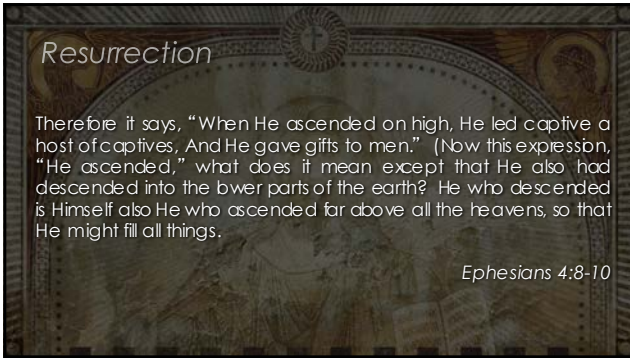


Resurrection

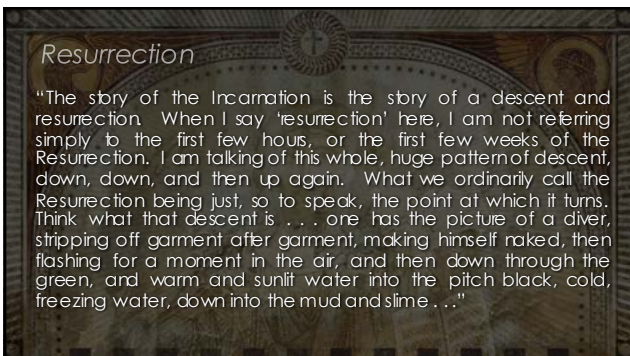
Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men." (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.

Ephesians 4:8-10



Resurrection

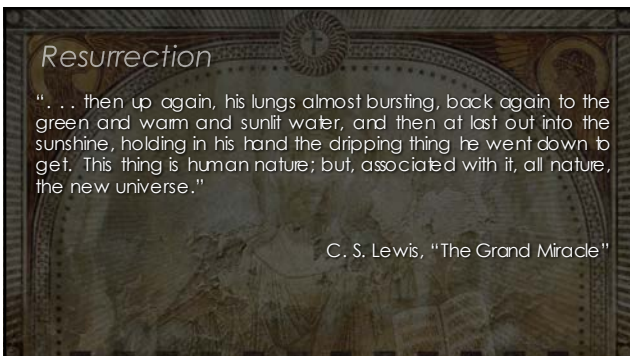
"The story of the Incarnation is the story of a descent and resurrection. When I say 'resurrection' here, I am not referring simply to the first few hours, or the first few weeks of the Resurrection. I am talking of this whole, huge pattern of descent, down, down, and then up again. What we ordinarily call the Resurrection being just, so to speak, the point at which it turns. Think what that descent is . . . one has the picture of a diver, stripping off garment after garment, making himself naked, then flashing for a moment in the air, and then down through the green, and warm and sunlit water into the pitch black, cold, freezing water, down into the mud and slime . . ."



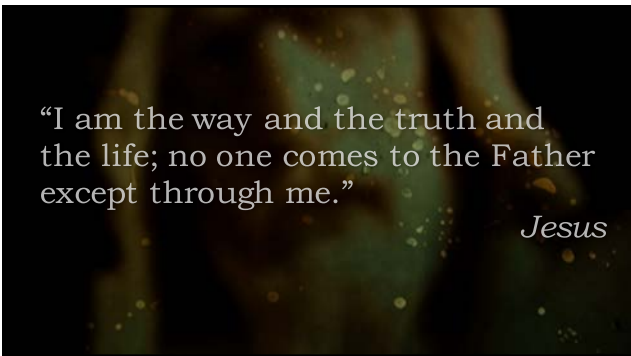
Resurrection

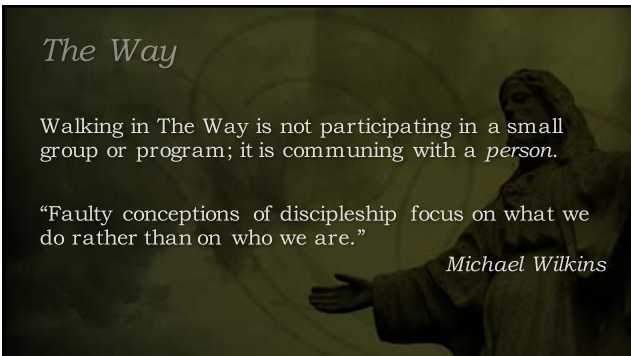
". . . then up again, his lungs almost bursting, back again to the green and warm and sunlit water, and then at last out into the sunshine, holding in his hand the dripping thing he went down to get. This thing is human nature; but, associated with it, all nature, the new universe."

