

A Study on

**The
Self-Disciplined
Life**

Prepared by:

**Paul E. Cantrell
2003**

A Study on

The Self-Disciplined Life

10 Lessons

Prepared by:

**PAUL E. CANTRELL
84 Northview Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050**

pecantrell@juno.com

Table of Contents

"A Self-Disciplined Life"

Lessons	Topics	Scriptures	Page
1	Discipleship Demands a Self-Disciplined Life	Lk. 14:25-33	1
2	The Challenge to Self-Disciplined Living	Matt. 18:15-17	5
3	The Value of Self-Discipline Living	1 Cor. 9:19-27	9
4	A Self-Disciplined Life is a Mark of Maturity (#1)	1 Cor. 7:1-9	13
5	A Self-Disciplined Life is a Mark of Maturity (#2)	James 1:21-27	17
6	Dangers to Avoid in Self-Discipline	Phil. 3:12-16	21
7	The Self-Disciplined Life and Holiness	Gal. 5:19-24	25
8	A Self-Disciplined Life is One of Persistence	Mark 4:14-20	29
9	Suggestions for a Self-Disciplined Life	Matt. 25:19-30	32
10	Should Discipline be Forced upon our Children?	Prov. 3:1-12	36

Lesson One

“DISCIPLESHIP DEMANDS A SELF-DISCIPLINED LIFE”

(Luke 14:25-33)

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus wants & is calling for mankind to become His disciples!
 - a) He wants to teach us truth that can set us free. (Jn. 8:31-32)
 - b) He wants us to learn of him, so he can give us rest for our souls. (Matt. 11:29)
 - c) He wants us to follow him because he is the Way to eternal life. (Jn. 14:6)
 - d) A true disciple is a learner as well as a follower!
2. The requirements of discipleship will vary with the person we are disciples of.
 - a) To be a disciple of some persons might require very little of us.
 - b) But of others, they may require much.
3. To be a true disciple of Jesus is costly!
 - a) Jesus encourages people to count the cost of discipleship to Him.
 - Luke 14:28-33
 - c) Jesus will not lessen His demands to make disciples.
 - Luke 18:22-24
 - d) What is the cost of discipleship to Jesus?
 - Luke 14:26-27
 - Luke 9:23-24
 - Jesus is calling for disciples who will deny themselves.
4. Discipleship demands a Self-Disciplined Life!

DISCUSSION**I. 1ST, LET'S LOOK AT WHAT THAT DEMAND IS NOT!*****A. It is not self-denial.***

- 1) In the sense that such is often used.
- 2) *“Sacrifice or restraining of one’s own comfort or gratification.”*
- 3) In the sense of doing without something we want.
- 4) Illustrate:
 - a) *“I do without sweets that I want, in order to lose weight.”*
 - b) *“I go without food at 2 meals, in order to eat a nice meal out somewhere.”*
 - c) *“I save my nickels & dimes sometimes in order to buy something I want.”*
- 5) A religious philosophy of some: *“One of the conditions of happiness is to renounce some satisfaction which men normally crave.”*

- 6) Col. 2:20-23
- 7) This may be self-denial, but not a denial of self!
 - a) Jesus demands the latter.
 - b) Not a denial of something I like or want, but a total denial of self.

B. It is not just carrying a burden!

- 1) Denial of self is often confused with bearing burdens of this life.
 - a) *“I have poor eyesight, this is my cross.”*
 - b) *“I have a poor marriage, this is my burden to be born.”*
 - c) *“Old age is my burden to bear.”*
- 2) Notice an obvious fact!
 - a) Most, if not all, of these things both Christians & non-Christians bear.
 - b) We talk about some minor inconvenience as a cross to be born.
- 3) There is a big difference between a burden and a cross.
 - a) Burden—Something placed upon us because we live in the flesh.
It comes our way because we are alive.
 - b) Cross—A load accepted voluntarily.
Not laid on us, but we pick it up voluntarily.
 - c) Burden—A small inconvenience, usually.
At most, a big problem.
 - d) Cross—An instrument of death.
It was a stumblingblock because of it’s shame.
“But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.” (1 Cor. 1:23)
- 4) Denial of self is more than carrying inconvenient burdens.

C. It certainly is not “modern denominational Christianity.”

- 1) Much of it is discipleship without demands!
 - a) It is flabby, weak, and spineless.
 - b) It is belief only!
 - All the blessings, but no real cost!
 - Just accept Jesus as Savior—that’s it—that’s all!
 - It is unconditional Christianity.
 - c) It tolerates:
 - Any kind of a life-style;
 - Any doctrinal deviations;
 - Any moral perversions.
 - d) It is all grace, and no obedience.
 - e) It avoids the biting demands of discipleship.
- 2) To be a true disciple of Jesus is costly. It demands a denial of self!

II. JUST WHAT IS A DENIAL OF SELF?

A. We have seen what it is not:

- 1) A denying of something I want or like.
- 2) Carrying of burdens that this life brings with it.
- 3) Not modern denominational Christianity with its faith only concept.

B. What is it that Jesus is calling upon people to do to be His disciple?

- 1) It is to be crucified with Christ!
 - a) Gal. 2:20—***“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”***
 - b) Jesus’ willingness to die for us is our example to follow!
 - c) Self is put to death in order to follow Christ.
- 2) Rom. 6:1-4
 - a) It is a dying to sin—to the way of sin—to disobedience to God.
 - b) The old man of sin is put to death.
 - c) We are then buried with Christ in Baptism.
 - d) We are raised up to walk in newness of life—a life after Christ.
 - e) Rom. 6:6, 16, 22
- 3) Rom. 6:11
 - a) This new life is not a life of sin, but a life after Christ.
 - b) I became dead to sin, so that I might be alive unto God.
 - c) Col. 3:5-8
- 4) Jn. 6:38—***“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent me.”***
 - a) I become dead to my own will & desires.
 - b) Become alive unto God’s will & His desires for me.
- 5) Lk. 9:23—***“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.’”***
 - a) It is to die daily—take up my cross daily.
 - b) As long as I live, I will face the struggle to die to self.

C. But this dead man lives.

- 1) He doesn’t live unto self, but unto God.
- 2) Christ lives in His disciples—to do His Will.

CONCLUSION

1. If this demand of Jesus is so great, why should I want to commit to it?
2. Rom. 6:23—“*The wages of sin is death...*”
3. If I am not willing to die to self here—I will die eternally away from God.
4. But if I am willing to die to self now—I will live eternally with God after this life is over.
5. Am I a true self-disciplined disciple of Jesus?

