

# Developing A Disciplined Life

Hebrews 12:11 ()

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

Today, I want to discuss how to develop a lifestyle of discipline and its importance to accomplish everything God created you to be.

I've never known anyone who has been successful and did not learn how to develop certain disciplines in their daily lives.

These disciplines were built around their life and lifestyle, enabling them to have a pathway to achieve whatever it was in their heart to achieve.

## **Everyone Is A Leader**

You are leading your family, friends, coworkers, business, ministry, or all of the above.

If you want to be a true leader, you have to create disciplines in your life that will help you not only lead, but also **stay** leading.

Mike Tyson said, "Discipline is when you have learned to do the things you **don't like**, with the same passion and intensity as the things that you **do like**."

Your life will never consist of the things you *like* all the time.

You are going to have to do things that you *don't like*, or even despise, to get the job done or to get to the things *you do like*.

### **Things I don't like to do:**

Planning Meetings-department team meetings, service meetings, Men's Encounter planning meetings, post-event meetings

I don't get up in the morning and get excited about going to meetings.

### **Things I love to do:**

What I love doing is what I'm doing right now, getting in front of people and teaching the Word of God, seeing the lights come on in people's lives, and seeing the life changes that happen during services or an event that I helped plan.

What I love hearing, and I know that Pastor Mitch feels the same way, is when you get that phone call or email from someone saying that their life has changed because of the Word of God or an event that you helped plan and lead. That's what I live for; that's the stuff I love!!!

But if I didn't do the stuff that I don't like to do, which is hours of planning meetings, hours of studying the Word of God, I wouldn't get to do the stuff that I love and see results and fruit from it.

### **Work On Creating Self-Imposed Discipline**

Proverbs 25:28 "A person without **self-control** is like a city with broken-down walls."

One of the fruit of the Spirit is **self-control**

Galatians 5:22 "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, and **self-control**. There is no law against these things!"

Self-control in the Greek "*egkrateia*," which means "self-mastery" or "temperance" in English. It encompasses the ability to control one's desires and passions, particularly sensual appetites. The word is derived from "en" (in) and "kratos" (strength or power), signifying strength within oneself.

Since self-control is a fruit of the Spirit, it must be maintained and developed. If you are going to grow an orange tree, you have to water it, make sure it's nurtured, and take care of it. If not, it will not grow, and eventually it will die.

If you are growing in life, you have to grow in your ability to have self-control. Many successful people do not need many outside boundaries imposed on them. Why? Because they harness the ability to have self-control.

Why do we have people in prison? Because they had no internal boundaries, society had to put a boundary around them. Not only are we harmful to ourselves, but we are also harmful to others when we don't have boundaries and self-control in our lives.

Why do we have divorce? It's a great divide between one person and another person who were once **one**. When a thousand little boundaries have been violated and are never put in place or checked, the court has to draw a great big one and divide up possessions, children, property, money, etc.

Someone or both parties didn't keep their desires and passions in check; now society has to build a boundary where there wasn't one before.

When it comes to success, **we** are our biggest enemy.

Satan isn't the biggest enemy most of the time. It's our minds and our self-will and (lack of) self-control – these are our biggest enemies. It's our passions and our desires that take us outside the boundaries that we have set to be successful. Those are the biggest things we have to war against.

Romans 7:23 (NLT)

But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.

Some things want to take our lives and purpose out, and we have to make sure that we implement specific disciplines in our lives so that we can control ourselves.

I didn't say control *everyone else* or your *husband, wife, friends, or children*. The only thing you can control is *yourself* – *your* passions and *your* desires.

Anyone can be successful and make it to the top, but **character**, coupled with a **disciplined** mind and heart, is what **keeps** them there.

There are so many music artists, sports stars, and celebrities out there who have become legends because of their talents and gifts, but who have made a mess of their lives because of their lack of self-control. They're in the tabloids constantly for doing outlandish things, in and out of jail, can't keep a marriage going, etc.

Society praises *talent* over *discipline*. God praises *discipline* over *talent*.

This past year, so many pastors have been exposed because of scandals where they had no boundaries or accountability.

Where there is no accountability, sin will reign.

