

## 第五堂：平息躁動的靈魂（第一部分）

### 觀看視頻！

視頻連結：<https://youtu.be/H7i5wFpd58I>

### 學習！

現代生活充滿了喧囂，遠遠超過了歷史上的任何其他時刻。人們越來越多地從農村轉移到都市，並帶來噪音（“有害聲音”）。從地面到空中 - 從高速公路上不間斷的交通到民航機的頭頂轟鳴 - 我們被噪音轟炸。

噪音不僅存在於我們外在環境，而且也在我們內心深處。在我們的罪過，痛苦和憂慮的重壓之下，重擔擠滿了我們的內心，直到我們無法聽見上帝的聲音。聲勢浩大的外在環境下，靜默對我們而言幾乎沒有任何吸引力，並且更懶得要騰出與神獨處的時間。

然而，更重要的是，我們需要操練靜默和獨處。耶穌經常撤離到孤僻的地方，在上帝的同在中保持靜默。但以理經常在禱告中尋求神。摩西不止一次地與神獨處40天，保羅在耶穌的引導下獨自在阿拉伯度過了三年。

我們也需要學習如何從世界的喧嘩中退出，以便我們可以接近上帝。斷開不必要的聲音，以便重新連接到上帝。只有當我們獨自靜默進入上帝的同在中，放下自我；我們的心懷意念和環境才會發生轉變。

### 重點經文：詩篇 62（和合本）

在神保佑中安穩自在  
大衛的詩，照耶杜頓的作法，交與伶長。

1我的心默默無聲，專等候神；  
我的救恩是從他而來。  
2惟獨他是我的磐石，我的拯救；  
他是我的高臺，我必不很動搖。  
3你們大家攻擊一人，把他毀壞，  
如同毀壞歪斜的牆、將倒的壁，要到幾時呢？  
4他們彼此商議，專要從他的尊位上把他推下；  
他們喜愛謊話，口雖祝福，心卻咒詛。（細拉）

5我的心哪，你當默默無聲，專等候神，  
因為我的盼望是從他而來。  
6惟獨他是我的磐石，我的拯救；  
他是我的高臺，我必不動搖。  
7我的拯救、我的榮耀都在乎神；

