

## INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here. If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to Matthew chapter 4.

## INTRODUCTION: PIANO LESSONS

Anybody, like me take piano lessons as a kid? Yeah, I took 6 years of piano lessons as a kid, and I quit in Jr. High. Why?

- Because of a new revelation in my life at the time...
- called girls...
- and because of a little band called Nirvana...
- and it seemed to me that girls were into guys
- who could play guitar like Kurt Cobain.
- So, I dropped the piano
- and picked up guitar.
- I don't regret picking up the guitar...
- but I deeply regret dropping the piano.
- Cause later in life another band got cool.
- Coldplay.
- And wouldn't it have been sweet
- if there were two Chris Martins who could play that thing?
- Alas...

But I took piano lessons from Mrs. Litton for six years, and I did alright.

The big problem for me was that I hated to practice. And very often I would wait all week until the day before my piano lesson...

- and then I'd be like, "oh no..."
- *I gotta go see Mrs. Litton tomorrow*...
- and I'd scramble to pull out my Alfred piano books
- and then I'd just cram whatever I had to practice.

And listen, most often, I was able to JUST GET BY the next day at my piano lesson. But how many of you know that:

**SLIDE YOU DON'T GET GOOD BY SIMPLY GETTING BY.**

## **EXPLAIN: THE DISCIPLINES**

Today we begin a new six-week TOPICAL sermon series called *The Disciplines*.

And you know we don't do a lot of topical stuff at Fathom. We normally just tackle books of the Bible. But I really felt like the Lord laid this on my heart for our church...

- because in so many of my conversations with y'all,
- when talking about how you're doing
- in your relationship with God,
- you're JUST GETTING BY.

But God doesn't want you to JUST GET BY in your faith journey.

- God wants you to thrive.
- God wants you to flourish.
- God wants you to mature.
- To use our vision for Fathom: to GO DEEPER with Jesus.

And you can't get there by SIMPLY GETTING BY.

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## TRANSITION

So, we're going to dig into what are classically called "spiritual disciplines."

- Some call them habits.
- Some call them practices.
- I'm simply going to refer to them as *The Disciplines*.

## ILLUSTRATION: VERNON

Now, I was first introduced to the Disciplines when I was in college.

- I wasn't raised in the church.
- God saved me when I was sixteen,
- So, when I was a Freshman in college,
- I really didn't have much of a faith life.
- Now, hear me:
  - I really loved Jesus,
  - and wanted to follow him,
  - but I wasn't sure HOW...
  - to GO DEEPER with him.

And I was sitting in a chapel service at CCU and the speaker for the day was a frail 90-year-old man, who was being interviewed by one of my professors.

- His name was Vernon Grounds.
- He had been president of Denver Seminary in the 1950s.
- And my professor was interviewing him
- on advice to young Christians.

Now, I sat through probably 200 chapel services in college, and I can hardly remember any of them. But one question asked of Vernon Grounds hit me, and stuck with me, to the point that I can still picture this moment vividly in my mind.

- He said, *“So, tell us, as a 90-year-old man,*
- *what is the secret to the victorious Christian life?”*
- And Vernon’s answer struck ME.
  - A brand-new Christian...
  - 18-years-old...
  - This 90-year-old saint said this:

He said, *“The victorious Christian life is lived in spiritual disciplines practiced in **SLIDE SIMPLICITY AND CONSISTENCY.**”*

- It wasn’t about doing a lot of really great things.
- Big things,
- like being a major figure
- or a celebrity pastor
- or anything like that.

But rather, it was found in small, simple things practiced very regularly.  
SIMPLICITY AND CONSISTENCY.

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## **EXPLAIN: WHY PREACH THIS?**

And so, for the next six weeks we’re going to walk through six disciplines. Because I really think many of us are settling for SIMPLY GETTING BY in our faith right now.

**But the things that you do daily—your disciplines—define who you become!**

- And my sense is that in our hope to JUST GET BY...
- Or to just survive this year...
- we have settled into bad practices or habits...
- and many of us have lost all rhythms of spiritual disciplines.
- And listen to me: THAT WILL DEFINE WHO YOU BECOME.

So, we're going to preach through these six disciplines, and we're going to challenge ourselves to start practicing them.

