

## Let's Review

The Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We can re-define designer colors, designer clothes and speed limits but we can not redefine sin, even if the pattern of the world says it is legal.

We are to change, that is, to not be conformed to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the *renewing of our minds*.

We renew our minds many ways. What we study, what we learn, experiences we have, but we “kill three birds with one stone” when we allow scripture to transform our lives.

I have asked you to identify the verses that have become so personal, so real they have actually transformed the way you think and act and I hope you have done that.

Change is hard, even comfortable but we can be reassured by knowing ***God's Ability Zone exceeds our Comfort Zone***. That sounds trite, but the truth is, you only learn that by the experience of trusting and obeying.

This life of godliness, holiness, peace and power or Spiritual Greatness is not automatic, but it is available to whosoever truly wants it.

To get from here to there does require a Different Way of Thinking and a Different Way of Doing things, or what has been called Disciplined Training Approach. Like an athlete has a systematic workout program, we need structure in our Spiritual Lives because it takes practice and repetition and perseverance to be perfect.

Our Disciplined Training Approach requires more than faith, we add to faith ... goodness or virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, and more because...

Faith is Not Enough

We are reminded to change our diet, to move from milk to meat, from the very good, but Elementary Teachings to the transformative Teachings of righteousness. We know they are transformative because Hebrews says *we are trained by constantly using them.*

The Teachings of Righteousness are the Teachings of Jesus that he called the 1st and 2nd Greatest Commandments as well as the life He lived that Modeled or exemplified... prayer, seeking, solitude, fasting, fellowship, etc.

The lesson tonight begins in Chapter 4, Why Discipline, but first, you had some homework.

1. Are you reading the chapters? They are not long.
2. Are you recording your prayers in your journal, are you seeing them answered? How does that make you feel?
3. I asked you to consider personally a couple types of scripture...  
**Instructive verses that became transformative** and I've told you mine and how they became foundational to me before God would answer harder questions or prayers.

**Favorite or Covenant Verses** and I asked you to identify 6-8 and include them in Covenant Prayer that you can pray back to God.

Do we have any volunteers who would share theirs?

Ok, Chapter 4, Why Discipline? The short answer is because it works. The question is What is discipline, or a discipline and there are at least 3 answers and they all apply.

The least of the 3 is corporate punishment. Where we are going is not punishment but training and I'll have to admit some of my early training did include punishment as I'm pretty sure, yours did too.

Discipline is a method of training. Hebrews says we are trained by constantly using Teachings of Righteousness which are the Christ-modeled activities we call Disciplines.

My definition for this chapter is ...

***Discipline is the process by which God shapes and molds us into the people He wants us to become or be transformed into.***

Paul said to be transformed and it requires discipline to renew our minds.

Discipline will include a pattern to live by or activities to do, chastisement, if necessary and most importantly, the will power, self control or soundness of mind to live the life Jesus modeled.

Another definition is *“Self Discipline is doing something you do not want to do in order to get what you want and do not have.” (Rainier, doing what you don’t want ...in order to get what you do want.)*

We can begin to understand the importance of Discipline when we contrast it with Pride. That may sound like a strange comparison but it is not.

Pride focuses on the worldly trinity of me, my self and what I want. That is the pattern of the world Paul spoke about.

Discipline focuses on Submission to a pattern of behavior that transforms us by the renewing of our mind or we can be trained by constantly using.

The result of Pride is what? ...

Pride does go before a fall, have you heard that?

Submission leads to what? Victory, *Victory in Jesus* as we submit or come *Just As We Are*, without a plea, with out our pride.

So pride or leaning on our own understanding is dangerous and the way that seems right to man leads to destruction.

And the path of Submission or Discipline leads to a wonderful, powerful, abundant, Spiritually Great Life that includes peace and power and calm in the face of calamity.

Can we agree that discipline is necessary?

Hebrews 12:1 says it is if we do not want to be stupid.

We have read that, *God, by his divine nature has already given us everything we need for life and godliness, right? (2 Peter 1:3)*

Paul agrees in 2 Timothy 1:7 and you know the verse...

*...For we do not have a spirit of fear, but love, power and a self-discipline.*

Self Discipline	NIV, NLT, NRSV
Sound Mind	KJV, NKJV
Self Control	ESV, RSV, ASV
Sound Judgment	Holman Christian Standard Version

Whichever words you use, they all mean God has given us the ability to reason with our mind and make correct decisions if we choose to.

You know 2 Timothy 1:7, but are you familiar with 1 Timothy 4:7?

Not in so many words, but he says, ...

