



The Joys and Fruits of Discipline

Zoom Bible Study | Tuesdays @ 7:00pm (CST)



May 23, 2023

Lesson Four

Lack of discipline is self-inflicted suffering.

What is the fruit of the Spirit?

Galatians 5:22 – 23: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

A reminder for us that we need to surrender ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit. When we feel overwhelmed by “all” that he asks us to do and be – he reminds us that when we quiet our hearts and open our hands before him and allow him to shape us – we can reflect our holy God.

Self-control means the restraint exercised over one’s impulses, emotions or desires.

We are admonished to control self, because self is not our solution, self - or really our flesh - is our problem.

Proverbs 25:28: Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.

Look at your own life right now and ask yourself where do I lack self-control – where are my walls broken down because of my unwillingness to exercise self-control. Even if the walls are only broken in one spot, or are beginning to crack, the enemy will find that spot, wherever it is, and he will invade you and try to destroy you at that point. We need to build up our walls of self-control so that we are not vulnerable to Satan's attacks.

Galatians 6:7: Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

If/when you sow seeds of discipline, of self-control, you will reap good benefits. The sowing takes time and effort, and it may not be your favorite thing, but you will like the harvest it yields.

However, if you're sowing seeds of no discipline, no self-control, don't be surprised to discover that the harvest is very painful and plentiful. Proverbs 13:18 tells us that the person who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame. Not a pleasant harvest, but that's what you'll reap in due season.

Living in an Orderly Way

What does God think about being organized and orderly? It is important to note that our God is a God of order. He is very organized. Think of how he created the world. It was done to perfection—each day building on the last day. Very orderly.

1 Corinthians 14:33: For God is not a God of disorder but of **peace**—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.



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1 Corinthians 14:40: But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

So, it stands to reason that since we serve an orderly God, and since we belong to him and everything we are and have belongs to him, and since we will give an account of our stewardship to him, we should also do things in an orderly way. Our lives should not be filled with confusion and chaos due to our carelessness or because we are messy or lazy. Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. This is a biblical principle.

Ephesians 5:15-16 (ESV): Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Remember, we are talking about stewardship. What you own (or rent)—your home, your stuff, your workplace, your environment—they belong to God and he expects you to take good care of them.

So what does it mean to be organized?

Being organized is having enough order in your environment so that things can be easily located and maintained. It is being able to find what you need when you need it. It is the ability to walk through your home, office or workplace without tripping over “stuff.” It is maintaining an environment which is mostly clutter-free.

The litmus test is a matter of efficiency: Do you maximize your energy and efforts because you are organized, or are you wasting time, opportunities and resources because of some lack of basic daily organizational habits?

Do you need to be more organized?

Here are some questions that will help you determine whether this discipline is in good, fair or poor condition in your life.

T or F (circle one)

1. T or F I have some sort of a written agenda or "to do" list for each day.
2. T or F I have a filing or storage system that could be understood by others.
3. T or F If I were out of my office/workplace, an important document or other work effort could be found there by someone else without ripping the place apart.
4. T or F I have specific places for certain things and I am careful to return things to their places.
5. T or F I spend less than 10 minutes a day looking for something I have misplaced.
6. T or F I can throw away things that are not necessary pretty easily; I'm not a "pack rat."
7. T or F I have a method of tracking the progress of any project in which I am involved. This includes deadlines, work effort, progress reports, or whatever is necessary to keep that project on target.
8. T or F My "stacks," if I have them, are organized; they are not just "piles." I know what is in a stack and it is stacked where it is for a purpose.
9. T or F Rarely do important appointments or commitments or deadlines fall between the cracks with me.
10. T or F Most days I feel I have control of my schedule and begin with a clear idea of the priorities for that day.

Scoring:

9 or 10 "True" answers: You are very orderly and could be teaching this session tonight.

5 to 8 "True" answers: You could be better organized.

3 or 4 "True" answers: You need to focus on this discipline.

1 or 2 "True" answers: HELP!

Organizing Your Daily Schedule

Do you think about organizing your day so that you work efficiently? Even if you don't go to work every day—you're retired or working at home—you need a plan for your day or it will just dwindle.