- SIMPLE AND CONSISTENT.
- We aren't going to overwhelm each other
- with delusions of grandeur.
- We're just gonna practice.

### **EXPLAIN: TRY HARDER**

Now, before we jump into our first discipline, let me say one more thing. By habits and practice and disciplines...

I don't mean:

- just grit down and try harder.
- You ever do that? The try harder method?

**The Gospel IS NOT: "God is good. You are bad. Try harder."**

But that's what so many of us have bought into.

- *"I just gotta try harder.*
- *I just gotta do better.*
- *I'm really blowing it right now,*
- *and I've just gotta double-down on my effort!"*

The problem is, if you've been following Jesus for any amount of time, you know...that does not work. Why?

- Because depending on your disposition,
- you can try really hard,
- and maybe make it for a day,
- or a week,
- or even months.

But the try harder methodology will eventually beat you out. Why? Because the try harder method is based on being motivated!

But listen: **MOTIVATION WILL DRY UP ON YOU!**

- **And when motivation fails you...**
- **you need discipline to take its place!**

When we talk about the disciplines you need to get this idea deep down into your heart: it is not about trying...it's about training.

**SLIDE WE DON'T TRY. WE TRAIN.**

## **ILLUSTRATION: IRONMAN**

I've got friends who have competed in IronMan Triathlons.

An IronMan is a

- 2.4 mile swim,
- 112 mile bicycle ride,
- and then you run a marathon...
- 26.2 miles.

Now, imagine if I got really MOTIVATED by my friends and decided I wanted to compete in an IronMan race.

What I DON'T say is,

- *“Alright, I wanna be an IronMan!*
- *So tomorrow I’ll get up early*
- *and I’ll TRY to do an IronMan.*
  - *2.4 mile swim,*
  - *112 mile bike ride,*
  - *and 26.2 mile run.”*

What’s gonna happen if I TRY that tomorrow?

Yeah, I’ll drown during the swim.

No! That’s not how you do this. WE DON’T TRY. WE TRAIN.

## **APPLICATION**

And we laugh...but that’s how many of us approach discipleship.

- We want to go deeper with God...
- we get motivated at church or something...
- but we apply the try harder method...
- and once that motivation dries up...
- and end up coming up short.

The disciplines are different...

WE DON’T TRY. WE TRAIN.

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## TRANSITION

So, with all that in mind, let's jump into our first discipline: the Scriptures. **If you want to GO DEEPER with Jesus, you need to practice the discipline of being in the Scriptures.**

And we're really going to ask two questions: why and how?

- WHY do we need to be in the Scriptures?
- And HOW can we be in the Scriptures?

## WORD 1: FOOD

Now, I've got three words for you today about WHY we need to be in the Scriptures. There are WAY more, but for today: three.

First word, it's **SLIDE FOOD**.

## ILLUSTRATION: FOODIES

Any Foodies in here? I know some of y'all are cause I've seen the pictures you post.

- You know the best place for pizza. What's your place?
  - Seriously, shout it out!
  - Don't you say Pizza Hut!
- What about chicken wings?
  - Come on, if you're online with us,
  - type me some foodie suggestions in the chat.
- Best burrito?
  - I don't even need you to shout it out:
  - jury is in. Chipotle.

Listen to me: **the Scriptures are FOOD!**

- The Scriptures are what sustain us!
- They are what we feed on!

Matthew 4...look at verse 1.

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### **MATTHEW 4:1-2**

[1] Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. [2] And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

- You think?
- A month and a half long fast...
- yeah...he was hungry!

Verse 3:

### **MATTHEW 4:3-4**

[3] And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." [4] But he answered, "It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

## **EXPLAIN: SURVIVAL**

Church, listen to me here: **being in the Scriptures is about survival!**

- Yeah, it leads to life and depth and maturity.
- But on a very basic level...
- the Scriptures are FOOD for our SURVIVAL!
- Man, I'm just trying to survive!

Now, when you miss a meal what happens?

- What does it say Jesus was?
- He was hungry!
- When you miss a meal...you feel hungry!

When you miss being in the Scriptures what do you feel...

- Guilty?
- Like you've failed?
- No!
- You should feel hungry!

Remember what Jesus said in John chapter 6.

### **SLIDE JOHN 6:35**

**[35] Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**

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## APPLICATION

- We get in the Scriptures because they're FOOD...
- and the FOOD that we get IS JESUS.
- Jesus said HE WAS food.
- Jesus IS the Word of God.

