

THE DISCIPLINES OF GODLY PEOPLE—PART 2
THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER
EPHESIANS 6:10-18

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Introduction

We live in a world where **way too many people lack *DISCIPLINE* in their lives**. The Bible word for that is “*INCONTINENT*” (e.g. *Now when we hear that word in our day most often it is used in commercials hawking products to folks who have lost control over some part of their bodily functions as they have aged!*)

But that is **NOT** what Paul was talking about when he gave Timothy various characteristics that would manifest themselves in the lives of people in the last days—“*INCONTINENT*” is one of those characteristics on that list! What Paul was saying was that people would “*lack self-control*” or be “*unbridled*” when it came to their manner of living. (i.e. They would lack the *DISCIPLINE* in their lives so much so that *SELF-CONTROL* is missing!)

We began to look last week at the matter of some ***GODLY DISCIPLINES*** that need to be in our lives as Believers! (And, by the way, it is not so much *SELF-CONTROL* that we are talking about as it is *HOLY SPIRIT CONTROL* in our lives!)

Galatians 5:22-25—“22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

TEMPERANCE = SELF-CONTROL; MODERATION

If we have an *UNDISCIPLINED* lifestyle (i.e. live an *UNDISCIPLINED* life), we are asking for and will have great heartaches in our life. Because when an *UNDISCIPLINED* life is sown it usually reaps a family full of *UNDISCIPLINED* living. God’s laws of sowing and reaping come into play!

So, *DISCIPLINE* is something that we must learn to embrace and thank God for as we grow in Him!

And we need to understand that when we, as Believers, fail to *DISCIPLINE* ourselves, then our loving Heavenly Father brings *CHASTENING* or *DISCIPLINE* into our lives. He does this because He loves His Children too much to leave them in an *UNDISCIPLINED* lifestyle!

The Apostle Paul linked the idea of *DISCIPLINE* with the spiritual life in *1 Timothy 4:7*, where he said, “*Exercise thyself rather for godliness*”

In the **physical realm**, we know that *exercise* is a *DISCIPLINE* that **tones the muscles of the body!**

In the **spiritual realm** we find things are much the same way. This “*exercising for godliness*” that Paul refers to is a **spiritual workout** or **spiritual routines** that **tone our spiritual life** and help us to develop healthy spiritual lives (i.e. They help us to develop *godliness*).

Paul goes on to say *1 Timothy 4:8* that “*godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*”

So then, we should be doing all we can, to make sure that we are ***exercising ourselves to godliness?*** (i.e. Doing things that *develop* godliness in our lives.)

Our lives as Believers are to be about **bringing our wills and every area of our lives under submission to God’s will. That is what godly discipline is!**

We began last time by looking at some *DISCIPLINES* that ought to be in each of our lives in order to bring about *godliness* in our lives.

To the extent that these *DISCIPLINES* are in our lives, there will be ***godliness in our lives***. To the extent that these *DISCIPLINES* are missing from our lives, there will be something missing from our spiritual lives.

We looked at only the first two of these *DISCIPLINES* in our first message: ***WE NEED THE DISCIPLINE OF THE GOSPEL!*** This is at the very foundation of living a godly life! If you are missing this *DISCIPLINE*, you will fail to achieve a godly walk!

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The Gospel is the very source of godliness in our lives! One CANNOT live a godly life without the indwelling Holy Spirit! It is impossible!

*WE NEED THE DISCIPLINE OF SUBMISSION!
Willingly bringing our lives into SUBMISSION to God's will in **everything** is the key to being a godly person! Finding and doing the will of God is the key to having joy and living the abundant life in Christ!*

Now, let's look at another **DISCIPLINE** that is needed in our lives as Believers:

WE NEED THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER!

Quite simply **PRAYER** is **TALKING WITH GOD!**
(e.g. The person who had a problem with what a certain man prayed!
"I wasn't talking to you!")

PRAYER is our line of **COMMUNICATION WITH GOD!** One cannot live a **godly life** apart from having an active **PRAYER** life!

According to our text here in *Ephesians 6:18*, one way that we have to battle in the spiritual warfare that we find ourselves in is to **PRAY** "*always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*"

In other letters to the Churches, Paul also addressed this matter of **PRAYER!**
Colossians 4:2–"**Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;**"

Philippians 4:6–"**Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**"

Romans 12:12–"**Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;**"

1 Thessalonians 5:17–"**Pray without ceasing.**"

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Think of how essential it is for the soldiers on the battlefield to be in contact with their commanders!

Why else do you think that **one of the main things an enemy tries to do is jam the communications OR knock out the line of communications in any way that they can?**

Now, PRAYER is just one of our sources of power for **SPIRITUAL GROWTH** and **PERSEVERANCE** in our lives. But it is a very important source! It helps us to **BEND OUR WILL TO GOD'S WILL**, which is what **SUBMITTING** our lives to God is all about!

And although **PRAYER** cannot be reduced to a formula, **Jesus did teach his disciples to PRAY.** We can learn from what He taught them and we can learn from His **PRAYERS** and the **PRAYERS** of godly men and women in Scripture and even godly men and women who are alive today!

