

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE  
Life in the Spirit  
Banská Štiavnica, 14th January 2021

ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἀγάπη χαρὰ εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία χρηστότης ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις <sup>23</sup> πραύτης **ἐγκράτεια**: κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος

**Gal 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law

Δι' ἣν αἰτίαν ἀναμιμνήσκω σε ἀναζωπυρεῖν τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν σοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου. <sup>7</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα δειλίας ἀλλὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ **σωφρονισμοῦ**

**2Tim 1:6-7** For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, <sup>7</sup> for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control<sup>1</sup>

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## 0. INTRODUCTION

### 0.1. MEANINGS OF "DISCIPLINE"

- [*Oxford English Dictionary*] Etymologically, discipline, as pertaining to the **disciple** or **scholar**, is antithetical to doctrine, the property of the doctor or teacher; hence, in the history of the words, doctrine is more concerned with abstract theory, and discipline with practice or exercise.]

<sup>1</sup> or: *correction; chastisement...*

- [*Chambers Concise Dictionary*] discipline (1) a) strict training, or the enforcing of rules, intended to produce ordered and controlled behaviour in oneself or others; b) the ordered behaviour resulting from this. (2) punishment designed to create obedience. (3) an area of learning, especially a subject of academic study. (4) a branch of sport. v {disciplined, disciplining} (1) to train or force (oneself or others) to behave in an ordered and controlled way. (2) to punish someone. [13c: from Latin disciplina; *disco* ↔ διδάσκω]
- [*Roget's Thesaurus*] discipline → order → teaching → training → restraint → punishment → religious

[Curtis Leone] When you lack self-discipline, you lack self-control. This means that when working on something, you easily get distracted and give in to your desires, urges, and feelings. You do not stay dedicated to your missions and easily lose sight of what is important and beneficial to you. Self-discipline seeks to reverse that; it helps you to stick to whatever it is you have planned to do no matter the level of discomfort or difficulties that you face along the way

## 0.2. KEY IDEAS/CONNOTATIONS

- from INFORMATION to FORMATION
- exertion, effort, pain, ...
- sacrifice, choice, giving up, ...
- regularity, repetition, habit, character ...
- finishing, getting things done, carrying through, ...

## 0.3. AREAS RELATED TO SELF-DISCIPLINE

- (1) Reading the Bible (2) Prayer, (3) Communion [church] (4) witnessing
- [A.T. PIERSON *Godly Self-Control*] I. – Regulation of Thought II. – Affections III. – Moods IV. – Disposition V. – The passions VI. – Speech VII. – Conduct VIII. – Manners IX. – Reading X. – Beliefs XI. – Habits XII. – Companionships XIII. – Nerves XIV. – Amusements XV. – Purpose
- [FOSTER *Celebration of Discipline*] inward: Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Study; outward: Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service; corporate: Confession, Worship, Guidance, Celebration

## 0.4. "DISCIPLINE" IN THE BIBLE

### 0.4.1. CORRECTION

- **Pro 3:11** My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline (מוסר יהוה) or be weary of his reproof,
- **Heb 12:5** And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline (παιδείας κυρίου) of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

### 0.4.2. SELF-CONTROL

- **Pr 25:28** A man without self-control (מְעַצֵּר לְרוּחוֹ) is like a city broken into and left without walls.
- **Acts 24:25** And as he reasoned about (1) righteousness and (2) self-control (ἐγκρατείας) and the (3) coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.
- **1Cor 7:5** Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control (διὰ τὴν ἀκρασίαν ὑμῶν)
- **1Tim 2:9** likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control (μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης)
- **1Cor 9:25** Every athlete exercises self-control in all things (πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεῖται). They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

### 0.4.3. GREEK WORDS

- [σωφρονέω] be sound of mind, in one's sound senses; to be discreet, temperate, moderate; to learn moderation, self-control,
- **Mark 5:15** And they came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind
- [σωφρονισμός] an **admonishing** or calling to soundness of mind, to moderation and **self-control**;
- [ἐγκράτεια] *self-control*, Latin *continentia*, *temperantia* (the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites)

## 1. THE DANGERS OF DISCIPLINE

- **1Cor 3:1-2** But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready,
- **Heb 5:12-14** For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, <sup>13</sup> for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

### 1.1. FAILURE/DISCOURAGEMENT

- rejection → "I am no good"
- defeatism → "I can never measure up"

### 1.2. SELF-RELIANCE/PRIDE

- asceticism → abstaining for spiritual indulgence
- judgmental attitudes → "They should try harder"
- independence → "You need no help to improve yourself"

### 1.3. AVOIDING DANGERS

- **1Cor 3:11** For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- **1 John 4:9** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him (ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ) → Gal 2:20
- **Gal 5:16** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh (Λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε)

## 2. THE DISCIPLINE OF DEFENCE ("NEGATIVE")

- **Mt 26:41** Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
- the sower parable → weeding out the thorns

### 2.1. TIME → ALWAYS

- **Mk 13:35-37** Therefore stay awake- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning- <sup>36</sup> lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. <sup>37</sup> And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake (γρηγορεῖτε).
- **Luke 9:23** "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me (ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι)

### 2.2. ACTION → IN EVERYTHING

- **1Cor 10:31** So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε)

### 2.3. PLACE → EVERYWHERE

- **2Cor 2:14** But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere (γνώσεως αὐτοῦ φανεροῦντι δι' ἡμῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ)

## 3. THE DISCIPLINE OF TRAINING (“POSITIVE”)

- developing Christian spiritual character

### 3.1. THE HEART → LOVE

#### 3.1.1. THE SAVIOUR

- **Jude 1:20-21** But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. (ὁμοίως δέ, ἀγαπητοί, ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ προσευχόμενοι, <sup>21</sup> ἑαυτοὺς ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ τηρήσατε προσδεχόμενοι τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον)

#### 3.1.2. THE SELF

- **Luke 14:26-27** "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple
- **Lk 9:23** "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.
- attachment → commitment

### 3.2. THE MIND → FAITH

[MANTON] If we understand not, how can we believe? If we believe not, how can we love? If we love not, how can we do? (1) Knowledge, (2) persuasion, (3) affection, (4) practice, these follow one another, where the faculties of the soul are rightly governed, and kept in a due subordination.

[EMERSON (?)]

„Sow a thought and you reap an action;  
sow an act and you reap a habit;  
sow a habit and you reap a character;  
sow a character and you reap a destiny.“

- Critical Thinking ([BACKUS&CHAPIAN] Self-talk means the words we tell ourselves in our thoughts.)
- **Rom 8:6** To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace (τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος, τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη) [→ Col 3:1]

### 3.3. THE WILL → SERVICE

- Seek first the Kingdom of God
- **Mt 20:28** ...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

## 4. TO REMEMBER

- Without spiritual discipline there is no Christian character.
- Spiritual discipline has to be built on grace and by grace. Self-willed self improvement leads to pride.
- Only disciplined disciples are really reliable soldiers of Christ.