

**BREAK-
THROUGH
IN
DISCIPLINE**

BUT REJECT PROFANE AND OLD WIVES' FABLES, AND EXERCISE YOURSELF TOWARD GODLINESS. *_1 TIMOTHY 4:7 (NKJV)*

DO NOT WASTE TIME ARGUING OVER GODLESS IDEAS AND OLD WIVES' TALES. SPEND YOUR TIME AND ENERGY IN TRAINING YOURSELF FOR SPIRITUAL FITNESS. *_1 TIMOTHY 4:7 (NLT)*

THE SPIRIT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT AS TIME GOES ON, SOME ARE GOING TO GIVE UP ON THE FAITH AND CHASE AFTER DEMONIC ILLUSIONS PUT FORTH BY PROFESSIONAL LIARS. THESE LIARS HAVE LIED SO WELL AND FOR SO LONG THAT THEY'VE LOST THEIR CAPACITY FOR TRUTH. THEY WILL TELL YOU NOT TO GET MARRIED. THEY'LL TELL YOU NOT TO EAT THIS OR THAT FOOD –PERFECTLY GOOD FOOD GOD CREATED TO BE EATEN HEARTILY AND WITH THANKSGIVING BY CHRISTIANS! EVERYTHING GOD CREATED IS GOOD, AND TO BE RECEIVED WITH THANKS. NOTHING IS TO BE SNEERED AT AND THROWN OUT. GOD'S WORD AND OUR PRAYERS MAKE EVERY ITEM IN CREATION HOLY. YOU'VE BEEN RAISED ON THE MESSAGE OF THE FAITH AND HAVE FOLLOWED SOUND TEACHING. NOW PASS ON THIS COUNSEL TO THE CHRISTIANS THERE, AND YOU'LL BE A GOOD SERVANT OF JESUS. STAY CLEAR OF SILLY STORIES THAT GET DRESSED UP AS RELIGION. EXERCISE DAILY IN GOD–NO SPIRITUAL FLABBINESS, PLEASE! WORKOUTS IN THE GYMNASIUM ARE USEFUL, BUT A DISCIPLINED LIFE IN GOD IS FAR MORE SO, MAKING YOU FIT BOTH TODAY AND FOREVER. YOU CAN COUNT ON THIS. TAKE IT TO HEART. THIS IS WHY WE'VE THROWN OURSELVES INTO THIS VENTURE SO TOTALLY. WE'RE BANKING ON THE LIVING GOD, SAVIOR OF ALL MEN

AND WOMEN, ESPECIALLY BELIEVERS. GET THE WORD OUT. TEACH ALL THESE THINGS. AND DON'T LET ANYONE PUT YOU DOWN BECAUSE YOU'RE YOUNG. TEACH BELIEVERS WITH YOUR LIFE: BY WORD, BY DEMEANOR, BY LOVE, BY FAITH, BY INTEGRITY. STAY AT YOUR POST READING SCRIPTURE, GIVING COUNSEL, TEACHING. AND THAT SPECIAL GIFT OF MINISTRY YOU WERE GIVEN WHEN THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH LAID HANDS ON YOU AND PRAYED—KEEP THAT DUSTED OFF AND IN USE. CULTIVATE THESE THINGS. IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THEM. THE PEOPLE WILL ALL SEE YOU MATURE RIGHT BEFORE THEIR EYES! KEEP A FIRM GRASP ON BOTH YOUR CHARACTER AND YOUR TEACHING. DON'T BE DIVERTED. JUST KEEP AT IT. BOTH YOU AND THOSE WHO HEAR YOU WILL EXPERIENCE SALVATION. *_1 TIMOTHY 4:1-16 (MSG)*

LOOK AT THE KEY WORDS IN THIS PASSAGE

1. **“Refuse”** means to decline, shun, reject, beg off, get excused, avoid.
2. **“Profane”** means lawful to be trodden (hence, profane in the sense of unhallowed, common); the absence of a divine or sacred character.
3. **“Fables”** means fiction, a fable, an invention, falsehood.
4. **“Exercise”** (gumnazo) speaks of Greek athletes engaging in athletic exercises in a gymnasium. In this usage, the exercise is not that of the physical body but that of the mind, emotions, and will (the spiritual part of a person).
5. **“Unto” means “with a view toward.”** Just as a Greek athlete would exercise with an intent to win in the athletic contest, so Timothy is exhorted to exercise with the intent to excel in godliness.

6. **“Godliness”** means reverence, respect, and piety toward God.

WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF THE WORD EXERCISE?

1. **When was the last time you sweated spiritually?**
2. **Would you describe your spiritual exercise routine as a regular ten-minute workout or that of a weekend warrior with no exercise during the week?**
3. **How does a lack of discipline affect what we think about every day?**
4. **What is the Lord saying to you about discipline?**

15 COMMON AREAS IN WHICH WE CAN BECOME LAX IN DISCIPLINE

Take a look at these fifteen areas in which we can grow complacent. Let the accountability begin today as you search your heart!

1. WE ARE HESITANT TO INITIATE FRIENDSHIPS.

2. WE FAIL TO FOLLOW UP (returning calls, school-work, finding a job, commitments, etc). We have made verbal commitments to people and organizations, but have failed to follow through.

3. WE HAVE STOPPED BELIEVING FOR CERTAIN PEOPLE. Remember that love endures and hopes for all things.

LOVE NEVER GIVES UP, NEVER LOSES FAITH, IS ALWAYS HOPEFUL, AND ENDURES THROUGH EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE.
_1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 (NLT)

This means believing for breakthrough, for salvation, and for change for other people. When we give up instead of pressing through and believing, it is like saying, “I’ll just wait and see.” This is pure passivity.

