

Inner Winning, Self-Discipline, & Emotions

A. “Things are the way they are without because things are the way they are within.”

1. You will never be a real winner over your emotions until you win the inner battles of life.
2. The control panel for all your emotional control is within your mind.
3. It’s under your direction and power . . . You call the shots.

B. **Illustrations:**

1. A group of business men, who were members of a prominent social club, decided on a unique humanitarian project for the group. They appointed two men to go down to the skid row section of the city and find a derelict they could help become a success in life. When they found the right person he was taken to a luxurious room in a hotel rented just for him. After a shower, shave, and a good meal, he was taken to a barber shop for the works (haircut, shampoo, facial, manicure, etc.); from the barber shop he was taken to a tailor’s shop and fitted with a wardrobe of expensive clothes.

The men of the club felt a deep sense of satisfaction from helping the man. He looked right at home when he was introduced to the group. In fact, one member of the club gave the once bum a good job with his company. After a week on the job, the man failed to report to work. After a couple of days the employer went to the hotel to see what had happened, only to learn that his new employee hadn’t stayed in his room or eaten in the hotel restaurant in several days. After additional checking, he found the derelict in a cheap hotel on skid row.

The men of the club were shocked when they heard the report on what had happened to the subject of their project. What had happened to the person who just a few days before looked like a successful business man? What made him go back to his old way of life? Answer: **Inside the man was still the same**. A changing of his external appearance and living environment didn’t change the inner man. He was still the same “old man” inside, with the same all ways of thinking.

- a. In spiritual realms, do you see why repentance is so vitally important.
 - b. Repentance – A change of heart/mind that brings about a corresponding change of life.”
 - c. Once repentance and full conversion occurs, do you see why spiritual growth is so important in the overall process of going to Heaven.
 - d. It is too easy for many to return to “wallowing in the mire.”
2. Under the Great Society programs of President Lyndon B. Johnson, large high-rise apartment buildings were built in clusters in many cities across the

country to house poor people in slums and ghettos in order to help them improve their quality of life.

- a. In a relative short time the new high-rise buildings became the slums and were in such a state of disrepair that they had to be torn down. News casts showed many of them being imploded.
 - b. Took people out of the slums but did not take the slums out of the people. Took people out of the ghettos but did not take the ghetto out of the people.
3. The children of Israel delivered out of Egypt.
- a. There were times that in their hearts they turned back to Egypt.
 - b. It took one night to get the children out of Egypt and forty years to get Egypt out of the children of Israel.
- C. A person will never become a real winner in life merely by making a few external changes.
1. To really win in the game of life a person must be an inner winner.
 2. Inner winning is what real, joyful, content is all about.
 3. Inner winning is a position you can maintain regardless of what is happening in your external world.
 4. Illustration: The brother and his can of beer in South Pittsburg.

INNER WINNING IS A BIBLICAL . . . IS BASED ON GOD’S WORD

- A. **Matthew 23:25-26** – “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the **OUTSIDE** of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence! ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the **INSIDE** of the cup, so the outside of it may also become clean.”
1. To look on the outward works and appearance of the Pharisees, you would think of them as the epitome of success in religious practices.
 2. But Jesus strips them bare and takes us into their hearts. They were displeasing to God.
- B. All sin has its beginning within the mind of man. **Mark 7:21-23** – “Then He said, “What comes out of a person—that defiles him. ²¹ For from **within, out of people’s hearts**, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, ²² adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, lewdness, stinginess, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from **within** and defile a person.”
1. How do these things get into our hearts?
 2. **Proverbs 23:7** – “. . . for as he thinks within himself, so he is.”
- C. We must work at being what God wants us to be on the **INSIDE** so as to be able to represent Him better on the **OUTSIDE**. In order to do this, self-discipline is required.

