

Fresh Fire Ministries
The Expository Teaching Ministry of Jay Duane Driver

“Discipline”

“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” First Corinthians 9:27 (New King James Version)

Sin, trespasses, transgressions, and iniquities, while they do not originate in our body or flesh, soon become manifested there. **“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies.” Matthew 15:19 (NKJV)** While our failings and faults present constant challenges; much of our temptation, which is a prerequisite to sin comes by way of our body. Unfortunately, as believers we quickly come to realize that we must still come face to face each day with the part of us that has been stained and tainted by the original sin of Adam, our flesh, even though we are clearly on our way to glory. In the meantime, and until we get there we must find the strength and power to discipline our body.

This struggle that we encounter is not new nor was it just recently discovered by the Apostle Paul. The text is only one of many where Paul eludes to the struggle that he and all believers face without regress. **“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.” Romans 7:18 (NKJV)** Paul realized as we must, that the flesh has to be disciplined and restrained if we are to bring glory to God and not bring reproach to our personal testimony. We must kill our flesh before our flesh kills us. Without the discipline prescribed in the word of God, our human efforts are fruitless and as a result, we will find ourselves repeating the same episodes that have haunted and hindered our walk with God since the time of our new birth. Our life becomes like the first track of a CD player stuck on repeat playing the same song; just on a different day.

The word discipline is translated in the King James Version to say “keep under my body.” The phrase in the original text means “to strike beneath the eye, or to give oneself a black eye.” This expression is not advocating self inflicted punishment to our flesh to discipline it, but the language that Paul uses here is a figurative idea which illustrates the constant need for moral and physical discipline. Paul is simply saying that we cannot allow our body to get the upper hand on us; we must keep it under subjection. We must make our body and flesh a “slave” to the Holy Spirit in us and the word of God. In extreme cases requiring discipline we may have to “mortify” or put to death the deeds of our flesh in order to live a life free of bondage to sin. **“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.” Romans 8:13 (NKJV)**

Should we fail to obtain the level of discipline over our body that is required to be free, the consequences could very well affect our testimony to others. In short, our testimony runs the risk of being disqualified or invalidated. One of Paul’s greatest fears was that after having shared and preached to others he himself would violate the law of God and be considered a “castaway”, or “disproved or rejected for the prize.” The good news is that we have been given the power and authority to discipline our flesh and keep it under subjection, yet it is easier said than done. A consistent diet of prayer, worship, fasting, and reading the word of God will help us do what we cannot do on our own. A disciplined flesh always results in a maximized spiritual life and a maximized relationship with God.