

# Disciplines of the Christian Faith

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## History

## Definitions

English Greek Pronunciation	Greek meaning	English meaning
<b>discipline</b> γυμναζο goom-nad'-zo	to exercise <b>naked</b> , to exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind	training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character
<b>disciple</b> μαθητες math-ay-tes'	a learner, pupil (derived from the Greek word μαθηται (math-ayt-yoo'-o) meaning to learn, to increase in knowledge, to hear, to be informed, to learn by use and practice, to be in the <b>habit</b> of or accustomed to)	one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another
<b>Christian</b> ξηριστιανος khris-tee-an-os'	a <b>follower</b> of Christ	one who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ
<b>faith</b> πιστις pis'-tis	conviction of the truth of anything, <b>belief</b> ; in the New Testament of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things	allegiance to duty or a person; belief and trust in and loyalty to God

## Lists of Disciplines

### Historical Disciplines

1. **Journaling**
2. Meditation
3. Fasting
4. Praise
5. Patience
6. Evangelism
7. **Submission**
8. Discipling

### Current Series Schedule

1. **Prayer** (11/29)
2. **Devotions** (12/06)
3. **Fellowship** (12/13)
4. **Tithing** (12/20)

## Introduction

### Purpose

To become a **mature** Christian and fulfill God's will for my life (**Colossians 4:12b: that you may stand perfect** [finished] **and complete** [full] **in all the will of God**; **Ephesians 4:14-15: 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up** [cause to be augmented] **in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—**)

### Focus

The four basic habits every Christian must develop in order to grow to maturity (prayer, devotions, fellowship, and tithing)—not gods, but godly

### Goal

To **commit** to the habits necessary for spiritual maturity (**Romans 6:19b: For just as you presented** [stood or sat next to] **your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present** [stood or sat next to] **your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.**) Growth must follow birth.

### Spiritual Maturity

Definition: being like **Christ** (**Romans 8:29a: For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed** [a compound word meaning "with" and "the same form"—closely akin to 'similar' in Mathematics] **to the image of His Son**)

- I. Facts about spiritual maturity
  - A. It is not automatic (**Hebrews 5:12-14: 12 For though by this time you ought** [to owe—i.e., this bill is due] **to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles** [words] **of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised** [goom-nad'-zo] **to discern** [distinguish, judge] **both good and evil.**)
  - B. It is a **process** (**2 Peter 3:18a: but grow** [an imperative, same as **Ephesians 4:15**] **in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**) There will be conflict the whole way.
  - C. It always takes discipline (**1 Timothy 4:7: But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise** [an imperative] **yourself toward godliness.**)

## II. Understanding Discipleship

- A. The more disciplined I become the more God can **use** me
- B. How can I become a disciple? Develop disciple **habits**

Habit: a settled tendency or usual manner of behavior; an acquired mode of behavior that has become nearly or completely involuntary (A habit is something that you **miss** when you miss it)

## III. Four Habits

- A. Prayer: **Talking** with God (**John 15:7: 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.**)
- B. Devotions: **Time** with God (**John 8:31-32: 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide [continue, remain] in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free [from the Law and sin]."**)
- C. Fellowship: **Loving** God's people (**John 13:34-35: 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love [agape] one another; as I have loved [agape] you, that you also love [agape] one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love [agape] for one another."**)
- D. Tithing: **Giving** to God (**Luke 14:33: So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake [separate, renounce] all that he has [literally, possessions, wealth, property] cannot be My disciple.; Deuteronomy 14:22-23: 22 "You shall truly tithe [give a tenth part] all the increase [income] of your grain that the field produces year by year. 23 And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear [stand in awe, respect, honor] the LORD your God always.**)

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## 1. Getting a Grasp on your Bible

I. **Hear** God's Word (sermons, studies, devotions)

A. Be ready and eager ([Luke 8:8c](#), [Psalm 119:103](#))

B. Pay attention ([Luke 8:18a](#))

C. Act ([James 1:22, 25](#))

II. **Read** God's Word ([Revelation 1:3](#))

Ideas: (1) Read systematically (2) Use a Bible without notes (3) Vary versions

Fact: I can read the entire Bible once a year if I read **15** minutes a day

III. **Study** God's Word ([Acts 17:11b](#), [2 Timothy 2:15](#))

Question: What's the difference between reading and studying?

