

ABIDE

Colossians 3.12-17; Colossians 4.2

In the following passages we see both Jesus and Paul talking/writing about spiritual disciplines. They are sometimes called spiritual exercises because if practiced they strengthen us for service, just as physical exercises strengthen our bodies. They are God's appointed means to help us stay connected to him, so that we might abide in his love and strength.

In the Matthew passage, Jesus simply assumed that his disciples would be practicing spiritual disciplines. He gave instructions about the things he expected his disciples to practice.

*So **when you give** to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. Matthew 6.2*

*And **when you pray**, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. Matthew 6.5*

When you fast**, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. **Matthew 6.16

In Colossians we see how spiritual disciplines are woven into the entire life of faith. In the midst of exhortations to be kind and patient, to bear one another's burdens, to forgive, Paul talks about the Word of God dwelling in us and challenges us to devote ourselves to prayer. He was telling them, in the midst of the heavy demands of ministry, to make time for the spiritual disciplines of Bible study and prayer. He seemed to assume that the life of ministry was absolutely dependent on and intertwined with the practice of discipline.

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

*¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly** as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3.12-17*

***Devote yourselves to prayer**, being watchful and thankful. Colossians 4.2*

Many believe that the only road to Christian maturity and godliness passes through the practice of spiritual disciplines. It is also through these disciplines we find the enablement to love Christ and serve others. Without an ever growing relationship with Christ through these disciplines, we often find ourselves blocked from effectively serving God and others.

⁷ Train (discipline) yourself to be godly. ⁸ For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4.7-8

The challenge for us is to each day to plan time for spiritual disciplines and to seek others that will encourage us in this endeavor.