Notice what Jesus taught a great crowd that was following him:

Luke 14:28 – 30: Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

Isn't he basically teaching us to be organized. To plan what we're going to do so it will be done well, it will be done efficiently? Jesus expects us, as his followers, to use our time wisely, plan our time well, and work hard.

There are different ways and different seasons in our life that require creative thinking. Your smart phone, your Apple Watch, your iPad—there is an app out there for almost everything! Or you can use a calendar or a handwritten to-do list. Honestly, the only thing that matters is that you have a method and you use it religiously. I don't think any of us can keep it all in our minds efficiently enough. You need a method.

Here are some other helpful hints for to-do lists:

- Establish a daily time for planning your day. Some people like to record tomorrow's "to-dos" at the end of today. Others prefer doing it first thing in the morning. The important thing is to develop a habit of doing it consistently at a certain time each day.
- As you keep your daily list, group similar tasks as much as possible to avoid as much set up time as you can. For example, group all those phone calls you need to make and try to do them all at one time.
- Include long term goals and activities as well as short term. Remember, long term goals have to become a part of a daily plan or they'll always be long term and never accomplished. So, plan to do at least a small part of your long term goals each day or week, and you'll eventually get there.
- Be flexible. Often our days don't go as we hoped or planned, and we have to be prepared for re-scheduling, re-defining, or removing something from our list.

One last thought about these daily planning lists. Don't become paranoid about doing everything on your list. That list is somewhat of a "wish list;" it represents what you would like to accomplish on a given day, if all goes well and Murphy doesn't kick in. But most days are not that controllable, and there are interruptions, divine appointments, unplanned meetings, and all kinds of things that interfere with our routine.

As a believer in Jesus Christ, it is also important for me to remember that he is ultimately in control. Sure, he expects me to be a good steward of my time and being organized is therefore important. But he has a right to change my schedule, to alter my plans, to divert my attention. So, I need to hold my daily plan with open hands. So many times I've had the most wonderful experiences when someone or something interrupted my day. God had his own list for me, and he trumped mine with something better.

Organizing Your "Stuff"

First let's define the difference between stacks and piles:

- *Stacks* are accumulations of related information in one specific place.
- *Piles* are dumping grounds for unrelated items because we don't know where else to put them.

If your work environment is cluttered with piles or your home is cluttered with "stuff," it saps a great deal of your energy and mental capacity because of the confusion it causes.

Stacks become piles when you're afraid to look through that pile because you're not sure what is there and it may be something very important that you've forgotten!

Begin to get organized by:

1. Take everything out of its place and deep clean that area.
2. Declutter: put in one of five bins: throw away, give away (There are many people who are in need and we all have plenty of stuff that we can share), different place, needs attention, put back
3. Put like items together – this helps you see what kind of space you need.
4. Find proper storage containers – label if needed.
5. Refill the area with items that belong there.
6. Keep order – take the time to keep this new area in order.
7. Try it out for 30 days and if it is not working for you – change it up.

Organizing Paperwork

This is one area that you need not touch twice. Look at what is in your hand and decide what to do with it and move on. Really helps keep piles from getting out of control.

Organizing Your Budget

Do you have a budget? A budget is a great tool to be organized so that we can be a good steward of your financial resources. This is also an area where you can create peace in your life instead of disorder and stress.

Wise Women Managing Money/Miriam Neff and Valorie Neff Hogan: <https://www.wisewomenmanagingmoney.com/>

Dave Ramsey: <https://www.ramseysolutions.com/>

Organizing Food

How much of our time is spent around food? What to make, shopping for, preparing, cleaning up after – all to do it over again. This is also an area where we can spend some time getting organized.

Start Small

If you need to be more organized about your time and work effort, don't overwhelm yourself with fancy systems right off the bat. Start with a simple list, prioritize it, and set a thirty-day trial period. You feel like you need to get on top of the paperwork – begin with a pile and get it organized and stick with the system for thirty days and reevaluate.

To summarize some healthy habits of an organized person:

To have a daily routine, prioritize your daily to do list, do the worst thing first, don't procrastinate, everything has a place, declutter regularly, keep it simple (complicated won't last), remember your why!

Pray and ask God where there might be areas that you can improve in putting more order into your day. Ask him for the creativity and discipline to help you make these changes. And remember your "why". Organization brings peace and order which reflects our loving God. And we desire to be more like him.