我力量的磐石、我的避難所都在乎神。

8你們眾民當時時倚靠他，  
在他面前傾心吐意；  
神是我們的避難所。（細拉）

9下流人真是虛空；  
上流人也是虛假；  
放在天平裏就必浮起；  
他們一共比空氣還輕。

10不要仗勢欺人，  
也不要因搶奪而驕傲；  
若財寶加增，不要放在心上。

11神說了一次、兩次，我都聽見：  
就是能力都屬乎神。

12主啊，慈愛也是屬乎你，  
因為你照着各人所行的報應他。

## 課程大綱：操練靜默與獨處

閱讀聖經時，我們必須注意重複的單詞，主題或短語。讓我們專注於以下兩節經文。它們幾乎是相同的，但細微的差別表明了大衛內心的兩次轉變。

### 轉變#1

“我的心默默無聲，專等候神”（第1節）

“我的心哪，你當默默無聲，專等候神”（第5節）

在語法中，有“疑問句”（問題），“陳述句”（聲明）和“祈使句”（命令）。在這裡，我們可以看到大衛的言語從陳述轉換為命令。大衛命令他的心靜默等待。

### 轉變#2

“我必不很動搖”（第2節）

“我必不動搖”（第6節）

注意單詞“很”不見了。內心的景況從“必不很動搖”到“必不動搖”。這是一種從躁動到平靜的轉變，這種經歷是當一個人有意地脫離世界的喧囂，在上帝面前默默地傾心吐意。

“靜默對我來說並不是自然形成的  
靜默對你來說一定也是陌生的  
如果你和我想要在我們躁動的心中保持靜默  
我們就需要去培養靜默

如果你珍視、珍惜並渴望滋養靜默  
你就可以在躁動的心中培養靜默”  
- 韋恩·奧茨 Wayne Oats

## 靜默與獨處的實踐

靜默的操練就是停止說話，停止與周圍的所有人對話，以便聽見上帝說話。

獨處的操練是從其他人身邊抽身出來，獨自一人，這樣我們才能享受與上帝的親密關係。

## 靜默與獨處的目的

### 1. 效法耶穌的榜樣

聖經教導說耶穌行了靜默與獨處（路加福音4：1，路加福音4:14，馬太福音14:23和馬可福音1:35）。要像耶穌一樣，我們必須自律，並尋找靜默與獨處的時間。我們必須這樣做的原因，是要像耶穌那樣，通過這些操練得到屬靈的力量。

耶穌被聖靈充滿，從約旦河回來後，隨聖靈的引導來到曠野(路加福音 4:1 當代譯本)

耶穌帶著聖靈的能力回到加利利，祂的名聲傳遍了周圍地區。(路加福音 4:14 當代譯本)

待眾人都離開了，祂就獨自上山去禱告，在那裡一直待到晚上。(馬太福音 14:23 當代譯本)

第二天清早，天還沒亮，耶穌就起來獨自走到曠野去禱告。(馬可福音 1:35 當代譯本)

### 2. 更好地聆聽上帝的聲音

遠離世上噪音和人類聲音的最明顯原因之一，就是為了更好地聆聽來自天堂的聲音。

耶和華說：「你出來站在山上，站在我面前。」耶和華從那裡經過時，疾風大作，劈山碎石，但耶和華不在風中。疾風過後又有地震，但耶和華不在其中。地震之後又有火，但耶和華也不在火中。之後，傳來微小的聲音。(列王紀上 19:11-12 當代譯本)

我要登上瞭望塔，站在望樓上等候，  
看耶和華要對我說什麼，要怎樣答覆我的抱怨。(哈巴谷書 2:1 當代譯本)

“除了默想神之外，她幾乎不關心任何事情  
她喜歡獨自一人走在田野和樹林中  
和似乎總是與一個看不見的人交談”  
- 愛德華茲（對他妻子的觀察）

### 3. 尋求上帝的旨意

基督徒與神保持靜默和獨處的最常見原因之一，就是為了辨明祂的旨意。

一天，耶穌到山上整夜向上帝禱告。天明時分，祂召集門徒，從中選出十二人立為使徒。(路加福音 6:12-13 當代譯本)

“當我們遵循上帝的旨意時，  
責任在於祂，而不是在我們這裡。  
上帝在發出邀請的時候，承擔了所有的負擔。  
作為僕人我只要向前，把結果留給祂。  
當我離開那片沙灘的時候，是多麼平靜啊；  
矛盾解開了，只留下愉悅和平靜。  
我覺得我能飛到山頂皮爾斯先生的房子裡。  
我昨晚睡的安穩！我妻子還以為布萊頓製造了什麼奇蹟呢！  
確實是的。”  
戴德生

#### 4. 尋求主的救恩

一個尋求主的救贖的靜默與獨處的時刻，可以指的是非基督徒尋求罪惡的救贖，也可以適用於在某些情況下尋求神救贖的基督徒。

耶和華必賜福給那些等候和尋求祂的人，因此，默然等候耶和華的拯救是美好的。(耶利米哀歌 3:25-26 當代譯本)

“我要求任何尋求救贖的人首先學會獨處，這樣你們可以透過上帝眼光認清自己。  
很少有人能真正地了解自己。  
大多數人都會透過濾鏡看自己，但還有另外一個濾鏡，可以真實反映，卻很少有人看。  
根據上帝的道省察自己，仔細省察自己的狀況，省察內在和外在的罪過，  
並運用聖經中給我們的所有考驗，將是一種健康的操煉；  
但是幾乎沒有人如此行！”  
- 司布真 Charles Spurgeon

