



12 Journey Spiritual Disciplines

The trail to a higher life!

Discussion Guide for Lesson 1 – Study & Service

1. Nobody likes discipline. Yet it is essential to doing anything well. How does one's discipline impact the way one performs in sports or music? What happens when we try to play a tough game or a hard piece of music when we haven't practiced? How is that similar to our spiritual walk?
2. Read I Corinthians 9:24-27. To what does Paul compare the spiritual walk? What did Paul say he did to keep his body in check? How do the spiritual disciplines that are in lesson one help us to do this?
3. Jeff mentioned a key phrase: "I want to discipline myself so I can be fully free to God." What is the connection between freedom and discipline? When I am disciplined, how am I free to accomplish things that are impossible without it?
4. Read II Peter 2:1-3. The discipline of studying God's word can be compared to feeding the body. How does Bible study feed us spiritually? What did you think of the information on how we use our time? What things keep you from the discipline of Bible study?
5. Read II Timothy 3:16. What does Paul say about scripture? What are the ways that having scripture in your heart can impact how you live for Christ?
6. Review the 5 ways that Jeff said we could take in God's word. (He used the five fingers of his hand.) Which of those is easiest for you? Which is hardest? What would it take for you to develop a discipline of Bible study in your week?
7. The discipline of service is how we live out what we learn in God's word. Where could you engage in serving others in your world this week? At home? At school? At church?

START A JOURNEY HABIT...

Each week we will choose an activity that will help us to practice one of the Journey Disciplines in our life. This week, pick something that you could do each day this week to cultivate the habit of Bible study. Share your choice and then pray together that you can keep that commitment all week long. In addition, pray this prayer sometime this week: "Lord, Jesus, I would so appreciate it if you would bring me someone today whom I can serve."



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Discussion Guide for **Lesson 2** – Prayer & Fasting

1. If you had a phone and could call God anytime you wanted to, how often do you think you would use it? What kinds of things would you say to God? Why don't we think of prayer in that way?
2. Read Colossians 4:2. What does it mean to be "devoted" to prayer? When are the times you are most likely to pray? What motivates you to pray? What keeps you from praying?
3. What is the typical content of your prayers? In percentage, how much of your typical prayer is asking God for things? How much of it is thanking Him for things? How much of it is asking Him to bless others? How much of it is praising Him for who he is? What does this tell you about your prayer life?
4. When are times in your day when you have an opportunity to pray? What is the best time for you to pray? What would it take for you to have a regular time of prayer each day? What changes in your routine would you have to make to do that?
5. Read Matthew 6:9-13. What are the themes that Jesus teaches us to pray about? Is there any reason you can see for the order he chooses? Review ACTS method of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. How would it change your prayer life if you used a "pattern" for some of your prayers like this?
6. Fasting is the voluntary denial of an otherwise normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity. The Bible deals with fasting from food, but you could also apply it to others things: A need to fast from people, from media, from telephone or electronics. How can fasting help you see what controls you? What do you think would be hard to fast from for you?
7. Read Luke 4:1-3. Why do you think Jesus fasted? How can fasting and prayer go hand in hand? How do you think fasting would impact your prayer life?

START A JOURNEY HABIT...

This week, set aside five to ten minutes each day to practice quieting your heart as a prelude to intercessory prayer. Then spend your time praying for someone else. Try skipping a meal this week and using that time to pray. Whenever you think about being hungry, let it be a reminder to pray. Write down how the experience felt and plan to share it with the group next week.



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Discussion Guide for **Lesson 3** – Meditation & Confession

1. The purpose of meditation is to enable us to hear God more clearly. What are some of your first reactions to the idea of meditation? What is your background experience in this area?
2. Jeff talked about the basic difference between eastern meditation and Christian meditation. In Eastern meditation you are listening to your own heart. In Christian meditation you are focusing on God's word and God's will. Why is that difference important?
3. Read Psalm 119:97. What does David say he will meditate on? What motivated him to do that? Meditation requires quieting the spirit. What things make your life crowded? Do you have a desire to hear the Lord's voice in the midst of all the clutter? Where could you find quiet to meditate?
4. Try taking the next 5 minutes in silence after reading these words from poet Frederick W. Faber. Let them roll around in your mind and listen for the voice of God in your heart. Then share what you learn from the experience.

Only to sit and think of God,

Oh what a joy it is!

To think the thought, to breathe the Name

Earth has no higher bliss.

5. When you think of confession, what thoughts come to mind? Is it primarily negative or positive? Read I John 1:8-9. Why is confession so important to the Christian? What does recounting my mistakes to God do to my pride?
6. Read Psalm 32:3-5. How did David describe the time when he would not confess? How did he describe the freedom confession brings? Why is confession hard for us sometimes? List three ways that confession can bless your life? To what kind of person are you most likely to confess a sin? Why?
7. How do you respond when someone else confesses to you? Why is giving forgiveness as important as confessing?

START A JOURNEY HABIT...

This week, spend fifteen minutes in silence before God and invite Him to reveal anything within you that needs to be confessed. Pray a prayer of confession then select a verse of scripture to meditate on. After reading it three times, sit quietly and let the verse roll around in your mind for 5 minutes. Write down the things that God showed you through the time with Him.



