

Discipleship

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 January 2009

[0 : 00] Go ye therefore and teach your nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you tonight for your precious word, for our gathering together, for our ears to hear, for our hearts to respond. Lord, for your word to work with each one and do something supernatural tonight. Lord, we pray by your grace to each heart. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen. I want to talk tonight about disciples, being disciples, being learners is what it means. As the title of one book is called, Go and Make Learners. Go and Make Learners. And that's based on this passage here where it says, Go ye therefore and teach.

Or you could put it, Go ye and make disciples. Make disciples. Now notice here it says, our object is to make disciples, not to make decisions. Not to make decisions. Some, at times, churches can put the focus on making lots of decisions. Lots of people making a commitment to Christ and that's a beautiful and wonderful thing to aspire to.

But we want to do much more than just a decision per se. We want to see disciples made. To be making disciples. And there's something precious and vital that our Lord wants His church and for you as believers, each one, to go and make disciples. Go and make learners.

[1 : 44] God's people are meant to be disciples. We see, it's referred to many times in the Word of God, this phrase, this term, disciple. Disciple. What does it mean? How can I be one?

It means being a learner. To want to know more of Him. To be in personal relationship with Him. Think of the twelve disciples. What did they do? They spent three years, day and night, with the Saviour.

They spent time with Him. They spent time with Him. They got to know Jesus as their Lord, as their Master, as their Saviour, as they followed Him, as they left their old ways and they followed Him as His learners, as His disciples.

And we too, as a believer here tonight, if you're a Christian here today, you are a student of the greatest teacher. The greatest teacher that we can ever sit under and learn from.

And our learning is not just a load of information, like packing our minds with facts and figures, like we could try to memorize an encyclopedia of information.

[2 : 48] Our learning is much more than information. It's coming to know the Saviour Himself. Coming to know Christ Himself, personally, each one of us. Jeremiah 9, verse 23.

It says, Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.

Glory rejoiced in this, he says, that you know and that you understand me. That I am the Lord, which exercised loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

God wants you to come to know, to understand, to have a relationship with Him as your Heavenly Father, Christ as your Master, as your Lord, as your Saviour.

Not just in some glib expression of Lord, but in reality. Discipleship is what He wants us to be, to make disciples, to be disciples. And what is discipleship?

[3 : 56] You can see this word discipleship, if you look at that components of that word disciple, it's also the component in the word discipline.

Discipleship is related to discipline. And through the Word of God we see God's discipline.

Discipline. Now, I don't think any of us really likes discipline, if we're the recipient of it.

If we're the one who's being disciplined. I know, I don't have to discipline me, as a young fellow, only once or twice, but you know, I needed it. And it was right that I received it.

And likewise, God wants to discipline us. At times it's needful, it's helpful, and we can grow from it, we can learn from it. There's many passages, we won't have time to turn to everyone, but let me

just refer to some of these ways that God exercises discipline for these people.

For example, Deuteronomy 8, verses 5 to 6. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

[5 : 03] The Lord thy God chastens you. He disciplines you, it says. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

God compares his discipline to the discipline of a father to his son. Proverbs 3, 11. My son despised not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction.

For whom the Lord loved, he corrected. Even as a father, the son in whom he delighted. The one who God loves, he chastens, he disciplines. It's needful, it's helpful.

Of course we can think of examples as a parent would see a child. I know I had to firmly call my grandchild. My granddaughter, who I was with, I was late, and she just was walking willy-nilly out onto the road.

And I had to say, stop! You know, I didn't discipline her more than that. Just my voice. Just the tone of my voice was enough to make her crack up in tears and be afraid and affected by the sternness that I showed.

[6 : 16] But my sternness was for her good. It was for her protection so that she would be heard. And likewise too, God's sternness and chastening and discipline at times is for our good. Hebrews 12, 11.

Now no chastening, no discipline, for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. You know, that chastening is not going to be a joyful thing. It's going to be unpleasant. But it's going to yield fruit of righteousness. Proverbs 13, 24.

It says, he that spareth his rod, hated his son. But he that loveth him, chasteneth him quickly.

There's a chastening, there's a necessary discipline apparent to a child that gets their attention.

It gets them to realize right from wrong and to recognize what is the safest way and the wise way. Revelation 3, verse 19.

