

# #1 – What is Spirituality?

By Randall Harris

## I. What Spirituality is NOT

1. Bible Knowledge
2. Religious Activity
3. Feelings

Our tendency is to define spirituality in terms of our personality type  
(thinkers, doers, prayers, feelers)

## II. What Spirituality IS

“Bringing all of life under the umbrella of our faith convictions”

Bible Study: 1 Kings 18:16-40

1. The problem: Divided Loyalties (16-21)
2. The solution: Which god is God? (22-39)
3. The Outcome: Radical Obedience (v40)

## III. Looking at Ourselves

1. Which of the above “types” of spirituality am I most drawn to? Which am I least comfortable with?
2. What areas of my life do I have the most problem turning over to God’s will?

## IV. Final Thought

There is one, and only one, evidence that we know God and have a deep relationship with him: Do we walk the way Jesus walked?  
1 John 2:3-6

## #2 – Practicing the Presence of God

By Randall Harris

### I. Bible Study: I Kings 19:1-18

1. Elijah flees to Sinai – where He is sure God is present
2. God gives Elijah a lesson in “presence” by his absence
3. God commissions Elijah back to the mundane tasks of his ministry

What is the point? Every time and every place is sacred – not just Carmel or Sinai, but the ordinary everyday life.

### II. Practicing the Presence of God

1. “Today, I will be incompetent.” II Cor. 1:8-20
2. “Today, I will be fully present to the people in front of me, and to God.” (example-Jesus)
3. “Today, I will be the Christ.” Phil 1:21
4. “Today, I will see the Christ.” Matt 25:31-46

### III. Looking at Ourselves

1. Share a time when you were keenly aware of God’s presence in the midst of ordinary life.
2. How would “seeing the Christ” change the way you interact with the world?

### IV. Final Thought

The spiritual Life is one lived one moment at a time. We begin by recognizing the kingdom possibilities right here and right now.

## #3 – The Way of Discipline

By Randall Harris

### I. Faulty Approaches to Spiritual Growth

1. “Strike me spiritual!”
2. Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps

### II. The Way Between: Spiritual Discipline

1. Rom. 8:1-4 – The Spirit empowers us as we make ourselves available.
2. Trying vs. Training
  - a. Athletics
  - b. Arts
3. Conclusion: As we accept certain disciplines into our lives, we train for righteousness and thus become available for God’s transformation of our lives.

### III. Discipline vs. Legalism

1. Internal vs. External
2. Preparation vs. Merit

### IV. Looking at Ourselves

1. Does the concept of discipline in the spiritual realm make sense to you? Can we train for the spiritual life as we train in the arts or athletics?
2. Are you willing to accept the way of discipline to have the spiritual life you’ve always wanted?

### V. Final Thought

This approach is tried and proven for 2,000 years of Christian history. You can grow spiritually. God will keep his promises. All you have to do is give him something to work with.

## #4 – Reading the Bible for Transformation

By Randall Harris

### I. Obstacles to Transforming Bible Study

1. Familiarity breeds, if not contempt, then apathy.
2. Prejudices we bring to the text
3. Seduction of the trivial

### II. The key to transformational Bible Reading: we don't interrogate the Bible, the Bible interrogates us. Scripture challenges our worldview, thoughts and actions.

1. The most serious Bible study question: If I take this text seriously, what must I change?
2. Scripture is a call to action, not just understanding (Matt. 7:24-27)

### III. Looking at Ourselves

A Bible reading exercise: Read Luke 18:18-30

1. Exegetical considerations
2. Where do I detect resistance to this text?
3. If I take this text seriously, what must I change?

### IV. Final Thought

Detailed study of a biblical text must not become a way of hiding God after linguistic and historical and cultural studies have told us what kind of world (and people) is the text trying to create?

The point of studying the Bible is not to master the Bible, but rather to be mastered by the One who is All in All.

