amazing things God has done in your life. It’s about the experience, strength and hope you have because of who God is and what He has done. Take five minutes this week to have a group member share their God Story and then ask another group member to share theirs next week.

//WEEKLY REVIEW//

Read: 2 Timothy 1:6-7

Timothy was experiencing resistance to his message and to himself as a leader. His youth, his relationship with the Apostle Paul, and his leadership had all come under fire from believers and nonbelievers alike. Paul urged him to be bold. When we allow people to intimidate us, we weaken our effectiveness for God. The power of the Holy Spirit can help us overcome our fear of what some might say or do to us, so that we can continue to do God’s work.

1. How has the power of the Holy Spirit worked in your life when facing criticism or fear?

Read Ephesians 1:17-23

If a person wants to get to know someone, they have to spend time with that person; there is no shortcut. The same holds true with God. Reading the Bible and devotional material are wonderful but there is no substitute for truly knowing God. Paul continually prayed for the believers in Ephesus to know God better. For us, there is a big difference between knowing God and knowing about Him. The difference is in spending time with Him daily and personally getting to know Him through the practicing of spiritual disciplines.

2. What are the differences between knowing God and knowing about God?

//DISCUSSION QUESTIONS//

3. While God decides what gifts to give each of us, we each have a responsibility to develop them. What are some practical steps you can take to continue to grow and develop your spiritual gifts?
4. We often approach spiritual disciplines the same way we approach working out – we want success after the very first work out. But there’s a learning curve to spiritual health as there is to physical health. What are some things you can do to begin to “embrace the learning curve?”

SUGGESTED ANSWER:

- **Seek to know more of who God is:** “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.” **Ephesians 1:17 [NIV]**
 - **Set my heart to know the depths of God’s hope:** “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people.” **Ephesians 1:18 [NIV]**
 - **Get to know more of His power in my life:** “His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength.” **Ephesians 1:19 [NIV]**
5. Which spiritual discipline do you feel strongest in and in which spiritual discipline would like to see the most growth?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

- **The inward disciplines:**
 - Meditation
 - Prayer
 - Fasting
 - Study
- **The outward disciplines** (inward realities resulting in outward lifestyles):
 - Simplicity
 - Solitude
 - Submission
 - Service
- **The corporate disciplines:**
 - Confession
 - Worship
 - Guidance
 - Celebration

6. What are some practical steps you can take to grow in your personal practice of spiritual disciplines?

SUGGESTED ANSWER:

- Choose a devotional and commit to doing it as a tribe.
- Fast and use the time for prayer with a partner.
- Memorize Scripture together.
- Spend “quiet time” with God and share what He’s telling me.

//MOVING FORWARD//

As we are connecting people with God, restoration is incomplete without practicing spiritual disciplines. Just like having a gym membership is not the same as going to the gym and actually working out, our relationship with God is built, developed and fueled by actually practicing those things that enable us to connect with Him.

//CLOSING PRAYER//

Take time this week to pray together and for each other as a group. Ask God for the strength and endurance this week to begin to take the steps to grow in the personal practice of spiritual disciplines.

//CHANGE YOUR MIND//

“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” **2 Timothy 1:7** [NIV]