

Paradigm Discipleship

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The purpose of this resource is to provide some guidance for you as you encourage your disciple to develop a healthy, biblical, gospel centered attitude in their approach to spiritual disciplines.

We encourage you to do your own study, using this resource as a guide, to develop a learning experience for you and your disciple that will help you both move deeper in your understanding and experience of disciplining your lives as you follow Christ.

The Heart Behind Discipline: An Introduction to Spiritual Disciplines

Opening question: What would you say are some key differences between being disciplined and being legalistic?

*Hopefully your disciple will say something about the attitude and motives of the heart.

*It is important to define legalism as human effort to attain righteousness.

* If you *know* and *believe* the gospel, it is impossible to be legalistic because the essence of the gospel is that it is impossible for us to attain righteousness on our own.

*The aim of this study is to help your disciple understand that knowing Christ more is the goal of discipline, and that discipline is therefore a worshipful means to that end, rather than an attempt at being “a good Christian”.

Follow up question: Describe a time when you disciplined yourself for the sake of an end goal. How did the end goal affect the attitude with which you disciplined/trained yourself?

*Your disciple shouldn't have much difficulty thinking of something that they have had to work toward, that they desired enough to make the work toward it worthwhile. Be prepared, as a discipler, to share an example from your own life that might help your disciple better understand the value of discipline. (i.e. training for a marathon, practicing an instrument, practicing for a team sport, etc.)

*Marathon runners don't run marathons so that people will think that they are good runners, they run marathons because they **love running**.

*Someone who wants to learn to play an instrument doesn't practice so that their teacher will like them or think that they are a good student, they practice so that one day they will be able to **play the instrument well**.

*Soccer players don't show up to practice and run for 3 hours straight so that their coach and teammates will be impressed by their commitment to practice; they do it so that they will be in good shape for the day that there is **a game**.

*Students don't cram for a test because they love studying or to prove to other people that they are good students; they study because they want an **A on the test**.

Not that it is impossible for someone to do these things successfully but in a legalistic way, like wanting an A on a test because you really do want people to think that they are a good student, but there is a much greater likelihood of success if the motive is out of genuine affection for something.

Study Question: Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Scripture also uses examples of discipline for the sake of a greater end goal; what are some truths about discipline that you see in these verses?

*What is the analogy used here?

*What is Paul's end goal?

*What seems to be his attitude toward discipline?

*Can you and your disciple think of verses that talk about discipline that are similar to this passage?

Transition Question: If discipline is a means to a greater goal, and not simply a means to being a disciplined person or a “good Christian”, then as followers of Christ, what is our *greater goal*?

- * Why do we do things like study the word, memorize scripture, pray, have a “quiet time”, etc?
- * Is it just so that we can check everything off of our to do list and say that we did all the right “Christian stuff”?
- * Something important to discuss is our tendency to slip into “autopilot”. This doesn’t mean that we become *legalistic*, so much as it implies that we become *habitualistic*. It is possible to become a very disciplined person who then starts to run on autopilot rather than genuinely meeting with Christ.

Study Question: Read John 17:1-3. Discuss, with your disciple, the implications of this passage, particularly that of verse 3.

- *What is eternal life?
- *Does it seem that our goal is something more than simply being forgiven so that we can go to heaven?
- *What do you think it means to “know the only true God”?
- *What is necessary to get to know God?
 - *”Lasting and loving mental intercourse...” A.W. Tozer

Reflection Question: How could this perspective change your attitude toward perusing discipline as a follower of Christ?

- * Really reflect on this with your disciple. Talk about all the areas of your lives and what the impact would be.
- * Discuss some disciplines that you and your disciple should be engaging, as followers of Christ.
 - *i.e. studying the word, memorizing scripture, engaging the lost, etc.

Resources: Dallas Willard The spirit of the disciplines