

## A 60-day plan of transformation into Christlikeness

### Day #17: Spiritual Discipline #1: Solitude (Part 1)

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#### A. SOLITUDE WITH GOD.

1. This time of solitude should never be viewed as an assignment or in any legalistic manner. It is not a time “to do;” rather, it is a time “to be”—to receive grace transformation by engaging in spiritual exercises (see 1 Tim. 4:7-8) that exist in the Bible, especially as practiced by the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The taking of at least 30 minutes daily enables you to have uninterrupted time with the Lord—away from all the noise and people vying for your attention in one way or another. This provides a sacred time between you and the LORD. The time of solitude is the time where you abstain from interaction with other human beings and electronic equipment. You will find this time not only refreshing and freeing, but very edifying as you dwell on God and your life in isolation from all connections.
3. This sacred time between you and the LORD has a transforming effect on all six areas of your life (mind, emotions, will, body, social orientation, and soul). I will demonstrate this in future lessons.
4. 2<sup>nd</sup> person personal relationship with God. It is during this time that you will naturally develop a very rich 2<sup>nd</sup> person relationship with God. 1<sup>st</sup> person orientation is “I” with the focus on me and my concerns. In 3<sup>rd</sup> person, my focus is God but only as a “He.” In this orientation, I think such thoughts as “God/He loves me, He wants me to live in Him, He will provide for me, and He desires for me to represent Him.” However, in 3<sup>rd</sup> person, God is still viewed as “He” even though He is present with me. It is not personal at this point any more than if I was sitting at a table with a friend and talked about him in 3<sup>rd</sup> person. For example, If I sat across the table from Bill and said “Bill is a good man . . . he is always dependable, etc.” he would likely be offended because I would be talking about him instead of to him even though he is sitting across from me face-to-face. What God desires more than anything is a 2<sup>nd</sup> person personal relationship, a direct “You” relationship. He is far more interested in this type of personal relationship than me thinking about me and my spiritual life or Him as if He were not present before me. For example, there is a radical difference between me thinking about God (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person orientation) all day in my study versus talking to Him directly in 2<sup>nd</sup> person relationship throughout the day in a personal present way.

## B. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLE #1: SOLITUDE (Part 1)

1. With this lesson we begin the study of spiritual disciplines with the spiritual discipline of solitude, which you have already been engaging in for two weeks. Of all the disciplines, solitude is the most fundamental in the beginning of the spiritual life, and it is to be returned to again and again as the life develops in transformation.
2. Let us note that the Bible both mandates and provides promises—for this life and the next—regarding spiritual discipline: 1 Timothy 4:7 “ . . . *exercise yourself* (Γύμναζε δὲ σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν) *toward godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness [exercise] is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*”
3. Jesus Christ is our Example. He is pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:1). We are instructed to walk in His steps (1 Pet 2:21). Only by taking Him as our example can we hope to acquire Christlike nature—sharing Jesus’ mindset, feelings, vision, love, hope, feelings, and habits. And He regularly practiced solitude for needed grace.
4. Consider Jesus intimacy with God the Father in John 5:19, 30; 14:10. Solitude enables one to develop intimacy with God, which is the foundation of walking with Him and thriving spiritually. This is why we must not only take time of solitude with Him, we must carry live out the relationship developed in solitude to our life throughout the day. For example, taking time of solitude with God to appreciate His goodness provides a richness that we can orient to and enjoy throughout the day. Just as a husband and wife, who takes time to be alone with each other away from distractions, can develop depth in their relationship that carries them throughout each day, so it is with the Lord. It is the establishment of special time together with the Lord each day that keeps us from being distracted in life or being too attached to other relationships.
5. The spiritual exercise of solitude also provides true freedom in life by breaking up bad patterns that we develop as we interact with others. In the normal course of day-to-day human interactions, we develop ingrained patterns of thoughts, feelings, choices, body habits, and social orientations. Nothing but solitude can allow the development of a freedom from the ingrained behaviors that hinder our integration into God’s order. We need to first be oriented to God before we move about the world where we pick up ideas, feelings, and social patterns from the world.
6. In solitude we can effectively bring psychological distance from the earthly realm as we move our minds on God and away from all created things. This sets a background in our minds of our place before God apart from creation. It effectively enables us to meditatively reflect on the nature of eternity and God at a time when we are disengaged from the world.

7. In solitude not only do we reflect on the greatness of God and His unsearchable riches, it enables us to confront our own lives in way that otherwise may be obscure to us. Solitude has a way of opening the unknown abyss that we all carry within us.
8. Moreover, as we confront those “demons” in our own souls, we are naturally moved to Christ, where we find our identity, life, righteousness, and purpose in life. This enables us to move out into the world with a strong sense of identity in Him as reflected in Galatians 2:20.
9. Without solitude with God, it is all but impossible to have a deep and personal relationship with God. It will also be extremely difficult to be very successful in the other spiritual disciplines because of lack of the solid foundation of being detached from this world. It is solitude with God that breaks connections with the world by moving us into a deeper connection with God each day that is apart from this world.
10. It is solitude and solitude alone that opens the possibility of a radical relationship to God that can withstand all external connections with this world up to and beyond death.
11. The next lesson will examine in detail the spiritual exercise of solitude as practiced by Jesus. In the meantime, it is worthy to note that Jesus constantly sought solitude from the time of His baptism up to the Garden of Gethsemane. It was solitude that provided Him a break from the world and a one-on-one connection with God the Father for refreshment, strength, and focus. It was a time in which He received the much-needed grace from God. If He needed it, don't we need it all the more?

### **C. SCRIPTURE MEMORY.**

1 Timothy 4:7-8 . . . *exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*

## **E. The 60-day transformation of the mind, heart, and emotions into Christlikeness**

- Day 1 – A life that lacks nothing (Psalm 23): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-1.pdf>  
Day 2 - Satan, the enemy (1 John 2:15-16): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-2.pdf>  
Day 3 – Review, reflect, journaling, and Psalm 19: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-3.pdf>  
Day 4 – The six areas of inner transformation: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-4.pdf>  
Day 5 – The Word of God, Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-5.pdf>  
Day 6 – 2 warnings & promise of transformation: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-6.pdf>  
Day 7 - Solitude, Disciplines, Transformation: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-7.pdf>  
Day 8–VIM (Vision-Intent-Means) & transformation: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-8.pdf>  
Day 9–Solitude with God and Christ’s transformative yoke: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-9.pdf>  
Day 10– Discipleship-1: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-10.pdf>  
Day 11– Discipleship-2: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-11.pdf>  
Day 12– The Life-giving Power of the Holy Spirit: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-12.pdf>  
Day 13– The Spirit vs. the Flesh (Part 1): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-13.pdf>  
Day 14– The Spirit vs. the Flesh (Part 2): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-14.pdf>  
Day 15– The Spiritual Disciplines: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-15.pdf>  
Day 16– The Spiritual/Psychological Disease of Hurriedness: <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-16.pdf>  
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