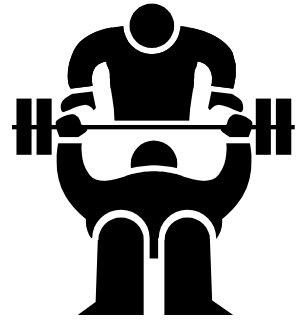


Training in Holiness

Role of Mentors and Discipline

“Train yourself to be godly....” – 1 Timothy 4:7b



In this lesson we consider...

- *The role of discipline and personal effort in the sanctification process*
- *The interrelation of human effort and divine power*
- *The importance of mentors and role models in the Christian life*

No Pain No Gain – Without blood, sweat and tears – no benefit!

Thank God, the blood that sanctifies us comes from the sacrifice of another -- the perfect lamb of God. Yet the process of sanctification requires some sweat and tears on our part!

The Apostle Paul’s “muscular” Christianity

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27



To be a successful athlete, one must...

- *Carefully observe and emulate role models and examples*
- *Accept criticism, guidance and instruction from good coaches*
- *Abstain from certain foods and indulgences to stay in shape*
- *Follow a strict regimen to stay sharp*
- *Practice, practice, practice....*



“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things...”

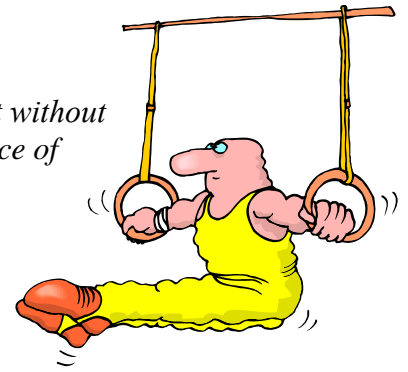
In much the same way as physical training, holiness requires “temperance” – moderation, abstinence, self denial. Because he dreams of that medal ceremony, the Olympic runner chooses to abstain from certain indulgences on a daily basis. Can you think of some examples of activities or indulgences, though perhaps not openly scandalous, which should be avoided by a Christian who is serious about growing in holiness?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

To grow in holiness – one must pray and sweat!

“... by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.” 1 Corinthians 15:10-11

We are saved *and sanctified* by grace. Holiness, like salvation, is a work of the spirit in the human heart. But grace and the work of the Spirit in our lives does not mean that we are passive recipients! Sweat and grace can and do go together!!



Practice makes perfect!



To win or achieve anything in life, we must train. An athlete adheres to a strict regimen of exercise and diet in order to tone his muscles and develop stamina and strength. A pianist takes classes and practices for hours on a daily basis. Likewise, Christian growth requires intentionality and execution: specific plans and regular activity.



Note below a skill or ability in your own life which required regular rehearsal, training or practice.

_____.

How about in your spiritual development? Do you apply the same intentionality and effort?

Yes _____ No _____

Interrelation of Human Activity and Divine Power

One Extreme - Legalism: Over-dependence on Human Effort

As we discussed in the previous lesson, we often try to do the Spirit's work for him! Have you ever tried to make a significant change – losing weight, quitting smoking, etc. – by your own will-power? How did it go?

_____.

We quickly learn that on our own – we are helpless!!

Paul described it in this way... ,

“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing.” Romans 7:18-19



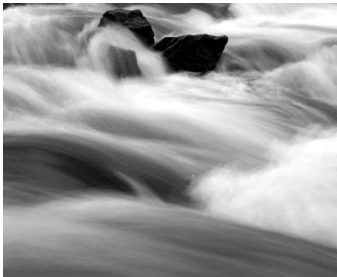
Thank God – it does not depend on us!

*“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty. --
Zechariah 4:6*

As Jesus phrased the same idea... *“apart from me, you can do nothing.”* John 15:5

Another Extreme: Passivity

Sin is like the current of a river or the force of a mighty wind



There is a saying in Spanish.. *“Camarón que se duerme... se lo lleva la corriente.”* Roughly translated: *“The sleeping shellfish is swept away in the current.”* If we float passively in a river or the ocean, without any movements, we will be taken wherever the eddies and currents carry us. In much the same way, the “tides” of this world and our own sinful inclinations will carry us away effortlessly should we choose to lower our guard.