*Discipline yourself or train yourself for the purpose of godliness so that we may be holy as God said be holy because I am holy.*

*He goes on... 4:8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (Holiness, godliness, Spiritual Greatness has value now and in Heaven.)*

Do you think we're on to something with Discipline, using Discipline in our physical and spiritual lives, and practicing or using "The" Disciplines?  
I think so.

If you are an athlete, exercise is fun, there is a thrill, an endorphin release that makes physical exertion fulfilling. There is such a thing, as a runners high, in fact if a trained athlete does not continue training there is a type of depression without the runners high.

That is true, but it is also true that if you are not an athlete or not in shape , exercise is not much fun at all.

Q./ Why

A./ We have to do something different. We have to get off the couch...

We will be sore, We do not want to be sore

And if we exercise too much too often

if we run too far, too fast too often  
if we lift too much weight too often...

Q./ What happens?

A./ Being sore is one thing, but being injured is another.

So while the exercise is good for us it requires self discipline to get what we want and not injure ourselves.

***Hebrews 12:11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Spiritual as well as physical)***

We see the benefit of and the choice we have to be trained by discipline.

There is discipline of self-will to exercise,  
a discipline of self-control to not exercise too much,  
a discipline of perseverance to keep on because practice makes perfect.

Something else about discipline. You cannot buy it and I can't give it to you.

I could give you a Bible, the church could give you a book, but no one can make you read it. No one can force you to be transformed by it.  
That is discipline.

It seems there are two types of sources for discipline.

Internally or from within ourselves. Maybe from earlier instruction, what we have studied or read or even common sense. It doesn't take a lot of training to not touch a hot stove twice.

Externally or from outside ourselves. God tells us what to do, or a parents training, even to the point of controlling a child's behavior.

One is Self Discipline, the other is Training by another. The point we want to get to is where we can train ourselves.

You may think it is prideful to train ourselves, that may be leaning on our own understanding, but it is not prideful when we train ourselves by constantly using the Teachings of Righteousness.

So far we have discussed ...

Spiritual greatness

What Discipline is and does  
Adding to our faith because faith is not enough  
Perseverance because Practice makes Perfect  
We can't buy training, we have to use discipline or the Disciplines in  
order to become trained.

And... we've seen several verses that say that.

Let's look at some others...

### ***Discipline Verses***

We have to understand God's discipline from the view point of a parent and that His discipline is evidence of his love.

When we tell God to *Have Thine Own Way*, what are we saying?  
We are submitted to him, as Jesus was on the Cross. That is the ultimate discipline. In the Beatitudes, Jesus called that being meek.

When God does have his own way and disciplines us, what is He saying? He loves us, it is out of His love and for our own good just as between parents and children.

Deut. 8:5           As man disciplines his son, so God disciplines us.

Psalms 94:12       Blessed is the man who is disciplined by God.

Proverbs 1:1-7    (Read all) Fools despise wisdom and discipline

Proverbs 3:11-12 Do not despise the Lord's discipline, He disciplines those He loves.

Proverbs 5:23     We will die for lack of discipline

Proverbs 12:1     love discipline or be stupid

Proverbs 13:18   He who ignores discipline goes to poverty and shame

Hebrews 12:5-11 (from Proverbs 3:11-12 Read all)  
God disciplines those He loves

Paul gives his reflections on his personal discipline in 1 Corinthians 9:27 He disciplines himself so that he *does not disqualify himself or his preaching and to keep himself above reproach.*

Godliness or Spiritual Greatness is not exclusive or evasive,

It is not automatic nor is it a "1-2-3, put God in a box system,"

Genie in a bottle system, to get what you want,

but there is a systematic, purposeful, disciplined Christ-modeled path to get there.

To be Christ-like we need to think and act as He did.

That is not as impossible as it sounds...

He is our role model and we were created in his image and likeness.

Consider this... The Ten Commandments are more than a check-list of things to do or not to do or how many times to do them. They represent an Disciplined Attitude of Submission to God and our fellow man...

In the same way, the Christian Disciplines also represent an Attitude of Submission to God and Love to our neighbor.

The purpose of the Devotional part of the book, Part 2, the Path to Spiritual Greatness is to purposefully incorporate Christian Disciplines into our lives and the journaling is way to make us accountable to do that.

We all are continuing to grow and none of us have reached our Spiritual peak yet.

You may not need a Disciplined Training Approach, some of you do not; but I still do and it is the way God showed me anyone could Unlock Their Spiritual Greatness.

You have an easy assignment next week if you did this week's because we didn't get to Chapter 5, Prayer tonight.

Next week, Chapter 5. We will take as long as we need on Prayer, then the rest of the chapters will go much quicker. We will be back here next week because of the Garage Sale.

Questions / Comments