

Discipleship—Part 4

Daily Disciplines of a Disciple

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. —James 1:22

But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting. —Matthew 17:21

The Daily Disciplines of a Disciple

A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. (Luke 6:40)

*Shimon his son said: All my days have I grown up among the wise and I have not found anything better for a man than silence. **Studying Torah is not the most important thing rather doing it.** Whoever multiplies words causes sin. (Avot 1:17)*

“It may be tempting to change your life all at once, but slow, steady progress is always more effective than a ‘crash course’... Remember, even the longest journey can only be completed one step at a time.”¹

In order to be a true disciple of the Master, we need to have daily disciplines of living out the Torah, just like Yeshua. It’s good to “know” how the Master lived, but it doesn’t do us any good until we “practice” living as he did. Some of the disciplines we can implement in our daily lives to help us become more like the Master are the following:

- Prayer
- Study
- Tzeddekah
- Fasting (not “daily”, but should be part of our regular routine)
- Shmirat HaLashon (proper speech)

We will focus on the first three today.

Prayer

“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.” (Mark 1:35)

Rabbi Shimon said: Be careful in the reciting of the Shema and in prayer. When you pray do not make your prayer a form of routine but a plea for mercy and supplications before G-d, for it is written (Joel 2:13), “For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and

¹ Jacobson, Simon. *Toward A Meaningful Life: The Wisdom of the Rebbe* (a collection of teachings by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson), Copyright ©1995, p149.

abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing." Do not be wicked in your own mind. (Avot 2:18)

You have been designed to pray. You were created with the capacity to pray. Only you can bring forth the praises of Adonai. Only you can commune with the Creator of Heaven & Earth. Although nature has the capacity to praise the Creator perfectly, the perfect praise of nature does not compare to the imperfect praise of man. Here are some very basic reasons to pray regularly:

- **Obligation**—We were created to praise the Almighty. Prayer should be 95% praise, 5% petition.
- **Discipline**—Prayer is a discipline that will bear forth much fruit over time.
- **Transformation**—Through prayer we are transformed by renewing our minds. (*Shema example*)
- **Community**—Through common prayer we join our hearts and our voices with others, including those who have gone before us: the prophets, The Master, the disciples, etc.
- **Prayer makes a difference**—It may be the only difference you make in another person's life, especially those who will not hear the message of Torah from you.

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time... I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer... (1 Timothy 2:1-8)

"Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

"Should circumstances make it necessary for a person to choose between saying more prayers without kavanah and saying fewer prayers with kavanah, the fewer are clearly preferred... Says the Talmud: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, desires the heart' (Sanhedrin 106b)."²

*We can't wait until we are discouraged to draw near to God. If we haven't been drawing near every day as a normal part of life, then how can we draw near the one day we are discouraged? **What we practice in times of comfort is what we will do when a time of discouragement comes.**³*

Contrary to popular belief, the core difference between Christianity and Judaism is not Messiah. It is knowing verses doing. Christianity places the emphasis on the gnosis of

² Donin, Hayim. To Pray As A Jew, ©1980, p20.

³ Hegg, Tim. Verbal quote from Wooden Podium seminar September, 2005.

messianic fulfillment, while Judaism places the emphasis on the application of messianic fulfillment.

Something Boaz Michael emphasized several times during his teaching on prayer is that majority of those within the Torah movement are a prayerless people. We do not have a consistent and active prayer life. We are more concerned with the trivia of the mitzvot than the performance of them. We would rather read a book on prayer, rather than pray.

Study

*Shammai said: **Make your study of the Torah a fixed habit.** Say little and do much, and receive all men with a cheerful face. (Avot 1:15)*

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

We should have a regular time of study each day, set apart and guarded from our other activities. This is hard to see modeled in the life of the Master. However, if we look closely, I believe we can see it. He attends synagogue on a regular basis, and even at the age of 12 he was engaged in *pilpul* (rabbinic debate) with adult, studied teachers of the Torah with a very sophisticated degree of understanding. Our lives should be characterized by constant learning *and* applying of the Scriptures.

Tzeddekah

And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness. (Deuteronomy 6:25)

No one is to appear before me empty-handed (Exodus 23:15; 34:20; Deuteronomy 16:16)

Shimon the Righteous was one of the last survivors of the Great Assembly. He used to say: On three things the world is sustained: on the Torah, on the (Temple) service, and on deeds of loving kindness. (Avot 1:2)

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:1-4)

In regard to righteousness, we need to be scrupulously living out the Torah day by day, as I have said previously.

We also need to daily be “doing” *tzeddekah* (righteousness / charity). In regard to charity, tradition is to put at least some small coins in a *pushka* (charity box) before each time you pray (based on the passages in Exodus & Deuteronomy above).