



# DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS SERIES

**SUNDAY 7TH MAY 2023**

Topic: Discipleship Essentials "Effort"

Philipp 3: 12-21

Speaker: Ps. Sam Toms

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Following Jesus can be incredibly hard.

Philippians 3 encourages us to apply effort to the challenge of discipleship.

Instead of applying effort to be better people, we would be wise to apply effort to ensure we are developing and growing in intimacy with our Heavenly Father.

Jesus made time with his Father absolutely central to his life and mission. We would be wise to do the same.

We can't ignore the effort required to undergo change and become Christ-like.

Effort in relationships produces intimacy, and intimacy produces transformation.



THE DISCIPLESHIP CHALLENGE 2023

**GROWING & GOING**





When we come to follow Jesus, we can either downplay or over-emphasise our own involvement in the transformation of becoming Christ-likeness. We can simply presume God will mould us without any intentionality or effort on our part, or we can try and become complete by ourselves without God. As with many aspects of trying to understand theology, there is a need to hold both realities in tension. None of us have perfect tension in this.

Q. Which side do you normally sit on with this tension? Are you more prone to abiding and waiting for God to change you, or are you more inclined to try and make it happen on your own strength?

The reality is that both are true at the same time. A better way to understand it would be that we put ourselves in a place where we can be transformed. A key to abiding is ensuring that we create sacred places where we engage and grow intimately with God. This can require a lot of effort and self-discipline to begin with. Removing distractions allows us to hear with greater clarity the voice of God.

READ Mark 1:35, Luke 3:21 and Luke 9:28.

In these verses, we see the significance Jesus places in finding quality time with God.

Q. Do you have a sacred quiet space where you commune and engage with God? What is needed for you to make a space like this a reality in your life?

Often we apply areas of effort more naturally to aspects of our life that we see as more pressing or more significant. Spiritual disciplines, such as fasting, praying and soaking in the word of God, can be a hard activity. This often betrays the reality that we don't truly acknowledge the significance and importance of being transformed by God.





Just as in any relationship, the level of intimacy and romance is directly proportional to the effort we put into it. As much can be said of our spiritual relationship with God. The effort we put in is foundational in growing in intimacy. It's within the context of intimacy that we understand God as our 'Abba' Father – essentially 'Daddy'. We would be wise to intentionally choose to pursue an intimate, honest and vulnerable relationship with our God.

The Christian life can be incredibly hard at times. We would be wise not to fight the hard and tough situations that life has us in and invest in remaining in close proximity to God, remaining in his presence, in the palm of His hand.

Pray for the self-control (fruit of the spirit) to place you daily in the presence of our King.



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