You shouldn't be asking yourself:

- why do I struggle reading the Bible so much?
- No, the question you should ask yourself is this:

**Why aren't I hungry?**

- What is going on in my heart
- that is letting me believe
- that I don't need the Scriptures as food...
- as survival.

Why be in the Scriptures? Because it's FOOD!

## WORD 2: FIGHT

Second word for why we need to be in the Scriptures:  
because we're in a **SLIDE FIGHT**.

- In Matthew 4
- Jesus was in the desert...
- in a fight with the devil.
- But hear me, church...
- we are in a fight, as well!

## **SLIDE** EPHESIANS 6:10-17

[10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. [14] Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. [16] In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; [17] and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

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### **APPLICATION**

What is a sword?

- It's a weapon.
- Church, the Scriptures are a weapon!

Why do we need to be in the Scriptures? BECAUSE WE ARE IN A FIGHT!

- The problem is for so many of us,
- we don't actually believe we are in a fight.

Listen, you are in a fight...

- and you have an enemy...
- and he is out to steal, kill, and destroy.
- We fight the world and the flesh and the devil.

And the only reason you wouldn't want a weapon, is if you didn't believe you were going to be attacked.

We are in a fight!

- And when in a fight you want a weapon.
- And what is that weapon?
- It's the Scriptures!

## ILLUSTRATION: IT IS WRITTEN

Back to Matthew 4:

- When Jesus, the Word made flesh,
- is in a fight with the devil...
- how does the Word of God fight back?
- **The Word of God fights with the word of God!**

Every time the enemy comes at him in that fight, what does he say?

He says three little words... *IT IS WRITTEN*.

- Verse 4 – It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'
- Verse 7 – It is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'
- Verse 10 – It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only you shall serve.'

You are in a fight and the Scriptures are your weapon!

### WORD 3: FIX

- Why are we in the Scriptures? Because it's FOOD.
- Why are we in the Scriptures? Because we're in a FIGHT.
- And then why are we in the Scriptures?
  - because we need to be FIXED.

Third word: the Scriptures are our **SLIDE FIX**.

- God's word is a FIX to our brokenness.
- It's a medicine for our illness.
- It's a bandage for our wounds.
- It's our FIX.

**SLIDE PSALM 107:19-20** says this:

[19] Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress.

[20] He sent out his *word* and healed them,  
and delivered them from their destruction.

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### APPLICATION

Listen to me here: you need to be fixed.

- And that's not just a one-time thing,
- but it's this ongoing,
- day after day after day thing.

We need to be fixed.

- And the Scriptures are the place
- Where God promises us
- healing
- and medicine
- and where we can be fixed.

Notice in Matthew 4, after fighting with the Scriptures, in verse 11 it says:

### **MATTHEW 4:11**

[11] Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

There's something about God's word

- that it's medication for my soul...
- it's healing for my wounds.

The Scriptures are very often the means by which

- God heals
- and saves
- and fixes things.

### **TRANSITION**

Y'all, there's so much more I could say about this discipline!

- I'm a Bible guy, you know that,
- So, I could go on and on and on about this,
- but I want to make this really practical for us.

So, I hope I've made my point for WHY we need to be in the Scriptures.

Now on to the HOW. How can I be in the Scriptures?

### **APPLICATION 1: READ**

Well, let's take our three whys and answer them:

If the Scriptures are FOOD, how do I eat the food?

How do you eat the food? You **SLIDE READ**.

- You read it.
- Every day.
- Remember: simplicity and consistency...
- so, you don't need to read it for an hour,
- or even a half-an-hour...
- simple and consistent.

So, some of you do this already.

- You're training in this discipline already...
- keep going!

But if you don't, or if you've let this discipline slip out of your routine, here's what I'd like to challenge you on.

- For the next six weeks,
- the length of this sermon series,
- I want to challenge you
- to read one chapter of the Bible,
- five days a week.

So, we've created this reading guide where,

- starting tomorrow,
- Monday through Friday,
- you can read one chapter in the Gospel of Matthew each day.
  - And if you do that
  - you will have read the entire book
  - by Thanksgiving.

You can download this at **SLIDE** [fathomchurch.org/disciplines](https://fathomchurch.org/disciplines) and if you want more, we have links there for other reading plans.

