



Foundational Essay

PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

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INTRODUCTION

When my husband and I were young adults, we lived for 18 months in Tel Aviv, Israel. We were so excited to see the biblical sites while living there, and indeed those places remain clear and vivid in our minds many years later. However, the most lasting gift from that year and a half was the Sabbath. It took us several months to settle into a day each week with nothing to do; buses were not running, and shops, grocery stores, movie theaters, and restaurants were not open. We grew to love our Sabbath day so much that we kept on observing the Sabbath after we returned to Seattle.


No one else seemed at all interested in our Sabbath observance, so we did it as a family on our own. Several years passed before Eugene Peterson and others began to write about the gifts of a Sabbath day. They used the language of *spiritual discipline* to describe Sabbath keeping, and I had never heard of spiritual disciplines. I learned that Richard Foster, in his 1978 book *Celebration of Discipline*, had brought the term back into view. He describes the many ways that spiritual disciplines played a role throughout church history, and notes that the term *spiritual discipline* was largely forgotten in the twentieth century.¹

I rely on two definitions to illuminate what a spiritual discipline is. The first comes from Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's book, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, which lists more than sixty specific spiritual disciplines: "From its beginning, the church linked the desire for more of God to intentional practices, relationships, and experiences that gave people space in their lives to 'keep company' with Jesus. These intentional practices, relationships and experiences we know as spiritual disciplines."²

Calhoun's definition focuses on making space to nurture our relationship with Jesus. She mentions the idea of *practices*, such as the practices described in this curriculum. They are those things we do modeled after Jesus. She also mentions relationships that help us keep company with Jesus, and these include small groups, prayer partnerships, and spiritual



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1. Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline, Special Anniversary Edition: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2018), 3.
2. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 17.

direction. In addition, we intentionally engage in experiences like mission trips and providing dinners for people experiencing homelessness where we will meet Jesus. All of these practices, relationships, and experiences are *spiritual disciplines*.

A second definition includes relationship with God but also mentions transformation. Marjorie Thompson lays out why she wrote a book on spiritual disciplines, *Soul Feast*: “My purpose is to help people of faith understand and begin to practice some of the basic disciplines of the Christian spiritual life. Disciplines are simply practices that train us in faithfulness. . . . Such practices have consistently been experienced as vehicles of God’s presence, guidance, and call in the lives of faithful seekers.”³

Spiritual disciplines train us in faithfulness. We commit to study the Bible with a weekly group, and we grow in faithfulness. We pray every night before sleeping, and over time we find prayer more natural and comfortable. We go to church consistently, and over time the singing, prayers, sermons, and relationships shape us. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are changed by the habits we engage in.

Both Thompson and Calhoun use the word *practices* in their definition of spiritual disciplines. In some Christian settings, the terms *spiritual disciplines* and *spiritual practices* are used interchangeably. This curriculum, *Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living*, focuses on practices that Jesus engaged in. These six sessions on spiritual disciplines describe additional things we do and relationships we nurture that enable us to walk with Jesus and experience transformation.

FAST

Fasting plays a role in all major religions, including Judaism and Christianity. Numerous individuals and groups of people in the Hebrew Scriptures fasted. David fasted with his men when Jonathan died (2 Samuel 1:12), and David fasted alone to pray for the unborn baby conceived in his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:16). Esther fasted, along with her servants and all the people of Israel in her city, before going to her husband, King Ahasuerus, with a dangerous request (Esther 4:16). Ezra asked the people traveling with him to fast and pray for God’s protection as they left Persia to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 8:21–23). The Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) mention many other individuals and groups who fasted.

God commanded the people of Israel to fast as a nation one day a year to repent of sin (Numbers 29:7–11). That day, Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement, retains deep significance today for Jewish people.

Jesus fasted after his baptism, and Jesus assumed that his believers will fast. “Whenever you fast,” Jesus says, “do not look dismal” (Matthew 6:16–18). The book of Acts records that the early church fasted. In one instance in Antioch, while the Christians there were praying and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to the people, telling them to consecrate Paul and Barnabas for the ministry of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2, 3). Fasting was common in the early church for the purpose of freeing up food to give to the poor and to focus on prayer.

