



WOMEN WHO PRIZE
BEING FOUND IN CHRIST

A Disciplined Life In God

By: Sarah Blount

Every gift I received for Christmas set me up for a very disciplined new year.

I slouch. A lot. Especially when I am at my desk. It's a problem I've wanted to eradicate for a long time. Husband to the rescue! He's the best when it comes to buying me gifts that I want but would never purchase for myself. When I opened the small, jewelry shaped box under our tree, there sat a Bluetooth, posture tracking device. You place it on your back, and every time you slouch, it buzzes and reminds you to sit up straight. It sounds annoying, but I love it. I need that buzz to keep me from looking like Yoda in 50 years.

I also received a Bluetooth toothbrush. Try to say that five times fast. It coaches me every morning and night as I brush my teeth and lets me know if I'm missing any areas. I was shocked at how terrible I was at brushing my teeth. The first time it graded me I got a score of 56%. Ouch. But you'll be happy to know, after just five days of coaching I've improved to 82%.

My stocking was nice and full thanks to a new water bottle with a timeline printed right on it that helps me track my hydration during the day. I know how much water I should have consumed every hour from 8 am - 5 pm. Twice as many potty breaks for me, but hey, it's working! I'm consistently drinking water throughout the day instead of getting to the end of the evening and realizing I have way too much water to chug before bed.

If that wasn't enough discipline, I ended up spending all of my Christmas cash to join a Barre 3 Workout Studio to challenge my body in a new way. **I thrive on disciplines like these because I love measurable goals, accountability and improving my health.** However, brushing up on my teeth brushing skills and joining a Barre 3 studio aren't the kind of disciplines that matter heading into a new year.

As excited as I am about a new year and being the best me I can be, I can hear the Holy Spirit asking, “*What do you have in mind when it comes to spiritual disciplines? What measurable goals are you setting? How will you keep yourself accountable? And how can you improve your spiritual health?*”

As I pondered those questions, he showed me I already had the blueprint — **the gifts under the tree I received to improve physically tied right into the areas I need to improve in spiritually.**

//POSTURE

1 Corinthians 16:13 *Listen, stay alert, stand tall in the faith, be courageous, and be strong.*
(VOICE)

I yearn to stand tall in faith. My heart is filled with God-given dreams and desires along with promises he’s given me to back up each and everyone, but I know if I am not mindful I’ll start to slouch. Life is busy, and distractions loom in every corner of my mind making it easy for my posture to gradually go from standing tall in faith to hunching over in apathy. I don’t want this fresh fervor to see God’s will come to pass in 2019 to dissipate by spring, so I have written down what he’s revealed about his plans for me, my family, and our church in 2019 along with correlating scriptures. **I’ve placed post-it note versions of his heart for me in places where I’ll see them often.** My car, my planner, my bathroom mirror, my phone, and as bookmarks in my Bible. Just like I need my posture tracking device to buzz and remind me to stop slouching, I need those post-its to send a signal to me and remind me to stand tall in faith. **When no one is watching, when everyone is watching, on the days when I feel like it, and on the days when I don’t. When I’m tired of standing tall and super uncomfortable- no matter what, I will stay alert and stand tall.** I trust that as I put this spiritual discipline in place, I will see God go above and beyond all I can ask, think, or imagine.

//COACHING

I’ve been brushing my teeth all by myself for at least 28 years. Which means I’ve brushed my teeth close to 20,440 times and yet after all my experience I am still greatly benefiting from my Colgate Coach. That little app has taught me that just because I *think* I’m an expert at something doesn’t mean it’s true. The amount of improvement needed was a little embarrassing, but I know you’d agree- I would be a fool to have my Colgate Coach point out areas of my mouth that I’m missing and do nothing about it. What a waste. **What’s the point of having a coach if you’re not going to take their advice?**

This year, I want to lean into THE Coach like never before. **I want to give him permission to show me when my heart is wrong, my motives aren’t pure, or my attitude needs adjusting.** I don’t want to depend on him to lead me into fun and exciting things only, I want him to search my heart and show me if anything is displeasing to him.

