

Devotional Life – Leader Notes

1. When we are born again we have a desire to **mature** in the Lord
2. We are **transformed** into His **likeness** by His **Spirit**
 - a. He **changes** us, then **stretches** us – never getting to “Christian Retirement”
 - i. Philippians 3:10-14 – I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
 - b. We need **continuing** change – You begin your relationship with God at the beginning, but that relationship must deepen.
 - i. **Fellowship** is what deepens a relationship (you can't have *fast fellowship*)
3. Circumcised Heart
 - a. Psalm 27:4 - One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.
 - b. Circumcision – “a **cutting** away”
 - i. Of course, this is a cutting away of any and all sin
 - ii. Focus: Cut away the good, but unnecessary, things that crowd out God
 - c. Demands of Ministry
 - i. Mark 1:35-37 - Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"
 - ii. People always looking for Jesus – He ministered to them, met their needs, etc... - everyone demanded His time
 1. Jesus made it a priority to spend time alone with the Father
 - iii. Luke 5:16 – (after healing the man with leprosy) ...yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.
 - d. Dr Andrew A. Bonar – *In order to grow in grace, we must be much alone. It is not in society that the soul grows most vigorously. In one single, quiet hour of prayer, it will often make more progress than in days of company with others. It is in the desert that the dew falls freshest and the air is purest.*

- e. Let nothing stand in the way of **God Himself**.
- f. Martha and Mary
 - i. Luke 10:38-42 - As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."
 - ii. 4 types of Christians
 - 1. **Mary of Bethany** - In a generalized way, she represents one with a single **pursuit of passion** for Jesus while lacking **public ministry** and **servanthood** that characterized Martha.
 - 2. **Martha** - In a generalized way, she represents one with **compassionate service, public ministry** and **servanthood**, while lacking the **pursuit of passion** for Jesus that characterized Mary.
 - 3. **Paul** - In a generalized way, he represents one who combines passion (intimacy) with compassion (servanthood).
 - a. The "Mary's" are seen as those who do not want to be entangled in the world of service that can distract her from loving Jesus.
 - b. The "Martha's" are seen as those who are very active in service and yet do not take time to sit at Jesus' feet.
 - c. The "Paul's" are seen as those who seek a life that combines passion and compassion. Desiring to walk in both dimensions of God's grace without neglecting either passion or compassion (Ecc. 7:18; Phil. 1:22).
 - 4. **Laodiceans** - In a generalized way, these believers represent selfish "consumer-Christians" that neither pursue passion (Mary) or compassion (Martha).
- 4. **Perseverance** motivated by **love**
 - a. Dieting one day won't help us lose weight
 - b. Working out occasionally won't give us strong, firm muscles
 - c. Good results require time and effort
 - d. To persevere, we need motivation – our love we receive from God and our love for God (Song of Solomon, Desiring God)
- 5. The two essential ingredients for spending time with God
 - a. The Word
 - i. It is the **FUEL** for the **FIRE**

End of Listener Guide Page 1

- ii. To develop a relationship with someone is to know better who they are
- iii. Start with the Bible, the Lord will give the revelation and reveal Himself to you
- iv. IT TAKES **GOD** TO REVEAL **GOD**
- v. Suggestions on reading the word
 - 1. Have a plan
 - 2. Read for observation and personal application
 - a. Who, what, where, when why
 - b. What does God have to say?
 - c. Is there a personal application for my life?
 - 3. Ask questions – you won't understand everything
 - a. "Lord, what does this mean – reveal to me what it is you are saying here"
 - b. The Bible doesn't tell us everything we need to know for all eternity – God wants us to ask questions. He desires to reveal the deep things of Himself
 - c. Some things will come in time – God will trust you with more knowledge as you grow and mature spiritually
 - i. Kids don't need to know how every appliance in the kitchen works
 - d. Ephesians 1:17-18 - I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.
 - 4. Write down Your thoughts – so you don't forget
 - a. Insights, instructions from the Lord, etc ...
 - b. You may not recognize it at first, because it won't always be BIG
 - 5. Respond
 - a. God intends for us to not only KNOW His word, but DO His word
 - b. James 1:22-26 - Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has

heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

- c. Be instructed, then respond – you bless God and you become blessed as well

b. Prayer

- i. Talking to God
- ii. Letting Him talk back
- iii. Four suggestions for practical devotional-life prayer (Danny Hodges – *Spending Time With God*)
 - 1. find a **quiet** place
 - a. Mark 1:35 - Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.
 - 2. Always Include **Thanksgiving**
 - a. Psalm 100 – “enter His gates with thanksgiving”
 - i. Gates are **ON THE WAY** to the palace
 - ii. **ON THE WAY** to see the KING
 - b. Helps us speak words of life and develop habits for praying positive prayers
 - c. Philippians 4:6 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God.
 - 3. Be **Specific**
 - a. Gets us out of the “Fast Fellowship” mentality
 - b. Don’t just pray for “sick people” – pray for healings and miracles for John Doe to be healed
 - 4. Pray **Biblically**
 - a. Perhaps the most important one
 - b. You are meditating – meditate on the God-breathed scripture
 - c. What is The Lord’s prayer – Matthew 6:9-13
 - i. Address the Father in reverence and holiness
 - ii. pray for the advancement of HIS kingdom
 - iii. pray for HIS will to be done
 - iv. when we pray for what HE wants, we find that we receive the things we ask for

End of Listener Guide Page 2

6. The Results of a true Devotional Life

- a. You will become more **forgiving**
- b. You will become more **forbearing** (showing patient and unruffled self-control and restraint under adversity; slow to retaliate or express resentment)
 - i. You find out that you have to forgive people you live with over and over and over

- ii. Matthew 18:21-22 – Peter asks how many times? ... 70x7
- c. You will experience **freedom**
 - i. You develop passion, experience His love, experience the NO CONDEMNATION promises
- d. You will experience unspeakable **joy**
- e. You will be able to joyfully honor God with your money – and other “things” that have been given to you
- f. You will become more relational in the Body of Christ
 - i. We are a body – needing each other to know how to operate
- g. You will **mature** spiritually
- h. All of these are qualities of meekness
 - i. You become more Christ-like
 - ii. Interesting how that works – you spend quality time with Christ and you become more LIKE Him

Resources

- Hodges, Danny. *Spending Time with God.*
 - Developing a devotional life
- Piper, John. *Desiring God.*
 - Being satisfied in God and glorifying Him by *enjoying* Him forever
- Bickle, Mike. *Song of Solomon Study, 1998.*
 - Developing true intimacy with Jesus.
- Arthur, Kay. *How to Study Your Bible.*
 - The lasting rewards of the Inductive Method of studying scripture.