

# DISCIPLINE – A FATHER’S DAY MESSAGE

## 1 Timothy 4:6-8

### INTRODUCTION

What do you think of when you hear the word “discipline”?

- A consequence of wrong behavior?
- A claustrophobic, restricted lifestyle?
- Younger children with good parents probably think → spanking ☺

No matter how one defines it, we live in an undisciplined world

We live in a world immersed in superficiality and overindulgence. A world worships the idols of recreation and relaxation.

Godly spiritual discipline is the exact opposite of this.

- At the heart of spiritual discipline is **denial of self** and **control of self**.

Vladimir Lenin – “*With a handful of dedicated people who will give me their lives, I will control the world.*”

- One of the few areas where He was right – **the future belongs to the disciplined.**

In his book *The Disciplined Life*, Richard Shelley Taylor writes, a disciplined person “*rises courageously, even heroically, to meet life and conquer it. He resolutely faces his duty. He is governed by a sense of responsibility. He has inward resources and personal reserves which are the wonder of weaker souls. He brings adversity under tribute, and compels it to serve him.*”

Today is **Father’s Day**.

Elder’s Meeting Monday Night – we discussed Men’s Ministry

What defines our Men’s Ministry? The Pastoral Epistles speak to the heartbeat of God regarding what ministry of men would look like.

Tuesday Morning Men’s Bible Study – 17 men attending a biblical study

While the truth in our passage applies to every Christian, this being Father’s Day, I am going to be speaking directly to the men.

You ladies get to sit in and listen and there are truths that apply to you.

### READ 1 Tim 4:6-8

**Proposition: 4 Responsibilities** for the Fathers on this Father’s Day:

- 1. Build Up**
- 2. Watch Out**

### 3. Bear Down

### 4. Look Forward

**1<sup>st</sup> Responsibility** of a godly Father...

#### I. **Build Up** **4:6**

Point – Positive Building – Your focus is not negative tearing down. Your focus is positive building up.

Proof – 1 Tim 4:6 – “**In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.**”

Paul lays out Practices of a “**good servant,**” of a Faithful Father (Application for Father’s Day)

#### A. A Faithful Father will ... **Teach the Word of God**

“**In pointing out these things to the brethren”**

1 Tim 3:14; **4:6, 11, 15**; 5:7, 21; 6:2, 11; 2 Tim 2:2

- Paul writes to Timothy fully expecting his teaching will not stop and lay dormant with Timothy. They will be passed on.

**Illustration:** – Turn to **2 Kings 7** – four lepers who were dying of starvation during the siege of Samaria. They were in no man's land outside the city gate, not allowed in, and before them lay the army of the Arameans.

**2 Kings 7:9-10** They go to the city gatekeepers and tell them, and the Bible tells us that those men “shouted the news”.

- They had the good news and they realized it was sinful to just take it in. In the Same way, we need to share it. We need to be an evangelizing church.

#### B. A Faithful Father will ... **Be Humble with the Word of God**

Paul had returned to Ephesus after his first Roman imprisonment, and found that Ephesus was a storm center of false teaching. Paul had dealt with the leaders of the trouble (Hymenaeus and Alexander – 1:19-20), but anticipating further trouble, Paul left Timothy in charge. Paul had hoped to return from Macedonia soon, but was having to stay longer than he expected so he writes Timothy to encourage him and make sure he understands he has the authority for this difficult task.

(“let no one look down on your youthfulness” – 4:12).

While encouraging Timothy to be bold in his authority, Paul also balances Timothy’s authority with humility

- 2 wings on airplane of leadership - authority and humility

1) “**pointing out these things**” - literally “placing before” the people – mild term

- The words of the faith, the sound doctrine, the truth of God is to be soothing to the wounded, not aggravating.
- It is a light to the path, not a dagger to pierce the ribs.

→ **Place the truth before your children in an appealing way.**

2) Paul could say “your people” or “your flock” or “your congregation.” Instead, he says “**the brethren**”

- remembering the need for humility - brothers and sisters in Christ

3) Paul could tell Timothy by placing these things before the brethren he would be a good leader, he could tell him he would be a good pastor, a good overseer, a good elder, but Paul writes instead that Timothy will be a good “**servant**” – *diakonos*

- the man of God needs to be humble with the Word of God

C. A **Faithful Father** will ...

**Feed constantly on the Word of God**

“**constantly nourished**” – *constantly* is added in NASB because the grammar implies a continuous process – a daily nourishing

- You must continue to nourish yourself spiritually in the truths of the faith and the good teaching you have been following if you are going to be a good servant of Christ Jesus, a Faithful Father.
- The truth that burns on Sunday can become icy cold by Monday.

There is one way to be nourished spiritually → a diet of the Word

**Illustration:** An athlete will eat food that nourishes his body and prepares for the race. He won't eat a diet of cotton candy dipped in arsenic.

**Application:** If you don't read the Word, memorize the Word and meditate on the Word daily and delight in the Word, you will be a poor servant of Christ Jesus. You will be fragile, easily deceived and easily paralyzed by trouble and stuck in mediocrity.