Most Christians in the West dropped fasting as a spiritual discipline for most of the twentieth century, but numerous forces are bringing it back into

3. Marjorie J. Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*, Newly Revised Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), xxiv.



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Christians fast for repentance, to clarify and intensify their prayers, to ask God for guidance, to purify their hearts before God and ask God to continue that process of purification, or to free up money or other resources to give to the poor or to Christ's mission.



view today. Many Christians in Africa, Asia, and South and Central America never stopped fasting; they are teaching Christians in the United States and Europe to rediscover the power of fasting and prayer.

Fasting has caught on in the wider culture too. People fast from specific foods and call this a *cleanse*. People fast from media, social media, and cell phones to clear their minds. Christians in the twenty-first century are fasting from diverse things, including movies, news, cell phones, social media, and shopping. Because people with a history of an eating disorder should not fast from food in any way, all these other forms of fasting make it possible for everyone to engage in fasting in some way.

These fasting practices raise the question of what makes a fast uniquely Christian. Christian fasting is the voluntary denial of something for a specific time, for a spiritual purpose, by an individual, family, community, or nation.⁴ Christian fasting is voluntary, chosen by the individual or group. Fasting is for a specific time, typically part of a day, a whole day, a few days, a week, or up to forty days. Denying ourselves something long term is a lifestyle, not a fast.

The spiritual purpose for a fast draws on biblical patterns. Christians fast for repentance, to clarify and intensify their prayers, to ask God for guidance, to purify their hearts before God and ask God to continue that process of purification, or to free up money or other resources to give to the poor or to Christ's mission. Fasting with the central purpose of losing weight is not a Christian fast! Fasting in the Bible almost always has a component of prayer, and Christians who fast from food, or other aspects of daily life, report that fasting intensifies and focuses their prayers.

Fasting creates space in our lives so that we can keep company with Jesus. Many Christians who fast from meals or media use the time that's been freed up to pray, read the Bible, and meditate on God's goodness. Fasting can transform us further into Christ's image because our deep desires are revealed when we fast, as well as our dependence on the item we are fasting from.

You might try:

- Fasting from a food item you are fond of (if you have no history of eating disorders)
- Fasting from a form of media you spend a lot of time on
- Fasting from shopping or eating out
- Experimenting with a new form of prayer when you fast
- Finding a partner to fast with: plan together and compare notes
- Fasting with a small group or family group

PRAY

When I was a college student, I was taught an acronym for four kinds of prayer, ACTS: adoration (or praise), confession, thankfulness, supplication (or intercession). Those forms of prayer are common in the Bible and in all Christian settings.

As I grew older and fell in love with the Psalms, I noticed that many of the psalm writers spent a great deal of time lamenting. In lament prayers, we express our grief, sorrow, regret, or mourning, and I found that some prayer teachers recommend the acronym LACTS to include lament. More years passed, and I became involved in a contemplative prayer group in my

4. Lynne M. Baab, *Fasting: Spiritual Freedom Beyond Our Appetites* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), 16.

church. I learned many forms of silent prayer and Scripture meditation, and I came to realize all forms of prayer can be done alone or with others. I also began to realize prayer is too rich and varied to be captured by an acronym.

Even later, I came across the idea that there are really only two prayers: *Help!* and *Thanks!* Sometimes the simplicity of that approach is exactly what I need, and I love knowing that those two prayers can take seemingly infinite shapes and forms.

In this curriculum, *Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living*, many forms of prayer are explored. In this unit, *Practice Spiritual Disciplines*, prayer must be described because prayer is so central to the notion of spiritual disciplines. If spiritual disciplines enable us to draw near to God and walk with Jesus, then prayer has to be essential. Calhoun lists sixty-six specific spiritual disciplines, and, by my count, twenty-two of them are forms of prayer, some of them not well known, including breath prayer, welcoming prayer, fixed-hour prayer, and inner healing prayer.

