

Sermon Title: **Series Our Church Covenant 3 – The Discipline of the Spirit**

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Scripture Reference: **Galatians 5:16-25**

Thesis: **In Paul's letter to the Galatian church, he addressed the struggle we all go through in our walk in the Spirit;**

Purpose: **Paul offer's us hope for victory over our sinful nature by the power of God's Spirit.**

Key Word: "Spirit"

Key Points:

1. **The Results of No Spiritual Discipline**
  2. **The Rewards of Spiritual Discipline**
  3. **The Struggles of Spiritual Discipline**
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I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Galatians 5:16-25**

A) The Setting:

1) **Discipline; what comes to mind when I say the word discipline?**

- (a) For some, I am sure they see it as a negative thing.
- (b) **There is a form of management call the "leave alone zap" method.**
  - (i) Essentially, the manager leaves the employee alone until they mess up and then zaps them with words of correction.
  - (ii) It is about the same as training a mouse with electric shock and no body likes to be zapped.
- (c) This is using discipline in a negative sense.

2) **But it doesn't need to always be negative;**

- (a) Mary came in to play the organ for us as she usually does this morning.
- (b) She does a wonderful job and we appreciate her playing.

3) **However, do you think she just sat down one day and began playing that way?**

- (a) No, she had to discipline herself to many hours of study and practice to learn to read music, to learn how to play such a complicated instrument and train her fingers and feet to work together and hit the right notes at the right time.
- (b) This took great discipline on her part to learn the skills required to be good at her craft.

4) **In both examples we see that training is taking place; one from a negative example and the other from a positive example.**

- (a) So, discipline is just another way of saying training.
- (b) We are continuing with our study of our church Covenant and our third paragraph states that, "*We consent to the discipline of embodying the Spirit of Christ;*"

5) **But what does it mean when it says that we consent to the discipline of embodying the Spirit of Christ?**

- (a) The word "embody" according to the World Book Dictionary is "to put into a form that can be seen."
- (b) When Mary studied to be able to play the organ she disciplined her body and mind to be able to put her music on the organ into a form that can be seen.
- (c) We can see, hear and enjoy the form of the fruit of her labor from Mary's many hours of practice.

6) **Likewise, Paul says that if we want to enjoy the fruit of embodying the Spirit of Christ, we discipline ourselves to put in the work to grow.**

- (a) Paul tells us in the verses we are about to read exactly what it is that we should see growing . . .
- (b) and what it is that we want to see decreasing if we have the Spirit of Christ working in us.
- (c) It is a way for us to see how well we are submitting to the Holy Spirit of God.
- (d) **So, let us see for ourselves if you will follow along with our scripture reading for today in Galatians 5:16-25.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

## C) (The Hook)

- 1) Illustration: **Now**<sup>1</sup>
  - (a) A friend often told me about the problems he had getting his son to clean his room.
  - (b) The son would always agree to tidy up, but then wouldn't follow through.
  - (c) After high school the young man joined the Marine Corps.
  - (d) When he came home for leave after basic training, his father asked him what he had learned in the service.
  - (e) "*Dad,*" he said. "*I learned what 'now' means.*"
- 2) **The Marines taught this young man discipline.**
  - (a) This boy submitted himself to be disciplined by the Marines.
  - (b) As a result he learned good life habits that will serve him the rest of his life.
- 3) **There are lots of examples of how discipline is good for us.**
  - (a) There are athletes, musicians, doctors, farmers, all who excel at their endeavors because they disciplined themselves to be their very best at what they are doing.
  - (b) Whether it takes physical, mental, practice and/or patience, it is a matter of putting in the hard work to become good and even great at what you are.
- 4) **When we fail to discipline ourselves we at best wallow in mediocrity, low self esteem, pity and possibly depression.**
  - (a) However, when we put in the work we will find confidence, acknowledgment, recognition, satisfaction and joy.
  - (b) But, it takes discipline.

