

# A DISCIPLINED LIFE

## Sunday Morning Class Winter 2013

Workbook Prepared By Jeremy Jones



*“Like A City That Is Broken Into And Without Walls  
Is A Man Who Has No Control Over His Spirit.”*

*Proverbs 25:28*

# **A Disciplined Life**

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## True Righteousness

***“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 5:20)***

1. Jesus made a bold statement in the Sermon on the Mount when He said, “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven” **(Matt. 5:20)**. How did the Jewish public view the Scribes and Pharisees? How did the Scribes and Pharisees view themselves?
2. Would you describe their lives as “disciplined?” Support your answer. Using the Sermon on the Mount **(Matt. 5-7)** determine what was the problem with the righteousness of the Pharisees.
3. How does Jesus describe the citizens of His Kingdom? **(Matt. 5:3-19)**. Is this how you view those that are righteous today? What is challenging for you as you try to match this picture of righteousness?
4. Where does sin come from? **(Matt. 15:1-20)**. Explain why outward disciplines alone will never be enough to solve the problem of sin.
5. What were Jesus’ instructions the teachings of the Pharisees? **(Matt. 23:1-3)**. What can we learn from this about how we should listen to religious teachers?

6. What were the seven woes (or eight depending on your translation) that Jesus had against the Pharisees in **Matthew 23**? How can we be guilty of each of these same woes today? What was the punishment for these sins?

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

**A Disciplined Life**  
***A Soldier, an Athlete, A Farmer, and a Prisoner***  
***(2 Timothy 2)***

1. Describe Paul's relationship to Timothy (**cp. 2 Tim. 1:2; Acts 16:1-5**). What does it take for a relationship like this to develop? Explain how Paul's relationship to Timothy helped the process of passing on teaching and instruction.
  
2. Describe God's plan for passing on instruction and making more teachers (**2 Tim. 2:2**). What makes somebody a "faithful" individual? (Use this book to define faithful)
  
3. How is a Christian like a soldier? What can we learn from a soldier's discipline to help us lead disciplined Christian lives? (**2 Tim. 2:3-4**).
  
4. How is a Christian like an athlete? What can we learn from an athlete's discipline to help us lead disciplined Christian lives? (**2 Tim. 2:5**).
  
5. How is a Christian like a farmer? What can we learn from a farmer's discipline to help us lead disciplined Christian lives? (**2 Tim. 2:6**).
  
6. What gave Paul the discipline to endure hardship as a prisoner? (**2 Tim. 2:8-13**).

7. From **verses 14-26** describe things that Christians must avoid or put away.
  
8. From **verses 14-26** describe things that Christians must pursue or put on.
  
9. What does this chapter teach us about discipline? Practically, what does it take to become a more disciplined Christian?





## Contentment

*“...But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.”*  
*(2 Timothy 6:6)*

1. Make a list of wealthy righteous characters in the Bible. Make a list of poor righteous characters in the Bible. What similarities are there between the two groups?
2. What did Jesus say about giving? (**Acts 20:35**). What is the purpose of our work? (**Eph. 4:28**). Describe how giving ensures equality among the people of God. (**2 Cor. 8:13-15**)
3. It is clearly not a sin to be wealthy. List the specific instructions Timothy is to give to wealthy Christians (**1 Tim. 6:5-10, 17-19**). Do you consider yourself wealthy? What things does Paul say we are to be content with? (**1 Tim. 6:8**).
4. Our society is obsessed with all things new, modern, valuable, innovative, etc. How can a focus on these things hurt our spirituality?
5. What are some practical ways we can reduce our dependence on “stuff” and “things?”



## **Fasting**

***“But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, in those days they will fast” (Luke 5:35).***

1. Do some research and find out what type(s) of fasting were practiced in Bible days. Is this the different or the same type of fasting as that practiced today?
  
2. What was the only commanded fast in the Law of Moses? **(Lev. 16:29ff, 23:27)**  
What purpose was given for these fasts? How often were some Jews fasting by the time of Jesus? **(Luke 18:12).**
  
3. What are some of the reasons Bible characters fasted”
  - a. **Ezra (Ezra 8:21)-**
  
  - b. **City of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5)-**
  
  - c. **David (2 Samuel 1:12)-**
  
  - d. **Anna (Luke 2:37)-**
  
  - e. **Jesus (Matthew 4)-**
  
4. What did Jesus confirm through fasting? **(Matt. 4:4; see also John 4:32-34)**. Why is this lesson so important, especially for a wealthy nation like ours?
  