Lesson Two

"THE CHALLENGE TO SELF-DISCIPLINED LIVING"

(Matt. 18:15-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. The great Roman Empire fell!
 - a) One of the main reasons given for its fall—*Weakness thru breakdown of moral & ethical fiber.*"
 - b) Breakdown of the will to self-disciplined living.
 - c) The desire for ease, luxury, self-indulgence & dissipation.
2. If this is true:
 - a) Any nation that will endure must deal with this problem.
 - b) If not—such will eat the heart out of the nation.
 - c) People will be brought to their knees in shame & despair.
3. Our nation is facing this dangerous road.
 - a) We are known as a permissive, indulgent people.
 - b) Emphasized—no controls, no restraints, and no limitations!
 - c) External & internal restrictions are unpopular.
 - d) We prefer to think about such words as: **Holiday, Vacation, Free Gift, Freedom, Exciting, Happiness, Fun Loving, etc.**
 - e) Rather than words like: **Work, Sacrifice, Duty, Responsibility, & Discipline.**
4. **Possibly one of the greatest challenges that men have to face is *Self-Discipline, Self-Control, or Self-Restraint.***

DISCUSSION**I. WHY IS SELF-DISCIPLINE SO IMPORTANT?*****A. In our country?***

- 1) Rom. 13:1-7
- 2) Laws have to be made to regulate people's lives & behavior.
- 3) If people are not willing to follow laws—Discipline themselves:
- 4) Then:
 - a) Verbal reprimand will be given by an official.
 - b) Impose financial fines.
 - c) Emphasize and show public social disapproval. (Stocks in early days).
 - d) Withdrawal of privileges. (Driving license)
 - e) For more serious disobedience—imprisonment.
 - f) Ultimate penalty—death.

- 5) The coming danger:
 - a) A nation cannot sufficiently administer discipline to its people;
 - b) The downfall of that nation would seem to be imminent.
- 6) Preservation of Law & Order with Justice is most important.

B. In our homes?

- 1) Eph. 6:1-3
- 2) Rules must be made by parents for their children.
 - a) The rules must be understood & the motives behind them.
- 3) When the rules are not followed—discipline is needed.
 - a) Verbal reprimand.
 - b) Social disapproval by rest of family.
 - c) Withdrawal of privileges.
 - d) Physical punishment (Especially true in earlier years).
- 4) Effectiveness of the home is destroyed—if obedience is not maintained.

C. In the church?

- 1) Matt. 18:15-17
 - a) If a man sins against his brother:
 - b) And refuses to face up to what he has done;
 - c) Who will not correct his error;
 - d) He is to be reproved by the offended person.
 - e) Then—reproved by 2 or 3 witnesses.
 - f) If he will not discipline himself—the group is to administer discipline.
- 2) 1 Cor. 5:1-5
 - a) A man is indulging in sin openly—living with his father's wife.
 - b) He would not change after efforts were made—no self-discipline.
 - c) Necessary for group to administer discipline.
- 3) 2 Thess. 3:10-15
 - a) Paul had warned these people when he was there—preaching against their unruliness.
 - b) He commanded them again to discipline themselves.
 - c) If they will not—the group is to discipline them.
- 4) Without such discipline—the church goes down hill!

II. WHY IS THERE SUCH A LACK OF DISCIPLINE?***A. Because discipline requires strength & courage.***

- 1) 1 Sam. 2:22-25; 3:13

- 2) Easy way out at the moment—allows things to drift.
- 3) It is to warn softly when stronger measures are needed.
- 4) Deceptive belief that all will work out right eventually.
- 5) Requires firmness & determination to do what is needed at times.

B. *Because proper discipline takes time.*

- 1) Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21
 - a) It is too easy to make quick, rash, harsh decisions.
 - b) Makes it hard for older children to accept such.
- 2) Proper Decisions & Discipline takes time:
 - a) To study out the situation;
 - b) To listen to all sides;
 - c) To evaluate past decisions.
- 3) The parent who will not take the time to administer proper discipline is asking for problems.

C. *Because discipline must come from disciplined lives.*

- 1) Rom. 2:21—"*Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*"
- 2) Why expect something of others that I am unwilling to do myself.
- 3) Lack of respect for authority in parents is reflected in their children.
- 4) Lack of self-discipline in parents leads to undisciplined children.

D. *Because discipline grows out of unselfish caring or concern for others.*

- 1) Heb. 12:5-6
- 2) A child must sense, realize, that his parents love him & has his good at heart.
- 3) QUOTE: "*Love me, and then say anything to me & about me that you like.*"
- 4) QUOTE: "*We take all things well from one who always & wholly loves us.*"

III. THE GOAL OF DISCIPLINE IS SELF-DISCIPLINE

A. *It is to encourage the undisciplined to become disciplined.*

- 1) This is the goal for the nation, the home & the church.
- 2) To encourage all to become self-disciplined people.

B. *Look at the challenge Jesus gives:*

- 1) Matt. 16:24—"*Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*"
- 2) No one is there to make us!
 - a) "*Whosoever will....let him come...*"

- b) It is self-imposed discipline of our lives.
- c) We willingly bring ourselves under God's Will for our own good.
- 3) It is to willingly exercise self-discipline over:
 - a) Our physical appetites & emotions.
 - b) Rather than being enslaved by them.
- 4) It is to discipline one's self so that he doesn't follow the crowd:
 - a) But, is able to think and act for himself;
 - b) And make decisions for himself correctly.
- 5) We want our children to:
 - a) Grow up;
 - b) Become responsible people;
 - c) To be disciplined adults.
- 6) God wants that of all His children.

CONCLUSION

1. QUOTE: *"We cannot live in self-indulgence & win a spiritual or moral victory."*
2. Our challenge then is:
 - a) To bring our wills into conformity to God's will;
 - b) And not to have to have someone standing over me trying to make or coerce me to do right;
 - c) To make decisions that show self-disciplined living.

Lesson Three

"THE VALUE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE LIVING"

(1 Cor. 9:19-27)

INTRODUCTION

1. In our last lesson on Self-Discipline:
 - a) We stressed the need for discipline in our country, our homes, & the church.
 - b) We looked at some reasons why there is a lack of Discipline.
 - c) Then, we stressed that the goal of discipline is self-discipline!
2. Total self-discipline may never become a reality for the Christian.
 - a) But....it should be our goal. (Matt. 5:48)
 - b) Unfortunately....too many fail badly in self-discipline.
3. Examples that could indicate lack of self-discipline:
 - a) Young people running away from home.
 - b) Students who quit school.
 - c) Husbands & wives who seek divorce as an answer to their problems.
 - d) Employees who walk out on their jobs.
 - e) Many are simply trying to escape a disciplined situation, or one that requires a great deal of self-control to stay with it.
 - f) Many of these will not be disciplined—nor will they discipline themselves.
4. QUOTE that says something about our age:

"The Western world loves to play. Up to a point this is good. But when play—whether vicarious play via TV or grandstand.....or play via personal participation—consumes a larger proportion of leisure time, money, conversation, and interest than is warranted by its cultural and recreative returns, then the play becomes the mark of a decadent age and the badge of softness rather than strength. It takes no discipline to watch a ball game or a wrestling match." ("Disciplined Life", p. 17)
5. Close behind this is: **Careless spending, self-indulgent living.**
6. But why should I want to live a disciplined life?

DISCUSSION**I. REASON DEMANDS AND CALLS FOR IT.****A. *"The race belongs to the disciplined person."***

- 1) 1 Cor. 9:25
- 2) *"If communism had conquered the world, it would not have been because of better ideology, but because of better discipline."*
- 3) Theodore Roosevelt is quoted as saying:

"The things that will destroy America are prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first, the love of soft living, and the get rich quick theory of life." ("Disciplined Life", p. 18-19)

4) The one who wins the race is the one who exercises discipline.