The “tides” and “currents” of sin

1. The World

The basic “flow” of this world is corrupt. The social networks that surround us; the patterns of business in the marketplace; the values promoted through television and the mass media; and maneuvers of politics.... All “flow” towards sin in myriad ways.

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world.” 1 John 2:15-16

2. The Flesh

No child need “learn” how to be selfish and disobedient! Our sinful human nature is inherently corrupt, and propels us towards that which is evil: Our pride, sensual desires, selfishness, hatred and malice.

3. The Devil

We do not inhabit a neutral spiritual environment, but one that is charged with spiritual conflict. Satan and his demons stalk us.

If we are passive, we will be drawn into sin – quickly!





Prayer and Action go together!
Spanish: “Oración” = Oración + Acción

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” (Philippians 2:12-13)

According to these verses, how do we view God’s action and ours working together in the process of our growth?



Jesus is vine – we are the branches.

John 15:1-8

How does the image of the vine and its branches illustrate for us the dynamic interrelation of God’s power and human effort?

If our part is to “remain” or “abide” in the vine – then *how do we do this??*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Jesus said on the night of his arrest: “*Watch and pray so that you do not fall into temptation.*” Why is necessary to spend time in prayer in order to avoid succumbing to temptation, in your opinion?



“*giving all diligence...*” 2 Peter 1:5

Read 2 Peter 1:5-10



In your own life; how can you better “*give all diligence*” (KJV) or “*make every effort*” (NIV) to grow in Christian character qualities.

Peter lists several goals and character qualities for Christian growth. What are they?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____



And you? Do you have some personal goals for your growth in Christian character? List them below. Try to express them in the affirmative (be patient), rather than the negative (stop exploding).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Every Athlete needs heroes – Role Models

We all have heroes and role models in our lives. For many kids who play sports, a super-star such as “Big Papi” provides an example to follow. Mention three such figures from your own life – whether from childhood or adulthood.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Seek examples and role models!

We usually learn best by observing the example of others, and then emulating them. An apprentice carpenter observes his “master craftsman” in action, and then seeks to imitate his technique. Likewise in the Christian life. We ought to seek role models and mentors to provide examples and offer counsel and correction as they observe us in action.

1. Jesus – the Perfect Example!

“...let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.” Heb 12:2

We ask the question: *“What would Jesus do” in this situation?*

2. Paul presents himself as an example to follow

“Imitate me as I imitate Christ.” – 1 Corinthians 11:1

3. The disciples are called to provide an example to others: Timothy and Titus

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” 1Timothy 4:12

“...encourage the Young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good....” Tito 2:6-7

How could it be dangerous to focus too much on the example of other believers or spiritual leaders?

How can we avoid falling into this trap?

Identify role models God has placed in your life...

Note the names of some Christians you know who provide examples of some aspect of the Christian life. (Preferably not pastors). What, in particular, do they exemplify for you?

<i>Name</i>	<i>...is an example of...</i>
<i>Hermana Meche</i>	A devoted and faithful wife
<i>Roberto and Leonor Naranjo</i>	Service in the church
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

Mentors – Every Athlete needs a Coach!

We all have had teachers, coaches, trainers or “big brothers” and “big sisters” who have taken us under their wing to teach us some skill or subject. Mention the names of two or three such “mentors” from your own past (or present).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Pick one and describe the relationship you enjoyed with this person. What did he or she teach or influence you? How? What were some of the methods employed?

How can we cultivate mentoring relationships in our lives?

1. **Take initiative**
2. **“Catch” their spiritual anointing**
3. **Observe their example**
4. **Accept assignments**
5. **Receive correction – be teachable**

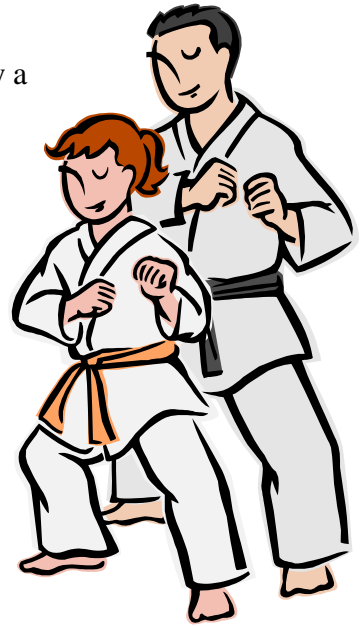
1. Take initiative – Want it! Be Pro-active!