In addition to the many specific forms of prayer we could mention, prayer plays a role in most other spiritual disciplines. Fasting and prayer are intimately connected because Christians throughout the centuries have found that fasting intensifies and focuses their prayers. Increasingly, Christians are adopting a Sabbath day; in the Jewish tradition, the Sabbath begins and ends with prayer. Sabbath keepers often find that slowing down helps them make space for prayer. Bible study alone or in groups is sometimes cognitive and sometimes personal, and any life-changing engagement with God's Word calls us to prayer. Many Christians participate in small groups, and those groups often begin and end with prayer. Worship services usually involve many moments of prayer.

In the apostle Paul's prayers, we see the connection between prayer and the themes of relationship with God and continual transformation in the life of faith. The Pauline prayer in Ephesians 1:15–19 focuses on knowing the richness and hope of the gospel. Ephesians 3:14–19 centers on God's strength and love. The prayer in Philippians 1:3–11 is profoundly relational, reminding the Philippians that God works in each of us, and Paul prays for the kind of love that flows into a pure and blameless life. In Colossians 1:9–12, Paul prays for wisdom and knowledge that results in a fruitful life and strength to meet challenges. In all of these prayers, thankfulness appears in numerous places.


Here are some things you might try:

- Pray silently with a friend or small group for ten to twenty minutes
- Write prayers in a journal and watch for answers
- Pray one of the apostle Paul's prayers for yourself or someone else
- Pray a psalm
- Focus your prayers for a period of time on "help" and "thank you"
- Observe the role of prayer in other spiritual practices and disciplines you engage in

LISTEN TO GOD

When two friends walk together regularly, the conversation normally goes back and forth. One raises a topic, the other one chimes in, and the conversation flows.


Jesus calls us his friend (John 15:15). The spiritual discipline of listening to God brings into focus an invitation from Jesus to converse with him, rather than view prayer solely as an opportunity to tell God things and ask God for help.




Prayer is interwoven into almost all spiritual disciplines because keeping company with Jesus involves talking to God, listening to God, and simply being with God—in other words, praying.

For many Christians, the Bible is God talking to us, and prayer is us talking to God. Approaching the Bible as God's Word for us this very day, and listening for God's voice through the words of Scripture, plays a significant role in listening to God. People who stress the importance of listening to God also name the significance of slowing down when reading the Bible, meditating on particular words or passages, and expecting God's voice to speak.

In addition to the Bible, we can also listen for God's voice in many other places and aspects of life. For example, God can speak to us through nature, sermons, friends, our conscience, and a still small voice (1 Kings 19:11–13). Many Christians hear God's voice through music. People who frequently experience God's voice will often say that a key component is following God's guidance. The more we follow, the more we will hear.



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The Gospels tell us that Jesus often went off to a solitary place to pray (Mark 1:35–39; Luke 5:16). After the incident described in Mark, Jesus had a renewed and clear sense of guidance from God, so he must have been listening as well as speaking. John 10 records a long discourse by Jesus comparing his disciples to sheep. He says that sheep won't follow the voice of strangers. Jesus' words are powerful: "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

Listening to God is a component in numerous spiritual disciplines. In *lectio divina*, a meditative way of approaching the Bible, participants are invited to listen for God's word in the passage. The spiritual disciplines of solitude and silence clear space for listening. The spiritual discipline of retreat involves going away to a quiet place to listen to God and be refreshed. People who fast to pray for a specific prayer request talk about the way God speaks to them during the fast and sometimes guides them to change the direction of their prayers. Thankfulness prayers and mindfulness meditation involve paying attention to what God has been doing and is doing right now, and people who engage in those spiritual practices often have the sense of God opening their eyes and speaking to them in the present moment.

Spiritual disciplines have two key components: making space to keep company with Jesus and allowing God to transform us and nurture faith in us. Listening to God plays a central role in both. When we keep company with a friend, we speak and listen in a back-and-forth exchange. When we want God to nurture faith in us, we must listen to God's guidance each day for the next steps on our path.