Psalms 139:23-24 *God, I invite your searching gaze into my heart. Examine me through and through; find out everything that may be hidden within me. Put me to the test and sift through all my anxious cares. See if there is any path of pain I’m walking on, and lead me back to your glorious, everlasting ways—the path that brings me back to you.* (TPT)

Just as I discipline myself to brush my teeth every morning and night, I will put a spiritual discipline in place by asking God to show me where I've missed it every morning and night. I'll do this while I am brushing my teeth, because the Holy Spirit can talk to us anywhere, as long as we're asking the right questions and desiring to hear his voice!

//WATER

You would think that someone who understands how important water is would make it a priority to drink it. But, couple a busy lifestyle with the fact that I am rarely thirsty, and somehow my knowledge of how critical water is to the human body vanishes. I am hoping my new hydration tracking bottle will help me be more mindful of my need for water and my need for Jesus.

John 7:37-38 *Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, **Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.** Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. (NIV)*

This year I want to stay thirsty. I don't want my busy lifestyle to drown out Jesus saying in a LOUD voice, "come to me and drink." I want to continually, consistently, throughout the day, sit at the feet of Jesus. I know how crucial it is to my spiritual well-being. I don't want my 30-minute quiet time every morning to be all she wrote. I want those rivers of living water flowing from within me. Each time I pick up my water bottle to hydrate my body, I will take a moment to tell Jesus, like David did, "my soul thirsts for you."

Psalms 63:1 ***I thirst with the deepest longings to love you more,** with cravings in my heart that can't be described. Such yearning grips my soul for you, my God! (TPT)*

Instead of consistently drinking from rivers that don't refresh like Instagram or Netflix, I have measurable goals right there on my actual water bottle that will help me with this spiritual discipline of thirsting for and drinking in Jesus.

//FITNESS PUSH

I start every day with exercise. I genuinely enjoy it. If I don't exercise, I have a hard time getting going for the rest of the day. Endorphins are real! I've been exercising since high school, and I've been a member of a streaming workout community for the last seven years. I love my workout community, but I've been desiring a new challenge- something I could add on to what I am already doing. Enter Barre 3. I participated in a free, trial class and I was hooked. I didn't think I would be able to finish the hour-long class after only ten minutes in. It was intense, but I loved pushing my fitness ceiling further. I was sore in places I have never been sore in- which means I was working muscles I have been neglecting to work. The once a week class is going to be the perfect challenging addition to my weekly routine.

Every morning after I exercise, I have my quiet time with the Lord. I genuinely enjoy it. I love reading my Bible, studying, seeking God, and worshipping. BUT I am desiring a new challenge- something I can add on to what I am already doing. **I want to push my spiritual fitness ceiling further.** I've never truly understood fasting until this year, and that's what I feel the Holy Spirit prompting me to adopt. Just as I am adding one workout class a week to my workout routine, I am going to add one day of fasting a week to my spiritual routine. Fasting is expected of New

Testament believers, and it's something I have been limiting to just one month out of the year. I'm looking forward to a year of greater connection with God.

My prayer for you this year ladies, is that **2019 would be your most spiritually fit year to date!** May you take this devotional to heart and find more of God than ever before as you live a disciplined life in HIM.

1 Timothy 4:7-9 *Exercise daily in God—no spiritual flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever. You can count on this. Take it to heart. (MSG)*

conversation starters

1. What are some *physical* disciplines you would like to adopt this year? Describe the measurable goals that pair with those disciplines and how you plan to keep yourself accountable.
2. What are some *spiritual* disciplines you would like to adopt this year? Describe the measurable goals that pair with those disciplines and how you plan to keep yourself accountable.
3. Do your physical goals and spiritual goals correlate in any way? For instance, you might want to lose weight this year to improve your health- is there anything in your spiritual life that you need to shed to improve your spiritual health?
4. What are you most excited about at the start of this new year?

his heart work

STUDY

As New Song Church participates in the 21 day fast together, make a point to share with your HIS group what the Holy Spirit is saying to you through the devotionals, your fasting, prayer and worship time. Message your group after you complete each devotional and share what's on your heart. (newsongpeople.com/21days)

ACT

Take some time to pray and seek God about what he has in mind for your spiritual disciplines this year. Write down whatever the Lord reveals to you on a card, seal it up in an envelope, and place it somewhere where you won't forget about it. Next January, you'll bring the sealed up envelope back to your HIS Small Group, open it up, and reflect on how much you have grown.

prayer needs

Write down the prayer requests of your group members, and pray fervently for them! Let your group members know when you are praying for them, if you have any scriptures or encouraging words for them, etc.