

Sacrifice, Stewardship, Simplicity

Intro

I Timothy 4:7,8 “Rather train (Discipline, Exercise, gymnastics) yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

“Spiritual Disciplines, which some may see as restrictive and binding, are actually the means to spiritual freedom.” Whitney

Tom Laundry, the famous Dallas football coach, says, “The job of a football coach is to make men do what they don’t want to do in order to achieve what they’ve always wanted to be.” We are called to do things that we would not naturally do in order to become like Jesus.

Skill in playing an instrument comes from training; skill in playing a sport comes from discipline.

Take a light and concentrate it and focus it and it can become a laser that can cut up to 1-inch thick.

Take sand and concentrate into a high velocity stream and smooth out concrete or steel.

Don’t want to produce shot guns Christians! We want to produce rifles that can shoot with precision accuracy.

“We aren’t merely to wait for holiness; we’re to pursue it.” Whitney

Simplicity-Rejecting materialism. Simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward life style that sets us free to receive provision of God as a gift.

Sacrifice-An act of offering something precious; destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else.

1) Stewardship-The Disciplined use of time, money and other resources.

a) God owns it all!

i) Psalms 24:1 “The Earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.”

b) We are stewards

i) **A steward is a manager of another’s affairs or property.** Food store example.

ii) **Stewards are faithful!-I Corinthians 4: 1,2** ¹ This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

iii) **The faithful prove their stewardship when they have little. Luke 16:10-13** ¹⁰ “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³ No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

c) **Areas of Stewardship**

i) **Time-Luke 19:**

(1) *prag-mat-yoo'-om-ahee* -to busy oneself with, that is, to *trade*: - occupy

- (2) Faithful Stewards: Luke 19:11-27 The Parable of the Ten Minas ¹¹ As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. ¹² He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. ¹³ Calling ten of his servants, ^[a] he gave them ten minas, ^[b] and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' ¹⁵ When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. ¹⁶ The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! ^[c] Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' ¹⁹ And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.' ²⁰ Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; ²¹ for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' ²² He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? ²³ Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' ²⁴ And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' ²⁵ And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!' ²⁶ 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ²⁷ But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'"
- (3) **Why did Jesus tell this parable?**-They supposed the kingdom of God was going to appear quickly.
- (a) HE countered that thought by telling people to stay busy gaining with what he had left them.
- (b) People have this flight mentality that makes them of no use for God.
- (4) **Warning Against Idleness** II Thess. 3:6-12 ⁶ Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹ For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹² Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. ^[d] ¹³ As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴ If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.
- (5) **What do we learn from these two passages?**
- (a) Make productive use of your time
- (b) Receive and put to use the treasures God has entrusted to you.
- (c) God demands increase of our time
- (d) Ignorance is not rewarded

- (e) God doesn't reward the fearful
- (f) If you are faithful you will receive increase on your efforts and also receive what the others wasted.

ii) **Money-Luke 16:10-13**

- (1) **God and money compete for lordship**
- (2) **Be a cheerful giver I Cor 9:7-8** ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency^[e] in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work
- (3) **The Balance of poverty and riches-** Proverbs 30: 7-9 ⁷ Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: ⁸ Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, ⁹ lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.
- (4) **Money is an indication of your heart. Matthew 6:19-21** ¹⁹ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^[a] destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- (5) **Rich fall in a snare 1Ti 6:9-10** But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. (10) For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
- (6) **Proverbs**
 - (a) **Don't trust in riches Pro 11:28** He that trusteth in his **riches** shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.
 - (b) **Don't allow riches to attract you away. Riches are fleeting Pro 23:1-5** When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what *is* before thee: (2) And put a knife to thy throat, if thou *be* a man given to appetite. (3) Be not desirous of his dainties: for they *are* deceitful meat. (4) Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. (5) Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

iii) **Body-**

- (1) **I am not my own!-I Corinthians 6:19-** ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
- (2) **I offer my body to God!-Romans 12:1-2** ¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers,^[a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.^[b] ² Do not be conformed to this world,^[c] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.^[d]
- (3) **Discipline my body!-I Corinthians 9:24-27** ²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control,^[b] lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

An illustration from *Tally Ho, The Fox!*

Dogs chase foxes. Have you ever seen a fox stole?

