

Working out your Salvation...
aka 'Spirituality and Theology'
- Introduction -

Phil 2:12-13

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always **obeyed**—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to **work out your salvation with fear and trembling**, ¹³for it is **God who works in you** to will and to act according to his good purpose. (NIV)

¹²What I'm getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in **responsive obedience**. Now that I'm separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, **redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God.** ¹³That energy is *God's* energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.

(The Message)

Although believers are justified once and for all, the Spirit helps us to constantly, progressively live out the implications of our conversion in daily life. The **Christian all too easily forgets the primary goals of his commitment to God**, as well as the resources available to him for fulfilling his obligations.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith

- **goodness**; and to goodness, (*"moral excellence."*, like tool that works correctly)
- **knowledge**; ⁶and to knowledge, (*"practical knowledge" or discernment. The ability to handle life successfully*)
- **self-control**; and to self-control, (*athlete who must exercise and discipline himself if he ever hopes to win the prize*)
- **perseverance**; and to perseverance, (*"Patience", ability to endure when circumstances are difficult*)
- **godliness**; ⁷and to godliness, (*"God-likeness."*, *"to worship well."*, *One who lives above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others.*)
- **brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness, (*a sincere love of the church*)
- **love**. (*agape, sacrificial love*)

⁸*For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. (2 Peter 1:5-9)*

Often, the person who gives in to pleasures is not disciplined enough to handle pressures either, so he gives up.

Spiritual growth is not automatic.

Spirituality and Theology

Definitions

Spirituality - the quality or condition of being spiritual (Quality of Faith)

Theology - the study of religion, especially the Christian faith and God's relation to the world (Understanding God)

Experiencing and understanding our faith.

What external or environmental factors influence our Spirituality and our Theology?

Why is Spirituality important? _____

Why is Theology important? _____

How are Spirituality and Theology related? _____

What about me?

What areas of my Spirituality need work? _____

What areas of my Theology need work? _____

What are some pros/cons of doing Spirituality and Theology alone? _____

Theology

1. Theology provides a framework from which to understand and interpret experience.
2. Theology describes the way things are.
3. Theology informs us of how others have responded to God
4. Theology gives us a sense of identity.

Warning: Theology alone can be dangerous; we must couple it with Spirituality

Spirituality

WHAT DOES SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE DO FOR US?

BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

KEY BIBLE VERSE: Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. (1 Corinthians 9:24)

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE HELPS US EFFECTIVELY “RUN THE RACE.”

Winning a race requires purpose and discipline. Paul uses this illustration to explain that the Christian life takes hard work, self-denial, and grueling preparation. As Christians, we are running toward our heavenly reward. The essential disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and worship equip us to run with vigor and stamina. Don't merely observe from the grandstand; don't just turn out to jog a couple of laps each morning. Train diligently-your spiritual progress depends upon it.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE FOCUSES OUR SPIRITUAL GOALS.

At times we must even give up something good in order to do what God wants. Each person's special duties determine the discipline and self-denial that he or she must accept. Without a goal, discipline is nothing but self-punishment. With the goal of pleasing God, our sacrifices seem like nothing compared to the eternal, imperishable reward that will be ours.

BIBLE READING: 1 Timothy 4:7-10

KEY BIBLE VERSE: Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next. (1 Timothy 4:7-8)

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE MAKES US SPIRITUALLY “FIT.”

Are you in shape both physically and spiritually? In our society, much emphasis is placed on physical fitness, but spiritual health (godliness) is even more important. Our physical health is susceptible to disease and injury, but faith can sustain us through these tragedies. To be spiritually “fit,” we must develop our faith by using our God-given abilities in the service of the church (1 Timothy 4:14-16). Are you developing your spiritual muscles?

BIBLE READING: Hebrews 12:1-4

KEY BIBLE VERSE: Since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE STRIPS AWAY THE NONESSENTIALS.

The Christian life involves hard work. It requires us to give up whatever endangers our relationship with God, to run patiently, and to struggle against sin with the power of the Holy Spirit. To live effectively, we must keep our eyes on Jesus. We will stumble if we look away from him to stare at our self or at the circumstances surrounding us. We should be running for Christ, not our self, and we must always keep him in sight.

Rough Outline of this Study Series

1. The 3 movements of the Spiritual Life
2. Practicing Spiritual Reflection
3. Discerning what God is doing in my life
4. The next step – Servant-hood

A Royal Priesthood

1 Peter 2:9-10

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Priesthood = Ministry

We are all called to ministry, to serve our Lord.

Are you prepared? Yes No

We need to develop our faith so that we can serve the Lord and in serving we will grow and be blessed.

What fears do you have with serving in the Lord's ministry? _____

What are some difficulties that one may experience in ministry? _____

What are some positives with serving in ministry? _____

In what ways can you see yourself serving in the Lord's ministry? _____
