

Reclaiming Spiritual Disciplines

Titus 2:11-15

Ben Deaver at New Hope Church on February 8, 2015

Announcements:

- **Ben Duell** is rotating off the elder team. This afternoon will be his last elder meeting for awhile, probably not forever though. Duell has given so much to New Hope in his role as an elder over these last five years. He continues to give so much as a LIFE Group leader. He has been a huge encouragement and support to me over the years I've been a part of this New Hope family. In fact, Duell was the first guy to really initiate with me long ago when I first started checking this community out. He's been a particular blessing to me through this transition—calling to check in with me and seeing how I'm doing. I know many, many men and women have been blessed in specific ways by brother Ben Duell. Let's give it up for him!
- **Austin and Jenni**

Why *Reclaiming Spiritual Disciplines*?

ILLUS: Second Life Studios

- Old barn is a beautiful thing of the past but is now dangerous and not functional.
- The reclaimed wood is now both beautiful and functional.

Our culture

- Information age—Living in an information age with little self-control. The online world can quickly give us a false impression of our spiritual maturity.
- Consumerism—gives us a false impression of disciplines. Worship music, books, etc.

Our church

- CHAT Survey results
- Desire coupled with the fear of legalism

My own life

- Past successes—Scripture memory
- Current failures—Bible Reading plan – I'm on day 95 of 365...and I started at the beginning of 2014!
- Current realities—Long-term godliness is tough to come by. Struggling leaders.
- Self-Control WOTY2015

Upcoming Sundays:

- February 15—Reclaiming the Scriptures
- February 22—Reclaiming Prayer (*Dave Geldart*)
- March 1—Reclaiming Fasting
- March 8—Reclaiming Solitude (*Bob Anderson*)
- March 15—Reclaiming Reflection
- March 22—Reclaiming Celebration (*Nate Sapp*)
- March 29—What's Best Next?
- April 5—Happy Easter! Baptism Sunday?

If you have a discipline that you would like to have addressed please let me know and we'll see if we can cover it in some way.

Our featured resource for this series is *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney. It was written in 1991 and a new edition just came out last year.

SERMON SERIES BIG IDEA: Let's reclaim Gospel-powered spiritual disciplines for the sake of godliness (i.e. good works to the glory of God and for the good of His people).

Read Titus 2:11-14^{ESV}

PRAY

This is one long, run-on sentence that Paul writes because he just can't stop adding detail about the grace of God and all the varied aspects that he sees and how it affects the life of believers in the present and the hope we have that will culminate in the physical return in the future and how we should here and now in light of that Gospel truth and reality and I realize that this is my own run-on sentence describing Paul's beautiful run-on sentence.

Past = ¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people...

- The grace of God the Father has appeared in life, works, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ!

Future = ...the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...

- The glory of God the Father, our Savior, will appear in Jesus Christ!

Present = ...renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope...zealous for good works.

How do we do that? How do we live this way? How does the Gospel connect with our conduct?

Let's talk **GOSPEL CIRCLES!**

Gospel = who gave himself for us = Christ died for our sins!

Gospel Truths

- Bringing salvation for all people (all classes/kinds/sorts of people...not universalism)
- To redeem us from all lawlessness
- To purify for himself a people for his own possession
- Training us
 - **1 Timothy 4:7b-8** Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸for 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.
 - Who is doing the training here, me or Jesus? Yes! Jesus and me. The Spirit of Jesus is in me and I am me so we are training myself for godliness.
 - **Col 1:27** ...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Gospel Conduct

- To renounce ungodliness and worldly passions
 - The power for this is the Gospel Truth that Jesus has redeemed us from all lawlessness.
 - I am sinful and broken. I need redemption from lawlessness. I need to be purified. Praise God I am. I hate to imagine what I would be like if not for the grace of God. If I'm struggling this much with sin now then how terrible would I be without the grace of God?

- to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age
 - The power for this is the Gospel Truth that Jesus has purified for himself a people for his own possession.
 - I need to be purified. I need to be given purpose. Praise God I am being purified and I have been given purpose. I belong to Christ. I am not my own. I was bought with a price. See **1 Cor 6:20**.
 - Freedom ≠ doing whatever we want
 - Freedom = living how we were created to live
 - **Gal 5:13** ¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
 - **How, exactly?** Why don't the Scriptures give us more direction on how exactly to live? What the disciplines are and how to do them? How do we study the Bible? How do meditate? How do we fast? How do we worship through song? How do we engage with silence and solitude?
 - There's indication that we should engage with these things and there are some positive and negative examples but for the most part, their aren't clear instructions. We want the manual on spiritual disciplines, the to-do list, don't we?
 - Spiritual disciplines were assumed in Jewish culture and in early church life.
 - Spiritual disciplines are passed on primarily by modeling/training/discipling. Discipleship is the way of a father with his son.
 - ILLUS: Maddox reading *Goodnight Moon!* He does what I do. "Goodnight, moon. Cows. Kitten. Slippers. Balloon. Goodnight, brush. Goodnight, air."
 - He doesn't read it perfectly but it brings me great joy to watch my son grow towards maturity. How do you think your Father, God, feels about you when He watches you grow? Is He stern? Is He proud? Talk with Him about this question. "Father, what stirs within You when You see me grow?"
 - You won't grow without the spiritual disciplines.
 - **Heb 12:5-11** ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.
 - I don't believe God wants to limit us to Jewish and early church culture with our disciplines. In Islam these things are spelled out very clearly in the Hadith, the words and deeds of Muhammed. We don't have this amount of detail about how Jesus actually lived in the Bible.
 - What makes a discipline spiritual? Are you doing this discipline to the glory of God? If so, then it sounds spiritual enough to me. **1 Cor 10:31** "Whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." The way you eat can be a spiritual discipline. There is really no limit to how many disciplines there are.
 - Examples of disciplines:
 - The discipline of waiting in the line at the grocery store well for the glory of God and the good of His people.
 - When you get in the car to drive somewhere you have many opportunities for spiritual disciplines.

