

CONNECT *with* GOD

VIDEO NOTES

Why doesn't putting our faith in Jesus instantly change us? It's a good question.

Jesus said:

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8:12b

So, why does it sometimes feel dark all around us? If you don't feel or behave much differently than you did before you were a Christian . . .

- It's not a **belief** issue.
- It's not a **theology** issue.
- It's a **following** issue.

FOLLOWING ISSUE = FREEDOM ISSUE

What does it look like to follow Jesus? Do the things he did. Engage in the same spiritual practices he did, for the same reason:

Spiritual practices grow our relationship with God by increasing our capacity to rely on him.

The New Testament records Jesus doing things like:

- Reading the Scriptures and reflecting on them.
- Praying frequently and in a way that really opened his heart and mind to God.
- Going off by himself in order to remove distractions and align himself with God's will.
- Fasting periodically.
- Serving others in big ways and small.

Jesus didn't do these things because he was already close to God. He did them because they drew him even closer to God.

Your approach to any spiritual practice should:

- Help you grow in your relationship with God.
- Fit who you are.

Begin a new spiritual practice individually or as a group.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you're in a group, use these questions to have a conversation about how you can support and encourage one another as you explore spiritual practices. If you're not in a group, reflect on these questions to help you consider what it would look like for you to connect with God through spiritual practices.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how engaged in spiritual practices are you currently? Which spiritual practices are you practicing?
2. Do you tend to view spiritual practices as work or as an opportunity to recharge? What are some things that shaped this view?
3. In your own words, how would you describe how spiritual practices grow you spiritually?
4. Have you ever tried a spiritual practice for a while, only to lose focus or energy over time? If so, which of the following best describes your experience?
 - It wasn't sustainable, so I eventually burned out.
 - It wasn't energizing (or it stopped being energizing), so I felt like I was just going through the motions.
 - It wasn't focused on growth, so I enjoyed it but didn't feel like I was making progress.
 - Other:
5. Out of the 12 Spiritual Practices that Clay discussed, which ones are new to you?
 - Practices of Engagement:**
 - Prayer
 - Bible Reading
 - Generosity
 - Service
 - Community
 - Accountability
 - Worship
 - Practices of Restraint:**
 - Sabbath
 - Solitude
 - Secrecy
 - Chastity
 - Fasting

Visit: [Groupsleaders.org/ConnectWithGod](https://groupsleaders.org/ConnectWithGod) to learn more about each of the disciplines above.

6. Which spiritual practice are you most interested in trying? Why?
7. What are your personal next steps after discussing the spiritual practices today, and how can this group help encourage and hold each other accountable?