

# Discipline Needed for Holiness

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[ 0 : 00 ] You know, whenever we want to do something in life that is worthwhile, okay, we set a goal for ourselves, for example, those goals, those things that are worthwhile in life require on our part a certain amount of self-discipline. For example, if you want to go to college, it would be who you to do well in high school, to study for your SAT, your ACT, all of those great things, those great tests that we all loved taking at one point in time. If you desire to get in shape, your goal is to lose weight, put on muscle, that's going to require self-discipline. It's going to require us to eat right. It's going to require us to go to the gym regularly. It's going to be a lifestyle, self-discipline. If we desire to buy a new vehicle, that's going to require self-discipline. It's going to require us to take money each month and put it aside, so that way when it comes time to buying that new vehicle, we've got the money to pay for it, and that requires self-discipline. Let's take as an example, an example of self-discipline, the swimmer that probably everyone in this room is aware of. His name is Michael Phelps. Michael Phelps is an American swimmer who holds the record for the most Olympic medals won by any athlete at the age of 28 years old, including 23 gold medals and 13 individual golds. Phelps competed in his first Olympics at just the age of 15 as a part of the

U.S. men's swim team. He was the first American male swimmer to earn a spot on five Olympic teams and also made history as the oldest individual gold medalist in Olympic swimming history at the age of 28. I don't really consider that old, but that is what it is. Michael Phelps, his swimming workout, and get this, his 12,000 a day calorie diet is one of the most intense and demanding around.

His training routine and his meal plan are astonishing for someone who was only six foot four, yes that's tall, but he weighed only 165 pounds. In his peak training phases, Phelps would swim a minimum of 50 miles every week. He would practice twice a day, sometimes more if he was training at altitude. Phelps would train for around five to six hours a day, six days a week, and in addition to all of this, he would weight train three days a week. Now, all of that's great, but the one thing that stood out to me was his diet, because anyone who knows me well, you know that I love to eat and I look forward to Fridays, which my family has called junk food Friday, where we sit around and we eat nothing but junk food. Michael Phelps eats or ate in his training phase 12,000 calories every single day. Let that sink in for just a second. 4,000 calories a meal. I eat about 3,000 calories a day. So just for breakfast,

Michael Phelps eats more than the average man in a single meal. Let's look at some of his, some of the food that he ate every single day during his training phase. For breakfast, 4,000 calories. Phelps would eat three fried egg sandwiches with cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, fried onions, and mayo. He would then drink two cups of coffee. He would consume a five-egg omelet, a bowl of grits, three slices of French toast with powdered sugar, and three chocolate chip pancakes with all of the syrup and goodies on top.

That's just breakfast. For lunch, he would then eat a pound of pasta, a pound, and then go swimming. A pound of pasta, two large ham and cheese sandwiches on white bread with mayo, and then he would consume 1,000 calories in energy drinks. Now, I'm just going to say this to our young people because they love energy drinks. My brother-in-law is a doctor. His name is Ian, and he has actually told me one of the worst things that you can put in your body is an energy drink, and he would drink 1,000 calories of it. So just because Michael Phelps did it doesn't make it right, but he drinks more energy drinks.

[ 5 : 05 ] For example, at dinner, he would drink another 1,000 calories of energy drinks. He would eat another pound of pasta and a full pizza, equating to about 12,000 calories a day, and then he would repeat that the following day. Now, for most of us in this room, we would think, hey, that's a little bit of overeating. I'm going to tell you, if I ate that much food, I wouldn't be 165 pounds. I'd be 265 pounds in no time at all. Most of us in this room would agree that if someone was eating 12,000 calories a day, that might be borderline gluttony, right? But Michael Phelps, he was a calorie-burning machine.

He worked out constantly, okay? He did this, and it was a lifestyle, and just to consume the food alone required a certain amount of self-discipline. Michael Phelps didn't become the world's greatest swimmer because he went to the gym every day for an hour and ate 3,000 calories. Michael Phelps became the world's greatest swimmer because he had self-discipline. The same can be true for holiness.

