



A Means of Grace

1. Schedule an extended period of solitude and ask the Spirit to search your heart and reveal areas of your life that keep you from his work in your life (Psalm 139:23-24).
2. Evaluate the condition of your heart. Try not to think in terms of what you do or don't do but in terms of affections and motivation, not simply what you do but *why* you do it. Pay attention to what your heart is drawn to. Write a summary paragraph that accurately describes the condition of your heart.
3. Identify one or two major conditions that quench the Spirit's work (i.e. worldly attachment or people pleasing) and evaluate the discipline(s) corresponding to those conditions. Consider how you might implement those disciplines into the rhythm of your life.

Below is a list of disciplines and their description taken primarily from Dallas Willard's *The Spirit of the Disciplines* and Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*. Examples of conditions that quench the Spirit's work are in italics below the corresponding discipline.

Disciplines of Abstinence

- Solitude: Purposefully abstain from interaction with other human beings. This allows us to develop the freedom from the ingrained behaviors that hinder our integration into God's order.
Busyness, Worldly Attachment
- Silence / Meditation: Close off our souls from sounds, whether it be noise, music or words. It allows for transformative concentration on God and listening for his voice.
Noise, Uncontrolled Tongue
- Fasting: Abstain in some way from food, drink, or media. Confirms our dependence on God by finding in him a source of sustenance beyond food or entertainment.
Lack of Self-Control, Fleshly Appetites
- Frugality / Simplicity: Abstain from using money or goods at our disposal in ways that merely gratify our desires or our hunger for status, glamour or luxury. Keeps our affections prioritized.
Materialism, Entitlement, Pretense
- Chastity: Abstain from dwelling on or engaging in the sexual dimension of your relationship. Cultivates a deep closeness with your spouse and keeps the sexual relationship out of the center.
Selfishness, Excessive Emphasis on Sex
- Secrecy: Abstain from causing our good deeds and qualities to be known. Cultivates a trust, humility and love for God that can only be known in secret.
Insecurity, People Pleasing
- Sacrifice: Abstain from the possession or enjoyment of what is necessary for living. Cultivates total and complete dependence on God to provide.
Self-Reliance, Lack of Faith

Disciplines of Engagement

- Study: Engage with the written and spoken word of God. We meditate and prayerfully focus on truth that forms us as God works in the depths of our hearts. Primary discipline of engagement.
Deceit, Laziness
- Worship: Engage with, dwell on and express the greatness, beauty and goodness of God through thought and the use of words, rituals and symbols. We move from thought and affection to response. Should be Christ-centered.
Pride
- Celebration: Enjoy our life and our world in conjunction with our faith and confidence in God's greatness, beauty and goodness. Come together and celebrate how God is working among us.
Selfishness
- Service: Engage our goods and strength in the active promotion of the good of others and the causes of God in our world.
Arrogance, Possessiveness, Envy, Resentment
- Prayer: Conversing, communicating (aloud or in our thoughts) with God. Cultivates an increasingly pervasive communion and intimacy with God that in turn strengthens every aspect of life.
Self-Reliance, Pride
- Fellowship: Assembling with brothers and sisters for worship, study, prayer, celebration and service. Cultivates sustainability and maturity in the body.
Isolation, Discouragement
- Confession: Let trusted others know our deepest weaknesses and failures. Cultivates faith in God's provision for us through his people. Through them we receive the grace, forgiveness, and love of God.
Isolation, Pretense
- Submission: Engage the experience of those in our body who are qualified to direct our efforts in growth and who then add the weight of their wise authority on the side of our willing spirit to help us do the things we would like to do and refrain from doing the things we don't want to do. This must be done in mutual submission, not in an ironfisted hierarchy. The least is the greatest.
Obstinacy, Pride