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Discussion Guide for **Lesson 4** – Guidance & Submission

1. When going someplace you have never been, are you a “map” person or a “stop and ask” person? Why? Spiritual guidance can come in both forms? Which is more important to you?
2. What did Jeff use to illustrate the principle of guidance? In what way does a compass give guidance? What is our “spiritual compass”? Spiritual guidance comes about mainly through responding to God’s invitation to enter into friendship with Him so that we know and desire His ways. Why is an intimate relationship with God so important to being guided by him?
3. Read Proverbs 1:8-9. To what does the writer want us to listen? Why are the sources of guidance he mentions so important? What stories from the Bible can you think of that demonstrate this positively? Negatively? What are three blessings that come from listening to our parents’ guidance?
4. Jeff said that the spiritual disciplines of guidance and submission are connected. How are they connected? What happens when we get guidance but we are unwilling to submit? When are you most likely to ignore important advice? What can we do to keep from disobeying when God provides sound guidance?
5. Read Luke 9:23. What are the three steps to which Jesus calls his followers? Why is the first one so key? What are three areas in which you need to learn to say “no” to yourself? How does “taking up your cross” look in your world? How does being a follower demand that we submit to someone’s guidance?
6. Read Philippians 2:3. Submission means ignoring our pride. Paul describes this as “humility”. How does he coach us to live humble lives? How does the way we look at others impact our ability to submit to godly guidance?
7. Outside your family, to whom would you turn for godly guidance? What is an issue you need guidance on right now? What has kept you from seeking it?

START A JOURNEY HABIT...

This week, get with a spiritually mature person that you trust and share an issue in which you are seeking guidance. Pray together asking God to make his will clear. Let them ask you questions about the situation, but not to tell you what to do. Have them point you towards some scriptures that may help you. Commit to them that you will submit to God’s will in the matter... and then do so!



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Discussion Guide for **Lesson 5** – Simplicity & Solitude

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very simple and 10 being very complicated, how would you rate the simplicity of your life? Has it gotten more complicated or less so as you have grown? What happens to your walk with Jesus when your life gets more complicated?
2. How can our possessions complicate our lives? Read Mark 13:3-9 & 18-22. What story does Jesus tell? What was the seed? What did Jesus say was the thing that choked out the seed of truth? How do the things we own deceive us? What are three lies that wealth and stuff can tell us?
3. Jeff offered four ideas that can help us simplify our lives. (Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status. Develop a habit of giving things away. Learn to enjoy things without owning them. Develop a deeper appreciation for the creation.) Give an example of a place in your life where you could use each of those suggestions. Which of them would be the most difficult for you?
4. Read Mark 1:21-35. How would you describe this day of ministry that Jesus had? How would you feel at the end of a day like that? What does Jesus do the next morning? Why did he find this so important? How do the spiritual disciplines of solitude and simplicity impact one another?
5. How does being all alone effect you? Are you afraid of spending time alone? What would you say is the difference between loneliness and solitude? How does solitude draw us into the presence of God? How does Satan keep you from periods of solitude?
6. Respond to this sentence: *“You don’t have to go off to a mountain to be alone with God. We just need to take advantage of the “little solitudes” that fill our day.”*
7. If you could have a day to spend alone with God, where would you spend it and what would you do? Can you plan a day close to that? How might it help you?

START A JOURNEY HABIT...

This week, find some of the little solitudes in your day. Take a few minutes to slow down and get alone with God. Select three things that complicate your life and try your best to do without them for this next week. What changed because of your practice of the disciplines of solitude and simplicity?



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Discussion Guide for **Lesson 6** – Worship & Celebration

1. How would you define worship? What are three of the best worship experiences you have ever had? What made them so special? Where were there any similarities in them? How did your surroundings impact the power of the worship? How did those who were with you impact the worship?
2. Read John 4:23. What kind of worshippers does Jesus say are “true”? What do you think he means by “in spirit and in truth”? What is worship with truth but no spirit like? What is worship with spirit but no truth like?
3. Read Mark 12:29-30. With what aspects of ourselves does Jesus say we are to love God? Someone described worship as a love letter to God. How do we show our love for God in our worship? What does worshipping God with all our heart and soul emphasize? What do you think worshipping God with all our mind and strength would feel like? What holds you back from that kind of worship?
4. Jeff challenged us to “Worship Big.” If we think of worship as a gift to God, what would be the price you would have to pay in order to worship big? What would motivate you to worship big? What would keep you from worshipping big?
5. Read Luke 15:21-32. What is this story about? How does the father celebrate his son’s return? Who gets upset about this? Why does God call us to celebrate? How does a life without any celebration impact the way you can share your faith? What about a life marked by celebration?
6. “Excessive celebration can lead to sin.” Is that true? What are some ways that Satan can use a desire to celebrate to get us heading in the wrong direction spiritually? What can we do to keep our celebration pure and godly?
7. How are worship and celebration connected? If you were throwing a celebration party in God’s honor, who do you think he would want you to invite? With whom did Jesus celebrate? How could you celebrate God’s goodness each day?

START A JOURNEY HABIT...

This week, find a time to worship BIG! Join with some Christian friends and hold a “God is Good” celebration party. Write down on a giant sheet of paper some of the ways that God has blessed you. Have some goodies and let everyone there write down some blessings as well. Pray a prayer of thanks and celebration together to finish the event. See how it affects the rest of your week!