## #5 – The Prayerful Heart

By Randall Harris

### I. The Habit of Jesus

Luke 4:40-44; Luke 5:15-16; Luke 6:12-13

### II. Five Ways of Praying

1. Talking AT God (rote prayers)
  - A. Psalms
  - B. Lord's Prayer
  - C. Other Written Prayers
2. Talking TO God (conversational prayer)  
Sharing everything with God
3. Listening to God (Lectio Divina and other meditations)  
Prayer as listening, not just talking
4. Being with God  
“Wasting time with God”
5. “To breathe is to Pray.” (praying without ceasing)

### III. Looking At Ourselves

1. How do you feel about your prayer life?
2. How does the notion of prayer as listening rather than just talking or asking hit you?

### IV. Final Thought

All the spiritual masters agree that prayer is at the very heart of spiritual renewal. There is a living and loving God who wants to spend time with us. Prayer is the frontier of the spiritual quest, a constantly new adventure. As Merton reminds us; in prayer we are always beginners.

## #6 – Battling Diversion: Fasting

By Randall Harris

### I. The Core Idea

“The central idea in fasting is the voluntary denial of an otherwise normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity.” (Foster)

### II. Some Key Passages

2 Kings 4:1-13 – Example of Jesus

Isaiah 58:1-7 – God’s chosen fast

Nehemiah 1:4-11 – Normal Fast

Daniel 10:1-14 – Partial Fast

Acts 13:1-3/Acts 14:19-23 – Group Fasts

2 Cor. 11:27 – Regular Fasting

### III. Is it a Command?

Matthew 6:16-18 – Does not appear to be a command as much as an assumption.

### IV. Extending the Principle of Fasting Beyond Food

1. Fasting from people
2. Fasting from media
3. Fasting from consumer culture

### V. Looking at Ourselves

1. Why has a discipline about which the Bible says much fallen into such disuse in our time?
2. Do you have a fasting experience you can share?

### VI. Final Thought

I know of no one who has seriously engaged the discipline of fasting who doesn’t think there are great spiritual benefits from it. Is it time to re-discover this ancient principle?

## #7 – Battling Idolatry and Pride: Simplicity

By Randall Harris

I. Jesus talks more about money than virtually any other subject.

Luke 6:20-26

Luke 12: 13-34

Luke 16:13

Luke 18: 18-30

Paul also, in his epistles (1 Tim. 6:6-10; 2 Cor. 8-9)

II. Principles on the use and abuse of material things

1. Everything God created is good.
2. Material things are often distracting from Kingdom work.
3. Wealth easily becomes idolatrous.

III. The Ideal Stance

1. Carefree contentment (Phil. 4:10-13)
2. Generosity (1 Tim. 6:17-20)

IV. Practical Suggestions for Managing Material Things

(See Foster's 10 suggestions, **Celebration of Discipline**)

V. Looking at Ourselves

1. We are among the richest people in the history of the world. What is an appropriate lifestyle for a Christian in our time and place?
2. What is one thing you can do to get a handle on our run-away lifestyles?

VI. Final Thought

Do we ever come to a point where we say, "Enough is enough"? There is little hope for genuine spiritual renewal among us while we are sunk in materialism. Who will be bold enough to chart the path of "downward mobility"? After all, we worship a Savior who didn't have a place to lay his head.

## #8 – Battling Compulsion: Solitude and Holy Leisure

By Randall Harris

### I. The Sabbath Principle (Exodus 20:8-11)

Times of rest remind us that God is on duty even when we are not – not everything depends on our frantic activity.

### II. Facing our compulsion and being able to say NO! (See Kelly, **Testament of Devotion**)

### III. Steps into Solitude and Sabbath

1. Daily little solitudes
2. Weekly Sabbath
3. Yearly Retreat

### IV. Cultivate Silence

### V. Looking at Ourselves

1. If you are leading a frantically busy life, God didn't lead you there. How did you get there?
2. Jesus got everything done he needed to, yet found extended time for solitude and rest. Can we do the same?
3. Discuss the importance of "play" (which doesn't necessarily mean competition).