In our walk with Christ, we are called to be holy, and in order to be holy, in order to walk in a manner that is worthy unto the Lord, well, that requires two things. It requires the filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and it requires, on our part, self-discipline. This morning, we're going to talk about the latter. We are going to talk about the disciplines that are needed for holiness, and I believe that this text right here, 1 Peter 1, 13 through 21, gives us four ways that we can discipline our lives for holiness. Number one, if we're going to discipline our lives for holiness, we must have the right mindset. We have to have the right mindset. Look at verse 13. He says, therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now, that phrase there, preparing your minds, it's one word in the original language of the New Testament, which is koionea Greek. It's one word, and if you're familiar with the King James Version, it is sometimes translated as gird up your loins.

When I was a young boy, and we would go to church service after Sunday school, the whole youth group would kind of sit together. We would sit there, and our home church preacher would preach from the King James Version, and every time he said, gird up your loins, we would just kind of sit there and chuckle.

We thought it was kind of silly. Gird up your loins, but it is translated as preparing your minds. The idea here in this word is taking a garment and pulling that garment up, so that way it's easier for you to walk. It might be like a lady wearing a dress, and it's raining outside, and there are puddles everywhere. She might pull that dress just up a little bit so she can walk a little easier and not splash water all over her dress. And that's kind of what's going on here in this phrase, preparing your minds.

[ 8 : 41 ] It means get yourself ready. Prepare. And he says to be sober-minded. And what's neat about the word mind here, yes, it is the faculty of reasoning. It is the place that we think, but it can also be translated as being self-controlled. Being self-controlled. And I think all of us in here can agree that being a person that is self-controlled takes a certain amount of discipline on our part. I mean, how many times has someone made you upset, and you just wanted to explode, but you didn't because you knew it might get you fired. It might upset the person. It might put you in a weird predicament. Who knows? But it required a certain amount of self-control, self-discipline on your part. And so this is all something that we do by the power of the Holy Spirit, and it requires on our part self-discipline.

And thus, obedience is a conscious act of the will. It's a conscious act of the will. And he says that we prepare our minds, and we set our hope here on something in this verse. And that word hope is very interesting as well. In the English language, when we think of hope, we think of something as, I don't know, I hope mom makes fried chicken for lunch today. Okay? Mom might make fried chicken for lunch. She might not. She might make you a pound of pasta and a thousand calories of energy drinks. You don't know. You're hoping that she's going to make you what you want for lunch. You might say, well, I hope next weekend it doesn't rain, because we're going to the lake. Well, you don't know if it's going to rain or not. It might rain. It might not. And so the hope that we have sometimes, as translated in the English language, is, you know what, we really desire for something to happen. It may or may not happen. But that's not how the New Testament uses hope here. The word hope means, yes, we're desiring this to happen, but it will happen. It is set in stone, and nothing can change it. And the hope here is referring to the return of Jesus Christ. The return of Jesus Christ was so important to Peter hear here in this text that he has already mentioned it four times in this one chapter. Verse 5, 7, 9, and 13. One of my favorite commentators of all time, his name is Dr. John MacArthur. Many of you know who he is. You probably have a study Bible by him. He says this about hope. He says, if a Christian finds anything more attractive than fellowship with Jesus, if he yearns more to enjoy this world than to receive the joys of heaven, then he does not love Jesus' appearing. And so we, as followers of Jesus Christ, if we're going to walk in a way that is pleasing unto the Lord, we've got to discipline ourselves. And we do that, number one, by having the right mindset. Number two, if we're going to discipline our lives for holiness, we have to forsake the ungodly life that we had before we came to Christ. Look at verses 14 through 16. He says, as obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. Since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy. I hope there is one word in those verses that jump off the page for you, because that one word happens four times. That one word is holy. Peter tells the church, be holy, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, to the ways of this world.

The word conformed is a neat word in that it's got this picture of an artist. Many of you all have heard this illustration before, where the artist has a lump of clay, and he begins to mold and shape that lump of clay into whatever he or she wants it to look like. And that's what the world wants to do to us. The world wants to conform us into its own image. The world wants to conform us so we think like them, and we act like them, and we act like them, and our priorities are like them, and our worldview is like them. And when we do not conform, what happens? There's pushback and sometimes hostility.

And if you don't believe me, all you got to do is turn on the news today, and you see this very example. The world wants to conform us after its pattern and our former ignorance. But Peter says, don't do that.

