

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Timothy 4:6-10

“Training for Godliness”

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Transcript

34:54

So I want to invite you this morning to make your way to First Timothy chapter four. We're going to be in First Timothy chapter four this morning so you can make your way there in your Bible if you didn't bring one and you want to follow along.

35:06

There should be a Bible underneath of your seat or maybe the one in front of you that you can grab and follow along as well. But if you weren't here with us over the last few weeks let me just give you like the the the 30 second version of where we're at in this letter that Paul the Apostle Paul is writing to a young pastor in Ephesus named Timothy because we're we're going to be picking up kind of in the middle of a thought.

35:27

So I want to make sure that we're all on the same page. So a couple of weeks ago as we were studying the end of First Timothy chapter three we see this verse, this incredible explanation of Jesus's ministry when he was on earth.

35:41

Verse 16 of First Timothy chapter three tells us that Jesus was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory.

35:54

That beautiful short summary of what Jesus did when he came to earth and how he brought salvation and made it available to people like me and you. And we saw that just a couple of weeks ago but then last week in our passage as we started First Timothy chapter four we see this warning from the Apostle Paul about the dangerous thing that may be creeping into their church namely the teaching of demons which is playing out in this legalistic asceticism this legalistic idea where people are establishing man-made rules and expectations where you know you're not allowed to get married you're not allowed to eat this or drink that or all these different rules thinking that by setting up these religious rules that they were going to follow that they were somehow going to earn favor with God and that simply isn't true.

36:45

The idea that God wants to limit your joy by taking things away from you well that's not at all what we see here in this passage but at the same time we see Paul warning God's not trying to steal your joy by taking things away from you the continuation of that same thought is what we're going to look at this week.

37:04

Because while God does not want to restrict you in order to steal your joy that also does not mean that the Christian life is just anarchy that you get to run around and do whatever you want if that looks good do it and if that looks fun go for it.

37:17

It's not this free for all where we get to just run around and do whatever we want. And so what we're going to look at this week is Paul's kind of counterbalance to last week's warning about not establishing too many rules just for rules sake.

37:31

We're going to see this week in first timothy chapter 4 verses 6 through 10 the balance of how Paul also, by you know by God's inspiration, calls us to discipline ourselves for godliness. So i want to invite you to follow along we're going to read our passage that we're going to look at this week first timothy chapter 4 verses 6 through 10 you can follow along in your copy or on the screens up here on the sides.

37:53

In first timothy 4:6 it says, if you put these things before the brothers you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. Have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths but rather train 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.

38:19

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance for to this end we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the living God who is the savior of all people especially of those who believe. These are the words of the lord would you guys pray with me God we thank you for your word.

38:36

We thank you for the church that we can gather here together with on a on a beautiful Sunday morning and God we can humble ourselves before your word. God we we thank you for the encouragement that you give us through one another and spending time together.

38:49

We thank you for the challenges that we receive at times when we come to church, we thank you for all of the things that you have given us to one another and we have this opportunity to gather together. We thank you for each and every one of our brothers and sisters that are here in this room with us or perhaps listening online.

39:06

God we also want to thank you for your word and God we pray that during the next few minutes as we have time together we pray that you would open our eyes and our hearts and our minds to understand what your word would speak to us this morning.

39:18

God we pray that you and the power of your spirit would help us to receive and to understand that we would humble ourselves before your word and God that you would speak in the way that you want to in our lives. So God we give this time to you we pray that you would be glorified that this would be about you, not about me, not about us, in any way. God hide me behind your cross and we pray that you would be glorified through these next few minutes and it's in Jesus name we pray, amen.

39:42

All right, well, as we jump in, we see kind of the main idea, this idea of training ourselves for godliness is what this passage is gonna be focusing on. But as we dive in, you get to verse six, and he says that if you put these things before the brothers, you'll be a good servant. So when he says, put these things, well, what things is he talking about?

40:04

That's kind of the danger of picking up in the middle of a thought. So what things is he talking about? Well, simply, he's talking about the things that I just mentioned. He's talking about the truth of Jesus's gospel that was laid out at the end of 1 Timothy chapter three.

40:18

And he's also talking about the warnings as he has been talking about the dangers of false teaching, about the dangers of believing wrongly as Paul has been arguing throughout this book so far, but specifically about the teachings of demons that insist upon man-made religion, asceticism, and this strict adherence to legalistic rules that you have to do this and do this and don't do that and don't do that.

40:44

But he says, if you put these things, these warnings before the brothers, he describes that you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine.

40:55

You know, as he describes a good servant, I think that's when all of us should at least want to raise our hand and say, yeah, that is what I want to do. That's what I want to be. But as he describes a good servant, he describes someone who is trained in the words of God, that they are trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine.

