

Spiritual Transformation in the Perspective of Christian Theology

Wati Runggear^{1*}, Victor Deak²
STT Kharisma, Bandung

Corresponding Author: Wati Runggear watir020473@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Spiritual Growth, Spiritual Discipline, Spiritual Transformation, Christian Church

Received : 13, June

Revised : 27, June

Accepted: 15, July

©2025 Runggear, Deak : This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

Spiritual growth is an important process in the Christian life that requires spiritual discipline such as prayer, meditation on the word, and worship. This discipline plays a role in shaping Christian character, deepening the relationship with God, and encouraging the spiritual maturity of the congregation. However, many individuals experience spiritual stagnation due to a lack of understanding and consistent application of spiritual disciplines. This study uses a qualitative approach with literature study, interviews, and observation methods, involving church and congregation leaders who actively apply spiritual discipline. The results of the study show that communities with discipleship based on spiritual discipline are more effective in guiding the congregation towards spiritual transformation. As a recommendation, the church is expected to strengthen discipleship programs, pastoral accompaniment strategies, and the integration of spiritual teaching in theological education to promote the spiritual growth of the congregation.

INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Spiritual Growth in the Christian Life

Spiritual growth is an essential aspect of a Christian's journey of faith. The Bible emphasizes that the spiritual life is not static, but must continue to evolve toward Christlike likeness (Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:15). Without spiritual growth, a person risks experiencing a stagnation of faith, loss of spiritual vision, or even experiencing separation from God's will.

Spiritual growth is not only about the increase in theological knowledge but also the change of character and the depth of the relationship with God. A Christian who grows spiritually will have a clearer understanding of God's call in his life, be able to face challenges with firm faith, and grow more and more in love and service to others.

The Relevance of Spiritual Discipline in Forming Strong Faith

Spiritual discipline is a tool used by believers to draw closer to God and experience continuous renewal of faith. Dallas Willard (2018) in *Renovation of the Heart* emphasizes that without spiritual discipline, humans tend to return to worldly mindsets and find it difficult to experience true spiritual transformation. Some of the major spiritual disciplines in the Christian tradition include:

1. Prayer – As a means of direct communication with God, prayer strengthens spiritual intimacy and provides insight into facing life (Philippians 4:6-7).
2. Meditation on God's Word – Meditating on God's words allows individuals to experience a renewal of their mind and understanding of His will (Psalm 1:2, Joshua 1:8).
3. Worship – Through worship, one experiences fellowship with God and the community of faith, as well as strengthening awareness of God's presence in daily life (Hebrews 10:25).

Research by Foster (2017) in *Celebration of Discipline* shows that individuals who are consistent in spiritual discipline have more emotional stability and spiritual strength in the face of life's challenges. Spiritual discipline also plays a role in shaping perseverance of faith, which allows a person to endure pressure and trials without losing hope in God.

Previous Studies on the Role of Spiritual Discipline in Spiritual Recovery

Many studies show that spiritual discipline plays a role not only in the growth of faith, but also in spiritual recovery, especially for individuals who have experienced inner wounds or loss of spiritual vision.

1. Maria (2021) in *DUNAMOS: Journal of Christian Theology and Education* found that the recovery of a person's self-concept is greatly influenced by their spiritual depth and involvement in prayer and reflection on God's word.
2. Kurniawan (2024) in his study on *Restoring Your Heart Indonesia* shows that spirituality-based communities help individuals experience emotional and spiritual recovery through pastoral mentoring and spiritual mentoring.

- Williams (2017) in *Grace-centered pastoral counseling: An empirical review* highlights that spiritual recovery through the practice of spiritual discipline contributes to improved relationships with God and others, as well as reducing stress and anxiety in daily life.

Based on these findings, this study aims to explore how spiritual discipline can be used as a tool for faith growth and spiritual recovery, as well as how churches can develop more effective strategies in guiding congregations toward deeper spiritual transformation.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The Concept of Spiritual Transformation in Christian Theology Definition of Spiritual Transformation According to Christian Theologians

Spiritual transformation in Christian theology refers to the process of mental transformation that makes individuals more like Christ. Willard (2018) in *Renovation of the Heart* explains that spiritual transformation is not only in the form of behavior change but also a renewal of the heart and mind led by the Holy Spirit.

