

GIL STIEGLITZ



Spiritual  
Disciplines *of a*  
C.H.R.I.S.T.I.A.N.

*Confession • Holy Spirit • Repetition • Interaction*

*Service • Togetherness • Identification*

*Abstinence • Needs*

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Spiritual Disciplines  
of a  
C.H.R.I.S.T.I.A.N.

# Spiritual Disciplines of a CHRISTIAN

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The Spiritual Disciplines  
of a  
C.H.R.I.S.T.I.A.N.

Introduction

This book is dedicated to the  
*Twin Lakes Community Church*  
who as a people were willing  
to pursue God with their pastor

and

Farris Tarazi, Gary Basham and Jud Boies  
whom God used in various ways  
to prod, encourage, and pray for me  
to finish this manuscript.

The names of the individuals referred to in the book have been changed to protect them.

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# The Spiritual Disciplines of a CHRISTIAN

Every day we brush our teeth, shower, comb our hair, make our beds, read the paper or listen to the news, clean up our rooms, and change our clothing and undergarments. All of us have habits or disciplines that allow us to live productive lives and come into close, even intimate, fellowship with other people. Some of these disciplines are daily, some are weekly, and some are monthly and yearly. We have built these practices into our lives because they help us. We practice them so regularly that they become hidden and we forget that we do so many of them.

Similarly, we need to build spiritual disciplines into our lives in order to have rich and full Christian lives. Some of the spiritual disciplines are daily disciplines, some are weekly disciplines, and some are monthly and annual disciplines. Each person who enters into the pursuit of God through this way is invariably rewarded with a deeper, richer spiritual life. The practice of the spiritual disciplines is not just for pastors and missionaries, but these can become a part of every Christian's life. In fact, one of the key weaknesses of modern western Christianity is that few average Christians have even heard of the spiritual disciplines. While there is a new revival in understanding the spiritual disciplines, there is much talk and not much actual practice. The spiritual disciplines are for everybody and can fit into everyone's schedule. It is true that the spiritual disciplines will war a person's schedule, but that is the normal process of holiness.

In the same way that physical and social disciplines have become a part of your life, this book seeks to build the basic spiritual disciplines of a C.H.R.I.S.T.I.A.N. into your life. This book will help you develop daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly spiritual disciplines so that the fullness of the Christian life will be yours. It will take work to add new disciplines to your life. Some of the spiritual disciplines will replace or push aside some of your present activities. Some of the spiritual disciplines will war with the way you or your culture thinks or acts. But these changes are for the better. The goal of this book is to push past the beginning stages of the Christian life to a deeper relationship with God.

There is a huge need for people to be taught about how to practice their spiritual life. We need to work out the salvation that God has put within us. He is working in us and we need to draw out the salvation offered to us in Christ. The church of Jesus Christ in the western world has become weak and sick because the average Christian does not know how to actually practice their walk with God on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Most people who attend church feel that they have an active spiritual life because they attend the service and take notes. It is a shame that most Christians have been turned into spectators, pushed away from a vital intimacy with God by a lack of knowledge about how to draw near to God. Christianity spread throughout the world because of real contact with God and actual forgiveness of sin. We must again teach, train, and inculcate the basic practices of Christianity into the life of the average Christian.

# Spiritual Disciplines of a CHRISTIAN

<b>C</b> - <b>C</b> onfession:	Personal, Group
<b>H</b> - <b>H</b> oly Spirit:	Guidance, Wisdom
<b>R</b> - <b>R</b> epetition:	Memorization, Meditation
<b>I</b> - <b>I</b> nteraction:	Bible Study, Prayer
<b>S</b> - <b>S</b> ervice:	Daily, Church, Community
<b>T</b> - <b>T</b> ogetherness:	Worship, Fellowship
<b>I</b> - <b>I</b> dentification:	Communion; Baptism, Witnessing
<b>A</b> - <b>A</b> bstinence:	Fasting, Solitude, Silence, Sleep
<b>N</b> - <b>N</b> eeds:	Love, Giving

# The Disciplines of Confession

We had been meeting only a few weeks when Bill just sat back and declared, “I have never sensed the presence of God in my life the way I sense Him now. God is at work in my life as never before.” This successful businessman couldn’t stop talking about what happened when he began practicing the discipline of Confession. “Confessing my sins to the Lord and constantly being aware of whether I am pleasing or displeasing Him is changing me. At first I would go through my sins at the end of the day and that was powerful. Then I noticed that while I was committing an act of selfishness the Lord would convict me that what I was doing was not right. This week I began to hear the Lord prompt me before I committed the sin. It was amazing how I was able to sense the Lord directing me even before I offended Him. I am walking with Him in an immediate sense that I never thought was possible.”