41:12

Essentially, a good servant is someone who confronts false teaching that is so prominently popping up not only in Paul's day, but also in our day, as we've seen this as a human problem for centuries. But a good servant is one who confronts false teaching, and specifically, as he says in verse seven, will have nothing to do with irreverent or silly myths, but rather will train themselves for godliness.

41:38

He warns them to have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths, and we're gonna come back to that in just a minute, but in verse seven, he starts talking about the value of training ourselves. And he starts by making this argument that physical training, bodily training, is of some value.

41:53

I think we can all agree to that, right? Anybody that has ever been out and, you know, you turn on your TV for about five minutes and there's a workout video, there's a supplement, there's a diet, there's something that seems to pop up every time you turn your phone on and go to the internet.

42:09

There is something telling us how to train ourselves physically to be healthy, right? If you eat this, if you do this, if you work out this way, you're going to benefit from that. And there are benefits of physical training.

42:23

People who take care of their bodies, they generally tend to live longer. They tend to feel better, you know? When you start carrying around those extra pounds, things just start to hurt in a different way.

42:33

Your knees start to hurt, maybe your back starts to ache, different things that when you take care of yourself, those same problems don't come up. You're able to do more things if you take care of yourself physically.

42:45

You're able to hop up and to go take care of something that maybe would be either unattainable or at the least, it would be more difficult for you if you weren't in good physical fitness. And in fact, physical training also helps offset and delay the effects of aging as we start to get older.

43:02

The value of physical training can't be argued against. There is value in taking care of yourself physically, but the value of spiritual training, Paul is going to make the argument here, far exceeds the benefit of physical training.

43:15

See, physical training is good, but physical training has its limits. Physical training has limitations because eventually, no matter how hard you work, no matter how much kale and vegetables and all those things you eat, eventually your body is going to break down, right?

43:32

Eventually, Father Time ultimately is undefeated, right? And so physical training is going to waste away. If you stop working out those muscles, they begin to atrophy. They start to get weaker and weaker over time and the effects of aging eventually come for us all.

43:47

We essentially just talked about that for like six months as we studied the book of Ecclesiastes, that this life is just a vapor, it's just a moment and then it's gone. And so while there is benefit to taking care of yourself physically, and we should take care of ourselves, there's also the problem that that is short-sighted and eventually is going to go away.

44:10

But he makes the argument that training for godliness has value both now and later. Paul calls Timothy to train himself for godliness, which will teach him to store up treasures for the next life as well as in this life.

44:26

That he's storing up treasures for the age to come rather than just in this temporary life that will last a few short years and then it's gonna be gone. Because godliness is valuable for all time. He says here in our passage that 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.

44:50

When we train ourselves spiritually, when we train ourselves to be obedient to God and to follow God and to know him, well that serves us, that benefits us in very practical ways now as it impacts our relationships that we have with other people.

45:03

It impacts the way that we think about life and the way that we view difficulties when they come in life. But not only does it benefit us now, it also will serve us in the life to come. But as he's talking about training ourselves physically and for godliness, the problem with that is that training ourselves, it's a task, it's hard work.

45:26

Toil and strife are words that we see in verse 10. He says in verse 10, for this end we toil and we strive. Those are effort words that we see. Those aren't things that you just pass, you don't describe someone as toiling or striving as they lay on the couch, right?

45:42

You don't see someone who's sitting around by the side of the pool and described them as toiling. That simply isn't the way that we would use those words, right? What he's telling us here is he talks about training ourselves and disciplining ourselves.

45:58

That to this end we toil and we strive. He's telling us that this is a task that we're gonna have to work hard at. This is a task that's gonna take some time, is gonna take some energy. And it tells us in verse 10 as well that we toil and we strive, but it is to this end that we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the living God who is the savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

46:25

What Paul is telling us is that it's not just for work's sake that we work. He's telling us that it is for Jesus' sake that we work. It's to restore, it's to strengthen our relationship with him. It's to strengthen us in what God would have us to be.

46:41

We're not working for ourselves and just for our benefit, but we train ourselves for godliness because it's what God would have for us to do. But as we talk about the value of training, I think more important or perhaps equally important, if I sat here and spent

30, 40 minutes explaining to you, trying to convince you of the value of training yourself for godliness and you left here believing, all right, this is something important that I should do, but we didn't actually take time to talk about how you can do that, well, that's probably not gonna yield a whole lot of fruit in your life, is it?

47:13

Yeah, I'm gonna go do this. How? I don't know! So we're gonna talk about the value of training as we just did, but I think equally important, we have to talk about the methods of training ourselves for godliness.

47:26

Because after Paul just warned us about the dangers of legalism in last week's passage, just a few verses earlier, I think we could easily look at this whole conversation and think that we should avoid all discipline, that we should avoid all rules and restrictions that would venture to box us in.

