

Raising Our Sails
to Grow Together in Love
in 2010



Name: _____

Let's Raise our Sails in 2010!

In order to grow together in love and accomplish our mission, we want to focus this year on raising our sails! This is a great image for practicing spiritual disciplines – those activities which open us up to the life-changing power of God's Spirit. While we cannot completely understand or control the Spirit (wind) of God, we can draw upon His power when we engage in spiritual disciplines (putting up our sails).

When we raise our sails, the wind of God's Spirit will carry us along and empower us to accomplish our mission. Our church's mission is *to build a loving community of Christ-followers to reach a culture in need of God's presence.*

In order to accomplish this mission, we must become and reproduce Christ-followers who are committed to *loving God* (worship), *loving each other* (community), and *loving our neighbor* (mission). The Spirit of God empowers us in these areas as we put up our sails and practice spiritual disciplines. Here are the basic disciplines we need to pursue.

Love God

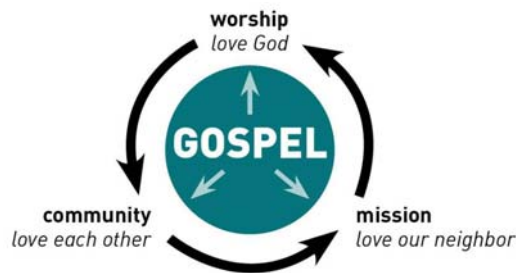
1. SCRIPTURE
2. PRAYER
3. WORSHIP
4. GIVING
5. FASTING
6. SOLITUDE

Love each other

7. FELLOWSHIP

Love our neighbor

8. SERVICE
9. EVANGELISM
10. CREATION CARE



Understanding the Spiritual Disciplines

Here is a description of the basic spiritual disciplines – the “sails” that we are going to raise!

Love God

1. **SCRIPTURE** – This is one of two foundational disciplines. It involves reading, studying, meditating on, and obeying the Bible! Meditation, by the way, is simply the repeated reading of Scripture – going over it over and over and over and over again.
2. **PRAYER** – This is the other foundational discipline. It involves talking to God. Specifically, it means Adoring God for who He is and what He has done, Confessing our sin to God, Thanking God for what He has done for us, and Asking God for help, wisdom, strength, provisions, etc.
3. **WORSHIP** – Worship is an active response in which we declare God’s worth. Although worship is a lifestyle, Scripture also calls us to gather as a community for corporate worship which involves praise, prayer, giving, preaching, and observance of the ordinances (baptism, the Lord’s Supper).
4. **GIVING** – This is a generous giving of our financial resources through our local church to fund God’s kingdom work. The New Testament does not specify a “tithe” (tenth) but rather a generous amount (see 2 Corinthians 9:6-7).
5. **FASTING** – This is the voluntary abstinence from eating food for a certain period of time in order to focus intensely on prayer. Fasting, though, can be abstinence from any good thing to focus and feast on all that God is for us in Christ.
6. **SOLITUDE** – This is the time alone with God needed to engage in the two foundational disciplines – Scripture and prayer. It can be daily time of 20-30 minutes, but it can also be a day retreat or even a week devoted to time with God.

Love each other

7. **FELLOWSHIP** – This is the discipline of sharing life together. It means that Christians spend time with each other at a level in which they can live out the “one another” commands in the New Testament. We are called to accept, encourage, forgive, honor, extend kindness to, be patient with, live in peace with, pray for, serve, submit to, and carry the burden’s of one another. Mentoring and accountability have a role.

Love our neighbor

8. **SERVICE** – This is the discipline of using our spiritual gifts for the carrying out of the church’s mission in the world. A spiritual gift is *any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church* (Wayne Grudem). The exercise of your gift may be directed more to believers or more to nonbelievers. But ultimately, its purpose is to help the church live out the mission of God in the culture around us. A key part of this is caring for the poor and marginalized.

