

Which Spiritualities Are Healthy Ones?

Subjectively that depends on one's beliefs about what it means to be fully and truly human. However, for a Christian the real difference between healthy and unhealthy spiritualities lies in the absolute clarity that to be fully and truly human is *to have the mind of Christ 24/7*. In other words, what distinguishes a healthy Christian spirituality from unhealthy "Christian" spiritualities is that every aspect of a healthy Christian spirituality is finalized ***to knowing and doing the will of God 24/7 with the mind of Christ, with love.***

This ultimately means that you must discern with the Holy Spirit not only what is the will of God and then do it, but also discern if you have done God's will with the mind of Christ. Note however that having the mind of Christ can only be determined by your internal attitude in doing God's will and by the fruit of the Spirit. Do not deceive yourself! It is possible to state that your *spirituality is to know and do the will of God 24/7 with the mind of Christ* and still have an attitude of cynicism, hatred, animosity These behaviors are codified in the Scriptures as *sin*. They are clearly not the fruit of what *having the mind of Christ* would produce. *Having the mind of Christ* will produce the fruit of the Spirit, as outlined in Galatians 5:22: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

Another good text by which to discern if one has the mind of Christ is set forth in 1 Corinthians 13:1-10: *always loves, is always patient, always kind, never arrogant, never boastful, never rude, never insists on one's own way, never irritable, never resentful, rejoices not in wrongdoing, rejoices in the truth, bears all things, hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things.* Another useful and insightful scriptural based chart that can help you distinguish good fruit from bad fruit is on page 22 in *Getting to Know God*.

Your Personal Notes and Reflections: _____

The Spiritual Discipline of Fasting and Healthy Spiritualities

Fasting can be a useful spiritual discipline. However, it can be motivated by many different spiritualities about the meaning and purpose of life. To look good and to attract others to you by having a nice body often drives some people to take care of their bodies, but that spirituality seems opposed to the spirituality of having the mind of Christ 24/7. Of course, whoever is striving to have the mind of Christ will also be motivated to care for their bodies. However, they will not do so to be seen by others, but to have their body as healthy as possible to serve the Lord and love their neighbor more fully.

Fasting is neutral. If one is successful at fasting, one can become arrogant and esteem the self above the other. This defeats the fruit of the Spirit and humiliates Christ's purpose in coming to redeem us. However, if fasting is inspired by the Spirit and practiced with humility, it will produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If you are irritable while fasting, you are clearly outside the gospel.

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show people they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to people that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. [Mt 6:16-18]

Of course, if you should feel the pangs of hunger and an associated discomfort from fasting, that is quite normal. One should not expect otherwise. However, you may not allow your discomfort to be an excuse to be irritable toward yourself, others or God. Being irritable is a lack of self-control, which is always a sign you are outside the gospel. It is sin; rebellion against God.

In other words, if fasting is forming the mind of Christ in a person, it would be evidenced by the fact that that spiritual discipline, by the Holy Spirit, is simultaneously producing the fruit of humility, gentleness, meekness, truthfulness, love of God, powerful desire to do God's will and an unwavering defense of the pure goodness of God. Another fruit would be a growing belief that the historical Jesus of Nazareth is God the Word incarnate, wonderful Lord and trustworthy risen Savior, and is also our one and only insight into what it means to be truly human. His attitude reflects what it means to be fully human.

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Having a Mind of Christ Spirituality

When a spirituality with its set of spiritual disciplines does not clearly set forth *having the mind of Christ at all times and in all situations* as its primary objective and does not demand that it be judged by its fruit (fruit of the Spirit), that spirituality and similar such spiritualities will seriously disorient Christians and stunt growth in the fruit of the Spirit. The teachers and followers of these spiritualities and their related spiritual disciplines—which disciplines could be the same as for a healthy Christian spirituality—will find themselves far from having the mind of Christ.

In fact, Christians who have unhealthy “Spiritualities,” even when they practice classical spiritual disciplines, will thwart their pursuit of an intimate relationship with Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit and ABBA. For example, they could come to believe that following the external rules and regulations of the spiritual disciplines is the fruit that Christ desires of his followers. They take their eyes off being known for their love, kindness, gentleness, and forgiving heart. Instead, they believe that *the doing* the external practice of the spiritual disciplines (whatever they might be) is *holiness*, is what it means to like Christ, *to be fully and truly human*.

