

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday February 15, 2023 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



HONORING GOD “Discipline That Matters” *1 Timothy 4:6-10*

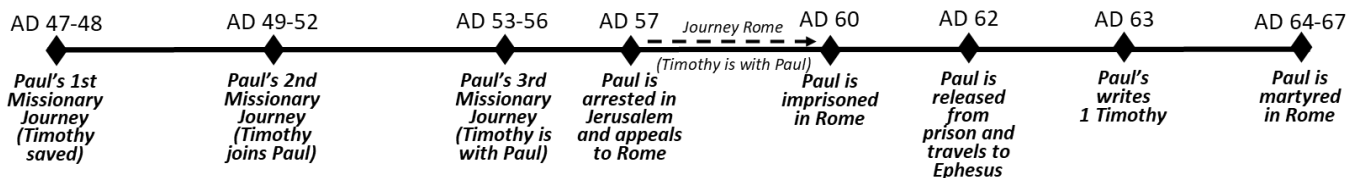
“6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 7 But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10 For to this end ^[a]we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” -1 Timothy 4:6-10 (NKJV)



Key Reminders for 1 Timothy:

- (1) **1 Timothy is a personal letter** – It is unlike most of Paul’s other letters that appear in the New Testament. Remember that most of Paul’s letters were written to churches and/or groups of churches, like Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians (a circular letter), etc. 1 Timothy was not a letter written to a group of Christians (churches). It is written to an individual and should be read and studied with that in mind. It’s personal in nature, rather than corporate. That doesn’t mean it’s not for the church today or applicable for the church and Christians. It is! It just means that in studying and understanding the letter for context purposes this must be kept in mind. It does have a bearing on interpretation of Paul’s letter.
- (2) **1 Timothy is written by Paul to Timothy, his apprentice in ministry** – As already - else’s mail, or better said we are privileged by design to get to read someone else’s mail. God wants us to for a reason. He wants us to apply the truths Paul spoke to Timothy to our own lives. Remember that the name Timothy means “one who honors God,” likewise our lives ought to honor God by how we conduct our lives, how we relate to believers in the church, how we serve and lead in the church, our behaviour, our spirit and attitudes, our words, our victory over the very things that defeat us and may keep us from being all that God has called us to be in Christ. Remember that Timothy was a young teenager from the town of Lystra when Paul first met him on his first missionary journey through Asia Minor. Paul led Timothy to the Lord, as well as the rest of his family... his mother and grandmother. When Paul returned to the area on his second missionary journey, apparently Timothy has grown in his faith to the point that Paul asked him to join him on his missionary journey. Timothy would remain a ministry companion to Paul for the rest of Paul’s life, as a faithful servant and fellow ministry.
- (3) **1 Timothy is known as a “Pastoral Epistle” (or letter)** – That makes this personal letter instructional especially for a pastor. There are three “Pastoral Epistles” in all in the New Testament; 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, all written by Paul. They are “pastoral” in nature. In its simplest form, “pastoral” means pertaining to the pastor and or his responsibilities. The most common definitions of “pastoral” would be 1. Pastoral - of or pertaining to shepherds; hence, relating to rural life and scenes; as in a pastoral life (remember that pastors are often referred to the shepherd of the flock caring for their needs especially spiritual), 2. Pastoral – relating to the care of souls, or to the pastor of a church, as in, pastoral duties or a pastoral letter, 3. Pastoral – used to refer to the part of the work of teachers, preachers (pastors) and priests that involves giving help and advice about personal matters, or giving pastoral care through teaching, sermons, homilies, etc. The Pastoral Epistles are 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. All three are letters from an old man at the close of his ministry who is concerned for his successors in the pastorate. As such, the letters concern the things that would be crucial for the young pastors to understand—church organization and discipline, including such matters as the appointment of elders and deacons, the opposition of rebellious members or false teachers, and the maintenance of doctrinal purity.

