

Becoming like Jesus in spiritual disciplines (Based on Chapter 16 of *Costly Grace*)

The Big Idea

Don't try to impress others with your devotion to God, just show God you are devoted to him.

Biblical Foundation

And when you fast, do not put on a sad face as the hypocrites do. They neglect their appearance so that everyone will see that they are fasting. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. When you go without food, wash your face and comb your hair, so that others cannot know that you are fasting—only your Father, who is unseen, will know. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you. Matthew 6:16-18 (TEV)

Jesus had to be totally devoted to the Father for him to be who he was and to do what he did. He didn't have to show others how devoted he was to the Father because Jesus' relentless obedience to the Father's will was proof enough.

Jesus says, if you want to make a big show about your devotion to God, you *will* impress people. But you won't impress God because he sees into your heart. What is the reward for those who make a big deal about their piety? Why do you think God rewards those who focus on him instead of the crowd?

Paul says the spiritual disciplines keep us spiritually fit and focused on Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:23-27). Talk about some of the common spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, Bible memorization, fasting, simplicity, and solitude. How can you incorporate some of these into your life?

The Cost of Discipleship

We must admit that our own undisciplined natures cause as many problems as much as the devil. "I harden my body with blows and bring it under complete control, to keep myself from being disqualified after having called others to the contest" (1 Corinthians 9:27 TEV).

Kingdom Thinking:

- I am devoted to God.
- I forgot to eat because I was having an incredible prayer time.
- The devil didn't cause this problem; I've just been lazy.

Fallen Thinking:

- I must show people how devoted I am to God.
- I'm not going to eat because I want God to give me a special anointing today.
- The devil made me do it.

Will you follow Jesus in prayer, even if it means physical discomfort and deprivation?