

# Inspirational Nuggets

(Archived posts from [www.discipleshipcenter.org](http://www.discipleshipcenter.org))

## DISCIPLESHIP:

As we continue to think in terms of deeper DISCIPLESHIP, let's revisit the practice of *examination*:

The last nugget talked about some benefits of examination, spoken of by author Frank Moore in his book, ***Rendezvous: A Sacred Encounter With God***:

- \* *The opportunity to evaluate goals, priorities, spiritual progress, etc.*
- \* *An open door for the Lord to talk to us about spiritual matters*
- \* *The fostering of hunger and thirst for righteousness*
- \* *Assistance in keeping one's heart pure before God*

How does a person go about conducting the practice of examination? Many Christians do this by daily (or at least regularly) asking themselves a set of questions, and rating themselves accordingly:

1. Did I set aside time today to pray, listen to Christ, and read the Bible?
2. Did I talk to Christ conversationally throughout the day?
3. Did I direct my public conversation and action toward the glory of God?
4. Did I attempt to do good to all people and in all situations?
5. Did I thank God for the good gifts I enjoyed?

There are many other questions that a Christian could use for the purpose of examination. Perhaps you could come up with your own set of examination questions. From the list of five questions that you just read, it looks like common themes for examination questions would be *prayer, Bible reading, actions that glorify God, doing good to others, and being thankful*.

**What would be your list of examination questions?** Suggestion: Print them, and put them by your bedside - you would have a ready-made way to do an examination before you went to sleep!

## DISCIPLESHIP:

Let's briefly examine the practice of "examination":

Have you ever had an opportunity to read the book entitled ***Rendezvous: A Sacred Encounter with God*** by Frank Moore? This book does a really good job of giving you and me ways to make our relationship with Christ more personal and intimate, and stronger at the same time.

One of the practices that Frank Moore recommends for every Christian is that of **examination**. Here are some thoughts from Mr. Moore as to why examination is so helpful:

*Examination offers us the opportunity to .... rate our day, our mood, our feelings, our goals, our priorities, our spiritual progress, or our life. It creates time and space for us to reflect on spiritual matters and (gives) Christ an open door to talk to us about them. The practice of examination fosters our hunger and thirst for righteousness, and it helps keep our hearts pure before God.*

*We need annual physical check-ups to make sure our bodies are in good working order. We also get our car engines and tires checked regularly. With so much attention to check-ups in life, doesn't it make sense that we should provide regular maintenance to our spiritual lives? Daily, weekly, or monthly examinations can provide that maintenance and give us an additional opportunity to meet with Christ.*

The next "nugget" to be posted will share some questions that Frank Moore offers for times of examination.

In my own daily prayer life, the second thing I do is to have a time of examination and confession. The main question for me is this: "Is there anything that I did over the past 24 hours that God might be displeased with?" When those actions, thoughts or reactions are identified, I confess them to God and ask for His forgiveness. It's one way, as former pastor and author William Greathouse used to advocate, of "keeping a short account with God."

**Do you have a few moments to set aside on a regular basis, for examination?**

**DISCIPLESHIP:**

There are certain books in the Christian world that are not easy reading, but challenge Christians at the deepest level. *The Cost of Discipleship* is one of those books. Have you ever read it? The book's author, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was a pastor who stood against Nazi beliefs during the years leading up to World War II, and during the war years as well. He did this while, for the most part, living in Germany, and it would cost him his life at the hands of Nazis at age 39.

Bonhoeffer would have a difficult time with the kind of Christianity that lay dormant until Sunday, as a person awaited their turn to be admitted into heaven. He would be in favor, however, of all-out obedience to Christ on a continual basis, as witnessed by the following words of his regarding the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew Chapters 5-7):

*Humanly speaking, we could understand and interpret the Sermon on the Mount in a thousand different ways. Jesus knows only one possibility: simple surrender and obedience . . . . doing and obeying it . . . . He does not mean that it is to be discussed as an ideal, He really means us to get on with it . . . . Only in the doing of it does the word of Jesus retain its honor, might and power among us. Now the storm can rage over the house, but it cannot shatter that union with Him, which His word has created.*

**"Lord, help me to hear Your words, and do them today, that I may know your power, and know *shatterproof* union with You."**

**DISCIPLESHIP:**

This nugget asks us to think about the person-to-Person aspect of DISCIPLESHIP:

