

SPIRITUAL: HABITS (BASIC)

LifeGroup PARTICIPANT Notes

Matthew 11:28-30

“I am not religious, just spiritual” is something you’ll frequently hear people saying nowadays. As Christ followers, we can get behind that, because our emphasis is relationship with Jesus. However, being “spiritual” does not mean structureless and free-floating. Spiritual growth in your relationship with God takes **hard work** and **serious effort**. This week we’re going to talk about spiritual habits, also known as spiritual disciplines. These are the ways in which we train our spiritual selves to develop and grow as Christians.

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” -2 Timothy 2:15

There is no such thing as a “spiritual” Christian without basic disciplines (i.e.: reading, praying, serving, giving, fellowshiping) because these are the God ordained paths by which we both come to and become like Jesus.

Next Level - Throughout the notes you will see “Next Level.” This indicates that it is time to read your group and determine if this is an area your group is ready to dig deeper into together or better suited for personal reflection..

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. As a group, take some time to discuss what makes each of you tick. What hobbies do people love to do? What are people passionate about? E.g.. Biking, Video Games, Horseback riding etc.

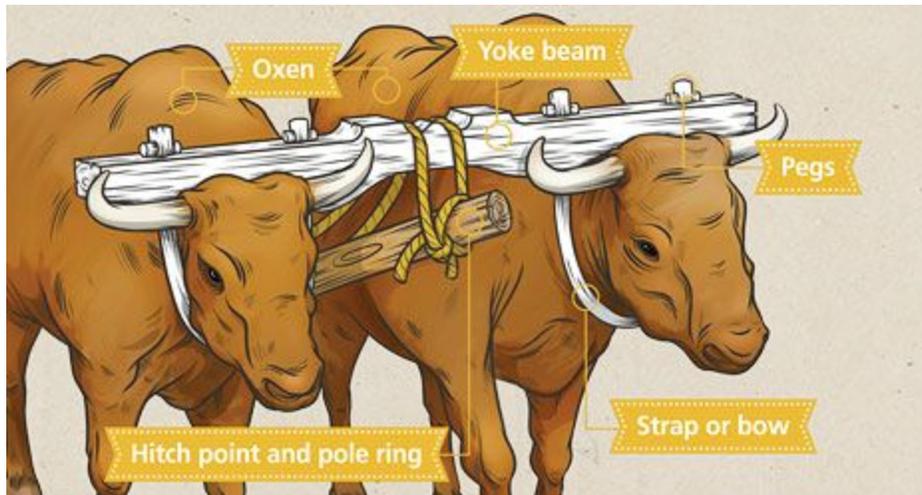
2. In the graph below take a moment to list areas, hobbies, or items in your life in which you invest much of your time, money, and headspace. Do not try to analyze too much what is “positive” or “negative” -- just be honest. Afterwards share with the group as little or as much as you’re willing.

Time	Money	Headspace

3. On Sunday we met Reverend Hank (yes, Hank is a doggy). Pastor Paul highlighted that, just as getting your medical license or dental credentials, being spiritual takes effort and hard work. You cannot get insta-spiritual insta-fast. There’s no fast food spirituality -- even if a dog can get their ministerial credentials online.
 - a. **Look up and read Psalm 119:6-16 in two different translations.** How does this passage put the graph above--relating to time, money and headspace--into perspective? How would David (the Psalmist and writer of Ps. 119) have filled out the above graph?
 - b. ***Next Level* Look up 1 Timothy 4:8, Hebrews 12:1-2, 2 Timothy 2:15 and compare their content.** How is the discipline necessary for physical training a good metaphor for spiritual training? What ways might it fall short?
4. Before diving into Matthew 11, can your group remember the three main verbal commands in Matthew 11:28-30?

Read Matthew 11:25-30.

5. In order to be a “spiritual” Christian we need to first and foremost actually become a Christian--a follower of Jesus Christ. This is a simple truth which we often miss, and is beautifully pictured in this passage.
 - a. What kind of people is Jesus inviting to come and know him in the passage?
 - b. Would anyone be willing to share their journey of coming to Jesus, perhaps connecting it to one of the four steps we listed above?
6. Though we like to think we’re free spirits charting our own spiritual journeys, the fact of the matter is that we’re all yoked (aka tied and influenced) by someone and something (usually more than one).
 - a. How does Jesus’ picture of a yoke (see picture below) include both submission and fellowship?



- b. How is a yoke a means of both limitation and empowerment?
7. Read the following quote: *My central claim is that we can become like Christ by doing one thing - following Him in the overall style of life He chose for Himself. . . What activities did Jesus practice? Such things as solitude and silence, prayer, simple and sacrificial living, intense study and meditation upon God's Word and God's ways, and service to others.*⁹
- What is the connection between being yoked with Jesus and spiritual disciplines?
 - Create your own working definition of a spiritual discipline.
8. Make a working list the spiritual disciplines (habits) that Christians have found to be helpful means of transformation and empowerment.
- Refer back to the quote above. Which spiritual disciplines might Dallas Willard have missed?
 - Two foundational disciplines in *every* Christian's life are spending time in the Word and in prayer. Referring back to your time and headspace chart from earlier, how do these fit in with your other activities? Which activities compete the most with the role of Word and prayer in your life?
 - *Next Level*** Personally reflect and categorize each of the disciplines and their role in your life personally. Choose one from the "not a part of my life" category and share with the group.

Comes naturally	Working on it	Not a part of my life

⁹ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper, 1988) pg. ix.

PRAYER

Read James 4:8.

This week we will pray for everyone! Here's how...

- Pray for the person on your right and go around in a circle.
- Pray specifically that during the weariness of the week they would come to Jesus and take His yoke of spiritual disciples.
- Pray for a meaningful time in God's Word and through prayer.