

Training in a Place Called Grace

January 21-22, 2012 - Gary Post

I. Operation Halyard: Saved Not to Wait, but to Walk

II. Walking a “Worthy” Walk (Col.1:9-14)

A. The Command to Walk

B. The Problem with “Earned” Grace

C. The Solution: His Walk in Us (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 2:8-9)

D. The Secret (Col. 2:2-3,6,9-14)

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”
(Galatians 2:20)

“God makes it quite clear in His Word that He has only one answer to every human need—His Son, Jesus Christ. In all His dealings with us He works by taking *us* out of the way and substituting Christ in our place.” Watchman Nee, The Normal Christian Life

“There are those who have a life they never live. They have come to Christ and thanked Him only for what He did, but do not live in the power of who He is. Between the Jesus who “was” and the Jesus who “will be” they live in a spiritual vacuum, trying with no little zeal to live for Christ a life that only He can live in and through them, perpetually begging for what in Him they already have!”

Major W. Ian Thomas

III. Training Versus Trying

A. Car Wash Sanctification and Training for Godliness

“Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”
(I Tim. 4:7-8)

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work”.
(II Tim. 3:16-17 ESV)

B. “Training” Versus “Trying Hard”

IV. Spiritual Disciplines: Putting Ourselves in the Way of the Holy Spirit

A. “Spiritual Disciplines” Versus “Religious Task Lists”

“Spiritual Disciplines are activities within our power that we engage in to allow God to accomplish indirectly in us what we cannot accomplish by our own direct effort.” Dallas Willard

“The life that is pleasing to God is not a series of religious duties. We have only one thing to do, namely, to experience a life of relationship and intimacy with God...By themselves, the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God’s means of grace. The inner righteousness we seek is not something that is poured on our heads. God has ordained the Disciplines of the spiritual life as the means by which we place ourselves where he can bless us.”

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

B. Three Disciplines to Position You for Growth in Your Life With God

1. Solitude and Silence: Making Space to Hear the Holy Spirit

“Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)

“In contemporary society our Adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry and crowds. If he can keep us engaged in “muchness” and “manyness,” he will rest satisfied.”

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

“And rising very early the next morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place, and there He prayed.” (Mark 1:32-35 ESV)

“In drawing aside...we seek to rid ourselves of the corrosion of soul that accrues from constant interaction with others and the world around us. In this place of quiet communion, we discover again that we do have souls, that we indeed have inner beings to be nurtured. Then we begin to experience again the presence of God in the inner sanctuary, speaking to and interacting with us. We understand anew that God will not compete for our attention. We must arrange time for our communion with Him as we draw aside in solitude and silence.”

Dallas Willard, The Great

Omission

2. Meditating on the Word of God for Transformation

“Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God’s voice and obey His word.”

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

“On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.” (Psalm 145:5 ESV)

“But his delight is in the law [or instruction] of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” (Psalm 1:2)

“In meditation we are growing into what Thomas a Kempis calls ‘a familiar friendship with Jesus.’ We are sinking down into the light and life of Christ and becoming comfortable in that posture. The perpetual presence of the Lord...moves from a theological dogma into a radiant reality. “He walks with me and He talks with me” ceases to be a pious jargon and instead becomes a straightforward description of daily life.”

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

3. Lectio Divina: The Ancient Christian Practice of Meditation

“Lectio Divina” means simply “spiritual reading” and is an ancient method of reading and meditating on Scripture that has been used by Christians down through the ages.

The purpose here is to look deeply and reflectively on a passage to hear God speak to us through His Holy Spirit so we can apply His truth to our daily lives in a practical way.

Lectio Divina includes four elements:

- **Listening:** Pray briefly that God would open our heart to understand His truth and that He would reveal Himself to us as we read. Read through the verse(s) a few times slowly and expectantly to see if there is anything that God causes to “jump out at us” or “highlights” for our attention.
- **Reflecting:** Reflect on what we are “hearing” from God, “listening” not only with our minds, but with our “heart.” Immerse ourselves in meditation on it expectantly. God’s speaking can come in the form of a subtle impression in our mind, a particular word or phrase or even an image. What is it that God desires for you to see in this passage as you meditate on it (turn it over in your mind)?

- **Praying:** Reflection naturally spills over to praying in response to what we have heard from God. Our prayer can be one of thanks for what He has revealed to us, of confession for a shortcoming He has pointed out, of praise for one of God’s attributes He has revealed to us.
- **Obeying:** Contemplating and “praying back to God” what we will carry forward into our lives. How will we live differently as a result of what we have “heard” from God? This is a good place to “journal” a couple of lines as to the direction, encouragement or new insight into His character that God has given you as you commit it to Him in prayer.

4. Practice Meditation: Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight.” (or “direct your paths”)

V. A Life Lived in God’s Presence: The Fanny Crosby Story

Recommended Reading

Life With God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation, Richard Foster

Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth, Richard Foster

The Spirit of the Disciplines: How God Changes Lives, Dallas Willard

The Great Omission: Essential Teachings on Discipleship, Dallas Willard

The Life You Always Wanted: Sp. Disc. for Ordinary People, John Ortberg

Listening for God: How Ordinary People Can Hear God Speak, Marilyn Hontz

Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Exp. God’s Presence, Ruth Haley Barton

Practicing the Presence of God, Brother Lawrence

The Imitation of Christ, Thomas a Kempis

Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God, Henry Blackaby

Hearing God’s Voice, Henry and Richard Blackaby

Hearing God: Dev. a Conversational Relationship with God, Dallas Willard

The Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee

Live a Praying Life, Jacqueline Kennedy Dean