Answer: Level of **involvement** (reading is surface level, while studying is digging and researching—much more effort involved)

Gary's recommendations:

1. MacArthur Study Bible
2. Scofield Study Bible
3. Ryrie Study Bible

Jim's recommendations

1. [studylight.org](http://studylight.org)
2. [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)
3. [blb.org](http://blb.org)

IV. **Memorize** God's Word ([Proverbs 7:2-3](#), [Psalm 119:11, 105](#))

We remember what is important to us (**Psalm 119:72**)

- V. **Meditate** on God's Word (**Psalm 1:2b-3, Joshua 1:8**)

Definition: Meditation is focused **thinking** about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply its truth to my own life.

Ways to do this: Picture, Personalize, Probe (**S**in to confess, **P**romise to claim, **A**ttitude to change, **C**ommand to keep, **E**xample to follow, **P**ray to pray, **E**rror to avoid, **T**ruth to believe, **S**omething to thank God for)

- VI. **Apply** God's Word (**James 1:22, John 13:17**)

Determine the interpretation (what it meant to the **original** hearers), the implication (the underlying timeless principle), and the personalization (how can I **wear** it?)

## 2. Devotions

Definition: a daily time I set aside to be alone with God to get to **know** Him through the Bible and prayer

- A. Why is it a big deal? (**Matthew 4:4b, Psalm 119:9**)
- B. What should it accomplish? (**Psalm 25:4, Proverbs 3:6, Psalm 37:5, Psalm 37:4, Acts 4:13**)
- C. The object of your quiet time is not to study about Him but to spend **time** with Him (**Luke 10:38-42**)
- D. How to begin: Select a time (when you are at your best), a place (with few distractions) and gather the resources (a Bible and a notebook)
- E. What does it look like? Relax, read, reflect, record, and request
- F. Problems you will face (discipline, distractions, **dryness**)

Educational fact: It takes **three** weeks for you to become familiar with a new task. Then it takes another **three** weeks before it becomes a comfortable habit. (Idea = give it time)

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## Introduction

Some of you know that Vikki and I lived in Destin Florida and owned our own snorkel business. We would take people out the Destin Jettys which is a line of break water rocks between the harbor and the gulf. It's pretty good snorkeling depending on high and low tide. At Low tide the current running out towards the gulf can be really strong. Sometimes 5, 6, 7 miles an hour. If someone got caught in the current we would have to go rescue them. The folks on my boat I would scare to death not to get caught in the Current.

One day, it was late spring of 1999 or 2000 and we were loading the boat and over on the docks getting on a pontoon boat was none other than Andy Stanley and his family. Andy Stanley. For those who don't recognize the name Mr. Stanley is the son of Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Atlanta. Andy is senior pastor of North Point Community Church and has written several books. When I was in high school and college he was the ultimate youth pastor type of guy. You know—the cool preacher that could connect with young adults, was funny, to the point. He just connected with the youth. He was kind of like a spiritual hero for lots of people my age, myself included. And there he was. A preaching superhero. There is no telling how many people accepted Christ from the seeds he's planted. A preaching superhero getting on a pontoon boat with his family. Me and business partner, Mike Frizzell, some of you might know him, went over introduced ourselves, shook hands, you know, general "Hello Mr. Preaching superhero stuff" Well, our snorkel trip took off and we're out there for two and half three hours with a bunch of tourist snorkeling goofing off. On the jetties one of us would swim out and sit on the rocks when we knew the tide was going to change. Just before the change we would yell out to our snorkelers to get over here on this side of the rocks, out of the current.

A tide line is the point where the clean gulf water and the darker bay water meet. As the tide starts the ebb out you can see this line. At the jetties you can see it coming a half a mile away. Just behind the tide line the visibility is next to nothing and the current just rips out. Well, just before the tide line hits the jetties this pontoon boat comes in and tries to anchor right at the point. On the boat a family, man wife couple of kids. Most people anchor at the jetties near the beach and use the rocks as protection, most

people that know what they're doing. This guy was anchoring about 75 yards off the beach in about 60 feet of water. They get the anchor set and dad and a little boy put on their mask fins and snorkels and jump in. They get near the point and I get their attention, explain the tide is about to change and the current is going to be really strong. They don't know me don't know that I'm "official" the dad kind of waves his hand at me and sticks his face back in the water. Well the tide line hits the rocks and its one of those days where the current is just screaming. Just about everyone is on the safe side of the jetties except that dad and boy. I'm bout waist deep on the rocks yelling out telling them to swim cross current over this direction out of the current but their caught. I hated saving my passengers and I really hated saving people who hadn't given me any money. I slide my mask down take my kick board and jump out in the current get out to the people and guess who it was. Andy Stanley. Preaching superhero. At that point he couldn't preach out of wet paper bag. I tow both of them back to the beach, he thanks me and after I told them how to get back to their boat off they went. Preaching superhero and I saved their lives.