C. S. Lewis, "The Grand Miracle"









Walking in The Way

1. Cultivate sound personal growth (Gal 6:7)

The Spiritual Disciplines

Actively Passive

The Spiritual Disciplines

"The ultimate goal of human existence is to receive life from above - the reign of God - and allow that Divine life to so permeate and influence our thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, desires, and powers that who we are and what we are able to do is beyond what could be accomplished through our natural abilities alone."

Dr. Steve Porter

The Spiritual Disciplines

<p>Legalist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goal is moral behavior. 2. Means of acceptance. 3. Willpower fueled by guilt and shame. 4. Lacks the power to transform. 	<p>Gospel:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goal is God Himself. 2. Means of grace. 3. Empowerment of the Spirit fueled by love. 4. Participation with the Spirit, who alone has the power to transform.
---	---

The Spiritual Disciplines

“I had been raised in religious circles of very fine people where the emphasis had been exclusively on faithfulness to right beliefs, and upon bringing others to profess those beliefs. Now that, of course, is of central importance. But when that process alone is emphasized, the result is a dry and powerless religious life, no matter how sincere, and leaves a person constantly vulnerable to temptations of all kinds . . .”

The Spiritual Disciplines

“Therefore, to see actual invasions of human life by the presence and action of God greatly encouraged me to believe that the life and promises given in the person of Christ and in Scripture were meant for us today. I saw that ordinary individuals who sought the Lord would find him real - actually, that he would come to them and convey his reality.”

Dallas Willard

Square One

"I want to simplify your lives. When others are telling you to read more, I want to tell you to read less; when others are telling you to do more, I want to tell you to do less. The world does not need more of you; it needs more of God. Your friends do not need more of you; they need more of God. And you don't need more of you; you need more of God . . .

Square One

"The Christian life consists in what God does for us, not what we do for God; the Christian life consists in what God says to us, not what we say about God. We also, of course, do things and say things; but if we do not return to Square One each time we act, each time we speak, beginning from God and God's Word, we will soon be found to be practicing a spirituality that has little or nothing to do with God . . .

Square One

"And so it is necessary, if we are going to truly live a Christian life, and not just use the word Christian to disguise our narcissistic and promethean attempts at a spirituality without worshipping God and without being addressed by God, it is necessary to return to Square One and adore God and listen to God . . .

Square One

“Given our sin-damaged memories that render us vulnerable to every latest edition of journalistic spirituality, daily re-orientation in the truth revealed in Jesus and attested in Scripture is *required*. And given our ancient predisposition for reducing every scrap of divine revelation that we come across into a piece of moral / spiritual technology that we can use to get on in the world . . .

Square One

“. . . and eventually to get on without God, a daily return to a condition of not-knowing and non-achievement is *required*. We have proven, time and again, that we are not to be trusted in these matters. We need to return to Square One for a fresh start as often as every morning, noon, and night.”

Eugene Peterson, *Subversive Spirituality*

Practical Exercise

Develop a Rule of Faith
(see handout)

Walking in The Way

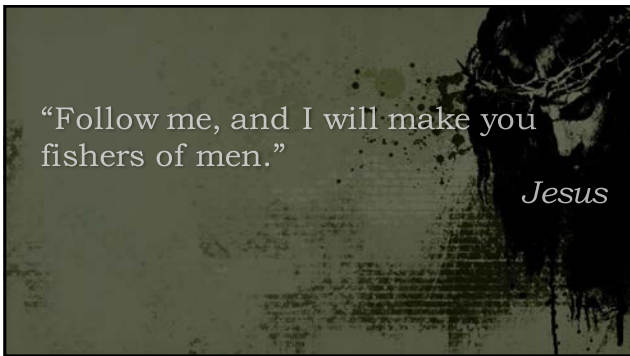
1. Cultivate sound personal growth (Gal 6:7)
2. Invest in healthy community (Jn 13:34-35)
3. Engage in strong mission (Matt 28:18-20)

