

Love Does Starts with Loving God: Three Keys to a Closer Relationship with God

Greg Wendschlag July 30, 2017

Matthew 6:1-24

1. Practice the essential **disciplines**.

"When you (give, pray, fast)..."

Spiritual discipline is not the hallmark of an extraordinary Christian life but the **daily habit** of the **normal** Christian life.

Some habits to practice that will draw you closer to God:

(Recommended reading: "Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster)

- **Prayer**
- **Fellowship**
- **Fasting**
- **Giving**
- **Bible study**
- **Service**
- **Worship**
- **Solitude**

Love Does next step: The essential discipline I am most lacking in is _____ I will begin that practice this week.

"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 Tim. 4:8

2. Practice the essential disciplines because you **love God** not because you want to receive **praise from people**.

"Do not be like the hypocrites...but when you (give, pray and fast) do it in secret. Then your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you."

Motive Check list

1. Am I doing what I'm doing to please God alone?
2. How will I feel if no one thanks me for doing this?
3. How will I feel if no one notices that I did this?
4. Do I often feel underappreciated?
5. Am I content knowing God sees my actions and is pleased with me?

Love Does next step: I will show a kindness to someone this week but will do it in secret to avoid praise.

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Col. 3:17

3. Practice the essential disciplines with **heaven in mind**.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

How do I know what to value?

1. Can it be destroyed by some natural disaster?
2. Can it be stolen?
3. Will it deteriorate?
4. Can it be replaced?
5. Can I take it with me when I die?

Love Does next step: I will evaluate what currently view as a “treasure” to see if that should have such a hold on my heart.

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” 1 Tim. 6:10

GIC Starter Questions for This Week

1. Are there some spiritual disciplines that the church of today has lost? What are they and why?
2. Why is it so difficult to really “train” our spiritual life like we would our bodies?
3. How can we reconcile Jesus’ words to “let your light shine before men so they can see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” and His words in Mt. 6 about doing your righteous acts in secret?
4. How have you learned to keep your heart from being attached to “earthly” things?
5. What “real treasures” are the most precious to you?