TS: **So, our first point is seeing the . . .**

## II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **The Results of No Spiritual Discipline**

- 1) **After submitting to the Disciplining of the Spirit so that we can embody it's fruit our Covenant next exhorts us to the "*abstaining from that which is clearly contrary to his teaching,*"**
  - (a) This is what Paul is referring to in his letter to the Galatians in his list of acts of the sinful nature in verses 19-21.
  - (b) If we have no Spiritual discipline, then we will manifest the fruit of the sinful nature.
  - (c) Sometimes God has to discipline us negatively to get our attention.
- 2) **Illustration: POWER AND DISCIPLINE** Jeff Strite May 2013
  - (a) **Over here is a wall socket; there is power in that socket.**
    - (i) Because of that power, I can plug lamps, fans, microwaves and phone chargers into it and magically empower those devices.
    - (ii) I can even plug a car charger into a wall socket and revive a dead car battery.
  - (b) **Now, if you go down to the hospital you'll find all kinds of devices plugged into wall sockets.**
    - (i) They plug in devices that can monitor your health as well as devices that could save your life.
    - (ii) So, you could say that the power offered in those wall sockets can add pleasure to your life. And they can add years to your life.
  - (c) **Now, if I take a butter knife . . .**

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1 Dana Visneskie, sermoncentral.com Feb 2004

- (i) What would happen if I were to plug this knife into the socket? (*wait for audience to reply*).
- (ii) That's right! At the very least it'll burn my hand and frizz my hair.
- (iii) But it might even cause my heart to stop.
- (d) **So, in that wall socket there is POWER and that power can bring me life...**
  - (i) Or it can bring me death.
  - (ii) If I am wise, and I have a proper fear for that power, I'll add years to my life.
  - (iii) But, if I don't ... I won't.
- (e) **Now, I have never put a knife into a wall socket.**
  - (i) Why not? For the same reason I've never put my tongue on a frozen pipe!
  - (ii) I'm afraid of what will happen if I do!
  - (iii) I don't have to experience these things to have a health fear of them.
- (f) **You see, when I fear God, I realize there are certain things He hates.**
  - (i) If He hates something, I don't want to go there.
  - (ii) I won't want to do that because if God hates something ... that's a good enough reason for me.
- (g) **What makes God angry about sin is that it hurts me.**
  - (i) Or, if it doesn't hurt me, it will hurt someone else around me.
  - (ii) I don't have to understand how my sin hurts people any more than I have to understand how electricity hurts people.
  - (iii) I just have to know that God hates something; therefore, I should be afraid to go there.
- (h) **Now, let's say I see a little child trying to put this butter knife into a wall socket.**
  - (i) Am I going to sit down with him and try to explain the theory of electricity?
  - (ii) Of course not! He would never understand that.
  - (iii) What I'd probably do is take the knife away and sternly tell him "NO!"
- (i) **But, if that child repeatedly tries to put that knife or some other item into that wall socket I may have to decide to put a little of the fear of God into him.**
  - (i) He may not understand what electricity could do to him . . . but he will understand how to fear me.
  - (ii) And if I love him that's probably just what I'd do because I want him to think twice about putting a knife in that socket.
- (j) **You see, God is like that.**
  - (i) Not because He's some big celestial ogre waiting for us to do some bad thing so that He can drop the hammer on us.
  - (ii) But because He is a father who wants to protect us from evil.
- (k) **If you're a Christian, you are His child and He is your heavenly Father.**
  - (i) Just like any parent – if He sees that you are doing something you shouldn't He WILL get your attention one way or the other.
  - (ii) Hebrews 12:7-8 says: "*...what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (by God) -- and everyone undergoes discipline -- then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.*"

**TS: But Paul tells us that if we submit to the discipline of the Holy Spirit we will embody . . .**

**B) Key Point #2: The Rewards of Spiritual Discipline**

- 1) **This is what the phrase in our Covenant means "making every relationship a channel of His goodness."**

