MAKING LIFE WORK: Developing Self-Discipline 11.09.08

Cautions:

1. Recognize that 'self-discipline' comes with a lot of baggage for us.
    a. Despair: "I am not very self-disciplined. There is no way I can change." The Gospel says you can change.
    b. Pride: "I am very self-disciplined. Look what I have accomplished." The Gospel calls you to great humility.
    c. We could become very 'self-disciplined' and entirely miss the point.

Toward An Understanding of Self-Discipline/Control :

1. Self-discipline and Self-control are the same concept in the Scriptures.
2. It is a command in Scripture.
    a. 2 Pet. 1:5-6, Tit. 2:2-6
3. It is one of the required characteristics of church leaders.
    a. 1 Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:8
4. It is necessary because we have a self (flesh) that must be controlled.
    a. Rom. 7:13-25
5. Ignoring self-discipline leads to destruction.
    a. Prov. 25:28

Do we I the danger of neglecting self-discipline?

Truths:

1. If we are 'in Christ,' self-control is something we already have.
    a. 2 Tim. 1:7, Gal. 5:16-25
2. We need to learn to let what is inside *outside* into our lives.

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Gal. 5:16-25 ESV

v.16-17 There are two sets of desires at work: The Flesh & The Spirit
v. 18a *"Led by the Spirit"* – being a true Christian, the Spirit directing our lives.
v.18b *"not under the law"*— correcting their incorrect view of "Jesus + obey Jewish Law = Accepted." Correcting us as well.
v. 22 *"fruit"* not *"fruits."* Not just character qualities or personality traits. Evidence that God has brought you to Himself through His spirit.
v. 24 Notice the verb. The flesh now has no power over you.
v. 25 *"walk by the Spirit"* – "keep in step with" – yielding to what the Spirit wants.

The biggest question is not "Are you controlling yourself?" but rather "Are you allowing the Spirit to control you?"

Do I recognize that the power of my flesh has been crucified and that I don't have to do what it tells me to? Do I recognize that my spiritual destiny is to walk according to my new identity in Christ?

How Do We Walk in It?

1. Look at ourselves.
    a. Overarching sense (macro). Specific areas (micro).
    b. *What are the areas of my life are not currently UNDER THE CONTROL of the Spirit?* (Health, Work, Finances, School, Relationships, Anger, etc.)
    c. Our Hearts: *Why is this the case? What is the 'sin behind the sin?'*
        i. Spend too much because of my fear of man. Eat too much to make myself feel better. Unhealthy because I love comfort. Addicted to...for a variety of reasons.
        ii. Repent. Get the help we need.
    d. **More Practically Speaking:**
        i. Make no provision for the flesh. Rom 13:14
        ii. *What are the things I need to start? What are the things I need to stop?*
2. Look to Jesus and apply the Gospel.
    a. Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted—Heb. 4:15, Lk. 4
    b. Because Jesus had perfect self-control at all times, He could die for our lack of self-control. Because of His death for us we can now turn to Him to help us. Meditate on His perfection. Look to Him for His strength. Use your failure as an opportunity to depend upon Him.
3. Look to the other means of grace God has given us.
    a. Scripture. *Particular verses that you need to leverage in your struggle?*
    b. Prayer. *Pray that God would help you in these areas. Enlist others.*
    c. Community. *Share your struggles with others. Encourage one another.*

What is God saying to you in regard to self-control?

Visit www.crossinglouisville.com for more helpful resources.

Works Consulted : Expositor's Bible Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, Messages by Darrin Patrick, Tim Keller