DISCIPLinE

It is no coincidence or accident that disciple is "in" discipline – for, indeed, it is. No one is a greater disciple than his or her DISCIPLinE. While it is true that discipline, in itself, does not make a good disciple (to be a good disciple a person must both be disciplined and complete the disciplines well), it is likewise true that without DISCIPLinE a person will not be a good disciple.

Yes, as Paul reminds us, I can have the greatest of discipline in "giving" but still not be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, for:

"If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."

But Paul is still the first to tell us of the importance of DISCIPLinE in becoming disciples.

The modern-day foolishness that we are saved for eternity in a second, with no obligation to this salvation in the here and now, is silliness even to the non-Christian, as it should be! True discipleship is not an ad hoc existence – a little dabbling here and there, neither hot nor cold, living like the world, while somehow "magically" becoming a disciple.

> "These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth." Revelation 3:14-16

This is a frightening prospect, but a consistent theme throughout the Bible!

Biblical (as opposed to cultural) Christianity is EVIDENCED by an increasing DISCIPLinE – if I have never had Christian DISCIPLinEs, if I am not really interested in Christian DISCIPLinEs, then I will NOT experience the fruit of Christian DISCIPLinEs – the salvation of my soul!

Not that DISCIPLinEs, no matter how good they are completed, save us, but they ALWAYS accompany (are evidence of) true salvation!

Cults are those that tell people exactly what, how, when and where they need to do X, Y and Z to do what is right – Christianity provides guidelines in the Bible (that is why consistent Bible reading is SO important) that, when accompanied by the other Christian DISCIPLinEs, provide a personal and specific discipleship plan as God has "prepared in advance for us."

There are "Dos" (that we major on) and "Don'ts" (that we minor on) DISCIPLinEs in any good discipleship plan – and for completing both we will need grace because we can't do what we ought and do what we ought not! Romans 7:21-25

So, periodically take your DISCIPLinE and discipleship "temperature" –

"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you – unless, of course, you fail the test?" 2 Corinthians 13:5

Think:
Reading your Bible – EVERY day.
Praying.
Listening for and to the Voice of God.
Giving.

Finding a good Church for:
Corporate worshipping of God
Hearing the Word of God
Christian fellowship
Getting to know people who can correct and help direct you
. . .

We either live life the best that we can or, by developing spiritual "muscles" through Christian DISCIPLinEs, find the grace of God for this and our eternal life! What we, ourselves, cannot do, God will do by His grace – but we need to see our need and seek it.

Go for it!