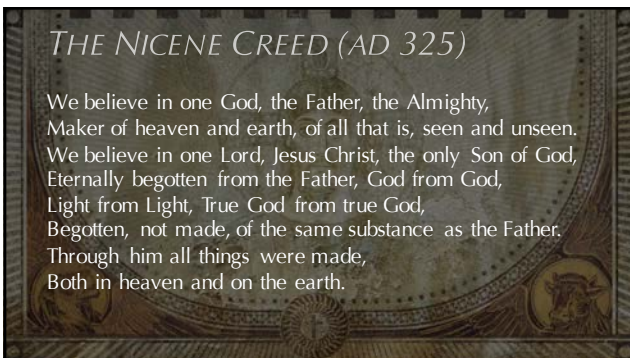
The Great Commission

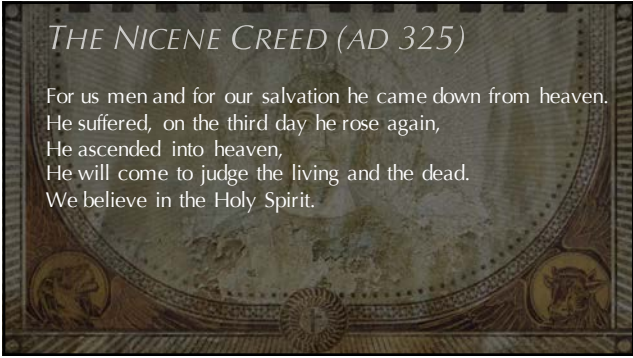
1. Go (Matt 28:19).
2. Make disciples (Matt 28:19).
 - Baptize into the Triune life (Matt 28:19).
 - Teach obedience to Jesus' commands (Matt 28:20).
3. He is with us (Matt 28:20).

	Conversion (New Creation)	BAPTIZE
-1	Decision to Act	
-2	Personal Problem Recognition	
-3	Positive Attitude toward the Gospel	
-4	Grasp of Implications of the Gospel	
-5	Awareness of the Fundamentals of the Gospel	
-6	Initial Awareness of the Gospel	
-7	Awareness of Supreme Being but No Effective Knowledge of the Gospel	

7	The Life of Love	TEACH OBEDIENCE
6	The Outward Life	
5	The Inward Life	
4	The Wall	
3	External Manifestation of the Gospel, Spiritual Reproduction (Productive Life)	
2	Conceptual and Behavioral Growth, Internal Recognition of Gifts (Learning Life)	
1	Post-Decision Evaluation, Incorporation into Community (Converted Life)	
	Conversion (New Creation)	







Challenge:

Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

Response

Summary of Arguments for the Physical Resurrection of Christ

H _____

E _____

A _____

R _____

T _____

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

Rule of Faith *regula fidei*

A Rule of Faith is an intentional pattern of spiritual disciplines that provides structure and direction for growth in holiness. A Rule establishes a rhythm for life in which is helpful for being formed by the Spirit, a rhythm that reflects a love for God and respect for how he has made us. The disciplines we build into our rhythm of life help us shed the “old self” and allow our “new self” in Christ to be formed. Spiritual disciplines are means of grace by which God can nourish us. Ultimately a Rule should help you to love God more, so if it becomes a legalistic way of earning points with God or impressing others, it should be scrapped. If the traditional, ancient term “rule” concerns you because it sounds legalistic, think of “rule” as a “rhythm of life” or as a “Curriculum in Christlikeness” (Dallas Willard), or as a “Game Plan for Morphing” (John Ortberg).

