

Friday

Read Romans 12:1-2. We studied these verses last week too, because they are such a great summary of the Christian life. Why do you think it's important that Paul says "in view of God's mercy"? If I do not always hold God's mercy to me in view, how can my "offering myself" to Him go off base?

- It turns into a legalistic, guilt-motivated commitment
- I wonder if I am "offering enough" of myself to earn God's mercy
- I can think of myself as better than others
- My faith turns from a response to God's love into an attempt to earn God's love
- Other: _____

How have you experienced any of these in your life? What steps can you take to ensure that future "spiritual disciplines" in your life do not turn into dry legalism?

Thank God for His mercies to you; list a few of them in a prayer of thanksgiving!

Saturday

This weekend we are specifically introducing the community at TLC to The Hope Experience. Please pray that the goals of spiritual growth and outreach will be embraced, and that God would bless our commitment by making this an effective and fruitful season. Thank you!

LAUNCH!

What Am I Aiming At?

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"So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity... Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand **what the Lord wants you to do.**"
Ephesians 5:15-17 (NLT)

3 Basic Questions

1. What does God want? _____

"Give yourselves **completely** to God since you have been given new life. And use your **whole body** as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God." *Romans 6:13 (NLT)*

"The only thing Christianity cannot be is moderately important." C. S. Lewis

"No one can serve **two masters**. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." *Matthew 6:24 (NIV)*

"Seek **first** his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." *Matthew 6:33 (NIV)*

2. What does it take? _____

"... discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." *1 Timothy 4:7 (NASB)*

"Whoever practices discipline is on the way to life." *Proverbs 10:17 (GW)*

Another word for discipline: _____

"Spend your time and energy in the exercise of keeping spiritually fit." *1 Timothy 4:7b (LB)*

"Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress..." *Hebrews 12:1b (NLT)* See Luke 10:40-42

3. Why should I do it? _____

"He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." *2 Corinthians 5:15 (NIV)*

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, **in view of God's mercy**, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." *Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)*

Transformed = Greek metamorphoo, meaning:

"To _____ into another _____."

"We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory..." *2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)*

The end result: _____

Daily Meditations

Monday

Review the message notes. What is the most challenging aspect of the message for you?

What would you say the primary aims of your life are right now?

Read Matthew 6:24-33. In verse 33, what does Jesus want the primary aim of your life to be?

How would your life change if this became true of you?

Pray that God will help you know how to focus your life on His goals for you.

Tuesday

Read 1 Timothy 4:7 and Hebrews 12:1-2. What are the biggest “weights” and “sins” holding you back spiritually?

What role do you think personal discipline plays in overcoming these things?

What would you like to develop better as a discipline in your life?

- Being more hopeful and joyful in my attitude
- Connecting with supportive friends
- Spending a relaxing daily quiet time with God
- Focusing my mind on godly, peaceful things
- Memorizing key Bible verses
- Doing good for neighbors and community on a regular, effective basis
- Using my gifts to encourage others in a fun and effective way
- Living my life with more purpose
- Attending worship services more consistently

(By the way, the Hope Experience, beginning in 2 weeks, is designed to enhance all of the above!) Why do you think spiritual disciplines are hard for people?

Pray that God helps you and all of us at TLC learn to practice self-discipline in a joyful and non-legalistic way. Pray that The Hope Experience produces a community of faith more in tune with God's will!

Wednesday

Read Luke 10:38-42. Martha seemed like a disciplined, busy person; she certainly was not lazy! Do you relate? How does Christ's answer to Martha relate to your life and your priorities?

Check the statement(s) that express your discipline level:

- If I'm honest, I'm a little lazy
- I'm not really lazy, but like Martha I do lots of stuff but I leave out important things
- I am very disciplined in certain areas but not enough spiritually
- I struggle with the idea of discipline because it seems legalistic to me
- I am very disciplined in my spiritual life
- I am disciplined in certain spiritual areas that are quantifiable, but not in relationships: loving others, encouraging others, etc.
- Other: _____

How can you become a little more like Martha's sister Mary in practical ways?

Please pray that in the midst of our busy schedules, our church produces disciples like Mary who loved to sit at the feet of Christ.

Thursday

Sometimes, in the name of “discipline”, people become legalistic. Read Matthew 23:1-28. How would you define the problem with the Pharisee's spirituality?

How do you think this kind of legalism in the name of spiritual discipline can be avoided?

- View fellowship and loving others as important disciplines too
- Schedule time to engage in ministries of compassion and encouragement
- Hang around with people who are role models in the areas of warmth, love, hospitality, etc. and learn from them
- Other ideas: _____

Ask God to help produce in us a community that is disciplined spiritually, including in the areas of love and compassion.



Memory Verse

“Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.”

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NIV)