

# THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE SERIES

DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

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THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

## THE DISCIPLINE OF DEFORMITY

*A PRACTICAL SERIES ON CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES  
AND HOW WE SHOULD BE LIVING IN THE WORLD AROUND US*

Week 9 of a 31-Week Series

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Christianity 101, Faith, Wisdom, Discipleship

Introduction to the Text;

Mark 7:31-37

# THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE SERIES

DEVELOPING A SPIRITUAL LIFESTYLE THAT'S USABLE TO GOD

## Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. :19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, :20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

Tonight, I'm Going to Share with you a "Discipline" that, for me - is the most meaningful in our Series...

## This Discipline Has Shaped My Life

and it's the root to whatever influence I have had in your life - it's personal !

## THE DISCIPLINE OF DEFORMITY

Nothing else seems to cut more deeply into our soul than each of our struggles with deformity. Doubt, discouragement, defamation, even disease have their powers - but deformity trumps them all.

### **It doesn't have to be physical deformity,**

there's **emotional** deformity, there's **mental** deformity - and many people, its all of the above !

### **But Outward, Physical Deformity**

**Causes deep, internal scars and pain that effect how we think, how we act, how we function and the way we live our lives...**

#### **Luke 4:16-21**

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

:17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: :18 *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; :19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."* :20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. :21 And He began to say to them, *"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

#### **Mark 7:31-37**

Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. :32 Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. :33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. :34 Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, *"Ephphatha,"* that is, *"Be opened."* :35 immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. :36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. :37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, *"He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."*

IN THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE, THERE'S...  
THE DISCIPLINE OF DEFORMITY

**1. As a Christian: It's my Victorious Reality**

What the World is Guilty of Having Made Fun of and then feels bad about it – ***The Christian Learns to Celebrate.***

**The World is Uncomfortable With The Issue of Deformity** in any shape or form – it's beyond the human scale of things.

Humanity struggles with Handicaps  
*And the first chance the world gets - it lashes out against the God they don't believe in.*

But The Reality is, there is Deformity and Pain and Sorrow

**Mark 7:32**

...Then **they** brought to Him **one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech**, and **they** begged Him to put His hand on him. **:33** And He took him...

**We live in “post-perfect” world**  
and pain and suffering is the result of mankind's rejection of God.

**We're the ones who have run out into the street  
and we're the ones in danger.**

**Isaiah 43:7-8**

Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” **:8** Bring out the blind people who have eyes, And the deaf who have ears...

**This is a Victorious Reality for Us  
who are Christians Now.**

### 1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." :10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

Jabez - **Yabets, yah-bates´**;

to grieve, to make sorrowful, to greatly disappoint, to cause pain.

### The Lord is On a Mission to Rescue Humanity from Itself

#### Isaiah 35:3-6a

Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. :4 Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come *with vengeance, With* the recompense of God; He will come and save you." :5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. :6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute shall sing..."

IN THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE, THERE'S...

THE DISCIPLINES OF DEFORMITY

## 2. As a Christian: It's my Joyful Recognition

#### Psalm 34:1-4

I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth. :2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad. :3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. :4 I sought the LORD, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears.

#### Romans 8:18

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

It was March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1991

Lisa and I were at Mark and Mary's House, it was Easter Sunday Evening – and all of a sudden, I didn't feel good in the lower regions of my constitution...

Over the months I learned to hang on to this scripture.

### Philippians 3:8-10

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ :9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; :10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

## Little Did I know That It was God's Blessing

### 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. :8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. :9 And He said to me, "My **grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.**" Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. :10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

### Please don't confuse my "confidence in Christ" for Human Pride.

You have no idea what I think about me – only God knows me, and that's enough for me – that He knows. That's why I don't care what people say about me, they don't know anything – He knows everything !

I just want to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, thus being conformed to His death,

IN THE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE, THERE'S...

THE DISCIPLINES OF DEFORMITY

### 3. As a Christian: It's my Favorite Resort

#### I Can Say This Now –

I couldn't have said this before I was a Christian. Things didn't make sense then but now they do.

### Proverbs 3:5-8

**Trust** in the LORD with all your heart, And **lean not** on your own understanding;  
:6 In all your ways **acknowledge Him**, And He shall direct your paths. :7 **Do not be wise** in your own eyes; **Fear the LORD** and **depart from evil**. :8 It will be **health** to your flesh, And **strength** to your bones.  
(resort, restoration, recuperation)

**I can tell you that** my weakness and deformities have kept me from getting into greater dangers and greater evils.

Knowing Now That My Victories Have Come From My Defeats;  
**It's where** I go to, **it's where** I can be encouraged.  
My weaknesses & handicaps are the visible trophies of His hard work in my life.

### Philippians 1:6

(be) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;

### Philippians 2:13

for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

What is Your Handicap & Your Set Back ?

**Stop resisting whatever it is**  
and ask Him to show you what you're to do with it.

### John 9:1-3

Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. :2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" :3 Jesus answered, "**Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.**"

Deformity causes deep pain.  
That pain is converted into self preservation and that results in temper and violence.

*Lord Bryon's Bitterness*

*"My poor mother was generally in a rage every day and used to render her sometimes almost frantic - particularly when, in her passion, she reproached me with my personal deformity, I would leave her presence to rush into solitude, unseen, I could vent the rage and mortification I endured, and curse my deformity, that I now began to consider as a signal work of an injustice of God. Those were bitter moments: even now the impression of them is vivid on my mind; and they have cankered my heart, which I believe was created naturally affectionate, but since has been and is almost always disposed to violence."*

## **Christian, Listen –**

Can you imagine how close He was to me when I was little; while being mocked, and at the age of nine, being held down by a gang while they urinated on me, what about my 4<sup>th</sup> Grade class and Mrs. Franz when she would say. "Hey class, you want to hear jack read out loud?"

### **Mark 7:33**

"...And He took him aside from the multitude,"

## **WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?**

THAT THERE'S A DISCIPLINE MORE POWERFUL THAN THE DEFORMITY – AND YET, IT'S THE DEFORMITY THAT CREATED THE ATMOSPHERE TO RECEIVE THE VICTORY.

### **Psalm 3:3-5**

But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. :4 I cried to the LORD with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill.:5 I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.

### **1 John 4:4**

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

**"The inconspicuous** have their inning, the **incompetent** make their contribution, and the **unsightly** serve their God and the **handicap** open the windows of heaven."

*“Thou shall know by training here what shall be thy temple yonder.”*  
- John Bunyan

**Revelation 21:4**

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

There is a Touching Story in the Old Testament

**2 Samuel 4:4,9:7**

(Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled.

His name was Mephibosheth = meaning: *his legs wont work*)... **2Sam. 9:7** But David said to Mephibosheth “Don’t you be afraid! I’ve asked you to come to me so that I can be a blessing to you, I made a vow to your father, Jonathan. I will give you all the land that once belonged to your grandfather King Saul, and you will live here with me in my palace!”

You don’t usually see an arrogant, proud or indignant - handicapped person – there’s a humbleness about them that is often born of humility and humiliation.

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*End of Study*

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