

## **I'll Choose Discipline.**

The farther a CIA or Special Forces member advances in his career, the farther he must savagely cling to self-discipline. No matter what trials he faces or what loss of friends he experiences, no matter what physical pain he encounters, he has to stay true to his training and discipline.

Jesus told His disciples they needed to deny themselves.

Matthew 16:24 "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Paul commanded those who would make a difference to make their bodies a living sacrifice.

Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

When a man begins to give up on the fight, you can see it in his appearance, in his morals, in his discipline, and hear it in his language. This is why preachers who are overwhelmed or discouraged will soil their morals for someone that means little or nothing to them apart from the moment. They are giving up the discipline, and the denial of self.

Rescue missions are filled with men who simply gave up on life; gave up on restraining the flesh and having a disciplined life. Discipline is simply saying no to the flesh, to one's emotions and appetites, and doing the right thing or the DISCIPLINED thing.

The incredible difference between Abishai and Joab was that Abishai would not give in; he would not give up the discipline. Abishai wanted to kill King Saul, but disciplined himself. Abishai would have loved to take Absalom's life, but he didn't. Joab, on the other hand, though mighty in battle, would not restrain his flesh, his opinions, and his desires when things went against the path he thought best. He

was a mighty warrior when life went the direction he thought it should go, but when the leader thought differently, Joab simply did what he thought was best.

A disciple is a “disciplined one” -- one who would follow "the path" during times of despair, who would keep doing the right thing even when he didn't care. A disciple does right by habit, in response to a well-trained lifestyle. (Training is nothing more than discipline of the mind or body.)



I enjoyed having lunch with our young people at Golden State Bible College right after speaking in chapel.

The disciple may lose a battle, may even fail at a job, but he will not give up the discipline. He will not give up the life he has chosen when things go wrong. Those on the road to defeat will enjoy the "who cares?" moments, and the "I don't give a ---" times. That is why I hate the emotion or the word, "WHATEVER!" If something is right to do, do it. If it is wrong, do not do it. Do not walk away with a "whatever" comment.

Those who give up on discipline will go to extremes and do the "I can not believe I'm doing this" act without concern often with pleasure.

Peter said this:

1 Peter 1:13 “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;” vs. 14 “As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:”

vs. 15 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;”

Being disciplined is a mental battle. We need to tie up our mind tightly in sobriety, not in recklessness, holding out unto the end. There are going to be days on which we despair even of life, but we must gird up the loins of our mind knowing the end will justify all the trials. One night, 20 years ago, I found myself very angry. I have no idea what it was, but I was mad. I put everyone to bed. Mrs. Goddard and I went to bed. I lay there until she was asleep. Then I got up, dressed, and went walking for hours. I don't think she ever knew I had left or returned, or that I was angry. I had to deal with my situation quietly before the Lord; I could not lash out at anyone, could not vent, nor "let go" and do some foolish thing.

2 Corinthians 1:8 “For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:”

There was a reason behind General Patton's wanting all his troops clean-shaven. The issue was not the beard; it was the discipline.

A successful orchestra or band leaders will tell you that attire matters and how one holds an instrument matters. Great orchestra leaders will tell you that the key to great football halftime shows is discipline. One great difference between a rock band and a quality orchestra is discipline in body, dress, and actions. The young, rebellious world loves the "let it all hang out" mentality.

Any great coach will tell you talent without discipline is worthless. Any teacher doing a good job will begin class for the year with one priority -- classroom discipline! After that, everything else will run smoothly.

Young preachers need to be careful to practice discipline in their ministry. Let's say, you start a church, it does not go as well as you wanted, so you give up the discipline, you give up on God or on your standards, or you change your affiliation.

The difficulty is not that you do not like the place from which you came, but you have given up on the discipline.

One young man I was very close to graduated from Bible college, started a church, and before long it was running 50 people, then 100, but then something happened and it was running 50 again. After a couple years of that, he not only left the ministry, he left church, was unfaithful to his wife, and went back to "the world" in which he thought he could succeed in. (By the way, a church that averaged less than 50 people is responsible for my salvation. I love those churches!)

Any young man wants to be a success and wants to be big, but such success doesn't happen very often. Did it ever occur to us that God might not want everyone to be BIG? We read a great deal about Paul and Peter, but what of the other disciples? My life is a tool in the hands of God for big or little, for fame or for suffering. I like fame more than suffering, but we can not study Christian history without knowing wonderful people were killed, suffered terrible atrocities, wandered in loneliness, and were unknown.

Hebrews 11:38 "(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

These may not be BIG in the eyes of men, but God keeps a log in Heaven, and when the books are opened, they will be rewarded for their faithfulness.

There is a reason the church of today does not like DISCIPLINE. The members want to enjoy the world, enjoy the relaxed lifestyle, or the casual life without the denial of self. But that is not the church of the first century, nor is it the life of a disciple.

Paul said of his personal discipline:

1 Corinthians 9:27 "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Paul thought the personal ruling of his body was the thing that prevented him from being a castaway. His success was not the restraint from liquor or sexual impropriety, but rather his being sure on a daily, hourly basis, that his body was under his control.

Moral failure is often the result of a tired, undisciplined spirit.

If you are struggling, get with God in prayer and Bible study, even if doing so feels fake. The discipline will work, no matter your spirit.

Draw boundaries. If you eliminate the place of temptation, you will not have to face the temptation.

Following simple rules of behavior and activity will prevent most moral depravity.

Avoid regular close associations with the same person of the opposite gender. Determine never to be alone with someone of the opposite gender in a private place, car, office, or their home. Men, no lady needs you to disciple her, and after one counseling session, do not counsel her unless her husband is there. Forbid words, gifts, texting, email, and the acceptance of gifts -- anything that depicts affection for someone to whom you are not married.

Let's cling to discipline in all aspects of life: personal discipline, classroom discipline, and social discipline. Discipline is vital.

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Our fall teen activity