He says, be holy. Now, the word holy here is the word *agios*, and it literally means to be dedicated or consecrated to God. Be dedicated or consecrated to God. And God's word has a lot to say about God's people being holy. For example, there's going to be a few verses up on the screen. Leviticus 11 44, for I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. Leviticus 19 2, speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel, and say to them, you shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. Romans 12 2, do not be conformed. There's that word again. Do not be conformed to this world, 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. The word holy occurs a lot. We just look at the New Testament alone.

[ 15 : 31 ] The word holy occurs 147 times in the New Testament. And what's interesting, 53 of those times is speaking about our need to be holy, to be pure, to be walking in a way that is pleasing unto the Lord. And so while we are here on this earth, while we are living, we have to fight the desires of sin. We have to be separated from evil, not be conformed to our former passions or to the way this world would have us to live. We are called to be holy. We are called to get rid of that old life, to take it off, that old life we had before we came to Christ. One of my favorite things as a parent, and my family will be at the 1030 service, is embarrassing my kids. I live for it. I love embarrassing my children. My dad liked to embarrass me when I was growing up, and so we kind of pass it down. And so what I'm going to do right now, she's not here, so I can't embarrass her directly, but I'm going to embarrass my daughter Ava, okay? Now before you get upset at me for doing this,

I asked for her permission, and she said it was okay to use her in this illustration. So here we go. When my daughter was about three years old, her first Halloween came around, and she, for Halloween, wanted to be a horsey, a horsey. She didn't want to be a cowgirl.

She didn't want to have a pet horse that, you know, she could pretend to walk down the road. She actually wanted to be the horse itself. And so my wife and I were sitting there thinking, where in the world are we going to find a horsey costume? And at that point in time, Michael was not born yet. We were finishing up seminary in North Carolina, and one of the things to do when you lived in Wake Forest was to go to Target, all right? I mean, that's just what you did.

It's kind of like Walmart and Pickens. There was nowhere to go, but you could go to Target. And so we went to Target, and we went up and down the costume aisle, and would you believe there was a horsey outfit in that aisle? Ava saw it, and she wanted it. It was about a week before Halloween. We bought that outfit, and we brought it home. And you know what she wanted to do. As soon as we got home, she wanted to put it on and, you know, and play with it. And we thought, oh my goodness, she's not going to, this costume's not going to last until Halloween. But we let her put it on, and what amazed me about her putting on this costume was that the moment she put it on, she was no longer my daughter. She was a horsey. She didn't talk like Ava. No, she neighed, okay?

She didn't walk like Ava. Nope. She galloped around the house. She became a horsey when she put that costume on. She'd take that horsey costume outside into the garage. I had a five-gallon bucket out there where I would use that bucket to wash the cars and so forth. And she would go out there, and she would pretend to feed that horsey, and it was really neat to watch. After Halloween got done, and she would continue to wear this horsey outfit, she decided one time while she was playing with it that the horsey, well, the horsey needed a drink of water. And so instead of taking it to, you know, the spigot or to the kitchen, she decided that the horsey needed a drink of water, and she went into the bathroom. And she gave the horsey a drink of water from the toilet.

[ 19 : 20 ] Fortunately, my son was not born yet, so the toilet was flushed. And just between me and you, that horsey disappeared shortly thereafter.

But what amazed me was, like I said, how she became a horsey when she put it on, and how she became my daughter again when she took it off. Ephesians 4, 22 through 24 says this.

It says, put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life, and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Now, I know my illustration breaks down a little bit, but I hope you see the point. When we come to Christ, we're to take it off.

That old self, that ungodly life that we had before we were in Christ, we take it off, and we clothe ourselves in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If we're going to discipline our lives for holiness, we've got to have the right mindset, okay? We have to get rid of that ungodly life we had before we came to Christ. But number three, if we're going to discipline our lives for holiness, it's going to require reverent worship of God. Reverent worship of God. Look at verse 17.