B. "The victory will go to the disciplined mind."

1) 1 Cor. 9:26-27

2) A disciplined mind always has an advantage over the undisciplined mind.

a) In evaluating evidence;

b) In thinking logically;

c) In selecting goals;

d) In devising means to reach their goals;

e) In the ability to concentrate on essentials & discarding non-essentials.

3) The undisciplined mind is always an easy prey for the **Demagogue, Charlatan, or False teacher.**

C. Better health & longer life usually goes to the disciplined person.

1) 1 Pet. 3:10-12

2) Overwhelming evidence is being presented to us constantly of this.

3) The undisciplined life deteriorates from **Abuse, Indulgence, & Neglect.**

D. The disciplined person is superior in the things that really matter.

1) James 1:2-4

2) He has power to courageously fight the battles of life.

3) He has the power to face the duties of life.

4) He has the power to shoulder responsibilities of life.

5) He has the power to bring adversity under his control & make it serve him.

6) A disciplined person develops **Poise & Grace** to serve him in crises.

E. The undisciplined person is usually a weak person.

1) 1 Cor. 11:28-31

2) In times of crisis—he will probably go under.

3) Mental breakdowns come often because of weakness—undisciplined living.

a) They have a lack of control of themselves & their situations.

b) They panic, deal in self-pity, and self-indulgence.

4) Illustration:

a) A med-student had successfully completed all his schooling.

b) Such required a lot of discipline & help from the school & teachers

- c) His practice was going well.
- d) He began to give in to drink & immorality.
- e) He lost his **Reputation, Practice, Family, His life, His soul.**
- 5) The limitation of a lot of people:
 - a) Is not necessarily due to lack of ability.....
 - b) But, lack of character—self-discipline.

F. We believe that reason demands that we discipline ourselves!

II. GOD CALLS FOR A DISCIPLINED LIFE FOR HIS FOLLOWERS.

A. Several synonyms are used to identify this concept:

- 1) Temperance
- 2) Self-control
- 3) Orderliness
- 4) Restraint in its various forms of forbiddance.
- 5) Teach, Train, Nurture, Admonition, etc.

B. Jesus used the word, "Disciple," quite often!

- 1) Luke 14:33—"***So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.***"
- 2) A follower of Jesus has to be taught & trained to live right.
- 3) He has to bring himself under the control of Jesus' Will.

C. We are warned not to despise chastening that leads to self-discipline.

- 1) Job 5:17—"***Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.***"
- 2) Prov. 3:11-12—"***My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor detest His correction. For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.***"
- 3) The purpose of God's Word is to give us correction & direction so we can live a disciplined life.

D. God calls upon those who lead in the church to have disciplined lives.

- 1) Tit. 1:7-8
 - a) In giving qualifications for elders or overseers—his life is to reflect self-discipline.
- 2) Tit. 2:2
 - a) Older mature men who should reflect a temperate life.

E. It is one of the fruits that the Spirit of God produces in our lives.

- 1) Gal. 5:23
- 2) A virtue that we have a part to play in adding to our lives.
- 3) 2 Peter 1:6—"***(add to)knowledge, self-control.....***"
- 4) 2 Peter 1:5—"***Giving all diligence***" to add these things.

F. The Christian life cannot be properly lived without self-discipline!

- 1) The apostle Paul recognized this fact clearly.
- 2) 1 Cor. 9:25-27

CONCLUSION

1. We are:
 - a) Trying to re-awaken us to the need of a disciplined life;
 - b) Trying to show the value of such.
2. We hope to challenge us to look at ourselves even in little things.
3. Contrast:

DISCIPLINED PERSON

1. Picks up clothes after themselves
2. Plans his work—works his plan
3. Habitually prompt to appointments
4. On time at church or even early

UNDISCIPLINED PERSON

1. Leaves them for others
2. Works haphazardly
3. Notoriously tardy
4. Habitually late

4. God calls for a disciplined life—an orderly & obedient life.
We need to encourage one another to this end.

Lesson Four

**"A SELF-DISCIPLINED LIFE IS A MARK
OF MATURITY (#1)**

(1 Cor. 7:1-9)

INTRODUCTION

1. Discipline carries a variety of connotations to different people.
 - a) To a Child—Being compelled to do something undesirable & being punished if he will not.
 - b) To a Soldier—Conformity to regulations, instant obedience to orders, etc.
 - c) To a Student—Meeting the requirements of their course of studies.
 - d) To a Christian—Discipleship—following Christ all the way.
2. The **AIM** of all forms of proper discipline is to:
 - a) Bring about a disciplined life.
 - b) To enhance one's ability to regulate his conduct:
 - By proper principles & judgment;
 - And not by impulse, desire, pressure, or social custom.
3. This lesson—To emphasize two areas of self-discipline.

DISCUSSION**I. A DISCIPLINED PERSON WILL HAVE HIS APPETITIES UNDER CONTROL.*****A. 1 Cor. 9:27***

- 1) Paul was flesh & blood as we are.
- 2) He had to deal with his appetites and bring them under control.
- 3) In fact—we all do to some degree or another.
- 4) Illustration:
 - a) A chain smoker realizes that his body is being harmed.
 - b) He makes a decision to quit.
 - c) Will it be easy—no—especially at first.
- 5) Illustration:
 - a) The over-weight person realizes that his body is being harmed.
 - b) He makes a decision to quit over-eating.
 - c) Will it be easy—no—especially at first.

B. 1 Cor. 7:8

- 1) Paul recommended living in abstinence to the unmarried.
- 2) Not all could do it—but the challenge was there.
- 3) It is not a command, but a challenge to those able to do so.

C. 1 Cor. 7:2

- 1) Marriage is for the purpose of helping to give proper direction to man's passions.
- 2) Marriage is honorable, right & allowed of God.
- 3) It is not sinful—as long as it is a correct marriage before God.

C. 1 Cor. 7:5

- 1) But even in marital situations, discipline is necessary.
- 2) There will come times of forced abstinence.
- 3) Illness or prolonged illness.
- 4) Prolong separation because of various reasons.
- 5) Thus—the need to learn to bring our appetites under control.

D. Observations:

- 1) Men try to blame their wives for their infidelity:
 - a) To do so admits their lack of discipline & self-control.
 - b) It admits immaturity as a Christian.
 - c) They admit they are weak.
- 2) We are not—and cannot be—forced to be unfaithful.
 - a) We choose to give in to our appetites, rather than keeping them under control.
 - b) Men & women stay in paths of virtue because they have gained discipline in their lives.
- 3) A weak man or woman is a poor risk in almost any situation.
- 4) The strong can abstain—even the rest of their lives—if necessary.
- 5) While we can enjoy the privileges of marital life:
 - a) We also must be developing our ability to discipline ourselves.
 - b) Testing times usually comes!

II. A DISCIPLINED PERSON WILL HAVE HIS EMOTIONS UNDER CONTROL.**A. 1 Tim. 5:11-15**

- 1) The danger is real—Letting their emotions rule over belief in Christ.
- 2) To go into sin.
- 3) Uncontrolled emotions can reap an undesirable harvest.

B. Eph. 4:14

- 1) Emotions need to be subordinated to **reason** and to the **right**.
 - a) Yes, we need to be warm-hearted, compassionate, etc.
 - b) But not giddy, impulsive, childish.
- 2) Without discipline—our emotional responses are:
SENTIMENTALITY, IRRESPONSIBLE, MISGUIDED.

