

Life Apps

Personal Disciplines: Building Great Habits

Have you ever noticed that the greatest secrets of all are those that aren't really secrets? What's the secret to a healthy life? Diet and exercise. No real secret there. Of course, there are real secrets ... like the recipe for Kentucky fried chicken and what's really in the Area 51 bunkers. But the secret to an authentic, life-giving faith seems to be a secret as well-kept as the formula for Coca-Cola. This week we'll explore the secret practices that build an Amazing Faith.

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18

1. Every spiritual discipline can be used for _____ and for _____.
2. Every spiritual discipline can be _____, _____ and made _____.
3. God rewards our _____, _____.
4. Building an Amazing Faith takes an _____, a _____, and _____.

My Count Me In! Commitments

- I'll be here next week
- I'll invite a friend
- I want to participate in the *Discipleship Directions Course*
- I'll engage a new spiritual discipline for the next 60 days
- I'll engage the weekly study to help the new spiritual discipline to stick

Additional Notes

Digging Deeper and Going Further

Read Matthew 6:1–18. This passage is in the midst of what is called *The Sermon on the Mount*. It is a compendium of teachings Jesus offered to the crowds that includes instructions for what could be called *kingdom living*. This particular section addresses the right motivation for three spiritual practices, but the teaching could easily be applied to many other spiritual habits.

1. Matthew 6:1 is an introductory statement to the next three sections (right giving, right praying, and right fasting). From this verse, what do you think is Jesus' primary concern?

2. Do you think the problem is the public display of righteousness or the motivation behind a public display? What's the difference?

3. Read 6:2–18. What benefits do you think the "hypocrites" get by their public displays of their righteousness?

4. Jesus says that those who practice their righteousness appropriately will be rewarded. What rewards do you think are being implied in these passages?

5. Do you think Jesus is implying that public praying is wrong? Why or why not?

6. In Jesus' day, the religious leaders fasted twice a week ... on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as for special occasions. To fast means to abstain from something, such as food, or meat, or even from an activity for a time. Nowhere in the Bible is fasting commanded, but people fasted as a sign of their devotion, as well as to demonstrate the seriousness of their prayer. In what ways do you demonstrate your devotion to God? To the seriousness of your prayers?