47:44

We don't wanna be accused of being legalistic, so we'll just avoid all things that might look like or smell like, or we don't want anything that resembles legalism here, so we'll just go and tell everybody, go figure it out and do whatever you want.

47:57

Well, that's simply not at all what Paul is talking about here. Because in our passage this week, in verses six through 10, Paul lays out the correct approach to godliness, which ironically he describes as coming through disciplined training.

48:12

And when an athlete is preparing themselves for some sort of a competition, anybody that's ever worked hard and excelled in some field, you may be an expert swimmer or a professional athlete in some area, you may know someone that has worked hard.

48:29

My kids are friends, they go to school with a young girl who was in the junior Olympics, I believe, in swimming. And so something like that, in order to reach a competition of that level, you have to devote yourself and you do everything that you can.

48:43

Your life kind of revolves around being successful in whatever that thing is. You need to figure out how to swim faster than everybody else, right? And when an athlete is in training for competition, they do things that will make them bigger and faster and stronger while avoiding things that might make them weaker or might make them slower or might make them smaller, right?

49:04

Part of training is working hard while part of training is also driving past McDonald's and not stopping for that order of French fries, right? Likewise, a person who's disciplining themselves for godliness, if you're physically training yourself, you have to do the right things and avoid the wrong things in order to be successful with that physical training.

49:26

But likewise, a person who is disciplining himself for godliness must pursue the things that makes him holier, that makes him more Christ -like while avoiding the things that may make them holier, unholy or excuse me, or less Christ -like.

49:42

As he says, Paul says in verse six, the words of the faith and of the good doctrine will make Timothy stronger while he continues in verse seven and he tells him that irreverent and silly myths, that he should have nothing to do with those things, that irreverent and silly myths will only make him weaker.

50:00

So I kind of boiled this whole thought down and as I kind of laid it out in my outline, I think there's two things that we have to be aware of. First, we have to be careful of what goes in to our spiritual lives and then we have to be second, intentional about what comes out in our spiritual lives.

50:16

We have to be careful of what goes in and intentional or careful about what comes out. First, we have to be careful about what goes in. So we have to reject bad doctrine. That's kind of summarizing what Paul has been talking about so far in 1 Timothy.

50:29

It seems like that is kind of the theme that we have seen week after week after week. Essential to a healthy spiritual diet, we have to reject spiritual junk food, which is being described here in our passage as irreverent, silly myths.

50:43

You know, you've probably heard if you grew up or have worked out or ever tried to train yourself, you probably heard the phrase garbage in, garbage out before, right? Well, when we physically feed ourselves junk food and we put garbage in, that comes out practically in our lives in a body that is poorly nourished, in a body that has aches and pains.

51:03

There's problems that come from eating junk day after day after day. And spiritually, we see that same truth to be true. Spiritually, when we feed ourselves junk, like media content that glorifies unholy living, when we fill our minds with music that is focused on things that God would frown upon or would describe as sinful, then we will be constantly stuck in these unholy habits, filling our minds with these unholy thoughts day after day, moment after moment.

51:33

That's why we have to be careful about the things that we allow into our minds. I could cite 100 Bible verses to talk about this. I picked out three that kind of seem to communicate this. You want to jot these references down.

51:45

You can go back and look at them later. We're gonna touch real quickly. But first, Proverbs 15:14, I use, I'm gonna read this from the NLT, the New Living Translation. I think it says it well.

51:56

It says that a wise person is hungry for knowledge while the fool feeds on trash. The wise person is hungry for knowledge while the fool feeds on trash. The second verse I wanted to use here is Psalm 101 verse 3.

52:11

Psalm 101:3 says, I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless. I hate the work of those who fall away. It shall not cling to me. That attitude of staying away from things that are dangerous for him.

52:24

Galatians chapter 6 verse 7 also talks about this same idea. He says in Galatians 6:7, do not be deceived because God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that he will also reap. You know, the reality is that when we put junk into our minds, that when we fill our minds with unholy, God -dishonoring content that seems to be the norm on TV or on the radio or wherever it is these days.

52:51

When we fill our minds with those things, I'm not surprised that many of us sit here and we throw our hands up and we go, I don't know why I can't gain victory over sin in this area. When we fill our minds day after day, when we sow the seeds of wicked sexuality or lying or negative views of relationships or any of these other things, violence, bad

language, all these things that we see that flood into our media sources and flood into our minds every day when we allow our minds to be filled with these things, well, you know what?

53:25

Galatians 6:7 says that whatever one sows, that is what they're going to reap. When we fill those things into our minds, I don't think we should be surprised and throw our hands up and go, I don't know where this is coming from when that's what comes out in our lives.

53:40

If you find yourself frustrated by an inability to gain victory over some specific sin or some specific weakness, I think it would be good for us to ask ourselves, am I feeding and nourishing that sin every time I turn the TV on?

