



FEBRUARY - SUBMISSION

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE RELEASE

OVERVIEW- SUBMISSION

Friends, this month's spiritual release is about *Submission*, a word that, for you, likely has some emotion attached to it. Whether you have been in a wrestling match, have fallen asleep from exhaustion, or even have had to admit you've lost playing a board game, submitting often means to *admit defeat*.

However, the spiritual practice of *Submission* means something entirely different. Through submission we gain the awareness that happiness should not be based on whether or not we get our way. As Nathan Foster says "Submission is the spiritual discipline that frees us from the everlasting burden of always needing to get our own way. In submission we are learning to hold things lightly. We are also learning to diligently watch over the spirit in which we hold others— honoring them, preferring them, loving them."¹

Submission to God can rankle us, as consumed as we are by our individualistic culture, but when we acknowledge *who God is*—the Creator of the Universe, the Father of all things, the Alpha and the Omega—it becomes a little easier for us to deny our preference for control and accept that there is a Triune God who we can, and must, submit to. Said more eloquently, "Submission is not something obtained when someone becomes a Christian or a disciple of Jesus but a lifelong practice that paves the way for the transformation of the individual who is being changed from within—from mere dust to a useful vessel under the hands of the Creator."²

It's been said that the best symbol of submission is one that every Christian is familiar with—the Cross. Remember in Philippians when it says "And being found in human form, [Jesus] humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross." Submission requires *humility, obedience, and self-denial*, but God's response to submission is *salvation and grace*.

And so, it is with humility that we offer you this month's Spiritual Practice Release. May you find freedom in submitting to the one who gave it all for you.

As always, if you have any resources that you would like to see added to this release, please let us know by emailing Meghan at mmatthews@baptist.ca.

God's grace be with you,

The CBOQ Youth team

¹ Nathan Foster, *The Making of an Ordinary Saint: My Journey from Frustration to Joy with the Spiritual Disciplines*.

² Cynthia P. Fetherman, "The Teaching and Practice of Submission in the Life and Ministry of Jesus."



SCRIPTURE ABOUT SUBMISSION

Ezekiel 11:19-20

“I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.”

Mark 8: 34-35

“Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.”

Mark 9:35

“Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

Mark 14:36

“Abba, Father,” he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

John 3:30

“He must become greater; I must become less.”

John 12:24-26:

“Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

Romans 9:21

“Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?”

Ephesians 5:21

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”



Philippians 2: 6-8

“Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!”

Hebrews 13: 17

“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.”

Romans 12:1

“Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

LESSON SAMPLE (ONE-HOUR VERSION)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students Will:

- Read a summary of the life of Joseph
- Look for examples of *Submission* in the life of Joseph's story
- Reflect on *Submission* as a Spiritual Practice

MATERIALS NEEDED

In-Person:

Necessary Materials

- Copy of *Summary of Joseph Story*-for each person (see appendix)*
- Bibles (or copies of Genesis 50:15-21, see appendix)
- Whiteboard/Chalk board/Big paper
- Whiteboard marker/Chalk/ Marker
- Copies of *Prayer of Abandonment* and/or *Serenity Prayer* (see appendix)

Additional Materials:

- Pens
- Paper, or journals/notebooks

*Note: as an alternative, you could project the story on a TV/Screen. If you choose this option, ensure you have the correct device, cables, screens etc.

Synchronous Online:

- Digital copies of *Summary of Joseph Story*
- Digital copies of *Prayer of Abandonment* and/or *Serenity Prayer*
- A method for students to take notes/share ideas (i.e., Google Doc)

Asynchronous Online:

- Same as Synchronous (participants can take their own notes, and could use a journal/notebook if preferred)

SET UP

In-Person:

- Gather supplies; ensure that there is enough space for students to sit and participate.
- If using a TV/Screen to project the Story of Joseph/Scripture, make sure it is ready to go before participants arrive

Synchronous Online:

- Ensure appendices are sent to all participants
- Have note taking/sharing method chosen and set up

Asynchronous Online:

- Ensure appendices and instructions are sent to all participants
- Encourage asynchronous participants to have their journal handy
- Schedule a follow-up/debrief time when able

PREAMBLE

Say: Today we are going to read the story of Joseph and learn about the Spiritual Practice of *Submission*. Before we start, I want to say that this is a Spiritual Practice that has been misused by a lot of people. When *Submission* means agreeing to the authority of a specific human or organization regardless of whether or not they are in alignment with *God's will* then it isn't a Spiritual Practice, it is an abuse of power. *Submission* as a spiritual practice is about freedom, not control. It is the ability to lay down the burden of always needing to have things go our own way. The idea that things have to go our (individual) way is common in our society, and people can spend weeks, even months, stewing over something that did not go as *we* wished.

