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SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Why Practice Spiritual Discipline?

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[TITLE SLIDE:]

There are season in our lives we think about DISCIPLINES

Who made New Years Resolutions?

Why do we make them??

- Make a **Difference** or **Change**
- **Improve** something

Some people are great at keeping NewYears Resolutions..... Who??

- those who are **DISCIPLINED**

All **SUCCESSFUL** men and women are highly **Disciplined**

All **UNSUCCESSFUL** men and women are **Undisciplined** and unable to control their behaviors and their appetites

Think of this.....

Totally UNDISCIPLINED life will lead you to:

poor **health** issues / **poverty** / **irresponsibility** / **stupidity** / **unhappiness**

Christian, if you want to be Real with God...

beyond playing games..... God has given us **Spiritual Disciplines**

Immediately when people heard word "Discipline"... think **Drudgery**

Only Discipline Without Direction is Drudgery

(Story)

- Six year old TOMMY parent's enrolled him in music lesson for guitar
- Mother makes him practice..... it was DRUDGERY
- NOW, suppose visited by angel... transported to Carnegie Hall

"What do you think?"

- Vision vanishes....

"Tommy, the wonderful musician you saw is you in a few years."

Pointing at guitar... *"But you must practice"*

- Angel disappears....

Do you think Tommy's attitude towards PRACTICE is different?

Yes, Effort will be involved, but you can hardly call it Drudgery

When it comes to Discipline in Christian's life, many feel like Tommy....

Spiritual Disciplines can feel like DRUDGERY

Here is the vision God wants you to see....




[Romans 8.29a NIV]

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son

- We see how Jesus was....
 - Joyous / Power / Holy / Grace / Kind / Wisdom / Self Control
 - God has *predestined you to be conformed to the image of Jesus*
 - When we grasp this...
 - Spiritual Disciplines (*practices / habits*) will not be Drudgery
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Read to you couple of verses....

 [Titus 2.11-13 NIV]

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

- We are **WAITING** for that “*blessed hope*” (Jesus’ return)
- **In The mean Time....** say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions,
...so can say “YES” to *live self-controlled, upright & godly lives in this present age*

Think of Spiritual Disciplines as Spiritual **HYGIENE**

- Physically we know we **clean teeth** / **wash hair** / **wash bodies** /
exercise / **eat healthy** / **you stay fit**
- Lots of little things you do for your physical hygiene
- Through out New Testament **God encourages people to stay Spiritually Healthy**

Hygiene in New Testament translates into English as **Sound Practices, Habits**

HYGIENE essentially means “**GOOD IDEAS**”

- Good idea to take care of yourself... Don’t have to
- Don’t be surprised Health Deteriorates

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES are a Good Ideas for Spiritual Health

- **BUT** you have to do something
- Can’t expect to grow in your Faith otherwise

SO... While we wait for be with Jesus we need “Spiritual Hygiene”

Spiritual Disciplines to grow and NOT Deteriorate

Let's look again at scripture:



[Titus 2.12b-13 NIV]

*live **self-controlled**, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope*

Through out these books - Christians exhorted to have **SELF CONTROL**

- First part of chapter 2 Paul addresses:
 - Young men, old men, young women, older women, slave people, free people, everybody;
 - BELIEVERS... **you have to be self controlled!!**
- Greek word used for "Self Control" literally means **to be in your right mind**

First part of this verse speaks of "GRACE appearing"

- GRACE means "Undeserved Favor"
- BUT for many people grace means....
 - "Anything goes.... I'm covered by grace!"*
 - "There is nothing I need to do. Just sit back, let go, and let God"*

- **Grace teaches us to say "NO!"**
 - No to this world's life style
- Just like then.... TODAY the world says...
 - *"Anything Goes"*
 - *"YOLO"* - You Only Live Once
 - Idea is.... *"Live it up" / "Do what feels good" / "Seize the day"*

That's how the UNSAVED live.... It's a Crazy way to live!

- Whose mother ever said: "Are you out of your ever-loving mind?"
- **Living like this is the OPPOSITE of SELF CONTROL**

Re-Read Scripture Different way

The blessed hope, (which is Jesus' return) but in the meantime, Gods grace teaches us to do something, and it begins with a big "NO" to worldly passions, so that we can say "YES" to lives that are godly and upright and self-controlled.

Christian, you have been saved FROM a Deteriorating lifestyle, so you can be what God planned for you.... to be like **Jesus** in every way!

CLOSING:

We will be learning several DISCIPLINES..... **They are all Simple, but NOT Easy**

- Exceedingly Simple, nothing complicated
- **But none of them is Easy**
- To do it, we have to be willing first to say:
 - **NO** to our Appetites,
 - **NO** to our Old Tendencies
 - **NO** to our Bad Habits.

- They require DAILY effort and discipline



[1 Timothy 4.7-8 NLT]

Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come."

- Paul uses athletic image... for Spiritual Disciplines
- Just as physically we need to get up off the couch and get active and get going
- So spiritually there are things that we need to do
 - WE ARE NOT EARNING OUR WAY INTO HEAVEN
 - WE ARE NOT PILING UP MERIT WITH GOD



[Philippians 2.12b-13 NKJV]

*...**work out** (workout) your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

[NLT]

Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him

- Paul saying - *"You have to engage in spiritual workouts"*
- We don't workout to get yourself saved! (justification)
- This is **SANCTIFICATION**

(Good news is Jesus offers JUSTIFICATION)

- We don't TRAIN ourselves to BE Saved... but BECAUSE we are Saved!

- Would you like to know God better?
- Would you like to have a closer relationship with God?

Well, there are things that you can do!!.... We'll learn in coming weeks!

PRAY.....