9. **EVANGELISM** – This is the discipline of sharing the gospel with people who are lost. Lost people may be non-religious or religious. Regardless, they are lost apart from Christ.

10. **CREATION CARE** – This does not show up in most (if any!) lists of spiritual disciplines, although Dallas Willard talks about “frugality” and Richard Foster talks about “simplicity.” But the mandate for creation care goes back to Genesis 1. As God’s representatives, human beings are responsible to be care-takers of God’s creation. This discipline is related both to loving God and our neighbor. Christopher Wright says: “The church in its mission must bear witness to the great biblical claim that the earth is the Lord’s . . . and must care for the earth as an act of love and obedience to its Creator and Redeemer” (*The Mission of God*, 417-18).

For more information, see: *The Life You’ve Always Wanted*, John Ortberg (Zondervan); *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard (Harper Collins); *Spiritual Disciplines For the Christian Life*, Donald S. Whitney (NavPress); *Disciplines of a Godly Woman*, Barbara Hughes (Crossway); *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, Kent Hughes (Crossway).

Practicing the Spiritual Disciplines

To practice the disciplines effectively, you need a good plan (or “rule” as some Christians long ago called it). Of course, your plan must be flexible and must not make you a slave! But, as Don Carson points out, “Unless you plan to read, you won’t read. Unless you plan to pray, you won’t pray. Unless you plan to evangelize, you won’t evangelize” (2009 interview on “Table Talk” by the Theology Network). Here are a few ideas to help you put together an effective plan for “raising your sails” (practicing the disciplines which open you up to the Spirit’s power).

Love God

1. **SCRIPTURE** – Your plan does not have to be elaborate, but it should be intentional. You can read through the Bible this year by reading four chapters a day. This will take you the Bible’s 1189 chapters in 298 days! (Note: There are 929 chapters in the OT and 260 chapters in the NT.) Or, choose a few Bible books to read repeatedly this year.
2. **PRAYER** – Use one of Paul’s prayers (in his letters) or the “Disciples’ prayer” (Matthew 6:9-13) as a model. Develop a prayer list to stay focused.
3. **WORSHIP** – Make corporate worship a priority! Missing it for a vacation or a sports event should be the exception, not the rule! Aim for greater concentration and participation when you come to worship.
4. **GIVING** – Determine what is a generous amount for you and your family. Consider increasing your giving this year over last year’s amount. Discipline yourself to give from each paycheck.
5. **FASTING** – If you’ve never fasted before, start small! First, skip a meal and use the time to pray. Then, work up to two meals, to a whole day, and even to longer periods as the Spirit leads. You could fast from TV, your I-Pod, e-mail, etc., if a fast from food is not practical.
6. **SOLITUDE** – Set aside a daily time and place to read Scripture and pray. Then, consider a half-day or a day-long retreat. You could go to a park (in the summer) or a library or a coffee shop to be alone with God. For some, a prayer walk through a forest preserve works well.

Love each other

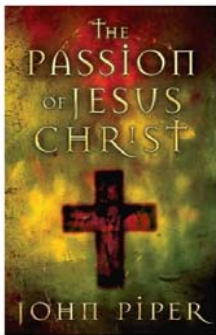
7. **FELLOWSHIP** – Join a LIFE Group! This is probably the single most important strategy for doing “life together.” Be intentional about encouraging, serving, helping, and caring for others in our church family. Also, seek out a mentor or someone to mentor. Ideally, each of us has a Paul (mentor), Barnabas (peer who encourages us), and Timothy (younger believer to mentor) in our lives.

Love our neighbor

8. **SERVICE** – If you’re not sure what your spiritual gift is, the best way is to try a ministry or two which interests you. Again, start small! Try serving as a greeter or an usher. Try helping in our children’s ministry. Then, consider how you can serve those in our neighborhoods who have needs. Watch our Community Service Opportunity table for various service projects.

