

Basic Spiritual Trainings Introduction

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John 15:4-8 (ESV)

⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Is it possible that one who has believed in Jesus not abiding in the Lord?

Yes! You may not be in the Lord! Therefore the Bible frequently reminds us to abide in the Lord, and says, “Apart from me you can do nothing”, and “If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned.” You may not be in the Lord, and this causes your life and ministry unfruitful. That is why it is very important to abide in the Lord.

Dr. Joel Comisky has interviewed eight of the fastest growing cell churches in the world, and the result shows that the key to the growth of cell groups is the time spent by cell church leaders in coming near to God. The growth of the cell group which has a leader spending more than 90 minutes daily in devotion is double of that having a leader spending less than half an hour.

Growth is a natural result of our relationship with God, the same applies to cell groups as well as to individual persons. As long as we maintain a good relationship with God, growth is the natural result.

The purpose of spiritual training is the keep abiding in the Lord. If you are firmly rooted in the Lord, you can bear more fruit for God. We need to equip ourselves and live out the presence of Christ in our daily lives. A strong sense of being with God will transform our lives, helping us to have self-control instead of being controlled by our natural response to circumstances. We bring our encounters back to the central point, which is Christ, and what comes out again from this central point would no longer be a response of flesh and blood, but a living out of the mind of Christ. This is a life of self-control.

The stronger the sense of God’s presence, the more self-control the life can be. The question is: Do we have a strong sense of God’s presence? How can be transform the objective fact of God’s presence into our subjective experience? The presence of God is an objective fact, but it is a totally

different thing to have a strong sense of God's presence in whatever kind of circumstances.

This needs training. Our goal is that the presence of God becomes our spontaneous response in face of all kinds of adversities and trials. (Training is to turn something basic into a habit.)

In whatever we do, success has to be achieved from the foundation. The basis is very important, as it is the foundation. The root determines the fruit. Taking root downward ensures bearing fruit upward. Firmly establish your foundation, so that you can build on the top of it.

Five Basic Spiritual Trainings – Five basic directions of training

2000 years of Christian spiritual training tradition can be distinguished into four main parts, namely Roman Catholic, Protestant, Charismatic and Eastern Orthodox, which may be unfamiliar to many.

Roman Catholic: Spiritual training in the image of marriage – a romantic and cozy love

Protestant: Spiritual training in the image of a father – obedient children

Charismatic: Spiritual training in the image a mother – enjoying in the bosom of the Lord

Eastern Orthodox: Spiritual training in the image of a bosom friend – nothing need to be said

Five basic spiritual trainings are abridged and modified exercises based on the above four Christian spiritual traditions.

- Daily morning praises (5 minutes a day) – Charismatic tradition
- Thanksgiving and waiting on God (5 minutes a day giving thanks to God and enjoying his presence) – Roman Catholic tradition
- Daily devotion not less than 7 minutes – Protestant tradition
- Keeping ourselves in God's presence
 - Active confession of faith, beginning from the passages on "loving ourselves" (3 minutes a day) – Charismatic tradition
 - Phrasal prayers – Eastern Orthodox tradition
- Listening to God's voice – a combination of Charismatic, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions

Learn all the five basic trainings. When you are thoroughly acquainted with them and can master them, choose and develop your own style according to your personality.