- Disciplines in how we relate to ourselves – SELF-CONTROLLED
 - Mentioned 5 times in Titus. See **Titus 1:8; 2:2, 5, 6, 12.**
 - Private disciplines
 - Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. See **Gal 5:22-23.**
 - ILLUS: I had to engage in multiple disciplines to have the illustrious career I had as a Kansas State University Marching Band trombone player and section leader. Marching. Sliding. Playing. Yelling. Turning. Kicking the pylon. It was worth it! How much more is training for Kingdom work worth it?
 - Disciplines in how we relate to others – UPRIGHT
 - Corporate disciplines
 - LIFE Group is absolutely a spiritual discipline, especially if you are bringing together a bunch of people who are different from each other.
 - Disciplines in how we relate to God – GODLY
 - Renounce and Replace
 - Renounce = renounce ungodliness and worldly passions
 - Replacement = live self-controlled, upright and godly live, waiting for our blessed hope
- waiting for our blessed hope – Active waiting in the present age!
 - zealous for good works
 - People seem to be terrified that their zeal for good works would lead them to legalism.
 - One large hindrance to reclaiming spiritual disciplines that I see is the fear of legalism!
 - **Read Titus 1:10-16.**
 - The circumcision party were legalists.
 - The circumcision party were also Cretans—brute beasts and lazy gluttons.
 - Circumcision party = legalists
 - Lazy gluttons = lazy folks
 - Lazy legalists!
 - The laziness of legalism vs. the laziness of licentiousness
 - Empty talkers and deceivers
 - Devoted to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth
 - Profess to know God but deny him by their works – no loving people
 - Detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work
 - They’ve set these parameters for godliness that they can easily meet and then act pompous to those around them. That’s lazy! They’re upsetting whole families with this stuff.
 - Actions speak louder than words. Put your money where your mouth is. Talk the talk and walk the walk. Their actions betray them.
 - If your spiritual disciplines don’t lead you to good works then you are probably engaging in legalism, trying to please God with some external behavior.
 - Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water of legalism!
 - If desire isn’t present in your relationship with God, you may need the crutch of duty until your desire catches up.
 - ILLUS: Marriage—That’s how it is in marriage, the most important earthly relationship we can have. It’s your duty to stay away from pornography and affairs and it’s your duty to pursue your spouse. Delight will come as you work at it.
 - Legalism says, “What we do leads to who we are.”
 - Licentiousness (antinomianism) says, “What we do does not matter.”
 - Grace says, “Who we are leads to what we do.”

- The goal is godliness, zeal for good works, like God. That's how we were created to function.
 - The spiritual disciplines are not themselves good works. They prepare you for good works.
 - **Titus 2:6-7a** ⁶Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. ⁷Show yourself in all respects to **be a model of good works...**
 - This is how we adorn the gospel. See **Titus 2:10**.
 - **Titus 3:14** ¹⁴And let our people learn to **devote themselves to good works**, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.
 - How's your devotional life? Are you devoted to good works?
 - **Eph 2:8-10** ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
 - We are God's masterpiece that He created in Christ for the purpose of good works that He has already prepared for us. Now go do them!
 - **1 Pet 2:12** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may **see your good deeds** and glorify God on the day of visitation.
 - **Matt 5:16** ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may **see your good works** and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
 - Our good works should be on display. The problem is when our spiritual disciplines are on display and they aren't bearing fruit.
 - **Gal 6:9-10** ⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰So then, as we have opportunity, let us **do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith**.
 - Do good to everyone, especially fellow believers!
 - **Heb 10:24-25** ²⁴And let us consider how to **stir up one another to love and good works**, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
 - Spur each other on to good works.
 - **Heb 13:20-21; James 2:14; 3:13**

SERMON SERIES BIG IDEA: Let's reclaim Gospel-powered spiritual disciplines for the sake of godliness (i.e. good works to the glory of God and for the good of His people).

Titus 2:15 Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Reflection/Diagnostic Questions:

- What's the next right step for you to reclaim spiritual disciplines?
- What has your engagement with the spiritual disciplines looked like? What victories have you enjoyed? What failures have you experienced? What would growth look like for you?
- How can we stir one another up to good works? What would growth look like for us as a family?

Vision for New Hope:

- 1st Wednesdays Prayer
- LIFE Groups
- The Greenhouse
- Silence and solitude retreats

Bring up ushers and PRAY.

Good stuff on the chopping block:

Re: Duty:

- Use duty when necessary. Marriage analogy.
- “I was only doing my duty.” This sentence has positive connotations.
- “Here, Maris, here are some flowers. I figured it’s my duty as your husband to give you some of these every once in awhile.” This sentence has negative connotations.

“Discipline without direction is drudgery.” – *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney

“Direction without discipline is drudgery.” This should be the quote for my generation and younger.

We want to do great things for God, and rightfully so. But we won’t get there without spiritual disciplines.