Those who teach unhealthy “Christian” spiritualities would be those who in any way allow the Christian to believe that *following the rule* equates to *holiness*. Such beliefs will lead those Christians down roads that will twist their understanding of the heart and character of God. Consequently, these Christians will also have a twisted understanding of what it means to love their neighbors and thus be more truly and fully human. This will also undermine their emotional connection to God and to their neighbor and simultaneously twist the good news of the gospel.

Within this context, *My Daily Bread*, by humble faith in the inner working of the Holy Spirit, has been structured, to the best of my understanding of God’s ways, to be a healthy Christian spiritual discipline. That is, it is rooted in seeking **to have the mind of Christ 24/7** as its only and constant objective. This also means that whoever embarks on the narrow path of *My Daily Bread* must judge by the fruit of their efforts, by the fruit of Holy Spirit. Deceive not yourself that by doing the spiritual discipline, *My Daily Bread*, you have necessarily grown in having the mind of Christ 24/7. Indeed, your focus on having the mind of Christ is something to be applauded and your objective correct. However, it is only by the fruit of the Spirit that you can judge.

Your Personal Notes and Reflections: _____

Mind of Christ = Thinking Like Christ

No longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. [Eph 4:14] [Write down what the Holy Spirit has convicted you of during the above Scripture reading.] _____

I affirm and insist this in the Lord: No longer live as others in the futility of their minds ... but be renewed in the spirit of your mind and clothe yourself with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. [Eph 4:17,23] [Write down what the Holy Spirit has convicted you of during the above Scripture reading.]

Do not conform any longer to the thinking patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then, you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. [Rom 12:2] [Write down what the Holy Spirit has convicted you of during the above Scripture reading.]

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that are against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make them obedient to Christ. [2 Cor 10:3-5] [Write down what the Holy Spirit has convicted you of during the above Scripture reading.]

No longer live as unbelievers do, in the futility of their thinking because of the deceitful lies of the world [the flesh and Satan] that harden their hearts to God's word. You, instead, by the Spirit, will be made new in the attitude of your mind and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness. [2 Cor 5:17; Ga 6:15] [Write down what the Holy Spirit has convicted you of during the above Scripture reading.]

Have the Mind of Christ

Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all! When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion. [Phil 2:3-8, The Message] [Write down what the Holy Spirit convicted you of during the Scripture reading.]

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! [Phil 2:3-8, New International Version] [Write down what the Holy Spirit convicted you of during the Scripture reading.]

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. [King James Version, 21st]. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. [NRSV] You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. [New Living Translation] Have this attitude in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus. [NASB] You should think in the same way Christ Jesus does. [New Intern. Reader's Version]. Think the same way Jesus Christ thought. [Worldwide English New Testament] [Write down what the Holy Spirit convicted you of during the Scripture reading.]

MDB is a Process Not A Totem Pole

A Flexible Process Not a Totem Pole of Fixed Rules: This Christian spiritual discipline, MDB, with, by and in the Holy Spirit, our Divine Coach, Helper, Teacher, and Comforter, is intended to assist the Christian *drill down* and focus on God’s particular will for them today in the complexity of the known and of the unknown that will or might happen today. For example, if you believe, as best as you can understand your reality for today that God wants you to be doing something else **right now**, then, by the inner power of the Holy Spirit, you must stop doing this spiritual discipline and go do God’s will for you **in this moment**.

Having the mind of Christ also means that you fully trust that if it is God’s will for you to return to this spiritual discipline today, God will create that awareness in you and you will humbly reschedule it with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Your Personal Notes and Reflections: _____

Prayer of the Author of My Daily Bread for This Spiritual Discipline

O, inner Divine Coach and Teacher, may my efforts to grasp the thoughts of Jesus’ heart in my humble transcriptions of the gospel passages be faithful to the true intentions of Jesus’ mind. Correct me wherever I have strayed even the slightest. And may those whom you lead to utilize My Daily Bread, not believe in this spiritual discipline but in You who are within them and in God the Eternal Word who became one of us to save us and redeem us and to be our model of what it means to be fully and truly human.

Your Prayer: _____

