

Starting a New Discipline

Last week, I asked you to prayerfully consider if there was a discipline, a practice, an activity that would deepen your own personal following of the Lord Jesus that you see you need to build into your daily life. That list includes (but is not limited to):

- ✓ Daily Bible study/Bible reading
- ✓ Personal and Corporate prayer
- ✓ Accountability/mentorship
- ✓ Church attendance
- ✓ Serving
- ✓ Community with other believers

It has been my experience that developing a discipline, building a practice in my life that becomes a habit, will involve a few active steps on my part. These kinds of practices don't just appear. Beginning such a practice requires intentionality. Continuing with such a practice requires intentionality as well.

This is **especially** the case when I try to build in my life a practice that will bring me closer to the Lord, one that will enable me to be of greater use to Him than I was before. That is due to the fact that Satan hates it when I try to get closer to the Lord, or actively work to make myself usable to Him.

So in the 4-6 weeks that I need to develop a lifelong habit in beginning and maintaining a necessary discipline, Satan is going to do everything he can to distract me, to tempt me to do some “good” activity, or something else that will knock me out of that rhythm. That means I need to have a mindset of intentionality to this discipline.

So what intentional steps are necessary to begin and maintain a discipline or practice that will deepen my love relationship with the Lord? Let me suggest two that will be vital in this effort:

1. Determine a specific time to start, and provide enough time margin—

For me, my devotional time with the Lord became a habit when I determined that it would be the first thing I do as soon as I get out of bed—and pouring my first cup of coffee (I also made sure that I allowed enough time with the Lord before the first kids would be getting up). The other place where I had to build my margin was when I went to bed. Just developing those margins removed the barriers that would have made my time with the Lord more hit-and-miss than the habit it became.

2. Ask someone else to hold you accountable—The simplest, most effective checkpoint I have discovered is the simple text message. For example, if you want to develop a consistent time alone with the Lord in devotions, ask someone if it's ok with them if you text them the insights, discoveries, or applications that you picked up from the Bible on a given day. Ask that person to text you if they don't hear from you by a certain time that you determine.

There's other things you can do to develop that discipline in your life. But these are two steps that will help get you up and running.

So as you are working to develop these practices in your life, when you think of the people who make up your small group, what discipline or practice do you suspect that each person might need to build into their lives that they are not already doing?

Let's take a look at that issue next week!