- 3) Our minds must not be used to devise excuses for doing what our emotions dictate.
 - a) Emotions must be brought under proper control.
 - b) Or—we will never be stable, dependable people as Christians.
 - 4) Just because I like something—doesn't make it right!
 - a) Sin is "***pleasurable for a season,***" but reaps terrible fruit.
 - b) Illustration:
 - A song that Pat Boone's daughter sang had a phrase in it.
 - "*It must be right, because it feels so good.*"
 - The very thing advocated in the song is sinful & wrong.
 - It is condemned by the Word of God.
 - 5) Emotions must be brought into control of something higher—more dependable.
- C. 1 Thess. 5:22—*"Stay away from all kinds of evil, and even that which appears to be evil."***
- 1) In our society—males & females are thrown together in some very awkward situations.
 - a) In jobs, social situations, serious situations.
 - b) Dangers lurk that must be guarded against—even ahead of time.
 - c) Must constantly be on our guard.
 - 2) 1 Peter 5:9—"***Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.***"
 - 3) Souls, Homes, Happiness, Influence—all can be lost in a moment of indiscretion.
- D. Matt. 5:27-30**
- 1) Why such strong language?
 - 2) Drastic action may have to be taken at times to avoid sin.
 - 3) The "*I can't help it*" philosophy must be discarded.
- E. Emotions can & must be brought under control.**
- 1) Illustration:
 - a) Young man was madly in love with a young lady.
 - b) She rejected him.
 - c) After a time, he married another.
 - d) But he still had strong feelings for the first lady.
 - e) He realized that he had to do something about it.
 - He reasoned with himself over the matter.
 - "*It is wrong for me to feel this way about her.*"
 - "*I don't have to feel that way.*"
 - "*With God's help, I no longer will entertain such feelings.*"

- f) The battle was won....but it wasn't easy—But maturing isn't easy!
- 2) Without a disciplined effort:
 - a) We could easily turn to self-pity.
 - b) Or worse—to moral deterioration!

CONCLUSION

1. The next lesson will continue on with this theme—"A disciplined Life is a Mark of Maturity"
2. The Christian is challenged to live a disciplined life—in all areas!
3. 2 Cor. 10:5—"***To bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.***"
4. If you have not brought your life under the control of Jesus—may we challenge you to think seriously about doing so today.

Lesson Five

**"A SELF-DISCIPLINED LIFE IS A MARK
OF MATURITY" (#2)**
(James 1:21-27)

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous lesson, we suggested two things that show discipline & maturity:
 - a) Control of one's passions;
 - b) Control of one's emotions.
2. This lesson continues on with this theme of a Self-Disciplined life that shows Maturity.

DISCUSSION**I. THE DISCIPLINED PERSON WILL HAVE HIS MOODS UNDER CONTROL.*****A. Moods can do strange things to us—if not controlled.***

- 1) Cause us to neglect our duty.
- 2) Cause us to make an unwise purchase (mood buying can be bad).
- 3) Cause us to do something we would not otherwise have done, if thought through.
- 4) Cause me to be **happy** one moment—and in **deep gloom** at another.
- 5) Cause me to be **generous** one moment—and then be **stingy**.
- 6) Cause me to be **optimistic** one moment—and then to be **pessimistic**.

B. Such lack of control may indicate:

- 1) That I am not a stable person—or I am unreliable.
- 2) That I allow my moods to control me—not me control my moods.
- 3) That I am weak.
- 4) That I give in too easily to my moods.

C. Christians are expected to properly deal with their mood swings.

- 1) 2 Cor. 6:3-10
 - a) As sorrowful—yet rejoicing!
 - b) Paul had to deal with his mood swings—and he did.
 - c) They did not get him down—he controlled them.
- 2) James 1:2
 - a) What happens in our lives often affect our moods.
 - b) But instead of letting them get us down—we control them.
 - c) How—by realizing how much we have to rejoice over!

- 3) Phil. 3:1; 4:4
 - a) A command—an appeal to the intellect—not moods.
 - b) Deal with your moods—rejoice in the Lord, always!
 - c) If we don't control our moods—they will control us!

D. The value of controlled moods:

- 1) Helps us to control what we say to others;
- 2) Helps us to control our dealings with others;
- 3) Helps us to be cheerful & cooperative regardless of our moods or circumstances.
- 4) Have a growing influence upon others for good.
- 5) It will become obvious to others—**I am in control!**
- 6) It has been observed: *"Most of the world's work is done by people who don't feel like it."*

II. THE DISCIPLINED PERSON HAS HIS SPEECH UNDER CONTROL.

A. A loose tongue can indicate a weak character.

- 1) To boast... *"I say what I think".....* does not necessarily show maturity.
 - a) Prov. 13:16—***"Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool lays open his folly."***
 - b) Prov. 29:11—***"A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back."***
 - c) Prov. 17:28—***"Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace: when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive."***
- 2) Control of the tongue is an obvious necessity!
 - a) James 1:26—***"If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless."***
 - b) Frankness can be a virtue when coupled with **Intelligent, loving tact, and discretion.**
 - c) But Frankness can also be a **Sadistic evil!**
 - When it is merely the unbridling of one's tongue.
 - When it is the emptying of one's thoughts & opinions without regard to:
 - The Time it is said;
 - The place it is said;
 - Or, human feelings involved;
 - or, the souls of people involved.
 - d) Prov. 12:18—***"There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health."***

B. It takes more discipline:

- 1) To refrain from speaking, than it does to speak.
- 2) James 1:19—*"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath..."*
- 3) Forbearance is a virtue in controlling my tongue.
- 4) James 3:2—*"For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body."*

III. THE DISCIPLINED PERSON RECOGNIZES & RESPECTS AUTHORITY.**A. *The very concept of discipline infers subjection to someone or something.***

- 1) Order, peace, security comes from respecting authority.
- 2) Rebellion to properly constituted authority can be a sign of immaturity.
- 3) The disciplined life is a controlled life—according to a standard.
 - a) If the standard is faulty—it can bring problems.
 - b) If the standard is good—it can bring desired results.

B. *This submission is not blind, unthinking submission.*

- 1) Disciplined people do not cater to every wish & opinion about them.
- 2) Even when confronted by a proper authority, Peter did not submit unquestioningly.
 - a) He had been warned not to preach Jesus any longer.
 - b) His reply: *"We ought to obey God rather than men."* (Acts 5:29)
- 3) This was not rejection of all authority, but:
 - a) A submission to a higher authority.
 - c) When the two conflict—one has to be chosen.
- 4) An example:
 - a) A husband expects his wife to act contrary to God's Will.
 - b) She obviously has two authorities in conflict in her life.
 - c) She is forced to make a choice between the two.
 - d) She does not reject all authority—but respects the one she considers the higher authority.

C. *This obedience is with understanding & cheerfulness.*

- 1) The disciplined person realizes the need for Authority—a standard.
- 2) He realizes that all of life is a submissiveness in one form or another.
- 3) That submissiveness is not a sign of inferiority, but of a disciplined person.

