

Disciplines of a Godly Man

What is Discipline?

Webster's - 1: punishment; 2 *obsolete* : instruction; 3: a field of study; 4: training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character; 5 a: control gained by enforcing obedience or order ; b: orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior; c: self-control; 6: a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity

What separates discipline from legalism? **Motivation**

Legalism is **self**-centered. The legalistic heart says "I will do this to **gain merit** with God.

Discipline is **God**-centered. The disciplined heart says "I will do this thing because I **love** God and want to **please** Him.

Legalism seeks to attain godliness through **outward conformity**. The point of discipline, on the other hand, is to bring the **external** into conformity with the **inner** reality. It is the visible outworking of inner transformation. (Romans 6:17 – obedience from the heart)

1 Timothy 4:7-10 "Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe." (ESV)

Paul compares the quest for godliness to the training of an Olympic athlete. Notice the following definition of the Greek word for train or discipline.

Train – Gr. *gymnázō* -The literal sense is "to exercise naked." It is used only figuratively in the NT, for concentration on godliness in 1 Tim. 4:7 (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24ff.; Phil. 2:12);

The word *gymnazo* was used to describe the training of athletes in ancient Greece who would exercise and compete naked. Why do you think they did this?

What are some of the things that hinder us, as men in our training in godliness?

Men are often very disciplined when it comes to sports, hobbies, etc. Why do we struggle so to become spiritually disciplined?

Toil – Gr. *kopiáō* -In secular Greek *kópos* means a. “beating” or the “weariness” caused by it, and b. the “exertion” (e.g., of manual work) that brings on physical tiredness. *kopiáō*, then, means “to tire,” “to wear oneself out.”

Strive – Gr. *agōnizomai* – a. Striving for the goal is the first thought here (Lk. 13:24). Exertion (1 Th. 2:2) and a concentration of forces (Col. 1:29; cf. 2 Tim. 4:7-8) are both necessary. b. Striving also calls for denial (1 Cor. 9:25), the setting aside of provisional ends (1 Cor. 9:27). This is not asceticism but athletic discipline (2 Tim. 4:5). It is not contempt for the world but a right ordering of priorities.

Consider this quote by Hughes:

“We will never get anywhere in life without discipline, be it in the arts, business, athletics, or academics. This is doubly so in spiritual matters. In other areas we may be able to claim some innate advantage. An athlete may be born with a strong body, a musician with perfect pitch, or an artist with an eye for perspective. But none of us can claim an innate spiritual advantage. In reality, we are all equally *disadvantaged*. None of us naturally seeks after God, none is inherently righteous, none instinctively does good (cf. Romans 3:9-18). Therefore, as children of grace, our spiritual discipline is everything – everything! I repeat...discipline is everything!” (p. 13)

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 *“Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”*

As men we are called to discipline ourselves so that we do not run the race aimlessly.

Paul said he disciplined his body. This verb means “to strike on the face” with resultant disfigurement, then figuratively “to defame,” “to castigate” (with words)...In 1 Cor. 9:26-27 Paul is using athletic metaphors for his work. He does not box as one who beats the air but pommels and subdues his body. The expression is figurative. He is not subjecting himself to ascetic exercises but subjecting his body to the demands of ministry (cf. Rom. 8:13), gaining strength from the hardships to which this exposes him and which God overrules for good (2 Cor. 12:7ff.). [K. Weiss, VIII, 590-91] (TDNT)

What aspect of Paul’s nature is he “beating” or disciplining here 1 Corinthians 9?

“The job of a football coach is to make men do what they don’t want to do, in order to achieve what they’ve always wanted to be.” Tom Landry See Romans 7:13-25

What does Paul recognize will happen if he does not discipline himself?

In the context here Paul is speaking of disqualification from the ministry God has called him to as an Apostle due to a lack of discipline. How might we disqualify ourselves due to lack of discipline?

Disqualification means to go outside of bounds. Consider the following illustration:

Lanny Bassham, Olympic gold-medalist in small-bore rifle competition, tells what concentration does for his marksmanship: “Our sport is controlled nonmovement. We are shooting from 50 meters—over half a football field—at a bull’s eye three-quarters the size of a dime. If the angle of error at the point of the barrel is more than .005 of a millimeter (that is five one-thousandths), you drop into the next circle and lose a point. So we have to learn how to make everything stop. I stop my breathing. I stop my digestion by not eating for 12 hours before the competition. I train by running to keep my pulse around 60, so I have a full second between beats—I have gotten it lower, but found that the stroke-volume increased so much that each beat really jolted me. You do all of this and you have the technical control. But you have to have some years of experience in reading conditions: the wind, the mirage. Then you have the other 80% of the problems—the mind. *Sports Illustrated*, August 2, 1976, pp. 31-35

Being slightly “off” today can lead to major error, even disqualification later. Consider your own life. Are there areas of your life that are “off,” even slightly, that could cause you to completely miss the mark or even lead to disqualification?

Take a moment and consider the trajectory of the following areas:

- My relationship with God:
- My family leadership:
- The direction of my career:
- Moral purity:
- My service to the body of Christ:

Why this study? The overall health of the local church is dependant upon the spiritual health of its men. Weak **men** make for a weak **church**

- God has established the order of male leadership in the home as well as in the church.
- Men today tend to be passive when it comes to these areas of spiritual leadership hence the need for discipline. (p. 15-17)

=====PREPERATION & APPLICATION=====

1. Pray: Ask God to give you wisdom and discipline. Ask Him to point out to you areas of your life that may be off and in need of change. Pray daily for your family and your church.
2. Invest: Seek a brother from the study and commit to meet once a week to discuss what you’re learning and what God is teaching you.
3. Read p. 11-44 for next Monday. Highlight/underline things that stand out to you. Remember; read the Scriptures listed in the book as well as the ones referenced, don’t skip over them.

Take time to read Proverbs 5:1-23 and 6:20-7:27 every day for the next 7 days and allow God to speak to your heart concerning purity and marriage. Plan to share next week with a brother.