

Morning Sermon, Sunday 16 February 2014, Julian Hardyman

# How to spot a good minister

## **1 Timothy 4:6-10**

A good servant of Christ

- Has a balanced theology of creation (1-6a)
- Feeds themselves on nourishing spiritual food (6b – 7a)
- Trains themselves so they can grow in godliness (7b-8)
- Is energised for gospel work by a vision of the living God (9-10)

*The following pages are copies of the PowerPoint slides used by Julian during this sermon...*

+ Holding promise for the life to come.....

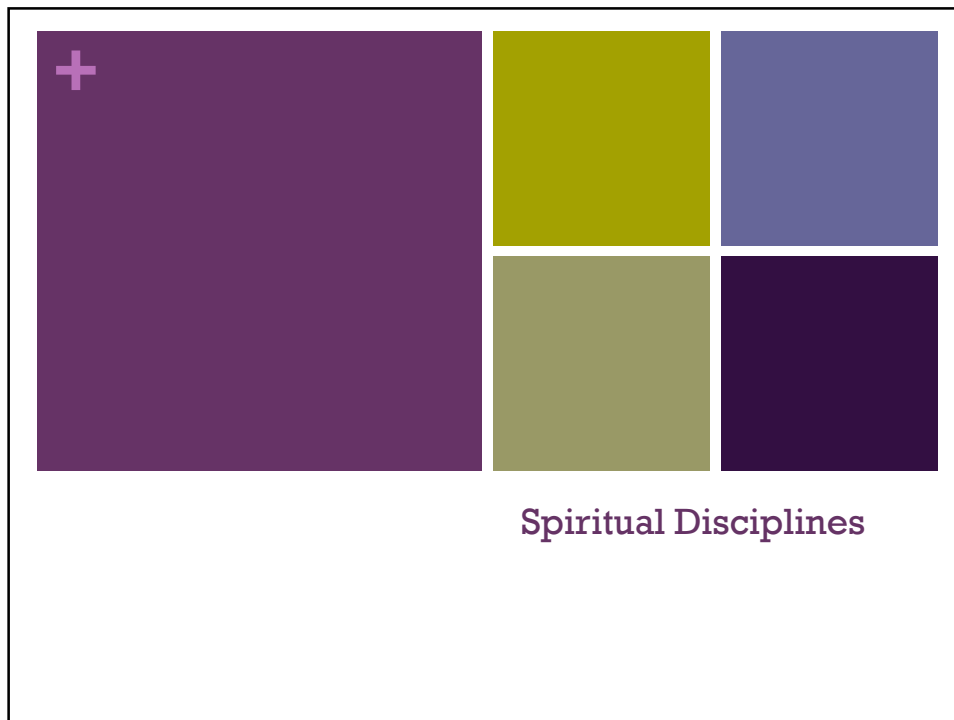
There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign,  
eternal day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,  
And never withering flowers:  
Death, like a narrow sea, divides  
This heav'nly land from ours.

Isaac Watts

+ God is Saviour of all people and especially of those who believe

- 'God preserves and rescues all people from difficult situations – and anyone who believe in Jesus finds a very special salvation from the most difficult situation of all.'
- 'Especially' means 'to be precise' – so...  
'God saves all sort of people – and that is those ones who believe.'
- 'God is ready to save absolutely anyone and anyone who believes in Jesus will find salvation.' (=2:4)



+ **Spiritual Disciplines**

**Those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth. Habits of personal discipleship which are modelled and taught in Scripture and have been practised by Christians since biblical times.**

*Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life*  
Don Whitney

## + Spiritual Disciplines – Don Whitney

- Bible reading
- Bible meditation
- Bible memorisation
- Prayer
- Worship
- Serving
- Fasting and self-denial
- Silence and solitude

## + Spiritual Disciplines

Repeated Inner Gospel Choices

+ **Spiritual Disciplines**  
– as repeated inner gospel choices

- Resting in Christ and his finished work
- Taking my failures to the cross and receiving forgiveness. Again and again
- Repeatedly repudiating my efforts at self-righteousness and trusting in Christ's perfect righteousness
- Asking the Holy Spirit to fill me and opening myself to His work. Daily.
- Turning to God in prayer rather than assuming I can fix everything myself

+ **Spiritual Discipline**  
– as repeated inner gospel choices

- Accepting that there are hard and puzzling things in the Bible and trusting God not my doubts
- Submitting to God's providence, even when events in my life are horrible
- Working out where my anger or my gloom are coming from and treating them with the gospel


+ **Spiritual Discipline**  
– as repeated inner gospel choices

- Making myself think about my money and possessions as God's not mine
- Deciding not to regret things I have missed out on in this life because Christ is everything I need and more
- Deciding not to hanker after things in this life because heaven will be everything I want and more
- Finding things to be joyful about in life and in Christ rather than finding things to be negative about

+ **Spiritual Disciplines**  
– as repeated inner gospel choices

- Putting aside excessive thoughts about myself and thinking about others instead
- Making myself apply the golden rule – 'Do to others as you would have them do to you' – in everyday situations
- Trying to see people through gospel eyes – not as scalps to be hunted, but sinners needing Christ
- Pushing my shyness into the background and making an effort to welcome and love people

+ **Spiritual Disciplines**  
– as repeated inner gospel choices



- Giving other people the benefit of the doubt
- Apologising for my failures and asking people's forgiveness
- Choosing to let love cover over a multitude of sins when people annoy or offend me
- Deciding to forgive and forgive and forgive
- Praying for my enemies

+ **Spiritual Disciplines**  
– as repeated inner gospel choices



- Working out which temptations I am most vulnerable to – and fighting them with the gospel
- Putting evil thoughts out of my mind by replacing them with wholesome ones
- Screwing up my will to do the right thing and doing it
- Walking away from sin and towards Christ

+ **Choosing Christ in place of sin:**

However much I tried it, the will-power of 'just don't look at it' never worked for me. I could go for a few days, and then the hole left just had to be filled. But then God made me realize that my choice was not simply between looking at porn and not. It was between desiring Jesus, who would satisfy, or desiring something else, which wouldn't. The struggle didn't become easy then, but it did become winnable, because I realized I had to choose not just to walk away from **something**, but to walk towards **someone**.....

Former Eden student