



## The Disciplined Worship Leader

Competency: Begin to incorporate essential spiritual and technical disciplines into the normal rhythms of the artist's life.

Assignments:

1. Read 1 Timothy 4:6–10 and Luke 6:12–16 and answer the questions.
2. Read the article *The Disciplines of the Artist* and answer the questions.
3. Choose a specific location for solitude, prayer, and Bible study that you will use for the next week. Consider using it long-term.
4. Start or continue using a prayer journal every day for the next 21 days. Each day pray through four themes to stay focused: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Intercession.
5. Begin to B.L.E.S.S. someone in your neighborhood.
6. Write out your personal story on a single page. Practice telling it in 1–2 minutes.
7. Try at least two new foods this week that you've never tried. Write them below and describe the taste.

a.

b.

Read 1 Timothy 4:6–10 and Luke 6:12–16

1. What challenged you most from the passages?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How spiritually disciplined are you? Be specific. Hint: Ask your spouse or a close friend.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. In what areas of spiritual training do you need improvement?



4. What was Jesus' model and pattern of prayer?

5. What challenged you from Jesus' model?

## *THE DISCIPLINES OF THE ARTIST*

When it comes to the disciplines of a worship artist, the list could be quite extensive. Here we will hone in on just a few of the essentials. And we will place them in two categories: 1) spiritual disciplines, and 2) technical disciplines.

### **SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

Spiritual disciplines have received special attention in recent years under the writings of spiritual leaders like Dallas Willard, Donald Whitney, and others. Each of these men include a variety of disciplines in their list, but there are four that top each list and are found extensively throughout Scripture: **1) Scripture Intake, 2) Prayer, 3) Worship, and 4) Gospel Witness.**

Before we look at these briefly, we should note that if the disciplines become an end in themselves, then all we've done is create another checklist of religious duties, similar to the behavior of the Pharisees of Jesus' day. However, if we allow the disciplines to become a vehicle for intimacy with Jesus, then they serve the purpose for which God intended.

1 Timothy 4:7 says, "Discipline yourselves for the purpose of godliness." The reality is, it takes hard work to achieve spiritual growth. You don't wake up one day to find that you're spiritually mature any more than you would wake up to find that you suddenly have six pack abs. It takes discipline, focus, and intentionality. Dallas Willard reminds us, "Grace is opposed to effort, not to earning."<sup>1</sup> In other words, while we can't earn grace through religious performance—like the spiritual disciplines—neither should we

---

<sup>1</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life*



stand by and passively wait for growth to happen. Growth in grace takes effort, but we certainly don't earn it. That is the tension we must hold in tandem. Now, let's examine the four main spiritual disciplines briefly.

## 1. Scripture Intake

Scripture intake is perhaps the most important discipline because everything else builds upon it. God's Word reveals to us everything we know to be true about God. Whatever God has intended man to know about Him, He has revealed through His Word. So, if we want to know who God is, how He works, and what He expects from us, we must know His Word.

However, knowing the Word of God, as important as it is, must never devolve into simply attaining doctrinal knowledge. In *Knowing God*, John Stott warns against this danger. He says, "If you look at Psalm 119 (vv. 1–2, 5), you will see that the psalmist's concern to get knowledge about God was not a theoretical but a practical concern. His supreme desire was to know and enjoy God himself, and he valued knowledge about God simply as a means to that end."<sup>2</sup> As worship artists, knowing the Word of God must always be motivated by a heart that longs to know God first and foremost.

## 2. Prayer

It's an amazing journey to read through the gospels with your eye on how Jesus interacted with his Father. Try it sometime. Take 3 months and work through the gospels noting how frequent Jesus got alone with his Father. Not only that, but notice how He got away in solitude, away from the crowds.

Here are just a few examples: 1) Matt 14:15 – "he withdrew from them in a boat to a desolate place by himself..." 2) Luke 5:16 – "But Jesus withdrew to a desolate place to pray." 3) Mark 1:35 – "And rising very early in the morning while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place and there he prayed." 4) Luke 6:12 – prior to choosing the 12 disciples – "In these days, he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God." 5) Hebrews 5:7 – "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence."

