



## 1 Corinthians 9:24-27\_The Power of Discipline

January 26, 2014

### Text: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

I wrote this on my blog Friday:

*As we near the end of another season of consecration, don't fall into the trap. You know the trap don't you? It's when we pray and pray and pray and seek God and hunger and walk around in the sanctuary and cry out and tears fall and read and study and push the plate away aaaannnnndddd when we are done...do nothing differently.*

*No fundamental change. No real growth. No real life and attitude movements. All that time with God results in the same church attendance, giving, lack of Gospel sharing, no real holiness adjustments, no real worldview adjustments, no more intensity in serving others, standing for truth, loving others, forgiving others, etc. Yes, I know sometimes we just want to be with God, but being with God, by definition, changes us.*

*The Trap: I'm deep. I consecrated . . . annnndddd . . . zilch! LOL!*

In this post, I was attempting to exhort the reader towards a greater Christ inspired, self-control, and come against the all-to-often post consecration result that despite our time with God, we still demonstrate **limited** self-discipline.

We've just finished two important things: walking through 1 Cor 8-9 and a time of fasting. I'll attempt to approach these Scriptures in light of both.

### Contextual Discipline: The Key to Paul's Sacrificial Ministry

*Verse 24 - Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.*

1. First of all, every born-again, *DISC Profile High "D"*, *ENTJ Myers-Briggs* person loves verse 24! Run to win baby! ☺ (Those are personality profile tests...and they are quite accurate too!)
2. But verse 24, in context, is about Paul's willingness to give up any and everything for the sake of the Gospel, as we've discussed the last few weeks.
3. In other words, it is a statement of his **attitude**; his mindset about what God called him to do. Verse 24 is truly a statement of **passion**, drive, and motivation.
4. And rightfully so! Shouldn't we all be passionate about obeying our Lord? Isn't love, by its very nature, passionate? "If you love me, keep..." (Jn 14:15)
5. Using an example the Corinthians would be familiar with, Paul wanted his hearers to understand the commitment required to follow God--like a runner training to win! ☺ The Isthmian Athletic Games, second in status only to the ancient Olympian Games during Paul's missionary journeys, were held in Corinth.

*Verse 25 - Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*

1. Continuing with the athletic metaphor, Paul uses the high cost of being a winning runner as an example of what he himself is trying to do.
2. I love the KJV here: "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." 1Co 9:25

3. Self-control (temperance) is absolutely **required** to “win the race.” Again, in Paul’s case, it meant giving up rights. But that too requires mastery over oneself.
4. If you recall, self-control is a fruit of the Spirit: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (24) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” Gal 5:22-25 ESV*
5. The goal for godly self-discipline is “an imperishable wreath.” The ultimate goal is rooted in the Gospel (the wreath or crown of changed lives) and in the hope of heaven! (1 Thes 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8)
6. Those two goals are reason enough to embrace a disciplined life. We should ALL be duly motivated to live lives of fasting, prayer, and service to our God!

*Verse 26 - So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air.*

1. In context, Paul is again declaring how focused he is on his mission.
  - a. First, he knows what his mission is! He’s not running without God’s direction.
  - b. And saying it another way, he doesn’t fight for the sake of fighting. He isn’t shadow boxing. ☺ He’s taking real swings at a real opponent for a real Christ-given **assignment**.
  - c. He knows exactly what he is doing and why. He’s focused, gazelle intense, and willing to give his life.
  - d. **Oh, that we all might have this sort of focus; that we all might be this committed to Christ and his mandates; that we might work to “redeem the time” because the days are truly evil!** (Eph 5:16, KJV)
2. Remember, Paul saw the Lord and was given a mandate by **revelation** (Acts 9).
  - a. Scripture declares that *“Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.”* (Pro 29:18 ESV)
  - b. It is a characteristic of “vision” to cause people to run. (Hab 2:2).
  - c. Instead of aimlessly living or fighting against the Lord, vision (an understanding of what the Lord wants in this context) brings clarity and single-mindedness!
3. Remember, from last week, Paul wasn’t following some man-made scheme or pragmatic human strategy. He sacrificed and lived with passion because Christ had spoken!
4. The bottom line is that **when you “see the Lord” (or become a Christian), Christ and His Word becomes what you run passionately towards**. This will be true in varying degrees in the life of EVERY born-again believer.