4) Eph. 5:21—"*Submitting to one another in the fear of God.*"

CONCLUSION

1. The ideal disciplined person is one who has brought "*into captivity every thought to the obedience to Christ.*"
2. The mature, the strong, the steadfast Christian has to be a disciplined person.
3. Each of us should be working towards this disciplined way of living.
4. How mature are you?

Lesson Six

"DANGERS TO AVOID IN SELF-DISCIPLINE"

(Phil. 3:12-16)

INTRODUCTION

1. We have been emphasizing the need for self-control, self-discipline!
 - a) We all recognize the need in our lives.
 - b) It is a very practical study for us all.
2. But in such a study—need to point out some dangers.
3. Must emphasize—this lesson is not to be used to justify undisciplined living.

DISCUSSION**I. DANGER—THINKING THAT DISCIPLINE IS THE SUPREME VALUE IN LIFE.*****A. Can people go to heaven if not thoroughly self-disciplined people?***

- 1) What about new members?
 - a) They are just getting started good.
 - b) They have quite a ways to go to be mature (self-disciplined).
 - c) They die in Christ.
 - d) Are they saved?
- 2) What about older members?
 - a) They have been trying to mature.
 - b) They may have had many problems to overcome.
 - c) They may never reach the level they would like in self-control.
 - d) But—they keep themselves in Spiritual Fellowship with God.
 - e) Can they be saved?
- 3) A right relationship with God is greater than total self-discipline.

B. Thus, we must realize that a disciplined life does not take the place of Christ in our lives.

- 1) Discipline must be a servant—it is not our Savior!
- 2) Even the world can be greatly disciplined people.
- 3) Discipline is a means to an end in following Christ.
- 4) Phil. 3:7-12

II. DANGER—DISCIPLINE CREATING PRIDE & SELF-RIGHTEOUS ATTITUDES.***A. A disciplined life is considered better than an undisciplined life.***

- 1) There is a legitimate sense of satisfaction that comes from self-control living.

- 2) Col. 2:5-8
 - a) We rejoice over the order & stability of God's people.
 - b) But we do not rejoice when they feel & act superior to others.
- B. There is a danger of self-satisfaction.***
 - 1) Being so pleased with ourselves—we become content.
 - 2) We look at ourselves—admire ourselves—*"Look what I have done."*
 - 3) No glory to God—but only to self!
 - 4) 1 Cor. 1:26-31
- C. The disciplined person must not look down on the undisciplined with disdain.***
 - 1) We fall a snare to pride.
 - 2) We become like the self-righteous Pharisees.
 - 3) Luke 18:9-14
 - a) They were very disciplined in life.
 - b) But their self-righteous attitude destroyed them.

III. DANGER—GO TO EXTREMES IN SELF-DISCIPLINE.

A. It is possible to be too rigid.

- 1) Fathers are warned of such:
 - a) Eph. 6:4
 - b) Col. 3:20-21
- 2) Self-discipline is needed, but not to an extreme.
 - a) Col. 3:5-7
 - b) Yet, notice the dangers of extreme.
 - c) Col. 2:20-22
 - Such actions can be showy & exacting;
 - But they will tend towards hypocrisy;
 - It is usually too radical;
 - It is a blind alley—promises much—but produces little.
 - d) Such does not lead to a WARM, VIBRANT, NOBLE CHARACTER.

B. Distinguish between true disciplined living & asceticism.

- 1) Characteristics of Asceticism:
 - a) Calls attention to itself.
 - b) Sets up rules & prohibitions that are petty.
 - c) Tends to despise good things of life—joys—experiences—which are a gift from God.
 - d) 1 Tim. 4:1-5
- 2) Characteristics of True Disciplined living:
 - a) It calls attention to the control behind the act.

- b) It does not set up petty rules & regulations.
 - c) It appreciates & enjoys the good things from God in a lawful way.
 - d) It uses them to glorify God & serve others.
- 3) Illustrate:
- a) To live unmarried purposely does not say marriage is evil.
 - b) Asceticism usually does.
 - c) A celibate life does not make one more holy!
 - d) Nor is it a means to holiness.
 - e) It is merely the practical means necessary to greater usefulness in certain areas of service.
- 4) Example:
- a) The apostle Paul was single & fasted often.
 - Not because marriage was evil;
 - Nor because eating food was wrong.
 - 1 Cor. 8:8—"*But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.*"
 - b) The apostle chose that way of life to serve God in a special way.

IV. DANGER—DISCIPLINE THAT IS UNDISCIPLINED.

A. Discipline helps us to develop good habits.

- 1) Good habits can help to safe-guard our souls.
- 2) But they also must be watched less they become tyrants & destroy us.
- 3) Habits must be kept in role of servant—not our masters.

B. Danger in becoming too disciplined.

- 1) That is—his life becomes like hardened concrete.
- 2) He permits no changes, no variations, no second-thoughts, no flexibility.
- 3) The Pharisees illustrate this concept well:
 - a) They were disciplined people—but too rigid.
 - b) Their rigidity caused them to reject Christ.
 - c) No room for growth, adjusting, expanding of their lives.
 - d) They had arrived—this is it!

C. We are not to become slaves of our discipline.

- 1) Especially when it can bring our own ruin or hurt others.
- 2) There needs to be intelligent flexibility.
- 3) Good, healthy disciplined activities need to be followed—except:

- a) Where a higher need calls for change temporarily or permanently.
- b) God commanded... ***"Let all things be done decently and in order."***
(1 Cor. 14:40)
- c) But He qualified it by saying: ***"Let all be done unto edifying."*** (1 Cor. 14:26)

D. Disciplined living is more than rigid rules, routine activities or habit.

- 1) Too many people are involved in our lives.
- 2) Too many legitimate demands that must be evaluated & worked in.
- 3) We can become bull-headed & show a LACK OF LOVE & CONCERN for self & others.

E. Disciplined living requires that we work to bring order to our lives.

- 1) It is generally for our own good.
- 2) Regimentation & control has it's value.
- 3) 1 Tim. 4:16—***"Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."***
- 4) But we must not lose sight of the higher strength we need.
 - a) Strength to adjust without quitting.
 - b) Strength to pause without stopping.
 - c) Strength to see that people & their needs are more important than our rules & regimen.
- 5) Helping people should be a supreme objective of our disciplined life.
 - a) 1 Cor. 9:19-23
 - b) Disciplined living!—Yet, concerned for people. Gal. 6:10
- 6) Example:
 - a) A judge was too busy writing his book: *"The Law of Trusts"*
 - b) It took a lot of discipline to do it.
 - c) Yet, his own son wound up in court before another judge.

CONCLUSION

1. Disorganized lives need to be brought into greater usefulness by discipline.
2. But—don't forget—it is a means to an end—not an end in itself.
3. We must not become so set in our disciplined ways that:
 - a) We forget & trample over people & their needs;
 - b) And do it in the name of "Disciplined living."
4. Remember-----Discipline is not our Savior—Christ is.
5. Christ saves those who strive to conform to the Will of God.

Lesson Seven

"THE SELF-DISCIPLINED LIFE AND HOLINESS"**(Galatians 5:19-24)****INTRODUCTION**

1. The Christian faces a constant struggle:
 - a) It is the conflict between the flesh & the Spirit.
 - b) Gal. 5:17—*"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."*
2. We are called upon to put to death the activities of the flesh.
 - a) Gal. 5:24—*"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passion and desires."*
 - b) We are expected to live after the Spirit and have His fruits in our lives.
 - c) **Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Meekness, Temperance.**
3. In other words:
 - a) The Christian is to live a holy life.
 - b) But we believe also a disciplined life.

