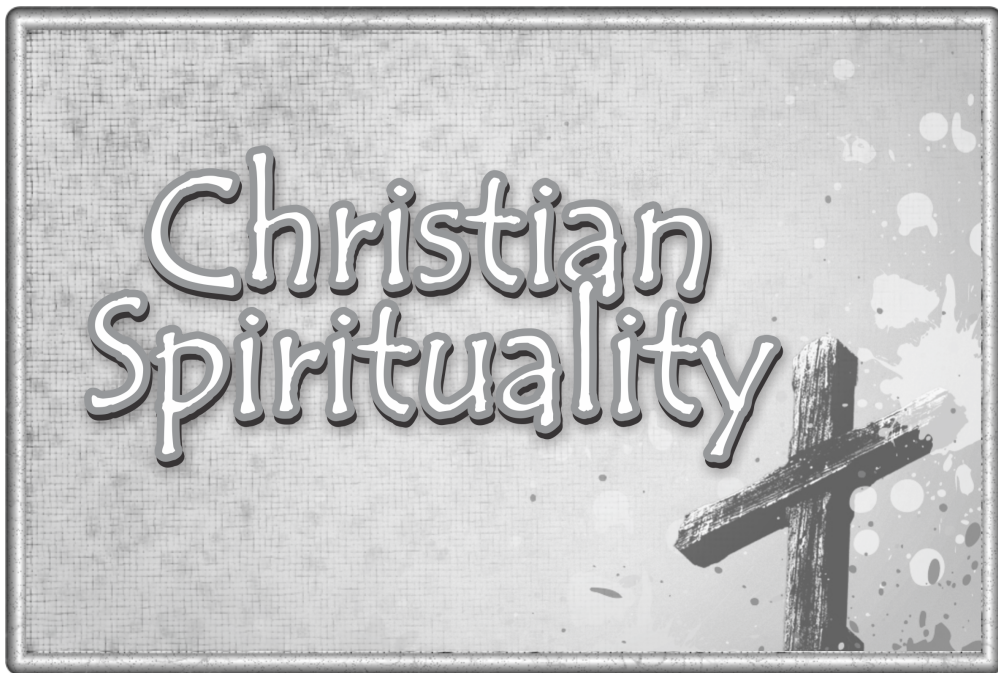


# Spiritual Disciplines:

What is Christian Spirituality?



## How to Experience Intimate Communion with God

By Dr Derek Morris  
(Used with permission, adapted and expanded by  
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# I. Introduction

## A. Method of Approach

The purpose of the next few modules is to help you in your journey toward experiencing intimate communion with God. The goal is not simply the conveying of information, but rather life change. These modules will explore the classic spiritual disciplines of the Christian faith and discover how they can help us to "set the Lord ever before us" (Psalm 16:8) and thus experience "fullness of joy in His presence" (Psalm 16:11).

These lessons include many practical elements in order to maximise your learning experience. Read all the Bible references in each section to get the most out of your learning experience.