## **PUSH BACK**

How do you eat the food? You read it.

Pushback:

- *"But I don't feel like reading my Bible."*

Listen to me: **DEVOTION REQUIRES DISCIPLINE.**

Church:

- **discipline is the bridge**
- **between your goals**
- **and your outcomes.**

You have a goal...you want to get there? Get disciplined.

- **Either suffer the price of discipline**
- **or suffer the price of regret.**

**Discipline is doing what you should even when you don't want to do it.**

Read the Scriptures.

## APPLICATION 2: MEMORIZE

Next, if the Scriptures are a sword to bring to a FIGHT, well how do I fight the fight? How do I actually fight?

**SLIDE** You **MEMORIZE** it. You get it inside of you permanently.

- This isn't just the cram session
- like I did in my piano lessons TO GET BY...
- no, you master some of this stuff
- so it just oozes out of you.

See, the problem about a fight, is when you get in a fight, you don't have time to go Google a Scripture.

- You need it already!
- You need to carry the sword with you...
- within you!

So, again, if you're already doing this: Keep going!

If not, again, on this same pdf with the reading plan, we have created a memorization plan:

- Just 1 Scripture each week.
- For the next six weeks.

Maybe write it out on an index card and carry it in your pocket.

- And every time you have a lull...
- you're standing in line,
- or you're waiting for a call.
- Pull out that card instead of your phone.

- Instead of checking Instagram or the news
- for the 637th time of the day,
- read that card and work on it.

Memorize the Scriptures.

## **PUSH BACK**

Pushback: *“But I’m just no good at memorization. I’ll never be able to do this.”* Listen to me: YES YOU CAN!

Ok, I want you to finish this line for me...

[Ice Ice Baby] “Alright, stop! Collaborate and \_\_\_\_\_.”

See, you can memorize things!

If you can memorize your favorite song, you can memorize Scripture.

But it requires discipline!

## **APPLICATION 3: MEDITATE**

And finally, if the Scriptures are a FIX to our brokenness, then how do I apply the fix? How do you apply that fix? **SLIDE** You **MEDITATE** on it.

- Don’t just read it. Don’t just memorize it.
- Meditate on it.
- Reflect on it.
- Consider it in all of your ways.
- Fill your mind with God’s word.
- Because as you meditate on it,
- it will begin to fix you.
- It’s like a salve on a burn...slowly soothing and healing.

Sometimes Christians get creeped out with the idea of meditation because of some wonky Eastern and New Age practices of it. But Christian meditation is different.

- Eastern meditation is an attempt to empty the mind;
- Christian meditation is an attempt to fill the mind.
- We fill our minds with the Scriptures.

Maybe this means you download a bible app and listen to it as you drive or run or walk...whatever! Again, we have a number of them listed on

**SLIDE** [fathomchurch.org/disciplines](http://fathomchurch.org/disciplines)

Maybe you write the verse on sticky notes and put them all over you home, or your car, or your office.

But meditate on the Scriptures. Fill yourself with them!

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## CONCLUSION

- The Scriptures are FOOD...
- they prepare us for the FIGHT...
- and they are a FIX to our hurts.

But as always, I just want to remind us what the goal is:

- The goal isn't to know the Scriptures. Ok?
  - The goal isn't a practice...it's a person.
  - The goal isn't the means...it's the ends.
  - The goal isn't the training...it's to finish the race.

**The goal isn't the written word of God...**

The goal is to GO DEEPER with the Word of God made flesh.

- The goal is Jesus.
- More of Jesus.
- Deeper union with Jesus.

Where Christians have gotten in trouble in the past

- is making the discipline the win.
- The discipline isn't the win...
- being a disciple of Jesus is.

## ENDING

- Are you hungry?
  - Jesus is FOOD.
- Are you in a battle?
  - Jesus helps in our FIGHT.
- Are you hurting?
  - Jesus is our FIX.

So, let's be done with JUST GETTING BY.

- Let's step into the disciplines.
- Simple and consistent.
- Not trying...but training.
- All with the goal of GOING DEEPER with Jesus.
  - Our Rock.
  - Our Redeemer.
  - Our Cornerstone.

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

## RESOURCES USED:

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- Tyson, Jon. Beautiful Resistance.