DISCUSSION**I. CAN ONE BE DISCIPLINED, BUT NOT LIVE A HOLY LIFE?*****A. Examples:***

- 1) An athlete:
 - a) He/she follows a rugged program of self-regimentation & denial.
 - b) Paul said: *"They do it to obtain a corruptible crown."* (1 Cor. 9:25)
 - c) But holy living leads to *"an incorruptible crown."* (1 Cor. 9:25)
- 2) A Business person:
 - a) He/she may deny both body & soul in their total efforts to secure possessions.
 - b) They may work hard, be frugal, and be industrious, rising early & working late.
 - c) This may require strong discipline.
 - d) But spiritually, they may end up like the Rich fool that Jesus spoke about: *"Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided? So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

- 3) Politicians, Teachers, Physicians, Artists, Musicians, Technicians:
 - a) Those who reach the top are usually disciplined people.
 - b) These people usually are disciplined over long years.
 - c) But—they may be far from God!

B. Disciplined Living is not necessarily a sign of Holy Living!

- 1) Holy Living is first a relationship with God through Christ.
 - a) By obedience to the Gospel—being born again into God's family.
 - b) Then, by a continued obedient life—maintaining that relationship.
- 2) Disciplined Living may only involve the person's own desires & interest.
 - a) Their life may be under control, well-regulated, respectable.....
 - b) But....they fail to face the deeper questions of life:
 - Sin, Death & the Mortality of man.
 - Truth & Duty to God.
 - Guilt & a hungering after righteousness. Etc.
 - c) They want to avoid the disturbing questions & issues.
 - d) They want to be left alone in their comfortable world.
 - e) Their disciplined life has become their means of shutting God out.
 - f) They snub God & reject His means of Righteousness or Holiness.
- 3) Even the religious can fall snare to this problem. Matt. 15:7-9
 - a) They were religious, disciplined, but had lost their relationship with God.
 - b) Their hearts were far from Him.
 - c) They chose their own disciplined way of religious activity over God's way.
 - d) Mark 7:9—*"All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."*

II. WHAT IS THE PROPER RELATIONSHIP OF DISCIPLINE & HOLINESS?

A. First, We need to see that Discipline needs motivation!

- 1) The motivation will either be earthly and corruptible incentives;
- 2) Or, spiritual and eternal incentives!
- 3) The heart must be won to one of these—to bring a disciplined life.
 - a) If the heart is fully set on the earthly, material rewards.....
 - b) Then, it will give the incentive to a disciplined life in order to obtain it.
 - c) But, if the heart is fully set on Spiritual, Eternal rewards.....
 - d) Then, it will give incentive to a disciplined life in order to obtain it.

- 4) Jesus said: *"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*
(Matt. 6:21)
- B. Discipline is needed to live a life of Holiness!**
- 1) 1 Cor. 9:27—*"But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."*
 - a) Paul was convinced of the need of discipline in order to live right.
 - b) The physical must be kept subservient to the spiritual.
 - 2) Holy living is glorifying God in our bodies, as well as our spirits!
 - a) 1 Cor. 6:20—*"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."*
 - b) Col. 3:5—*"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."*
 - c) Rom. 12:1—*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."*
 - d) Rom. 6:12-13—*"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you would obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."*
 - 3) These & others passages are calling for Holy Living.
 - a) But the means to that end is—A disciplined life.
 - b) One that exercises control over the body & subdues it unto God & His service.
 - c) Without disciplined living—our holiness can become a sham!
 - d) It is to allow one's self to be pulled back into the world & be overcome. (2 Pet. 2:20-22)
- C. Even willingness to suffer is no guarantee of Holiness before God.**
- 1) Some believe:
 - a) If we suffer, we will be purified, and drawn closer to God.
 - b) So—to be more holy—suffer more!
 - 2) 1 Pet. 4:12-16
 - a) We can suffer as a wrong-doer, ungodly person.
 - b) Or, we can suffer as a Christian.
 - c) Suffering is not necessarily a sign of holiness.
 - 3) Heb. 12:10-11
 - a) Chastening is given to us to encourage us to live Holy lives.
 - b) It should cause us to realize:

- *"Whom the Lord loves, He chastens."*
 - *"He scourges every son whom he receives."*
 - *"He chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."*
 - *"Afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."*
- c) Suffering can:
- Make us realize our helplessness, littleness, & insecurity;
 - Show we need God's help to see us through;
 - Help us to see our self-will & rebellious spirit, at times;
 - Help us to see the folly of our proud head & stiff neck.
- d) Thus,
- We can become wiser;
 - Wise enough to submit to God's will;
 - Let His Grace change our lives towards holy & righteous living.
- e) Holiness comes:
- Not because we suffer;
 - But, because we surrender to God in suffering.

CONCLUSION

1. To secure our heavenly reward:
 - a) We must become holy & live holy lives!
 - b) 1 Pet. 1:16—*"Be holy, for I am holy."* (quote from O.T.)
 - c) But this cannot be done without: Temperance, Self-Control, or Disciplined living.
 - d) But this is Disciplined Living that submits to God & His Will that makes us Holy.
- 2 A disciplined person is not necessarily a Christian.
 - a) But a Christian must be a disciplined person.
 - b) Holiness requires it.
 - c) Heb. 12:14—*"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."*

Lesson Eight

“A SELF-DISCIPLINED LIFE IS ONE OF PERSISTENCE”

(Mark 4:14-20)

INTRODUCTION

1. Why did the plant in the stony ground die?
 - a) No root—no continuation.
 - b) No endurance qualities.
2. Jesus is indicating that this is the sad picture of many who become Christians.
 - a) They come in with joy—survive for a while—then fall away!
 - b) They fail to learn a great lesson of life—Endurance—Persistence!
 - c) A person:
 - Can have good intentions
 - Can have high goals & desires
 - d) But, without persistence—they are worthless.
3. Persistence is a must for successful Christian living.
 - a) He. 3:14—***“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end...”***

DISCUSSION**I. THERE ARE GOOD REASONS FOR EMPHASIZING PERSISTENCE.*****A. If life was easy, persistence would pose no problem.***

- 1) But life has its challenges—problems—trials & tribulations.
- 2) 2 Thess. 1:4—***“So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.”***
- 3) In additions to life’s normal tribulations.....
- 4) The Christian has to face persecutions as well.
- 5) 2 Tim. 3:12—***“Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”***

B. These things challenge and test our faith in God.

- 1) Will we give in to doubt?
- 2) Will we let discouragement cause us to fall away?
- 3) Will we let the lure of the easy way cause us to turn away from the straight & narrow way to life?

