

Spiritual Disciplines – The Wheel Diagram

The Wheel Illustration depicts SIX of the crucially important components of a healthy and growing Christian life.



Three important dimensions of The Wheel are:

1. The Vertical Dimension – Your relationship with God through The Word and Prayer.
2. The Horizontal Dimension – Your relationship with others through Fellowship (other Christians) and Witnessing (non-Christian)
3. The Volitional Dimension – Your relationship with your will through surrender to the Lordship of Christ (the wheel hub) and through Obedience (the wheel rim)

THE VERTICAL DIMENSION – Your Relationship with God

The Word

In this illustration The Word is the foundational spoke and is perhaps the most crucial element of a balanced Christian life. Through the Bible God shows us His principles for life and ministry. We learn

to obey, and we increasingly see Christ as worthy of our unqualified allegiance. As you have a personal intake of The Word you stay healthy and continue growing.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Hebrews 4:12

Prayer

Prayer is the natural outflow of meaningful time in the Bible. Our talking to God completes the fellowship element with Him. We respond back to God in prayer after He speaks to us through His Word. We are sharing our heart with the One who longs for our companionship. Prayer can unleash the power of God. Personal battles can be won through prayer, and our prayers for others can further the kingdom of Christ in the world.

Jeremiah 33:3

Philippians 4:6-7

THE HORIZONTAL DIMENSION – Your Relationship with Others

Fellowship

Christians are neither higher nor lower than other people. As someone once said, “the ground is level at the foot of the cross”. We have the privilege of close, meaningful interaction with other members of God’s family. We can learn from one another and spread encouragement. Among like-minded believers we experience dynamic, spiritual reinforcement. This does not happen if we operate independently in isolation from other Christians.

Hebrews 10:24-25

Acts 2:42

Witnessing

When a person has a vibrant life in Christ, it is natural to want to explain to others how they can also have it. Your devotional life, extended times of prayer, and prompt obedience to God will give your life an attractiveness that draws people and adds credibility to your words. Effective witnessing also involves skills. Skills can be developed. We can become a sharpened instrument in God’s hand as we

get training and experience.

Acts 1:8

I Peter 3:15

THE VOLITIONAL DIMENSION – Your Relationship with Your Will

Christ the Center

The act of making Christ central to your life – that is, giving Him the place of true lordship in your life – is really an act of your will. It is a decision that you make, and there should be a moment in your life when you are willing to surrender totally to Christ's authority and lordship. This may be as a new Christian or after some months or even years. There may be times of recommitment, as surrendering our will and following Christ's will is often a daily struggle. It is true that lordship is a volitional matter – a matter of your choice or your will. But as you pray and others pray for you, God creates within you the desire to do what He wants you to do in order to express His lordship in your life.

Galatians 2:20

Luke 9:23-25

Obedience to Christ

When you are obedient to Christ and actively follow God's leading, it will show in your outward lifestyle. People can see evidence of your Christianity. Some acts of obedience to God are more internal. They have to do with attitudes, habits, motives, sense of values, and day-to-day thoughts.

These internal acts of obedience eventually surface in relationships with other people. The proof of your love for God is your demonstrated obedience to Him.

Jeremiah 7:23

John 14:15, 21

CLOSING AND DISCUSSION

The Wheel illustration is a visual example of the basic habits and disciplines a Christian must develop to grow as a Christian. It is not either prayer or an intake of the Word, it is both. It is not either fellowship or witnessing, it is both. A balanced Christian life includes all of these disciplines. It is the wise believer who intentionally pursues balance and the development of all these disciplines. Develop your strengths and trust God to use them to the fullest extent. Also work on your deficiencies and inadequacies, trusting the Holy Spirit to continue to renovate you.

The Wheel is a good checklist for evaluating growth and balance in your spiritual life. Over the months and years, you want to see a continual development and strengthening of your spiritual life in all areas.

1. The purpose of discipleship is to help you develop habits necessary for spiritual growth. Can you think of someone who is spiritually mature? What character traits or habits mark them as someone who is spiritually mature?
2. Reflect on the spiritual disciplines in The Wheel illustration. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being high), how would you rate your habits and self-discipline in each area?

The Word

Prayer

Fellowship

Witnessing

Christ the Center/Lordship

Obedience

3. Which discipline do you think you are doing well in, and why?
4. Which discipline is the hardest for you right now, and why?
5. What can you do to bring balance to the spiritual disciplines in your life?