Confession is the beginning of the disciplines and it invites the Lord Jesus Christ to draw near to you with His presence. The Scripture calls believers to draw near to the Lord and He will draw near to you. Listen to James 4:8, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded.” In order to walk with God we must begin to practice the spiritual disciplines that are laid out in Scripture. St. Augustine said, “The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.”<sup>1</sup>

## What Does Confession Mean?

Confession means to agree with God that a particular activity is wrong and is against God’s law and desire for us. The more we know of the Scripture, the more we will know what pleases God and what displeases Him. Knowing God’s will awakens our conscience and allows us to live in harmony with God. Harmony with God is what most people want but few achieve because they are not willing to let God comb through their life and point out areas that are not pleasing to Him. Deep connection with God is a joyful experience that requires that we look at our lives through God’s eyes, keeping the good and removing the bad.

Confession includes the idea of repentance: that we do not want to practice the sin anymore. Some people are very sorry that they were caught sinning, but really have no desire to stop. The person who is truly interested in connecting with God and living his life experiencing God’s presence has a desire not to repeat the offending action. This is not to suggest that we will not commit this sin again. But in true confession the desire is to stop. It is the desire that God views, not the failures. It is important to mention at this point that it is not possible to confess a sin so many times that eventually God will not forgive. True sincere confession carries with it a willingness to develop a concrete plan for avoiding the sin in the future. If we are not willing to implement a practical repentance plan, then we may be sorry about being caught but not really deeply troubled about offending God.

## Spiritual Disciplines Back Cover

Every Christian longs for an intimate connection with God. The spiritual disciplines are the keys to a deeper interactive relationship with God in Christ Jesus. The screaming need in Christianity today is for Christians who walk humbly but deeply with God. Many churches major on programs but do not teach deep spirituality. This book is designed to teach the basic spiritual disciplines to everyday Christians so they can enjoy intimacy with God. Just as we train our physical bodies through exercises so we can train our spiritual life through spiritual exercises. If you would like to enjoy a close fellowship with God then this book is for you. If you want to help others experience deep and lasting spiritual growth then this book is for you.

## Testimonials for practicing the Spiritual Disciplines of a C.H.R.I.S.T.I.A.N.

“I have never sensed the presence of God in my life the way I sense Him now!!!”  
- Businessman

“I am alive to the presence and direction of God in ways that I never dreamed possible.”  
- Executive

“It is the Scripture; it is changing me. I am amazed, but it is changing me.”  
- Design Consultant

“I am a totally different person today than I was six weeks ago. I cannot believe the change. Everybody is beginning to notice that I really am a different person. I would not have believed that it was possible if you had told me. These little spiritual exercises have put me in a totally different place after only six weeks. Everything about my life is now different. It is amazing.”  
- Counselor

“It was amazing! I have never experienced anything like that before. My husband and I spent five hours praying instead of the one hour you assigned; it was incredible!!!”  
- Christian Ministry Leader

“I have never felt so close to God and so moved in my soul as when we did this worship exercise!!! God came and touched me.”  
- College Student

“The change in my husband from last year to this is staggering. He just never made any progress until he was in this group of yours. Now he is becoming the spiritual leader of our home.”  
- Wife

“I am no longer hiding my faith!”  
- Quality Control Manager

“Who would have thought that by giving something up I would gain so much?”  
- College student

“I finally have a practical way of releasing how burdened I feel about particular events and situations in the world.”  
- Young woman

“When I opened myself to actually being a conduit of God’s love to others, things began to change.”

- Teenager

“God does love me and is willing to forgive me for all the things I have done!”

- Businesswoman

“I am a totally different person than I was just a few weeks ago.”

- CEO

“God walks with me”

- Business Owner

Gil Stieglitz is a nationally and internationally recognized church health consultant and conference speaker. He is the District Superintendent of Western District of the Evangelical Free Churches of America. He is Founder and President of Principles to Live By (PTLB.com). He is an Adjunct Professor at Western Seminary (Sacramento extension). He served as Senior Pastor of Twin Lakes Community Church for 17 years. He received his Masters of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Biola University.