



When we mistake spiritual disciplines for to-dos, time slots on our schedule, or Instagram-able moments, we miss the benefits of Christ's continual and constant work for us. In *Ragged*, Gretchen Ronnevik aims to reclaim spiritual disciplines as good gifts given by our good Father instead of heavy burdens of performance carried by the Christian.

Only when we recognize our failure to maintain God's commands do we also realize the benefit of our dependence on his promises. Gretchen uses this distinction of law and gospel, presented throughout Scripture, to guide readers through spiritual disciplines including prayer, meditation, Scripture reading, and discipleship among others.

Despite our best efforts, the good news is that spiritual disciplines have less to do with what we bring before God and more about who Christ is for us, not only as the author but also as the perfecter of our faith.



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RAGGED

DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS

Gretchen
Ronnevik

Chapter 1:

- First impressions
- What is it to be needy before the Lord? Is it sinful to be needy?
- Why do we struggle with it?
- Compare discipline with punishment.
- How are spiritual disciplines and remembrance connected?
- What are some improper uses of spiritual disciplines?
- Additional reading: Read Luke 15, in the parable of the 2 sons.
- Which son have you related to? How are the 2 sons different? How are they alike?

Chapter 2:

- First impressions
- Define God's law.
- Define the gospel.
- Compare and contrast Moses and Jesus. (Put column up to fill in under Moses and Jesus)
- Read John 1:17.
- How can our understanding of the roles of Moses and Jesus help us understand the role of the law and the gospel in our lives?
- What sorts of confusions, and misunderstandings happen when we take law and gospel, and mix them, or put them out of their proper place?
- Optional additional reading at home: read through Hebrews in one sitting.

Chapter 3:

- First impressions
- In your own words, define Justification and Sanctification.
Feel free to refer to use scripture or the Luther's Small Catechism as well for reference.
- Compare good works motivated by love, and good works motivated by fear.
- Which one points us and others to Christ?
- Which one points to salvation or favor through works?
- Why would this matter?
- What is the role of God's love in our sanctification?
- What does sanctification reveal about God's love?
- How does being in need change our position, or attitude towards the gospel, as opposed to being self-disciplined?
- Does this change after justification?
- For further reading, read Ephesians chapters 2-3.

Chapter 4:

- First impressions
- Define remembrance. What other words or activities come from that?
- (Memory) What role does remembering play in our sanctification?
- Compare God's words of "always," "continuously," and "complete," with our common word of "enough" when it comes to spiritual matters. Why does God use these words?
- What role does the Holy Spirit play in our remembrance, thereby our sanctification?
- What are the expected, and unexpected distractors from remembering the works of Christ?
- Read Psalm 77. How does remembrance effect the psalmist?

Chapter 5:

- First impressions
- What does it mean to have Christian freedom? (As opposed to national or religious freedom)
- Who gives the freedom?
- Who uses the freedom?
- How does Christian freedom compare with legalism? (2 columns)
- What role does Christian freedom play in Christian community?
- Martin Luther said, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." What does that mean, and how can both be true?
- Read Luke 10.

Chapter 6:

- First impressions
- Define liturgy.
- In the story about the chickens, the safety of the 4 walls of the coop are compared to the livestock guardian. This comparison could extend to keeping sheep in a barn, and letting sheep roam on a pasture with a shepherd. What are the pros and cons of living in a fence or living with a shepherd? (2 columns)
- What is the difference between God training us in our response to various situations, as opposed to God training us to a specific schedule?
- In what circumstances are habits helpful, and in what circumstances are they harmful?
- Read Psalm 23.

Chapter 7 (REST):

- First impressions
- What are some different ways of defining rest?
- Compare rest and faith. How are they alike? How are they different?
- What was the relationship between rest and the other spiritual disciplines?
(Rest and prayer, rest and Bible reading, rest and meditation or confession, etc.)
- Are there real life circumstances where rest is not possible?
- What role does Christian freedom play in Christian community?
- Read Matthew 11:28.

Chapter 8 (Bible Reading):

- First impressions
- Romans 10:17 tells us that “faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of God.” What does this mean, and how do we define hearing?
- We often see it as “balancing” when we weigh how much time to spend in the word each day, against all the other things that God has called us to do (work, care for children, etc) How is it different to see that “balancing” instead as “freedom?”
- How does our understanding of law and gospel distinctions affect how we understand the Bible, and approach Bible reading?
- We often have an “ideal” of how we think our time of Bible reading should go?
- Read Matthew 11:28.

Chapter 9 (Prayer):

- First impressions
- Define prayer.
- Compare individual prayer and corporate prayer.
What are the unique benefits of each?
- What's the relationship between prayer and Bible reading?
How do they complement each other, or work together?
- How does prayer teach us dependence on God?
How might different circumstances of why we are praying
teach us different things about our dependence and access to God?
Give some examples.
- Read Matthew 6:5-13.

Chapter 10 (Meditation):

- First impressions
- Define Christian meditation.
- Compare meditation with Bible reading and prayer.
How do they complement each other?
- What is the relationship between meditation and the arts within the church?
(poetry, paintings, sculptures, cathedrals, music, writing, etc)
- What are some parts of the church service that brings us to corporate meditation?
- Read Psalm 19.

Chapter 11 (Fasting):

- First impressions
- Define fasting.
- Compare fasting and humbling?
What are various ways to humble yourself?
- What is the relationship between fasting and prayer?
Why are they so often mentioned together?
- What are some circumstances when fasting isn't wise, or even inappropriate?
- Read Esther 4.

Chapter 12 (Confession):

- First impressions
- Define confession.
- Compare confession and truth. What kinds of truth do we confess?
- How does confession teach us to depend on Christ?
- In what kinds of circumstances does confession not necessarily mean conflict resolution?
How does patience play a part in this? How is God patient?
- Read James 5:7-20.

Chapter 13 (Generosity):

- First impressions
- Define generosity.
- Compare the generosity of the poor compared to the generosity of the rich?
- How does generosity teach us to depend on Christ?
- What are some ways we are called to be generous besides money, and what are some of the most difficult ways to be generous, and why?
- Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

Chapter 14 (Lament):

- First impressions
- Define lament.
- Compare lament and confession. How are they different? How are they alike?
- What is the relationship between fasting and lament? How do they go together?
- How does lament teach us how to depend on Christ?
- Read Psalm 55.

Chapter 15 (Discipleship):

- First impressions
- Define Discipleship
- Compare discipleship with moralism. What makes them different?
- How does teaching others about Christ train us to depend on Christ?
- What memory of Christ's faithfulness in your own life can you share with others, as a testimony to God's faithfulness? How do sharing these stories build our faith? How do they edify the church?
- What role does Christian freedom play in Christian community?
- Martin Luther said, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." What does that mean, and how can both be true?
- Read Luke 10.