Grudem (2020) in *Systematic Theology* defines spiritual transformation as self-renewal that God works in believers, producing spiritual fruits such as love, joy, and patience (Galatians 5:22-23). Theologians such as Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, and John Stott also emphasized that spiritual growth is an ongoing process that requires spiritual discipline and openness of heart to God's leadership.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Shaping Spiritual Character (Romans 12:2)

Romans 12:2 states, "Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern between the will of God, what is good, acceptable to God, and what is perfect." This verse affirms that spiritual transformation occurs through the renewal of the mind, which is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

According to Stott (2017) in *Baptism and Fullness*, the Holy Spirit acts as a transformer of the heart, allowing individuals to experience true growth of faith. A study by Prasetyo & Naibaho (2024) in *the PRAGATI Journal* also found that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the congregation not only provides comfort but also forms a more mature spiritual character.

A Study on Faith Growth Based on the Experiences of the Church

The growth of faith is an important aspect of the Christian life that can be influenced by personal experience, church community, and spiritual discipline. A study by Maria (2021) in *DUNAMOS: Journal of Christian Theology and Education* shows that congregations that actively practice prayer, worship, and the reading of the word experience a more stable development of faith compared to those who do not apply them.

Meanwhile, research by Kurniawan (2024) in *Restoring Your Heart Indonesia* shows that a person's spiritual recovery can occur through a supportive community. This study highlights how the experience of congregations in small

groups and spiritual mentoring plays a role in faith growth and spiritual transformation.

Spiritual Discipline as a Means of Faith Growth

Prayer as Communication with God and a Means of Faith Formation

Prayer is one of the most fundamental spiritual disciplines in the Christian life. As a direct communication with God, prayer allows individuals to express heartfelt longing, supplication, and praise to God (Philippians 4:6-7).

According to Foster (2017) in *the Celebration of Discipline*, prayer is not just a spiritual routine, but a tool that brings people closer to God and forms a mindset that is in line with His will. Through prayer, a person experiences a renewal of heart and a strengthening of faith, as exemplified by Jesus, who often prayed to seek His Father's will (Matthew 14:23).

Research by Johnson & Patel (2018) in the *Journal of Christian Counseling* shows that individuals who have regular prayer habits tend to be more emotionally calm and have stronger spiritual stability. Prayer also serves as a faith-building tool, through which individuals learn to surrender to God and trust His providence in daily life (James 5:16).

Meditation on God's Word for Spiritual Understanding and Depth

Meditation on God's words is a spiritual practice that focuses on meditating on and understanding God's words, allowing individuals to experience a more real spiritual depth. Psalm 1:2 emphasizes the importance of meditating on God's word by saying: "*But the law of the Lord is his delight, and he who meditates on it day and night.*"

According to Willard (2018) in *Renovation of the Heart*, meditation on God's words serves as a tool to renew the mind, forming a mindset that is in harmony with the principles of the Kingdom of God. When a person meditates on God's words deeply, he not only gains a better understanding, but also experiences a transformation of heart, so that his life reflects the character of Christ.

Research by Kurniawan (2024) in *Restoring Your Heart Indonesia* shows that congregations that are actively involved in meditation on God's words experience increased spiritual awareness and are better able to overcome life's challenges with a perspective of faith. Meditation on God's words also plays a role in building sensitivity to God's voice, allowing individuals to act on divine wisdom and not just emotional promptings.

Worship as an Expression of Worship and Spiritual Fellowship

Worship is the primary expression of worship of God, which not only reflects a personal relationship with God but also strengthens spiritual fellowship with fellow believers. Hebrews 10:25 emphasizes the importance of fellowship in worship by saying: "*Let us not depart from our meetings, as some are wont to do, but let us admonish one another.*"

According to Stott (2017) in *The Living Church*, worship serves as a means by which the congregation experiences God's presence collectively and is strengthened in faith through praise, joint prayer, and the preaching of the word.

Worship is not only personal but also builds a Christian community that supports each other and encourages faith growth.

A study by Maria (2021) in *DUNAMOS: Journal of Christian Theology and Education* shows that congregations that are active in worship experience increased spiritual commitment, have a stronger sense of connection to the church, and are more motivated to live according to biblical values.

The Biblical Foundations of Spiritual Growth Patterns of Spiritual Growth in the Bible

Spiritual growth is a major theme in both the Old and New Testaments, which emphasize how humans must grow more and more in faith and become more and more like God.

