

THE HOURS OF OUR DAYS
A Worshiper's Primer On Spiritual Habits

"Resolved : that all men should live for the glory of God.
Resolved second: that whether others do or not, I will."
Jonathan Edwards

"Every hour of every day," so the adage goes, "makes the life." Who would disagree with the idea that who you are today is the sum of genetics, choices, experiences and habits of years gone by? Stephen Covey put it this way: "Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny." If our destiny is to know God as we are known by Him, then how we spend the hours of our days has everything to do with reaping the reward of intimacy with God.

The following is a brief primer on some spiritual habits you may be familiar with, how they open us up to God's work in us and why each may prove beneficial to this season of God's work of formation in you. Drawing on a synthesis of Dallas Willard and Richard Foster's categories, each discipline is noted as being effective training for a certain area of our lives.

The Inward Disciplines

Meditation
Reflecting on the scriptures trains us to create space for God to speak to us.

Prayer
Offering our requests trains us to cast our cares on God.

Fasting
Abstaining from food or other human needs trains us to say "no" to ourselves and affirms self-control.

Study
Examining the Scriptures, our faith and other topics trains us to think beyond our common perception and experience.

The Outward Disciplines

Simplicity
Choosing to restrain ourselves, our schedules and our possessions trains us to live peacefully.

Solitude
Seeking out silence trains us to listen to God, ourselves and others.

Submission
Putting others first trains us to live selflessly and to trade in our "I" for a "You."

Service
Giving our energies to build up others trains us to live as givers, not as takers.

The Corporate Disciplines

Confession
Accounting for our sins to another trains us to live an open and vulnerable life.

Worship
Directing our affections to God trains us to live out of a God-centered reality.

Guidance
Looking to the Holy Spirit for direction trains us to defer to God's agenda.

Celebration
Approaching events with festivity trains us to appreciate the gifts of God.

Community
Pursuing spiritual friendship trains us to live our lives interdependently.

As a worshiper, consider how God might have you apply these disciplines in your life in order to, as Richard Foster puts it, "...combat the twin plagues of our day: unbridled freedom and isolated effort." Set your heart "...to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:15), and may the hours of your days yield a great spiritual harvest in your lifetime.