**SPIRITUAL HEALTH**

Most of us are so busy that we don’t take the time/energy to stay spiritually healthy. A lot of things compete for our attention. We want to know God more deeply, but our lifestyle choices often make it next to impossible. It’s no wonder that we feel spiritually empty, dried up, even sick.

The Bible very clearly tells us that we aren’t just to be theoretical Christians but people who completely accept God’s grace and **practice** what we say we believe. Spiritual health means that we are alive and vibrant in Christ. That takes discipline to help us stay on the right track, focused on God and not on our own problems or distractions. James 1:22 says *we shouldn’t just hear what the Bible says, we should do what it says.*

Jesus sets an example for us of how to strengthen our spiritual health. He used disciplines such as solitude, silence, simplicity, service, study, prayer, worship and fasting to stay spiritually healthy.

Below are some examples of activities and practices which Christians have employed through the centuries. We can find evidence of them in the Bible and each of these can help us to maintain or achieve spiritual health.

1. **Prayer; silence and solitude:**

Spending time in God’s presence empowers us. It is a privilege and a gift to be able to commune with God through prayer.

1. **Listening to God; journaling our thoughts and prayers:**

Listening (paying attention) to the Holy Spirit’s still small voice in our hearts reminds us that God is active in our lives. Writing down our prayers, thoughts, questions, and hopes gives us the opportunity to track how God has worked in our lives on a daily basis.

1. **Private and corporate worship:**

Praising God opens us to the Holy Spirit, reorders our priorities and focuses our attention. Worship connects us to God in body, mind and spirit.

1. **Bible-reading and study:**

Meditating on God’s Word keeps us focused on God, rather than on our problems and wants. Through the Bible God speaks to us and guides us personally.

1. **Obeying God’s commands:**

Putting our faith into practice increases our joy. This is one of the paradoxes of faith: when we **submit** ourselves to God, we are actually **freed** from the anxiety and worry that Satan throws at us.

1. **Loving God and our neighbors:**

Surrendering to God leads us to a life of love. God is love, and when we live and serve in Christ, we experience love in return.

1. **Stepping out in faith when urged to do something:**

Trusting in God’s guidance strengthens our faith. When we dare to step out in faith, we learn that God is with us wherever we go and that God is more powerful than our fear.

1. **Fasting, not necessarily from food – perhaps from some other thing that consumes our thoughts or time:**

Finding time or space to pay attention to God by giving up something else blesses us. We need to guard our hearts as well as our time from distractions. The sacrifice results in an enriched spiritual life.

1. **Serving others:**

Redirecting our attitude away from self keeps us on the right track. It is an exceptional way to put Christ’s example into action.

1. **Fellowship with other believers:**

Building and being part of a Christian faith community equips us for sharing and caring. The values of God’s kingdom are different than those of the world, so we need the support and encouragement of other believers in order to truly live as Christians in our daily lives. The Bible teaches that believers are part of one body…we can’t function appropriately without one another.

It's important to remember that disciplines are not ends in themselves but means to an end of knowing God more deeply. If we seek God, we will find him because he wants to be found. Effort won’t earn salvation – that comes only through faith by grace (Romans 3:24-25) – but we **can** make the effort to stay spiritually healthy. When we are fully alive in Christ, we are also richly blessed with spiritual health.

Be Well!