The Old Testament: Growth as a Process of Discipleship

- a) **Psalm 1:2** teaches that a person who grows in God is one who meditates on His words day and night, showing that closeness to the word is the primary foundation of spiritual growth.
- b) **Proverbs 9:10** emphasizes that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, indicating that spiritual growth is rooted in a heart attitude that is submissive to God.
- c) **Jeremiah 17:7-8** illustrates that people who believe in God will be like a tree planted by water's edge, showing that dependence on God is the key to stable spiritual growth.

The New Testament: Spiritual Transformation as a Life Renewal

- a) **Romans 12:2** emphasizes the concept of *renewing of mind*, which means that spiritual growth involves a change in mindset and lifestyle that is in harmony with God's will.
- b) **Ephesians 4:15** teaches that believers must grow in all things toward Christlikeness, making it clear that spiritual growth is an ongoing process of building Christian character.
- c) **Philippians 1:6** affirms that God who has begun good works will finish them, teaching that spiritual growth is not only human effort but also God's work in the life of believers.

Metaphors for Spiritual Growth in the Bible

The Bible often uses the metaphor of nature to describe the process of spiritual growth, emphasizing that faith develops gradually just as biological growth or natural change does.

1. The Tree of Fruit (Psalm 1:3, Jeremiah 17:8)

- a) Psalm 1:3 describes the one who holds fast to the word of God as a tree that bears fruit in its season, whose leaves do not wither and who always succeed in everything he does.
- b) Jeremiah 17:8 reinforces this metaphor by stating that those who believe in God are like a tree whose roots are planted near the water, who are not afraid when the heat comes and continue to bear fruit.
- c) This shows that spiritual growth requires a strong root in God's word, as well as a constant connection to the source of life – God himself.

2. Growth Toward Maturity (Ephesians 4:13-15, 1 Corinthians 3:2)
 - a) Ephesians 4:13-15 emphasizes that believers must grow toward the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, attaining spiritual maturity that reflects the character of Christ.
 - b) 1 Corinthians 3:2 compares immature believers to those who still need spiritual milk, showing that spiritual growth is like human growth—beginning in the early stages and progressing to maturity in faith.
 - c) This metaphor reminds us that spiritual growth is a gradual process, not something that happens instantaneously.
3. Walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, Romans 8:14)
 - a) Galatians 5:16 teaches that believers must live according to the Spirit and not follow the desires of the flesh, emphasizing that spiritual growth occurs when a person is led by the Holy Spirit.
 - b) Romans 8:14 affirms that God's children are those who are led by the Spirit of God, making it clear that obedience to the Holy Spirit is a sign of true growth of faith.
 - c) This shows that spiritual growth is not just about knowledge, but also about a lifestyle led by the Holy Spirit, producing spiritual fruits such as love, joy, and patience (Galatians 5:22-23).

Factors Affecting Spiritual Growth

Obstacles and Challenges in Spiritual Discipline

Spiritual growth is often hampered by a variety of internal and external factors that affect an individual's consistency in practicing spiritual discipline.

Internal Factors

- a) **Lack of Motivation** – Many congregations experience spiritual fatigue or find it difficult to maintain their zeal in exercising spiritual discipline. This can be due to a lack of understanding of spiritual benefits or not seeing immediate visible results.
- b) **Faith Struggles** – Personal challenges, such as faith crises, theological doubts, or experiences of spiritual trauma, can lead a person away from spiritual discipline. Studies by Johnson & Patel (2018) show that faith struggles often result in decreased engagement in prayer and the study of God's word.

External Factors

- a) **Busy Work** Schedules, academic demands, and social obligations often distract congregations from their spiritual habits. Many people feel that they do not have time for prayer and meditation on God's word, so spiritual growth is stunted.
- b) **Social Influences** – Environments that are less conducive to spirituality, such as more secular associations or communities that do not emphasize discipleship, can reduce a person's motivation to practice spiritual discipline.

Spiritual Psychology and Faith Growth

Spiritual psychology plays a role in understanding how individuals experience and develop their faith. Some of the psychological factors that affect the growth of faith include:

- a) **Openness to Religious Experience** – A study by Willard (2018) in *Renovation of the Heart* shows that people who are more open to spiritual experiences experience a greater depth of faith than those who are skeptical of spiritual growth.
- b) **Resilience and Spiritual Recovery** – Individuals who have experienced life crises or emotional distress but still hold on to spiritual discipline often find that prayer and meditation on the word contribute to their psychological recovery.
- c) **Balance between Spirituality and Emotion** – Maria (2021) in *DUNAMOS: Journal of Theology* examines that individuals who understand the connection between faith and their emotional state are better able to exercise spiritual discipline consistently.