Several hunters out together one day began to tell tales, and one said, “My dog can pick up a 50-year-old scent on the trail.”

“I know how we can find out,” the oldest of them said. He and his grey, weathered hound always stood ready for amusement. “An old fox used to run underneath the old abandoned house down the road.” The guys ambled down to the house and let the dog sniff around. Suddenly, the hound took off, dragging his owner to the edge of the house, where the dog started yapping and sniffing, pulling hard at the rope until the hunter turned the dog loose. He darted off across the yard; then, about 20 yards from the house, the dog leaped about 6 feet into the air without warning.

“What is wrong with that crazy dog?!” one of the hunters cried.

“Crazy dog, nothing – 40 years ago there was a 6-foot fence, and that fox used to jump right through that fence,” the old hunter said with a guffaw.

The dog took off straight, yapping and sniffing, and then veered to the right to follow a curved course away from the house.

The old hunter smiled, eyes twinkling above his wiry beard, and said, “40 years ago, there was a stand of trees and bushes right there the fox used to skirt around. Sure enough, that dog of yours is following the trail of that old fox.”

The dog kept proceeding across the field, sniffing and yapping until he had disappeared.

The hunters had been so fascinated with watching the dog that they hadn’t noticed the dog had ran beyond of sight and sound.

“We better go after him and see where he takes us!” One young hunter said with excitement.

But search as they would, they couldn’t find the dog. After hunting for the dog the rest of the day, they gave up and split off to their homes in the deepening twilight.

Two years later, after giving up the search and giving up hope, the dog owner received a phone call.

“Are you the owner of a dog named Rex?” the faraway voice asked.

“Well, we haven’t heard of or seen him for two years. Who is this? Why are you asking?”

“I am the owner of a department store in New York City,” the man continued with some wonderment, “and I identified the dog by the name and address on his tag. He is downstairs in my store and I can’t get him out.”

The hunter gasped in sudden, disbelieving realization.

“He has an old fox stole cornered in the basement and we can’t get him to leave it,” the department store owner said.

Silence fell briefly, broken by the hunter’s deep laugh.

Quickly recovering from his astonishment, the dog’s master sized up the situation and asked, “Would you consider shipping my dog back home at my expense?” No expense loomed too great for such a hound.

“I considered that, and I looked into it,” the store owner replied, “and frankly, sir, the cost of shipping a dog is much too high for his value, in my opinion.”

The hunter weighed his options.

“Well how much is it for the fox stole?” The owner asked.

“\$65, sir,” the store owner answered, confused.

“Well, do me a favor,” the owner said. “I would like to purchase the fox stole. Please ship it to me today.” He paused.

“Then, sometime tomorrow, leave the basement door of your store open for 5 minutes.”

What is your fox?

Be discipline followers of Christ Jesus.

Other passages:

Have understanding you are given more.

Mat 13:11-17 He answered and said unto them, **Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. (12) For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. (13)** Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. (14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: (15) For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (16) But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. (17) For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

Mar 4:21-25 And he said unto them, **Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? (22) For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. (23) If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. (24) And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. (25) For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.**

II cor 9:3-15 ³ But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as I have been telling them, and that your money is all collected. I don't want to be wrong in my boasting about you. ⁴ We would be embarrassed—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren't ready after all I had told them! ⁵ So I thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly. ⁶ Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. ⁷ You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."^[c] ⁸ And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. ⁹ As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever."^[d] ¹⁰ For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity^[e] in you. ¹¹ Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. ¹² So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem^[f] will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. ¹³ As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. ¹⁴ And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. ¹⁵ Thank God for this gift^[g] too wonderful for words!