And if you call on him as father, who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile. Now, that word conduct or conduct, it means to, yes, behave in a certain way, to have certain principles, but it can also mean to overturn completely. Pretty neat. When we come to Christ, we take our old conduct and we overturn it completely. And we conduct ourselves with, it says, fear, okay? Fear towards God. Now, yeah, fear, when we think of it in English, we think of being scared. You watch a scary movie, and as we like to say in the South, we get scurred, right? And fear can be that. It can be intimidating. And I do think there is room for a certain amount of that kind of fear towards God, because he is our creator. He is the judge.

[ 22 : 03 ] But it's not just that kind of fear. It's a reverent kind of fear. It's a fear of God's discipline and his fatherly displeasure. When I was growing up and I was young, when I did wrong, my dad would spank me, right? Yeah, I got spanking. Sometimes we got whoopings, right? My dad would spank me. But as I got older and I messed up, my dad wouldn't spank me anymore. Kind of outgrew that phase, I guess you would say. And he would say these words to me. I'm disappointed in you. Now, I would act like that didn't bother me, but it tore me out the frame. I'm disappointed in you.

Any child sitting in this room, if you've ever had your parents say those words to you, you know what I'm talking about. And whether or not you want to show it, you always desire to make your dad proud.

It's what a son wants to do. I remember when my dad told me those words. I'm proud of you. Made me feel good. But man, when he said, I'm disappointed in you, you know what? I'd rather get a spanking than for my dad to tell me he was disappointed in me. That's kind of the fear going on here.

It's a fear of God's discipline. It's a fear of his fatherly displeasure. And so we're to be concerned with the things that our heavenly father is concerned with. And every single aspect of our lives should be led by the guiding principle of reverent fear of God. That reverent fear, I would argue, is none other than worship. You could say it like this. You could say, live a life of worship. Because reverent fear for God is worship. And it's not just something we do on Sunday morning at 9 a.m. or 10 30. Reverent fear or worship of God is something that Christians should be doing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's not something we check off our list on Sunday afternoon. And so we have to ask ourselves in every area of our lives, are we fearing the Lord? Are we worshiping the Lord? So in my job, you've heard Fred say this a number of times. Am I giving my best? I should be known among my co-workers and my boss. I should be known as a man or a woman that does their job to the best of their ability all of the time. Why?

Because I'm worshiping my creator. I've told our youth this a number of times as well. Here's where the parents kind of do this, right? You go to school, you study as unto the Lord. You worship him in your studies. And so that means if you're an A student, you should be making A's, not B's.

[ 25 : 23 ] I would argue that if you're making anything less than the type of student you are, you're in sin. Because you're not fearing the Lord. It's not reverent worship. What about that relationship that you have with that individual that's kind of awkward?

Okay, they kind of get under your skin a little bit. All right. Is that relationship, can you honestly say, is that relationship reverent worship? Are you doing everything as far as it is with you to make that relationship the way it should be? My attitude towards all people should be done as reverent worship, fear in the Lord. And I fail that. I fail that all the time.

But that's what we're called to do. Christianity knows nothing of a Sunday morning only worship service. Okay? Something that we check off our list and then move on with the next thing on our agenda. I'm afraid that sometimes the church universal, not just a First Baptist thing, an East Pickens thing, this is a church universal, church-wide thing. That the church sometimes is more concerned about what they're eating for lunch than they are about living a life of reverent fear and worship unto the Lord. Ask yourself, how is my life in this area? Am I living for Him?

You may be thinking that I'm meddling now. I'm meddling and I sound like one of these religious kind of zealots. But the fact of the matter is, is that when we come to Christ, we don't just give Him Sunday morning or the occasional Wednesday night. We give Him our lives. We give Him everything.

Everything we say, everything we do comes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I tell our youth, often, when we're not in COVID-19 circumstances, that you cannot have one foot in the world and one foot in heaven or the church, however you want to word it. It doesn't work. You can't have both. It's one or the other. And this very fact right here is one of the reasons that Billy Graham himself was quoted a number of times as saying that 80 to 85 percent of the people in the church that have their names on the roll are lost. I want you to think about that. 80 to 85 percent of the people in the church today who have their names on the roll don't know Jesus. They may affirm the historical reality that Jesus came and lived and He died, but they do not have a relationship with Him because they're not living for Him.