The Impact of Culture and Modernization on Spiritual Discipline

Contemporary culture has a profound influence on the way individuals carry out spiritual practices. Some of the aspects that are challenging for spiritual discipline in the modern era include:

- a) **Technology and Digital Distractions** – The presence of social media and technology has changed the pattern of spiritual interaction, where many people are more likely to seek spiritual information online than to apply traditional disciplines such as prayer and worship in person.
- b) **Individualism and Personal Spirituality** – Modernization has increased an individualized approach to religion, where many people prefer a form of personal spirituality to active involvement in the church community. A study by Stott (2017) in *The Living Church* shows that this trend can reduce fellowship and discipleship, which should be an important part of spiritual growth.
- c) **Church Adaptation to Cultural Change** – Churches that are able to adapt discipleship strategies to modern needs, such as online discipleship groups, spiritual apps, and digital ministry, are more successful in maintaining congregational involvement in spiritual discipline than churches that are still fixated on traditional methods.

Theological Models and Approaches in Spiritual Discipline

Classical vs. Contemporary Approach in Spiritual Discipline

Spiritual disciplines have evolved in practice from classical times to modern times. The classical approach emphasizes simplicity, order, and involvement within the church community, while the contemporary approach is more flexible and utilizes technology and the context of modern life.

Classic Approach:

- a) **Prayer and Spiritual Retreats** – In the classical tradition, prayers are often done on a strict schedule, such as morning prayers, evening prayers, and

community prayers. Spiritual retreats are also an integral part of spiritual formation.

- b) **Meditation on God's Word with the Lectio Divina Method** - This method, which developed in the early church tradition, encourages deep reflection on God's words, with stages of reading, meditating, praying, and meditating.
- c) **Liturgical Worship and Church Rituals** - Traditional churches such as Catholicism and Orthodoxy emphasize a sacred worship structure, in which the congregation experiences growth of faith through involvement in the sacraments and liturgy.

Contemporary Approach:

- a) **Technology-Based Discipleship** - Many churches today use spiritual apps, learning videos, and digital platforms to assist congregations in spiritual discipline.
- b) **Flexibility in the Practice of Spiritual Discipline** - Spiritual discipline is now more adaptive to modern lifestyles, where prayer, meditation on the word, and worship can be done virtually or in a small group discussion format.
- c) **Simplification of Discipleship** - Today's model of discipleship focuses more on the mentor-mentee relationship, allowing the congregation to engage in spiritual growth without having to follow traditional methods that are too formal.

Concepts of Spiritual Theology in Various Denominations

The perspective of spiritual discipline in various Christian theological traditions shows variations in its practice and meaning.

Evangelical:

- a) Emphasizing a personal relationship with God through prayer and Bible study.
- b) Small group-based discipleship and mentoring are very common in this denomination.

Catholic:

- a) Emphasizing the sacrament as part of spiritual growth, such as the Eucharist and confession.
- b) Using retreats and monastic spirituality as a means of deepening the faith.

Pentecost:

- a) Focus on direct experiences with the Holy Spirit, such as prayer in tongues and spontaneous worship.
- b) Emphasizing powerful prayer and expressive worship as part of faith growth.

Reformed:

- a) A systematic theology-based approach, where spiritual growth is guided by a deep understanding of God's words.
- b) Doctrinal-based discipleship is emphasized more than an emotional approach or personal experience.

Integration of Spiritual Discipline in Daily Life

In the modern context, spiritual discipline needs to be adapted in the life of the congregation in order to remain relevant. Here are some strategies for implementing it:

In Employment:

- a) Use short devotionals or morning prayers before work to stay connected to God.
- b) Apply the principles of honesty, integrity, and Christian ethics in the world of work as a form of practical spiritual discipline.

In the Family:

- a) Make it a habit to have family prayer, discussions of the Lord's word, and family worship to strengthen spiritual growth together.
- b) Instilling spiritual values in childcare so that they understand the importance of spiritual discipline from an early age.

In Technology and Social Media:

- a) Using Bible apps, spiritual podcasts, and online communities as a means of faith growth.
- b) Avoid digital distractions that can hinder spiritual discipline and replace it with faith-building content.