Let's remember the line of the Lord's Prayer as we move forward today: "*Thy will be done.*" (Matt 6:10)

MINDS ON

In-Person/Synchronous Online

Say: Think of a time when you were *wrong* about something (big or small).

Ask: Would anyone be willing to share their story?

Follow up questions (if desired): How did you feel about that? Were there any consequences? Is it still a big deal, or is it less now than it was when it first happened?



Say: Think of a time when you were warned about something (doing or not doing that thing).

Ask: Would anyone be willing to share their story?

Follow up questions (if desired): What do you think would have happened if you had/had not listened? If this kind of situation came up again, would you consider listening to a warning?

Say: Think of a time when you had to *wait* for something (it might be happening right now!)

Ask: Would anyone be willing to share their story?

Follow up questions (if desired): what (if anything) makes waiting easier? What does/did it feel like to get what you've been waiting for?

Asynchronous

Send the questions to students to consider on their own, encourage them to journal their answers if that will help them think clearly.

ACTIVITY

In-Person

Explain: We are going to read a summary of the life of Joseph, his story can be found in the book of Genesis chapters 37-50 (you can try reading it on your own if you're interested!)

Hand out: the story on paper OR utilize TV/Screen if desired.

Ask: for volunteers to read out loud OR invite students to read on their own.

Encourage: students to make note of anytime Joseph is wrong about something, warned about something, or waits for something (this can be done on their printout of the story, or on paper, or in their heads).

Read: Genesis 50:15-21 (from a Bible or off the appendix sheet)

Pray: Lord as we reflect on the story of Joseph, help us to see how his response to you models Godly submission, help us to see how his desire was not to have his own way but to make room for you in all he did.

Reflect: Using the whiteboard/chalk board/large paper ask students for examples of times when Joseph was wrong (or wronged), when he was warned about an event or action, or when he had to wait.

Write responses so they are visible to all the students.



DEBRIEF

Say: Now that we've reviewed and reflected on the story of Joseph, let's debrief what we've learned.

Ask:

- How did the events of Joseph's life prepare him for God's chosen time and place for service? For reconciliation with his brothers?
- How did God use the events of Joseph's life?
- Based on this story, what does *Submission* as a Spiritual Practice look like?
- Other questions you may think of

Conclude: When we practice letting go of our own desires and "our rights" we free ourselves from the need to have our own way and the ensuing self-absorption when those desires are thwarted or frustrated. Through submission we find ourselves free of bitterness, resentment, and a demanding spirit and instead find a joyful freedom that rests in God's provision and love.

As Christians we practice submission out of love and reverence for Christ. It is the way of Jesus. A life of submission to God, to the scriptures, to each other is a beautiful portrait of a disciple.

Like all the disciplines it takes time and practice to learn to live in the true spirit of submission. An angry, resentful, self-pitying submission isn't truly submission at all, just a counterfeit of God's good gift. Look to the heart for freedom in the midst of submission to test whether or not the real thing is being practiced.

Synchronous Online:

Send "Minds On" questions, Story of Joseph, Genesis 50:15-21, and prayer to participants.

Follow the "In-person" lesson, on your chosen online platform.

Asynchronous Online:

Send "Minds On" questions, Story of Joseph, Genesis 50:15-21, and prayer to participants along with instructions. Allow them to go through this lesson on their own. Encourage journaling of the experience, follow-up with participant at a later mutually agreed upon date.



HOMEWORK/ WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week we invite you to pray one of these prayers each day:

1. Pray the ***Prayer of Abandonment*** of Charles de Foucauld daily. Journal what you notice as you let the words find a home in you. Do you notice any difference in how you react to adversity or times when things don't go your way?
2. Read and Pray the **Serenity Prayer** attributed Reinhold Niebuhr, a great 20th C. theologian. (The first stanza of the prayer was adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous.) How might this prayer help you in your efforts to practice the Spiritual Discipline of *Submission*?