Now these pastors are having to step down from their positions. It hits the church as badly as it hits the world. The enemy would love to rip apart the church from the inside out through corrupt leaders and pastors.

The main killer of marriages, churches, jobs, careers, and relationships is a lack of discipline.

Ruggs was set to be a multimillionaire, a legend in the NFL, a household name, possibly, but a lack of self-control sabotaged all of it.

I Corinthians 9:27 (NKJV)

But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Ephesians 4:1 (NLT)

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to *lead a life* worthy of your *calling*, for you have been called by God.

My ***lifestyle*** has to be brought under subjection, so that my calling has legitimacy.

Whatever you want to accomplish in your life, you have to have a lifestyle that accompanies it.

There are things in life that are not morally wrong. The question you need to ask yourself is, “*Is it wise?*”

I Corinthians 10:23 (NLT)

You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is good for you. You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is beneficial.

The fact that I ***can*** do something doesn’t necessarily mean that I ***should*** do it. Does it benefit me in where I want to go in my life, or will it take away from where I want to go?

Discipline earns trust. There’s a reason why you are here at Victory Church. It’s probably because you hear and see our senior pastor and trust his leadership and life because of his ***lifestyle*** of ***discipline***.

Why are so many athletes spokespersons for so many products? Because when we see a person who is an MVP or a hall-of-famer, we immediately admire the discipline that it took a long period to achieve that kind of success.

We, as a society, automatically have a level of trust in them. Their life is not wild or out-of-control, but tempered to what their goal is. And they have sacrificed time, blood, sweat, and tears to get to where they are.

You can't live any old way and achieve what you want to achieve, just like these athletes.

Matthew 7:14 (NLT)

But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

Everyone who is going to walk the way to success is going to walk the **narrow** road.

John Maxwell's story:

Someone came up to him and said to him after meeting with thousands of people doing a conference for leaders, and said, "I want to do what you do." He responded, "Ok, but do you want to do what I **did**?"

John didn't *just become* to GOAT of leadership. He had to work hard at it. He's written 51 books. Can you imagine the time and effort it takes just to write one book, let alone 51?

This guy has had best-sellers multiple times. That just doesn't happen. Do you want to do what he did, to do what he does?

A lot of people want to do what Pastor Mitch does, but do you realize the time, the effort it takes to be a Pastor and do what he does? You'll have to get up and preach when the last thing you want to do is preach. You'll have to go through rejection and emotions you thought you'd never have to go through because of the love you have for the people you are shepherding. You'll have to smile when you want to cry.

## **You Have To Have Vision**

Where does discipline come from? It comes from **Vision**.

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

Where there is no **vision**, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

The word *perish* doesn't mean die here. It means to *cast off restraint, run wild*.

There have been times in ministry when I wanted to throw in the towel and quit, but my *vision* kept me put and saved me.

Sometimes, when I wanted to give up on things or even people that I loved, my *vision* saved me.

Times when I felt completely depleted, physically, mentally, and emotionally, times when I was tired and didn't want to keep going, my *vision* kept me going.

Times when I've lived a tight life and wanted to do something stupid, my *vision* kept me.

If the lack of vision makes me *cast off restraint and run wild*, then the *vision* brings restraint, purpose, and structure to my life.

The *vision* helps you know what to do or why you're doing it, what to say "yes" to and "no" to.

What is the vision for Victory Church? It's **Helping People Become Who God Created Them To Be.**

The church's vision is **my** vision. I want to see everyone in this place be who God created them to be. I don't want to get to heaven and realize that I didn't do the work of the vision God created you and me to do here on earth and in this church.

My vision is to be everything God created me to be and that is, be the best follower of Christ I can be, be the best husband I can be to my wife, be the best father I can be to Avalyn, be the best son I can be to my mother, and be the best pastor I can be here at Victory Church.

If someone comes to you and wants you to do something stupid, if you have no vision, you'll do anything they want you to do, without restraint. But if it doesn't align with your vision and you say "no", the **vision** said "no". Does it align with your **vision**? Then the **vision** said "yes".

**Vision** tells you who to let into your life. **Vision** tells you who to keep out of your life.

The **vision** tells you what activities you can participate in. The **vision** tells you what activities you cannot participate in.

