

Introduction

The priority, position and process of the Christian life mostly realised through the practice of various Christian disciplines.

This section of the book introduces you to these disciplines and encourages you to grow in them.

Application



What is spiritual discipline?

Spiritual discipline is imposing order upon disorder to nurture communion with God.



2 Tim 2:1-6

Consider the three images Paul gives of discipline in these verses. Describe the discipline of

- a soldier
- an athlete
- a farmer



What does discipline have to do with faith and abiding in Christ?



2 Pet 1:5-7

Faith is nurtured through the grace-enabled practice of the spiritual disciplines.



How do the spiritual disciplines enable this?

First, they provide the opportunity to know and love God in the cycle we have studied.

Second, they train us in contemplation, confession, consecration, and celebration. They teach us humility, submission, drawing near and repentance.

Third, structure and shape life so that its rhythms, routines and rituals shape the overall imagination and sensibilities towards abiding in God (Deut 6:7-9).



Are their dangers associated with discipline?

Yes. A lack of discipline leads to laziness (Prov

Memory Verse 1 Corinthians 9:27

26:13-16), lack of watchfulness (1 Thes 5:6-8; 1 Pet 4:7) and spiritual apathy (Mal 1:13; Rev 3:16-17)

On the other hand, turning discipline into an end in itself leads to self-made religion (Col 2:23), spiritual pride (Lk 18:11-12), and man-pleasing (Mt 6:1-18).



How do we avoid these dangers?

We understand that no progress is possible without discipline (2 Tim 2:3-6), while understanding that discipline is a means to abiding in God, not an end in itself.



How do we reconcile spontaneous desires with planned, dutiful discipline?

The Spirit will grant us desires (Phil 2:13), but these desires are fanned into flame and not quenched (2 Tim 1:6; 1 Thes 5:19) when we respond by working out those desires in vigorous, wholehearted action (Phil 2:12; Col 1:29; 1 Tim 4:15), which requires self-denial (1 Cor 9:25-27; Lk 9:23).



What are the disciplines of the Christian life?

We can think of the disciplines as matching three areas of our lives: private life, public life, and perpetual life. We must worship God in all these phases of life, so there are disciplines that help us to do so.

Private life: the disciplines of meditation and prayer

Public life: the disciplines of church life and discipleship

Perpetual life: the disciplines of fasting, discernment, and gratitude.



Helpful resources

Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life - Don Whitney