

THE DISCIPLINED LIFE

I Cor. 9:24-27 “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Introduction: The primary keys for a disciplined Christian life is personal salvation and purpose (having a direction.) Another important key for a disciplined Christian life is choosing the right marriage partner. You want someone with the same goals and common viewpoints on life, raising children, finances, job sharing, etc.

I. Discipline Gives Power.

A. National power

1. The world belongs to the disciplined. One of the most ominous disclosures that has come out of other countries is that other cultures (Japanese and German) youth are subjected to a far more intensive and exacting training than most young people in the Western nations.
2. The American way of life, on the other hand, accents relaxation and recreation. The Western world loves to play and observe – sports, TV, shows, etc. It takes discipline to learn a new art, science, or skill; it takes no discipline to watch a ball game or a wrestling match.
3. Immediately following World War II the American GI in Europe earned the reputation for being “kindhearted but undisciplined.” Kindheartedness is a virtue when coupled with moral stability. Without discipline kindheartedness becomes sentimental weakness.
4. Communist Lenin once said, “With a handful of dedicated people who will give me their lives, I will control the world.”
5. Theodore Roosevelt: “The things that will destroy America are prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first, the love of soft living, and the get-rich theory of life.”

B. Personal Power

1. Mentally: Not only nationally and politically but in every realm, the race belongs to the disciplined.
 - a. A trained mind can evaluate evidence, think logically, select ends, and devise means; it can concentrate on essentials and discard the relevant.
 - b. The man whose mind is undisciplined will soon be outclassed and outdistanced by others in whatever field he enters. He will

find himself not only on a lower scale economically, but dominated socially by those who are more efficient.

2. Physically
 - a. Although the discipline of the body is less important, it can be indispensable to power if its object is to train the body to serve the mind in the attaining of worthy objectives.
 - b. It is hard to accomplish your goals if you do not have a healthy body.

C. Disciplined Character

1. One may have an outstanding strong ability which has been cultivated by intense training within that narrow sphere, such as a steady hand and keen eye in playing golf, without general strength of character. But if one is weak as a person, the specialized ability will be progressively choked by the growth of vices until it will be lost.
2. Only a disciplined character can carry through in positions of larger responsibility.

D. Evidence of Personal Power

1. Is seen in times of personal crisis, sickness, financial adversity.
2. A person with discipline is governed by a sense of responsibility, is courageous, has poise and grace, order in their lives, consistency and purpose.

II. Discipline is a Mark of Maturity

A. To a Christian, discipline means “discipleship,” following Jesus with one’s self denied and one’s cross resolutely carried.

1. The aim of child discipline, military, academic, or religious, is a *disciplined character*, which goes beyond the demands of these specific disciplines and permeates the whole life.
2. In a general sense, self-discipline is the ability to regulate conduct by principle and judgment rather than impulse, desire, high pressure, or social custom. It is basically the ability to subordinate.

B. A disciplined Christian is in control of:

1. Appetites – Example – if you marry someone with weak impulses, they are a poor risk. Marry (and be) someone with strong character and discipline.
2. Emotions – God wants all of us to be warmhearted.
 - a. But the warm heart must have the wisdom of maturity or it can become or remain the giddy impulsiveness of adolescence.

- b. When warmth is not disciplined, it tends to degenerate into irresponsible sentimentality, caprice, frivolity followed by depression – or even worse, flirting, and philandering.
- 3. Mood
 - a. We must cultivate a fixedness of purpose, a steadiness of faith.
 - b. We must learn to transcend our moods. While some ebb and flow of our mood is inevitable, we must guard against giving into our mood.
 - c. With the changed mood may come strange impulses which we should guard against: taking a trip, make an unwise purchase, neglect some common duty. Such a tendency to exhibit moodiness is a grave weakness.
 - d. The husband, wife, child, pastor, secretary, janitor, teacher, etc. who can be counted on to be temperamentally even and reliable, always the same, will have a steadily accelerating influence over others.
- 3. We should be disciplined in our speech. Prov. 29:11; James 3:2.
- 4. We should be disciplined in our priorities. Be selective in what you say yes to and learn to say no. God, spouse, children, church, work, etc.
- 5. We should be disciplined in our adjustment to authority.
 - a. Submit body, soul, and spirit to the will of the Lord.
 - b. Eph. 5:22-23; I Sam 15:22-23; Romans 13:1-4

III. The Perils of Discipline

- A. You can become too rigid or tyrannical.
- B. You can become proud.

IV. Discipline and Holiness

- A. Discipline is not holiness.
- B. Discipline is not a substitute for holiness – (Amish, Mennonites, Pharisees.)

V. Case for Imposed Discipline

- A. Civilizing with the rod – Prov. 23:13 & 14
- B. Testimonies of moms that were 'strict'
- C. Most successful people in life have impulse control.

VI. How to Become a Disciplined Person

- A. Begin w/ simple things, i.e.: hang up clothes, make bed, wash out bathtub or sink after yourself.
- B. Train your body:
 - 1. Nix nervous gestures.
 - 2. Keep hands still.
 - 3. Posture should be graceful and tall.
 - 4. Your eyes should focus on speaker at all times. Don't have straying eyes or stare off into space.
- C. Start with hard tasks first. Complete what you begin.
- D. Cultivate punctuality.
 - 1. Are you a "better late than never person" or a "better never late person"?
 - 2. Christian courtesy demands punctuality. This is almost a matter of ethics.
 - 3. Plan ahead, rise earlier, and leave earlier.
 - 4. Use a planner to keep appointments in and consult often.
- E. Organize your mind.
 - 1. Concentrate on a problem without visual or social aids. Sit quietly and think.
 - 2. Undertake systematic courses of instruction.
- F. Exploiting the unexpected. Romans 8:28
 - 1. See that fretting is folly.
 - 2. Thank God for his hidden providence.
 - 3. Ask God to show you how to turn your frustration into fulfillment.
- G. Learn to love your critic. Prov. 15:32
- H. Self-restraint – Prov. 18:13
 - 1. Curiosity – nosiness.
 - 2. Prejudice.
 - 3. Dogmatism.
- I. Conquer gluttony. I Cor. 9:25-27
- J. Learn to respect time tags – Eccles. 3:1
 - 1. Many of life's most important joys, privileges, and responsibilities have a time tag on them. They belong to certain days or to a certain level of maturity.
 - 2. Too many young people are nothing but spoiled children who must have immediate satisfaction for all their urges.
- K. Welcome the yokes of life. Cultivate a sense of responsibility.

I would be true, for there are those who trust me,
I would be pure, for there are those who care,
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer,
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.

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You can check your progress toward a mature sense of responsibility by asking yourself these questions:

- 1) Am I faithful to keep appointments?
- 2) Can I be depended on to fulfill tasks assigned to me?
- 3) Am I quick to take hold and help when a job is to be done, or do I find it easy to slip quietly away?
- 4) Do I accept responsibility for my decisions and mistakes, and do I share the responsibility for the decisions and mistakes of my group, or do I tend to shift the blame to others?
- 5) Am I careful about financial obligations, or do I require the prodding of duns?

Lamentations 3:27 *“It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”*