- (4) **1 Timothy was written to address problems in the church at Ephesus and encourage their pastor, Timothy** – Timothy would eventually become the pastor of the church at Ephesus, likely around AD 62, following Paul’s release from prison. Paul’s release allowed him the opportunity to travel to Ephesus and eventually place Timothy in ministry at that church. Paul often sent Timothy to churches as his representative (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Philippians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:2), and 1 Timothy finds him on another assignment, serving as pastor of the church at Ephesus (1 Thessalonians 1:3)... a troubled church with problems (Revelation 2:4, “... *you have left your first love.*”). Timothy find’s himself... perhaps at a young age, pastoring a very strategic, yet troubled church with a lot of problems.
- (5) **1 Timothy was likely written about AD 63** - The Bible’s silence on the ultimate fate of Paul has generated a great deal of debate in modern times. The book of Acts ends with Paul sitting in a Roman prison awaiting his hearing before the Roman emperor, a privilege of appeal that all Roman citizens like Paul possessed. However, the writing of the Pastoral Epistles clearly dates to a time after the events of Acts. So where was Paul when he wrote 1 Timothy? Paul had expected the Romans to release him from prison, something that likely happened near the end of AD 62 (Philippians 2:24). As previously stated, his release allowed him the opportunity to travel to Ephesus and eventually place Timothy in ministry at that church. Paul then went on to preach in Macedonia, where he heard reports of Timothy’s work at Ephesus that prompted him to write 1 Timothy, probably in AD 63.



First Timothy presents one of the most challenging plights that faces the Christian even in our day... a falling away or drifting from the faith, something we are all susceptible too. This is why it is so important that Christians/believer be grounded in the Word of God and that the disciplines of the Christian life are a real and practiced part of the believes life. In the context of chapter 4, 1 Timothy 4:6-10 encourages our attention to the discipline that matters so much. Look at it with me... (let’s back up and get it all in context... look beginning in the first verse)

“¹Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” -1 Timothy 4:1-5 (NKJV)

“6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 7 But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” -1 Timothy 4:6-10 (NKJV)

Discussion Questions

1. *If you knew you had one year to live, how would your life be different? How about one week? Where’s the balance between an eternal perspective and long-range goals?*
2. *What are some “good” (not sinful) hindrances to discipline in the Christian life that believers struggle with?*
3. *How do we find the balance between being disciplined and being driven?*
4. *Jesus was disciplined, but never seemed to be in a hurry. How can we do likewise in our busy culture?*

What are the “disciplines” of the Christian faith?

Why are the “disciplines” of the Christian life so important?

But mark it well: *You will not succeed spiritually if you do not become the godly believer God has called you to... the disciplined man or woman of God He desires for you. That’s the message Paul is giving to his younger co-worker, Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4:6-10.*

Maybe you’re thinking, “I’d like to be disciplined, but I try for a while and then fall back to my old ways. What’s the key to becoming disciplined?” The key to becoming disciplined is motivation.

- Why do those Olympic athletes drive themselves relentlessly for years? They’re motivated to win a gold medal.
- Former famed Dallas Cowboys coach, Tom Landry, put it, “The job of a football coach is to make men do what they don’t want to do in order to achieve what they’ve always wanted to be” (cited by Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* [NavPress], p. 18).

The key to being a disciplined Christian is to be a motivated Christian.

What is it that should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness? It's that eternal issues are at stake.

Because eternal issues are at stake, we must discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness.

ETERNAL ISSUES ARE AT STAKE

We aren't involved in a game of Tiddlywinks. Eternity is the issue. Nothing could be more important! Paul mentions three eternal issues which will motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness:

3 Eternal Issues That Should Motivate Us to Discipline Ourselves for Godliness:

(1) **The fact of eternity itself should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness (4:8)** – Notice verse 8, “*8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*” The King James Version of verse 8 does not adequately communicate Paul's thought. He is not despising bodily exercise. Rather, he is making a comparison between bodily exercise and spiritual exercise.

It's fine to discipline your physical body; it will help you for a few years. But it's far better to discipline yourself spiritually, because it will put you in good stead not only in this life, but also in the life to come. We ought to work much harder at godliness than we do at our games!

