



Spiritual Disciplines Toolbox

08 Worship

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

— Revelation 5:12

What are Spiritual Disciplines?

At some point we all get stale, stuck, or start searching for more. Most often all we need is the right tool to break through in our relationship with God. Spiritual disciplines are the biblical tools Christians have been using for centuries to draw closer to God. We use the disciplines because we need help, not because we are so holy. Experiment with the tools to find out what helps you connect with God the best.

What is Worship all about?

We are all wired for worship. The problem, as John Calvin wrote, is that “Man’s nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols.” We often find meaning and value in anything but God. These things quickly become the focus of our conversations, our energy and eventually . . . our lives. The only object big enough and worthy enough of our life’s commitment is God. To worship means to realign all that we are around all that He is.

Worship is work and worship is wonder. It takes effort because we drift into the gravitational pull of self-adulation and small worthless distractions. We must fight to focus on our infinitely greater God. Worship is wonder because when our eyes are on Him we become captivated by His glory. The soul was built to savor the Creator, and nothing else will do. When we set our hearts on God the shadows shrink back, worries lose their weight, sin loses its appeal, and fear is uprooted. In worship our hearts are enlarged, our joy is boundless, and we are transformed (2 Cor. 3:18).

Where do I start?

Super Sunday. Make the most of the Sunday service. If you normally roll into the service right before it starts, sing along, and listen for something interesting—try taking it up a notch. Get up a little earlier, pray on your way to church and ask God to help you hear Him clearly. As you sing, think about the One to whom you are singing. Lean in during the message by taking notes. In essence, give God your undivided attention for the full hour and notice if seeing Him more doesn't change your life.

What other ways can I use this tool?

Focus on God's Attributes. Make a list of God's attributes (like loving or holy) and His names (like the Almighty or the Lord)—then circle the ones that have had a special meaning in your life. If you have discovered that God is the redeemer of your mistakes, then write down Redeemer. If you have felt His comfort, then write Comforter. If you are in awe of His handiwork, write Creator. As your list grows, so will your admiration of God.

Focus on God's Actions. Make a list of blessings. Simply and slowly write down the many things you are thankful for in your life. You can list the big ones like salvation and forgiveness. And the small ones like a good meal, a rich book, sports or days at the beach. With each blessing, reflect on the love of God as your Father, who delights to give you these gifts (James 1:17).

Let Music Move You. Worship and music are often intertwined in Scripture (Ps. 150:1-6). Music has the power to unite our hearts and minds in a single, focused act. In those moments, we can worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). Use the world of music to move you closer to seeing God as He truly is and giving Him the praise due His name. You can sing a song or just reflect as you listen. You can turn on a current favorite or try a classic (Hint: To keep things fresh, try the opposite of what you are familiar with).

Wander and Wonder. Creation primes the pump of worship. It was crafted by the Creator and speaks endlessly of His power, greatness and creativity (Ps. 19:1-6, Rom. 1:20). Allow the sights, smells and wonders of the natural world to lead you into supernatural worship. When you are awestruck by the stars, think of the One who made them all and knows them each by name (Ps. 147:4). When you are left speechless by the display of power in a thunderstorm, fall to your knees in silence before the One who can calm the wild forces of nature with a word (Mark 4:39). Let your wonder in creation lead you to worship.

“Without worship, we go about miserable.”

— A.W. Tozer