#### 靜默與獨處的產物

主耶和華——以色列的聖者說：「你們回轉、安息便可得到拯救；你們安靜、信靠便可得到力量。但你們卻不肯。(以賽亞書 30:15 當代譯本)

31 耶穌對他們說：「你們私下跟我到僻靜的地方去歇一會兒吧。」因為當時來來往往找他們的人實在太多，他們連吃飯的時間都沒有。(馬可福音 6:31 當代譯本)

靜默與獨處將帶來三件事：

1. 我們開始尋找安息

2. 我們破碎的心得修復
3. 我們被誤導的生活開始重新與神對齊

## 反思!

你多久一次能夠獨自安靜的在神的面前?

在之後的兩周中，你要如何實踐靜默和獨處？

## 討論!

我們需要讓我們的心安靜下來，聽聽上帝的聲音。大衛為我們樹立了榜樣。大衛一生中對審判和迫害的第一個反應是“向主打聽”。當他這樣做時，上帝一次又一次地向大衛證明了自己。另一件事：大衛默默地等待主，不僅增強了他對上帝的信心，而且向周圍的每個人（無論是朋友還是敵人）展示了上帝的信實。

問題1：在上帝面前保持默默無聲是什麼意思（詩篇62：1，5）？你如何實踐的？

問題2：在等候上帝時，你會堅守上帝哪些方面的屬性？

問題3：如果你沒有得到上帝的回音，你是否曾經用自己的方式解決事情？結果如何？

問題4：在詩篇62：8-10中，大衛對其他人做了什麼指示，以應對困難的情況？

問題5：當他等待上帝的幫助時，人們繼續攻擊並施壓大衛。你可以從中學到什麼，了解生活中所有挑戰的本質？

問題6：你如何提醒自己，不論外在環境如何，但上帝仍然掌控一切？

問題7：為什麼有時很難在上帝面前靜默等候？

問題8：當周圍有其他人時，你仍可以在上帝面前保持安靜嗎？請解釋。

問題9：為什麼你不能信任自己不認識的人？如果你難以信靠上帝，那麼有什麼可以幫助你增長信心呢？

問題10：向上帝“傾心吐意”是什麼意思（詩篇62：8）？在你遇到困難的時候，這會如何幫助你？

問題11：在接下來的兩週內，您可以採取哪些步驟來操練靜默和獨處？

## 課後作業

### 挑戰！

回答下列問題，並紀錄在你的日記裡。

1. 我對上帝的信心有多牢固？
2. 我有什麼恐懼會影響我的生活？
3. 我的心有多滋潤？是什麼餵養我的心？
4. 我要對什麼放手？
5. 我為他人做了什麼樣的妥協？我應該這樣做嗎？
6. 我過去的傷口如何塑造現在的我和將來的我？
7. 我感受到上帝絕對的愛嗎？
8. 我羨慕別人嗎？是誰？是什麼讓我羨慕他人？
9. 我可以在上帝裡安息嗎？
10. 在我混亂的生活裡，對我來說一件重要的事情是什麼？

### 背誦！

詩篇 62:5-6 和合本

- 5 我的心哪，你當默默無聲，專等候神，  
因為我的盼望是從他而來。
- 6 惟獨他是我的磐石，我的拯救；  
他是我的高臺，我必不動搖。

預習！

Read the article below by Dallas Willard on Personal Soul Care.

**Personal Soul Care**  
(Dallas Willard)

*Watch over your heart with all diligence,  
For from it flow the springs of life.*  
Proverbs 4:23, NASB

The call of God to minister the gospel is a high honor and a noble challenge. It carries with it unique opportunities as well as special burdens and dangers for members of the clergy as well as their families. These burdens can be fruitfully born and the dangers triumphantly overcome. But that will not happen unless the minister's "inner person" (2 Corinthians 4:16) is constantly renewed by accessing the riches of God and His kingdom in the inner person.