A light bulb went off that day. Here was a guy that in my opinion the pecking order was God, Jesus a few disciples, some saints, Billy Graham, Gary Jared and Andy Stanley. If God had a committee about buying a tour bus for the streets of gold it would be these people. But he was only human and if it wasn't for me that day who knows what might have happened. He went on to start North Point that has three campuses and 25 thousand attendees every Sunday. And if it wasn't for me....and I haven't gotten any recognition for any this... not yet... but **2 Peter 5:6**.

## **Fellowship: Enjoying God's Family**

In this room of 25-30 people there are 25-30 different personalities and we each have talents gifts faults problems. I might not like you all the time but as a believer I should love you all the time even when it's hard. Why is this important?

- A. I belong in Gods family with other believers (**Galatians 6:10, Ephesians 2:19, Romans 12:5**)
- B. I need encouragement to grow spiritually (**Hebrews 10:24, Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12**)
- C. I need accountability to grow spiritually (**Proverbs 27:17, Hebrews 3:13, Galatians 6:1-2**)
- D. Christ is present when we fellowship together (**Matthew 18:20**)
- E. There is power when people pray together (**Matthew 18:19**)

- F. Fellowship is a witness to the world (**John 17:21**)
- G. I am OBLIGATED to every other Christian (**1 Peter 4:10, 1 Corinthians 12:26-27**)

## One Another's

1. Serve – **Galatians 5:13** (keyword = liberty)

The freedom from God to do whatever you wish in any matter the Bible does not address, without fear of persecution by the church or saints (choice). It is not an excuse to break any Bible principle, compromise your conscience, put yourself in bondage, raise arguments in the church, harm the reputation of the gospel, or destroy another saint's walk with God. We have been freed by the effectual grace of God, out of bondage to sin, Satan, and the law, unto the liberty of the Gospel and of the grace of God; that liberty with Christ had made us free. Don't misuse that freedom but because of that freedom we should rejoice and serve one another with love. **1 Corinthians 5:8**

2. Receive – **Romans 15:7** (keyword = embrace: hug, shake hands—as Jesus received us)

3. Forgive – **Colossians 3:13** (keyword = forbearing: showing patient and unruffled self-control and restraint under adversity; slow to retaliate or express resentment. Best known Greek word for the concept of forbearance, one that is often translated "longsuffering," is *makrothumia*. Forbearance could be explained as showing patience, even though a thing is owed to us. It is holding back or restraining the self from doing something that is normal to do. It is controlling oneself when provoked or offended.) (secondary keyword = forgiving: forgiving of all trespasses and offences, so far as committed against themselves, and praying to God to forgive them, as committed against him)

4. Greet – **Romans 16:16** (keyword = holy kiss: common custom in most nations, used by friends at meeting or parting, to kiss each other, in token of their hearty love, and sincere affection and friendship for each other. Not an open mouth tongue wagging kiss.)

Kisses in the Bible that went bad: **2 Samuel 20:9** (Joab gave to Amasa, when, inquiring of his health, he took him by the beard to kiss him, and stabbed him under the fifth rib) and **Matthew 26:49**

holy kiss: **Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26**

kiss of love: **1 Peter 5:14**



Commentators offer two perspectives: 1) that this was a greeting performed in coordination with the liturgical rites of the church (i.e., the Lord's Supper); 2) it was simply a standard greeting performed at normal greeting times. Favoring the latter is the point that in the Jewish and Greco-Roman world, a kiss was used as "a form of social respect" used to greet other parties. [Dunn, Romans commentary, 898; Black, 212]

5. Prefer – **Romans 12:10** (keyword = brethren: Not of people of the same country, or as such who are born of the same parents in a natural sense are; to each of whom love is due under their respective characters and relations: but such who are so in a spiritual sense, who are born of God, are of his household, belong to his family, are the brethren of Christ)

6. Admonish – **Romans 15:14** (keyword = admonish: to reprove firmly but not harshly, to advise to do or against doing something; warn; caution)

'Knowledge' is spiritual knowledge relating to God, his nature and perfections, his mind and will; to Christ and the work of redemption by him; to the Spirit, and the operations of his grace.