Over the course of the week, as you pray your prayer, notice if there is one area you feel Jesus calling you to practice the Spiritual Discipline of *Submission* out of reverence and love for him. Make a conscious effort to look for opportunities to act accordingly. Be attentive to your actions and your attitudes. Journal the things you notice.

Appendix 1:

The Summary of Joseph's Story

Joseph was born into a family of twelve boys who lived in Canaan. His father Jacob (also known as Israel) loved Joseph more than all his sons since he was a child of his "old age" (Genesis 37:3) and perhaps, because he was the first child of his favorite wife, Rachel. Though Joseph had a younger brother, his father specially made a coat of many colors for him as a mark of preference.

Joseph's elder brothers saw this preferential treatment from their father and got very jealous. The 17-year-old Joseph did not help matters as he kept bringing back reports about his elder brother's activities to their father while tending to the flocks (Genesis 37:2). He also shared dreams he had with them; dreams that he interpreted to mean that one day he would rule over their family (Genesis 37:5-11). All this made the brothers dislike Joseph even more.

One day, when Joseph went to find his brothers in the field, the brothers saw him in the distance and planned to kill him but Reuben, Joseph's oldest brother, prevented them from following through on their plan. Instead of killing him, they still sold Joseph as a slave to traders going to Egypt who in turn sold him to Potiphar, an assistant to the Pharaoh of Egypt. The rest of the brothers returned home to tell their father that Joseph was dead, producing his multi-colored coat, which they dipped in a goat's blood, as proof of his death.

While in Egypt as a slave, God was with Joseph and helped him do everything right. In fact, it was all well with Joseph as he found favor before Potiphar, but the ugly side of this time was that Potiphar's wife repeatedly tried to seduce him. Eventually Joseph landed in prison when Potiphar's wife accused him of rape because he did not yield to her seduction. In all this, God was still with Joseph (Genesis 39:21). This became apparent when he (correctly) interpreted the dreams of two fellow inmates, who were Pharaoh's former butler and his former baker.

The butler, who was restored to service according to Joseph's prediction, soon forgot he had promised to help Joseph. So Joseph sat in prison for another two years until Pharaoh had a series of disturbing dreams and the butler remembered his cell mate who had correctly interpreted dreams. Because of this recommendation Joseph was brought to the palace to interpret two renowned dreams of Pharaoh: one in which seven sickly cows devoured seven healthy cows, and a parallel dream in which seven sickly ears of grain devoured seven lush ears of grain. Joseph interpreted to mean: "There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land" (Genesis 41:25-31).

Impressed by Joseph's knowledge, Pharaoh appointed him to a position that is next in command to Pharaoh. Thus, Joseph became fully in charge of storing food for the upcoming hard times. When the famine came, it affected Egypt, and the surrounding country including Joseph's homeland—Canaan. Joseph's father sent the brothers to buy food in Egypt. On their arrival, they were brought before Joseph who recognized them immediately even though they did not recognize him after 20 years. Incidentally, they all bowed to Joseph (because he was an important person) just as he had dreamed, they would.

Joseph concealed his identity and tested the brothers, locking up one of them, Simeon, until the rest of the brothers returned with Benjamin. It was only when Benjamin was brought to Egypt that Joseph revealed himself to his brothers who proved from various tests that they had changed. At the end, Joseph forgave them of all the evils done against him and arranged for the entire family's relocation to Egypt (Genesis 42:33-45).

Without much ado, Jacob (Joseph's father) came down to Egypt with his family to again see his beloved son at last and to live in Egypt with him the rest of his life on earth.

Appendix 2:

Genesis 50: 15-21 (NIV)

¹⁵When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" ¹⁶So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: ¹⁷'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

¹⁸His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰**You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.** ²¹So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Appendix 3:

Prayer of Abandonment

My Father, I abandon myself to you. Do with me as you will. Whatever you may do with me I thank you. I am prepared for anything. I accept everything, provided your will is fulfilled in me and in all creatures. I ask for nothing more, my God. I place my soul in your hands. I give it to you, my God, with all the love of my heart, because I love you. And for me it is necessity of love, this gift of myself, this placing of myself in your hands without reserve in boundless confidence, because you are my Father.

