

Lost Words: Self-Discipline

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Scripture: 1 Tim. 4:6-8

But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

Opening Question

When was the last time you prepared for something where the outcome was important to you (buying a house, participating in an athletic event, presentation at work)? What kinds of choices did you make during your preparation to ensure that you achieved your goal?

Digging for Truth

1. **Self-Control is negative** ("I resist the urge to do this"), while **Self-Discipline is positive** ("I choose to make the effort to pray early in the morning, even if the natural thing to do is sleep longer"). The **combination of these ideas is this:** "I choose to say no to *this*, but say yes to *something else* that causes a greater good for myself." What are some examples of this?
2. Athletes and Musicians are expected to have high levels of self-discipline to be successful in their fields. How does this type of expectation for self-discipline apply to God's call on a Christian's life? Which has a greater importance: being a world-famous musician/athlete, or following the orders God has issued?
3. Pastor Les talked a lot about fasting. He said it helps us rule over the flesh instead of being mastered by the flesh. Have you ever fasted? What were your experiences? Consider picking a day this week to fast and plan to share next week what kinds of things God taught you.
4. Like all investments, the results of practicing self-discipline aren't necessarily seen right away, but consistently doing them over a long period of time shows up dramatically over time. What kinds of things can you do now that will bring forth a dramatic result generations from now (or even eternally)?
5. Likewise, when you neglect spiritual disciplines, the results won't show up right away, but they will over time. How can involvement in a small discipleship group keep you from slipping slowly into spiritual oblivion?

6. **Desire without Discipline is just wishful thinking.** How many times have you promised yourself to become more organized? more committed to daily Bible reading? to keep your temper under control? to lose weight and get fit? To become more fervent in prayer? In Galatians 5:22-23, the Apostle Paul says that Self-Control is one of the **fruits of the Spirit**. How might falling short on your resolutions be more of a **nutrition** problem than a desire problem?

7. Pastor Les said that the word “discipline” and “disciple” come from the same word that means to teach or to train. Its root also the root of the word “gymnasium,” or the place where the athlete goes to train. In what ways is it important for disciples of Christ to be involved in the gymnasium of Christ, the Church?

Closing Thoughts

God commands that his children be self-disciplined. Have you ever gone through a stretch where it seems like you can't find rest from God's discipline? The Good News promises not only salvation from Hell, but also from who you were before Christ. God's desire to transform followers of Jesus into His People cannot be achieved without discipline.

Have you ever considered that the more discipline you intentionally practice yourself, the less of God's discipline you'll have to endure?