The great evangelist, **George Whitefield**, once told of seeing some criminals riding in a cart on their way to the gallows. They were arguing like a bunch of kids going on a trip about who should sit on the right hand of the cart. Here were men condemned to die that very day, but their focus was on who got the best seat on the way to the execution!

But isn't that exactly like everyone who is living for this life rather than for eternity?

- You see people in our beauty-obsessed culture who are health nuts.
- They eat all the proper foods.
- They take vitamins and minerals.
- They work out to keep in shape.
- But the fact is, they're going to die.
- All their efforts may extend their lives a few years, if they don't get cancer or die in a car crash or some other way.
- But they're foolish because they're living as if this life is all there is and as if they can extend their lives indefinitely.

One of the reasons we're so spiritually flabby is that we're caught up with the temporal. We tend to think that we and others will live forever. But we won't. The Puritan preacher,

Richard Baxter, used to say, “I preach as though I might never preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.”

The Bible is clear that as members of the fallen human race, we’re all in that cart, on the way to the gallows. We’d better be preparing for what lies beyond. Because eternity is a fact, we should discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness.

(2) The fact of the living God should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness

(4:10) - Notice verse 10, “¹⁰ *For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.*”

One of Paul’s favorite phrases in 1 Timothy is “we fix our hope” (1 Timothy 5:5, 1 Timothy 6:17 and 1 Timothy 4:10. Paul literally says, “*We have fixed our hope on the living God.*” That is, God is real. He is the God who is there, to use Francis Schaeffer’s term. He is not the projection of our minds. He created the universe and all that is in it.

Because He is the living God, we can live each day in communion with Him. If that’s not true, we’re wasting our time. If there is no eternity with the living God, then eat, drink, and be merry, because tomorrow you die (1 Cor. 15:32). But if it’s true that God is living, and we have fixed our hope on Him, then it should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness.

(3) The fact of salvation should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness (4:10)

- Notice verse 10, “¹⁰ *For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.*” “God is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

What does Paul mean?

- We know that he does not mean that all people will be saved - If that were so, then why did Paul pour out his life for the gospel?
- Paul clearly taught that Christ is returning to take His people to be with Him, but also to deal out retribution and judgment to those who have not obeyed the gospel (2 Thess. 1:8-9).
- Not all will be saved.

There are two main interpretations...

2 Main Interpretations of 1 Timothy 4:10, “Savior of all men”:

1. “**Savior**” is used in a general sense - Calvin (and others) suggests that Paul is using the word “Savior” in a general sense with regard to the world, in that God gives protection and provision even to the wicked. But in a special sense He is the Savior of believers, since He not only gives them temporal blessings, but eternal deliverance from His judgment. The problem with this view is that it forces on the word Savior an unusual meaning that does not fit the context.
2. “**Savior**” is a counter to the false teaching in Ephesus - A better view is that Paul is countering the false teachers, who said that salvation is an exclusive thing for those in the inner circle who had “knowledge.” Paul is saying, “No, God wants to save all

types of people in every place, from every walk of life. He has provided salvation for all, but it is only applied to those who believe in Christ.”

The point is, apart from Christ people are alienated from God, on their way to eternal judgment. But God has provided a sufficient salvation for all who will believe. Since we’re called to proclaim that good news, the fact of God’s salvation should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness.

So these eternal issues—the fact of eternity itself; the fact of the living God; and, the fact of salvation—provide the motivation for the hardship of discipline unto godliness. Then comes the work:

WE MUST DISCIPLINE OURSELVES FOR GODLINESS

Again, “What is discipline?” What does it entail? I want to sketch what it is and is not. Then I’ll show how to implement it. Let’s focus on **verses 7-8** for this discussion... look at it verses 7-8 of our passage, “***7 But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.***” Here is the phrase at the end of **verse 7**, “***... exercise yourself toward godliness.***” NLT = “train yourself”; NIV = “train yourself”; NASB = “discipline yourself”; ESV = “train yourself”; KJV = “exercise yourself”

What discipline is and is not:

- (1) ***Discipline is an ongoing process, not a quick fix*** - The verb is a present imperative, pointing to a process. This means that you can never say, “I’ve arrived!” It’s like staying in shape physically: You can do it for 25 years, but the day you quit you start getting flabby. You’ve got to keep at it. So, no matter where you’re at spiritually, verse 7 applies to you. It’s a lifetime process.
- (2) ***Discipline involves hard work not passive/sedentary living*** – **Verse 10** of our passage says “***We labor and suffer/strive.***” (“Strive” is a better reading than the KJV’s “suffer reproach.”) It’s a word used of wrestlers in an athletic contest, giving every ounce of strength to defeat their opponent. This means that discipline doesn’t come naturally! It’s not something some people are just born with. It’s not a spiritual gift.

By definition, discipline means acting against your feelings because you have a higher goal. We’re being encouraged in our day to live by our feelings. If we violate our feelings, we might do some sort of psychological damage! But if you’re disciplined, even though you feel like that piece of chocolate cake, since your goal is to lose weight, you deny your feelings. Or, you feel like sleeping in; but your goal is to be godly, so you roll out of bed, grab your Bible, and spend time with the Lord. It’s not easy and it doesn’t always feel good! Discipline is something in which both God and you must be involved. “Self-control” is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). That is, when the Spirit of God controls you,

He gives you the ability to control yourself. Thus God does it, and yet Paul can tell Timothy, “Discipline yourself ...” You have a responsibility in the matter. It boils down to the question, “Are you willing to pay the price?” If athletes put themselves through years of hard work and training to get a silly gold medal, shouldn’t we be willing to pay the price to be godly?

- (3) ***Discipline means discarding hindrances, not hanging on to things that trip us up*** - Paul tells Timothy to **“have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women”** (4:7). Some translate it “old wives’ tales.” It refers to the stories an old woman might pass on to her grandchildren. Paul was ridiculing the “endless myths and genealogies” of the false teachers (1:4). The Greek word for “discipline” is *gymnazo*, from which we get “gymnasium.” It came from a word meaning “naked,” because the Greek athletes would strip off their clothing so as not to be hindered from their purpose of winning their event. The point is, if we’re going to train ourselves for godliness, there are hindrances we have to strip off. We have to say no to things that hinder us from our purpose. Of course that includes all sin; but also it includes things that may be all right in and of themselves, but they don’t help you grow toward godliness. It certainly means controlling the TV set!
- (4) ***Discipline means keeping your eyes on the goal, not losing sight of who we are and whose we are*** - The goal is fairly clear: “godliness” (in the Greek) has the nuance of “reverence for God.” So it points to a person who is growing in conformity to God in his character and daily life because he has fixed his hope on God (4:10). He takes God seriously and recognizes the practical implications in terms of developing a godly thought life, godly speech, and godly actions. The way we move toward that goal (in the words of Heb. 12:2) is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus so that we become more and more like Him, especially as we endure the trials God uses to make us more like Him.
- (5) ***Discipline means managing your time in line with your goals, not wasting your time non-essentials*** - This point is not directly in the text, but it’s a logical necessity. An athlete works his schedule around his goal. He says no to many good activities so that he can say yes to his daily workout. As **Annie Dillard** has pointed out, **“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives”** (*Reader’s Digest*, [7/92], p. 137). And how we spend our minutes and hours is how we spend our days. The goal of godliness demands that you spend time each day alone with God in His Word and prayer. It’s not a question of having a schedule. You have one! We all have the same number of hours in our day. We all make time to do what we want to do. The question is, Is your schedule in line with your goal of becoming a godly person?
- (6) ***Discipline is not opposed to the grace of God, but dependent on the grace of God*** - Many people resist discipline by saying, “That’s legalistic!” It can become legalistic if your motive is wrong. But if your motive is to love and please the God who gave His Son for you, it’s not legalistic. Grace doesn’t mean sloppy living (1 Cor. 15:10). And discipline, though it sounds restrictive, is the only way to true freedom. Someone who has disciplined himself to play the piano or speak a foreign language is free to do things I am restricted from doing. As we saw last week, Paul talks about enjoying God and then

moves on to talk about discipline. They go hand in hand. The disciplined Christian enjoys God in ways the undisciplined person can't.

