

Discipline

“And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof. Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected” (1 Corinthians 9:23-27).

Christianity is a life of discipline! It is true that man is not saved by the works of the law: mankind will never be able to say to the Lord, “you owe me.” Nevertheless, works do make faith perfect, as James said, “Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith” (James 2:22-24), that is, works validates faith, and the man’s faith is made complete.

The Apostle Paul addressed the necessity of discipline in a past, present and future tense:

Past: “But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit” (Ephesians 4:20-22).

Present: “I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected” (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Future: “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).

The Christian’s life should be an example to all mankind, as Paul instructed the brethren in Ephesus, saying, “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1).

A disciplined life will be manifested in every area of life: “Flee fornication,” 1 Corinthians 6:18; “Flee idolatry” (1 Corinthians 10:14); “Flee youthful lusts” (2 Timothy 2:22); “Keep oneself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27); and by “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:12).

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul, saying, “abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Do you have a well-disciplined life?