53:54

Am I feeding or nourishing that sin with the things that I watch or listen to or think about that I fill my mind with? What is it that I'm doing to either help or to starve out that sin issue in my life?

54:07

Galatians 3:2 warns us about this. It tells us how to win that battle. It tells us to set your mind on things that are from above, not on things that are of the earth. You know, we can win. God can help us to gain victory in these areas, but it's really difficult to kill a beast when you continue to feed it and make it stronger part of the day and then throw your hands up in the air and go, I don't know why I can't defeat this thing.

54:32

Well, it's because you made it big. It's because you made it angry and hungry and, you know, this beast isn't just a tiny little puppy anymore. It's a big mean dog that's going to

eat you one day. We should be careful about the things that we allow into our lives, but we also have to be careful or intentional about what has lived out in our lives.

54:51

You know, to train ourselves for godliness, it requires that we have to avoid the spiritual junk food, but we also have to make sure that we discipline ourselves and develop good habits in the same way that developing good physical habits allows us to train ourselves physically.

55:08

We have to find those things that will make us stronger, and we do them day after day after day. I'm going to tell you guys, just confession time here. I have done a sit -up before, but once. I actually usually do one a day.

55:22

I split it in half. I sit up in the morning, and then I lay back down at night. But you know something? In order to gain that washboard set of abs that everybody wants so desperately, doing something once is not sufficient to successfully train and to strengthen that muscle in the way that we might want it to be.

55:45

You know, we look at things and we go, oh, no, no, no, no, we understand that physically. You have to do rep after rep after rep. You have to work hard in order to doing the same things over and over and over again in order to gain the results that you want physically.

56:01

You know, just because you did a push -up or a sit -up or maybe even a pull -up one day, that doesn't make you fit to go join our armed forces or to win any Mr. Universe competitions. And in the same way, I think it's dangerous for us, but I think there's times

where Christians will go, you know, man, I read my Bible like two weeks ago on Thursday.

56:23

I don't know why I'm still struggling with this. That's because doing one sit -up doesn't train us physically and reading your Bible once a month doesn't train you spiritually. To train ourselves for godliness requires discipline.

56:36

It requires good habits. And it requires day in, day out being faithful to do the things that are gonna train us for godliness in the same way that training ourselves physically requires discipline day after day after day.

56:51

So what are some of those good habits? What are some of those good training methods for us to develop those godly disciplines and those godly habits in our lives? I just wanted to give you just a few of them.

57:01

There's more that I could have included here but we'd be in trouble and run out of time. So let me just give you a few things that you can start to do, that you can jot these things down to make sure that you're disciplining yourself in these areas.

57:13

The first thing, the first discipline that we have to say, you're gonna know this one, right? You probably could raise your hand and shout it out to me. The first thing that we have to do to discipline ourselves is we have to read the word of God.

57:25

We have to read and be people of this book. We have to consider what God has said in his word. And so if we say that we believe in the sufficiency of scripture, and our church, we openly will declare that we believe in the sufficiency of scripture, which means that we believe that when 2 Peter chapter one verse three says the following, we believe that it's true.

57:48

2 Peter 1:3 says that his God's divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and to godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. We believe that God has given us everything that we need for life and for godliness.

58:03

And the way that God has revealed himself to us is through his written word that he inspired and breathed out and gave to us. If you wanna hear from God, the way that you're gonna do that is to read his word. God has given us his word, and we can hear from him anytime that we read it. Let me share with you one of my favorite quotes of all time. I love this. So Justin Peters once said that if you wanna hear God speak, you should read your Bible. And if you wanna hear God speak audibly, read your Bible out loud, right?

58:33

If you wanna hear God speak, read your Bible. If you sit back and you cross your arms, I just don't feel like God ever speaks to me. I don't feel like I really know what God wants for me. Well, God's made it clear, right? God has given us what he wants us to believe or wants us to think. I don't know what God's will for me is. Well, you can because he's given it to us in his word.

58:55

And if we will read and consider what he has said to us, we can understand what God's will is for our life. Second thing that I think is important for us is not only to read the word, but also to study the word.

59:07

Second Timothy chapter two, fast forward just a little bit, spoiler alert, if you don't wanna hear something from Second Timothy yet, we're gonna study in just a couple of months. But Second Timothy chapter 2:15 tells us to do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

59:28

You look at different translations and they translate that first couple of words differently and different translations. The King James Version tells you to study, to show yourself approved as a worker who has no need to be ashamed because of the way that he handles the Bible.

59:43

The New American Standard tells you to be diligent in the way that you work to study the Bible. The New Living Translation says to work hard in the way that you handle the Bible, the way that you study the Bible, that we need to work hard, that reading our Bible is not enough to just passively sit back and scan our eyes across words on a page.

01:00:05

Well, that is good and we should do that in bulk at times. It's also good for us to sit down at times and to study to understand the depths of what God has to say. Because there's times where you can look at something and go, okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's good, that makes sense.

