

# DISCIPLINE: FIRST THINGS FIRST

## Cultivating Character – Part 1

### July 6, 2014

**DEFINITION:** *Character is what you do when no one is looking... Character is who you are.*

**Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)** *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - -<sup>9</sup>not by works so that no one can boast.”*

**Discipline is a truly endangered character quality... yet it is essential.**

**Hebrews 12:10b (NIV)** *“God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in His holiness.”*

### 3 KEYS TO DISCIPLINE IN CHARACTER

#### 1. To understand discipline... DELAY GRATIFICATION .

**Hebrews 12:11 (NIV)** *“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace...”*

- **IMPLICATION:** The TOUGH part.

**Luke 9:23 (NIV)** *“Then He (Jesus) said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me.’”*

**A disciple is someone who has accepted the discipline of the master.**

**Colossians 3:9b-10 (GNT)** *“...You have taken off the old self with its habits <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self. This is the new being which God, its Creator, is constantly renewing in His own image, in order to bring you to a full knowledge of Himself.”*

- **IMPLICATION:** No PAIN, no GAIN!

**Hebrews 12:11a (NIV)** *“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful...”*

#### 2. To practice discipline... make ADVANCE DECISIONS

**Hebrews 12:1-2a (NIV)** *“Therefore... let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. <sup>2</sup>Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith...”*

**Isaiah 50:7 (NIV)** *“Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.”*

#### This Influences Several Practical Areas...

- Your PHYSICAL health.
- Your mastery of MONEY.

**1 Corinthians 16:2 (TLB)** *“On every Lord’s Day each of you should put aside something from what you have earned during the week, and use it for this offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn...”*

- Your PERSONAL relationships.
- Your RELATIONSHIP with God.

**1 Timothy 4:7b (Phillips)** *“Take the time and the trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit.”*

#### 3. To maintain discipline... harness the power of ACCOUNTABILITY.

**Proverbs 27:17 (GNT)** *“People learn from one another just as iron sharpens iron.”*

**Galatians 5:22-23a (NLT)** *“The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”*