While Christianity may be listed among the great world religions, there are a significant number of aspects that separate Christianity from other religions. One of these aspects is that the adherent to Christianity has the opportunity to experience an interpersonal connection with the God of Christianity, through Jesus Christ. Henry Blackaby adds this commentary: *"Real Christianity is not merely a religion; it is a relationship with a person."*

We must never forget that true discipleship includes the vital necessity of having a growing relationship with our Lord. How important is this? Oswald Chambers, author of *My Utmost For His Highest*, gives us this unforgettable advice:

*We have to maintain our relationship with Him whatever happens. We must never allow anything to injure our relationship with God; if it does get injured we must take time and get it put right. The main thing about Christianity is not the work we do, but the relationship we maintain and the atmosphere produced by that relationship. That is all God asks us to look after, and it is the one thing that is being continually assailed.*

**How is your relationship with God today?**

**DISCIPLESHIP:**

In his booklet entitled *Pursuing The Mission: Making Christlike Disciples*, author Woodie Stevens has some challenging thoughts for all Christians to consider about intentional Discipleship:

*Is there such a thing as "discipleless Christianity?" Is it possible that we have Christians who do not pray and Christians who do not read or hear the Word (the Bible)? What if we have people who claim Christ but do not serve, give, or witness?*

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 20th century author of **The Cost of Discipleship**, said, "Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ."*

*If you are a Christian, following Jesus is not optional. To follow Him means we **love Him**, we **learn from Him**, and we **obey Him**. A disciple is simply a follower of Jesus, who is **helping his or her friend follow Jesus**.*

**If a private detective were hired to find evidence of active discipleship in my life, what would he/she find?**

**CHRISTIAN GROWTH:**

Here is an action list to assist you in the area of CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

If you have a small child at home, your goal is to help that child grow up to be healthy and strong. What are some of the steps that you would take to promote growth in that child? You already know the answers to that question — plenty of sleep, sufficient exercise, eat fruits and vegetables, limit snacks, lots of hugs from parents, etc. These steps, actively taken, will help assist your child in the growth process. Similarly, there are action steps that need to be taken regularly if you are to grow as a Christian. Below is a list that I have compiled from my 40+ years as a Christian along with lots of study and expert advice that should help you grow. (By the way, these steps must be carried out in the context of a right relationship with God, or they could end up becoming a herd of religious activities.)

1. ***Read your Bible*** — Read it daily; do some actual study of a Bible passage, perhaps once a week or once a month; don't forget to meditate on it and memorize it.
2. ***Spend time in Prayer daily*** — Accountability and confession; thanksgiving and praise; cover your day in prayer; pray for others in your world. Aim for a minimum of 15 minutes per day with your Bible and prayer!
3. ***Be part of a Small Group that studies the Bible, prayer for each other, and serves the world around them*** — This could be a Sunday School class or a small group.
4. ***Devote yourself to some aspect of Christian Service*** — Know your **S.H.A.P.E.** and serve in that sphere: *Spiritual Gifts* - what gifts has God given to me? *Heart* - what is it that I love to do? *Abilities* - what abilities do I have that would be useful to God's kingdom? *Personality* - how does my personality affect what I would do best in serving the Lord? *Experiences* - what do the experiences from my past tell me about where I can best serve God?
5. ***Operate on solid Financial ground*** — Tithe (plus 1-2% for ministries and charities of your choice); Stay out of debt as much as possible; Know some solid financial principles to guide your money management (Crown Financial Ministries, at [www.crown.org](http://www.crown.org) is a good resource).
6. ***Become proficient at Sharing Your Faith*** — Know your testimony and be ready to share it; how would you handle objections to the Christian faith? What one person have you connected with, to help them toward faith in Christ?
7. ***Make Worship a daily thing*** — It'll help you get ready for worship on Sunday; consistent Sunday worship attendance is key.
8. ***What am I doing to be a Godly Influence for Christian living in the lives of other people?***
9. ***What am I doing to Grow in Grace and Knowledge of Jesus and the Christian faith?*** — Do I know how to determine the will of God in my life? What am I reading or listening to that makes me stronger in Christ?

Always remember to carry out these steps in the context of a right relationship with God. These steps are up to you to carry out, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

***Are you ready to do them? On your mark .... get set .... GROW!***