01:00:23

But when we go back and we dig into it a little bit and we go, oh, wait, there's, oh, this is cool. Oh, this actually ties to this over here and you start to tie the things together and maybe that's overwhelming to you and maybe you don't know how to do that, but we would love to help you figure out how to do that.

01:00:39

There are more than a few resources available to help you understand how to study the Bible. You don't have to go to seminary, you don't have to be a pastor or an elder or something to figure out how to do that.

01:00:53

But God does want us to slow down and to study at times, to not just read passively or to listen to our Bibles as our phone will read it to you when you're driving down the road, that's good. And we should also study and really deeply consider what it has to say.

01:01:10

Work hard so that one day when you stand before God, what second Timothy two is telling us, work hard so that one day when you stand before God, you don't have to be ashamed of, yeah, God, I know you gave me your word, but I didn't take enough time to really understand what it meant.

01:01:25

We should work hard so that we can be proud of how we rightly handle the word of truth. Philip Ryken talking about this, he said that our diet is to be the scriptures and we are to exercise ourselves in them.

01:01:38

You know, the third discipline that I thought of as we're talking about reading the Bible and studying the Bible, I think one other one that's valuable for us that I learned a long time ago and sometimes I've been really good at it and sometimes I really struggle, but I think there is value in also memorizing the word of God.

01:01:54

Psalm 119 verse 11, the psalmist says that I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Yeah, there's times where we get curious and we have time

and we can step back and grab your phone and start Googling, hey, what does the Bible say about how I should treat somebody in this situation?

01:02:12

You can go and we have the resources to go and to find the answers to those questions. But there's a lot of times in life where you don't have the time to step back and hang on just a minute, I can't give you an answer, I need to go study for a little bit and figure out what God has for me, right?

01:02:26

There's times where we just have stuff come up in life and if we will do what Psalm 119 is encouraging us to do, to store God's word up in our hearts, to memorize it and to allow it to take up some data space in our brains. There's times that God can use those things, that God can, in that moment when you're tempted, he can recall something from your database that maybe you don't have time to go look up, but when you're looking at a circumstance and God's gonna go, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, my word says, and that thought will come to mind in a moment that you can benefit from storing up God's word in your heart.

01:03:05

Psalm 119, it says it, I have stored up your word in my heart, memorized the Bible, so that I might not sin against you. It's gonna help you to discipline yourself in some of those areas where maybe you're struggling.

01:03:18

Another area where I think it's good for us, we should make sure that we're taking time to grow in this discipline, is not only to intake the Bible, but also through prayer. If God speaks to us through his word, that God has revealed himself and revealed his will and speaks to us through his word, then we should also consider the discipline of how we speak back to God, which is in prayer.

01:03:42

This is just my opinion, but I believe it's impossible for a relationship, any relationship, spouses, friends, anything, it's impossible for a relationship to be strong, to be healthy, if both parties don't get opportunities to express themselves from time to time.

01:03:58

If you've got one person that is just day after day after day doing all the talking, I don't need you guys to tell me that you're that person and elbow your spouse right now, I know there's those temptations, but it's important for both sides to be able to express themselves, right?

01:04:14

It's important for both the husband and the wife to be able to express how they feel about a certain circumstance before a decision is made. It's important for friends to not just be one person gives and gives and gives and the other takes and takes and takes, that has to go both directions, the street has to run two ways.

01:04:32

One the same way, our relationship with God, if we sit and we read the Bible day after day after day and we receive from God, but we don't ever speak back to him, we don't ever have a relationship where we bring our requests and our thoughts and bring our concerns to God, well, it's not gonna be a very healthy relationship.

01:04:51

Prayer is an essential part of training our relationship with God. Now I've got a quote I wanna read for you guys, it's a little bit long, but it's a super quote because what we've got here is Charles Spurgeon quoting Martin Luther, so you get both of these guys in the same quote.

01:05:08

So enjoy this one, this was Charles Spurgeon quoting from Martin Luther in one of his sermons as he was preaching in 1865. It's a Spurgeon speaking, he says, I like that

saying of Martin Luther when he says, I have so much business to do today that I shall not be able to get through it with less than three hours prayer.

01:05:28

Now most people would say, I have so much business to do today that I only have three minutes for prayer, I cannot afford the time, but Luther thought that the more he had to do, the more he must pray or else he could not get through it.

01:05:39

That is the blessed kind of logic, may we understand it. I think that just confession time for me, I find myself more prone to jump into the, I have so much to do today, I've only got three minutes to pray than I do, Martin Luther's mindset of I have so much to do today, I need a little extra Jesus in my life today and I need to spend three hours in prayer.

01:06:04

I think we often all struggle with this from time to time. I think there's the temptation for us that the busier we get to the more stuff we've got going on in life, the more we're tempted to run off and take care of it all ourselves.