The Revelation of John describes the tenderness of our invitation to listen to Jesus and keep company with him: "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me" (Revelation 3:20).

Considering trying some of the following:

- Sit in silence in an outdoor space for a few minutes listening to nature and to God
- Read the Bible with the expectation that God will speak to you
- Write your thoughts very rapidly in a journal, asking God to speak to you through them
- Observe the way God speaks to you through friends, small groups, and worship services
- Ask someone to pray for you that you will hear God's voice more easily
- Ask Christian friends how they hear God speak to them

EMBRACE SIMPLICITY

A man has discovered the joy of minimalism. He writes to an advice columnist about his girlfriend's many pillows, books, and knick-knacks. He has given her a copy of Marie Kondo's book on tidying up, but his girlfriend actually likes the look of her home. How can he change her, he asks the advice columnist.⁵

In this time when people who embrace minimalism are convinced of its benefits for everyone, Christians need to have a clear sense of how the Christian spiritual discipline of simplicity is similar to and different from minimalism. Both simplicity and minimalism have a focus on intentionality with possessions and use of time. However, the goal of Christian simplicity relates to keeping company with Jesus and allowing Jesus to transform us.


Calhoun writes that the purpose of simplicity is "to uncomplicate and untangle my life so I can focus on what really matters." Two of the God-given fruits of simplicity, she argues, are "creating more space in your life for loving and serving God" and "staking your identity in God's love, not accumulations and possessions."⁶

Christians who embrace the spiritual discipline of simplicity might focus on possessions, time, food, and use of money as arenas where they can introduce limits for the purpose of focusing on what really matters to them. They remind themselves of Jesus' words in Matthew 6:19–21: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . . For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." They know that the main point of Christian simplicity isn't to reduce possessions or spending, or to have a tidy home. Instead, the goal is to be sure that our hearts are focused on real treasure.


The apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:11–12: "I have learned to be content with whatever I have." His way of living demonstrates another gift of simplicity: contentment "in any and all circumstances." Paul experienced contentment in part because of his intense focus on proclaiming the gospel. Nothing else mattered. When we embrace the spiritual discipline of simplicity, we choose to shift our focus away from possessions, money, and thrilling experiences. We focus on treasure that lasts: our relationship with God through Christ, and God's work of transformation in us.

The Christian spiritual discipline of simplicity has a long history in the monastic movement. Only a few centuries after Jesus' life, Christians began to leave wealthy homes and embrace a simple life for the sake of the gospel. Francis of Assisi, who lived in the twelfth century, was one of them. Despite growing up rich, he lived an unpretentious life among poor people, preached a straightforward gospel to ordinary people, and ultimately founded a religious order, the Franciscans, who for centuries have served the poor and ill. Even today, people enter monastic movements to center their lives on Jesus, and they embrace a simple lifestyle to do so.

The spiritual discipline of simplicity raises the issue of Christians judging each other, just like the man who wanted his girlfriend to embrace minimalism. We can look at others' possessions and visible use of money



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5. Carolyn Hax, "All her stuff makes him huff and puff," *Washington Post* (May 27, 2020), www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/advice/carolyn-hax-all-her-stuff-makes-him-huff-and-puff/2020/05/27/f18224a4-97d5-11ea-82b4-c8db161ff6e5_story.html.

6. Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 84.

and come to erroneous conclusions about their values. The temptation to judge others' patterns of spirituality can be all too real with any spiritual discipline, but simplicity makes the temptation stronger because this discipline focuses on how we live. We must remember that the goal of simplicity is to focus on God's goals and desires for us, and surely love is one of God's values.

You might try some of these practices:


- Think about what is real treasure to you and how you might pursue it more fully
- Pick one area of life to simplify for a specific period of time and see how it feels
- Pick one item in your home each day for a week that you can give to someone else
- Simplify your eating for a week to see if that connects you in any way to real treasure
- Observe friends and mentors who seem to have a strong life focus. What in their lives is simpler than in yours?
- Watch for times you judge others for their lifestyle decisions

UNPLUG


- A high school teacher challenges her students to put their cell phones away for a Saturday afternoon. One of the students reports being amazed at the sound of birds in her backyard.
- Two friends in their twenties decide to go off social media for a month. They compare notes over the course of the month about how it feels.
- A woman in her sixties decides to take her daily walk without her iPod. She finds that she loves the sound of the wind in the trees.
- A married couple in their forties asks their kids to put their cell phones in a beautiful wooden box during dinner. They close the lid of the box. They start with once a week, and they decide to increase to three times a week because their discussions are so interesting.

