

THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE SERIES

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

MEDIA REFERENCE NUMBER WNX-532 JANUARY 26, 2010

THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

THE DISCIPLINE OF DISTINCTION

*A PRACTICAL SERIES ON CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES
AND HOW WE SHOULD BE LIVING IN THE WORLD AROUND US*

Week 26 of a 31 Week Series

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Christianity 101, Faith, Discernment, Discipleship

Introduction to the Text;

2 Chronicles 26:16

THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE SERIES AND THE DISCIPLINE OF DISTINCTION

DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. :19 **Go therefore** and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, :20 **teaching them to observe all things** that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

2 Chronicles 26:16a

But when King Uzziah was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction,

Distinction: a result of having achieved a place or the advancement and acknowledgement of an individual or group for some excellence or worthy act.

**There is an Amazing Background to This Verse
That Will Serve Us Well *if* We Pay Close Attention.**

The Background:

2 Chronicles 26

Now all the people of Judah took Uzi, who was sixteen years old, and made him king... Uzi was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem.... And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD,... **So** God helped him against the Philistines,... And Uzi built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate,... Moreover Uzi had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies... ***But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his own destruction,***... Then King Uzi died of leprosy, in the day that the Lord had judged him for exalted himself.

THE DISCIPLINE OF DISTINCTION

WHICH IS THE ABILITY TO RIGHTLY STEWARD OVER WHAT'S IN YOUR LIFE

THE **SMALL** OPPORTUNITIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

UNTIL THEY ARE **LARGE** OPPORTUNITIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

On the topic of opportunity & responsibility & stewardship – Jesus Christ Himself taught that it was essential that what comes our way is to be managed and used (1) for God's glory and (2) for the betterment of man and (3) for the furtherance of the Gospel.

Is your life being used by God to its greatest potential?

Is your life advancing in the things of God?

Or are there areas of barrenness and drought?

If so - It's often because we've been lazy and neglectful about spiritual things.

Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. :8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. :9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. :10 Therefore, **as we have opportunity**, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

THE DISCIPLINE OF DISTINCTION

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

1.) Is the godly stewardship of **wealth**

Wealth Being Our Assets, Possessions, Material Goods

Far Too Many Christians Are Either Still Impressed and In Love With This Worlds Toys Or They're too Biblically Weak to Handle Success, Power, Influence, Wealth.

Luke 18:18-25

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" :19 So Jesus said to him, "**Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.**" :20 You know the commandments: "**Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'**" :21 And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." :22 So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "**You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.**" :23 But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. :24 And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "**How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! :25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.**"

The Key is – Not to Become a Rich Man.

You want to become a faithful, responsible, steward of what He gives you.

We're To Study, Pray and Preach, But Ultimately We Can't Advance The Kingdom of God Practically Without Material Goods.

The Bible is Full of Examples

From the building of the Temple to the Ministry of the Apostles to the Globalization of the Church

Romans 10:13-15

For "**whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.**" :14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? :15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

??? Why Are We Not Christ-Like with What We Have ???

1 John 3:17-18

But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? :18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

There is a False Doctrine, (once again) circulating among young people today that ***“Poverty is Godliness”*** and that ***“We’re going to drop out of school, quit work and just follow Jesus”***

It’s Almost Comical That This Message is Being Once Again Preached by Those who have already made their millions or had a Relative who died and left them millions.

So they go about appealing to the carnal belief that a vow of poverty or simplicity is the right way to serve the Lord.

The Sad Thing Is;
these groups can never feed the homeless or send out missionaries or influence a culture for God because they have no stewardship skills. They are unable to handle God’s blessings without loving the stuff and so they check out from the very thing that God is trying to work into their lives – spiritual maturity thru physical stewardship & responsibility.

THE DISCIPLINE OF **DISTINCTION**

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT’S USABLE TO GOD

2.) Is the godly stewardship of recognition

Fame, Notoriety, Prominence, Reputation

Matthew 4:23-24

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. :24 Then His fame went throughout all Syria;

It’s a strange thing that Jesus’ workers can become well known, even famous people.

Isaiah was famous / Abraham became famous / King David, famous.
Peter, Paul & Mary – The Apostles all became well known. George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, Billy Graham...