01:06:20

Well the more we run off and take care of things ourselves and don't bring them back to God and don't consider what God has to say in his word about a circumstance or we don't bring it to him in prayer and ask him how he would have us to live out this thing or for us to work in some area.

01:06:35

If we don't come to him and we just run off and try to take care of things ourselves, that's a dangerous place for us to be. That's a dangerous place because we're going to run off and try to take care of it ourselves and eventually we're going to come up short.

01:06:50

Time after time after time we're gonna try to do it ourselves and we're gonna fail. The last thing that I stuck in here in our short little list of disciplines for us to train ourselves in is the discipline of fellowship, Christian fellowship.

01:07:03

The last method I think is important for us is that we have fellowship within the body of Christ, within the church. You know as God in his New Testament talks about how he has built a church, built a people for himself, tells us that he has given us to one another.

01:07:21

We are given to one another and we are given responsibility for one another. We're given responsibility to challenge one another, to encourage one another, to correct one another, to walk with one another through difficult times.

01:07:32

We have responsibility for one another as we follow Jesus together. Just a couple of verses that I want to read for you guys. Hebrews chapter 3 talks a little bit about this and it says in verse 12, take care brothers lest there be in any of you an evil unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God.

01:07:53

But exhort one another every day as long as it is called today that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Also we see in Hebrews chapter 10 this same author continues down in chapter 10. He says in Hebrews 10:24-25 encouraging Christians he says let us consider how to stir one another up to love and to good works not 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.

01:08:21

If you go all the way back to the beginning of the Bible you'll see the story of how God created the world and you'll see the first humans that were created Adam and Eve and you read another chapter or two you're gonna come across Adam and Eve's sons the story of Cain and Abel.

01:08:36

You'll see the story of how Cain got frustrated with his brother Abel and he chose to kill his brother Abel and as God comes and is looking for Abel one day he's looking and he says that he knows what Cain has done but he comes to Cain and he says where is your brother Abel?

01:08:54

Where's Abel at? Where'd he go? And Cain kind of shrugs his shoulders at that. Why am I supposed to know? Am I my brother's keeper? You probably heard that phrase before right? I'm not my brother's keeper. Am I my brother's keeper?

01:09:07

Well in that comment that Cain makes to God he was implying that he wasn't responsible for his brother. It wasn't his job to keep track of his brother but you know what? Cain was a fool because that idea is exactly what we see throughout the rest of scripture.

01:09:22

It absolutely is my responsibility to help and to keep up with my Christian brothers and sisters. It is absolutely my responsibility. We are our brothers or our sisters keeper. Galatians chapter 6 says this pretty explicitly.

01:09:38

Galatians 6:1 says brothers if anyone is caught in any transgression you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness but keep watch on yourself lest you too be tempted. You know people will see someone else doing something and you know

it's easier for us if we just say hey you do your thing I'll do my thing we won't get in each other's space.

01:10:02

But that attitude is not what we see in scripture. We don't see this whole judge not less ye be judged attitude that we see so often in people in today's world. That attitude they might be taking a tiny little portion of scripture and twisting it around to say what they want but they are missing the whole big picture of what God has given to us as he gave us to one another.

01:10:25

We have been given responsibility for one another. People will often cite the the parable that Jesus talks about how you know if there's a speck in your brother's eye you leave that alone and you should focus on the plank in your own eye.

01:10:40

And we go, oh yeah, that sounds right, right? Don't focus on my spec, you worry about your own plank in your eye. You worry about the log sticking out of your eye. But that's not the whole message of what that passage is talking about.

01:10:50

It doesn't say you focus on your log, I'll focus on my spec. What it says is make sure that you remove the log from your own eyes so that you can see clearly when you remove the spec from your brother's eye.

01:11:03

There's both of those things are important. You have to deal with your stuff. You don't get to just run around and on your high horse, point out everybody else's problems when you've got stuff in your own life.

01:11:14

But we absolutely need one another. And so you're gonna focus on your stuff, I'm gonna focus on my stuff, and I'm gonna focus on your stuff, and you're gonna focus on my stuff. We work together, we need to encourage one another and challenge one another.

01:11:30

And we have responsibility for one another. When we live in Christian community the way that God told us to, we have responsibility to take care of one another. Sometimes that's a hug or a pat on the back and sometimes it's a kick in the backside when we need to figure out or leave some sinful practice, some habit that has popped up in our life.

01:11:52

Now this is just five of the disciplines that I think are valuable for us that we kind of picked to focus on. There's several other habits and disciplines that can be learned to help you grow to maturity.

01:12:03

The terms of spiritual disciplines or spiritual formation are terms that have become kind of popular recently, but this is something that there are absolutely all kinds of gifts and things that God has given to us that we can look into and investigate and learn how to train ourselves for godliness in the way that Paul is talking about here in 1 Timothy 4.