II. TO SURVIVE, PERSISTENCE MUST BE OUR WATCHWORD.***A. No one will survive without it.***

B. Its value is illustrated so well in our world.

- 1) Edison's invention of the light bulb was over a long period of time and after hundreds of unsuccessful efforts.
 - a) His observation—*“Achievement is 2% inspiration and 98% perspiration.”*
 - b) He persisted until he succeeded.
- 2) Abraham Lincoln well illustrates such.
 - a) 1831—He failed in business.
 - b) 1832—He was defeated for Legislature.
 - c) 1833—He again failed in business.
 - d) 1834—He was elected to the Legislature.
 - e) 1838—He was defeated for Speaker of the House.
 - f) 1840—He was defeated for Elector.
 - g) 1843—He was defeated for Congress.
 - h) 1846—He was elected to Congress.
 - i) 1848—He was defeated for Congress.
 - j) 1855—He was defeated for Senate.
 - k) 1856—He was defeated for Vice-President.
 - l) 1858—He was defeated for Senate.
 - m) 1860—He was elected to the Presidency.
- 3) Like Abraham Lincoln—We succeed because we are persistent!
- 4) And we also learn from every disappointment and difficulty.
 - a) Jas. 1:2-4

C. Persistence is our way of proving we want to succeed!

- 1) *“Success is like a fickle lady who wants to be pursued!”*
 - a) She questions our sincerity of purpose over and over.
 - b) But if we prove ourselves—endure, persevere, persist—we will have her.
- 2) We are not called to be faithful for a day, a week, a month, or a year, but for life. Rev. 2:10
- 3) Nothing will take the place of persistence.
 - a) Talent will not—talented people have failed.
 - b) Genius will not—people of genius have failed.
 - c) Education will not—Educated people have failed.

III. THE BLESSINGS OF PERSISTENCE.***A. Persistence rewards us with great rewards:***

- 1) It will bring peace because we are faithfully living for God each day.
- 2) It will bring a sense of joy of achievement.
- 3) It will bring continual meaning and purpose for our lives.

- 4) It will produce an amazing knowledge of God's Word.
- 5) It will make us wiser from our experiences in the light of God's Word.
- 6) It will bring many opportunities to affect the lives of others for good.

B. Just imagine the outcome of a life devoted to the following code:

- 1) I will never give up so long as I know I am doing right.
- 2) I will believe all things will work out for me if I hang on to the end.
- 3) I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.
- 4) I will not permit anyone to intimidate me or deter me from my goal.
- 5) I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.
- 6) I will try again and again and yet again to accomplish what is right.
- 7) I will learn from others who have successfully overcome adversity.
- 8) I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what obstacles may confront me.

CONCLUSION

1. Illustrate:
 - a) After a concert by a pianist, a woman said to her, *"I'd give anything to play as you do."*
 - b) The pianist's answer was to the point: *"No you wouldn't."*
 - c) The lady responded, *"Yes, but I really would like to play as you do."*
 - d) The pianist's then said to her: *"If you really do, then you will have to give time to practice hour after hour, day after day, year after year to succeed."*
2. Humans can do many things in life—if willing to pay the price—persistence!
3. Illustrate:
 - a) The Romans came to the shores & cliffs of Dover to conquer.
 - b) They were repulsed.
 - c) Then, later, they returned again.
 - d) This time to stay.
 - e) They landed—carried supplies to shore—set fire to their boats.
 - f) With great resolution—they went into battle...and won!
4. On the Road to heaven:
 - a) We must burn our bridges--Jesus warns us about looking back—not worthy of Him.
 - b) Have we made the resolve to be persistent as Christians?
 - c) How well are we doing?
5. The Disciplined person must be a Persistent person!

Lesson Nine

"SUGGESTIONS FOR A SELF-DISCIPLINED LIFE"**(Matthew 25:19-30)****INTRODUCTION**

1. These Lessons on "The Disciplined Life":
 - a) Have been designed to inform, clarify, and challenge.
 - b) And to stress the importance of such a life.
2. In this lesson we offer suggestions that can help to bring a Disciplined Life."

DISCUSSION**I. REALIZE THERE ARE NO SHORT-CUTS.**

A. Luke 9:62—"But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'"

- 1) Looking back can mean:
 - a) I look back with regret of my decision.
 - b) I look back with an unwillingness to pay the price of going forward.
- 2) To have a disciplined life requires hard work.
 - a) There is no easy solution!
 - b) No "get rich quick" scheme.
 - c) No easy way to a correct & thorough knowledge of the Bible that helps us know how to discipline our lives.
- 3) We must put our hands to the plough & not look back.
- 4) Motivation to press on can be gained by seeing the results of an undisciplined life.
 - a) Matt. 7:14—"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

II. PAY ATTENTION TO LITTLE THINGS.

A. Luke 16:10—"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much."

- 1) Little things are important in what they reflect.
 - a) It shows character.
 - b) If we won't do the least, we won't do what requires much more.
- 2) Paying attention to little things indicate:
 - a) Carefulness & thoughtfulness.
 - b) Such can show the difference between: Slovenliness or Orderliness.

- c) Phil. 2:4—*"Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."*

B. The Rewards of little things can be great.

III. LEARN TO FINISH THE TASK BEGUN.

A. Heb. 2:3—*"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation..."*

- 1) It may be hard—it may get harder—but finish the task!
- 2) There are too many unfinished jobs that have become a way of life.
- 3) Such can indicate an undisciplined life & character.
- 4) Heb. 3:14—*"For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."*

B. Such tasks could be a turning point for good or bad.

- 1) They may be critical to our lives here & hereafter.
 - a) We can become discouraged & give up.....
 - b) Or, become determined to finish up the job & win the victory.
- 2) Either can become a way of life.
- 3) Prov. 22:29—*"Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men."*
 - a) Reason—He has proven himself.
 - b) He is disciplined to do what has to be done.
 - c) He is a responsible person.

IV. SUBDUE THE BODY.

A. 1 Cor. 9:27—*"But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."*

- 1) Control comes by forming right habits.
- 2) Once an action of our body becomes a habit—it is set—hard to break!
- 3) We deal with the little things first—form new habits.
- 4) Learn to stand tall, sit tall, and walk tall.
- 5) Deal with such nervous habits as: Fidgeting, Shifting, Scratching, Tapping, Slouching, Shifting of feet, etc.
- 6) More and more bring our bodies into control.

B. Reason—God wants to use them. (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:20)

V. BRING THE MIND INTO CONTROL.***A. The reason is obvious!***

- 1) Prov. 4:23—*"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."*
- 2) Matt. 15:18—*"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man."*
- 3) Prov. 29:11—*"A fool utters all his mind: but a wise man keeps it in till afterward."*

B. We have a great challenge—bring our minds into control.

- 1) Without discipline, the mind runs in every direction.
- 2) God's work needs trained, disciplined minds.
- 3) We are to love the Lord with all of our mind. (Matt. 22:37)
- 4) 1 Pet. 1:13—*"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind..."*
- 5) TCNT—*"Therefore concentrate your minds, with the strictest self-control..."*

VI. DEAL WITH OVER-INDULGENCE.***A. Prov. 23:20-21—"Do not mix with winebibbers, or with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags."***

- 1) Food & drink are just two of the many things we can over-indulge in.
- 2) Those who habitually self-indulge:
 - a) Do so without regard to health or need;
 - b) And are usually weak in character in various areas of their lives.

B. We need to learn to be temperate in our lives.

- 1) To learn when to stop.
- 2) To realize that good health, effectiveness, and longevity are involved.