SELF DISCIPLINE AND EMOTIONS

- A. Self Discipline determines which emotional button you will push in every situation of life.
- B. Do you remember the last time you resolved to make a specific change in your life?
1. Perhaps you vowed to:
 - a. Lose weight
 - b. Stop smoking
 - c. Stop procrastinating
 - d. Exercise regularly
 - e. Become a better parent
 - f. Grow in knowledge
 - g. Quit worrying so much.
 - h. Read & Study the Bible daily
 - i. Etc.
 2. This time you told yourself:
 - a. “I mean it, I am going to accomplish my goal.”
 - b. “This time I am going to see it through.”
 - c. “This time I am going to be more determined than ever.”
 - d. “I am going to become the person God wants me to be.”
 3. A few days, a few weeks, or a few months pass and you find yourself right back in the same old rut. You lost your fire, your enthusiasm, your determination. In short, you gave up . . . you quit.
 4. It is time to both learn and practice that one of the major keys to your success in life is **self-discipline**.
- C. Successful living and emotional control occurs through self-control, and self-control comes through self-discipline.
1. **Proverbs 25:28** – “has no rule over his own spirit Is like a city broken down, without walls.”
 2. Dr. Maxwell Maltz, in his book, *Creative Living for Today*, says, “Self-Discipline is your golden key, without it you cannot be happy.”
 3. Discipline is the difference between what we **can do** and what we **should do**.
- D. Self-discipline is a Bible doctrine and is essential growth.
1. **2 Peter 1:5-6** – “also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,
 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,
 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.
 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- a. The Greek word for self-control is “egkrateia” and refers to the “holding of passions and desires in hand.”
 - b. The word was used of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sexual appetites
 - c. In Titus 1:8 the word is used in reference to an elder “holding himself in control.”
 - d. In Galatians 5:23 it is listed as a fruit of the Spirit.
2. Self-control was part of the message Paul shared with Felix in Acts 24:25.

KEYS TO SELF-DISCIPLINE

Self-discipline is not an easy thing to accomplish. It is a daily continual effort.

- A. **It all begins in you mind.** You must believe you can have self-control.
- B. **Don't be afraid to pinpoint your weak areas.** Do a complete self-examination on yourself.
 1. Do you have a temper?
 2. Do you eat too much?
 3. Do you gossip?
 4. Do you worry?
 5. Etc.
- C. **Try to determine why you lack proper self-discipline.**
 1. What Bible verses are you violating by not practicing self-discipline?
 2. Have you really tried to win over the problem area?
- D. **Tackle your weakness without reservation.**
 1. Confront it with a specific plan of action.
 2. Don't be afraid to ask others to help you.
- E. **Start your self-discipline program in small areas.** Little successes lead to bigger victories later.
 1. Many diets fail because you have to change your approach all at once.
 - a. This month give up soft drinks.
 - b. Next month leave off the soft drinks and give up greasy foods.
 - d. Next month leave off the soft drinks and greasy foods, and give up fast food.
 2. Take small steps that will lead to bigger steps.
 - a. Get out of bed promptly.
 - b. Write that letter.
 - c. Pay that bill on time.
 - d. Hang up your clothes.
 - e. Arrive on time.
 - f. Etc.
- F. **Fill your mind with positive challenges and directives from God's word.**
Psalm 119:97 – “How I love Your teaching! It is my meditation all day long.”
- G. **Learn to roll with the punches.**

1. There will be days when things don't go the way you planned.
2. There will be days when we disappoint ourselves by taking a step backward rather than forward.
3. **Romans 8:28** – “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose.”

H. **Self-denial is a daily challenge.**

1. **Matthew 16:24** – “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.’”
2. Daily we must deny self to make more room for Christ.

I. **Pray for wisdom and strength on a daily basis.**

1. Thank God for the progress and successes of yesterday.
2. Request faith, strength, and help for today to grow even stronger.

J. **Don't quit because you have a few failures.**

1. Hank Aaron struck out far more times than he hit home runs, but he didn't quit. Consider his career/
 - a. Played 23 seasons 21 in National League. Last 2 in American League
 - b. 3298 games
 - c. Came to bat 12,364 times
 - d. 3771 hits
 - e. Scored 2174 runs
 - f. Drove in 2297 runs
 - g. Hit 755 Home runs
 - h. Struck out 1383 times
 - i. What a gentleman Hank Aaron was . . . and is.
2. A person who is trying to lose weight may conclude after eating a piece of forbidden pie that he might as well give up dieting.
 - a. This is wrong thinking.
 - b. Don't quit!

K. **Don't be afraid to be hard on yourself when it is needed.**

1. The apostle Paul said he had to buffet his body daily if he was to win the battle of self-control. **1 Corinthians 10:1** – “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”
2. We must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

L. **Don't forget that your goal is to develop a new habit.**

1. When you do something long enough, it become a part of you.
2. You can practice a positive habit just as easily as an old one (or wrong one).
3. The key is practice . . . practice . . . practice. We call this faithfulness.

CONCLUSION:

A. Self-discipline is an exciting challenge that the Lord will help you accomplish in your life.

1. The key is to make the commitment and then follow through on it with **daily action**.

2. The best is yet to be . . . Keep trying . . . and never, never, never give.

B. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**