[ 28 : 23 ] It's evident. And so ask yourself, am I worshiping God in every aspect of my life? If we're going to prepare our lives for holiness, it's going to require the right mindset. It's going to require forsaking our ungodly life before we came to Christ. It's going to require reverent worship of God.

And then finally, it's going to require a reminder of your redemption. A constant reminder of your redemption. Verses 18 through 21 in closing. Peter says, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you, who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory so that your faith and hope are in God.

The word ransomed here is a very rich, rich theological word. It can be translated as redeemed or you were bought. Okay. It's got the imagery of a slave. Okay. All of us in this room, if we're in Christ, at one point in our lives, we were a slave, but we're no longer a slave because we've been bought. Our freedom has been bought. And it was purchased through the currency of Jesus's blood. Jesus's blood. We were slaves to sin, but we are slaves to sin no more. We are now bondservants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are delivered from a life of futility to one of great significance. And that's why Peter says here in verse 18, that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers. Let me just say one thing about that phrase, your forefathers. Because Peter here, yes, as he's alluding to the Old Testament, he is speaking to parents. He is speaking to grandparents. He is speaking to the generations that came before. Let me just say this. Jesus's sacrifice breaks the inevitability and power of generational sin. Jesus's sacrifice breaks the inevitability and the power of generational sin. It's the idea that the sins of parents, grandparents are often repeated by later generations.

Parents, we got a huge responsibility to raise our kids up into the Lord. Huge. I mean, for example, how many times have, maybe you're a school teacher or you work with children and youth or, you know, in your job or in ministry, how many times have you said the words about a child, man, that child is off the chain. That child's terrible, right? And then the person you're talking to says, yeah, you ever met their father? Yeah, I think all of us have had that conversation at one point in our lives. It's the old saying that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. We have a huge responsibility, parents, to disciple our children, to set before them a good example, an example of discipline, of making the things that are important to God, important to us and our families. They're watching us. They're learning from us. And so Jesus's sacrifice here is compared to a lamb without blemish or spot.

[ 32 : 27 ] Okay. Once again, he's alluding to the Old Testament and he's alluding to that, those Old Testament sacrifices. And when the people would bring their Old Testament sacrifices into the temple, that sacrifice had to be perfect. It couldn't be an animal that was blind or an animal with a broken leg or, you know, something that you just kind of want to get rid of. So I'll just take it to the temple and sacrifice it. No, there were rules for that. That sacrifice had to be perfect, flawless. And of course, as New Testament believers in Christ, our spotless lamb, our perfect lamb was the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us. And it says here that God planned this, that Christ was foreknown before eternity past, that he would send his son to die for you, for me. And when I started thinking about that, it was like, you know, when God created me, he knew that he would have to send his son to die in order to redeem me, to redeem you. But even, even, even greater than that, as if it could get greater, God knew before he created you, who does, does not believe in Christ, to the unbeliever.

He knew before he created you, that you would rebel against him, he would send his son to die for you, and you would reject him. And he also knew, oh wayward believer, that when he created you, that he would have to send his son to die for you, to redeem you, only to have you later on in life fall away. Whereas we like to say sometimes, backslide.

And when I started thinking about that, I just started thinking about the awesome mercy of God in my life. I haven't walked with the Lord, I'd love to say I walked with the Lord every single day of my life to the best of my ability, but that would not be true. And he knew that, and still, before eternity passed, God had already determined, I'm going to send my son to redeem him.

So what about you? Are you living for him? Are you giving him your all in all? Do you know Christ as your Lord and your Savior? The Father sent him to die for you.

And in my sanctified imagination, I think that if you were the only person living, he would still send his son to die for you. Do you know him?

[ 35 : 23 ] In just a second, we're going to pray, and we're going to sing a hymn. And I'm going to be standing down here at the front. And if you're here today, and you don't know Christ as your Savior and your Lord, I would love nothing more than to pray with you, to talk with you.

Our next service doesn't start until 1030, and so I'll take all the time that is needed to talk with you. But maybe you're here this morning, and you know Christ as your Savior, and you realize, you know what, I'm not living for him like I should.

Once again, I'll be down here at the front to pray, or you can just pray right there at your pew. There's nothing magical about walking down an aisle. But however the Lord has led you this morning, let him have his way in your life.

Would you join me in prayer?