**The Soul And The Great Commandment**

"Soul" is here defined as the hidden or "spiritual" side of the person. It includes an individual's thoughts and feelings, along with heart or will, with its intents and choices. It also includes an individual's bodily life and social relations, which, in their inner meaning and nature, are just as "hidden" as the thoughts and feelings.

The secret to a strong, healthy, and fruitful ministerial life lies in how we work with God in all of these dimensions. Together they make up the real person. They are the inescapable sources of our outward life, and they almost totally determine what effects, for good or ill, our ministerial activities will have. Natural gifts, external circumstances, and special opportunities are of little significance. The good tree, Jesus said, "bears good fruit" (Matthew 7:17, NASB). If we tend to the tree, the fruit will take care of itself.

The inner dimensions of life are what are referred to in the Great Commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27, NASB). This commandment does not so much tell us what we must do, as what we must cultivate in the care of our souls. This is true for all believers and is certainly true for ministers of the gospel.<sup>1</sup> Our high calling and sacrificial service can find adequate support only in a personality totally saturated with God's kind of love, agape (see 1 Corinthians 13).

But we must be very clear that the great biblical passages on love—those cited above and others, including 1 John 4—do not tell us to act as if we loved God with our whole beings, and our neighbors as ourselves. Such an attempt, without the love of God indwelling us, would be an impossible burden. We would become angry and hopeless—as, in fact, happens to many ministers and their families.

**Character and the "Fruit of the Spirit"**

The "sudden" failures that appear in the lives of some ministers are never really sudden but are the surfacing of long-standing deficiencies in "the hidden person of the heart" (1 Peter 3:4, NASB). Divine love permeating every part of our lives is, by contrast, a resource adequate to every condition of life and death, as 1 Corinthians 13 assures us. This love is, in the words of Jesus, "a well of water springing up to eternal life" (John 4:14, NASB). And from those possessed of divine love there truly flows "rivers of living water" to a thirsty world (see 7:38, NASB).

The people to whom we minister and speak will not recall 99 percent of what we say to them. But they will never forget the kind of persons we are. This is true of influential ministers in my past. The quality of our souls will indelibly touch others for good or for ill. So we must never forget that the most important thing happening at any moment, in the midst of all our ministerial duties, is the kind of persons we are becoming.

God is greatly concerned with the quality of character we are building. The future He has planned for us will be built on the strength of character we forge by His grace. Intelligent, loving devotion to Christ will grow in importance through eternity and will never become obsolete.

It is God's intention that our lives should be a seamless manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23, NASB). He has made abundant provision for His indwelling our lives in the here and now. Appropriate attention to the care of our souls through His empowerment will yield this rich spiritual fruit and deliver us from the sad list of "deeds of the flesh" (vv. 19-21, NASB). We can be channels of the grace of the risen Christ, and through our ministerial activities—speaking, praying, healing, administering—He can minister to others. But we must attend to the means of His grace in practical and specific ways to experience His life into and through our lives.

### **"Practicing the Presence of God"**

The first and most basic thing we can and must do is to keep God before our minds. David knew this secret and wrote, "I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely" (Psalm 16:8-9, NASB).

This is the fundamental secret of caring for our souls. Our part in thus practicing the presence of God is to direct and redirect our minds constantly to Him. In the early time of our "practicing" we may well be challenged by our burdensome habits of dwelling on things less than God. But these are habits—not the law of gravity—and can be broken. A new, grace-filled habit will replace the former ones as we take intentional steps toward keeping God before us. Soon our minds will return to God as the needle of a compass constantly returns to the north. If God is the great longing of our souls, He will become the pole star of our inward beings.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus Christ is, of course, the Door, the Light, and the Way. We are privileged to walk in this profound reality, not just preach it. We first receive God into our minds by receiving Jesus. The way forward then lies in intentionally keeping the scenes and words of the New Testament Gospels before our minds, carefully reading and rereading them day by day. We revive them in word and imagination as we arise in the morning, move through the events of the day, and lie down at night. By this means we walk with Him moment by moment—the One who promised to be with us always.