VII. HANDLE RESPONSIBILITY GLADLY.***A. Matt. 11:29-30—"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."***

- 1) We must take on Christ's yoke & learn of Him and His ways.
- 2) A yoke & burden infer responsibility—involvement!
- 3) Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:19-30)
 - a) Strong emphasis upon being responsible.
 - b) Strong emphasis upon punishment for the irresponsible.

B. Questions that challenge us:

- 1) Am I faithful to keep appointments—dealing with tardiness?
- 2) Can I be depended upon to finish assigned tasks?

- 3) Do I take hold & help to see a job through?
- 4) Do I accept responsibility for my decisions & mistakes?
- 5) Am I careful about financial obligations?
- 6) Do I have a goal to deal with my bad habits?
- 7) Am I determined to attend the assemblies of the saints?
- 8) Do I set aside some time each week to reach out to others?

CONCLUSION

1. The Christian life is:
 - a) Serious, Challenging, and Demanding.
 - b) It is not a glorified picnic, nor dress parade—but a battlefield!
2. A disciplined life must come out of a spirit of earnestness & commitment.
 - a) A passion for improvement for Jesus' sake.
 - b) A sense of stewardship towards life for Jesus' sake.
 - c) A readiness for sacrifice & service for Jesus' sake.
 - d) A steady application to the task at hand for Jesus' sake.
3. How well are we progressing in our disciplined living?

Lesson Ten

**“SHOULD DISCIPLINE BE FORCED UPON
OUR CHILDREN?”**

(Prov. 3:1-12)

INTRODUCTION

1. Self-Reliance, Self-Control, Dependability are considered mature characteristics!
 - a) How does one come to that stage of development in his life that can be called “Mature?”
 - b) What part does enforced discipline have upon such development....if any?
2. Needless to say, there are differences of views on the subject at hand.
 - a) Some advocate—no regimentation for youth at all!
 - 1) *“Let their character develop naturally, from within.”*
 - 2) Be left along to develop such.
 - 3) No compulsion....given free reign to make choices.
 - 4) Let each person find out things for themselves.
 - 5) Let them learn how to restrain, balance, and organize their own lives.
 - b) Others advocate—youth need rigid discipline in their lives!
 - 1) The rod should be used at all ages of a child’s life.
 - 2) Their lives must be organized, directed, regimented by parents from cradle to marriage.
 - 3) Decisions made for them.
 - 4) Their sole duty is obedience.
 - 5) No real freedom to develop on their own.
3. Which is right?
 - a) Which philosophy shows the sanest teenagers?
 - b) Which produces the highest type of disciplined citizens?
 - c) What have you observed during your life-time?
 - d) Or, is there another approach?

DISCUSSION**I. OBSERVATIONS BY PEOPLE WHO DEAL WITH PEOPLE*****A. Dr. Benjamin Spock’s approach.***

- 1) His 1946 edition was interpreted by mothers to be freer with children.
- 2) He saw the way things were gone and changed his mind.

- 3) In his 1957 edition, he clarified his approach: *“When I saw the way the wind was blowing between 1946-1957 in over-permissiveness, I added, enlarged, and made more emphatic, material on parents’ rights and children’s need for control.”* (P. 65)

B. Dr. Anderson, President of The American University states:

“It is the problem of American education, and the problem of the American home to find the middle position between the two extremes, which is neither total discipline nor total freedom and.....I think we have been too far to the left in the direction of too much freedom, and not enough discipline....”

C. General Observations:

- 1) *“I personally feel that the swing is back to more discipline being used with children.”*
- 2) *“The over-permissive, spoiled child has been too much to deal with.”*
- 3) *“Man’s tendency is to over-react to an extreme.”*
- 4) *“The answer seems to be obviously....a blending of the two.”*

D. Children do not normally learn discipline by being allowed to follow their own selfish, self-centered ways.

- 1) They do not learn respect for others’ property by being allowed to punch 6 holes in the neighbor’s new sofa without reprimand.
- 2) Humoring a child:
 - a) Does not necessarily build a disciplined character.
 - b) It more than likely will result in a spoiled, selfish child.
 - c) He is being conditioned to:
 - Want what he wants;
 - When he wants it;
 - Without being put off or denied.
- 3) Such a child may have a strong will.....
 - a) But will it not be a strong will to defy, to destroy, to lash out at whatever stands in his way.
 - b) Prov. 19:26-27

II. WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE’S TEACHING ON THE USE OF THE ROD?

A. The need for it is obviously stated.

- 1) Prov. 19:18
- 2) Prov. 23:13-14
- 3) These and others show clearly God’s Will in this matter.

B. The Proper use of the rod is a real challenge.

- 1) Questions to be answered:
 - a) How much to use it?
 - b) To what extent to use it?
 - c) For how long to use it....up to what age?
- 2) Parents must deal with these questions to properly discipline their children.
- 3) If parents fail here:
 - a) They may end up with pampered children.
 - b) Whose self-love is so fed that natural affection is greatly lessened.
 - c) 2 Tim. 3:2-3
 - d) They can lose their ability to experience pity, compassion, and sensibility for others.
 - e) Parents can “slave” for them:
 - They will not even give a grunt of thanks.
 - When called attention to—too self-centered to care!
- 4) Example of Mother:
 - a) Arose early to fix 7 different breakfasts.
 - b) Children allowed to stay in bed until last minute.
 - c) Years went by.
 - d) Mother became a widow...had to live with her daughters.
 - e) They didn't want her...went from one to the other.
 - f) Finally, they put her into home...where she died.
 - g) She had devoted herself unselfishly to her children:
 - She expected to be loved and appreciated;
 - But instead, her pampering had ruined them.
- 5) Prov. 15:20

III. WHY IS THE ROD NECESSARY WITH CHILDREN?***A. Because foolishness is bound up in the heart of the child.***

- 1) Prov. 22:15
- 2) A child needs to be curbed, controlled, and re-directed.
- 3) He must be taught properly & trained properly. (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6)
- 4) Dr. Harry a Snyder, formerly of Penna. Bureau of Correction, 1960: *“If there is any remedy for disrespect for the law, dearth of moral values, and absence of religious guidance, it appears that the family circle must assume the primary responsibility.”*

- 5) If parents could only see and realize:
 - a) The disastrous consequences at times that comes from their failure;
 - b) The crime against society and God they are committing;
 - c) Some might change!
 - d) Prov. 13:24

C. Because FEAR may be the only thing that will work at times.

- 1) To try to reason with small children may be useless.
- 2) One thing they do understand—fear of punishment.
- 3) Fear is not the highest motivation for doing something.....
 - a) But it is a legitimate motive.
 - b) God uses it on us.
 - c) It is better to learn self-control through fear than not at all.
- 4) With fear:
 - a) The child, at least, knows what to expect.
 - b) He realizes the painful consequences that will follow.
 - c) And extreme measures are usually not needed, if training is started early

CONCLUSION

1. The mark of a mature and capable parent:
 - a) To administer discipline skillfully and accurately;
 - b) To do it with firmness, consistency, and love;
 - c) That it produces the desired results.
2. Children grow up to be mature and capable adults:
 - a) Because they were taught and trained;
 - b) And part of that process involved imposing discipline.
3. God disciplines (chastens) those whom He loves, so that we can become more mature as his people.
4. Imposed discipline is right and needful!