5. What did David learn from fasting? **(Psalm 69:10)**

6. Look at the following passages describing fasting in the early church. What can we learn from these about the people involved, the occasion for, and the methods involved in these fasts? (**Acts 9:9, 10:30, 13:2-3, 14:23, 1 Cor. 7:5**)
  
7. Did Jesus' disciples fast when He was on the earth? When did he say they would fast? (**Matt. 9:15, Luke 5:35**). When did this take place?
  
8. What regulations did Jesus put on fasting? (**Matt. 6:16-18**). Why is it so easy to abuse the spiritual discipline of fasting?
  
9. What do you think are some reasons why fasting is not practiced or discussed in modern times as much as it was during Bible times? Do you find anything difficult about the concept of fasting? If so, what?
  
10. Does fasting have a useful purpose in the church today? If so, what would Christians be hoping to accomplish by a fast?

## Personal Bible Study

*“For he had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (Ezra 7:10)*

1. Who was Ezra? What was his role in the Jewish nation? How does the Bible describe him? **(Ezra 7:1-10)**
2. What can we learn from Ezra’s approach to Bible learning? **(Ezra 7:10)** Explain what three things he had set his heart to do, and why all three are essential for believers.
3. What mission did King Artaxerxes give Ezra? Why? What was his reaction? **(Ezra 7:11-28)**. Do some research and find out what the legacy of Ezra’s work was.
4. What was Paul’s system for teaching future generations? **(2 Tim. 2:2)**. Why is this essential? What is eventually expected out of mature Christians? **(Heb. 5:11-14)**.
5. What do the following verses teach about Scripture? **(Rom. 15:4, 2 Tim. 3:14-17, 1 Pet. 3:15, 2 Pet. 1:2-3, Jude 3)**.
6. Skim over **Psalm 119**. What is this entire Psalm about? What can we learn from the Psalmists attitude about Scripture?
7. What are some practical ways we can work on increasing our Bible knowledge? How can we turn study into a Spiritual discipline rather than an occasional hobby?

## Personal Prayer

*“The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”*

*(James 5:16)*

1. What is prayer? Find Bible passages that describe what happens during prayer.
2. Why is it sometimes difficult to have a regular prayer life? What do you find difficult about prayer?
3. What are some things that can interfere with our prayer and worship life? The following passages should help. **Isa. 29:13; Matt. 5:23-24, 6:5-8; James 1:5-8, 4:1-3; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 John 3:21-22.**
4. Bible characters pray in many different “positions.” Examples include standing (**Gen. 24:12-14**), lifting the hands (**1 Tim. 2:8**), sitting (**Jud. 20:26**), kneeling (**Mark 1:40**), looking upward (**John 17:1**), bowing down (**Ex. 34:8**), placing the head between the knees (**1 Kgs. 18:42**), pounding on the chest (**Luke 18:13**), and facing the temple (**Dan. 6:10**). Is there a “right way” to pray? What is the purpose of these positions? How do they affect the mindset of the one praying?
5. What is the reason for prayers being offered in **James 5:16-20**? Why is it good for us to pray these same types of prayers? What makes Elijah such a good example for our prayer life?

6. What do we learn about God from His interaction with Moses in **Exodus 32:11-14**? Why is this concept exciting for praying believers? Can you find other Biblical examples of God doing this same thing?
  
7. What did Paul mean when he instructed the Thessalonians to “pray without ceasing?” (**1 Thess 5:17**). What does this mean to you? Is this practical?
  
8. How do we learn to become better at prayer? (**Luke 11:1**)
  
9. Practically, how can we as a congregation help each other to become better at regular personal prayer?

**Submission**  
*Citizen, Slave, Spouse, and Savior*  
*(1 Peter 2-3)*

1. Define submission. Why is this a difficult attitude for some people to have? Who in the church is commanded to practice submission? **(Eph. 5:21)**
  
2. What were the circumstances of the audience in 1 Peter? **(1 Peter 1:1-9)**
  
3. What would a citizen under the Roman government **(1 Pet. 2:13-17)**, a slave under an unreasonable master **(2:18-20)**, and a believing woman married to an unbelieving husband **(3:1-6)** have in common in regards to their submission and subjection? What might be some of the reasons Peter singles these 3 groups out?
  
4. When is submission or subjection easy? When is it difficult?
  
5. Who is given as the ultimate example of submission? **(1 Pet. 2:21-25)** What made His submission so amazing? What attitudes and character traits must we develop to be able to submit in this way?

