

Pastor's Corner

Discipline is Key for 2010

By Pastor Fred Toailoa

The word that has stuck in my mind as I approach this New Year is discipline. The word discipline has several meanings but I am referring to one that Merriam-Webster defines as "training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character". Discipline is a very important word for our everyday living. If it is utilized in our lives it yields tremendous benefits, if not it can be detrimental to all aspects (physical, mental, spiritual) of our lives. Many great people owe their accomplishments to this very word. Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper for lacking ideas. He also went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland. Thomas Edison's teachers said he was "too stupid to learn anything." He was fired from his first two jobs for being "non-productive." As an inventor, Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. When a reporter asked, "How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?" Edison replied, "I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps." Babe Ruth is famous for his past home run record, but for decades he also held the record for strikeouts. He hit 714 home runs and struck out 1,330 times in his career (about which he said, "Every strike brings me closer to the next home run."). I believe all these famous individuals and more were just ordinary people but discipline was why they succeeded and thus separated themselves from their peers.

For the Christian, there is spiritual discipline and I have defined that to mean, "living an orderly, controlled, and obedient lifestyle according to biblical principles". One author described it as "behaviors that facilitate spiritual growth." - <http://www.wcg.org/lit/spiritual/group/discip1.htm>. My church family, the key to a healthy spiritual life has to do with spiritual discipline and that is how we're going to succeed in 2010 and/or until Jesus comes.

Paul gives Timothy the same encouragement for the success of his spiritual life. Paul says, (1Tim 4:7-8) "exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." Another translation says, "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (NASB). Timothy is told that as an athlete trains his body, so the Christian must train his soul. Why? Paul gives the answer in verse 8, because it is profitable for this life and the life to come. So, spiritual disciplines are spiritual exercises that the Christian can do to build godly character and behavior. What kind of spiritual exercise is Paul talking about? Here is a list that will help with your New Year's resolutions considering the spiritual aspect of your life this year:

- **Prayer** - spend time talking to God - (**Col 4:2**)
- **Meditation** - study God's Word and other worthy endeavors - (**Ps 1:1-2; Phl 4:8**)
- **Fasting** - accompanied with prayer - (**Neh 1:4; Act 13:2-3; 14:23**)
- **Singing** - one can praise God and be edified - (**Ps 71:23; Act 16:25**)
- **Giving** - please God and be blessed - (**Heb 13:16; Ac 20:35**)
- **Assembling** - exhort one another - (**Ps 122:1; Heb 10:24-25**)
- **Hospitality** - kindness often results in a blessing - (**Heb 13:2**)
- **Teaching** - usually benefits the teacher more than the student - (**Heb 5:12-14**)
- **and more...**

May we, this year, as we serve God at Citrus Heights awaiting His soon return, be diligent in our service and discipline with our spiritual exercises. Happy New Year!