

## Dragons 1:

*Matthew 12:33-35 ESV*

*(33) "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.*

*(34) You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

*(35) The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.*

For the last 5 weeks we have been doing a series called Chasing Dreams and Slaying Dragons.

We have been utilizing the stories of Genesis 29-50, looking at the life of Joseph.

We have looked at the man he needed to become and the lessons he need to learn in order to fulfill the purpose he believed God had for him.

Today I want to change tact just a little and look at some of the personal dragons we have to battle if we are going to take our mountains and fulfill our dreams.

Jesus is challenging the religious people of His day on every level. But in this particular series of confrontations he is dealing with the issue of personal integrity.

He is telling them that they need to change the focus of their attention from an issue of dealing with the external manifestation of their life and deal with the more important issue that determines the direction and authenticity of their life.

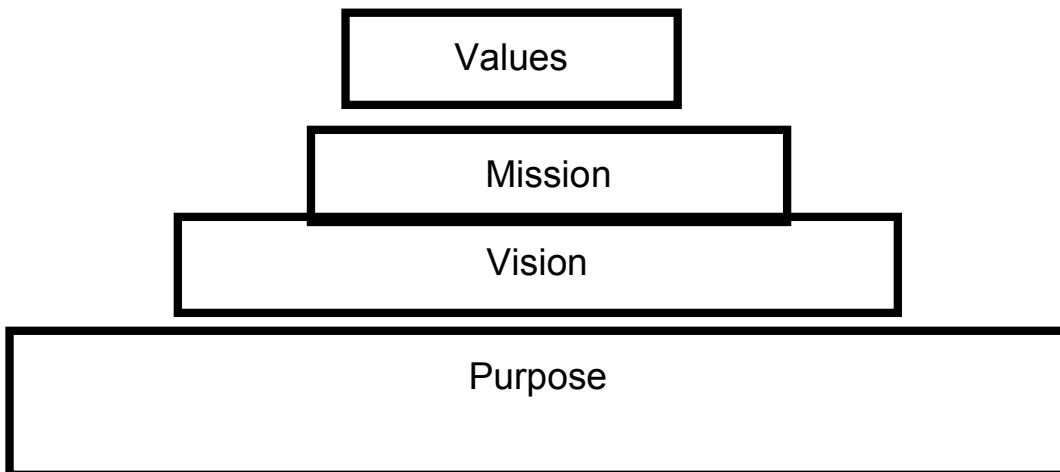
Last week we looked at the question of who are you when no one is looking using the context of Josephs life.

I drew for you a simple drawing that showed the four foundations that make up personal integrity.

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FOUR FOUNDATIONAL LEVELS OF AN AUTHENTIC LIFE

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And I want to continue that theme this morning.

He was saying, that what is inside of you will come out of you.

*Matthew 15:17-20 ESV*

*(17) Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled?*

*(18) But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.*

*(19) For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.*

*(20) These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."*

To defile means to make common.

In other words to take something that is set aside for a purpose, for something special, and make it a common.

To take something that is full of potential and hinder it, or take it from its original purpose by making it unclean, that is not useable.

### **Potential:**

There are two types of potential.

There is **realized** potential and there is **latent** potential.

**Potential** means: possible, but not yet actual.

### **Realized Potential:**

Realized potential means that this possibility has become an actuality.

That what has lain dormant has manifested itself.

It has become fruit,

it has matured,

it is evident.

## **Latent Potential:**

Latent means that something is dormant it is present but not expressed. It is believed to be there, but not evident.

I believe that Jesus was saying:

You make common your potential.  
You defile your potential.  
You retard your potential.

From the inside, not from the outside.

## **Our greatest enemies:**

Our greatest enemies are rarely external, they are mainly internal. People with great dreams rarely fail because of obstacles external, but obstacles internal.

These are the demons of self that we must face. Here are a number of things I have seen make or break people....depending on how they deal with them.

They are like bricks in a wall that stand between you and your future. Only you can slay these dragons. Only after you have demolished this wall will you be able to move into your future.

Let me give you a list of them I am going to cover over the next couple of weeks:

- The dragon of planning and lack of attention to detail.
- The lack of a use of a personal schedule.
- The lack of personal education....Notice I didn't say learning.
- The lack of self confidence.

