

Paradigm Discipleship

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The purpose of this resource is to provide some guidance for you as you encourage your disciple to develop a healthy, biblical, gospel centered perspective that will facilitate the discipline of simplicity of life, as well as the discipline of appropriately pursuing solitude.

We encourage you to do your own study, using this resource as a guide, to develop a learning experience for you and your disciple that will help you both move deeper in your understanding and experience of disciplining your lives as you follow Christ.

The Single-Minded Pursuit of Christ: **A Look at the Disciplines of Simplicity and Solitude**

Opening question: Read Psalm 86:11 together. What do you think it means to have an ‘undivided heart’?

*The goal of this question is just to get conversation going. Ask the question and **listen**, you might be surprised at what you learn about your disciple.

* It might be helpful to think about other ways we use the term ‘undivided’. For example: we often speak of having someone’s ‘undivided attention’, meaning that they singularly focused on one thing or person.

*As you discuss this with your disciple, make it a point to distinguish various areas of being ‘undivided’.
*i.e. Singularity of material possessions, of time and schedule, of life perspective, and so on...

Follow up question: What would an ‘undivided heart’ look like in your life? What are some things that keep you from having an ‘undivided heart’?

*Take some time on this question, and again, really **listen** to how your disciple answers this. It will tell you so much about their life and where they are at in relation to Jesus.

*It might be a good idea to make a list here. Sometimes a visual, of how many distractions or complications we have added to our lives, can help us see, more clearly, what changes need to be made and where to start.

Study Question: Read Hebrews 12:1-3. It is often obvious to us what ‘the sin that clings so closely’ is in our lives, but the author also talks about ‘weight’ what do you think the weight is? And how do we get rid of it?

*What extra weight are you carrying that you could do without?

* Talk about every area of life here, and examine it for extra weight. **1 Timothy 6:6-19** will be helpful for you to read ahead of time to help yourself and your disciple identify some of the common ‘extra weights’ that we give our attention to.

*What are some practical ways that you can get rid of some of the extra weight?

*Just because this study is focused on simplifying our lives and giving our ‘undivided’ attention to one thing, doesn’t mean that we don’t need to address sin. **Be bold** and ask your disciple what the ‘sin that clings so closely’ is in their life?

Quote: “You don’t have to know **a lot** of things in order to make a huge difference for the Lord, in the world, but you do need to know **one thing**, and be gripped by it, and let your life be saturated by it, and then be willing to live for it and die for it.” – John Piper

* Thinking about Hebrews 12:1-3, what seems to be the ‘one thing’ that we should know, and be gripped by, and let our life be saturated by, and be willing to live and die for?

* Hebrews 12:2-3 basically sum up the gospel. Affirm any answers that have to do with being singularly focused on, or having an ‘undivided heart’ toward the gospel.

Quote: “Simplicity is freedom. Duplicity is bondage. Simplicity brings joy and balance. Duplicity brings anxiety and fear.” -Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline

*Discuss how simplicity results in freedom when it comes to things like: time, finances & generosity, future plans, material possessions, etc.

* Are there specific areas of your life in which you desire to have more freedom?

Quote: “... simplicity is an *inward* reality that results in *outward* lifestyle. Both the inward and the outward aspects of simplicity are essential. We deceive ourselves if we believe we can possess the inward reality without its having a profound effect on how we live.” – Richard J. Foster, Celebration on Discipline

Transition Question: If your heart were ‘undivided’ how would that affect your schedule?

* Does your current schedule allow for time that can be spent alone without distractions?

Follow up question: When your schedule *does* allow for time in solitude, do you engage that time, or try to escape it?

* Do you ever spend time completely alone; no music, TV, other people, etc? (Just you, a bible, and a journal)

Study Question: Read Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, & Luke 6:12. Yes, Jesus is praying in all three of these passages, but what do you notice about the setting and context that he is in?

* There are several things that we could pull out of these texts, but for this study, help your disciple to focus on the way that Jesus intentionally sought out time in solitude.

*If we are modeling our lives after the life of Christ, what do these texts show that we should be modeling?

Study Question: Read Matthew 6:6. What does Jesus instruct his followers to do in this text?

* Is this challenging? Why?

Reflection Question: Why do you think that we have such a difficult time with the discipline of solitude?

* Brainstorm, with your disciple, practical things that you can both do to make the discipline of solitude more a part of your lives.

* It might be cool if each of you intentionally took a chunk of time in the next week to spend some time in solitude (no music, TV, or other people). Then you can share with each other what it was like, what was challenging about it, and how it was valuable.

Resources: Dallas Willard *The spirit of the disciplines*