

Discipline: Mind

Colossians 2:6-10; Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; Psalms 1:1-3; Philippians 4:8-9; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 3:14-16; Jeremiah 17:5-8

Discipline:

The Bible never presents transformation as something we force through determination alone. Scripture consistently describes change as something that grows. Living a disciplined life has nothing to do with punishment. It is training, slow intentional work, that God does when we surrender our lives to Him. It is the transformation of our minds, bodies, and souls through presence...not pressure.

Tree Analogy:

Last week we introduced this image that we will be using through the series.



Trees make great metaphors for how we grow as humans. We were created in the image of God (God, Jesus, Spirit = Trinity). We are also made up of more than one part (Mind, Body, Soul).

A healthy tree grows slowly, intentionally, and from the inside out. *Roots* anchor identity and draw nourishment. The *trunk* gives strength and direction. *Branches* and *fruit* reveal what's happening beneath the surface. In the same way, a disciplined Christian life begins below the surface with a mind rooted in God and formed through discipleship.

Today we are focusing on how we can have a disciplined mind that is rooted in God (Identity and Truth). Discipleship begins with who God is and who we are in Him. Before behavior can change, beliefs must be formed.

Read Colossians 2:6-7. As believers, having a disciplined mind means anchoring our thoughts in God's truth and letting Scripture shape our worldview. When we are rooted in the truth and knowledge of God we can stand firm against anything the world throws at us. Having deep roots is necessary to be able to withstand the things of this world that come against us.

Read Colossians 2:8-10.

Rocky Ground:

It doesn't feel like enough to say that I grew up in church. I didn't just attend services on Sunday mornings. My involvement in church was a large part of my identity. My dad was a Sunday school teacher, deacon, and handyman. My mom taught Sunday school, children's church, played the piano, sang, cooked meals, and cleaned. My sister and I started helping with puppets, singing, and even teaching at very young ages. If the doors were open, we were there. And if the doors weren't open, often we were still there.

But my faith foundation went beyond the church walls. My parents prayed with us, read the Bible to us, and instructed us in how to live a Christian life. My life was fully saturated with all the right things. I knew the songs, quotable scriptures, and all the stories.

Then I went to college. My first semester, I had a biology professor who was a bold atheist. She used science as a weapon against Christian belief and I was defenseless. She had a PhD, spoke with confident conviction, and was ready to take down anyone who disagreed with her. I was a simple country girl who had lived a very blessed but very sheltered life. For the first time in my life, I was face to face with someone who not only didn't believe like me but who took every opportunity to try to convince me that I was wrong. It shook me to the core. I realized that I had no idea why I believed what I believed and had no way of defending my faith. From the outside, my faith life looked like a strong and sturdy tree. However, under the surface, the roots were shallow and weak.

Read Matthew 13:3-9. This is the only parable that Jesus explained what it means. Now read Matthew 13:18-23.

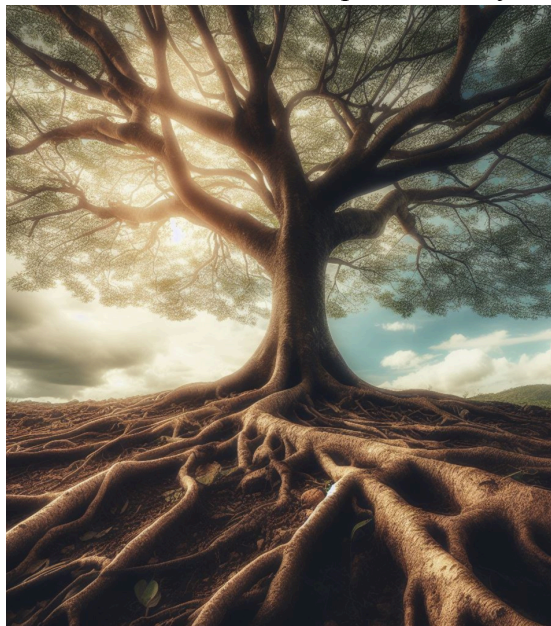
I was the seed that fell on the rocky ground. Had I been planted by myself, my faith probably would have withered away. However, I was planted by friends and family who encouraged, prodded, and sometimes pushed me along until I dug through all the soil around me and pulled out all the rocks that were blocking me from growing in my understanding.

Growing Deep Roots:

It takes time to grow deep roots. When the roots are good, the tree can grow, produce, and flourish...but it takes work and discipline.

A couple of months ago, we did a series called Sacred Rhythms. Rhythms are different from habits. Habits are often unintentional, but Rhythms are intentional actions. To form deep spiritual roots, you have to intentionally develop your mental discipline and train both your mind and your heart over time.

Let's look at some practical ways to form sacred rhythms to grow your roots deep.



ANCHOR YOUR MIND IN ONE DAILY 'NON-NEGOTIABLE'
{ PSALMS 1:1-3 }

PRACTICE SLOW SCRIPTURE READING
{ PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9 }

DISCIPLINE YOUR INPUTS
{ ROMANS 12:2 }

TRAIN YOUR THOUGHTS WITH TRUTH
{ 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 }

LET COMMUNITY SHAPE YOUR MIND
{ EPHESIANS 3:14-16 }

1. Anchor your mind in one daily 'non-negotiable'. Choose one small, repeatable practice you can do every day...even on busy or hard ones. Some examples are: prayer, 5 minutes of scripture, journaling. Depth comes from consistency, not volume. Roots grow quietly and slowly. Read Psalms 1:1-3

2. Practice slow scripture (not more scripture). Resist skimming, read fewer verses, read them out loud, and sit in silence for 30-60 seconds after reading (soak in it). Ask: What word or phrase stands out? What does this reveal about God? What does this invite me to trust or release? This forms patience and attentiveness. Read Philippians 4:8-9.
3. Discipline your inputs. What you repeatedly consume shapes your inner world. Limit reactive news or scrolling. Create 'quiet margins' (car rides, showers, walks). Replace background noise with silence or worship. Read Romans 12:2.
4. Train your thoughts with truth. When anxious or intrusive thoughts appear, don't just push them away...name them and replace them ("This is fear/control/shame". "I can trust Him with what I can't control"). This builds mental resilience rooted in faith. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5.
5. Let community shape your mind. Deep roots are rarely formed alone. Invite others to speak truth into blind spots. Process scripture and life together. Learn to receive corrections without defensiveness. Spiritual formation is communal. Read Ephesians 3:14-16.

Progress:

It is so hard to see spiritual growth, but you don't see the roots when you look at a tree. A Sunday morning message will only get you so far. You have to be disciplined on your own to really grow deep roots. Sometimes you will do better than other times but that's ok. Some seasons are dryer than others. It's natural. Just don't give up trying...never give up trying. Fix your mind on the things above and let your roots grow deep.

Read Jeremiah 17:5-8.

Reflection Questions:

- How would you describe the current depth of your roots in God's truth and identity?
- What could be a realistic daily "non-negotiable" that would anchor your mind in God?
- What anxious, fearful, or intrusive thoughts tend to repeat in your mind? How can naming and replacing those thoughts with truth (2 Corinthians 10:5) become a regular practice for you?
- Who are the people helping shape your thinking and spiritual growth? How open are you to receiving corrections or truth from others?