

Topic	Hiding God's Word in Our Hearts
Reference	Deuteronomy 6:6-7
Date	3 February 2019
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The discipline that the marine corp instills in the man that fight for them is second to none, except perhaps our special forces and you've probably seen some movies or heard somethings about that over the time. Today, I want to talk to you about a subject called spiritual discipline and in particular hiding the Word of God in our hearts and the value of doing that.

Victor Raymond Edman said,

Ours is an undisciplined age. The old disciplines are breaking down... Above all, the discipline of divine grace is derided as legalism or is entirely unknown to a generation that is largely illiterate in the Scriptures. We need the rugged strength of Christian character that can come only from discipline.

For us discipline is often a painful word to hear and sometimes a painful word to practice and I would tell you that if discipline has no purpose then that is the reality probably of discipline but when one sees the purpose behind the discipline, the cost that we pay to discipline ourselves is quite insignificant in comparison. For instance, I know only a few musicians that are capable enough or have a natural talent to play music by ear. Most of the other artists that have a great talent, even athletes, practice over and over and over again and sometimes they don't like the idea of the practice, that practice is not joyful necessarily but when they keep the long view in mind of what it is they are trying to accomplish then the practice fades into insignificance.

So when we say discipline, I first want to talk about spiritual discipline. Discipline is the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior, using punishment to correct disobedience. We as parents do that. We try to discipline our children and we should by the way. Sometimes, it is not enjoyable and sometimes it is hard to correct them, but it is necessary thing which scripture admonishes us to do. The Greek word is **Gymnazo** from which our words Gym and Gymnasium derive. It literally means "to practice, train or exercise naked" as in preparation for a competition or game.

There is something about what happens when we study the Word of God and we memorize the Word of God that it divides us, the Hebrews tells us that it is sharper than any two edged sword and it divides us and it reveals in us the truth of the scripture, of the Word of God. A.W. Tozer writes,

*"[The Church] has lived through its early travails and has now come to accept an easier way of life. It is content to carry on its painless program with enough money to pay its bills and a membership large enough to assure its future. Its members now look to it for security rather than for guidance in the battle between good and evil. **It has become a school instead of a barracks. Its members are students, not soldiers.** They study the experiences of others instead of seeking new experiences of their own."*

You may recall that in Ephesians 6 we are given the whole armor of God and I would say that while it is worthy to be a student of the word, that's not the ultimate purpose of a Christian. The ultimate purpose of a Christian is to be on the battlefield waging a war against sin, self and Satan and we are to carry the gospel message as the means to do that. That's our weapon. School students don't need armor and so you can see the purpose of following God and learning his word is to arm yourself, so you can protect yourself against the devil, against the evil and wicked philosophies of the world and that you can join the battle as it were in defense of the Christian faith.

People who evidence that they are or have been disciplined are a lot of

- Professionals like Doctors, Lawyers, Accountants, Law Enforcement, Clergy and others...
- Artists, Actors, Musicians, Lyricists (songs and prolific writers), Sculptors, Painters, Chefs, etc.
- Athletes - particularly professionals operating at the highest levels of their sport.
- Military Personnel - especially Special Forces with highly trained skills: snipers, HRT, medics, linguists.

There are two types of discipline. There is a physical discipline and a spiritual discipline. These two types involve a mental component, the mind is fully engaged. Both of these disciplines need to know how to say no to what you don't need in your life to get what you want in your life. That's one of the most valuable things that we can learn as a believer. It is not what we need per se, we

need to be disciplined enough that we make our wants become a heart of Christ that we become godly in the pursuit of that. The other type of discipline is spiritual discipline that we are talking about today.

The Purpose of Spiritual Discipline

It is found in 1 Timothy 4:6-7

⁶ If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. ⁷ Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. **Rather train yourself for godliness;** ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, **godliness is of value in every way**, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The purpose is produce Godlikeness in our lives!

If we all are being conformed to the image of Christ as the scripture tells us in Romans what's the point of spiritual discipline. Why do we have to do anything, why don't we just coast into heaven or Christ return and just wait for him to make us perfect at the last day. This verse tells us the reason why. It is to produce godlikeness in us through the discipline. Bodily exercise has some value but when you quit exercising the consequences are disastrous. Godliness is a value in every way and why is that because it holds a promise for the present life and for the life which is to come. So there is a purpose in the discipline. When we are trying to memorize scripture or we are trying to pray and we war against the flesh against our natural inclinations and impulses, if we keep in mind that the important thing is the long view that we are being transformed into God likeness by exercise of these disciplines then we know that we please God and I say that we have to do this, we have to do it in a proper way because you can do these spiritual disciplines as just a mental activity and lose the spiritual benefit that comes along with it. So the purpose of discipline is to produce godlikeness in our lives and so spiritual disciplines are those **personal and interpersonal** or corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth. They are the habits of devotion and experiential Christianity that have been practiced by the people of God since biblical times. Spiritual Disciplines, properly practiced, draw us into communion and intimacy with God.

Spiritual disciplines practiced properly draws us into community and intimacy with God.

What they are not?