As a beginning step in this "practicing" process, we can choose to practice constantly returning our minds to God in Christ on a given day. In the evening then we can review how we did and think of ways to do it better the next day. As we continue this practice, gently but persistently, we soon will find that the person of Jesus and His beautiful words are "automatically" occupying our minds instead of the clutter and noise of the world—even the church world.

Our concentration on Jesus will be strengthened by memorization of great passages (not just verses) from Scripture. Passages such as Matthew 7, John 14-17, 1 Corinthians 13, and Colossians 3 are terrific "soul growing" selections. This practice of memorizing the Scriptures is more important than a daily quiet time, for as we fill our minds with these great passages and have them available for our meditation, "quiet time" takes over the entirety of our lives.

God's word to Joshua, as he undertook the great task before him, was, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success" (Joshua 1:8, NASB). Psalm 1 demonstrates that this became a part of the recognized practice of spiritual living among the Israelites. Meditation on Him and His Word must become an integral part of our lives too.

But how does the law get *in your mouth*? By memorization, of course. It becomes an essential part of how we think about everything else as we *dwell on it*. Then the things that come before us during the day come in the presence of God's illuminating Word. Light dwells within us and enables us to see the things of life in the right way. "In Thy light we see light" (Psalm. 36:9, NASB). This is the true education for ministry and for life.

## Love and Worship

As the Living Word and the written Word occupy our minds we naturally—and supernaturally—come to love God more and more because we see, clearly and constantly, how lovely He is.

The wise Puritan, Thomas Watson, wrote:

The first fruit of love is the *musings of the mind upon God*. He who is in love, his thoughts are ever upon the object. He who loves God is ravished and transported with the contemplation of God. “*When I awake, I am still with thee*” (Ps. 139:18). The thoughts are as travelers in the mind. David’s thoughts kept heaven-road. “*I am still with Thee.*” God is the treasure, and where the treasure is, there is the heart. By this we may test our love to God. What are our thoughts most upon? Can we say we are ravished with delight when we think on God? Have our thoughts got wings? Are they fled aloft? Do we contemplate Christ and glory? ... A sinner crowds God out of his thoughts. He never thinks of God, unless with horror, as the prisoner thinks of the judge.<sup>3</sup>

In this way we enter a life, not just *times*, of worship. The hymn of heaven will be a constant presence in our inner lives: “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and forever” (Rev. 5:13, NASB).

Worship will become the constant undertone of our lives. It is the single most powerful force in completing and sustaining restoration of our whole beings to God. Nothing can inform, guide, and sustain pervasive and radiant goodness in a person other than the true vision of God and the worship that spontaneously arises from it. Then the power of the indwelling Christ flows from us to others.

Remember, however, that we are not *trying* to worship. Worship is not another job we have to do. It is one aspect of the gift of “living water” that springs “up to eternal life” (John 4:14; 7:38, NASB). Our part is to turn our minds toward God and to attend to His graceful actions in our souls. This is the primary “care of the soul” we must exercise. Then love and worship, worship and love, flow in our lives as we walk constantly with God. By stepping with Him—in the flow of His grace—we live with spontaneity, love our neighbors, and minister the word and power of the gospel.

## Opening to the Fullness of Joy

Personal soul care also requires attending to our feelings. Emotions are a real component of life and of our lives in Christ. Some ministers allow their emotions to defeat them.

We do well to note, however, that love is the foundation of the spiritual life and joy is a key component in the Christ life. Joy is not pleasure, a mere sensation, but a pervasive and constant sense of well-being. Hope in the goodness of God is joy’s indispensable support.

In a moment of worship and praise, Paul spontaneously expressed a benediction on the Christians in Rome: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13, NASB). This verse addresses the profound needs of the emotional side of the Christian’s life.

