

Self-Discipline and How to develop it

- I. What is self-discipline?
- a. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary – "Correction or regulation of oneself for the sake of improvement"
 - b. The KJV uses the word 'temperance' - self-control
 - i. **(1 Cor 9:24-25)** "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that **striveth for the mastery is temperate** in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an **incorruptible.**"
 1. Olympic Runners must practice self-discipline to become the best. The same is for the Christian.
 - c. One of the core values of the Christian Faith is self-discipline
 - i. **(Acts 24:25)** "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."
 - d. Self-Discipline is a fruit of the Spirit
 - i. **(Gal 5:22-25)** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."
 - ii. The spirit through the word teaches us how to develop self-discipline
 - e. It is required for us to learn and develop self-discipline
 - i. **(2 Peter 1:5-10)** "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:"
 1. Notice temperance comes after knowledge.
 2. If we lack in temperance we're the same as 'blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.'
 - ii. **(Rom 6:12-13)** "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

1. This requires self-discipline
 - iii. **(Gal 2:20)** “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
 1. Paul is saying that he has put away his desires and does those of Christ
 2. This requires self-discipline
 - f. Self-Discipline is required of us, if we want to live for God!
- II. How to Develop Self-Discipline
- a. Begin with An “I Can” Attitude
 - i. Paul had an “I Can” attitude
 1. **(Phil 4:13)** “**I can** do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
 - a. Paul is saying that he can do what God expects of him.
 - ii. You can do anything that God expects of you.
 1. Meet any temptation
 2. Fulfill any command
 3. Bear any trial
 4. Perform any duty
 5. Live any circumstance
 6. **(1 Cor 10:13)** “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”
 - iii. You can do anything God expects of you because Christ strengthens us
 1. Since God expects you to control yourself, then you can do it.
 - a. You can say “NO”
 - b. You can refrain
 - c. You can bridle your tongue
 - d. You can quit what you know to be wrong
 - e. You can make yourself do what you know you need to do
 - f. You can do without some things that you may desire and want
 - g. You can overcome habits and practices that you have learned and developed
 - iv. Defeatist attitude will not make the effort to discipline self.
 1. This attitude will say...
 - a. “I don’t know...”
 - b. “I’ll try, but...”
 - c. “It is hard for me to...”

- v. **(Heb 6:1,3)** “...let us go on unto perfection... ..And this will we do, if God permit.”
 - 1. Notice, He didn’t say, “And this will try to do, if it’s not too hard.”
 - 2. We must have this attitude. “**We Will Do, if God permit.**”
- b. Refuse to Dwell on What You Need to Deny
 - i. Control your thinking
 - ii. We must realize that it is hard to “window shop” without either buying something or making ourselves miserable.
 - iii. Outward sin comes from our thoughts
 - 1. **(Matt 15:19)** “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:”
 - iv. Stop your thoughts before they lead to sin.
 - 1. Lustful thoughts can lead to adultery
 - a. **(Matt 5:28)** “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”
 - 2. Bitterness and hatred can lead to murder
 - a. **(1 John 3:15)** “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”
 - 3. Put away all ungodly thoughts and lusts
 - a. **(Titus 2:11-12)** “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”
 - v. Stop lusts for things that are within themselves good, but are out of our reach or in excess.
 - 1. **(Phil 4:11)** “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”
 - 2. **(Heb 13:5)** “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”
 - a. Material things beyond our reach
 - b. Anything to the excess
- c. Think Before You Act
 - i. Joseph **(Gen 39)**
 - 1. When tempted by Potiphar’s wife, he thought about:
 - a. The sin and wickedness involved
 - b. The trust that Potiphar had in him.
 - 2. His thinking led to his self-discipline
 - ii. **(Ps 119:59)** “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.”
 - 1. We need to think before we act!

- iii. Some questions need to be raised to help us learn to exercise self-control:
 1. Is this how God wants me to respond?
 2. Am I yielding to my own desires or to the desires of God?
 3. Will I be controlling myself in this?
 4. Should I say this? Does it serve any good purpose?
 5. Is this what I need?
 6. Can I afford this?
 7. Can I do without this?
 8. Will I be ashamed after I do this?
 9. Will I regret my actions later?
 10. Would I want my children and other family members to know if I do this?
- d. If sin comes from wrong thoughts, then right thoughts lead to right actions
 - i. Instead of this – (**Matt 15:19-20**) “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.”
 - ii. Do this – (**Phil 4:8-9**) “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”
 1. If we would fill our minds with good things then we will do good things

III. Conclusion

- a. It is required for us to develop Self-Discipline
- b. In being required, we can all do it. God doesn't expect anything you can't do. But he requires self-discipline. Therefore we can all develop it.
- c. How to develop
 - i. I Can attitude
 - ii. Refuse to Dwell on what you need to deny
 - iii. Think before you act