

Session Three: What Does a Disciple Do? General Aspects

Philippians 3:2-11 describes Paul's greatest joy and goal in life as _____ and _____.

Two Warnings by J. I. Packer

1. "One can know a great deal about God without much knowledge of him."
2. "One can know a great deal about godliness without much knowledge of God."¹

The Main Thoughts:

- I. The _____: To _____ and _____ Like Christ
- II. The _____: The _____ to Make Us _____ Christ
- III. Church _____: The Greenhouse for _____

I. The _____: To _____ and _____ Like Christ- Philippians 3:2-11

Scripture teaches that our goal is to know and be like Christ.

John 17:22-23-

Romans 8:28-29-

1 Corinthians 15:49-

¹ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 26.

2 Corinthians 3:12-18-

1 John 3:1-3-

2 Peter 3:14-18-

The summary of the teachings of the Old Testament, and _____ commands, can be found in _____.

The commands are to love _____ and _____. Or, to put it another way, to _____ and _____ like Christ.

A Rabbinical Look at the *Shema* and Our Goal

“This is the first instance in human history that the *love* of God was demanded in any religion. The love of God is the distinctive mark of His true worshippers. The worshipper, as he declares the Unity of God, thereby lovingly and unconditionally surrenders his mind and heart to God’s holy will. Such spiritual surrender is called ‘taking upon oneself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven.’ מלכות שמים קבלת עול. If the Unity of God is the basis of the Jewish creed, the love of God is to be the basis of the Jewish life. And the noblest spiritual surrender and love of God, the Rabbis held, was so to live and act toward our fellowmen as to make God and His Torah *beloved* in their eyes.”²

Questions for Self-Reflection

J. I. Packer asks this convicting question, “Have we ever formed the holy habit of contemplating Jesus in solitude, allowing Scripture passage after Scripture passage to show us his many-sided glory and to draw us out in the many-angled adoration that is our proper response?”³ Or, let me ask this question, “Have we ever desired to share the sweet Savior, who was beaten and mocked and died for our sins, knowing of his dearness, his

² Dr. J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs: Hebrew Text, English Translation, and Commentary* (London, EN: Soncino Press, 1937), 770.

³ J. I. Packer, as cited in Mark Jones, *Knowing Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2015), ix.

delightfulness, and wanting others to experience it?” Or, another question, “Have our lives reflected that we truly desire and know the sovereign, holy, righteous God?”

II. The _____ : The _____ to Make Us _____ Christ

Scriptures that address spiritual discipline:

1 Timothy 6:11-

Acts 24:16-

Titus 2:11-15-

Hebrews 5:11-14-

2 Peter 1:3-11-

Spiritual Disciplines Defined

Don Whitney defines them, “those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth.”⁴

Whitney goes on to say, “The _____ are the God-given means we are to use in the Spirit-filled pursuit of _____.”⁵

Spiritually Disciplined People

Don Whitney, “Godly people are disciplined people. It has always been so. Call to mind some heroes of church history—Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Bunyan, Susanna

⁴ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciples for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 1991), 17.

⁵ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 17.

Wesley, George Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon, Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, George Muller—they were all disciplined people. In my own pastoral and personal Christian experience, I can say that I’ve never known a man or woman who came to spiritual maturity except through discipline. Godliness comes through discipline.”⁶

A. _____

1.A disciple hears the Word of God (Luke 8:21; 11:28; Romans 10:17; 1 Timothy 4:13)

2.A disciple reads the Word of God (Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:18)

3.A disciple meditates on the Word of God (Psalm 1:1-3; Joshua 1:8)

4.A disciple obeys the Word of God (John 14:15; James 1:22)⁷

B. _____

John Piper’s definition of prayer, “Prayer is the coupling of primary and secondary causes. It is the splicing of our limp wire to the lightning bolt of heaven. How astonishing it is that God wills to do His work through people. It is doubly astonishing that He ordains to fulfill His plans by being asked to do so by us. God loves to bless His people. But even more He loves to do it in answer to prayer.”⁸

William Wilberforce on the need for prayer, “This perpetual hurry of business and company ruins me in soul if not in body. More solitude and earlier hours! I suspect I have been allotting habitually too little time to religious exercises, as private devotion and religious meditation, Scripture-reading, etc. Hence, I am lean and cold and hard. I had better allot two hours or an hour and a half daily. I have been keeping too late

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See pages 4-5 of Session One: Who is a Disciple?

⁸ John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2002), 53.

hours, and hence have had but a hurried half-hour in the morning to myself. Surely, the experience of all good men confirms the proposition that without a due measure of private devotions the soul will grow lean. But all may be done through prayer—almighty prayer, I am ready to say—and why not? For that it is almighty is only through the gracious ordination of the God of loving truth. On then, pray, pray, pray!”

C. _____ - Acts 13:2; 14:23; Exodus 34:28

What individuals come to mind when you think of fasting?

Whitney’s definition of fasting, “A biblical definition of fasting is a Christian’s voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.”⁹

D. _____ - Matthew 6:2-4; Acts 9:36; 10:2; James 2:15-16

Chuck Swindoll, “No other discipline is more closely associated with the character and the mission of Jesus Christ than sacrifice....It is a sacrifice that distinguishes the Son of God from all mere historical figures and identifies Him as Savior—even to those who scarcely know of Him.”¹⁰

E. _____

Other disciplines:

III. **Church _____: The Greenhouse for _____**

Do you think the Bible addresses church membership?

Jonathan Leeman offers a warning to the modern, Western church, “If you are a Christian

⁹ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 160.

¹⁰ Charles R. Swindoll, *So, You Want To Be Like Christ? Eight Essentials To Get You There* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 169.

living in a Western democracy, chances are that you need to change the way you think about your church and how you are connected to it. Most likely, you underestimate your church. You belittle it. You misshape it in a way that misshapes your Christianity.”¹¹

A. A General Stroll Through Acts

Acts 1:15-

Acts 2:42-47-

Acts 4:4-

Acts 6:1-7-

B. A Particular Look at Specific Churches

1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 5:1-2; and 6:1-8-

Galatians 1:1-2, 8-9-

Philippians 1:1-

Revelation 2-3-

C. Reasons to Join a Church

1. “To assure ourselves” - John 14:21; 15:10, 14; 13:17
2. “To evangelize the world” - Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20
3. “To expose false Gospels” - Matthew 16:18; Galatians 1:8-9; Acts 20:28-32
4. “To edify the church” - Hebrews 10:19-25¹²

¹¹ Jonathan Leeman, *Church Membership: How The World Knows Who Represents Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 22.

¹² Dever, *9 Marks of a Healthy Church*, 150-156.

Recommended Resources

Books

J. Oswald Sanders, *The Incomparable Christ: The Person and Work of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1971)

Mark Jones, *Knowing Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2015)

J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993)

John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (New York, NY: Multnomah Books, 2003)

E. M. Bounds, *E. M. Bounds On Prayer* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1997)

Jonathan Leeman, *Church Membership: How The World Knows Who Represents Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012)

Mark Dever, *9 Marks of a Healthy Church: New and Expanded Edition* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004)

Articles

On prayer: <https://www.desiringgod.org/topics/prayer#>

Websites

Desiring God

9 Marks

The Gospel Coalition