

Discipline in Godliness

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: 1 Timothy 4:7ff.

B. “Train”, “exercise”, and “discipline” are translations of a Greek word taken from Greek athletics.

1. “Discipline” simply means structured training.

2. Paul applies this concept to spiritual realm in regard to godliness. (1 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 5:14; Hebrews 12:11, 2 Peter 2:14)

a) We must be disciplined in the scriptures so we can discern good from evil. (Hebrews 5:14)

b) We are responsible to train ourselves in godliness. (1 Timothy 4:7)

II. Godliness is founded in our desire for God to be glorified and our desire for God Himself. (Isaiah 26:8-9)

A. Godliness begins with a God-centered heart- a heart that yearns for God. (Psalm 42:1-2; Psalm 27:4)

B. A godly person desires that God’s will be done in my life and throughout the world and that God be glorified.

C. A godly lifestyle flows from these two desires.

1. Moralism and legalism are not substitutes for godliness because their chief motivation is not God.

III. Godliness is God-likeness and displays the traits that define God’s character.

A. God is light (that is, pure and untainted by sin); therefore, our objective should be to free from sin. (1 John 1:5; 1 John 2:1ff)

1. Being completely sinless is not possible in this life, but it should be our objective to be holy instead of indulging occasionally in our pet sins.

B. God is love in His very essence; therefore, our goal should be to love unconditionally. (1 John 4:8)

1. Love gives of itself. (1 John 3:16-18)

2. Love forgives, usually at great cost to itself. (1 John 4:8ff)

IV. Discipline has three essential ingredients.

A. Commitment to the pursuit of the goal. (1Timothy 6:11; Philippians 3:12-14; Psalm 63:1)

B. Instruction in the scriptures by the Holy Spirit with the goal of godliness, not knowledge. (Titus 1:1; 1 Corinthians 8:4; Ephesians 4; James 1:22-25)

C. Practice in the skill.

1. We have to seek God daily with the aim of knowing Him. (Philippians 3:10)

2. We must make daily choices appropriate to godliness- this is the culmination of godliness. (Titus 2:11-12; 2 Peter 2:14)

a) We can discipline ourselves in the wrong thing.

b) The Holy Spirit is our trainer, but we also have a responsibility in that training.

Application questions:

1. How can you avoid legalism or moralism in your pursuit of living a holy life?

2. Do an inventory of your own heart. Do you have a commitment to forgiveness and to giving of yourself? What does practicing forgiveness and giving of self look like in the context of your life?

3. When you look at your daily choices, what are you disciplining yourself in? Are you committed to your own convenience, entertainment, comfort, etc. or to godliness?