7. Comfort – **1 Thessalonians 5:9-11** (keyword = edify: to improve the morality, intellect, etc., of, especially by instruction, from Latin *aedificāre* to construct, from *aedēs* a dwelling, temple)

### **Biblical "one another's"**

1. 'Do not deceive one another' - **Leviticus 19:11**
2. 'Show Mercy and Compassion to one another' - **Zechariah 7:9**
3. 'Love one another' - **John 13:34-35**
4. 'Be devoted to one another' - **Romans 12:10**
5. 'Live in Harmony with one another' - **Romans 12:16, 1 Peter 3:8**
6. 'Accept one another' - **Romans 15:7**
7. 'Instruct one another' - **Romans 15:14**
8. 'Agree with one another' - **1 Corinthians 1:10**
9. 'Greet one another with a holy kiss' - **2 Corinthians 13:12**
10. 'Serve one another in love' - **Galatians 5:13**
11. 'Bearing with one another in love' - **Ephesians 4:2**
12. 'Be kind and compassionate to one another' - **Ephesians 4:32**
13. 'Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' - **Ephesians 5:19**
14. 'Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ' - **Ephesians 5:21**
15. 'Admonish one another' - **Colossians 3:16**
16. 'Encourage one another' - **1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 10:25**
17. 'Spur one another on toward love and good deeds' - **Hebrews 10:24**

18. 'Do not slander one another' - **James 4:11**
19. 'Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling' - **1 Peter 4:9**
20. 'Love one another deeply' - **1 Peter 1:22**
21. 'Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another' - **1 Peter 5:5**
22. 'Have fellowship with one another' - **1 John 1:7**

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## 1. Benefits of Giving

### 1 Corinthians 16:2a; 2 Corinthians 8:7

- A. Giving makes me like (similar to) **God** ([John 3:16](#))
- B. Giving draws me closer to God ([Matthew 6:21](#))
- C. Giving is the antidote to materialism ([1 Timothy 6:17-19](#): **17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give** [literally, 'ready to be **liberal**'], **willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.**)
- D. Giving strengthens my faith ([Luke 6:38](#))
- E. Giving is an investment in **eternity** ([1 Timothy 6:18-19](#))
- F. Giving blesses me in return ([Proverbs 22:9a, 11:25](#): **The generous soul will be made rich** [fat], **And he who waters** [**saturates**] **will also be watered** [rained on] **himself.**)

## 2. Tithing

- I. What is a tithe? the **first tenth** part of my income
- II. What is the difference between a tithe and an offering? A tithe is giving the first tenth part of my income and an offering is anything I give in addition to my tithe
- III. Why should I tithe?

- A. Abraham **modeled** it (**Genesis 14:18-20**)—this was pre-Law
  - B. God commanded it (**Leviticus 27:30**)
  - C. Jesus **commended** it (**Matthew 23:23**: **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint [sweet smelling herb that the Jews spread on the floors of their houses and synagogues] and anise [dill—used as a spice and a medicine] and cumin [a seed used as a condiment], and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done [literally, ‘these were necessary that you continue doing constantly’], without leaving the others undone.**)
  - D. God says that refusing to tithe is stealing from Him (**Malachi 3:8**)
- IV. What does tithing show?
- A. Tithing demonstrates that God has **first** place in my life (**Deuteronomy 14:23b**)
  - B. Tithing reminds me that everything I have was **given** to me by God (**Deuteronomy 8:18a**)
  - C. Tithing expresses my love to the Lord (**Psalms 116:12; Deuteronomy 16:17**)
- V. Where should I give my tithe? Where I **worship** (**Malachi 3:10a**)
- VI. When should I tithe? **regularly** (**1 Corinthians 16:2a**)

### 3. Attitudes

- A. Willingly and **sacrificially** (**2 Corinthians 8:3-4; 9:1-2a**)
- B. Expectantly (**2 Corinthians 9:6b**)
- C. Cheerfully (**2 Corinthians 9:7**: **So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful** [Greek word is *hilaros*—from which we get our English word, **hilarious**] **giver.**)

The key: **2 Corinthians 8:5b**: **they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God**