**Self-Control #3, *Self-Discipline***

Let’s review what we’ve covered (and hopefully learned) previously…

Self-Control is more than just controlling our *behavior.* It is controlling our *thoughts, emotions, passions/desires,* and *activities/behavior.* This is so because *self* is much more than just *actions;* it requires controlling our minds, hearts, soul/spirit, and body.

We also learned that Self-Control involves *self-denial* (from Matt.16:24ff). Such involves *all* that makes us the individual we are (perhaps better, *who* we choose to be). *Self-denial* thus means *denying* ourselves the *thoughts, emotions, desires,* and *behaviors* in which the world indulges itself. It means saying “No” to self regarding these things, and is therefore largely *defensive* in nature. All of which brings us to today’s lesson on *self-discipline.*

If self-denial is the *defensive* side (and it is), then self-discipline is the ***offensive*** side of self-control.

**Self-Discipline** is exactly what it sounds like, wherein:

* Self is composed of *mind, heart, soul,* and *body,* cp. Luke 10:27. And so, what is *discipline?*
* Discipline is translated from the Greek term, *gumnazo* (*goom-****nad****-zo*), which is literally to *train naked-*  to *exercise* or *train* vigorously with every encumbrance to achieving the desired goal is removed, 1Tim.4:7-8.
* There is a *negative* connotation to *discipline* as a *punishment;* cf. Heb.12:5-7. This is *corrective* discipline.
* But there must also be *positive* discipline involved, cf. Heb.12:8-14. The *treatment suited to a disciple* is not just *reproof/correction,* cf. Rev.3:19. It also includes *guidance* and *instruction,* Eph.6:4; Col.2:5. In fact,
* Discipline includes, in addition to the *punitive/correction* aspect, both *instruction* (“this way”)and *encouragement* (motivation), Heb.12:1-2. Although *gumnazo* is not in these verses, note that Jesus is the *“author”* of our faith. The term here is *archegos,* and does not mean *to write* or *author,* but rather *one who goes first to lead* (and *show*) *others;* a *trailblazer* or *pioneer;* a *captain* who doesn’t just *point/direct,* but *leads.*
* Now apply these things to *self-discipline:* Are you ***leading/directing***your thoughts, emotions, passions/desires, and actions? Or **being *led***by them, cf. 2Pet.2:12-19? It’s the difference between *driving the bus, riding along on the bus while someone (or something) else drives,* or even worse, *being run over* and then *dragged along behind the bus!* So, who is driving *the bus* of your life? You, with the *instruction* and *guidance* (discipline) of the Lord? Have you turned the wheel over to Satan and/or the world? Or, are you at the mercy of your own *thoughts, emotions, passions/desires,* and *body?*

**Self-Discipline is the means by which you wrest control of your life from Satan/world, or even your own *thoughts, emotions, desires,* and *body,* and guiding and directing it in the way you want to go- the path of Jesus that leads to heaven.** Remember, *discipline* is *treatment suited to a disciple* (or *follower*)*!*

**How do we accomplish the task of *self-discipline?* Go back to 1Tim.4:7-8…**

1. **Start *eating right,* v.7a.** *Worldly fables* and *wisdom* is just “garbage in, garbage out.” There are no “quick fix diets” or “magic pills” that will allow you to continue to consume spiritual “junk food”! Instead, feed yourself with *“the pure milk of the word”* at first, 1Pet.2:2-3; then gradually move up to the *“solid food”* or *“meat”* as you grow and progress, Heb.5:12 – 6:2.
2. **Stop waiting for or depending on *someone else* to do it for/to you, v.7b.** It’s called “***self***-discipline” for a reason. Another (or others) can be a great source of *instruction* and *encouragement,* but no one else can do it for you. You have to actually “put the work in” yourself, 1Cor.9:26-27a.
3. **Remember the *purpose* or *goal* of *godliness,* v.7c.** This is not about some “personal weight-loss” or “personal “best” goal/achievement; this is about *godliness-* being like God/Christ, Eph.5:1-2; 1Pet.1:13-16.
4. **Prioritize it over mere *bodily discipline,* v.8a.** Think about the effort and expense we put into our *physical* health: *diet, exercise, vitamins* and*, wellness checks,* and *OTC meds* and *prescriptions* and *ERs* and even *surgery* when we’re sick or hurting. Now think about what we put into our *spiritual* health: a *couple of hours’ worth* of time at Bible Study and Worship? Make *spiritual discipline* a priority, Rom.8:12-13.
5. **Understand what’s at stake, v.8b.**  Your “best life now” is NOT a “fulfilling career” and “perfect family” and “money to live/retire comfortably” and “dream vacations.” It IS “living a new life, obedient but free” in Christ, being the husband or wife God expects you to be (Eph.5:22-31), raising children in *“discipline and instruction of the Lord”* (Eph.6:4) being *“content”* with *“food and covering”* because *“godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment”* (1Tim.6:6-8), and *eternal rest* instead *eternal torment,* (Heb.4:1ff; cp. Matt.25:34 with v.41).

**Conclusions:**

* **There is no doubt that self-controlnecessarily involves *self-denial* (being able to and saying “No” to self); that we *“lay aside”* or *“put off”* spiritually unhealthy and corrupt *thoughts, emotions, desires,* and *practices* of the *“old self,”* Eph.4:22.**
* **But self-control also certainly involves *self-discipline* (being able to *take control* and *steer* self in the *righteous* and *holy* way); that we *“put on”* spiritually healthy and godly *thoughts, emotions, desires,* and *practices* of the *“new self,”* Eph.4:24.**
* **So, are you willing to *“discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness,”* or just *along for the ride?* The former *“holds the promise for the present life and also for the life to come,* 1Tim.4:8. Butif the latter, you won’t like the destination!**