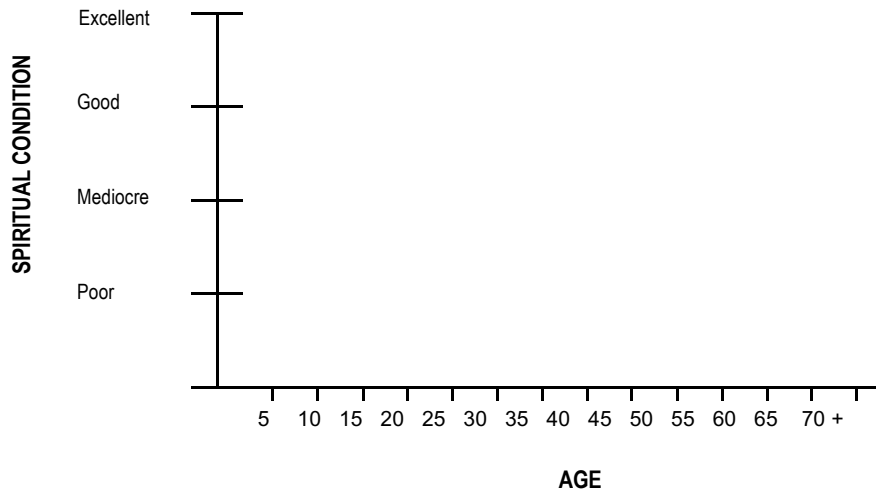
**Name of Learning Partner**

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## B. Reflection Upon my Spiritual Condition

1. Where am I now?

a. Draw a line graph showing your spiritual journey up to the present time.



b. Write a brief explanation of the graph, noting key events and experiences that have been a significant influence on your spiritual journey. These may be both positive and negative.

2. List factors that were a positive influence in past spiritual growth which might also help in the future. Share these with your learning partner.

3. Describe your spiritual goals for the next year. Be specific. Link these goals to your roles as employer, employee, scholar, parent, spouse, church leader, etc. Share these with your learning partner and ask him/her to hold you accountable to them.

## II. What is Christian Spirituality?

### A. Definition

With your learning partner develop a concise definition of Christian spirituality. Write it in the space below.

### B. Where Do We Begin?

1. Recognise your spiritual poverty. Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Isaiah 6:5.

**If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better.... There is help for us only in God.... We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are.<sup>1</sup>**

2. Accept the grace of God revealed through Christ, die to yourself and experience the new birth. John 3:16; Ephesians 2:1-10; Galatians 2:20.

**Nicodemus had come to the Lord thinking to enter into a discussion with Him, but Jesus laid bare the foundation principles of truth. He said to Nicodemus, "It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission. <sup>2</sup>**

**You cannot atone for your past sins, you cannot change your heart, and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ.<sup>3</sup>**

3. Receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38-39; John 1:12; Luke 11:13; John 14:15-17.

With your learning partner and discuss the following questions: Have you received the Holy Spirit since you first believed (Acts 19:2)? How do you know that you have received the Holy Spirit? Take notes below.

4. Open your life on a daily basis to a deepening relationship with God. 2 Peter 3:18; Jeremiah 29:11-14; Psalm 143:8.

### **III. The Importance of Discipline**

#### **A. The Problem of Human Resistance**

We know God loves us, and calls us to a joyful, intimate relationship with Himself. We know that's what we need. So why do we resist Him? Why is it that all too often we are undisciplined in our spiritual lives?

Discuss this issue with your learning partner. Take notes in the space below.

#### **B. The Crucial Decision of the Will**

Anything significant that happens in our lives related to spiritual things is God's work, and not ours. But God will not violate our free will. In the process of salvation, we must choose to accept His gracious gift. Similarly, in the process of spiritual growth, we must make a daily disciplined decision of the will to open our lives to God's transforming presence.

Notice the common theme of these passages of Scripture: Psalm 143:8; Psalm 16:8; Psalm 5:3.

We see a clear emphasis upon a disciplined decision. Spiritual vitality does not happen by accident. We cannot engineer it; but we can choose it. Without discipline we will surely fail.

#### **C. The Classic Spiritual Disciplines (Habits)**

Throughout the history of the people of God, certain key spiritual disciplines have been practised by godly men and women as a way of placing themselves before God so that He can transform them. Listed below are some of those spiritual disciplines:

Prayer, meditation on Scripture and nature, fasting, Scripture reading and study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, sacrifice and worship.

In this series we will examine the first four disciplines listed above and add a fifth, viz., Scripture memorization. Brace yourself for an exciting journey.

#### **IV. Endnotes**

1. White, *Steps to Christ*, pg 31.
2. White, *Desire of Ages*, pg 171.
3. *Ibid*, pg 51.

For a complete bibliography of this devotional series, see the last module, viz., **Spiritual Disciplines: Scripture Memorization**