

What is your gut reaction to the words “spiritual disciplines”? What are spiritual disciplines?

Getting Spiritual Control

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (MEV)

24 Do you not know that all those who run in a race run, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain it. 25 Everyone who strives for the prize exercises self-control in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. 26 So, therefore, I run, not with uncertainty. So I fight, not as one who beats the air. 27 But I bring and keep my body under subjection, lest when preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

What motivates a serious athlete to change their daily routine, change their diet, train rigorously and spend money on equipment and training?

What is the goal that we are to be striving for in Christ?

Do athletes view these disciplines as obligations or expectations they have to meet?

What does Paul mean when he says he “beats” his body and makes it a “slave”?

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NKJV)

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

In what ways might we “beat” our body and make it our “slave”?

Philippians 3:7-11 (NKJV)

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

What will it take for us to bring this type of spiritual determination and discipline into our lives? Discuss what the passage above reveals about having spiritual discipline.

A. Complete _____

B. A desire to _____ for Christ

Why should we view our accomplishments as rubbish?

How do we surrender daily to Christ? What are some things that we should surrender in order to live for Christ?

What does it mean to suffer for Christ, to share in his sufferings?

What are some examples of suffering for Christ?

Hebrews 13:16 (ESV)

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

In today's culture what do we mean when we "sacrifice" something?

Romans 12:1-2 (MEV)

1 I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship.

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

What does it mean for us to be a living sacrifice?

An old saying goes, "The problem with living sacrifices is that they have a tendency to keep crawling down off the altar." At what times are we inclined to crawl off the altar?

When an animal was given for a sacrifice, what was the main qualification for it being acceptable? How about us?

Romans 12:1 (MEV)

1 I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NKJV)

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery,[a] fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders,[b] drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Jesus tells us to pick up our cross and follow him.

Luke 14:27 (ESV)

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

How are we to “pick up our cross” and follow Jesus?

When are some times you’ve experienced persecution for following Jesus?

Is the “mission” you are currently living out worth dying for?

Romans 12:2 (MEV)

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

How do we know what it is God wants us to do?

How can we renew our minds?

In light of offering ourselves to God as living sacrifices, fully surrendered, and sharing in His suffering, everything we do now becomes an expression of fulfilling HIS purposes on earth.

Read the following verses that spur us on to take seriously the building of the kingdom of God in our lives.

Underline the phrases that encourage you to live with spiritual discipline.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV)

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Ephesians 5:15-16 (MEV)

15 See then that you walk carefully, not as fools, but as wise men, 16 making the most of the time because the days are evil.

Colossians 4:5 (NASB)

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, [b]making the most of the opportunity.

Galatians 6:9 (ESV)

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

What is stopping us from disciplining our lives towards building the kingdom of God?

How can we change these things?

What do you think might be some of the benefits of being spiritually disciplined to do God's will?

Revelation 22:12 (NKJV)

And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.