

Spiritual Disciplines for Lent

Week 1 (gleaned from John Ortberg's *The Life You've Always Wanted*)

Why the need for spiritual disciplines?

What have you been taught about Spiritual disciplines?

1) We are broken.

Bible's big story is a love story: boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl back, happily ever after.

Creation, fall, redemption (rest of the Bible), eternal life with God.

What happened to Adam and Eve has happened to us.

I find sin alive in me.

I try to not sin, but still do.

I want more—I want to change. I want to become more like Christ.

What is your experience of trying to change? Have there been things that you've tried to give up, but haven't been able to give up? Are there some examples you would be willing to share?

Bible says there is more.

2) We are to change

OT law is given to show Israel how to live. That means there is an expectation of change. Laws given because they are needed---force people to change.

It was given to everyone in Israel.

It was a civil law, not just a religious guide. So it focuses mostly on behavior, not heart.

NT: See that as Jesus begins ministry: "Repent for the Kingdom of God has come near."

Repent: change is possible.

Most Christians don't think about changing:

Hank's story (from Ortberg)

Do you know people like Hank? Have you ever been Hank?

The danger of pseudo change: outward behavior rather than inward change.

What are examples of pseudo change that you have seen?

Example of change: Mabel [read Mabel's story, Ortberg, pp. 22-25]

Change isn't always recognized:

as you grow in holiness, you also see sin more clearly.

3) Spiritual disciplines are the way we change.

How do people change?

Ancient people knew what we forget: discipline.

READ Dt. 6:1-9 (Israel needed to learn God's word, memorize)

READ Mt. 6:1-2, 5, 16 (These are disciplines Jews practiced)

READ Mk. 1:35 (Jesus praying)

READ Mt. 4:1-11 (Jesus knows the Bible)

Not magic or just a religious experience.

Most common word for Christian: disciple.

What do you think the word 'disciple' means?

What discipline means in other areas

Woman comes up to musician after her concert and says, "I'd give my life to play like you play." The musician responded, "I did."

Baseball players—imitate great players. Does it work? No. You have to live like the player—work out, practice, study the game to really be like the great player.

Where have you seen discipline work in your life or the life of others? When does discipline not work?

Surrender—the secret to success. Practicing surrender. READ Lk. 9:23-24.

What might surrender look like in a person's life?

4) Spiritual Disciplines (from Foster)

Inward Disciplines:

Meditation

Prayer

Fasting

Study

Outward Disciplines:

Simplicity

Solitude

Service

Submission

Corporate Disciplines:

Confession

Worship

Guidance

Celebration

Next week:

How to grow through spiritual disciplines

Training vs. trying

I fall short. I am broken. But there is hope for change.
The goal of the Christian life is to change and become like Christ.

Me as 18 year old: In Men's Breakfast Bible Study. I remember hoping that I would be more advanced when I was the age of some of the guys in the men's Bible study. I'm not sure I am.

I have grown, but what has really happened is that as I have grown spiritually, I have also seen more that needs to change. One Bible teacher said, "As you grow as a Christian, you may not feel like you are growing because God is revealing more about yourself as you grow." He means that as we deal with one sin in our lives, God reveals other sins that we still have.

I have grown, but there is still much for me to change and grow.