

Spiritual Disciplines of a Godly Order **1**

1 Tim 4:7 "Train yourself to be godly."

Exercise takes sweat. It is the exception and not the rule. I will do this thing because I love God & I want to please Him.

Spiritual Disciplines allows us to soar!

Sometimes we look for the easy way out of tough situations. In the musical "ANNA", a character named "Rooster" lead the bad trio in a song called "Easy Street". The theme of the song was to get rich the easy way and live life fast with that ill-gotten gains.

We all want to reach certain goals in life but we many times are not ready to pay for it. Want to loose a few pounds? Easy? No! Want to get more money in the savings? Easy? No! Even when it comes to our walk with God, is there an 'easy street' way to get there, too? No! It will take work and it will not come fast. It takes sweat. Spiritual sweat.

It takes discipline.

But the Bottom Line: *For Growth to* **2** *happen, there must be New Life first! And growth will not happen over night. It will take sweat and time—and prayer.*

Illustrations of Disciplines:

"We must face the fact that many today are notoriously careless in their living. This attitude finds its way into the church. We have liberty, we have money, we live in comparative luxury. As a result, discipline practically has disappeared. What would a violin solo sound like if the strings on the musician's instrument were all hanging loose, not stretched tight, not "disciplined"?" A.S. Tozer in Men Who Met God.

We are all in need of getting our lives tightened so that we will 'sound' better in His Hands. Stretching is not all that bad. To make the drum top sound real good, it has to be stretched. To make our life better, we must be stretched as well.

Interruptions. To do that, we need to add things to our life.

Don't get me wrong, it is not works that ³ we are using to get more of Him but using more of Him to get better at our works of Faith.

Take 2 Peter 1:2~8 ² *Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.* ³ *His Divine Power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own Glory and Goodness.* ⁴ *Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the Divine Nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.* ⁵ *For this very reason, make every effort (SWEAT) to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.* ⁸ *For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

To add to the faith means that there is already Saving Faith in your life. That is easy to work out: Place your trust in the One who

died in your place and took your punishment for your sins. Easy, that is for you but it cost God His Only Son! And now ⁴ the free gift is yours in Christ Jesus—just for the asking. So ask Him, already!

Whereas, in 1 Peter 1:3~8, we find: ³ *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade -- kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through Faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the Salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.* ⁶ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.* ⁷ *These have come so that your faith --of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire --may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.* ⁸ *Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,*

This is what He has for you!

There is something to be said for a person who is set aside for the Lord's use. That person has not only heard the Lord's call on him/her, but have joined in the quest to follow that calling; to be bold and active. To take the necessary steps to get to the **5** goal!

Lanny Bassham, Olympic gold-medalist in small-bore rifle competition, tells what concentration does for his marksmanship: *"Our sport is controlled non-movement. We are shooting from 50 meters--over half a football field--at a bull's eye three-quarters the size of a dime. If the angle of error at the point of the barrel is more than five one-thousandths of a millimeter, you drop into the next circle and lose a point. So we have to learn how to make everything stop. I stop my breathing. I stop my digestion by not eating for 12 hours before the competition. I train by running to keep my pulse around 60, so I have a full second between beats--I have gotten it lower, but found that the stroke-volume increased so much that each beat really jolted me. You do all of this and you have the technical control. But you have to have some years of experience in reading conditions: the wind, the mirage. Then you have the other 80% of the problems--the mind."* Sports Illustrated, August 2, 1976, pp. 31-3

Spiritual Discipline gets us where we've always wanted to be: Close to Jesus.

The job of a football coach is to make men do what they don't want to do, in order to achieve what they've always wanted to be. ~ Tom Landry: first head coach of the Dallas Cowboys. OR *"Leadership is getting someone to do what they don't want to do, to achieve what they want to **6** achieve."* <http://football.about.com/cs/legends/p/tomlandry.htm>

The problem with many is that we have the stuff but we don't use it. For example:

Percentage of American's who own running shoes but don't run: 87%. What Counts: The Complete Harper's Index, edited by Charis Conn

If you aren't practicing, someone else is.

Another illustration of a man with a will to be disciplined: In the 1880s a young man who was an earnest Christian found employment in a pawnshop. Although he disliked the work, he did it faithfully "as unto the Lord" until a more desirable opportunity opened for him. To prepare himself for a life of Christian service, he wrote on a scrap of paper the following resolutions: *"I do promise God that I will rise early every morning to have a few minutes--not less than five--in private prayer. I will endeavor to conduct myself as a humble, meek, and zealous follower of Jesus, and by serious witness and warning I will try to lead others to think of the needs of their*

immortal souls. I hereby vow to read no less than four chapters in God's Word every day. I will cultivate a spirit of self-denial and will yield myself a prisoner of love to the Redeemer of the world." That young man was William Booth, who later led thousands to Christ and founded the Salvation Army. Daily Bread, June 28, 1989

Here are examples of others who have not stopped trying:

The Life and Times of Mike Singletary. 7

As a great football player, he would watch a single play of the other's team play 50 to 60 times—taking him 3 hours to watch 1/2 of a game with about 20-30 plays. He wants to know his opposition's tendency. He would mentally know what they were going to do before they did. Once they started to move, he was already on the way to stop him. A very disciplined life. Mike Singletary with Armen Keteyian, *Calling the Shots* (Chicago/New York: Contemporary Books, 1986), p. 57

Ernest Hemingway would write only 500 words a day when he was writing a book. He wrote the ending to *A Farewell to Arms* - 17 times to get it just right.

Da Vinci drew 1,000 hands to get just the right one.

Thomas Edison came up with the incandescent light after 1,000 failures. He sure knew what wouldn't work!

We would never get anywhere without some form of discipline. Think of the brain surgeon. How many hours did he have to put 8 in before he 'cut' into a human skull!

Why do we lack zeal in our spiritual life? Or do we feel it will come in time? Or feel we just don't need to get too worked up over the need, as He has promised us to be with us and never leave us. But the truth is that we need to keep active in our walk to become more and more like Him. That is called Sanctification and He expects us to do well.

So, add to what you already have. Adding to your faith requires the bottom line:

The Bottom Line is: *For Growth to happen, there must be New Life first! And growth will not happen over night. It will take sweat and time—and prayer.*