In order to be life-giving a Rule must be realistic! It is not an ideal toward which you are striving to soar. Instead, your initial Rule should be a minimum standard for your life that you do not want to drop below. It's a realistic level of engaging in the spiritual disciplines for which you can honestly and truly be held accountable. Rules will vary widely, depending on the character and life situation of a person. Not only will people choose different disciplines but how the disciplines are practiced will also vary. For example, every believer should pray, but the frequency or length or times or kind of prayer will differ depending on the individual. Thomas à Kempis writes, “All cannot use the same kind of spiritual exercises, but one suits this person, and another that. Different devotions are suited also to the seasons [of life] . . .”

The Rule you write should include three things: a self-assessment, an explanation of how you will practice your chosen disciplines, and your form of accountability. First, provide a clear self-assessment that briefly describes your current situation in life—family responsibilities, work schedule, and other life circumstances. Your self-assessment should also reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of your character. Are you blessed, for example, with self-control, a compassionate heart, a bright mind, or a spirit of joy? Which vices do you struggle with most? If you struggle with anger, for example, keep a journal for a week, noting what you get angry about and why, and rating each incident. Once you've identified a weakness, you can do something about it.

In general, talk over your self-assessment with someone who knows you well and ask for that person's candid feedback. Beginning your Rule with an honest self-assessment will push you to develop a rhythm of life that is unique to your personality, circumstances, and needs.

Second, describe the way in which you will practice specific disciplines. Your Rule should include an explanation of why your choices not only fit your situation in life but also how they address areas where you especially need discipline and growth. In other words, describe how your Rule contributes to the goal of your spiritual formation, namely, being conformed to the image of Christ by the Spirit for the sake of others. Always remember this goal as you develop your Rule.

Making choices about specific disciplines requires prayer and wisdom. As you decide on specific practices (e.g. how and when to pray, serve, practice simplicity, etc.), consider the following questions:

1. *What disciplines and specific practices are you attracted to and why you are attracted to them?*

There is nothing wrong with choosing spiritual practices because they seem suited to your personality (e.g. an introvert may be drawn to more inward disciplines). You will likely engage in those disciplines with the greatest consistency and satisfaction. They may not, however, be the practices that will stretch you toward the greatest growth or the ones you most need. Still, they are probably a good place to start, especially if you have little spiritual discipline in your life at the moment.

2. *Where do you sense that God is calling you to stretch and grow? Where do you want to change?*

Ask yourself and God why you resist particular disciplines. Perhaps a strong negative reaction to a practice such as fasting or self-examination may reveal that you are avoiding a part of your life in need of healing. Ask God to show you which disciplines you need in order to address weaknesses in your character.

3. *What kind of balance do you need in your life?*

Does your Rule exercise your thoughts, actions, and affections (head, hands, and heart)? Does your Rule contain both corporate and individual practices? Both inward and outward disciplines? Don't be confused by the title "Personal Rule of Faith." It's a "Personal Rule" (as compared to a communal Rule) because it's drawn up by you, it's about you, and you are the one committing yourself to it. "Personal Rule" does not mean that you only engage in inward disciplines or private disciplines. Your personal Rule should include corporate disciplines (such as worship, confession, celebration, or spiritual direction) and outward disciplines (such as service, simplicity, or chastity).

4. *Is your Rule realistic for you to commit to?*

A Rule is not a list of things you must add onto an already busy life. The disciplines you choose should not only be realistic for your life but should also balance, help to prioritize, interweave, and integrate your entire way of life, better enabling you to take your ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering (Rom 12:1).

Once you have chosen your spiritual disciplines and explained of your choices, briefly state who will hold you accountable and pray for you as you practice your Rule. For this role, consider a close friend, your accountability or community group, or a mentor. Spouses and other family members should know enough of your Rule to be able to encourage, or at least not interfere needlessly with your practice. It may be unwise to expect your spouse to be the only person holding you accountable in your spiritual life. The person(s) holding you accountable should also help you to discern when your Rule needs to be re-assessed and adapted.

Be succinct and make your actual written Rule a 1-page document. A highly distilled self-assessment of your character and life situation will be most helpful for identifying strengths, weaknesses, limitations and opportunities. Your chosen spiritual disciplines can be listed in bullet points with a brief explanation of the desires, goals or needs you are hoping to address. Finally, your method of accountability can be very briefly stated and explained. It is a good idea to revisit your rule and adjust as needed once a quarter, or four times a year.