

# Embody



## Essentials – Seek God Daily.

### ICEBREAKER

What is something you have done in your life that required you to practice intentionally and consistently? Perhaps a sport like gymnastics or basketball, or a speech you delivered. Perhaps a skill you acquired, like woodworking.

### INTRODUCTION

Just like the situations above that require practice and training in order to excel, spiritual practices become the training we need in order to grow in our spiritual maturity. Often referred to as “disciplines,” the very word can sound off-putting. Yet, from its beginning, the Church linked the desire for a deeper life with God to intentional practices that helped people to be spiritually formed in the image of Christ. These intentional practices are fueled by the desire to know and love God. They help us to partner with God so that we can embody the hope of Jesus in our everyday lives.

**Eph. 4:22** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23** to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24** and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (NIV)

What does “put on the new self, created to be like God” mean? What does that “new self” look like?

### INTO GOD’S WORD

**Read Matthew 11:28-30 in The Message.** What appeals to you about that passage? What specific words draw you in and make you thirsty for what God is offering?

**Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8.** What’s the value of exercise and bodily discipline? How does exercising the body help us to understand what it means to train ourselves to be godly? How do we exercise our spirit/soul for godliness?

**Read Ephesians 4:2.** How would you describe the virtue Paul calls us to possess? What would it look like to train yourself to become the kind of person who demonstrates this virtue as a habit from the heart?

**An Analogy:** Someone who wants to be a great piano player gets a teacher to show her the way. She starts by doing simple, small things, such as learning scales and practicing them every day. She interacts with her teacher over and over, and she practices each new skill as she goes along. Over the course of years, she is transformed into someone who is like her teacher—someone who can play the piano, which was her goal all along. But she didn't get there by simply saying, "I want to play the piano. God, turn me into a piano player." Nor did she get there by simply trying really hard to be a piano player. Rather than just wishing or trying to be a piano player, she trained to become one. She understood that there is a way to become a piano player, and she followed a path to become what she wanted to be. The same is true in our spiritual lives. We train ourselves toward godliness through daily spiritual practices to be the godly person God calls us to be.

**Read Acts 2:42.** What spiritual practices do you find in this description of daily life in the early church?

### A P P L I C A T I O N

#### Common Spiritual Practices

- Scripture- reading and memorizing God's Word so that it "dwells in you richly" (Colossians 3:16).
- Prayer- a life of regular, meaningful, honest conversation with God.
- Soulcare Time- a daily practice of getting alone with God for some period of time to read the Bible, reflect, and pray.
- Journaling- recording and reflecting on the hopes, fears, longings, lessons, and prayers of our heart.
- Confession- the process of admitting and surrendering to God our weaknesses, faults, willful disobedience, and sin.
- Sabbath- a set apart time or day each week for rest, enjoyment, worship, and prayer with and among people you love.

## WEEK 2 – SEEK GOD DAILY

There are many more spiritual practices than those listed above. As you become comfortable with these, you can begin to explore other spiritual practices that train your heart for godliness and bring you closer to God.

**Discussion:** What would it look like for you to incorporate one of these Dailies into your life over the next week? A practice that you do not currently experience as a daily habit. What changes might you need to make? Are you willing to commit?

### DAILY THIS WEEK (Choose one)

As you ponder what it might mean to seek God each day, consider these examples as ways to jumpstart your own spiritual practices this week:

- Spend 10 minutes each day opening your heart to talk to God about the issues most dominating your thoughts or emotions.
- Take pictures of those you serve (with their permission) and pray for them daily. As appropriate, weep for them, rejoice over them (Romans 12:15), and empathize with them.
- Do a good deed each day without letting anyone find out (Matthew 6:3). Then journal about how it feels. Does it feel good because you've done something "undercover"? Does it feel empty because the person doesn't even know how much you loved them in order to do it? Does it feel freeing because you are trusting God to do his good work and you aren't in the middle of it?
- Write Matthew 11:28-30 on a small card and memorize it each day this week as you jog or walk, letting Jesus' words linger in your mind as you reflect on them.
- Think forward to a conversation you'll be having today (lunch with a friend, a break at work, talking to a spouse or sibling). Purpose that for five minutes you will be "slow to speak and quick to listen." You will listen carefully to that person's words without jumping ahead mentally to what you want to say next or what your opinion is of what they're saying. Connect with the heart and emotion behind their words.

## WEEK 2 – SEEK GOD DAILY

### P R A Y E R

*Our Savior and Lord Jesus, thank you that you desire for me to grow in godliness and obedience. And, you have given me the means to partner with you through training my heart in godliness. Help me to begin growing in godliness and obedience through daily spiritual practices. Grant me courage and intentionality to use each day to become more like you. I know you will bless me in this because it will bring you glory. Your glory is my heart's desire as I practice the Dailies. Amen.*

### S U G G E S T E D   R E S O U R C E S

Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, Donald S. Whitney  
NavPress, 2014

The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People, John Ortberg  
Zondervan, 2009

Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us, Adele Ahlberg Calhoun  
Publisher: IVP Books, 2009

Habits for Our Spiritual Growth  
<https://www.moodypublishers.com/habits-for-our-spiritual-growth/>  
Moody Publishers, 2024

If you have questions or would like to talk to a Pastor on this subject, please contact your Campus Pastor.