Previous Studies on the Practice of Spiritual Discipline

Research That Has Been Conducted on the Impact of Spiritual Discipline

Various academic studies have examined the impact of spiritual discipline on the lives of individuals and Christian communities. Foster (2017) in *Celebration of Discipline* states that individuals who routinely practice spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, meditation on the word, and worship, tend to experience more stable faith growth than those who do not do so consistently.

Research by Willard (2018) in *Renovation of the Heart* shows that spiritual discipline plays an important role in character change and heart formation, so that individuals can be more sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and act in harmony with the principles of the Kingdom of God. The study also highlights that active involvement in spiritual disciplines strengthens spiritual confidence as well as provides resilience in the face of life's challenges.

Meanwhile, research by Maria (2021) in *DUNAMOS: Journal of Christian Theology and Education* examined the relationship between spiritual discipline and a person's emotional stability. The results of the study showed that individuals who regularly engaged in reflection on God's words and prayers had lower levels of stress and were better able to manage emotions in daily life.

2.6.2 Analysis of the Success of the Church's Approach in the Growth of the Faith of the Church

The church's approach to supporting the growth of the faith of the congregation through spiritual discipline has been analyzed in various studies. A study by Kurniawan (2024) on *Restoring Your Heart Indonesia* shows that churches that implement small group-based discipleship programs have succeeded in guiding congregations in experiencing deeper spiritual growth.

Meanwhile, Stott (2017) in *The Living Church* states that churches that emphasize pastoral mentoring and spiritual mentoring have more active congregations in developing spiritual discipline. Congregations involved in discipleship and Bible study groups experience increased theological understanding and spiritual resilience in the face of life's trials.

Research by Prasetyo & Naibaho (2024) in *the PRAGATI Journal* also found that churches that provide spiritual retreats and joint prayer sessions are more effective in building congregational engagement compared to churches that focus only on weekly worship. This approach allows individuals to experience spiritual renewal more intensively.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This research uses a qualitative approach, which aims to understand the experiences of individuals and Christian communities in applying spiritual discipline and its impact on faith growth. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of phenomena that cannot be statistically measured but are very significant in the context of spirituality.

To gain more comprehensive insights, the study relied on two main methods:

1. Literature Study

- a) Examine the literature on Christian theology and psychology that discuss the relationship between spiritual discipline and the growth of faith.
- b) Browse through previous research in academic journals and relevant biblical sources.
- c) Analyzes the theories of spiritual growth from prominent theologians such as Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, and John Stott.

2. Interview

- a) Engage congregations who actively apply spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, meditation on the word, and worship, to understand their spiritual experiences.
- b) Interview church leaders, pastors, or spiritual mentors to explore effective spiritual discipleship and mentoring strategies.
- c) Using a semi-structured approach, which provides a space for respondents to share their experiences and perspectives in depth.

Analysis of the Church's Experience in Applying Spiritual Discipline

Data obtained from interviews and literature studies were analyzed using two main methods:

1. Theological Hermeneutics

- a) Interpret the experience of the congregation in the application of spiritual discipline based on biblical principles and the teachings of Christian theology.
- b) Compare the results of the interview with the church's teachings on faith growth and spiritual transformation.

2. Thematic Analysis

- a) Identify key patterns and themes that emerge in interviews, such as the impact of prayer on emotional stability or the role of worship in building spiritual community.
- b) Group findings by category of spiritual discipline and see their relationship with the growth rate of the church's faith.

This approach provides deep insight into how spiritual discipline can be a tool for faith growth and spiritual transformation, as well as how the church can develop a more effective approach in guiding congregations toward spiritual maturity.

Data Collection Techniques

To understand the impact of spiritual discipline on faith growth, this study used two main methods in data collection, namely literature studies and interviews.

Literature Study of Christian Theology and Psychology

- a) **Objective:** A literature review was conducted to examine academic references related to spiritual discipline in the perspective of Christian theology and its influence on spiritual and emotional well-being.
- b) **Sources:** The literature used includes theological books, academic journals, and Christian psychology articles that discuss the role of prayer, meditation on the word, and worship in shaping character and spiritual maturity.
- c) **Analysis:** The literature is analyzed with a theological hermeneutic approach, which is to compare the concepts found in reference with biblical principles and the church's teachings on the transformation of faith.

