**Detachment**

***The practice of Detachment reflects the desire to nurture the spirit of trust that is attached to God alone. Detachment means replacing the attachment to (1) idolatrous relationships (people or things) and (2) self-serving goals and agendas for success, money, power, ego, productivity and image with wholehearted attachment to and trust in God alone.***

*“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel’s will save it.” Mark 8:34-35*

**Practice Includes:**

* Naming and confessing attachments that take priority over God.
* Allowing others to lead and win in your life.
* Letting go of image management.
* Letting go of notions that your money and things belong to you and make you who you are.
* Trusting outcomes to God rather than your own capabilities.
* Honoring the freedom of others; refusing to manipulate and control in order to get what you want.

**Spiritual Health Benefit:**

* Keeping company with Jesus in the letting go.
* Freedom from an identity attached to image, possessions, achievements and so on.
* Quickness to repent and center your identity in Jesus.
* Less need for temporal security; more trust in God.
* Living out of your true self in Christ by dying to self.

The Christ Hymn found in Philippians 2:5-11 is the perfect embodiment of this spiritual practice. Christ, though he was in the form of God, did NOT consider equality with God something to be desired and so emptied himself and took the form of a servant. There is no better way to describe the practice of Detachment.

Christ was willing to give everything up in order to be obedient to God and in doing so was exalted and glorified. As followers of Jesus we are called to live as he did, putting our trust in Him. Finding our identity, not in our jobs or our things, but in Him. We are called to relinquish worldly values and detach from anything that stands in the way of desiring and knowing God.

**Get To It:**

This spiritual practice of discipline hurts and is an ongoing process. Begin by reflecting on the questions below. Spend time in prayer asking God to help you be honest with yourself. Following the questions are a series of suggested practices to help you detach and relinquish the false self. Pick one you can work on in your devotional time, pick another that may be an ongoing effort.

**Reflection questions:**

1. How do you handle failure and weakness, suffering and loss? What does this tell you about how you attach and adapt to the world’s view of success, power and self-worth?
2. What are some specific ways in which mistakes and failures have worked for your good?
3. When has loss made God more real to you?
4. What about yourself are you most attached to?
5. Imagine a testimonial dinner in your honor. What would you like people to say about you?

**Spiritual Exercises:**

1. Take an attachment inventory. Write a list of the defense mechanisms you are attached to (sarcasm, temper tantrums, aloofness, phone or tablet use). Ask God to make you aware of the times you instinctively move into your defensive response. Consider what seems to trigger your response. What response would you like to cultivate instead? Share your observations with a trusted friend, asking them to pray with you. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you change your attachment to these behavioral patterns.
2. Practice letting go by giving away something you are attached to (money, time, possessions). Notice the feelings that arise in you when you think of giving something away. Spend time talking to God about how attached you are to your things.
3. Walk through your home or office, and in your mind give it all to God. Tell him that you could live without the things you see. What is this time of prayer like for you?
4. Recognize your attachment to labels. How do you use labels to judge people? How attached are you to your professional label? Where do professional labels get in the way of really knowing others? How might you enter a conversation without using the question, “What do you do?” Spend time coming up with questions that lead you to a deeper appreciation of the person.
5. Where in your life do you need Christ’s spirit of detachment? Where do you need to pray “Not my will but yours be done?” Talk to God about what it means to you to pray this sort of prayer. How does praying this prayer make the reality of Jesus’ life touch your own?
6. Ask God to give you an opportunity to become more detached from secondary things like your phone, social media or your time.