



Discipline, A Defense Against Mediocrity

By Candrus Franklin

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

The definition of self-control is: disciplined, consistent, and temperate. Why is discipline necessary? Have you ever said to yourself, “How did I get here, in this situation?” Why did I let it go this far?” “Why did wait so long to get started?” Often, a lack of self-discipline is the culprit. The road to mediocrity is a life that lacks self-discipline. *“God does not give us overcoming life; He gives us life as we overcome.”* (Oswald Chambers)

First you must understand that private victory, over ourselves, leads to public victory. We all want to run our race and finish our course and to hear God say, *“Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into My rest”*, but private victory plays a large part in this. *Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down without walls.* Proverbs 25:28

The second reason we need discipline, and perhaps the most important one, is that the greatest desire we have as believers is to know each person of the Godhead more. We desire to deepen our knowledge of, and intimacy with, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In order to do this, we must have discipline. Discipline to “come away with Him” in fellowship, worship, praise, prayer, both “in the spirit” and understanding” **Private Victory Leads To Public Victory** “in the word, even when we long for a face-to-face encounter with Him. We want the whole earth to see His glory. This means that we must maintain the right priorities in life and it takes discipline.

The third reason we need discipline is because we are engaged in spiritual warfare with Satan, the enemy of our soul. He will oppose on every front. *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”* 1 Peter 5: 8-9 We also have the commands to make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19), love one another (John 13:34-35) and suffer as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:3).

Scripture is full of examples of men and women with self-control. Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the king’s delicacies and prayed three-times a day. David demonstrated great discipline as a shepherd, a warrior, and as a king.

When I think of David, I am always amazed that in addition to all his duties, he wrote songs for the chief musicians and also was overseer of praise and worship rendered to God. Of course, the greatest example of self-discipline was Jesus. *“In Our Lord’s life every project was disciplined to the will of His Father. There was not a movement of an impulse of his own will as distinct from His Father’s – The Son can do nothing of Himself.”* (Oswald Chambers) Jesus said Himself that He only did what He saw the Father doing. He did nothing for selfish gain or ambition, but that the Father be glorified in the Son. Can you imagine the discipline it took for Jesus to lay down His deity and not pick it up again until after the crucifixion?

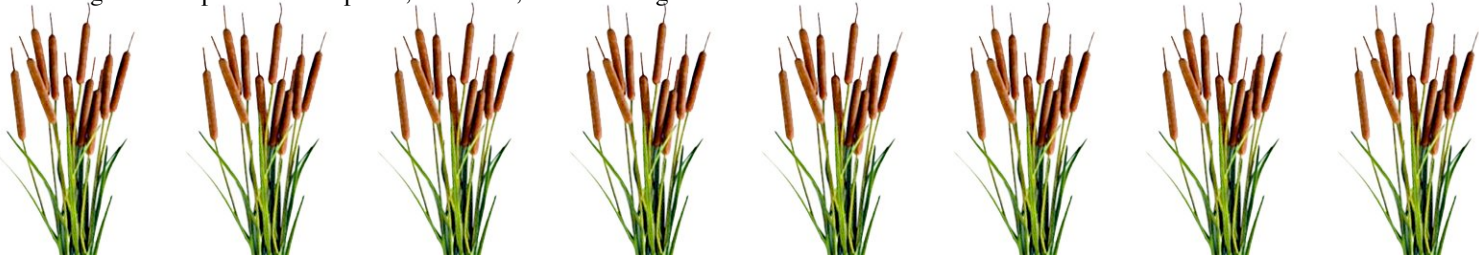
Jesus Only Did What He Saw The Father Do

The amount of discipline we have can have a direct correlation to the long-term impact we make for the Kingdom. Yes, God is sovereign and can use anyone or anything to accomplish His will. Many of us make reference to God’s use of the talking donkey to get Balaam’s attention, and avoid death (Numbers 22:29-35). I believe that God is looking for saint’s who will be soldiers He can use long term for His purpose and glory. Soldiers are disciplined. Yes, He used the talking donkey, but He only used him short term!

Now the question is, how do we develop the necessary discipline? We all have discipline or good habits in various areas of our lives. However, I am certain that each of us have areas of struggle. The good news is that the Holy Spirit will do the work within us. He promised in 2 Corinthians 3:18, *“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”* I, personally, am counting on this promise! However we have a part to play, we must cooperate with God.

I would like to share with you a few recommendations that are on my heart to implement a transition to discipline. First - Pray in the Holy Spirit, at every opportunity, throughout the day, every day. Why? To get control of the tongue (James 3:1-12), build yourself up in your faith (Jude 20), and edify yourself (1 Corinthians 14:4). Second – Start small. For example, you desire to get up earlier in the morning to spend more time with God. The first discipline to master would be to begin going to sleep earlier the night before. You set yourself up for failure if you desire to get up

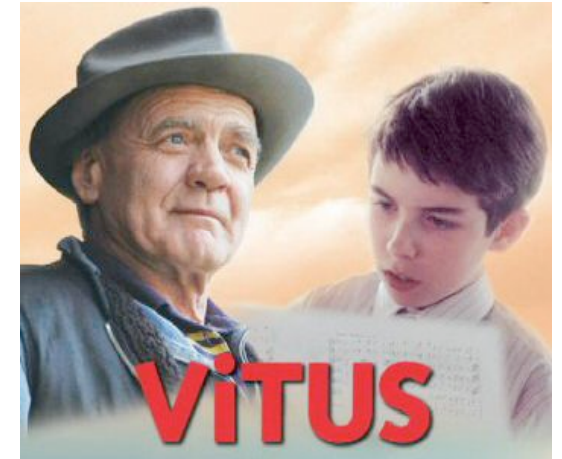
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Vitus



Vitus is an inspirational story, a superb German film that vividly captures the stress and strain of having an adult brain essentially trapped inside a child's psyche. It is filled with extraordinary piano music, romance, undying love, and the emergence of an intellect that is far ahead of his years. *Vitus* grabs one's heart very early on and never lets go. Refusing to be controlled by his teachers, his mother and father or his peers, *Vitus* bonds with his grandfather. The grandfather acts out a role of humble wisdom and noble character for the impressionable young musical prodigy. As the story develops, we see that young *Vitus* is not just a musical genius, but has a mind capable of out thinking all the adults around him. He creates the kind of life he wants, which is to be 'normal' and not be treated special. *Vitus* is a wonderful film that says a lot about human nature and true intelligence.



As Far As My Feet Will Carry Me

A modern day "Les Miserables," this film is the story about a German soldier, Clemens Forrell, who escapes from a Russian work camp, circa WWII, and is hounded by a Russian lieutenant. He's sent to a labor camp where death seems much more appealing than staying alive. Foreign films simply don't get much better than this. It is refreshing to watch international films that have their own Academy and Emmy Awards systems in Europe. This movie will make you realize what sacrifice for family is all about. Not only does this movie apply to all our young men and women who are fighting in conflicts around the world, it helps everyone see the sacrifices they make by leaving loved ones behind with the faith to see them again at all costs. The excellent acting will make you dig into your soul and see how much you are willing to sacrifice for something greater. We found this to be a very moving theatrical experience.