### VI. Final Thought

If there is anything that the spiritual masters all consistently agree on, it is that there is nothing so destructive of the spiritual life as constant frantic activity and noise. Do you hear God calling you to the depths of silence?

# #9 – We Are in This Together: Fellowship

By Randall Harris

## I. What Fellowship is NOT

1. Spending time together
2. Common interests
3. Intimacy

## II. What Fellowship IS

1. Gal. 3:26-29

Fellowship is what we share in common IN CHRIST that makes all our differences relatively unimportant.

## III. What We Share and How We Share It

1. Common salvation ----- Telling our story
2. Common purpose ----- Encouragement
3. Common sin ----- confession

## IV. Looking at Ourselves

Confession – the hardest aspect of fellowship

1. Why it matters (Bonhoeffer) (1 John 1)
2. How to be a good confessor (Foster)
3. How to be a good priest

## V. Final Thought

Christian fellowship is not just hanging out with other Christians. It is sharing what brings us together and holds us together in Jesus Christ.

# #10 – Make Me a Servant

By Randall Harris

## I. Bible Study: John 13:1-17

Notice especially v. 3-4, where Jesus performs *out* of his understanding of his identity, not *despite* this understanding.

In other words, the better we understand who we truly are, the more natural service is.

## II. Principles of Service

1. Matthew 25:31ff – small things count
2. Luke 10:25 ff – service is not bound by ethnicity or class
3. Mathew 6:1-4 – secrecy in service is great discipline

## III. The Word for Our World is Power, But the Word of Scripture is Submission. Ephesians 5:21-6:9

## IV. Looking at Ourselves

There are many ways to serve in our world. One of the most important forms of service in the New Testament world was hospitality. How can we renew the service of hospitality in our time?  
(See Thompson, **Soul Feast** – Chapter 8)

## V. Final Thought

There is a great deal of talk in our time about “servant leadership.” What would it look like if we truly led out with the servant heart of Jesus?

# #11 – Battling Forgetfulness: Rituals that Empower Us

By Randall Harris

- I. There is always the threat that the performance of rituals will become simple ritualism. Rituals must not be disconnected from the stories they tell or the rest of life.
  1. Deuteronomy 6:20-25 (positive example)
  2. Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8 (negative examples)
  
- II. Two Primary Elements of Ritual
  1. Remembrance
  2. Participation
  
- III. Two Primary Christian Rituals
  1. Baptism (Romans 6)
  2. Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34)  
(see Harris' chapter, baptism and the Lord's Supper, **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Incarnation**)
  
- IV. Looking at Ourselves
  1. As you look back on your baptism experience, are there things you wished had been done to mark this momentous moment? How can your church develop a deep, meaningful, baptism ritual?
  2. With a weekly Lord's Supper, it is easy for it to become a thoughtless habit. Describe one of your more meaningful Lord's Supper experiences. Are there ways to keep this powerful ritual lively?
  
- V. Final Thought

Rituals have always been important to God's people. We should not abandon rituals gone stale, but reinvigorate them by re-connecting them to God's story in our lives.

## #12 – A Way of Life (Rule of Life)

By Randall Harris

### I. Principles for a Rule of Life

1. Do-ability (consistency over time is the key)

Does this rule take seriously your current place in life?

Does this rule take seriously your giftedness and areas of desired growth?

2. Transforming Power?

Is there enough here to make a difference?

3. Accountability

Have I made provision for encouragement and nurture from others?

### II. Examples of Rule of Life

(See Thompson, **Soul Feast** – Chapter 9)

### III. Looking at Ourselves

1. Do you feel resistance to or the need for the discipline of a Rule of Life, or both?

2. Explore with a couple of others what you think the elements of a workable rule in your own life would look like.

### IV. Final Thought

As we come to the conclusion of this study, if we do not make provision for the disciplines to become a part of our ongoing lives, we may have gained insight, but will not experience transformation.

Do you sense God's call to deeper spiritual life – the life you have always wanted?