But if you read the Word and memorize it and meditate on it, then you will be like a strong tree planted by streams of water that brings forth fruit. Your leaves won't wither in the drought and you will be productive in your life for Christ

John Piper – “*Christian living means living on the written Word of God, the Bible. In true Christian living, our relation to the Word is intentional, not haphazard. It's active not passive. We pursue it and don't just wait for it to happen. The Christian life is a joyful project that calls for energy and aim and resolve and determination. It is not coasting or drifting or something that just happens to you like the weather ... Our delight is in the Word of the Lord, and on this*

*Word we meditate day and night.*”

Beat the path to God daily. Beat the path to God while you have light. Night comes when you will not see the way. Beat the path to God in his Word every day. Make the path well-worn. Then, when you are weak and the darkness falls, your body will find its way home through the evening mist to food and refreshment.

D. A **Faithful Father** will ...

**Know the Message of the Word of God**

“**the words of the faith**” → broad phrase describing the Gospel, Scripture in general

E. And a **Faithful Father** will ...

**Know the Theology of the Word of God**

“**the sound doctrine**” refers to the theology in Scripture, Doctrine

- we need to know The Book!

F. A **Faithful Father** will ...

**Obey the Word of God**

“**which you have been following**” –

- Timothy has followed and is following (perfect tense)
- he is a disciple of Christ – by definition, one who follows Christ

John Newton – “*My grand point in preaching is to break the hard heart, and to heal the broken one.*”

**Application:** Father, as you give your children wisdom, you give your children the gospel with **2 goals** in mind:

- 1) to **break** their hard hearts and
- 2) to **heal** their broken hearts

Build Up, ...

**2<sup>nd</sup> Responsibility** of a godly Father ...

**II. Watch Out 4:7a**

Point – Main focus is positive building up ... but **warning**

- It has rightly been said, **a pastor's heart** is not just manifest in how good he is at petting sheep. A pastor's heart is equally manifest in how capable he is at protecting his sheep from wolves.
- In the same way, Fathers, this is your responsibility with your families.

Proof – **1 Tim 4:7a** – “**But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.**”

“**worldly**” – means “worthy of being stepped upon”

- translated as “profane” in **1 Tim 1:9**

“**fable**” – *muthos* – fiction, fable, falsehood, a lie

- word from which we get the English word “myth” translated as such in **1:4; 2 Tim 4:4**

“**fit only for old women**” – sarcastic label frequently used in philosophical debate in 1<sup>st</sup> century – describes something utterly foolish and devoid of value

“**worldly fables**” = deceitful spirits and doctrine of demons in **4:1-5** – warning passage, continues what Paul began in **1:3-10**.

- Paul encourages Timothy to **stand strong and fight - Be a man!**
- We live in a time and place where there is a willingness to accept everything without question.

**Illustration:** – Phil Gaines at Men’s Study on Tuesday about men who compromise – “*It’s like trying to hold jello.*”

This results in an undisciplined generation of Christians, and mediocrity in the church’s message and effectiveness.

Martin Luther – “*If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages there the loyalty of the soldier is proven.*”

→ Protect your Family

**Illustration:** When we were in Delaware, we lived in a cul-de-sac where there were new homes being built. There were many construction workers around daily and over time, these construction workers were ogling and gawking at my most beautiful wife. This made her uncomfortable. Then, one day when I was gone, as Margie got out of the car, one of them said something. I came home and heard about this. They had crossed a line. Most of the workers were gone but one van was just beginning to leave. I stood in its path to block it. The driver stopped and asked me if there was a problem. I said yes there is. I told him the situation and he immediately said he had nothing to do with it. But he knew that it was the bricklayers. They had all left for the day. I told him to tell the bricklayers that I’ll be happy to have a one-on-one conversation with any of them about this. They need to leave my wife alone. The driver told me he would tell the bricklayers that they were messing with the wife of the wrong man.

The next day, I found the foreman of the bricklayers and explained the situation. He responded that that was unacceptable behavior and he would deal with it. From that day on, Margie was invisible to them. They didn’t even glance in her direction when she left the house. She could have blown an air horn and seemingly no one would have noticed.

God has given you the responsibility to protect your family. Protect them physically and, even more importantly, protect them spiritually.

**Application:** Don't be a coward, Timothy. Don't display a guilty silence. Point those things out which are under fire. Then you will be “a good minister of Christ Jesus.” You will be a Faithful Father.

**Application: 2 Myths**

**1. The Myth of Adolescence** - the idea that young men and women are “kids.” They are not “kids” from a biblical standpoint, they are young men and women.

**2. The Myth of Magical Independence At The Age Of 18** - they are not somehow thrust from your responsibility or authority the day they turn 18.

**Another Dynamic: The Tail is Wagging the Dog** - I saw this dynamic multiple times when I first came to STBC. I haven't seen it much since. Fathers were excited about the direction of STBC, expository teaching and deeper doctrine. And then, poof, they are gone. We would then find out after the fact that their children want to be in that youth group over here. First off, are your children even saved? If they are saved, just how much of a mature believer are they? Are you going to let the least mature member of your household determine where you go to church?

