

Friendship Rising:

The Benefits of Spiritual Formation, DISCIPLESHIP

2 Timothy 2:1-4

The Benefits of Personal and Spiritual Development

- **Increased Neuroplasticity:** The human brain is designed to continually adapt. Research shows that engaging in disciplined, continuous learning (like studying scripture and theological concepts) builds new neural pathways, significantly delaying cognitive decline and improving overall mental agility.
- **The Mentorship Multiplier:** A core component of discipleship is the mentor-mentee relationship. Sociological studies consistently reveal that both mentors and mentees experience higher levels of emotional intelligence, lower burnout rates and a deeper sense of life satisfaction compared to those who try to navigate life independently.
- **Enhanced Resilience:** Stanford psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck's research on the "growth mindset" demonstrates that individuals who view themselves as "in development" bounce back from failure much faster. Discipleship frames our mistakes not as final judgments, but as necessary steps in our spiritual formation.
- **Purpose-Driven Longevity:** Studies published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* show that having a strong, defined sense of life purpose—which spiritual development clarifies and reinforces—is associated with a decreased risk of mortality and cardiovascular disease.

1. **GRACE:** Complying with our divine directive to disciple people is not something we can successfully do out of our own limited strength—it must be fueled by God's grace (v. 1).

2. **MULTIPLICATION:** Utilizing the grace that God has shown us, we must deliver on our mandate to share what we know and have learned about God with people who will, in turn, share what they know and have learned about God with more people (vv. 1-2).

(over please)

FRIENDSHIP COMMUNITY CHURCH
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3. **SUFFERING:** One of the great things that discipleship does for us is help prepare us for when following Christ gets difficult (v. 3).

4. **WARFARE:** An unavoidable aspect of life is that we are at war against the forces of evil. Being a disciple means embracing the reality that we will often find ourselves on a battlefield, not a playground (v. 3).

5. **RELEVANCE:** Being disciples who effectively make disciples means that we can never afford to become irrelevant (v. 5).

6. **THE COMMANDER:** The ultimate goal of a disciple is not to impress the culture; it is to please the Commander who saved us and called us into service with undivided loyalty and clear focus (v. 4).

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