Interviews with the Church and Church Leaders on Spiritual Practice

- a) **Objective:** The interview was used to obtain empirical data related to the experiences of congregations and church leaders in applying spiritual discipline and its impact on the growth of personal faith and the church community.
- b) **Respondents:** This study involved congregations who routinely practice spiritual discipline as well as church leaders who are active in discipleship and spiritual formation.
- c) **Interview Techniques:** A semi-structured approach is used so that respondents can share their experiences in depth, but still fit within the framework of the research.
- d) **Data Analysis:** Data from the interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis method, which identified common patterns that emerged related to faith change, emotional stability, and involvement in the spiritual community.

With this approach, research can provide deeper insights into how spiritual discipline is applied in the lives of the congregation and how the church can develop more effective discipleship strategies.

Data Analysis

Interpretation of Individual Spiritual Experiences

This analysis focuses on how the congregation experiences faith growth through the practice of spiritual discipline such as prayer, meditation on the word, and worship. Data from interviews and observations will be interpreted using a theological hermeneutic approach, which is to interpret individual experiences in the context of biblical teachings and Christian theology.

Some of the factors analyzed include:

- a) Changes in character and spiritual maturity after applying spiritual discipline.
- b) The connection between personal experience and theological understanding in spiritual practice.
- c) The challenges and obstacles that the congregation faces in exercising spiritual discipline.

Correlation between Spiritual Discipline and Faith Growth

The relationship between spiritual discipline and faith maturity will be examined with a thematic analysis approach, which is to look for common patterns in the experience of the congregation that can show the connection between spiritual practice and spiritual development.

The aspects analyzed include:

- a) The frequency and consistency of spiritual discipline to the level of resilience of the individual's faith.
- b) The influence of the church community in encouraging the growth of faith through discipleship and fellowship.
- c) The impact of spiritual discipline on emotional stability and spiritual recovery is based on the experience of the congregation.

The results of this analysis will provide a clearer picture of how congregations that consistently apply spiritual discipline experience more stable faith growth, as well as how churches can optimize their discipleship approach to be more effective in guiding congregations toward spiritual transformation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Impact of Spiritual Discipline on Spiritual Transformation Key Findings from Interviews and Literature Studies

Based on the results of interviews with congregations and church leaders, as well as literature studies conducted, it was found that spiritual discipline has a significant influence on the spiritual transformation of individuals.

Key findings include:

- a) **Prayer consistency increases spiritual resilience** – Congregations that pray regularly report that they are better prepared to face life's challenges and have greater inner peace. (Philippians 4:6-7)
- b) **Meditation on God's words strengthens spiritual understanding** – Those who regularly meditate on God's words show an increase in wisdom and decision-making that is more in line with Christian values. (Psalm 1:2)
- c) **Worship strengthens a connection with God and community** – Congregations that are active in worship together experience an increased

sense of togetherness and involvement in church ministry. (Hebrews 10:25)

In addition, research from Foster (2017) in *the Celebration of Discipline* reveals that disciplined spiritual practices contribute to the formation of Christian character, helping individuals to become more patient, loving, and have a more God-centered orientation in life.

Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Spiritual Discipline

Based on the data analysis, there are several factors that determine the success of the application of spiritual discipline in spiritual transformation:

1. Perseverance and Personal Commitment

- a) Congregations that have strong personal discipline are better able to experience the benefits of prayer, meditation on the word, and worship in their faith growth.
- b) Failures in spiritual discipline often result from a lack of consistency and a lack of awareness of the spiritual benefits it produces.

2. Community Influence and Spiritual Mentoring

- a) Congregations that follow small groups or discipleship experience more significant spiritual growth than those who practice individual spiritual discipline.
- b) A study by Kurniawan (2024) in *Restoring Your Heart Indonesia* shows that spiritual mentoring and prayer groups are important factors in building faith resilience and spiritual recovery.

3. Environmental Conditions and Life Challenges

- a) A social environment that supports spiritual practice helps the congregation maintain their habits of spiritual discipline.
- b) However, congregations that face worldly pressures, such as busy work and technological distractions, often find it difficult to maintain consistent involvement in spiritual discipline.

Overall, spiritual discipline has a profound impact on spiritual transformation, but its effectiveness depends heavily on individual commitment, church community involvement, and external factors that influence one's lifestyle.

