

# 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