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Spiritual Disciplines of Jesus



UNITARIAN MINISTRIES

Jesus of Nazareth showed us how to love and serve God with all of our heart and spirit. He embraced his role as a "child of God" and sacrificed everything so that we might have the necessary spiritual tools to release ourselves from the bondage of our sins. It is because of his role and example as a "savior" and "deliverer" we have found an effective way to cope with life and death. Christ was truly a great man that was both fully God-centered and fully human-focused.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40 NIV)

Walking in the Footsteps of Christ

I. Establishing Personal Relationship With God

Prayer

Jesus engaged with God in a very personal and intimate way. He approached God with a loving heart and addressed the Most High as "Father." In his moments of solitude, he created a sacred space to repent and confide in the Merciful One. Whenever he endured ridicule, rejection, or hardship he placed his trust in God's Divine Providence and sought forgiveness for man's short

comings. While going about his daily affairs, he routinely praised and thanked the Creator for all that our Divine Maker has bestowed upon humanity. He wasn't too proud to beseech God for help or afraid to question the Lord when he witnessed the unjust suffering of others, including himself. Life wasn't just all about him and his relationship with God. He wanted everyone to have access to what he was experiencing. He prayed to God to shine upon and enlighten all those seeking God's holy presence.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV)

Meditation

Jesus routinely retreated into a place of seclusion to meditate and regain his spiritual strength. In these sessions, he sought to better discern the will of God. He relied on the advice of his "inner voice". In theological terms, this is known as the "Word of God" or "Divine Inspiration." This discipline by no means gave him all the answers he craved, but he valued its ability to provide wisdom and insight in difficult times and situations.

"Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God." (Matthew 5:8 NIV)

II. Embracing One's Role As a Child of God

Stewardship

Jesus comforted his fellow brothers and sisters that were shunned and outcasted. He took on a big brother role and helped the oppressed regain their dignity and health.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28 NIV)

Confronting Injustice

The "Son of Man" bravely reproached the social and religious rules of his era that violated basic human rights. He attempted to change those things that were within his means and capabilities.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."(Matthew 5:9 TNIV)

Promoting the Good

As a high priest and rabbi, Jesus taught people how to avoid the evil in this world, live a good life, and reconcile themselves to God.

"Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God." (3 John 1:11 NIV)

III. Building a Sound Spirit and Heart

Forgiving Oneself and Others

Jesus showed people how to release the spiritual burdens of shame and guilt by calling them to forgive the transgressions of themselves and others.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32 NIV).

"I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me." (1 Corinthians 4:3-4 NIV)

Loving thy Enemy

Jesus converted hate into love by embracing his enemies. He revealed to us the healing power of loving kindness.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father(Mother) in heaven. You cause Your sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.(Matthew 5:43-45 TNIV with gender-inclusive modifications by Unitarian Ministries)

Trusting in God

Jesus humbly placed his trust in God's Divine Providence and bravely faced life's circumstances and many challenges.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in [the Lord](#), so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13 NIV with [gender-inclusive modifications](#) by Unitarian Ministries)