[7 : 16] God speaks to a church there. He says, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. He says, if he loves the church, he's going to rebuke, he's going to chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent.

God wants us to repent, to literally make a U-turn. To stop going the wrong direction and to go his way. To go the right way. To turn around. And Titus 2, just lastly, verse 11.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. God's grace hath bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching. Here's that same word. It's to do with child discipline. It's got the sense of a teaching with discipline. God's grace teaches us. That denying ungodliness and worldliness, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

God's grace teaches us. And sometimes God's grace will treat us like a father would treat an erring child. God's grace, chastening us, teaching us. So that we won't live ungodly, but we'll live godly, righteously and to his glory.

[8 : 26] So we see there's much said about discipline. Again, it's a topic, hey, I don't really want to be disciplined. Nobody likes discipline, but it's needful.

And God wants you to see the value of it. And we're going to look at some kinds of discipline that we can exercise, that we can grow as disciples and become more disciplined in our lives.

And firstly, you can look at, for example, self-discipline. Self-discipline. It means we control ourselves. We control ourselves. Now, sometimes I've got to help Julie control herself.

You know, when she goes shopping, and I'm a wet blanket when she wants to buy something, then I think, oh, is it needful? Is it useful? But, you know, Julie likes to buy all kinds of decorative things and beautiful looking things that, in her mind, they're useful.

And they're important to Julie. But, you know, for me, when I go shopping, I exercise self-discipline. I don't like to spend anything. I always look for the cheapest thing.

[9 : 36] I exercise self-discipline. But, you know, sometimes when you walk past that fast food restaurant and you smell that, that Hungry Jack's cooking, you know, you've got to exercise self-discipline, don't you? You know, I'm just being a bit glib here to illustrate that sometimes we have to really restrain ourselves and control ourselves.

You know, sometimes when it's lunchtime and I haven't got anything to eat, I go and buy a chocolate bar. And if I'm not careful, I'll eat the whole thing. The whole thing for my love. See, I've

got a problem here.

Pray for me for this addiction to chocolate that I have sometimes. I've got to exercise self-discipline. Brother says, we all need to exercise self-discipline. And watch that we control ourselves.

That our actions are based on principle and judgment. And I'm talking that in spiritual terms, of course, there's a need for self-discipline. Because all around us is the devil's web that he wants to tangle us in.

And there's octopus-like tentacles that want to grab a hold of us and drag us away from God's perfect will for our lives. And we've got to constantly be exercising self-discipline.

[10:41] And seek that our feelings, our desires, the pressure that is exerted on us, especially for younger people, the peer pressure.

But even for older people too, we get peer pressure too. In the workplace, in our day-by-day relatives and friends who aren't believers. There's pressure on us to conform, to drag us away, to things that wouldn't be pleasing to God.

So we can all know that we need to have self-discipline and control ourselves. And Acts 24, verse 16, Paul talks about that. He says, and herein do I exercise myself.

He says, herein do I discipline myself. To have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. He wants to make sure that he's so self-disciplined, that he's so careful with himself, that he's got a conscience that is void of offence before men and before God.

And as God's people, we need to exercise self-discipline. It's vital, it's essential. And believer tonight, you can resist temptation. You can get the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[11:48] God's Spirit can shape your desires and your emotions. His Word can guide your conduct. And you can focus on that which will be a blessing that will honour and glorify God.

Self-discipline is a key character trait of God's people through history. You look at all the men and women of God, great missionaries, revivalists, reformers of old, preachers and upstanding Christians that are examples and a testimony to us, as well as the men and women in the whole of faith in Hebrews 11.

They had self-discipline. They had a commitment. They kept on keeping on. And we need that. It's like, as Paul compares it in 1 Corinthians 9, so like an athlete's training.

1 Corinthians 9, verse 24 onwards, he talks about, Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize, so run that ye may obtain.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that feeds at the air, but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that, by any means, when I have peace to others, I myself should be a castaway.

[13:09] The athlete who wins got there through discipline. You hear about these Olympic athletes and of the great strain of effort. You hear of the stories of how they get up at, what, four o'clock in the morning or whenever and dive into a freezing cold pool and do so many laps to build up their strength, to get on that bike and go so many kilometres, to run that race so many kilometres, to build up their muscles, their strength, their stamina.

