Spiritual Formation

Growing Into the Image of Christ



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Session 4: Discipline

Main Idea

• The means that God uses to sanctify us are the spiritual disciplines.

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How can the Man/Woman of God Grow Spiritually

- How do we become the kind of person we learned about in the Sermon on the Mount?
 - The answer is the spiritual disciplines



Discipline

- Thought experiment
- What do you think the point is of this example?



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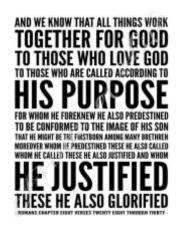
The Goal of Discipline

- If you forget the goal of your discipline, then it becomes drudgery
- DON'T EVER FORGET THE PURPOSE OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES!



What is the Goal?

- Look at Romans 8:28-30.
 - -We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.
- Verse 29- the words "so that" reveal the purpose.
- God is so committed to the goal, He predestined it.



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Hebrews 12:14

- Hebrews 12:14—Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness-without it no one will see the Lord.
 - Pursue = διώχω
- Without pursuing sanctification, you will not see the Lord.
 - -Sanctification is necessary for salvation.
 - -When the Holy Spirit indwells any flesh and blood creature, He brings with Him His holy nature.
 - -This creates within us, holy hungers.
- Every believer pursues sanctification at a difference pace.
- How do you think believers are to pursue sanctification?



Discipline as a Command of God

- How do we pursue holiness? The answer is in 1 Tim 4:7.
 - -"But have nothing to do with pointless and silly myths.
 Rather, train yourself in godliness"
- The word train $(\gamma \nu \mu \nu \dot{\alpha} \zeta \omega)$ means to discipline oneself.
 - -What kind of discipline? The Spiritual Disciplines.
- There are two categories of Spiritual Disciplines
 - Personal and interpersonal



-Biblical and Sufficient



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Disciplines = Activities, Not Attitudes

- They are not a state of mind or way of thinking
 - -They are concrete actions that we do
 - —It is doing rather than being
 - -"Being" is the goal, but we get there by "doing"
 - $-\mbox{\rm Disciplines}$ are the means, not the ends
 - Holiness is the end; spiritual discipline are the means
- This distinction avoids the selfrighteousness of the Pharisees



Defining Godliness

- It's conformity to Christ
 - It must be both an inward and outward conformity
- Do you understand the difference between activities and attitudes? Can you give an example of a good activity that will lead to a good attitude?



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Discipline as the Means of Sanctification

- There are other ways that God sanctifies us too
 - -Other people (Provers 27:17) and circumstances (Romans 8:28)
- There is a big difference between how God uses people and circumstances to grow us as opposed to spiritual disciplines.
 - -Outside in vs Inside out
- The Point?
 - —If you will not grow by the means that you can control, then God will grow you by the means you cannot control.
- Colossians 1:29
 - "For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."

The Disciplines Put You on the Path

• There are specific works that God uses to pull you into the path of sanctification



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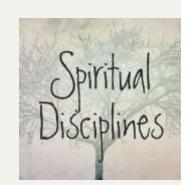
1 Timothy 4:7

- The spiritual disciplines are expected by the Lord -Training is a command
- The 10,000 hour rule as an illustration



Final Implications

- First, you might exhibit no spiritual fruit if you neglect the spiritual disciplines
- Second, freedom comes from embracing the spiritual disciplines
- Third, God invites all Christians to enjoy Himself and all His things. So pull yourself into God's path.
- The Spiritual Disciplines we will study in this course are: Bible Intake (reading and meditation); prayer; fasting; solitude and silence; and the Lord's Day



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Personal Application

- Get with a partner and answer the following questions to each other.
- What spiritual disciplines do you already do regularly? How has it helped your walk with Christ?
- Which disciplines have you neglected? How has it hindered your walk with Christ?

Group Assignment

This is a case study that I want us to discuss together

A member of your church meets with you for counseling. He complains that he has been a believer for fifteen years but has not grown much. He is asking you to help him grow in his walk with Christ. What will you tell him? Put together a plan for him that will grow him greatly if he follows it. Present that plan to the class.