The great central terms of life in Christ are “faith,” “hope,” “love,” and “peace.” These are not just feelings; in substance, they are not feelings. They are conditions involving every part of an individual’s life, including the body and the social context. They serve to equip us for the engagements of life. They do, however, have feelings that accompany them, and these positive feelings abundantly characterize those living in the presence of God. These feelings displace the bitter and angry feelings, that characterize life “in the flesh”—life in human energies only. They even transform the sickening emotional tones that permeate and largely govern the world around us—even many times the Church world.

Jesus taught us to abide in God’s love “that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full” (John 15: 10-11, NASB). Our joy is full when there is no room for more. Abiding in God’s love provides the

unshakable source of joy, which is in turn the source of peace. All is based in the reality of God's grace and goodness.

*Faith, hope, love, joy, and peace*—the “magnificent five”—are inseparable from one another and reciprocally support each other. Try to imagine any one without the others!

### **Solitude and Silence**

Among the practices that can help us attend to soul care at a basic level are *solitude* and *silence*. We practice these by finding ways to be alone and away from talk and noise. We rest, we observe, we “smell the roses”—dare we say it?—we do *nothing*. This discipline can be used of God as a means of grace. In it we may even find another reminder of grace—that we are saved, justified by His redeeming power—not by our strivings and achievements.

In drawing aside for lengthy periods of time, we seek to rid ourselves of the “corrosion” of soul that accrues from constant interaction with others and the world around us. In this place of quiet communion, we discover again that we do have souls, that we indeed have inner beings to be nurtured. Then we begin to experience again the presence of God in the inner sanctuary, speaking to and interacting with us. We understand anew that God will not compete for our attention. We must arrange time for our communion with Him as we draw aside in solitude and silence.

The psalmist said, “Cease striving and know that I am God” (Psalm 46: 10, NASB). And immediately following this, the writer affirms the success of God's mission on earth: “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’ The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold” (vv. 10-11, NASB).

Other translations of this verse read, “Be still, and know” (NIV) or “Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me” (TM). God's provision for us and for His work through us is adequate. We do not have to “make it happen.” We must stop shouldering the burdens of “outcomes.” These are safely in His hands. Someone insightfully said, “The greatest threat to devotion to Christ is service for Christ.”

What a paradox! This is so easily a challenge for many ministers. Allowing service for Christ to steal our devotion to Him is a radical failure in personal soul care. But it is one from which the practice of communing with Christ in times of solitude and silence can deliver us.

### **Time is Made, Not “Found”**

A response to giving attention to personal soul care often is, “I don't have time for extensive solitude and silence. I have too much to do.” The truth is you don't have time not to practice solitude and silence. No time is more profitably spent than that used to heighten the quality of an intimate walk with God. If we think otherwise, we have been badly educated. The real question is, “Will we take time to do what is necessary for an abundant life and an abundant ministry, or will we try to 'get by' without it?”

So a couple of words of counsel are appropriate for our attending to the inner life. First, God never gives anyone too much to do. We do that to ourselves or allow others to do it to us. We may be showing our lack of confidence in God's power and goodness, though it may be that our models and education have failed us. Second, the exercise of God's power in ministry never, by itself, amends character, and it rarely makes up for our own foolishness. God's power can be actively and wisely sought and received by us only as we seek to grow by grace into Christlikeness. Power *with* Christlike character is God's unbeatable combination of triumphant life in the kingdom of God on earth and forever. Power without Christ's character gives us our modern-day Samsons and Sauls.

Knowing Christ through times away in solitude and silence will “let our joy be full” (see John 16:24). It will bring over us a pervasive sense of well-being, no matter what is happening around us. Hurry and the loneliness of leadership will be eliminated. We can allow the peace of God to sink deeply into our lives and extend through our relationships to others (see Matthew 10:12-13).

