

Keeping The Faith

Reflections on Emotional, Spiritual and Relational Wellness for Pastors

“Word of the Day - Discipline”

Last month I shared with you that I have 7 specific words (or phrases), one for each day of the week, that highlight a needed area of growth in my life, and trigger a key insight to help me stay focused, to finish strong and keep the faith each day I have to live on this side of heaven. The first word I wrote about was my Tuesday word, **No Minimizing**.

This month I would like to share with you my Monday word, **Discipline**. I cannot think of a person who has experienced success and fruitfulness in any dimension of their life, whether personal or professional, who has done so apart from a commitment to discipline (e.g.- our dear brother, John Wesley). For some of us the idea of discipline sounds almost unkind and punitive, and for others it is a gift and a natural part of how we live life. The impact of how we witnessed, and experienced discipline practiced in the past in our family of origins has a great deal to do with how we view, experience and practice it in the present.

There are several practical benefits I have discovered that come along with practicing discipline in my daily life...when I actually practice it! First, discipline provides order, intentionality, structure and focus to my days. Second, discipline corrects my natural bent toward compromise and indulgence. Third, discipline in my life lends itself toward helping me to a live principle-directed life rather than a feelings-directed life. Fourth, discipline is a gift to the multiple dimensions of my life; the physical, spiritual, relational, educational, vocational, and emotional. Apart from discipline my physical health suffers, my spiritual life feels emaciated, my relational fulfillment is haphazard at best, my educational aspirations never become more than good intentions, my vocational goals fail to become realized, and my emotional life feels chaotic. Fifth, discipline reminds me of the importance, and value of self-sacrifice, self-denial and self-control. Sixth, discipline requires me to be able to say “**no**” to myself. Seventh, discipline is the engine that transports me toward the accomplishment of my goals. Eighth, the presence or absence of discipline in my personal life affects those around me. Ninth, discipline underscores the law of sowing and reaping; and Tenth, discipline keeps me on track in light of my tendency to obsess on the one hand and to minimize on the other.

I wonder, of the 10 benefits of discipline I listed, which one(s) did you most resonate with and why? In what area of your life do you sense the Holy Spirit directing you to practice greater discipline, and what are you going to do about it?

God bless you as you press on toward the goal!

Keeping the Faith,

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