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## THE POWER OF DISCIPLINE AT WORK - AND IN LIFE

By Jim Langley

What comes to mind when you hear the term, “the disciplined life”? Does it carry positive or negative connotations for you? The idea of a disciplined life has always intrigued me, especially since I have observed champions of important causes usually are highly disciplined. They strive for excellence in reaching their perceived goals. They become obsessed with achieving their very best.

Stellar athletes are good examples. Their disciplined lives are necessary for achieving their true potential. In the Bible, the apostle Paul used a sports analogy. He wrote, “I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Many professions have followed a similar approach, establishing exceptionally high standards for their respective disciplines. Being good is not ‘good enough’ for many of us. We want to become the best, or at least among the best in our chosen vocation.

To be truly disciplined means becoming devoted to a way of life. This deep commitment becomes synonymous with the cause we are pursuing. During the many years I have followed Jesus Christ with a desire to align my faith with my business practices, I have become convinced this requires a life focused on placing trust in God first, even above the needs of others and ourselves. I have also learned this cannot happen naturally, because our self-oriented human nature tends to keep getting in the way. It requires supernatural power, a life-changing encounter with Christ that strikes to our very core. This change began for me many years ago, but my spiritual metamorphosis has continued to this day.

As with attaining excellence in my profession, the Christian life also requires great discipline – becoming devoted to the cause of Christ which includes but also transcends our vocational pursuits. This applies to the CEO of a company, department managers, sales representatives, and maintenance people – no matter what we do, if we are devoted to Jesus, it should affect how we approach our lives and work.

It applies even to royalty. In Psalm 86:1-4, King David of Israel prays, “Hear O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. You are my God; save your servant who trusts in You. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to You all day long. Bring joy to Your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.” Can you sense King David’s dedication and devotion?

As a business or professional person, do you have a desire to please God through your work? If so, consider living a disciplined life that will result in pleasing Him. In most instances, He does not expect us to live in monasteries or give up all our worldly possessions. What He does require is for us to place Him first and others before our own needs.

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No matter how disciplined we may be, we all slip and occasionally give into temptations from time to time. Fortunately, those of us who follow Christ are promised a way that allows us to get back on the path our Lord wants us to follow. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 we are told, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” Paul continues in the next two verses: “Therefore my dear friends flee from idolatry. I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.” This, as you can imagine, requires discipline and devotion.

© 2023, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing “Fourth Quarter Strategies” in 2014.

### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you define the word “discipline”? When you hear it, do you understand it in a positive sense, or does it carry negative meaning for you? Explain your answer.
2. What do you think a disciplined life looks like? Do you think you are living a disciplined life right now? Why or why not? Can you think of someone you know – or someone you have heard about – who lives (or has lived) a truly disciplined life? If so, what has stood out about that person?
3. How do you think a disciplined spiritual life can be applied to a disciplined work life? Do you think they should even be related at all? Why or why not?
4. If someone determines they have not been particularly disciplined in any or most of the areas of their life, what initial steps do you think they could take to develop such discipline?

### CHALLENGE

How would you evaluate your own life in terms of discipline? If you do not think you are where you would like to be, what could you do today to start cultivating a more disciplined life professionally, personally, and spiritually? Who do you know who could help you in developing greater discipline? If you consider yourself to be fairly disciplined, then is there someone who might benefit from your experience?

#### NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:  
Deuteronomy 5:28-29; Proverbs 21:5; Matthew 22:34-40; John 21:18-19; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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