

Developing Spiritual Muscle—To be a Servant to Others

1 Timothy 4:1-8 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ² by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³ *men* who forbid marriage *and advocate* abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; ⁵ for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. ⁶ In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. ⁷ But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸ for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come. NASB

God the Spirit has predicted that people will be drawn from Christian teachings toward lies and false teaching. (1)

They will be drawn toward these teachings because sin-calloused legalists hypocritically present severe, austere abstinence as godliness. (2—3)

But the activities they forbid, God actually created and blessed for truth-loving people to thankfully enjoy to God's glory. (3—5)

In order to minister Christ and His truth properly to people, we must diligently work to show when these kinds of false teachings have crept into our thinking and faith-life. (6)

This kind of effort and ministry requires diligence and discipline in your own life, leading to present Christlikeness and future life with God (7—8)

Donald Whitney, in his book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* identifies ten disciplines that will aid Christians in fulfilling what Paul calls Timothy to in this paragraph—a godly life.

1. Bible Intake—Hearing, Reading, Studying, Memorizing, Meditating
2. Prayer—Colossians 4:2 Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield; APTAT (See End of Document)
3. Worship—focusing on, and responding to God—with His people—Eph. 5:15f
4. Evangelism—Romans 10:8f
5. Serving—John 13:12—16
6. Stewardship—Time (Eph 5:15—16); Money (1Tim5:8; Phil 4:18)
7. Fasting—Matt 9:14—15; 6:16—18; Acts 13:3; Helps prayer, creates gratitude, focuses
8. Silence & Solitude—Jesus, Moses, Paul changed by solitude & deep thought Mk 1:35
9. Journaling—writing how God is working in your life, prayers, what you have learned, quotes—Psalms, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Acts, Jude, etc. Ps. 62:8
10. Learning—2 Tim 1:13; Prov 9:9; 10:14; Mk 12:29—30; John 4:22; Rom 12:2; Job 32:9

Helps for Prayer

Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield

APTAT

A – I *acknowledge* that without Christ I can do nothing ([John 15:5](#); [Romans 7:18](#)).

P – I *pray* that God would make me love as Jesus loves, and work in me all that is pleasing to him ([1 Thessalonians 2:12](#); [Romans 5:21](#); [Hebrews 13:21](#)).

T – I *trust* the promise of God’s help and strength and guidance ([Isaiah 41:10](#); [James 1:5, 6](#)).

A – I *act* in obedience to God’s word. [Philippians 2:12](#) fits here: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”? Look at the ground clause which follows: “*for* it is God who works in you to will and to do his good pleasure.” Yes! We act. We obey! But what keeps this action from being a “I can do it on my own” is that we have acknowledged our helplessness, prayed for enablement, and trusted that precisely in and under our working and willing it is *God* who does the work! Therefore our act is a fruit of the Spirit not a work of the flesh.

T – I *thank* God for whatever good comes. I give him the glory ([1 Peter 4:11](#)).