An athlete exercises self-discipline. And God, through Paul, exhorts us to being like a runner, running a race. And it's not a sprint, this is a marathon event. This is a long-distance event.

And an athlete wins through discipline by obeying the coach, by learning how to restrain and control his diet, his pleasure, his rest, that in obedience to the coach, in every aspect of his life or her life, the athlete wants to aspire to the gold, to the first place, to win the race.

And discipline helps us attain the goal. And likewise too, as God's people, as brothers and sisters, as his disciples, we want to have that discipline that Paul talks of here.

Paul says that these athletes of the ancient games, they would obtain a perishable crown. They would just get a garland of leaves of a token of their win, of these green leaves that they placed upon the head of the winner.

[14:50] But it seemed withered away. It was corruptible. It corrupted it. Withered away. The disciplined believer will receive an incorruptible crown.

In other words, a crown that will never corrupt. It's a crown that will last forever. It will never corrupt. And as God's people, aren't we to be those that will not drift with the tide, but will go against the flow?

Those that will be intent, that will be disciplined, that will be driven by that goal. As it talks about looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Humanism holds that life is all about a man meeting his own needs and getting satisfaction for himself.

But for you, for I as believers, as God's people, our fulfilment is found in Christ. It's found in living a life that is pleasing to him. Paul exhorts 10th in 1 Timothy 4, 7.

He says, But exercise thyself rather unto godliness. He says exercise. You could put that word discipline. Discipline yourself. Exercise yourself unto godliness.

[15 : 59] Godliness is talked about as being a kind of exercise. and we were joking before our exercise. And this is the very word from which we get our English word, gym.

G-Y-M. The gymnasium. He says here, Go into the gymnasium. He says, Go into the gym and exercise yourself unto godliness. Put in that training, that effort, that self-discipline to grow in your godliness, to train yourself in it.

Paul tells Timothy that if it's going to be godly, it's going to take discipline, it's going to take concentrated effort. In contrast to that, an undisciplined life will drift into ungodliness.

If you're not disciplined, you're just going to drift. Friends, God wants you to be focused. He wants you to be disciplined. He wants you to see the goal, to see the prize, and to aspire for it.

To discipline yourself, to create habits that are godly habits, to become a godly person. Not that you can big-night yourself and parade and put others down, but that God will truly be God.

[17 : 08] That the Lord will truly be Lord for you. That He will be your priority. That He will be your love. That He will be the one you adore, that you want to honour and please above all others. And that you'll develop godly habits, not out of a condemnation or out of a dread kind of legalism that's a bondage thing, but you'll want to live a godly life because you love the Saviour.

You love Jesus so much that you want to love His Word. You'll love the Lord Jesus so much that you'll love to witness for Him. You'll love to tell others about Christ.

You'll love to tell others about that salvation that they so need. You'll love to pray because you want to communicate with your Heavenly Father. You'll love to have fellowship, to spend more time with His people, with your brothers and sisters so you can grow, so you can be blessed and so you can bless and exhort another.

And friends, it takes self-discipline to have all those things, to schedule these things until they become habits because there's times when any of us can feel like, oh, I just don't feel like it today. I just don't feel like it today. It's just, oh, I think I'll just have a sickie from church or I think I'll just have, oh yeah, I think I'll just have a sleep in or I think I'll, I think I'll, I'll, I don't feel like witnessing today.

[18 : 31] Let somebody else do it or, you know, let somebody else do whatever it is spiritually. But it takes discipline. It means we do it whether we want to or not because, not out of a bondage thing, but because we've disciplined ourselves.

God constrains us. He leads us and His love, His life, we can't help but one. And deep down, as much as the spirit might be willing and the flesh is weak, we don't care about the flesh, our spirit is willing.

And that's what matters. And look at what Paul says here. He says, discipline your body. Your body. As a disciple, you've got a body. It's your body. It's His body.

You've only got one. Look after it. He says, he compares the disciples' life to that of the fight of a boxer. It was intense boxing. It was rugged. It was one to one.

This was no shadow boxing, Paul says. This was real boxing. And he wanted to bring his body into subjection. So, you could put it, to make his body his slave. We must control our bodies and make them serve us, not let them control us.

[19 : 42] Most believers, someone has put it here, are slaves to their bodies. Their bodies tell their mind what to do. Their bodies decide when to eat, what to eat, how much to eat, when to sleep, and get up, and so on.

