

Why Discipline?

Some people seem to succeed at everything they try; their job, marriage, health and maturing as Christians.

When we get to know these people well, we find that in almost every case one quality plays a significant role in the success: self-discipline.

By contrast, people who have an embarrassing string of setbacks and failures, when we get to know them and they offer us a candid appraisal of why these calamities occurred they may make such statements as:-

“I just started to let things slide” ... “I put off doing my home work” ... “I neglected to follow up leads” ... “I didn’t take care of myself” ... “I thought problems would solve themselves.”

Most of such statements stem from a **lack** of self-discipline.

Discipline is one of the most important character qualities a person can possess.

Discipline plays a key role in developing every area of life.

Most people do **not** know how to develop greater levels of discipline and put it to work for them in everyday life.

What is the key to discipline?

Two words easily remembered that we can use to constantly remind us of the need to increase and apply discipline.

Delayed gratification

What is meant by delayed gratification?

It is a process of scheduling the pain and pleasure of life in such a way to enhance the pleasure by meeting and experiencing the pain first and getting it over with.

Proverbs 24:27 [Amplified Bible] *“Put first things first. Prepare your work outside and get it ready for yourself in the field, and afterwards build your house and establish a home.”*

This very basic principle, first written to a farming community, should be applied to any lifestyle.

Every one would like to get married and have a lovely home and children. But if we find ourselves trapped in a mortgage that is more than we can easily afford our life will become a nightmare.

Philippians 4:11-12 [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”*

Contentment is something we should be helped to learn from an early age for it will keep us in good stead throughout life.

1 Timothy 6:6 [NIV] *“But godliness with contentment is great gain.”*

Living as a Christian is an example of maturing in discipline.

The followers of Jesus Christ are called “disciples”, the very name implies a life empowered by personal discipline.

As a Christian I have learned over the years that if I discipline myself to spend a period of time early in the morning in a quiet place in prayer and study of the Holy Bible, I develop a proper perspective in life. As a result I accomplish much more during the rest of the day.

On cold and wet mornings it takes great effort and is painful to leave a warm bed early, but at the end of the day I’m so glad I made the effort.

The same discipline of “no gain without pain” can be applied to all aspects of our lives: our personal health, our marriage and family life, our mastery of our finances, our personal relationships and most important of all, our relationship with our Creator God.

Two additional principles will help us develop a disciplined life.

Proverbs 29:18 [NIV] *“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.”*

We need the revelation or understanding that is found in the Holy Bible to know how to plan our life in advance, make advance decisions that will shape our future.

John 14:15-17 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”*

Obedying Jesus Christ’s commands, becoming a disciple of His, brings with it the unlimited powerful help of the Holy Spirit [“Spirit of Truth”].

Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

One of the “fruits” of this relationship with the Holy Spirit is “self-control”.

2 Corinthians 5:10 [NIV] *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

The fact that we are all accountable to our Creator God is a very powerful prod to developing self-discipline.

Christians are people who are willing to sacrifice temporary physical pleasures now in this life because of what God offers them in a future eternal life.

Why discipline?

The quality of our eternal future depends on it!