The Church's Strategy in Developing Spiritual Discipline Discipleship and Spiritual Mentoring Program

Discipleship is an important part of the growth of the faith of the church, where the church acts as a vessel for spiritual formation. Based on research and interviews with church leaders, several effective strategies were found that can be used in developing the spiritual discipline of the church:

1. Small Groups for Discipleship

- a) Churches that implement community-based discipleship groups are more successful in guiding the congregation in spiritual discipline.

- b) A study by Kurniawan (2024) in *Restoring Your Heart Indonesia* shows that congregations involved in small groups experience deeper spiritual growth than those who study individually.
- 2. **Spiritual Mentoring and Pastoral Mentoring**
 - a) Personal or group mentoring by spiritual leaders helps individuals develop the habit of prayer and meditation on God's word.
 - b) Johnson & Patel (2018) in the *Journal of Christian Counseling* found that congregations that received spiritual assistance were more stable in faith and emotional well-being.
- 3. **Spiritual Discipline Training in Church Communities**
 - a) Conduct prayer training, Bible studies, and more in-depth worship, so that the congregation understands how to apply spiritual discipline in daily life.
 - b) Maria (2021) in *DUNAMOS: Journal of Theology* notes that congregations that receive spiritual discipline training are more consistent in building a personal relationship with God.

Recommendations for Christian Communities Based on Research Results

Based on the analysis of data and findings from various studies, here are recommendations for the Christian community in developing spiritual discipline:

- 1. **Enhancing Community-Based Discipleship**
 - a) The Church needs to facilitate small groups, spiritual mentoring, and discipleship programs that help the congregation exercise spiritual discipline on an ongoing basis.
 - b) Congregations that receive guidance in small groups are better able to maintain their spiritual commitment.
- 2. **Building a Culture of Spiritual Discipline in the Church**
 - a) Integrate doctrines of spiritual discipline in sermons and church teaching.
 - b) Hold prayer training sessions, scripture studies, and intensive worship, so that the congregation can better understand spiritual practices that support the growth of faith.
- 3. **Adapting Spiritual Discipline Strategies to the Challenges of the Times**
 - a) Use digital technology to support discipleship, such as online prayer groups and virtual Bible classes.
 - b) The Church needs to adapt the method of discipleship to the modern lifestyle, so that the congregation can remain disciplined in their spirituality despite their busy schedule.

From the findings of the study, churches that are active in spiritual formation and facilitate community-based discipleship are more successful in helping congregations achieve deeper growth of faith. If this strategy is implemented well, the Christian community can experience a sustained spiritual transformation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research that has been conducted, it is found that spiritual discipline has a significant impact on faith growth and spiritual transformation. Practices such as prayer, meditation on God's word, and worship contribute to spiritual maturity, emotional stability, and increased involvement in the church community.

Key findings of the study include:

1. **Prayer as a faith-building tool** – Churches that actively pray experience increased spiritual resilience and sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Meditation on God's word strengthens spiritual understanding** – Helps individuals build Christian character and develop decision-making that is in accordance with biblical teachings.
3. **Worship as a means of fellowship and worship** – Enhancing the connection with God and strengthening the relationship between congregations in the church community.

Theologically, the results of the study confirm that spiritual growth is part of the process of discipleship, in which the Holy Spirit plays a role in shaping the character and renewing the mind of the believer (Romans 12:2).

Practically, the church has a responsibility to provide a forum for the congregation to practice spiritual discipline consistently. Discipleship strategies, pastoral mentoring, and community-based spiritual coaching need to be strengthened to ensure that the congregation experiences continuous faith growth.

Recommendations

Strengthening the Practice of Spiritual Discipline in the Church Community

To ensure the congregation experiences continuous spiritual growth, the church needs to strengthen the practice of spiritual discipline with the following approaches:

1. **Forming a Discipleship Group**
 - a) The church needs to provide a forum for the congregation in the form of small groups that focus on spiritual companionship, joint prayer, and reflection on God's word.
 - b) Ongoing discipleship programs have been shown to increase the spiritual commitment of the congregation, helping them apply spiritual discipline more consistently.
2. **Optimizing Pastoral Assistance**
 - a) Pastors and spiritual leaders should be active in accompanying the congregation, providing guidance that encourages them to live in spiritual discipline.
 - b) Effective pastoral accompaniment can build faith resilience and assist the congregation in spiritual recovery.
3. **Facilitating Spiritual Retreats and Spiritual Discipline Training**
 - a) The church may hold prayer retreats, discipleship seminars, and training sessions on Christian spirituality to increase the

congregation's understanding of the importance of spiritual discipline.

