

“TRAIN YOURSELF FOR GODLINESS” PRACTICING THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Session One - Foundational Assumptions

Introductory Comments -

1. Christian spirituality is the pursuit of godliness.

“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.” I Timothy 4:7-8

To what dimension of human being is this primarily addressed?

A connection with Christian devotion – godliness is Christian character that springs from devotion to God.

The *formed* life -

So, Christian spirituality is the pursuit of godliness and success in that pursuit is something called sanctification.

2. Just as there is no self-justification, there is also no self-sanctification.

3. The pursuit of godliness requires discipline.

➤ Perseverance

➤ Organization – “They [the puritans] lived by ‘method’ (we would say, by a rule of life), planning and proportioning their time with care, not so much to keep bad things out as to make sure that they got all good and important things in.” J.I. Packer in *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*.

➤ Intentionality – (cf. excerpt from William Law)

4. Our role in sanctification must always be motivated by grace.

5. The spiritual disciplines are a means of sanctifying grace.

Always remember and never forget that the disciplines are tied to our sanctification, not our justification!

How is it that the disciplines are a “means of grace”?

6. The Word of God is effective in sanctification.

The unique role of the Word of God in the sanctification of the believer –

“It is not many books or much reading that makes men learned; but it is good things, however little of them, read often, that make men learned in the Scriptures and makes them godly too. Indeed the writings of all the Holy Fathers should be read only for a time, in order that through them we may be led to the Holy Scriptures.” Martin Luther from his *Letter to the Christian Nobility*

Therefore, we need both a solid theology and a solid practice of the Word.

- 7. In your pursuit of godliness, you will always wrestle with yourself as a rival to God. There will be an ongoing temptation to “do” your spiritual life to be seen by men.**

A word of encouragement –

The ultimate goal –