- (7) ***Discipline is not driving yourself relentlessly, it involves taking care of yourself*** - Some people get obsessed with discipline to the point that they can't relax or enjoy time off. We need the balance of Scripture which teaches that God rested after His labor, and so should we. He made our bodies to require sleep. We're not good stewards if we drive ourselves until we burn out, either physically or emotionally. Often our problem is that we mess around when we're supposed to be working, so we feel guilty when we try to relax. A disciplined Christian will work hard when he works and thankfully take time for rest and recreation when it's needed. As far as the Lord's work goes, it helps me to remember that God is the Savior of the world; I'm not. By His grace, I can labor and strive for His purpose, but I can also relax and not worry that somehow His purpose will flounder without me.
- (8) ***Discipline is not being so rigid that you are insensitive to what God is doing, but should make you more sensitive and in-touch with what God is doing*** - This point also comes from the balance of Scripture, not directly from our text. It's good to be disciplined for the purpose of godliness, but the flesh can abuse that good goal by becoming so rigid that you miss what God is doing. For example, you're having your devotional time and your toddler bounds into the room and says, "Daddy, look what I did!" You say, "Go away! Can't you see that I'm reading the Bible!" You're not being disciplined; you're being rigid and insensitive to your child. Jesus always did the Father's will, but He always had time for people who interrupted Him (Mark 5:21-43).

How we implement discipline:

- (1) ***By being constantly nourished in the truths of the faith (4:6)*** - Look at verse 6, "*6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.*" The verb "*nourished*" is present tense; the meaning is, we must continually feed on God's Word, or "sound doctrine." As we saw last week, spiritual warfare involves your mind, and your mind affects your morals. So it's crucial that you feed your mind on God's Word through every means—by hearing it preached; by reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on it. God's Word shows us what God is like and how He wants us to live. **There is no such thing as godliness apart from constant nourishment from God's Word of truth.**
- If you're not a reader, learn!
 - God saw fit to record His truth in written form.
 - Almost anyone can learn to read.
 - That may be a necessary step in disciplining yourself for godliness.
 - Meanwhile, get the Bible on tape and listen to it daily.
 - If you don't have a regular time in the Word, set a realistic goal and stick with it.
 - Start out with 15 minutes a day reading the Bible and 5-10 minutes in prayer.

When you're consistent, you can increase the time. But you need spiritual nourishment from the Word as much as you need to eat. Also, we implement spiritual discipline ...

(2) ***By being obedient to the truths of the faith (4:6) -*** verse 6, *"⁶ If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed."* Notice he says there, *"... which you have carefully followed."* We aren't supposed to learn God's Word for the purpose of filling our heads. It is to change our lives. So we always should come to God's Word with the prayer, "Lord, show me how this applies to me, and enable me to obey it!" It may be a wrong attitude or thought I need to change. Maybe my speech isn't honoring to God. I may need to change my behavior.

The Word often confronts my selfishness. Remember, the goal of the Christian life is not happiness and fulfillment. It is godliness and becoming a good servant of Christ Jesus (4:6). But the beautiful irony is that as we pursue that goal, God blesses us with true joy and fulfillment, because godliness holds promise both for the present life and for the life to come (4:8).

CONCLUSION

Have you ever heard this humorous statement, *"Whenever I feel like exercising, I go and lie down for two hours until the feeling goes away."* A lot of us can identify with that! Exercise is discipline and discipline is hard work, and who likes hard work?

And yet, like it or not, you need to remember about four things here...

4 Things To Remember:

- (1) **Discipline is essential for godliness -**
- (2) **Godliness is essential because eternity is certain -**
- (3) **There are no shortcuts, no easy, effortless ways to godliness -**
- (4) **If you have fixed your hope on the living God who is the Savior, how can you do less than discipline yourself for godly living -**