Charles de Foucauld, 1858-1916

Appendix 4:
Prayer of Serenity

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathways to peace;
taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever in the next.
Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

LESSON SAMPLE (FIFTEEN-MINUTE VERSION)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students Will:

- Reflect on *Submission* as a Spiritual Practice

MATERIALS NEEDED

In-Person:

Necessary Materials

- Copies of *Prayer of Abandonment* and/or *Serenity Prayer* (see appendices)

Additional Materials:

- Pens
- Paper, or journals/notebooks

PREAMBLE

Say: Before we start, I want to say that this is a Spiritual Practice that has been misused by a lot of people. When *Submission* means agreeing to the authority of a specific human or organization regardless of whether or not they are in alignment with *God's will* then it isn't a Spiritual Practice, it is an abuse of power. *Submission* as a spiritual practice is about freedom, not control. It is the ability to lay down the burden of always needing to have things go our own way. The idea that things have to go our (individual) way is common in our society, and people can spend weeks, even months, stewing over something that did not go as *we* wished.

Let's remember the line of the Lord's Prayer as we move forward today: "*Thy will be done.*" (Matt 6:10)

ACTIVITY

Choose: Either *The Prayer of Atonement* (appendix 1) or *The Serenity Prayer* (appendix 2).

Ask: Participants to read through the prayer silently.

Ask: Everyone to read through the prayer out loud.

Ask: If there is anything that stands out, or a situation that might be relevant to pray this prayer for?

Honour: Any requests that come in. Ask participants to hold the situation/event/person etc. that came to mind (for them, if they didn't speak out loud, as well as the requests that were spoken)



Pray: One final time together as a group. Pray slowly.

DEBRIEF

Conclude: When we practice letting go of our own desires and “our rights” we free ourselves from the need to have our own way and the ensuing self-absorption when those desires are thwarted or frustrated. Through submission we find ourselves free of bitterness, resentment, and a demanding spirit and instead find a joyful freedom that rests in God’s provision and love.

As Christians we practice submission out of love and reverence for Christ. It is the way of Jesus. A life of submission to God, to the scriptures, to each other is a beautiful portrait of a disciple.

Like all the disciplines it takes time and practice to learn to live in the true spirit of submission. An angry, resentful, self-pitying submission isn’t truly submission at all, just a counterfeit of God’s good gift. Look to the heart for freedom in the midst of submission to test whether or not the real thing is being practiced.

HOMEWORK/WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week we invite you to pray (one of these prayers) each day:

1. Pray the ***Prayer of Abandonment*** of Charles de Foucauld daily for the next month. Journal what you notice as you let the words find a home in you. Do you notice any difference in how you react to adversity or times when things don’t go your way?
2. Read and Pray the **Serenity Prayer** attributed Reinhold Niebuhr, a great 20th C. theologian. (The first stanza of the prayer was adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous.) How might this prayer help you in your efforts to practice the Spiritual Discipline of *Submission*?

Over the course of the week, as you pray your prayer, notice if there is one area you feel Jesus calling you to practice the Spiritual Discipline of *Submission* out of reverence and love for him. Make a conscious effort to look for opportunities to act accordingly. Be attentive to your actions and your attitudes. Journal what you notice.

Appendix 1:

Prayer of Abandonment

My Father, I abandon myself to you. Do with me as you will. Whatever you may do with me I thank you. I am prepared for anything. I accept everything, provided your will is fulfilled in me and in all creatures. I ask for nothing more, my God. I place my soul in your hands. I give it to you, my God, with all the love of my heart, because I love you. And for me it is necessity of love, this gift of myself, this placing of myself in your hands without reserve in boundless confidence, because you are my Father.

