

# CULTIVATING THE INNER-LIFE

## The practice of God's presence

### I. What is "Cultivating the Inner Life"?

- Seven things that say you need to work on cultivating an awareness of His presence:
  1. You have no idea what is meant by "relationship with God". It's just a trite expression.
  2. You find yourself dissatisfied with a routine spirituality.
  3. You've attempted to be quiet before God, but your head just fills up with all of the daily distractions of life.
  4. You're so accessible via cell phone, Facebook, Twitter that you find yourself wanting to get into a time machine so you can go back in time and punch Alexander Graham Bell right in the face.
  5. You've done the church thing for awhile, but you still don't really feel like you trust God with the basic aspects of your life.
  6. You've done the church thing for awhile and yet you still cannot seem to stop impulses that you know are sin.
  7. Your relationship with God resembles an equation instead of a seek-and-pursue friendship.

### II. How does one go about developing an awareness of God's presence?

### III. What obstacles are in the way of a real "relationship" with God?

### IV. Yeah, but I've got the Holy Spirit thing going on here, right? Won't He fix that stuff?

### V. OK, so how do I open the door to the Spirit's work in my life?

#### *Disciplines of Abstinence*

Solitude  
 Silence  
 Fasting  
 Frugality  
 Chastity  
 Secrecy  
 Sacrifice

#### *Disciplines of Engagement*

Study  
 Worship  
 Celebration  
 Service  
 Prayer  
 Fellowship  
 Confession  
 Submission<sup>1</sup>

### A. Using fasting to control our impulsiveness (Matthew 4:1-11).

Temptations of Jesus	Turn stones to bread	Jump from temple	Worship Satan
Doubts	Will God provide?	Will God protect?	Will God "win"?
Weaknesses	Impatience	Insecurity	Conflict avoidance
Impulses	Impulse for <u>instant gratification</u>	Impulse to be <u>accepted</u>	Impulse to avoid <u>pain</u> <sup>2</sup>

### B. Using sacrifice to cultivate trust (Hebrews 11:4, 6, 17-19).

### C. Using simplicity to teach us to control our materialism (Leviticus 25).

### D. Using suffering to learn hope in God (Romans 5:3-5).

<sup>1</sup>Willard, Dallas, The Spirit of the Disciplines, pub. by Harper Collins, 1988, p. 158

<sup>2</sup>Johnson, Jan, Spiritual Disciplines Companion, pub. by IVP, 2009, p. 242

### *Study Questions for November 15*

1. Read Romans 12:1-2. How does Paul portray worship in these verses? How does that differ from an understanding that worship is what we do on Sunday morning?
2. Read Amos 5:21-24. What do you think Amos is renouncing, in terms of their worship (you may want to read Amos 4 and 5 for the answer)? What would Amos say to the American church today about its worship? Why do you think that?
3. Read Micah 6:1-8. What does Micah criticize about Israel's worship? What is his remedy? What do you think it means? What would Micah say to FBC today?
4. Read John 4:19-26. What is the Samaritan woman's confusion about worship? What do you think Jesus means by worshipping in "spirit and in truth"? Why do you say that?
5. How do these passages change the way you think of worship?