9. **EVANGELISM** – Work hard on building relationships with nonbelievers. Pray that God will give you “open doors” into their lives to share the gospel with them. As a church, let’s work to share the gospel with 700 people this year! Plan to share the gospel with at least one person a quarter (so, four times in 2010).

10. **CREATION CARE** – Find some practical, sensible ways to care for God’s green earth! Consume less. Reuse items and get more life out of them. Recycle paper and plastic. Refrain from abusing creation by littering or improper disposal of environmentally unfriendly substances. Enhance your property with trees, flowers, weed removal, etc. Restore the environment by participating in a restoration workday at one of our Lake County Forest Preserves.



Join us during Lent as we read daily readings from [The Passion of Jesus Christ](#) by John Piper. We’ll begin on February 17 and conclude on April 3. The book contains brief (2-page) but powerful readings about the cross of Christ.

Your Plan for the Next 90 Days (Jan-Mar 2010)

Love God

1. SCRIPTURE

2. PRAYER

3. WORSHIP

4. GIVING

5. FASTING

6. SOLITUDE

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Evaluation – Complete this by March 31! Evaluate your practice of the disciplines. What needs to change? Go to the next section and put together a new plan for the next quarter (April-June 2010).

Your Plan for the Next 90 Days (Apr-Jun 2010)

Love God

1. SCRIPTURE

2. PRAYER

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Evaluation – Complete this by June 30! Evaluate your practice of the disciplines. What needs to change? Go to the next section and put together a new plan for the next quarter (July-September 2010).

Your Plan for the Next 90 Days (Jul-Sep 2010)

Love God

1. SCRIPTURE

2. PRAYER

3. WORSHIP

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Evaluation – Complete this by July 31! Evaluate your practice of the disciplines. What needs to change? Go to the next section and put together a new plan for the final quarter (October-December 2010).

Your Plan for the Next 90 Days (Oct-Dec 2010)

Love God

1. SCRIPTURE

2. PRAYER

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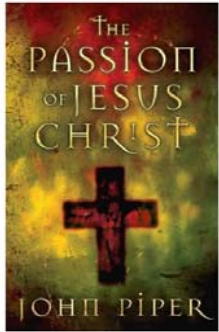
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Evaluation – Between Christmas day and New Year’s day, take a few minutes to write down how you have seen God at work in your life as a result of “raising your sails” (practicing spiritual disciplines) over the past year.

Schedule for 2010 Lenten Readings

From *The Passion of Jesus Christ* by John Piper



Feb 17 - Intro & Reading 1

Feb 18 - Reading 2

Feb 19 - Reading 3

Feb 20 - Reading 4

Feb 21 - Reading 5

Feb 22 - Reading 6

Feb 23 - Reading 7

Feb 24 - Reading 8

Feb 25 - Reading 9

Feb 26 - Reading 10

Feb 27 - Reading 11

Feb 28 - Reading 12

Mar 1 - Reading 13

Mar 2 - Reading 14

Mar 3 - Reading 15

Mar 4 - Reading 16

Mar 5 - Reading 17

Mar 6 - Reading 18

Mar 7 - Reading 19

Mar 8 - Reading 20

Mar 9 - Reading 21

Mar 10 - Reading 22

Mar 11 - Reading 23

Mar 12 - Reading 24

Mar 13 - Reading 25

Mar 14 - Reading 26

Mar 15 - Reading 27

Mar 16 - Reading 28

Mar 17 - Reading 29

Mar 18 - Reading 30

Mar 19 - Reading 31

Mar 20 - Reading 32

Mar 21 - Reading 33

Mar 22 - Reading 34

Mar 23 - Reading 35

Mar 24 - Reading 36

Mar 25 - Reading 37

Mar 26 - Reading 38

Mar 27 - Reading 39

Mar 28 - Reading 40

Mar 29 - Reading 41

Mar 30 - Reading 42

Mar 31 - Reading 43

Apr 1 - Readings 44-45

Apr 2 - Readings 46-47

Apr 3 - Readings 48-50