6. Does submission make a person weak? Explain your position.
  
7. How can we practice submission to government?
  
8. How can we practice submission to our employers?
  
9. How can we practice submission to the appropriate family members?
  
10. What is the end result of learning to submit?





## Listening

*"He who has an ear to hear, let him hear..."*

*(Revelation 2:7)*

1. Would you consider listening skills a discipline? Why or why not?
2. What are some reasons why people are often poor listeners? Where and when do we learn listening skills? Is there room to improve these?
3. Read the following Proverbs. What do they teach about listening? (**Proverbs 1:33, 2:2, 18:13, 19:27, 25:12**).
4. What does the phrase, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Mean? (**Rev. 2:7**). What does the phrase "Having ears, do you not hear." mean? (**Mark 8:18**).
5. What things (there are many correct answers) can get in the way of listening? (**John 8:47**). List as many as you can think of.
6. The Thessalonians are praised by Paul for the way they listened (**1 Thess. 2:13**). Why? What makes a good listener? Why is it important to work on these skills? What will a church full of good listeners look like?



## Solitude

*"He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray."*

*(Matthew 14:23)*

1. Explain the difference between taking time for solitude and anti-social behavior?
2. How did Jesus start His ministry? (**Matt. 4:1-11**). What did He learn from this? How did Paul start his ministry? (**Gal. 1:11-18**). What did he learn from this?
3. Besides Jesus and Paul, list other Bible characters who made time for solitude.
4. What did Jesus do before picking the 12 Apostles? (**Luke 6:12**). What might we learn from this for our lives?
5. What did Jesus do immediately after gaining fame from healing a leper? (**Luke 5:16**). What might we learn from this in our lives?
6. Jesus repeatedly withdrew from the public eye, including the transfiguration (**Matt. 17:1-9**), and in the garden before His arrest and crucifixion (**Matt. 26:36-46**). What made solitude such a priority for Jesus?

7. Would you consider solitude a discipline? Do you ever take any time (anywhere from 5 minutes to 5 days or more) to be alone with God? Why is it often difficult to do so? What is the value of solitude?
  
8. Jesus made sure to have alone time with His Apostles? In **Mark 6:31-34** what was it that took priority over solitude? What does this teach us about how we should approach the discipline of solitude?
  
9. What are some practical ways we can make sure we have special time set aside for only us and God? How can we help new Christians, busy Christians, and lonely Christians to see the importance of this?

## Group Worship

*“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.”  
(John 4:24)*

1. What does our English word “worship” mean? What is its origin?
2. There are 7 Hebrew words (Barak, Hallal, Shachah, Tehillah, Todah, Yadah, and Zamar) and 3 Greek words (Proskuneo, Latreuo, Sebo) translated as worship in our English Bibles. Use a Bible dictionary or the internet to learn about a few of these words to see what they were used to describe.
3. What was Isaiah’s reaction to being in the presence of God? **(Isa. 6:1-5)**. Why? Do you ever feel the same?
4. What kinds of attitudes must one have to be a disciplined worshipper? How should Christians worship God? When? Where? **(John 4:20-24; Rom. 12:1-2)**.
5. The Bible is clear in both the Old **(Ex. 20:3)** and New **(Matt. 4:10)** Testaments that God alone is worthy of worship. What are some ways that Christians can be guilty of worshipping other gods. Give examples.
6. In what ways was worship restricted under the Law of Moses? What changed that? **(Hint- Matt. 27:51)**. What should be our attitude as we worship God today? **(Eph. 3:11-12, Heb. 10:18-25)**.



## Celebration

*“Rejoice with those who rejoice...”*

*(Romans 12:15)*

1. Celebration may seem like an odd ending to a study of Spiritual disciplines but I believe a careful study of Scripture will show it to be very Biblical. Make a list of events that Godly individuals in the Bible celebrated.
2. What were some of the celebrations mandated under the Old Law? What events and occasions did these holidays celebrate?
3. How was Jesus' entrance into the world announced? **(Luke 2:10-15)**. What was the reaction of the Jewish crowds and children as He entered Jerusalem the final time? **(Matt. 21:1-11)**. What was the mixed reaction of the women at the tomb after they discovered He had raised? **(Matt. 28:8)**. What were the emotions and reactions of the first converts of the early church? **(Acts 2:41-47)**.
4. What is the reaction in heaven when one sinner is found? **(Luke 15:7, 10, 20-32)**. What should our reaction to this be?
5. The book of **Philippians** is an exciting book about celebration during persecution. Paul uses the word “joy” in one form or another 16 times in 4 chapters. Skim the book this week and list some things that Paul rejoiced in.

