

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

WEEK 7: DISCIPLINE OF PERSEVERANCE

INTRODUCTION

- What is Discipline of Perseverance?
 - It is not to be confused with persevering faith of a Christian
 - It is persevering in the spiritual disciplines—continuing to do those things, consistently, that the Holy Spirit uses to grow us in the likeness of Christ and are consistent with the Word.
 - To date, we have learned about the discipline of bible intake, discipline of the mind, discipline of time and money, discipline of prayer, and discipline of service. Next week we will learn about the discipline of worship and the following week, the discipline of evangelism.
 - As you think about these disciplines and incorporating them into your lives, what concerns, if any, come to mind?
 - How do we protect ourselves from the spiritual disciplines becoming legalistic, just simple to-do's, mundane or even a burden?
 - How do we persevere in the spiritual disciplines through all of life's busyness trials?
 - How do we persevere in the spiritual disciplines?
 - It is by remembering and meditating on God's love and passion for His people, for it is God's love and passion for His people that won't let us do anything other.

CHOSEN BY GOD

- We are God's chosen people

1 Peter 2:9, But you are A CHOSEN FAMILY, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

- A Chosen Family

- Chosen by God for salvation, holiness, and blessing:

Ephesians 1:3-5, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love, by predestining us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will

- While we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:1-5)

- A Royal Priesthood

Revelation 5:9-10, And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain and purchased for God with Your blood people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And You made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth."

- Two primary elements constitute the image of a royal priesthood. First, the priests serve the King by having access to His holy presence, into which they come offering spiritual sacrifices to Him (1 Peter 2:5) and second, the priest's rule with the king in His kingdom (Revelation 5:10).¹
 - Sacrifices consistent with the character of Jesus Christ and His work revealed through His Word
 - Our bodies and our minds (Romans 12:1-2)
 - Our praise and worship (Hebrews 13:15)
 - Sacrificial love (Hebrews 13:16)
 - Prayers (Ephesians 6:18) ...
- The only one who can establish such a royal house is Jesus Christ. He is both King (John 18:36-37) and Priest (Hebrews 4:14-15).¹

¹ The John MacArthur New Testament Commentary 1 Peter

- **Holy Nation**

- Set apart to know God--intimate fellowship now and forever

John 17:3, And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

- Set apart for obedience

1 Peter 1:1-2, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as exiles, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to the obedience of Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

1 Peter 2:14-16, As obedient children, not being conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your conduct; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

- **A People for God's OWN POSSESSION**

- Bought with a price

Ephesians 1:13-14, In Him, you also, after listening to the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Titus 2:13-14, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works.

- **To Proclaim the Excellencies of God – proclaim Christ!**

- He called us out of the darkness of sin into the light of salvation
- He suffered in our place
- We are free from the bondage of sin
- We have a relationship with Christ
- His great promises
- Our blessed hope

- **True Believers are predestined by God to be conformed into the likeness of Christ**

Romans 8:28, Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers

EQUIPPED BY GOD

- It is God who gives us the desire to grow and the growth itself

Philippians 2:12-13, So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

- Jesus' power is the source – granting us everything needed for growth in Christlikeness

2 Peter 1:3, seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

- So be diligent in growing in Christlikeness

2 Peter 1:5-8, Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these things are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- It is the indwelling Holy Spirit who brings about our growth in Christlikeness

Galatians 5:16-17, But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you want.

Galatians 5:22-23a, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Galatians 5:25, If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk in step with the Spirit.

- All things work together for good

Romans 8:28-29, And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers;

Note: The “good” of verse 28 is the progressive transformation and final transformation into Jesus Christ’s image (likeness).

- Reading and Meditating on the Word (see “Discipline of Bible Intake” and “Discipline of the Mind”)
- Prayer (See “Discipline of Prayer”)
- Fellowship with other believers (preaching, teaching, using spiritual gifts, admonishing, worship...)

Ephesians 4:11-16, And He Himself gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the, full knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ, so that we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming, but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, that is Christ, from whom the whole body, being joined and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the properly measured working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Colossians 3:16, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratefulness in your hearts to God.

- Trials and Persecution

James 1:2-4, Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith brings about perseverance. And let perseverance have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

1 Peter 1:3-7, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, having been kept in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:12-13, Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you. But to the degree you are sharing the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation

BEHOLD THE GLORY OF CHRIST

- **Behold the glory of the Lord!**

2 Corinthians 3:18, But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

- We “see” and “reflect back” Christlikeness in increasing representation; culminating in complete “reflection” at the return of Christ.
 - i. All believers can see the glory of Christ as we worshipfully study and meditate on the Word. It is in the Word that we “see His face” in His character and actions and know His mind through the Spirit’s illumination.
 - ii. It is through this means that the Holy Spirit progressively transforms us into the likeness of Christ. As we are transformed, we reflect increasing Christlikeness, from the inside out, to the world.
- To look into the face of Christ is to see our model for love, our model for peace, our model for mercy, our model purity, our model for faithfulness, our model for obedience, our model for perseverance, our model for purpose, our model for everything.
- As we behold the glory of Jesus Christ in the scriptures, the Holy Spirit renews our minds and transforms us progressively into the likeness of Christ (Romans 12:2a)
- To look into the face of Christ is to look intently and deeply at the cross, where the ultimate expression of justice, mercy, grace, love, obedience, sovereignty, power, and God’s passion for His chosen people are magnificently displayed. R.C. Sproul said when talking about Paul’s declaration in 2 Corinthians 4:6,” ...but don’t *ever* forget the cross, because it was on the cross, through the cross, and by the cross that our Savior performed His work of redemption and gathered His people for eternity.”
- To look into the face of Christ is to see the glory of our God (2 Corinthians 4:6).
- It is no wonder that Paul told the church at Corinth that he resolved “to know nothing but Christ and Him Crucified” when he came to them (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). And for Paul “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).
- As we fix our eyes on Jesus, let us live, with endurance, lives worthy of His life, crucifixion, and resurrection

Hebrews 12:1-2, Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

PRACTICAL WISDOM AND GROWTH IN THIS DISCIPLINE

We are Chosen by God, a People for His Own Possession; for His glory!

- It is God who brings about the transformation from one degree of Christlikeness to the next through the Holy Spirit by studying and meditating on the Word
- As we behold the glory of Christ in His word our hearts desire to be more like Him to one day fully reflect His glory (at His return).
- He began this transformation work in all believers and will be faithful to complete it
- Pray always and all kinds of prayer
- It is through consistent Holy Spirit energized application of the Spiritual disciplines that believers diligently train to run, with endurance, the race set before us.

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2).