

The background of the entire slide is a photograph of a person's silhouette climbing a dark, jagged rock face. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, reaching up with their right arm. The sky behind them is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is one of struggle and perseverance.

Discipline:

Part II

The choice
between what
you want now
and what you
want most...

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Penarth
5 Studies on the Inward Spiritual
Disciplines for small groups

A Lenten Study on the inward Spiritual Disciplines

The choice between what you want now
and what you want most

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A Study on the Outward Spiritual Disciplines

Preface

You might remember that in our study on the inward disciplines, we started by reading the very first paragraph in Richard Foster's book "Celebration of Discipline" which says:

"Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people." This is the second series looking at the disciplines with the sole purpose (or should that "Soul" purpose) of growing deeper in our relationship with Jesus. In Matthew 7: 24-27 Jesus speaks of the importance of firm foundations in our faith, saying that a person who hears His words and does not act on them is like a man who builds his house on the sand, which collapses easily in the storms of life. The disciplines are NOT your relationship with Jesus NOR are they in themselves maturity in the faith. They ARE however, the foundations that we can set down, on which to build a deep and mature relationship with the living God. I described them in one of the sermons in the last series as the railway sleepers on which the tracks of our spiritual life run. They in themselves do not get us to heaven or make us Christian, but unlike the things we have so often built our faith upon like doctrines and denominations which are all open to change or challenge, the disciplines underpin our relationship with Jesus, who is after all, the one we are supposed to be living our lives for.

Richard Foster says that each discipline frees us from something that would otherwise stand between us and Jesus. Some of the subjects in this particular series will be hard to accept because of the way society and life in the 21st century has shaped the way we think and act. We all expect these days to have certain possessions, we all aspire to better ourselves and these views may well be challenged, yet in the practice of these disciplines will come something so much better: liberty to be the people Jesus called us to be; liberty to be in relationship with Him without distraction, without restraint, without pride or fear of the consequence. Trystan Owain Hughes in his book "The Compassion Quest" quotes: "Faith is not belief in spite of the evidence, but a life in scorn of the consequences." The disciplines give us the freedom to live a Jesus lifestyle in scorn of what the world (that has rejected Jesus) considers consequences rather than rewards.

Foster. Richard, *Celebration of Discipline* (Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, London) 2008. P.1

Clarence Conrad quoted in Hughes. Trystan Owain, *The Compassion Quest* (SPCK, London) 2013.

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