*Verse 27 - But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

1. Self-discipline is a non-negotiable of being a disciple.
  - a. *Luk 9:23-26 ESV And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. (24) For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. (25) For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? (26) For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*
  - b. *Tit 2:1-8 ESV But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. (2) Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. (3) Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, (4) and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, (5) to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. (6) Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. (7) Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, (8) and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.*
  - c. *2Pe 1:3-8 ESV His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, (4) by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (5) For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, (6) and knowledge*

*with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, (7) and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. (8) For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. There are so many other Scriptures that call the Christian to a life of control and holiness. We don't have time to cover them all!
  - a. But Peter really nails it: we aren't walking in self-discipline so God will love us or to impress people or because we've fallen for some kind of legalism or unbiblical asceticism. We do so for the sake of the **Gospel!** We want to be effective and fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord! (2 Pet 1:8)
3. Again, Paul exercised discipline over his appetites and his rights for the sake of Christ and His gospel. He knew he must set an example. He wasn't trying to live a life of hypocrisy--saying one thing and doing another. This friends, is the price of **leadership**.

### **Some Thoughts in Summary:**

1. Every Christian is called to live a life of great discipline: over our bodies, thoughts, emotions, and actions.
2. If we don't, we run the risk of living out of control.
3. This is why fasting properly is important at times. This discipline reorients us on what is truly and eternally important.
4. Think about it: how many people do you know that knew the truth of how to fix family, or money, or how to minister to a lost person but did not obey it? How many people do you know that were taken out by addictions and other sins, the pull of the world, or overcome by temptation?
5. What does it take to reform your home D6 style? Or to have a good marriage or healthy body or write a book instead of watching TV? Or give consistently or get out of debt or be a good student of Scripture and gospel-sharer?
6. A pretty good answer to all the above: **DISCIPLINE**
7. Biblical self-discipline is really about conquering **YOU** for the glory of God: ☺

*Pro 25:28 ESV A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.*

*Titus 2:11-15 ESV For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, (12) training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, (13) waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, (14) who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (15) Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.*

**Here are 10 principles for self-discipline I learned a long time ago from the book, *Developing the Leader Within You*, by John Maxwell. Just some practical stuff as we close out Consecration! ☺**

1. List five areas in your life that lack discipline.
2. Place them in order of your priority for conquering them.
3. Take them on, one at a time.
4. Secure resources that will give you instruction and motivation to conquer each area.
5. Ask a person who models the trait you want to possess to hold you accountable for it.
6. Spend fifteen minutes each morning getting focused in order to get control of this weak area.
7. Do a five-minute checkup on yourself at midday.
8. Take five minutes in the evening to evaluate your progress.
9. Allow sixty days to work on one area before you go to the next.
10. Celebrate with the one who holds you accountable as you show continued success.

## REACHING OUTREACH

### CPC's LifeChange Campaign

CRCC will be participating in Crisis Pregnancy Center's LifeChange event starting today through February!

- Step 1: Pick up a baby bottle in the lobby
- Step 2: Fill it with change/cash/checks
- Step 3: Return the bottle once filled

## TEACHING EDUCATION

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### Care Group Fellowship

Care Group Fellowship will resume February 6th!  
Please contact Pastor Meeks if you need to connect to a local Care Group.

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### 2014 Contribution Statement Available

If you have signed up for a contribution statement, please pick it up today at the front office.

## RELEASING MINISTRY

### January/February 2014 Speaking Engagements

Wednesday, January 29th Bishop will be speaking at CRCN @ 7pm  
Saturday, February 1st Bishop will be speaking at CRCN's men's meeting @ 8am followed by a book signing at Discover Life Book Store for a book signing.

### Deadline Quickly Approaching!

The deadline for New Member's Class is next Sunday! Have you signed up yet?  
Visit our website and click "Become a member" to get started.

## CATECHISM

Q. 105. For what do we pray in the fifth request?

*A. In the fifth request, "forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors," we are encouraged by God's grace, which makes it possible for us to sincerely forgive others and pray that for Christ's sake God would freely pardon all our sins.*

Q. 106. For what do we pray in the sixth request?

*A. In the sixth request, "and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil," we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin or support and deliver us when we are tempted.*