Charles de Foucauld, 1858-1916

Appendix 2:
Prayer of Serenity

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and wisdom to know the difference.
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Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathways to peace;
taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever in the next.
Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

RESOURCES

OTHER RESOURCES

ARTICLES

[“The Teaching and Practice of Submission in the Life and Ministry of Jesus.”](#) (by Cynthia P. Fetherman)

[“What You Need to Know About Biblical Submission”](#) (by Denise Larson Cooper)

[“The Limits of Submission to Man”](#) (by John Piper)³

VIDEOS

[The Discipline of Submission](#) (Sermon from Ox Hill Baptist Church)

[The Spiritual Practice of Submission](#)⁴ (Sermon from The 180 Church)

You can also check out our Tech Page, for resources and best practices on running your youth group virtually: <https://cboqyouth.ca/tech/>

PODCAST

[The Spiritual Discipline of Submission](#) by Mount Merrion’s Church

³ This goes into some of the ways that the term *Submission* has been misused by the Church. It is worth looking at for a background in that subject, especially if you have inquisitive youth.

⁴ Start video at 43 minutes, timestamp “Jean Martin’s Message”

BOOKS ON SUBMISSION

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Absolute Surrender*.

Johnson, Jan. *Community & Submission*.

Murray, Andrew. *Absolute Surrender*.

GENERAL BOOKS ON SPIRITUAL PRACTICES:

Ahlberg-Calhoun, Adele. *The Spiritual Practices Handbook*.

Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline*.

Shiflett, Diana. *Spiritual Practices in Community*.

Smith, Traci. *Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home*.

Thompson, Marjorie. *Soul Feast*.

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*.

UNDERSTANDING SUBMISSION

Book Excerpt

Submission is the spiritual discipline that frees us from the everlasting burden of always needing to get our own way. In submission we are learning to hold things lightly. We are also learning to diligently watch over the spirit in which we hold others— honoring them, preferring them, loving them.

Submission is not age or gender specific. We are all — men and women, girls and boys — learning to follow the wise counsel of the apostle Paul to “be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21).” We — each and every one of us regardless of our position or station in life— are to engage in mutual subordination out of reverence for Christ.

The touch-stone for the Christian understanding of submission is Jesus’s astonishing statement, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me (Mark 8:34).” This call of Jesus to “self-denial” is simply a way of coming to understand that we do not have to have our own way. It has nothing to do with self-contempt or self-hatred. It does not mean the loss of our identity or our individuality. It means quite simply the freedom to give way to others. It means to hold the interests of others above our own. It means freedom from self-pity and self-absorption.

Indeed, self-denial is the only true path to self-fulfillment. To save our life is to lose it; to lose our life for Christ’s sake is to save it (see Mark 8:35). This strange paradox of discovering fulfillment through self-denial is wonderfully expressed in the poetic words of George Matheson:

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life’s alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me with-in Thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.¹

The foremost symbol of submission is the cross. “And being found in human form, [Jesus] hum-bled him-self and became obe-di-ent to the point of death— even death on a cross (Phil 2:7 – 8).” Now, it was not just a “cross death” that Jesus experienced but a daily “cross life” of submission and service. And we are called to this constant, everyday “cross life” of submission and service.

All the spiritual disciplines have the potential to become destructive if misused, but submission is especially susceptible to this problem. As a result, we need to be clear regarding its limits. The limits of the discipline of submission are at the points at which it becomes destructive. It then becomes a denial of the law of love as taught by Jesus and is an affront to genuine Christian submission. These limits are not always easy to define. Often we are forced to deal with complicated issues simply



because human relationships are complicated. But deal with them we must. And we have the assurance that the Holy Spirit will be with us to guide us through the discernment process.

Foster, Nathan. *The Making of an Ordinary Saint: My Journey from Frustration to Joy with the Spiritual Disciplines*. Baker Publishing Group.

Available at: <https://renovare.org/articles/understanding-submission>

RICHARD FOSTER ON SUBMISSION

Submission is a concept as broad as life itself and a Discipline found throughout Scripture. It raises issues that are deep and difficult: issues of submission to the ways of God, issues of submission to the state, issues of submission to the Christian fellowship, issues of submission in the Christian household and much more. As we hammer out our understanding of these matters, we will always want to hold before us the life and death of Christ as the divine paradigm by which all the verbs of Christian submission are to be conjugated. (*Study Guide for Celebration of Discipline*, Richard J. Foster)

I said that every Discipline has its corresponding freedom. What freedom corresponds to submission? It is the ability to lay down the terrible burden of always needing to get our own way. The obsession to demand that things go the way we want them to go is one of the greatest bondages in human society today. People will spend weeks, months, even years in a perpetual stew because some little thing did not go as they wished. They will fuss and fume. They will get mad about it. They will act as if their very life hangs on the issue. They may even get an ulcer over it.