The list could go on and on, but we will stop there. You get the point. If Jesus, the Son of God, God in flesh, needed to spend time with His Father in prayer and solitude, how much more do we, frail human weaklings, need daily intimate time with the Father?

---

<sup>2</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 22.



Donald Whitney says, “One of the main reasons for a lack of godliness is prayerlessness.”<sup>3</sup> Ouch. If you and I, as worship artists, are going to become like Christ and do the hard work of disciplining ourselves for godliness, prayer is a non-negotiable.

### 3. Worship

At Seven Marks, we define worship as “our response to God’s revelation.” For us as worship artists, if we’re not careful we may think we have cornered the market on understanding what worship is. Jesus clearly set up His expectations for worship in John 4 when He encountered the Samaritan woman. He said, “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” The kind of worship Jesus is looking for is the kind that balances spirit and truth. A. W. Tozer said, “It must be by the Holy Spirit and truth. We cannot worship in the spirit alone, for the spirit without truth is helpless. We cannot worship in truth alone, for that would be theology without fire.”<sup>4</sup>

The context for worship, from a biblical point of view, is both **corporate** (Hebrews 10:25, 1 Cor. 14) and **private** (Luke 5:16). I often say it, but it bears repeating. The worship that happens on a Sunday morning must come from an overflow of a heart well-cultivated in worship all week long. Period. Sunday morning comprises a mere .6% of your week. If that is the only time you spend in worship and adoration of a holy God, that is a problem. As worship artists responsible for leading a congregation of people, we must cultivate a heart of worship and a lifestyle of worship (Romans 12:1) throughout the week.

### 4. Gospel Witness

One of the tools we introduced a few years ago at Seven Marks for sharing our faith is B.L.E.S.S. Watch how Dave Ferguson describes the process of B.L.E.S.S.

“From the very beginning, God’s way of reaching and restoring the world has always been through what I would call a blessing strategy...how do we in a very practical way that’s theologically grounded explain to people how they could bless people in places they are incarnating?”

We came up with this...

- B- Begin with prayer. We want you to ask, ‘God how do you want me to bless the people in the places you’ve sent me to?’
- L- Listen. Don’t talk, but listen to people, their struggles, their pains, in the places God sent you.

---

<sup>3</sup> Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 66.

<sup>4</sup> A. W. Tozer, *Whatever Happened to Worship?*



- E- Eat. You can't just check this off. It's not quick. You have to have a meal with people or a cup of coffee. It builds relationships.
- S- Serve. If you listen with people and you eat with people they will tell you how to love them and you'll know how to serve them.
- S- Story. When the time is right, now we talk and we share the story of how Jesus changed our life."<sup>5</sup>

The final "S" is crucial. We MUST eventually open up our mouths and share. If we fail to share, we have failed to give the good news that alone can save. Jeff Vanderstelt, one of the missional church gurus we have studied a lot at Seven Marks, says this, "If you say you're on mission and you never talk about Jesus, you're on somebody else's mission."<sup>6</sup> Bam! It doesn't get much clearer than that. We can live "missionally" all day long, but if it never leads to a point of sharing Jesus, we've missed the point.

#### WRITE & SHARE YOUR STORY

1. On a single sheet of paper, write your story with three parts: 1) Your life before Jesus, 2) How you met Jesus, and 3) Your life since Jesus.
2. Try to remove or avoid religious vocabulary that your non-Christian friend might have trouble understanding.
3. Remember to keep your story short, no more than 1-2 minutes in length.
4. Now, practice three times, reading your story out loud. Then, close your eyes and recite your story from memory.
5. Ask three Christian friends to listen to your story. Invite them to give you feedback on how to improve. See if you can do it better each time.

#### Questions:

1. What areas of spiritual discipline do you need to grow in?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. List 3 specific action steps you will take to pursue spiritual technical growth?

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.vergenetwork.org/2012/12/27/five-ways-to-bless-your-neighbors-dave-ferguson/>

<sup>6</sup> Jeff Vanderstelt, "Speak the Gospel," Verge Conference 2014.