You interact with your children, you discuss these things, but you make the decision. Don't let the tail wag the dog.

Build Up, Watch Out, ...

**3<sup>rd</sup> Responsibility** of a godly Father ...

**III. Bear Down 4:7b**

Point – Spiritual Discipline – centerpiece of our passage is Paul's exhortation ... **1 Tim 4:7b** – “**On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;**”

Discipline for the Christian is very simple: It is the relentless pursuit of holiness.

- It is bringing desires and emotions under the control of God.
- Discipline submits to the authority of the Word of God rather than following the siren song of: impulse, desire, and pressure.

Proof – “**discipline**” – from Greek word *gumnadzo* – origin of English “gymnasium”

Paul's point is ...

1. use of this athletic term pictures the intense training and self-sacrifice of an athlete
2. just as the athlete exerts to the fullest, in the same way, Christian, you exert to the fullest for the glory of God
3. just as the athlete frees himself from every burden, so you men need to free yourself from burdens - get rid of it
4. just as the athlete has his eye on the goal, to win the race/contest, so you **MUST RUN TO WIN**

Turn to **1 Cor 9:24-27** - Paul uses this athletic language, for example, in the context of his

willingness to sacrifice his Christian liberty

The **Goal** of Discipline? → “**for the purpose of godliness**”

- just as an athlete disciplines himself with a view to win the race, so the Christian should compete to win the race of life, to excel in godliness, to win the prize

**Illustration: David Livingstone** began working when he was 10 years old. He worked in a cotton mill in Scotland from six in the morning until eight at night. He so purposefully used his “free time” that he mastered Latin before he was 16. He earned a medical degree and a degree in theology by the age of 27.

**Illustration:** A man named **Irving Stone** spent a lifetime studying greatness. He wrote biographies of Michelangelo and Vincent van Gogh. Stone was once asked if he had found a thread that runs through the lives of all these exceptional people.

He said, “*I write about people who sometime in their life...have a vision or dream of something that should be accomplished...and they go to work. They are beaten over the head, knocked down, vilified and for years they get nowhere. But every time they're knocked down they stand up. You cannot destroy these people. And at the end of their lives they've accomplished some modest part of what they set out to do.*”

How you use your "free time" after work, meals and sleep (which is overrated) will determine if you will be a man of mediocrity or a man to be reckoned with.

Martin Luther - "*Work, work, from early to late. In fact, I have so much to do, I will spend the first three hours in prayer.*"

- he understood who controlled his calendar
- he understood his priorities

**Application:** Men, The future does not belong to the lazy, the distracted, the complacent, the impulsive, the lovers of comfort. The future belongs to the disciplined.

- There are no disciplined people who did not pay a price.
- Discipline requires sacrifice.

Build Up, Watch Out, Bear Down ...

**4<sup>th</sup> Responsibility** of a godly Father ...

**IV. Look Forward 4:8**

Point – **What is the Motivation behind Spiritual Discipline?**

The motivation is twofold:

- 1) **Profit**
- 2) **Promise**

**Proof – 1 Tim 4:4 – “for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life to come*.”**

“**profit**” – bodily discipline is of some profit, but value is limited to this life

Paul moves from the lesser to the greater,

→ “**profit**” – from bodily discipline to spiritual discipline

→ “**promise**” – from the present life to the one to come

this “**profit**” vanishes in comparison to the infinite “**promise**” of spiritual discipline → spiritual discipline = “**godliness**”

- your bodily discipline profits only the body
- your spiritual discipline profits your body in this life AND profits your soul for eternity

“**promise**” – *epangelia* – comes from root “angel” - used often in classical Greek

- in **classical Greek**, it is never the gods who promise something to men, but only men to gods
- in **Christianity**, it is God who makes the promises - there is one Promise keeper

God’s promise produces in us hope, grit, determination, and joy

in Joshua’s farewell address ...

**Josh 23:14 – “you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed.”**

Godliness: “**holds promise for the present life**”

- Men, your eternal life began at your conversion.
- It began when God made you a new creation in Christ.

“**and *also* for the life to come.**”

**1 Cor 9:25 – “everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.”**

In his book *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, R Kent Hughes said this:

*“In Christ, spiritual discipline frees us from the gravity of this present age and allows us to soar with the saints and angels.”*

Spurgeon said – *“When the invisible is near, the visible loses power over us.”*

**Illustration:** Do you want to be engaged your whole life? Engagement is great, but how much

better is marriage? → “**the life to come.**” How much better will it be when we serve and rejoice and have communion, when we worship and praise Him fully!

## CONCLUSION

Paul said in **Phil 3:13** "**Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.**"

**Malachi 4: 5-6** "**Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.**"

Men, have the heart of God. Men, have the mind of Christ in your thinking, in your behavior and in your passion. May God bless you and your ministry to your beloved bride and to your children. And when He does that, God will bless the ministry of this church, God will bless His presence, and God will adopt men and woman in the East Valley and everywhere we have influence over - all for His glory.