01:12:25

Just a couple of recommendations for you. If you're curious about this, there's a couple of books that I've read that are really valuable on this topic that I wanted to recommend that we didn't have time to get into everything, but if you want to snap a picture of those.

01:12:37

The first one is, excuse me, is called The Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life. It's written by a man named Donald Whitney. Great book. The second one is called Habits of Grace by David Mathis.

01:12:48

If you're in 180, I know you guys recognize that one because you guys have been working. Our teenagers have been going through that and they're small groups over the last few months. So two excellent books that talk about this idea of how there's things that we can put into our lives, disciplines that we can train ourselves in that will help us to grow in our relationship with the Lord.

01:13:07

So snap a picture of those or jot those names down if you want to do a little bit of digging and have a couple of excellent books for you to read on your own. But let's wrap all this up in just the last couple of minutes that we've got.

01:13:19

The discipline of training yourself, I think the rule of mastery that somebody came up with is that if you train yourself at doing something for 10 ,000 hours, it will enable you to become a master at whatever that thing is.

01:13:31

To train for 10 ,000 hours can enable some mere mortals to be able to run 100 meters in 10 seconds. It can allow you to take an instrument like this and I can make noise come out of it but I can't make beautiful noise come out of it.

01:13:45

It can allow you, if you practice hour after hour after hour, you can become a master at an instrument. You can become a master at whatever activity you learn to do and learn to do with excellence as you devote yourself to the practice of doing that thing.

01:13:59

But when it comes to spiritual discipline and matters of spiritual discipline, I think we hesitate and I'm not sure why. Discipline I think sounds so much to us like legalism that we just try to avoid it in any way, shape or point.

01:14:13

I don't wanna be accused of being legalistic so I'll just let everybody do whatever they want and I will just stand back and refuse to work hard in my relationship with the Lord. But I think that thinking is mistaken because legalism is a danger but legalism is self-centered.

01:14:29

It's focused on yourself and how you can do things to earn God's favor but discipline is God-centered. The legalistic heart says I will do this thing to gain merit with God. Meanwhile, the discipline heart says I will do this thing because I love God and I want to be closer to him.

01:14:47

I want to please him. Paul knew the difference between these two things well and while he is telling us in this passage that we have to discipline ourselves for godliness and he told us just a few verses earlier that we should be aware of legalism and he never gave an inch to legalists even while he was challenging Christians to train yourself to be godly.

01:15:08

Paul understood the importance of hard work while also balancing it with the grace of God that God is the one that ultimately does the work in us. In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 10, Paul is talking about this and how he has grown in his relationship with the Lord and he says in 1 Corinthians 15:10, by the grace of God, I am what I am and his grace towards me was not in vain but on the contrary, I worked harder than any of them though it was not I but the grace of God that is in me.

01:15:39

You know, we see beautifully summarized in that verse, that the balance of, you know, Paul worked hard. I think we look at the Apostle Paul and the temptation that runs through our mind, the thought that runs through our mind is, you know, I could never be like Paul.

01:15:53

Paul was special. Paul had, God was working differently in Paul's life. I could never be like that. But what Paul is saying here is, maybe God was working in a unique way through him, but also Paul says, I worked harder than any of the rest.

01:16:09

He disciplined himself. He trained himself to be the man that he was. It was the grace of God that was at work in him, but also he had work to do. It was God's work in Paul that made him who he was, but Paul worked hard as well.

01:16:25

And I think that truth about Paul is the same truth that's true in our lives. You know, God is gonna be the one that accomplishes his work in you. Philippians 1:6 says as much. It says that I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

01:16:41

It is Jesus that works in us. It is God's power through his Holy Spirit that is at work in cleaning us up and shaping us and making us to be the person that he wants us to be. But that does not mean that we don't have work to do in the process.

01:16:55

Because what Paul says here in 1 Timothy 4 is to train yourself for godliness. Maybe you wanna do that, but you don't know how. Gave you a few ideas, gave you a few books,

but maybe you've got more questions or maybe there's just more to this conversation that we don't have time for today.

01:17:13

Well, you know what? I would love to help you. And so I just wanted to make myself available. If you've got questions or want to talk, I stuck my email in here. You can take a picture of my email, reach out to me.

01:17:25

I've told the group last night that was at church, if you buy me a burger or a taco and wanna go sit down, I will be happy to talk with you as long as you wanna talk, right? Let's go find time. We'll make an appointment and we'll go sit down and we'll talk about what does this look like to train yourself for godliness?

01:17:41

How do you discipline yourself? And what are some of those things that, how can I do that, right? I would love to walk with you through that. We've got other people, as Ryan was making announcements, he said there's a bunch of people running around with ask me name badges on.