An athlete cannot allow that. An athlete, they don't always feel like getting up at four o'clock in the morning. They don't always feel like doing those arduous months and months of training.

But, an athlete knows she has to. She has to, to win. And likewise, as a believer, you want to discipline your body. Discipline yourself. It doesn't matter what your body feels like.

Your spirit needs fellowship. Your spirit needs the word. Prayer. Grow. And, it takes a disciplined lifestyle, a way of life. This takes endurance.

It means toughness to continue to take the bumps and bruises of the battle. Paul compares the Christian life to, as I say, a boxing match. You're going to get bruised. You're going to get battered. [20 : 39] You know, he compares it, likewise to a, of course we know the word tells us that the Christian life is like a spiritual battle. Maybe you'll take a few punches. But, you've got to keep on.

Keep on keeping on. Think of the use of your time too. I know for any of us, we've all got time pressures. And, what is the priority to you? I was reading something just today, in fact, that said, about use of time.

It said, we will always have enough time to do God's will. It's an interesting thought, isn't it? And, it said, he doesn't make his perfect will unachievable.

So, he gives you the time that you need to achieve his will. But, we don't always do it, do we? I know for myself, I can use my time unwisely and it just goes.

It's gone. Where did that time go? You know, and you think, oh, if only I'd have been a bit more disciplined with the use of my time, I could have done so much more valuable things.

[21 : 42] And, your body, as a believer, is the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in you. 1 Corinthians 6, 19. Glorify God in your bodies. Be disciplined with your food.

In healthy eating, not in overeating. The Bible talks about gluttony as being a sin. A Turkish proverb goes like this, the man who overfills his stomach digs his own grave with his own teeth.

You know, don't overeat. Look after that body. You've only got the one. Be disciplined with your sleep. Sleep is essential for survival. I think it's been said, is it three days without sleep, you're dying.

So, you need sleep. It's essential. Yet, you don't want to be lazy too. The Bible talks about the sluggard. You know, consider the ant that's a sluggard. You know, come on.

We don't want to be lazy either. My problem is that I think I don't get enough sleep. But, you know, you've got to be careful when you get your discipline with your sleep. Discipline with that. And discipline with your exercise.

[22 : 38] Paul says, 1 Timothy 4, verse 8, For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things. So, Paul says, exercise, bodily exercise, it profits a little.

So, it's good, but godliness is profitable unto all things. So, keep in shape. Paul has to do that, I'm sure, as he had lots of travels and journeys, fastings, labour.

Paul's lifestyle kept him in shape. And Paul approves of the benefit of bodily exercise. So, discipline your body. Another areas of discipline is discipline your mind. Discipline your mind.

As a believer, you want to control your thought line. You want to control your thoughts, keep your heart pure. Our heart, or mine, is the source of all evil. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaker.

Our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? And it says in James 1, how when those lusts of the heart, those desires that are wrong, are entertained, it brings sin.

[23 : 39] So, don't entertain those thoughts, those desires that are ungodly. Discipline your mind. Discipline your feelings. And so, as Christians, we know what we read, what we watch, what we hear can affect us, it influences us.

And instead of those things that are harmful, let us think and meditate on those good things. So, discipline your mind. Another area, discipline your spirit. Your spirit. As a disciple, you want to take daily time for fellowship with God, for His word and prayer.

God wants us to grow in Christ-likeness and spiritual ways. Sometimes, God is going to push you around a bit. I believe there's times when God will put you through challenges and testing times, testing phases.

Tozer wrote, I doubt that God can use a man greatly until he has been hurt deeply. For God to use you, you might have to go through some hurt. You know, ministry is hurtful.

You have lots of hurts. And it's hard. And the Christian life isn't always rosy, it isn't always plain sailing. But you'll grow through those things. They'll help you be stronger for God.

[24 : 51] And if you're living life in your own strength, you're short of fail. But God will give you that self-discipline. It's one of the fruit of the spirit. Self-control. Temperance. As we depend on the Lord, He will help us to develop self-control.

So discipline yourself. Some tips here. Be on time. You know, it's one area that I need help with sometimes. So be on time. To organise my self-life. To organise myself.

To practice self-denial. Don't give your body everything it asks for. You know, that chocolate, I've got to deny myself. You know, sleep. If you're prone to sleeping too much, set the alarm clock and obey the alarm clock.