- b) This training can include how to develop prayer habits, Bible study, and deeper worship, so that the congregation is more focused on their spiritual journey.

Development of Word-Based Programs for Faith Growth

The church has a responsibility to ensure the congregation grows in God's word and has a deeper understanding of Christian spirituality. Therefore, a word-based program should be developed with the following strategies:

1. **Integrating Teaching on Spiritual Discipline in the Church Curriculum**
 - a) Bible sermons and classes should include material on the importance of spiritual discipline, not just theological information but also practical ways to apply it in daily life.
2. **Spiritual Practice-Oriented Theological Education**
 - a) The church needs to develop a program of study of the word that not only addresses theory but also teaches the congregation how to exercise spiritual discipline effectively.
 - b) Churches that have a deep understanding of God's word are better able to practice spiritual discipline consistently.
3. **The Use of Technology for Spiritual Discipline**
 - a) The church can use digital platforms, such as online discussion groups, virtual prayer sessions, or spiritual apps, to help the congregation stay connected to God's word in their daily lives.
 - b) Technology can be a tool that strengthens spiritual discipline in the modern era, allowing the congregation to continue to grow spiritually despite its worldly busyness.

By implementing these recommendations, the church can build a strong culture of spiritual discipline, so that the congregation experiences a deeper growth of faith and a more stable spiritual life.

FURTHER STUDY

Future research could explore the contextualization of spiritual transformation across various Christian denominations, such as how Evangelical, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions interpret and practice spiritual renewal. Comparative studies between Western and Global South theological frameworks may also yield deeper insights into how culture influences one's understanding of spiritual growth, sanctification, and personal relationship with Christ.

Additionally, a promising area for further study lies in integrating Christian spiritual transformation with interdisciplinary approaches, such as psychology, neuroscience, and education. This could help develop practical models for discipleship, pastoral counseling, and spiritual formation programs. Investigating the role of digital media and virtual communities in fostering or hindering authentic spiritual transformation also presents a relevant and timely direction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

1. To the Lord

- a. Be grateful for the wisdom and strength given during this research process.
- b. Hopefully the results of this research can be a blessing and contribute to the spiritual growth of many people.

2. To the Supervisor

- a. Thank you for your direction, input, and support in the preparation of this journal.
- b. The guidance provided is very helpful in deepening the analysis and strengthening the research argument.

3. To the Church and Church Leaders

- a. High appreciation to the speakers who have shared their experiences and insights about spiritual discipline.
- b. Their contributions are invaluable in understanding how discipleship and spiritual practice play a role in the transformation of faith.

4. To Family and Friends

- a. Thank you for the moral and spiritual support during the research.
- b. Their motivation and prayers were very helpful in completing this research well.

5. To All Parties Involved

- a. An award to academic peers, the church community, and other individuals who provide advice and perspectives in journal development.
- b. Hopefully, this research can benefit the church and the Christian community in developing stronger spiritual discipline.

REFERENCES

Alkitab (Terjemahan Baru). (1974). Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia.

Dallas, W. (2018). *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*. InterVarsity Press.

Foster, R. (2017). *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. HarperOne.

Grudem, W. (2020). *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Zondervan.

Johnson, K., & Patel, R. (2018). The role of prayer in spiritual formation. *Journal of Christian Counseling*, 32(1), 45-60.

Kurniawan, B. (2024). *Restoring Your Heart Indonesia: Program Pemulihan Luka Batin Berbasis Teologi Kristen*. Jakarta: Penerbit Rohani.

Maria, F. (2021). Pemulihan konsep diri dalam penyembuhan luka batin. *DUNAMOS: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 19(4), 67-89.

- Ortberg, J. (2015). *The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*. Zondervan.
- Peterson, E. (2005). *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*. Eerdmans.
- Prasetyo, J., & Naibaho, R. (2024). Peran Roh Kudus dalam Transformasi Karakter dan Pemulihan Luka Batin. *Jurnal PRAGATI*, 27(3), 145-167.
- Smith, J. K. A. (2016). *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. Brazos Press.
- Stott, J. (2017). *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor*. InterVarsity Press.
- The Holy Bible (English Standard Version). (2001). Crossway.
- Willard, D. (2018). *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. NavPress.