Believing for people builds endurance. It is easy to believe for two or three days (sometimes for only two or three hours). We are to believe, and there is no set time limit for faith. Jesus said in John 6:29, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” How long can you believe for others? How long can you believe for yourself?

A. LOVE DOES NOT GIVE UP ON TRUTH AND OBEDIENCE. Instead, love rejoices with the truth, celebrates obedience, and stands on the promises of God.

B. LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS. How quick are we to cover another person’s faults? Love feels the pain of those who fail and helps carry the burden of the hurt.

SURELY HE HAS BORNE OUR GRIEFS AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS; YET WE ESTEEMED HIM STRICKEN, SMITTEN BY GOD, AND AFFLICTED. BUT HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES; THE CHASTISEMENT FOR OUR PEACE WAS UPON HIM, AND BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED. *_ISAIAH 53:4-5 (NKJV)*

AND ABOVE ALL THINGS HAVE FERVENT LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER, FOR “LOVE WILL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS.”
_1 PETER 4:8 (NKJV)

C. LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS. Love is not suspicious or cynical. Love always opts for a favorable possibility. Love is not ready to believe the worst about someone.

BROTHERS, EVEN IF A MAN IS CAUGHT IN ANY TRESPASS, YOU WHO ARE SPIRITUAL, RESTORE SUCH A ONE IN A SPIRIT OF GENTLENESS; EACH ONE LOOKING TO YOURSELF, SO THAT YOU TOO WILL NOT BE TEMPTED. *_GALATIANS 6:1 (NASB)*

D. LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS. Even when belief in a loved one's goodness or repentance is shattered, love hopes. When it runs out of faith, it still holds onto hope. As long as God's grace is in play, anything can happen!

4. WE HAVE GIVEN UP ON PERSONAL REVELATION WE HAVE RECEIVED. (For example, you know the Lord has spoken to you about aiding a friend in need, but you have ignored His request).

5. WE HAVE NEGLECTED TO GUARD OUR MINDS AND MOUTHS.

6. WE LACK THE PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE OF OUR BODY, WHICH IS THE TEMPLE OF THE SPIRIT. (For example, you now know the importance of eating from all major food groups. You cannot be lazy about this and later expect God to fix the problems that come as a result.)

7. WE HAVE BEEN CARELESS ABOUT SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES (reading the Bible, prayer, intercession, etc.).

8. WE HAVE FLED TRIALS RATHER THAN ENDURING THEM. (For example, asking the Lord to change you, but then not receiving the training and equipping opportunities He provided.)

There may still be sorrow over current trials and character development. We are mourning, complaining, and resisting the Lord in the way He works to change us. We cry out, "Lord, come and change me, rearrange me!" but we don't think about the fact that rearranging us takes work and causes pain.

9. WE HAVE BEEN WILLING TO STOP SHORT OF MATURITY. We are not making the choices (daily, hourly, by-the-minute) to put away childish behaviors like arguing with roommates or spouses, looking for excuses, or finding the "easy way out."

10. WE HAVE LET DISTRACTIONS DRAW US AWAY FROM STAYING FOCUSED. We have given in to the temptation to move away from the goals set before us.

It is like an individual standing before a target with bow and arrows in hand. Suddenly they begin looking at other nearby targets at which others are shooting, and they start shooting aimlessly at whichever target catches their eye.

There are four common sources of this lack of discipline:

A. COMPARISON: "I want to do what they're doing, not what God has asked of me."

B. JEALOUSY: "I want to be like them, to have what they have (ie. influence), or produce fruit like they do."

C. BOREDOM: We allow our obedience to God to become mundane and boring for us. This is a lack of mental toughness.

D. RELATIVE OBEDIENCE: We obey God relatively, not literally, not taking Him at His word. (ie If He told me to call all five people and I decide to call only three, I am establishing my own plan and "shooting arrows" at my own whim.)

11. WE NEGLECT PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING. We can overlook the importance of expressing our praise and gratitude to God as well as to others.

12. WE CHOOSE TO HOLD ONTO THE INJUSTICES IN OUR LIFE. This allows us to remain victims and not choose victory. We exaggerate the pain we may have experienced, which is a major distraction from moving forward with other issues; fosters passivity.

13. WE ARE LACKING IN OUR ZEAL AND BELIEF FOR THE HARVEST! We are like a man throwing out a net but saying, "We won't catch anything anyway."

14. WE NEED TO CULTIVATE OUR ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO WAIT ON GOD.

We cannot afford to reject God's timing, modify His process, or challenge His ways. It is like a person constantly checking his or her watch in the middle of a conversation. How rude! The Lord wants to remind us of Noah's enduring patience in waiting to see the fulfillment of his faith – over 100 years!

15. WE SELDOM READ THE WORD WITH EXPECTANCY.

Do we believe whole-heartedly the promises of the Scriptures, even though they seem impossible to the human mind?

FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND POWERFUL, AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD, PIERCING EVEN TO THE DIVISION OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, AND OF JOINTS AND MARROW, AND IS A DISCERNER OF THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF THE HEART.

_HEBREWS 4:12 (NKJV)

YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH.

_PSALM 119:105 (NKJV)

ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND IS PROFITABLE FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE COMPLETE, THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.

_2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 (NKJV)