You know, you need, but then you need necessary relaxation and recreation too. Make your body do what you want. And as you discipline yourself, you'll become a disciplined believer.

And God will help you to be a more, a fruitful, useful disciple as you discipline yourself to be living that godly life. Self-discipline or self-control can help us to overcome and to free us from being enslaved and addicted.

[25 : 57] Of course, there's, at times, believers struggle with being enslaved, being addicted to things that they know deep down and it's really not helpful for them.

It's harmful for them. Harmful for them to be addicted. God wants to set you free, not for you to be, to be mastered by nicotine or whatever it might be.

Proverbs 25, 28 says, He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls. The writer of Proverbs says, if you don't have rule over your own spirit, you're like a wall, a city that the walls are smashed and it's vulnerable to the enemy.

You're in danger. It's a dangerous place. You're vulnerable. You're at risk. And a man without restraint, without control, without self-discipline is open to those things, whether it be anger, lust, destructive emotions that can do him damage, they're going to drag him down, exercise self-control. Ask God to help you, to give you that fruit of the spirit, of self-control. Our life is like a race. And friends, you're on the running track. Go for God.

[27 : 11] Go for gold. Don't settle for second rate. Don't be a second rate Christian. Runners need resolve. It means the rigor of training. It means listening to the coach, hearing what he said.

Here's how we found it, pointed out. Here's the training manual. Here's the discipline manual. The spiritual fitness program is here in this book.

And take it, read it, apply it. It's like a race. And we need discipline, choices and habits. Ask God to help you develop them, to be in control of your body, of your mind, to be willing to give up your own rights so that you can do what is right with God.

Discipline can involve all areas of our life. Younger people win courtship. A girl goes out with a boy, a boy goes out with a girl. There's discipline needed in that relationship.

People call it dating. I prefer the word courting. There's a courting, there's a winning of the other. And so that they come to develop a friendship and a love for one another.

[28 : 18] And as they grow together and as Christians, because as a Christian we know, a Christian is to court a Christian, not a non-Christian. As a Christian courts a Christian, they'll honour the Lord together and they'll want to have a godly marriage that will be glorified to God.

And they'll honour God with purity and exercise discipline. They'll have integrity and pluralise in our family, in our life, in our everyday life, in all areas of our life. We see discipline that's so needful, especially, for example, as parents discipline in the home.

Discipline in the home, we see that lacking sometimes, where you see homes that are lacking in discipline. And you wonder, wow, what are they going to be like when they get older, those kids? You know, I mean, the parents, they must be tearing their hair out already. And you think, if only there was just some godly framework of necessary discipline so that those children have some boundaries to grow within, to learn within, that will help that family to have some godly order and structure.

And firm and loving discipline is so needful, it's so essential. And these children will grow to be wise and sensible citizens, God willing, as the parents exercise that loving and caring and firm discipline.

[29 : 39] Of course, it may not always happen, but as God tells us, train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. And just as the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, so parents who really love their children will exercise discipline and instruct them with firmness.

And of course, we know God's word tells us of orderliness in households of keeping children under control. Jonathan Edwards, an old-time preacher, said, every Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little church consecrated to Christ and wholly influenced and governed by his rules.

That that would be just a godly place, a godly sanctuary for the family to be nurtured, for the children to grow in that loving home, in that loving parenting.

And loving means discipline exercised in love. It doesn't mean a child gets beaten black and blue, of course not. But there's a needful boundary set, and there's restrictions, there's consequences for bad behaviour.

And so that child can be trained and guided in the right way. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, first let us begin by emphatically declaring it is parents, fathers in particular, and not the church, who are given the primary responsibility for calling the next generation to hope in God.

[31 : 03] The church serves as a supplementary role, reinforcing the biblical nurture that is occurring in the home. Now, of course, we know in our neighbourhood, there's many homes without Christ, without Christian fathers, without Christian mothers.

And we're thankful to God that as a church we can play a role to help raise some of these lovely children, these delicate lives for Christ, and as they grow, that they'll be guided.

But of course, we know ultimately, as the parents, that we'd love to see the parents won for Christ, that they'll be saved. Because the parents who really make a difference in the life.