These people are engaging in the practice of *unplugging*, increasingly common among people in all walks of life because technology dominates so many minutes and hours of our days. Unplugging becomes a Christian spiritual discipline when it is done for a spiritual purpose. Returning to the two main themes of spiritual disciplines, unplugging can help us connect with God because we take our focus away from a screen or other digital input. Unplugging can make space in our lives for God to transform us because we are more able to pay attention to what's happening in our lives. We are more able to see where God is active, blessing us and leading us through the events and relationships of daily life.

Fasting can be a form of unplugging, denying ourselves something for a specific period of time for a spiritual purpose. A day, weekend, or month without one or more forms of technology can be enlightening and refreshing. The spiritual discipline of unplugging can go further and become a lifestyle. Some people go off one form of social media, or even all forms, indefinitely. Some people get rid of a smartphone and go back to a flip phone. These forms of unplugging can last for months or years, and they become a Christian spiritual discipline when the spiritual motive is articulated clearly.



Even today, people enter monastic movements to center their lives on Jesus, and they embrace a simple lifestyle to do so.



The Christian spiritual discipline of unplugging provides a vivid illustration of the fact that not all spiritual disciplines are described in the Bible. How could the Bible discuss something that hadn't yet been invented? However, we have numerous models of people in the Bible who pray with attentiveness to what God might do. For example, the prophet Samuel was in the temple one night when God called out to him. Samuel went to his mentor, Eli, to ask for advice on how to respond (1 Samuel 3:1–11). How could Samuel have heard God's voice if he had earbuds connecting him to compelling music?

In the same way, Jeremiah and Isaiah heard God's call (Jeremiah 1:4–19; Isaiah 6:1–13). Jesus went off to pray in quiet places (Mark 1:35–39; Luke 5:16). The apostle John describes being "in the spirit on the Lord's day" when God gave him the vision that became the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:10). It is hard to imagine how Jeremiah, Isaiah, Jesus, and John could have communed with God and heard God's voice clearly if their attention was focused on a sci-fi thriller played at full volume in a home movie theater.

In the letters of the New Testament, we read challenging and helpful advice related to our relationships with others. Here are only a few examples out of many: build up one another (Romans 14:19), care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25), be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32), comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18), show hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9), and pray for one another (James 5:16). We can do some of that caring via email and even social media, but meeting those commands as they relate to the people in our family, workplace, and neighborhood is pretty difficult if we are plugged in to an electronic device all the time. Unplugging can enable us to walk with Jesus and love the people around us.

You might try unplugging for a specific period of time from:

- TV
- One or more forms of social media
- News
- Music
- Blogs and online articles
- YouTube

TRY NEW SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Chapters 3 and 4 of the letter to the Hebrews talk about God's rest, and how we are able to enter that rest through Jesus, our high priest. The chapters conclude with a statement that has informed my willingness to experiment with a variety of spiritual disciplines:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

—Hebrews 4:15–16

For the word *approach*, other translations use "draw near" or "come boldly."

We draw near to God—approach or come boldly—in so many ways: prayer, Bible reading, worship services, mission trips, and many other spiritual disciplines. We can use creativity and imagination to consider



A day, weekend, or month without one or more forms of technology can be enlightening and refreshing.



new and innovative ways to keep company with Jesus. For my husband, a watercolor artist, painting and looking at his past paintings are major places of drawing near to the God who created everything. We seldom think of art as a spiritual discipline, but perhaps it could be significant for you as it is for my husband.