If you are a football player and the position you want to play requires you to weigh 350, but you weigh 250, you can go to Cookout and get a couple of burgers and a milkshake for a few weeks to gain some weight. But if you weigh 450, guess what, you're going home and fixing yourself a salad for a few weeks, eating nothing but lean protein and greens, doing high cardio to lose weight to get the position that you desire.

Why? Because the particular **vision** is driving that particular activity.

There are 2 different visions to get what you want.

Show me a person who lives any way they want – that's a person with no vision. Show me a person with no discipline – that's a person with no vision.

A girl who will date any guy who shows her attention – that's a girl who has no vision for her life. And vice versa with a guy.

Show me a guy who gets up whenever he wants, goes to bed whenever he wants, has no personal responsibilities, no job, that's a guy with no vision. He doesn't know where he's going.

What gets me up in the morning? I have a vision. I have a purpose. I have responsibilities. I have a daily routine.

Why do I work 5-6 days a week? Because I have a family to provide for, and things I want to accomplish in life, and it requires finances to achieve them. Also, there are people I want to see come into the kingdom of God.

There are things I cannot be involved with, not because they are morally wrong, but because they are not beneficial for the **vision** for my life and where I want to go.

You can't go there and do what I do, you can't do that and do what I want to do. You can't have that habit and go where I'm going. You can't be in those same situations and atmospheres and do what I want to do. You can't run with those people and do what I want to do.

So the vision of what I want to do with my life is answering atmospheres, answering activities, answering people, answering conversations I can and cannot have.

The **vision** is driving everything in my life. The **vision** tells me how to spend my money.

## **Rivers and Swamps**

Ezekiel 47:6-7 (NLT)

He asked me, 'Have you been watching, son of man?' Then he led me back along the **riverbank**. 7 When I returned, I was surprised by the sight of many trees **growing on both sides of the river**."

The life-giving fruit was not in the river; it was on the **riverbanks**, on both sides of it.

Rivers have boundaries. The fruit of our lives is created by the boundaries we form, and it will save and heal us many times over if we put them into place.

We also have to ask ourselves: Are we drawing our strength from ourselves, pride, selfish ambition, self-indulgence, etc., or are we drawing from *The River of God and His presence*?

Ezekiel 47:11 (AMP)

But its **swamps** and marshes will not become fresh [and wholesome for animal life]; they will [as the river subsides] be left encrusted with salt.

### **What's the difference between rivers and swamps?**

A **river** has banks, boundaries, direction, and it's going somewhere. It has a destination. Boundaries and banks produce fruit and life.

A **swamp** is water with no banks. The water that had no boundaries had a stench and produced no life. It's stagnant and has no destination.

**People who live with boundaries:** There will be things that they will and won't say, places that they will and won't go, and self-imposed disciplines in their lives. No one needs to call them out on anything. They do it because it's in them.

**People who live a life without boundaries:** This person's life is a trainwreck, has no boundaries, and anything goes. Anyone can come into their life, and they'll run with them. They'll listen to anyone and anything. They'll go anywhere. They'll do anything. They'll sleep with anybody. They do not bring value to others, they suck people dry.

Which one are you?



It takes 21 days to create a habit. Many people stopped going to church regularly because of COVID and have not gotten back into the habit of going to church. Now, five years later, someone who used to be on the frontline in their church, (they were in that river, God was using them in ministry,) is stuck in the habit of staying at home, producing no real fruit in their life, and not being involved at their local church.

As a result, their lives are in shambles. They're willing to go anywhere, do anything because they chose to slack in an area where once there was discipline.

But just as you can create bad habits, you can create good ones too.

Today is the day you can start creating good habits and setting boundaries and disciplines in your life.

## Action Points

1. First, ask God to reveal the vision and purpose of your life, and then write it down. ***Suggestion: "God help me be everything you created me to be."***
2. Run with that vision and implement daily disciplines in your life to fulfill that vision.
3. Cut out useless things or people from your life that are causing your life to be a swamp. Decide to be a **river**, running with purpose, boundaries, and fruit. When you leave this earth, you want to make a fruitful impact.