Think about, with closing now, the discipline of a crucified life. Luke 9.23, it says, the Lord Jesus says, and he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Taking up a cross, well, that's heavy, it is heavy. It's painful, it's rough, it's hard, and if you're taking up a cross, it means it's one way.

[32 : 12] It's a one-way trip to a hill where they're going to know you. It means you're going one way, there's no turning back. There's a cross there, and if you're carrying a cross, it means that you're going to die, you're going to be dead.

It means sacrifice, it means complete surrender, if you're going to take a cross. And the Lord Jesus says, you must take up a cross daily, he says, daily, not just when you feel like it, you're never going to feel like it carrying a cross, but he says, take it up.

He's going to help you. It says, the word tells us as we know, the Lord Jesus says, take my yoke upon you and learn of me. He says, my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

He's not going to give you something that he's not going to help you with. He's going to help you carry that cross, to help you live that Christian life. And the Lord Jesus calls us to the way of the cross, to the way of the cross, to a daily denial of our self-censoredness, of our selfishness, of our carnality, to a daily embracing of him.

And friends, what is it going to take for you to be a disciple, like Christ wants you to be? It's going to take commitment. It's going to mean taking the cross.

[33 : 23] It's going to mean hardness. It's going to mean persecution. If you're going to live godly in Christ Jesus, guess what? Persecution's going to happen. It's guaranteed. You're told it's going to happen.

Get ready for it. Friends, get serious about your Christianity. Stop playing games. Stop playing church. Stop pretending. And get real.

Get serious. Get radical with your commitment to Christ tonight. It's going to take discipline. The discipline of the crucified life. How's your Christian faith? How is it today?

Take stock today. At the end of financial years, I know, they take stock. You know, my dad worked in a factory and he called me in as a casual, one of the first jobs I had working in Levi's, taking stock and counting everything.

It's time to take stock today of where you're at. To take a stock take. How are you tonight with your Christian life? How are you today? Take a stock take.

[34 : 26] Take an inventory. Take a look at how strong are you in your life with God? Or is it just a token thing? Is it a take it or leave it when you feel like it, think?

Or are you a real fair dinkum disciple of Christ? Are you disciplined? Self-disciplined? Have that discipline of your mind, the discipline of your spirit, the discipline of your body, the discipline of your home, the discipline in all aspects.

Is your Christian faith growing deeper and sweeter, not just busier? I know sometimes I can be very busy for God and you wonder whether you're really achieving anything.

We can all make that mistake. We can pack our lives full of all kinds of things and be busy for God, yet not closer to God. He says, draw nigh to me and I will draw nigh to you.

Are we making disciples unto Christ, not unto ourselves? We want to make disciples, as I say, to be a church, not just make decisions where people, you know, to say, yeah, I'll accept him.

[35 : 32] Yeah, I'll invite him into my life. No, we want people that just, I need Christ. I need salvation. I need to be saved. I want to be saved.

And I'm willing to do anything, everything that it takes to follow him, to take up his cross daily and follow him. that I want to be a real disciple, a real Christian.

Whatever it takes, can we seek to develop that spiritual life, that spiritual fitness program, that spiritual discipline program, a personal Bible study of prayer time?

Will you commit to developing a heart for your Lord, to deny yourself to a greater spiritual discipline? I pray you've been challenged tonight. Think of that word disciple.

That's what it means. It means discipline. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that we can be your disciples by faith in Christ as we put our trust, as we put our life in your hands.

[36 : 30] Lord, as we resign as the master of our lives, as we resign as the controller of our own destiny, as we resign, as we give our resignation of control of our lives, as we hand it over, our life into your hands, as we resign our spirit into your hands tonight.

Lord God, help us to be a disciple. Help us to be a learner, to learn of you, to learn more of you, to grow closer and closer to you. Whatever it takes, whatever it hurts, however hard it is, let it be, Lord, that we'll be a disciple, that we'll be a lover of Christ, that we'll be more committed than ever before. Lord, and not just so we can be busy for you, but that we can be closer to you, Lord Jesus, that we can be closer in our sweet fellowship with you, in our love relationship with you, and that love will drive us and motivate us to do that which is pleasing to you.

And help us, Lord, to exercise that discipline. We know all around us, all about us, in every day, in every moment, there's pressures all around that will draw us away. Help us, Lord, to resist that temptation to deny ourselves and to put our life in your control.

Dear God, that you would take us over. Lord, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.