They are not a means to attain righteousness. It is not a way in which we can merit God's favor, nor a means of gaining righteousness. The believer prays and

hears and fast and goes hard after God confident in the righteousness of Another, the righteousness that comes from God through faith. Our acceptance with God is not determined by the quality of our fastings, the number of our prayers, the zeal of our disciplines. It is guaranteed by the perfect fastings, prayers, and disciplines of Christ credited to our account.

So it is not something that we do in the flesh that gains God's approval, it is actually when we surrender our lives in submission and practice the spiritual disciplines that encourage the character of Christ to come alive in us where we gain the benefit.

"The greatest adversary of love to God is not his enemies but his gifts. And the deadliest appetites are not for the poison of evil, but for the simple pleasures of earth. For when these replace an appetite for God himself, the idolatry is scarcely recognizable, and almost incurable" (John Piper, Hunger for God).

We don't even recognize that we are being rolled into a sense of apathy and complacency when we seek the comforts of this world. When you think about our brothers and sisters around the world, even to this day who suffered great-great persecution for their faith, who pay any price, we have to thank God that we are blessed with the relatively peaceful environment in which we get to live and practice our faith, but don't let that get you to sleep. By practicing the spiritual disciplines and in particular memorizing scripture the world becomes clear to us. We see more of who God is and more of the reality of the unseen world as it were.

"If we don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because we have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because we have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Our soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great" (John Piper in Hunger for God).

So a lot of us, we fill up on junk food. Now the scripture is called the Bread of Life and Jesus is referred to the bread. we can lose our spiritual appetite by filling our lives with the wrong things that stimulate us, maybe they intrigue us or they interest us and they give us a false sense of happiness or fulfillment, maybe even a false sense of purpose and then we lose our hunger for God. If you stay close to the scriptures that is less likely to happen. A lack of spiritual discipline leads to spiritual poverty.

When we are satisfied to live in our despair and disappointment. There are two types of spiritual disciplines.

Personal disciplines

- Memorizing Scripture
- Bible Reading/Study and Meditation
- Prayer -
- Fasting - Abstinence
- Introspection - Examine Yourself
- Journaling
- Waiting on the Lord - Solitude
- Giving of resources

Interpersonal disciplines

- Witnessing to the Lost
- Church Attendance - Preaching
- Bible Study under Spiritual Leaders
- Bearing one Another's Burdens
- Fellowship - with Believers
- Corporate Worship
- Service Works
- Confession of sins to one another

Discipline of Scripture Memory and Meditating on God's word.

I want to give few verses to hopefully impact on you the importance of memorizing scripture. Now if you have been a Christian for a long time, you probably have memorized scripture as a young child. But as you get older that is not so cool. That seems a little awkward and it doesn't fit well with your new personality or what you are trying to identify as in your life.

There is a vital relationship that we don't often understand between memorizing scripture and Jesus Christ. We find in

John 1:1-2 In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word** was God. ²He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, Jesus always existed. He existed in the form of the word. When God spoke from eternity past and spoke the world into existence, the causative force for creation was Jesus speaking the Word of God and creating the world. So there

is a vital relationship between Jesus and the word. My belief is that when we study the scripture and when we memorize the scripture we are communing with God in a way that is not to be duplicated in any other fashion.

Is there a scriptural mandate to memorize scripture?

The Word is inextricably tied to the identity of Jesus and together they are the sum total of what we know about God, revealed by the Holy Spirit. How we treat the Bible reveals what we really believe about Jesus, not just what we say we believe. Let's look at a handful of verses that address that question, directly and indirectly:

If the Word of God is our food and our source of strength, are we on a starvation diet. Let's look at some of the verses that question both directly and indirectly.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Jeremiah 15:16

Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts.

Joshua 1:8

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

John 15:7-8

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Colossian 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Psalms 1:1-3

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Proverbs 7:1-3

My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.

Matthew 4:4

Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

John 17:17

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

Jesus was also spoken of as the Truth. In John 14:6 He is the Way, the Truth and the Life!

John 6:63, 68

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

Psalm 119

11: I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

119: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The more a person disciplines themselves, the freer they actually become.

Sancy Diamond is the second largest diamond in the world. This diamond was in the hands of a French man and he sent it to another king and in the transfer of the diamond to its new owner the guy that was carrying the diamond was robbed and murdered and they went back to the king who sent the diamond originally to the future owner of the king and they said to him, it didn't arrive. The new owner wants to know where is the diamond and he said, where is the man. Find the man and you will find the diamond and they said, we cannot find him. He is missing. He may have stolen the diamond. The original owner of the diamond said, I know that man. He didn't steal that diamond, find the man and

you will find the diamond. So they continued to look and they found his body down the road some distance and off in the woods and they said, the diamond is not on him. It apparently was taken or robbed and he said, cut the man open. They did just that and they found that he had swallowed the diamond to protect it. Ultimate sacrifice.

The king knew his servant well enough to know that he could be trusted, that he would pay any price with that special treasure. That is the Word of God for us. Do you have the Word of God taken into your life, sealed way, stored, memorized. It is a precious diamond in our life and it will influence our life.

Revelation 19:11-12

11Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

Recommit yourself to a vital intimate practice of memorizing scripture, of taking it into your heart.