Acts 4:8,13,17,-19

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, :13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. :17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.” :18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. :19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.

MAN’S WEAKNESS TOWARD THIS WORLD’S THINGS

It’s a very sad thing that the God of the universe has to compete with material things for our affection.

You and I are living at a time when Christians, like Martha in the kitchen, are distracted about with many things.

Very few Christians are mature enough to Steward and manage and discipline themselves to handle distinction.

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

THE DISCIPLINE OF DISTINCTION

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT’S USABLE TO GOD

3.) Is the godly stewardship of influence

Power, Sway, Control

These things all grow and increase over time like a vineyard.

Acts 9:15-16

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a **chosen vessel** of Mine to bear My name before **Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel**. :16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

Managing Influence is an Opportunity to Develop Integrity.

Luke 16:10

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much;

MAN'S INABILITY TO MANAGE INFLUENCE

Proverbs 28:11

The rich man is wise in his own eyes,

??? Why Would God Make a Man Powerful ???

Matthew 23:11-12

But **he who is greatest among you** shall be your servant. :12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Jeremiah 45:5

And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them;

Daniel 4:30-31

The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" :31 While the word *was still* in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!

THE MOST WELL-BALANCED, WELL-ADJUSTED MAN

Philippians 3:7-10

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. :8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ :9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; :10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

THE DISCIPLINE OF **DISTINCTION**

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

4.) Is the godly stewardship of **success**

Achievement, Accomplishment, Exploits,

Daniel 11:32b

...the people who know their God shall be strong,
and carry out great exploits.

Matthew 6:33

But **seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,**
and all these *(others)* things shall be added to you.

CAN A **CHRISTIAN** BE "BLESSED" AND BE RIGHT-ON ?

CAN A **CHURCH** BE "BLESSED" AND BE RIGHT-ON ?

CAN A **LEADER** BE "BLESSED" AND BE RIGHT-ON ?

Yes - If They Are Living and Walking In
The Reality
of Jesus Christ On A Daily Basis.

HOW CAN WE TELL ?

- SEE IF THEY'RE HUMBLED BY THE BLESSINGS !

Psalms 25:9

The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.

STEWARDSHIP & RESPONSIBILITY

Matthew 13:23

But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who **indeed bears fruit and produces**: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

The Key to All these Distinctions is;

Psalms 34:18

The LORD *is* near to those who have **a broken heart,**
And saves such as have **a contrite spirit.**

Mark 8:36-37

For **what shall it profit** a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?
:37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

THE DISCIPLINE OF **DISTINCTION**

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

5.) Is the godly stewardship of **vitality**

Energy, Health, Vigor, Wellbeing

This is most often a Young man's danger

"Feeling Good" causes a young man to waste his vitality on things that will never matter and in fact, rob him from blessing God.

Lamentations 3:27

It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young.

Philippians 4:11-12

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I **have learned** in whatever state I am, to be content: :12 I **know** how to be **abased**, and I **know** how to **abound**. Everywhere and in all things I **have learned** both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. :13 I **can** do all things through Christ who strengthens me.



learned *manqaznw manthano, man-than'-o;* to discover by experience and trial. To come to the place of understanding. To be educated.



abased *tapeino/w tapeinoo, tap-i-no'-o;* to be pushed down or depress into a mold. to be humiliated. to in need.



abound *perisseu/w perisseuo, per-is-syoo'-o;* to superabound in quantity or quality. To have in excess, an abundance. More than what is needed. enough and to spare.

**As a Christian – God Wants Everything in Our Hands to Become a
T o o l for His Work**

Psalm 62:10b

If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them.
(what if the Lord blesses you with riches – what will you do?)

*The Lord Wants to Mature Us
So that we can be vessels of use – conduits for His provision.*

The Middle Class Blessing

Proverbs 30:8-9

Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. :9 Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

1 Corinthians 4:2

Moreover it is required in **stewards** that one be found faithful.

Matthew 25:19-21

After a long time the lord of those **servants** came and settled accounts with them. :20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' :21 His lord said to him, "Well done, **good and faithful servant**; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Leave It @ The Cross Tonight

End of Study