A young Christian who had been guided into the effective practice of solitude and silence had this to say:

The more I practice this discipline, the more I appreciate the strength of silence. The less I become skeptical and judgmental, the more I learn to accept the things I didn't like about others, and the more I accept them as uniquely created in the image of God. The less I talk, the fuller are words spoken at an appropriate time. The more I value others, the more I serve them in small ways, and the more I enjoy and celebrate my life. The more I celebrate, the more I realize that God has been giving me wonderful things in my life, and the less I worry about my future. I will accept and enjoy what God is continuously giving to me. I think I am beginning to really enjoy God.<sup>4</sup>

Experiencing God through the practice of connecting with Him via this discipline brings rich rewards.

### **Planning for Fullness of Life**

Our discussion so far has been more illustrative than expository. Solitude and silence are absolutely basic in our responsibility to soul care. But they also open before us the whole area of *disciplines* for the spiritual life. It is vital for us to keep before us that there are tried and true ways we can pursue toward abundant life in Christ. These ways are often referred to as “spiritual disciplines.”<sup>5</sup> We can and must incorporate these into our lives as completely reliable ways of personal soul care. There is no substitute for this.

A person could make a long list of such disciplines, drawing on the history of Christ's people. The list would certainly include fasting, which when rightly practiced has incredible power for the transformation of character and for ministry. On this list would also be such practices as frugality (*simplicity*), service, celebration, prayer (as a discipline of *surrender*), journaling, fellowship, accountability relationships, submission, confession, and many others.

There is no such thing as a complete list of the disciplines. Any activity that is in our power and enables us to achieve by grace what we cannot achieve by direct effort is a discipline of the spiritual life.<sup>6</sup>

As we seek to know Christ by incorporating appropriate disciplines into our lives, we must keep in mind that they are not ways of earning merit. They also are not paths of suffering or self-torment. They are not heroic. They are not righteousness, but they are wisdom.

Once we understand that grace is not opposed to effort (action)—though it is opposed to earning (attitude)—the way is open for us to “work out” all that is involved in our salvation, not only “with fear and trembling” but also with the calm assurance that it is God who is at work in us to accomplish all of His goodwill (see Philippians 2:12-13, NASB).

When we have settled into a life of sensible disciplines with our ever-present Teacher, then Peter's admonition (2 Peter 1:5-7) to add virtue to our faith, knowledge or understanding to our virtue, self-control to our knowledge, patience to our self-control, godliness to our patience, brotherly kindness to our godliness, and divine love (agape) to our brotherly kindness will prove to be a sensible plan for life. God will use this course of action to help others through our ministries as well.

“As long as you practice these things,” Peter continues (v. 10, NASB), “you will never stumble.” In our walk with God in Christ there will be provided to us, from “His riches in glory” (see Philippians 4:19, NASB), sweetness and strength of character, profundity of insight and understanding, and abundance of power to manifest the glory of God in life and in ministry—no matter the circumstances! And “entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you” (2 Peter 1: 11).

### **Notes**

1. For development of this point see my *Renovation of the Heart*, especially chapter 2 (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002).
2. For some illustrations of how this works, see Frank Laubach, “Letters of a Modern Mystic” and “Game with Minutes,” in *Frank C. Laubach: Man of Prayer* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Laubach Literacy International, “New Readers Press,” 1990).
3. Thomas Watson, *All Things for Good* (1663; reprint, Carlisle, Penn.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1986), 74.
4. Quoted from Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 165.

5. For further discussion see Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), as well as his *Streams of Living Water* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998). See also Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.
6. See Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, as well as Chapter 9 of my *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, for ways of listing and classifying many of the disciplines and for discussions of any particular ones.

\* **Dallas Albert Willard** was an American philosopher, professor, speaker and author, known for his writings on Spiritual Formation.

### **Reference**

Willard, D. (2002). Personal Soul Care. In *The Pastor's Guide to Effective Ministry*. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City. Retrieved from <https://dwillard.org/articles/personal-soul-care>