In the Discipline of submission, we are released to drop the matter, to forget it. Frankly, most things in life are not nearly as important as we think they are. Our lives will not come to an end if this or that does not happen.

The biblical teaching on submission focuses primarily on the spirit with which we view other people. Scripture does not attempt to set forth a series of hierarchical relationships but to communicate to us an inner attitude of mutual subordination.

In submission we are at last free to value other people. Their dreams and plans become important to us. We have entered into a new, wonderful, glorious freedom- the freedom to give up our own rights for the good of others. For the first time we can love people unconditionally. We have given up the right to demand that they return our love. No longer do we feel that we have to be treated in a certain way. We rejoice in their successes. We feel genuine sorrow in their failures. It is of little consequence that our plans are frustrated if their plans succeed. We discover that it is far better to serve our neighbor than to have our own way.

Excerpt from: Richard Foster *The Celebration of Discipline*, 111-112.



THE SEVEN ACTS OF SUBMISSION

1. The first act of submission is to the **Triune God**. At the beginning of the day we wait, in the words of the hymn writer, “yielded and still” before Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The first words of our day form the prayer of Thomas à Kempis, “As thou wilt; what thou wilt; when thou wilt.” We yield our body, mind, and spirit for his purposes. We surrender our body, mind, and spirit into the hands of God to do with us as he pleases through the long darkness.
2. The second act of submission is to the **Scripture**. As we submit ourselves to the Word of God living (Jesus), so we submit ourselves to the Word of God written (Scripture). We yield ourselves first to hear the Word, second to receive the Word, and third to obey the Word. We look to the Spirit who inspired the Scriptures to interpret and apply them to our condition. The word of Scripture, animated by the Holy Spirit, lives with us throughout the day.
3. The third act of submission is to our **family**. The primary deed of submission is a commitment to listen to the other family members. Its corollary is a willingness to share.
4. The fourth act of submission is to our **neighbors** and **those we meet in the course of our daily lives**.
5. The fifth act of submission is to the **believing community, the body of Christ**. At times calls to serve the Church universal may come, and if the ministry is confirmed in our hearts, we can submit to it with assurance and reverence.
6. The sixth act of submission is to the **broken** and **despised**. In every culture there are the “widows and orphans”; that is, the helpless, the undefended (James 1: 27). Our first responsibility is to be among them.
7. The seventh act of submission is to the **world**. We live in an interdependent, international community. We cannot live in isolation. Our environmental responsibility, or the lack of it, affects not only the people around the world but generations yet to be born. Starving peoples affect us. Our act of submission is a determination to live as a responsible member of an increasingly irresponsible world.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- In what ways has the discipline of submission been abused?
- Are you currently experiencing the freedom of Biblical submission?
- Which of the seven acts of submission represents the greatest challenge for you personally?
- Consider making the following prayer the focus of your prayer time for the next 30 days.

Take Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will, All I have and call my own. You have given it all to me. To you Lord I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me. (Ignatius of Loyola)

Adapted from: <https://www.godslivingstones.org/articles/the-discipline-of-submission/a538.html>



SUBMISSION

Desire	To have Jesus as the Master of my life in absolutely every way
Definition	Submission that leads to growth means aligning my will and freedom with God’s will and freedom. God’s will for us includes freely submitting to each other out of love and reverence for Christ.
Scripture	<p>“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21)</p> <p>“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:6-8)</p> <p>“He must become greater; I must become less.” (John 3:30)</p> <p>“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.” (Hebrews 13: 17)</p> <p>“Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1)</p>
Practice Includes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking God’s will (no matter where it leads) and doing it • Allowing others to mentor, disciple, teach, correct and guide you • Being a good follower • Laying aside the need to be in charge • Willing and eager obedience to God and to those whom you owe obedience • Being an eager learner, trainable, and tractable
God-Given Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being free from the need to be in charge • Teachability • Esteeming and honouring others more than yourself • Being free from a rebellious and autonomous spirit • Surrendering and losing your life to find it • Developing approachability, gentleness, humility • Expressing a deep regard for others and what they might have to offer

Adapted from: *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*. Adele Ahlberg-Calhoun.

