

THE VIRTUE OF DISCIPLINE

ser5056 Proverbial Wisdom, Pt 4

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I. (HOOK) LIGHT MOMENT

A. A minister decided that a visual demonstration would add emphasis to his Sunday sermon.

He took four worms and placed each one in a separate jar. The *first* worm was put into a jar of vodka. The *second* worm was put into a jar of cigarette smoke. The *third* worm was put into a jar of chocolate syrup. The *fourth* worm was put into a container of good clean soil.

The minister then proceeded to deliver the rest of the sermon. At the conclusion of his message the minister returned to the four jars and reported the following results:

The *first* worm in the jar of *vodka* – dead!

The *second* worm in the jar of *cigarette smoke* – dead!

The *third* worm in the jar of *chocolate syrup* – dead!

The *fourth* worm in the jar of *good clean soil* – alive!

The *fifth* worm in the jar of cocaine – a dragon. ([show](#)



photo, p1) (Where'd he come from? LOL!)

The Minister then asked the congregation, "*What did you learn from this demonstration?*" Maxine, a ten-year-old who was sitting next to her mother, aggressively waved her hand, and without waiting to be recognized shouted out, "*As long as you drink, smoke and eat chocolate, you won't have worms!*"

That pretty much ended the service. Smile!

B. Let us pray.

II. **(BOOK)** THE VIRTUE OF DISCIPLINE

A. Our text

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (TLB)

²⁴ Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!

²⁵ All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize [literally = wreath] that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

²⁶ So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing [literally = beating the air]. ²⁷ I **discipline** my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

ILLUSTRATION: In the sports arena there is only one winner. Now, the reality is in any sporting event, just to make it to the finals means you're a winner, but seldom does anyone

remember the second-place team, or who came in second. We only remember the first-place winner. Here's an illustration:

(**show video clip** 2018 Kentucky Derby/last Triple Crown Winner <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uo5n077psFc> 2:55)

Justify was the last triple crown winner (2018); only thirteen horses have captured the esteemed title since the three races have been in existence and that is 247 years.

Think about this! Who remembers the horse that came in second? Who remembers the team that lost the Superbowl last year? The Stanley Cup? The Wimbledon? The Daytona 500? The World Series? You say, I don't even remember who won. And some of you are saying, "And neither do I care."

BEFORE WE MOVE ON—No matter whether it be a horse race, a sporting event, an educational degree, an achievement in science or any other field, one thing is required beyond talent and ability—discipline.

(LOOK#1)

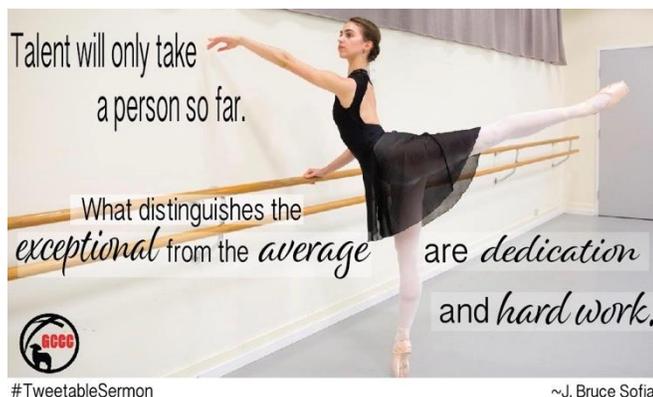
"Self-discipline is the ability to make yourself do what you should do when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not." *Elbert Hubbard*

"We must all suffer from one of two pains: the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. The difference is discipline weighs ounces while regret weighs tons."
Jim Rohn.

"It takes discipline not to let social media steal your time." *Alexis Ohanian.*

The graveyard of history is filled with the dreams of those who had the skill but not the will. *Joel Sofia*

Keeping it in the family ...



... and that requires “discipline.

B. As to Paul’s analogy to running the race, the point is twofold:

- 1. In this world only one can win the prize, but in the spiritual kingdom ALL can win the prize—not just one.**

In the *Parable of the Talents* (**Matthew 25**), Jesus said to the man with five talents and to the man with two talents, both of whom doubled their talents—that is, did something with what God had given them—

²³ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

This is the beauty of the spiritual, heavenly race. No matter what your mental prowess, talent, or ability, if you do your best, you will receive the prize-- in charge of many things and ushered into the "joy of your Lord." God is no respecter of persons. Comforting isn't it!

2. The second point is—to win the race requires *discipline*.

C. Here is still another reality, another truth—most people don't get excited when they hear the word *discipline*.

ILLUSTRATION: We have three grandchildren living in our home, aged 16, 15 and 8. In our household, when the word discipline is mentioned,

1. One, I won't say which, gets depressed, retreats into "its" room and mopes throughout the day (or days).
2. Another, I won't say which, argues that "it" doesn't deserve the discipline, says, "What about so-and-so?" and retires to "its" room and sleeps.
3. The third, just mention the orange shoehorn (**show photo, p6**), or the loss of electronic devices, and you'd think "it" was being torn to pieces, limb by limb.

YET: Listen to what the Bible says about disciplining our children.

Proverbs 22:15

15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away.

**Proverbs 29:15**

15 A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom, but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother.