- (a) When the Spirit has control of your life you will begin to experience the fruit of that Spirit.
  - (b) Things like "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."
  - (c) These are the rewards of Spiritual Discipline.
- 2) **The good news is that these are available to every believer who let's God's Spirit have rule in your life.**
- (a) It is a gentle benevolent rule that is not forced.
  - (b) You will find the Spirit nudging you to make changes in your life.
  - (c) And as you learn to listen to the Spirit's influence you will begin to realize the change in your spiritual appetite.
- 3) **When you were born physically, you required physical nourishment to sustain you.**
- (a) When you are born spiritually, you will desire more of spiritual nourishment.
  - (b) You will notice that you hunger and thirst to be right with God.
  - (c) You will have a desire to learn more about His Holy Word.
  - (d) Your taste in music and programs will no longer be satisfied with that which does not honor God; you will desire things that help you to grow spiritually.
  - (e) And the result will be the fruit of the Spirit.

TS: **But just so you don't think it is an easy road we all have to face . . .**

C) Key Point #3: **The Struggles of Spiritual Discipline**

- 1) **You see in Romans chapter 7:21-25 Paul describes his own struggle with not always doing the right thing.**
- <sup>21</sup> **So I find this law at work:** Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.  
<sup>22</sup>For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. <sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! **Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?** <sup>25</sup> **Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!**
- 2) **Paul is acknowledging that he cannot do this on his own.**
- (a) Paul needs a helper and that Helper is God the Holy Spirit.
  - (b) In the Gospel of John 16:7, he recorded Jesus' own words saying, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (NASV)
- 3) **Yes, there is a war going on between the physical body and the Spirit living within you.**
- (a) Which one will win out?
  - (b) **Illustration:** There is an old Indian story where a father was explaining to his young son that inside you is like two dogs fighting;
    - (i) One is a good dog fighting to do good.
    - (ii) The other is a bad dog who wants to do bad.
    - (iii) The young brave asked "Which one wins?"
    - (iv) The wise Indian father said, "The one you feed the most."
- 4) **Yes, we all struggle with sin in this life; but if we want to see maximum growth then we need to be feeding our Spiritual nature.**
- (a) We need the discipline of making time with God each day to pray, read His word, and give Him a chance to speak to us.
  - (b) We need the discipline of being quiet before God in order to hear Him.
- 5) **There are so many distractions in this world today.**
- (a) You can have the news, radio or TV on 24-7.
  - (b) You can be playing games on your phones or electronic devices anywhere you go.
  - (c) You can be connected to the world and on the phone even in your car.
- 6) **Our enemy wants us distracted from God.**

- (a) He does not want us to take time to slow down and listen and meditate on God because he knows we will draw nearer to God.
- (b) We need to take time to unplug; go for a walk, "*Be still and know that I am God*" Psalm 46:10

TS: **So, in conclusion let me remind you that . . .**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

A) **We have agreed to submit to the discipline of embodying the Spirit of Christ.**

- 1) We will put it in a form that will be seen at work in our lives with the fruit of the Spirit.
- 2) We are known by our fruit and our fruit of the Spirit will be our witness to the world.
- 3) **This means making every effort to sustain from that which we know is contrary to God's Word.**
  - (a) How will we know what the word teaches?
  - (b) By disciplining ourselves to reading it, studying it, and hearing it preached.
- 4) **And thus through the process we will become a channel for God's goodness.**
  - (a) In this way we can experience victory over our sinful nature
  - (b) and "*be transformed by the renewing of our minds.*" (Romans 12:1)
- 5) **What about you?**
  - (a) Have you submitted yourself to the discipline of embodying the Spirit of Christ.
  - (b) Do you have victory over your sinful nature?
  - (c) Which one are you feeding the most?
  - (d) If you would like me to pray with you before you leave I invite you to come forward during our closing hymn or see me after the service.
  - (e) I would be delighted to pray with you and help you know victory in your life.

IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**