What are some important aspects of **PRAYER?**

I. **PRAYER SHOULD INCLUDE CONFESSION OF OUR SIN TO GOD!**

That is because sin in all its manifestations can hinder our **PRAYERS:**

A. **Sin Includes Our Iniquities!**

(iniquity = a deviation from the way; missing the mark)

Psalm 66:18 "If I regard **iniquity** in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:"

Psalm 59:1-2–"**I Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.**"

B. **Sin Includes Our Disobedience!**

(Whether that be by omission or commission!)

Omission = Not doing what the LORD has told us to do.

Commission = Doing what the LORD has told us not to do.

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- C. **Sin Includes Our Selfish Purposes!**
(Living life to please ourselves rather than the LORD!)
- D. **Sin Includes Our Idolatries!**
(Idolatry is anything we put before God in our life!)
(This can include friends, pleasures, habits, hobbies, sports, possessions, business, reputation, money, ANYTHING!)
- E. **Sin Includes Our Unforgiveness!**
Ephesians 4:31-32–“31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”
- F. **Sin Includes Our Unbelief!**
Not taking God at His Word!

Proverbs 28:13–“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

1 John 1:9–“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

PRAYER SHOULD INCLUDE CONFESSION OF OUR SIN TO GOD!

II. **PRAYER SHOULD FLOW OUT OF OUR MEDITATION ON GOD AND HIS WORD!**

- A. **We Should *MEDITATE* On The ATTRIBUTES And PERSON Of God That Leads To Our WORSHIP And ADORATION of Him!**
***MEDITATION* = a focusing of our thoughts on God Himself!**

*Psalm 104:34–“My *MEDITATION* of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.”*

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- B. **We Should *MEDITATE* On The WORD OF GOD!**
***MEDITATION* = “A thinking through or over; a reflecting on” what the LORD has said!**

*(Cf. Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2 where *MEDITATION* on God’s Word is linked to both PROSPERITY and SUCCESS!)*

- C. **We Should Offer Our *THANKSGIVING* to GOD!**
*When we *MEDITATE* on THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, THE PERSON OF GOD, and THE WORD OF GOD it should bring forth an ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE!*

Colossians 4:2–“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving!”

Philippians 4:6–“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

- D. **We Should Freely *SUBMIT* To The Will Of God!**
(One of the DISCIPLINES we saw last time in James 4:7-10)
This is tied very closely to Christ being our **LORD** and not just our **SAVIOR**! He calls the shots!

When we **MEDITATE** on **THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, THE PERSON OF GOD, and THE WORD OF GOD** we come to understand that **HIS WILL IS BEST!**

PRIDE says I’ll do what I want or I’ll do it my way!

HUMILITY says I’ll do what the LORD wants or I will look to the LORD Who alone knows what is best!

The closer that we DRAW NIGH to God, the easier this becomes in our walk because HE DRAWS NIGH to us!

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*PRAYER SHOULD INCLUDE CONFESSION OF OUR SIN TO GOD
PRAYER SHOULD FLOW OUT OF OUR MEDITATION ON GOD
AND HIS WORD!*

III. **PRAYER SHOULD INCLUDE OUR *PETITIONS* (OR
SUPPLICATIONS) TO GOD!**

Understand that a *PETITION* is a **REQUEST, NOT A DEMAND!**

**WE DO NOT COMMAND THE SOVEREIGN KING OF KINGS
AND LORD OF LORDS, SO THEREFORE WE MUST NOT
DEMAND ANYTHING FROM GOD!**

The word translated *PETITION* means **“TO ASK” or “REQUEST”**.

A good example of this is found in 1 Samuel 1 when Hannah asked for a child?

1 Samuel 1:17—“Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.”

*1 Samuel 1:20—“Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, **Because I have asked him of the LORD.**”*

*1 Samuel 1:27—“For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my *petition* which **I asked of him:**”*

The Apostle John pointed out the importance of **PRAYING
ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD!**

*1 John 5:14-15—“14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, **if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:** 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the *petitions* that we desired of him.”*

We might be tempted to think, *“Well that’s all well and good Pastor, but what if we don’t know what the will of God is?”*

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Can you say, **HOLY SPIRIT TO THE RESCUE!?** (*Romans 8:26-28*)
2 Peter 1:3—“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Look at what Jesus said in *Matthew 7:7-11.*

PRAYER SHOULD INCLUDE OUR PETITIONS TO GOD...

IV. **PRAYER SHOULD INCLUDE OUR *INTERCESSIONS* TO
GOD!**

An **“INTERCESSION”** is **“seeking the presence and hearing of God on behalf of others.”**

It is what we mainly do in our Wednesday Night Prayer Time and it is the purpose for providing the Prayer List like we do!

Some examples of this type of praying are:

The prayers of Moses for the Children of Israel!

The prayers of Job for his friends in Job 42:7-10!

The prayers of the Church for Peter when he was imprisoned by Herod in Acts 12:5!

The prayers of Paul that he mentions in his Epistles to the Churches. (Ephesians 1:15ff, Philippians 1:3ff, Colossians 1:9ff)

Conclusion

Continual prayer is God’s will for us! We must always have an attitude of prayer wherever we are and whatever we are doing!

(e.g. The late Dr. John R. Rice)

Having an attitude of prayer will go a long way toward:

1. Keeping us from sin and helping us to guard our testimony.
2. Keeping us from worry or fear.
3. Keeping us from self-sufficiency.
4. Keeping us from having an unforgiving spirit.
5. Keeping us focused on the right things.
 - a. The souls of men.
 - b. The eternal things rather than the temporal things.