When I was a young adult, retreats were important places of Christian growth for me. On retreats, I met God in new ways and received challenges that I took into my daily life. I haven't been on a retreat for about fifteen years, but several of my friends find great joy in silent retreats. Every time they talk about going on a retreat, nothing inside of me urges me to join in. The spiritual disciplines that work at one time of life can change as the years pass.

Forms of silence and solitude are helpful spiritual disciplines in our increasingly noisy and busy society. We might embrace silence and solitude on silent retreats with a group, while praying silently with a prayer partner, or while journaling. Christians today also enjoy centering prayer, mindfulness meditation, meditative ways of engaging with the Bible, and using the words of the Bible as prayers. Silence and solitude can sound intimidating. Keeping a lightness as we experiment with new spiritual disciplines is essential.

For many Christians, close friendships or small groups provide them with a sounding board, support, accountability, and people to pray with. Christians in centuries past used the term *soul friend* to describe people who were companions on the journey of faith, and many Christians today have soul friends even if they never use that term. Nurturing relationships with people who function as traveling partners as we walk with Jesus is a spiritual discipline. Naming it that way can clarify that role of soul friends in helping us make space to keep company with Jesus and grow in faith.


Engaging the body while drawing near to God can be very helpful. Spiritual disciplines such as prayer walking, walking a labyrinth, and the stations of the cross can help us to bring our whole selves before God. My husband's watercolor painting is quite physical, involving his whole body, and many forms of creative expression such as dance or playing a musical instrument can enable us to draw near to Jesus with our whole beings.

Many forms of Christian service and mission function as spiritual disciplines because we find Jesus where we serve, and we are transformed as we risk and stretch in mission and ministry. Service and mission drive us to prayer because we know we need God's help. Service and mission can motivate us to engage in other spiritual disciplines too, such as fasting and Bible study. Spiritual disciplines work together in beautiful ways, helping us draw near to Jesus and experience transformation into the image of Jesus.


As Hebrews 4:15–16 points out, our high priest, Jesus, sympathizes with our weaknesses. He knows we need variety in our spiritual life. He knows we will try some new spiritual disciplines and not like them at all. He calls us to draw near in any way we can, to approach God in a variety of new and old ways. He invites us to let the Holy Spirit guide us into spiritual disciplines that work for us.

You might try one or more of the following:

- Creativity as an expression of your faith
- Retreat, solitude, or silence
- Journaling
- Engaging your body in prayer



We can use creativity and imagination to consider new and innovative ways to keep company with Jesus.



- Prayer partnership or prayer in a group
- Service and mission

CONCLUSION

Henri Nouwen wrote a beautiful book in the form of a letter to a friend, *Life of the Beloved*, describing the ways all of us are beloved of God. Nouwen compares hearing God’s voice to discovering a well in the desert:

Every time you listen with great attentiveness to the voice that calls you the Beloved, you will discover within yourself a desire to hear that voice longer and more deeply. It is like discovering a well in the desert. Once you have touched wet ground, you want to dig deeper.⁷

Spiritual disciplines enable us to dig deeper and find that water. Spiritual disciplines help us make space so we can hear the voice that calls us Beloved. Nouwen develops this metaphor further in a way that speaks vividly to the way that spiritual disciplines function in our lives:

The word “digging” might not be the best word since it suggests hard and painful work that finally leads me to the place where I can quench my thirst. Perhaps all we need to do is remove the dry sand that covers the well. There may be quite a pile of dry sand in our lives, but the One who so desires to quench our thirst will help us to remove it.⁸

Spiritual disciplines enable us to remove the dry sand around the well. God is always speaking to us, calling us Beloved, and spiritual disciplines help us make space so we can hear the voice that is always there. We don’t have to find the one right way to remove the sand. Spiritual disciplines come in many different forms, and we can experiment to find the disciplines that work best for us in each stage of life. We can engage in spiritual disciplines with the lightness of knowing that the well of living water is right there below the sand. We can find that water.



God is always speaking to us, calling us Beloved, and spiritual disciplines help us make space so we can hear the voice that is always there.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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7. Henri Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 31.

8. Nouwen, 31–32.