Proverbs 13:24

24 Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

Now I know what the state of NJ tells us, but the state's advice is "perverse." It is *contrary* to the word of God. Now there is a way to administer and not administer the rod, but that's not today's lesson. Pick up my CD, "*Disciplining Children God's Way*," from the Garden Bookstore if you want to know the "how."

C. Here is still another reality, another truth—most people don't get excited when they hear the word *discipline* because the word has a *negative* connotation.

It's associated with something painful, and most of us don't delight in pain. Seriously, let's be honest, those MMA guys/gals aren't hardwired like most of us, but even they have a time when they say, "Call it!"

LET'S GET PERSONAL!

There are certain disciplines I *like*, and there are certain disciplines I *hate*. E.g.:

- 1) I hate to exercise. There's not one thing I like about it other than the result.
- 2) I don't like having to watch what I eat.
- 3) I don't like having to set my alarm four times a day to remind myself to do a set of 50 pushups.
- 4) I don't like saying, "That's my one dessert for the day."
- 5) Sometimes I don't like having to read my Bible and pray. Now, it's not that I don't like reading my Bible or praying, I enjoy both, and I do both every day, with few exceptions. But some days I would rather not. (I know that sounds horrible, but it's true.)
- 6) There are times I don't feel like getting on my knees in worship, but it's better than being driven to my knees to worship. Comprene?
- 7) I don't always like reading the Bible cover to cover every 2.5 years, but I do.
- 8) I don't always like locking up on a Monday until my sermon is done, then taking another day to score it, to transfer Sylvia Mellor's corrections, to review slides for screens, and then to get it down so that I can present it with some measure of excellence.
- 9) But when it's done—it's worth the reward. (At least for me; not so sure about you.)

10) This all requires discipline.

III. (LOOK#2) DISCIPLINES THAT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE *NOW* AND *THEN*

A. (Let's start with the physical.) **Diet: What we eat and drink effects our mental, emotional, and physical being.**

Ecclesiastes 3:13 ... people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (*J. B. Philips*)

As a Christian I may do anything, but that does not mean that everything is good for me. I may do everything, but I must not be a slave of anything.

In brief, eat and drink in a way that brings glory to God and is beneficial to your mental, emotional and physical health.

B. Practical disciplines

1. Work—it's therapeutic.
2. Have a hobby—something that is different than what you typically do EVERY DAY. It works your mind, will, body, and emotions in a different and healthy way.
3. Spend time with your spouse—if not, someone else will. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but it could be.

4. Not married? Find a friend. God didn't make us to be alone. WARNING! Don't put expectations on them; let them be them and you be you. It will keep the fire burning.

C. **(TOOK)** Seven Spiritual disciplines (there are more)

1. ***Go to Church*** – it has so many benefits. But you'll only get out of it what you put into it.
2. ***Read your Bible***—it's God speaking to you, and it's *the substance* for all that is good in life.
3. ***Pray***—it's you speaking to God, and the most powerful recourse God has given to you to accomplish His purposes and your God-given dreams.
4. **Tithe**—Give God 10% of everything you make: your weekly income, your yard sales, your side jobs, your investments—well, right now God owes you money LOL! Seriously, don't panic—stay where you are. You can't outgive God. Furthermore, the tithe is ***God's promise to provide***. Tithe!

If you're one of those people who says, "I can't afford to tithe." No, you can't afford not to tithe. In ***Malachi 3:10***, He says,

"Test me in this and see if I won't open up the windows of Heaven and meet your EVERY need." And He will.

5. **Serve**—“*You don’t know how to live until you know how to give.*” Live for someone other than yourself and you’ll feel good about yourself and change the culture around you.
6. **Share your faith.** It should come natural to all of us who are God’s children, but it doesn’t always. Fear gets in the way. **Be INTENTIONAL!** God was intentional when He put on flesh. You don’t have to be a harvester. You can turn over the soil, plant a seed or nurture, but be intentional in sharing your faith.
7. **Last, but not least, let’s discipline ourselves to GIVE THANKS IN AND FOR ALL THINGS.** It will change your life and the lives of those around you. Giving thanks is a form of worship, and the very First Commandment. Here’s what happens when you give thanks in and for ALL things.

The setting: Paul and Silas are stripped, severely flogged and thrown into prison. Let’s pick up the text.

Acts 16:23-26

²³ After they had been severely flogged, ... the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. ²⁴ ... and ... put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the

prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.

D. Want to break every chain?

Worship the LORD with *praise* and *thanksgiving*.

IV. INVITATION

This disciplined life; you can't do it on your own. Where do you begin? By giving your life to Christ. Here's how!

Admit– your sins have separated you from God. (*Psa 14:1-3; Rom 3: 23*);

Believe – that God did something about your sins through Jesus Christ. (The final Pascal Lamb/Messiah.) (*Lev 17:10; Heb 9: 19-22*);

Commit – yourself to His righteousness by confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior. (*Isa 53:5; Col 1:22*);

Do it today! (*Isa 49:8; 2 Cor 6:2*).

Father in Heaven, I'm sorry for the things I've done that are wrong: I am a sinner; forgive me. Thank You for loving me and sending your Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for my sin. Holy Spirit, come into my heart; Jesus be my Lord and Savior. I give You my life. Amen!