

Series Introduction: Private Habits for Christian Growth

What are habits for Christian growth? They are practices (sometimes called “disciplines” or “rhythms”) that God outlines for us in the Bible that develop our relationship with him. More specifically, they are practices that *connect* us with God (and sometimes with others) and help us temporarily *separate* from people and things to allow us to refocus on God.

Habits of Connection include: (1) listening to, studying, meditating on, memorizing, and obeying God’s Word (see Donald Whitney’s *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* chapters 2 and 3); (2) praying to God (including thanksgiving, confession of sin, and praying for yourself and others); (3) singing to God; (4) fellowship with other Christians (with an emphasis on both relational intimacy and advancing the church’s mission); (5) serving others with your time, talents, and treasures; (6) submitting yourself to those in God-ordained positions of authority (such as your church leaders). In this category, we directly engage God and his people to grow in our relationship with God.

Habits of Separation include: (1) abstaining from food (fasting); (2) separating from people (solitude); (3) separating from noise and distractions to focus on listening to God (silence); (4) reducing your amount of sleep—rising earlier and/or staying up later than you would otherwise to connect with God (vigil); (5) avoiding public recognition for your good deeds (secretive giving and service); and (6) putting aside work (rest and recreation).

Many of these habits can be practiced *both privately and publicly*—particularly studying God’s Word and prayer. In this series, we focus on four habits that Christians practice privately.

This series focuses on the following *passages of Scripture* and *summaries of sound doctrine* (also called *sound teaching*):

Lesson	Primary Scripture Passages	Sound Doctrine
One	Psalms 1–2	Bible Intake
Two	Matthew 6:5–15	Prayer
Three	Psalm 51	Confession of Sins
Four	Matthew 6:16–18, Luke 5:33–39, Acts 13:1–3	Fasting