

DISCIPLINE

Character Tour 1 of 8

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Intro:

- * **How do we stay committed in our quest to reflect the absolute & uncompromising image of a holy God?**
- * **The answer is Character. "Character is the outer reflection of our inward connection."**
- * We will **survey several characters** in the bible over the next few weeks as we take this "**Character Tour**"

Character is...

1. DEVELOPED THROUGH METAMORPHOSIS (2 Corinthians 3:18)

- **2 Cor. 3:18** "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed** into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.
- Paul refers to OT story of Moses to explain that the veil is lifted in Christ & there is FULL access in Christ.
- In **OT times** God used more of an **outside-in to develop faith in His people** (now changed)
- "**Changed**"= to transfigure (metamorphosis) **to change from the INSIDE-OUT**.
Not depending on anything on the outside ... thus character is the outward reflection of an inward connection.
- * Connected to what? JESUS (the cross)

2. FORGED IN THE FIRE OF TRIALS & TESTING (1 Peter 1:6-7)

- These are the two most useful tools in the hand of God to develop our character.
- Peter was an expert in this subject matter (on the inside & the outside)
- * God is more interested in our growth than our success.
- * God knows we need times of failure & suffering to test what is within us to motivate us to follow Him in the transformation PROCESS.
- **1 Peter 1:6-7**
- * Goldsmith purifying gold- the hotter the fire the quicker the impurities get out of the gold! (**He stops when he sees his reflection in the gold**)

3. DEEPENED BY AFFLICTION & SUFFERING (Psalm 119:67-71)

- **Psalm 119:67-71**
- Here we see that struggles & correction come into our lives to bring permanent change to our character & ultimately our actions.
"Afflicted"= humbled
"Went astray"= **out of his stubbornness & willfulness he decided to run his own life.**
- * Affliction & suffering imply a "deeper" work to get greater results.
- *** **This is a dangerous inclination for all of us.**
If this DOESN'T come out of us, it will ruin us.
- * So our loving God uses affliction & suffering to generate a deeper work in us.
- * David indicates that the **only real casualty in metamorphosis is our pride.**

- * **James 1:2-4 God wants us to experience joy in spite of the pain.**

Definition: Discipline- "Discipline is doing what you *ought* to do so you can do what you *want* to do."

- (1) We link up to Jesus get his character- yes I get that but what about what I want to do?
- (2) When we accept Christ he wants us to be successful...

"Successful"= living in His will. (**Deep with God- by discipline**)

"Failure"- **is filled with excuses** (happens when we stop discipline)...

- * **"Success"**- begins & ends with "DISCIPLINE"...
- (Doing what you ought to do so you can do what you want to do.)"

M. Scott Peck "*The Road Less Traveled*", "**Discipline is delayed gratification.**"

- * The question is how do I go deep with discipline?

We must make a decision with discipline to go deep with God.

I. DANIEL WAS INVOLVED IN ADVANCED PLANNING (Daniel 1:8-21)

- A. "**Purposed**"- in the past tense- already made up his mind before he got into that position.
(see 1:4-5)
- B. "**Favour**"- (1:9) discipline (delayed gratification) discipline (doing what you ought to do, so you can do what you want to do)
 - (1:10-21) test of discipline
 - 1. Daniel's favour continued for a minimum of 70 years (1:21 "1st year of Cyrus cp Ezra 1:1)
 - 2. 1:17 "**God gave them...**"

*** Talking about advanced planning...

Prov. 21:5a "The thoughts of the diligent *tend* only to plenteousness..."

- * If you want a profitable **marriage** - need advanced planning
- If you want a profitable **dating life** - need advanced planning
- If you want a profitable **business** - need advanced planning
- If you want a profitable **career** - need advanced planning
- If you want a profitable **ministry** - need advanced planning

Prov. 21:5b "... but of every one *that is* hasty only to want."

* **Can't plan on the fly!**

Most of us make the decision in the heat of the moment- can't be disciplined

instantaneously.

- Can't plan to be **pure sexually when** you are **in the backseat of a car...**
- Can't plan on eating healthy when you are at **Cold Stone...** you plan in advance...
- Can't plan on being **honest when you are in the middle of trying to make a deal &**

exaggerate...

* **Jesus - EVERYTHING he did had advanced planning.**

II. DANIEL UNDERSTOOD THE POWER OF CONNECTON (Daniel 1:6, 17)

- A. Daniel had linked arms with some other young men that had his type of discipline.
 - 1. They apparently shared the same commitment toward God.
 - 2. 1:11-15 "Us, their, they also "purposed" in their heart.
- B. They knew that discipline is most easily maintained in a relationship with others that will stand with you!

III. DANIEL UNDERSTOOD THE POWER OF BITE-SIZING (Daniel 6:10)

A. **Discipline develops as we take one small bite of life at a time.**

- 1. **Discipline downers**- they will wear you out...
 - We are all busy- our schedules are CRAZY...

Mt 6:34 "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof."

- 1440 minutes each day (take little bites)
- Enjoy the moment- God can teach you that.
 - 2. Each small victory can lead to another & another until you are ready for a big bite.
 - 3. Daniel & his three friends were taking small bites in chapter 1 so they could go into a "fiery furnace (chpt. 3) & into a lions den (chpt 6) & the intense spiritual battles in (chpts 7-12)

B. **Zechariah 4:6** Highlights discipline...

"... Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

Gal 6:8 "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

- 1. Discipline of the disciplines will produce fruit (farmer plants seed then God...)

NOTE: So I need to be a disciplined person because it gets me into the ground so God can bring fruit in my life.

IV. DANIEL UNDERSTOOD THE POWER OF DEEP DEPENDENCE (Daniel 6:10)

A. Daniel's secret of developing discipline & maintaining self-control was a deep dependence on the Lord.

1. **He regularly - three times a day - gave thanks to God & meditated on Him.**
- **He filled his mind with so much God that there wasn't any room for the enemy.**

B. Meditation- not the Eastern kind (where you empty your head) but fill your mind with God's word.

Quote: Richard Foster 'Celebration of Discipline'

"Christian meditation is the ability to hear God's voice & obey His word. It's that simple. I wish I could make it more complicated for those who like things difficult."

1. **Meditation on God & His word prepares the soil of our hearts & minds so that God can grow discipline (and other character qualities) in our lives.**

Ps. 1:1-3 "Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 1:2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 1:3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Note: Best illustration of meditation is a COW chewing its cud.

They bring it back up 7 times. WOW 7 times.

- Meditate outside - see nature (the Creator's work)
- Meditate on your face
- Meditate on your past graces- remember.

Conclusion: Daniel 6:4 "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find **none occasion nor fault**; forasmuch as **he was faithful**, neither was there **any error or fault found in him.**"