01:17:54

Ask one of them. They would love to talk with you. And if they give you big eyes and go, oh, I have no idea, you know what? Come find me, right? I would love to help. I think this is something that's valuable, it's important for us.

01:18:07

And as we finish up, our prayer team is gonna be down here at the front. They would love to pray with you about whatever it is that's going on. They would be wonderful people to talk to and to ask how they grew in their relationship with the Lord.

01:18:18

You should come ask them and talk with them. Maybe you're too shy to come talk to the prayer team that's gonna be up front. We have our prayer wall that's back in the back hallway at the end of the hall as well.

01:18:27

You can anonymously write your prayer request on there and know that our prayer team is gonna pray for you, even though you didn't want to come up here and to speak with them directly. They would love to pray with you through that medium as well.

01:18:40

But before we finish up, we're also, I'm sure you guys noticed, we're gonna take communion together this morning. And so as we prepare to approach the table for communion, just a word of reminder or caution for all that are here in attendance this morning, the time when we gather around the Lord's table, when we gather around and take communion together, this is a sacred time that is specifically given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ for believers, people who have placed their faith in Jesus for salvation.

01:19:09

So if you're not a believer, if you're here this morning, we wanna welcome you and we're thankful that you're here, but this is a special time that I would encourage you to abstain from partaking in because this is something that is meaningful to us as Christians because of the sacrifice of Jesus and what he has done in making a way for us to have a relationship with God.

01:19:28

And so if you don't have that, I would love to share with you how you could have that relationship, but until you do, please refrain from partaking. And then when you have that relationship with Christ, you can come and joyfully join in along with the rest of the body.

01:19:42

But we would encourage you, those of you guys who are believers, who have placed your faith in Jesus, I would also encourage you before you come to take a moment to examine your hearts, to make sure that you can partake of the Lord's communion in a worthy manner because the Bible cautions us, it tells us not to come if we have sin in our hearts, if we have unforgiveness or these different unrepented of and unconfessed sins in our life.

01:20:06

It tells us that we should make sure that we make those things right before we just come and casually partake of these elements. If your heart is not right, I would encourage you to refrain, take a moment, confess that sin before the Lord and make sure that you're in the right place before you come and partake of these elements as well as Paul is gonna talk a bit about in 11, in 1 Corinthians 11 as I'm gonna read in just a minute.

01:20:29

So we've got these three tables at the front. We've also got a table at the back wherever it's easiest for you to come grab. We've got fresh pita and grape juice there for you. If you're gluten-free, we've got little pre-packaged things that are gluten-free for you as well.

01:20:42

But I wanna read for us from 1 Corinthians 11 as we prepare to partake of this communion together. So after I read these verses and after I pray, I'd encourage you to take a moment to reflect, to pray, to prepare your hearts to take communion.

01:20:57

And then when you're ready, I'd invite you to come and to take these elements, to return to your seat and to take communion there at your spot. Let me read from 1 Corinthians 11 verses 23 through 29 as the Apostle Paul talks about this incredible ordinance that we have of communion.

01:21:14

1 Corinthians 11 says, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me.

01:21:29

And the same way he also took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

01:21:47

And whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and the blood of the Lord. So let a person examine himself then and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

01:21:59

For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself." Would you guys pray with me? God, we thank you for your church. We thank you for your word. We thank you for your son who made away as he went to the cross, Jesus died on a cross to pay a penalty that he didn't deserve so that sinners like us could be forgiven.

01:22:21

God, we thank you for the opportunity to come and to partake of communion together with our church family. God, we thank you for the privilege that we have of gathering together and God being the church for one another, to be the encouragement for one another, the encouragers, the challengers, the rebukers, all those things that you give us to one another for.

01:22:43

We thank you for each and every one of those roles no matter how easy or joyful or difficult they may be. God, we thank you for Jesus. And God, as we come to this table in just a moment, God, as we remember the sacrifice of Jesus as his body was broken, as his blood was shed so that we might be forgiven.

01:23:02

God, we pray that you would use this time to fill our hearts with the joy of our salvation. God, that you would remind us of what an incredible gift it is to be able to come to you and to know that you hear us and to know that we can be adopted as your son or your daughter if we have placed our faith in Jesus.

01:23:18

And so God, as we take these elements, we wanna confess any known sin that we may bring to church this morning. God, we wanna repent of any known evil that may be in our lives. God, we wanna forsake those things.

01:23:31

God, help us to live in right relationships with one another. God, help us to live in holiness in the way that you call us and invite us to. God, help us to discipline ourselves for godliness and by so doing, God, that we might have a pure and unhindered relationship with you.

01:23:49

So God, we wanna confess those known sins. God, we pray that you would bring to mind any unconsidered sin that we might confess it and come to this table rightly. And God, as we come and take these elements, we thank you for Jesus.

01:24:03

It's in his name we pray, amen. Take and eat.