To be trained – *you gotta want it!* We cannot passively wait to be adopted by a mentor. To be a true “disciple” or “student,” we must do our part to be pro-active in the process.

Finding mentors is your responsibility!

Karate Kid

In the film, “The Karate Kid,” the aspiring student of this martial art sought his own teacher. He literally “camped out” on his doorstep, night and day, until the “*sen-se*” took him under his wing. As the relationship develops, the *sen-se* gives him many menial and tedious tasks, and the young man becomes discouraged to the point of quitting. Thankfully for him, his decision to persevere under the master’s tutelage makes all the difference for his future success.



Discipleship and mentoring is much the same. If we genuinely want a teacher, then we must seek him or her out, and then persevere, especially when the initial “gloss” wears off.

Let’s brainstorm. How can you meet and become acquainted with potential mentors for your Christian growth?

Once you have identified some potential candidates, how can you begin to cultivate this kind of relationship? (Remember than most people who are worth learning from are already quite busy!)

2. “Catch” the spiritual anointing of your mentors

The Spirit is contagious! When we spend time with a mentor, the anointing of that person can be transferred and imparted to us. Consider these examples...

Paul and Timothy – the laying on of hands

“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands...” (2 Tim 1:6)

Elijah and Elisha – The double portion

“When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?’ ‘Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,’ Elisha replied.” (2 Kings 2:9)

While this “spiritual contagiousness” is organic and somewhat spontaneous, it can also be cultivated and sought. How can we actively seek to “catch” the anointing of mentors?

3. Observe their Example -- “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.” – 1 Corinthians 11:1

Of course, to observe the example of another person, *we must simply be around them*, which presents a challenge in our busy society. We must pro-actively seek opportunities to accompany a mentor in activities. Again, *we cannot wait passively for a mentor to make appointments with us*. We must be willing to adapt and “fit in” to his or her activities.

“Help out” and “tag along” with mentors in their activities

Example: Moses and Joshua in the Tent of Meeting:

*The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but **his young aide** Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.” (Ex. 33:11)*

What is a “fringe benefit” for Joshua of being Moses’ “aide?”

Getting specific, think of a potential mentor in your own life. What are some activities which could provide opportunities to share experiences?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. Accept Assignments – without complaining!

We learn *by doing* – and then processing the evaluation of others.

Jesus sent out the twelve and then dialogued with them about their experience.

“Calling the twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits... .. (Then) the apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.” ” Mark 6:7 y 30

Why is it so important to “report in” and dialog with a mentor after fulfilling certain tasks and missions?



A mentoring moment – the multiplication of the loaves!

Read Mark 6:30-44

How do we see Jesus mentor the disciples through this experience?

List the variety of emotions the disciples must have experienced in various stages of this “teaching moment?”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What do you think the disciples learned through this experience?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

A mentoring moment – Moses sends Joshua to fight!

“Moses said to Joshua, ‘Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.’ So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning...” (Ex. 17:9-11)

What do you think Joshua learned from the mentoring assignment?

5. Accept criticism and guidance from your mentor

No one enjoys being corrected. Any mentoring relationship will involve moments of conflict and tension. If we embrace this “discomfort” and submit ourselves, we will enjoy a rich harvest of spiritual growth.

Rebuke: Peter and Jesus

“...But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. ‘Get behind me, Satan!’ he said. ‘you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.’” (Mark 8:33)



How do you think Peter felt after this “mentoring moment?”

Have you ever received correction from a Christian brother or sister? What happened? How did you feel? How did you benefit from the experience?

Words of encouragement

“... and I say to you; you are “Peter” and on this rock I will build my church.”

Listening to a mentor, we are corrected, guided and encouraged, but we must submit and be teachable.

Conclusion:

The promised land *was given* to the Israelites, but it also had *to be conquered by them!* Very little of value in life comes easily. Holiness is a gift from God – but it also must be fought for with passion and perseverance.

Are you willing to pay the price?

