

“PRACTICES FOR THE WAY”

Talmidim: disciple, apprentice

“Spiritual formation in the Christian tradition is a process of increasingly being possessed and permeated by the character traits of Jesus as we walk in the easy yoke of discipleship with Jesus our teacher.” — Dallas Willard

“Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”

1 Timothy 4:7-8

Practices For the Way—Why?

We cannot live the Kingdom of God and leave our way of life untouched.

“When a habit emerges, the brain stops fully participating in decision making. It stops working so hard, or diverts focus to other tasks. So unless you deliberately fight a habit—unless you find new routines—the pattern will unfold automatically.” — Charles Duhigg, *The Power of Habit*

How do we change what we love? Practice. Because the things we do, do something to us.

Practices For the Way—What?

Spiritual Practices: any activity engaged by direct effort that eventually enables a person to do something they currently cannot do by direct effort.

“The disciplines are activities of the mind and body purposefully undertaken, to bring our personality and total being into effective cooperation with the divine order. They enable us more and more to live in a power that is, strictly speaking, beyond us, deriving from the spiritual realm itself, as we yield ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God,’ as Romans 6:13 puts it.” — Dallas Willard

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

— John 15:4

Practices For the Way—How?

1. Practicing the way of Jesus takes balance and nuance.
2. Practicing the way of Jesus takes into account your personality.
3. Practicing the way of Jesus acknowledges seasons of life.
4. Practicing the way of Jesus focuses on the moment.
5. Practicing the way of Jesus embraces hard work.
6. Practicing the way of Jesus embraces repetition.

Discussion Questions:

1. What's something you have put effort into improving? How much did practice play apart in your improvement?
2. Are there any spiritual practices you have experience in engaging with? Have they been helpful?
3. If our response to the Gospel is about changing our lives instead of only belief, what aspects of your life do you find the hardest to give over to God? 