



Northland Reformed

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The Life-Changing Power of God’s Word – Part 6 – “Discipline”

Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, wrote “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In the last several



newsletters our focus has been the theme of the life-changing power of God’s Word as taught in these verses. We have learned how the Word of God is profitable for doctrine (teaching of truth), for reproof (conviction of sin) and for correction (how we are to live as Christians). Now, in this final article, we will learn how the Word of God is profitable for “instruction in righteousness.” This phrase includes both the method (instruction) and the goal (righteousness) of growth in the Christian life.

The Method is Instruction

The method is to be “instructed” in righteousness. The word translated as instruction in 2 Timothy 3:16 is the Greek word *paideia* which has the sense of “disciplined training.” Paul uses this same word in Ephesians 6:4 when he commands fathers “do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the **training** (Greek *paideia*) and admonition of the Lord.” The training Paul refers to in Ephesians 6:4 is the process of disciplining a child to know and obey. The same needs to happen for us. God is our Heavenly Father, who pities us as children, who knows that we are weak (Psalm 103:13-14), but who cares enough for us to show us the way through loving discipline (Heb. 12:5-11).

Therefore, when we know what God’s Word teaches (doctrine), have learned how we have failed to live according to God’s Word (reproof) and are taught the correct pattern for our lives (correction) we are called to disciplined training (instruction) in

righteous living. Just like runners must keep up a disciplined physical exercise routine to stay in shape, so we are called to keep a disciplined spiritual exercise routine to keep in shape. Older writers refer to this as the practice of spiritual exercise or discipline. These are the positive practices that we put in place to strive for that “holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). It is not enough to stop following an old pattern or to follow a new pattern for a little while. Nature abhors a vacuum, and a sinful pattern not replaced with a godly pattern will inevitably be filled with another sinful pattern! To use another illustration, when a doctor prescribes medication, he gives directions which must be followed in order for it to work properly. If a person stops taking the medicine when he feels better, but does not finish the prescribed dose, he will not overcome the sickness. Proverbs 3:5, 8 teaches us to “trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (v. 5) and promises that when we do it will be “health to your flesh and strength to your bones” (v. 8). Therefore, think of disciplined training in righteousness as the prescription God provides to keep you spiritually healthy. And this is a daily prescription, for “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

The Goal is Righteousness

God is sovereign, ordaining both the means and the ends of our lives. If the means of Christian growth is “instruction” or “disciplined training” then what is the end goal? The goal of the Christian life is to be more and more like our Savior, who is “Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

It is important to understand that the righteousness that Paul speaks of here in 2 Timothy 3:16 is not self-righteousness. The Jews, in Jesus’ day, believed that they were righteous apart from Christ and therefore they refused to come to him. There is a righteousness that we have in Christ, which is called our justification. God sees us as if we now have no sin nor had ever committed any sin. But the righteousness Paul is talking about here is not the righteousness of justification that we have in Christ, but the righteousness of sanctification that is being worked out in us by our union with Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Justification does not make us righteous, it declares us as righteous in God’s sight. Sanctification is the process by which God makes us what he has already declared us to be. In other words, since we have been counted as righteous in Christ (justified) so now we become righteous in our actual lives (sanctified). This is illustrated in Philippians 2:12-13 as believers are commanded to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for

His good pleasure.” What Paul teaches here is the same thing Jesus taught in Matthew 7:17-20 (good trees produce good fruit) and James taught in James 2:18-26 (our faith is known by our works). This is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) produced in a life controlled by the power of the Spirit. This righteousness is right living and is a result of the the daily process of sanctification. As Jay Adams writes, “The change of lifestyle called sanctification occurs, at least in part, when we submit in faith and obedience to the “disciplined training in righteousness” provided by the Scriptures.” (p. 177)

But one might ask, “Is righteousness really possible for sinners?” The short answer is “Yes!” Romans chapter 6 clearly teaches that our “old man was crucified with him that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin” (vv. 6-7) and commands us “do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (vv. 13-14). We now have a new master called righteousness and no longer belong to our old master sin (see Romans 6:18, 20, 22).

The Bible teaches us that “since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God” (1 Peter 4:1-2). In other words, when we identify with Christ in his death, we are to arm ourselves knowing that we can now live differently through his power. We must become practically (through sanctification) what we are already positionally (by justification) in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Remember that God’s Word is powerful for true salvation (Rom. 1:16-17) and is also profitable for true change (1 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, we must put God’s Word into practice in our daily lives through disciplined training in righteousness.

Rev. Christopher Campbell

Congregational News

Welcome Henry Mark Griess

We rejoice as a church family with Mark, Ashley and Everly Griess for the birth of Henry Mark Griess. Henry was born on February 12th at 5:31am. The name Henry was selected because it was Ashley's maiden name.



Lord willing Ashley's father, Rev. Scott Henry, will be at Northland Reformed on March 31st to officiate the baptism.

Please continue to pray for this family and for all those with young children, that they might train them up in the fear and admonition of the LORD.

“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.” (Psalm 127:3-5)

Looking Ahead to March

REGULAR MEETINGS

- Sunday Worship | March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 | 9:30AM & 5:00PM
- Men's Morning Fellowship @ Cracker Barrell Tiffany Springs | March 9, 23 | 7:00AM
- Friday Night Fellowship | March 8, 22 | 6:30PM | We will meet for a meal and lesson
- Prayer Meeting | March 20 | 7PM

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Covenant East Classis Spring Meeting | March 5-6 | Our Classis will meet at Peace RCUS in Napoleon, OH. Pastor Campbell and Elder Liesveld will be travelling Monday March 4th and returning Thursday March 7th.
- Lord's Supper & Fellowship Meal | March 12 | During the morning service we will observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. After the service we will gather for a fellowship meal.



Scripture Memorization

“Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.” – Psalm 119:11

March 3	Acts 5:29
March 10	Psalm 100:1-3
March 17	Psalm 100:4-5
March 24	Ephesians 2:1-3
March 31	Ephesians 2:4-5