- The lack of purpose to your prosperity.
- Lack of resolve – lack of tenacity.
- Lack of physical and emotional fitness. (exercise and a balanced life)
- A lack of purpose for your life.

But there is one area that life, a foundational stone that sits under all of these areas.

And if you do not get victory over this area of your life you will not have victory in any area of you life.

### **The dragon of personal discipline and self control.**

#### **Lack of personal discipline:**

The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand.

Now personal discipline I think applies to every area of your life.

Emotional

Physical

Spiritual

Balance is the key to life.

And a mature Christian is a balanced Christian.

A mystic lives in denial of their body.

A Christian realizes that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

It is a gift that should be cared for and cherished.

You discipline a child because a child can not discipline itself.

One of the marks of a maturity is the ability to be self regulating.

If you don't master the art of personal discipline, you will not master yourself.

Julie Andrews

*Some people regard discipline as a chore. For me, it is a kind of order that sets me free to fly.*

People who can not discipline themselves,

- can not discipline their work life
- Can not discipline their thought life
- Can not discipline their appetites

### **Michael Jordan:**

JORDAN WAS ONLY A freshman when he first tried out for his high school's varsity basketball team.

Despite his six foot-tall physique, he did not make the team. Undaunted, Jordan tried out again as a sophomore. He was cut for a second time.

Devastated, he struggled through the rest of the school day.

When he got home, he promptly shut him self in his room and dissolved into tears.

Looking back, he admits, "It's probably good that it happened. It made me know what disappointment felt like. And I knew that I didn't want that feeling ever again."

Fueled by this resolve, Jordan continued to practice. Mother Nature gave him an added edge by giving him a four-inch growth spurt, and he finally made the basketball team his junior year.

Nevertheless, when the list of the top three hundred U.S. college basketball prospects was published right before his senior year, his name was not on it.

However, Jordan- was good enough to land a full basketball scholarship at the University of North Carolina (UNC).

UNC appreciated Jordan, and he was a starter for the team from the beginning. By the end of his freshman year, he was a national celebrity after sinking a fifteen-foot jump shot in the final seconds of the 1982 NCAA championship game.

Jordan was the third overall pick when he was drafted by the Chicago Bulls in 1984.

During his professional basketball career, Jordan was NBA Rookie of the Year and set NBA records for the most points scored.

He has won multiple MVP awards, several NBA championships, and two Olympic gold medals; however these are not the statistics that Jordan believes makes him a success.

He said:

*"I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career.  
I have lost almost 300 games.  
On 26 occasions I have been entrusted to take the game-winning shot and missed.  
And I have failed over and over and over again in my life.  
And that is why I succeed."*

### **How to develop self discipline:**

As I have alluded to already today,  
your inability to control yourself,  
your mouth,  
your temper,  
your financial habits,  
your thought life,  
your fleshly appetites not only hinder,  
but ultimately destroy all and any possibilities of you walking in the fullness of who you can be.

*Proverbs 16:32 ESV*

*(32) Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.*

*Proverbs 25:28 ESV*

*(28) A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.*

*Matthew 16:26 ESV*

*(26) For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?*

As you can see the Bible is not quiet on the topic.

You couple this with our opening scripture reading and you can see that it is an area that God deals with thoroughly.

The time to learn self control and self discipline is as a child, from our parents.

But if that has not been the case and you did not learn this most basic and essential of all skill, then it is something you will have to give you self to mastering.

I want to split this morning into two and see how far we get.

I would like to start by looking at how we as adults....those that are responsible for our own conduct....those over 13 years of age....

How you can develop self control and self discipline.

Then the Lord and time permitting,  
I would like to outline to parents how you can help your child by training them in the area of self-control and self discipline.

Now....what do we do with teenagers....that is an eternal question.

My view is this...if they are in my house,  
and eating from my fridge  
they are my children

and are still subject to my rule  
and hence my responsibility to direct, correct and protect.

There are some different approaches you can take and we will talk about them in a little bit.

### **Historical perspective:**

In the 30's, 40's America was known as a prosperous and disciplined nation built upon a pioneering Can-Do attitude.

No one work for free and there was a belief that you could make your future happen

We had just come out of the Second World War and our economy, thanks to steel and oil, was the biggest in the world.

People came home from the war and wanted to enjoy the peace and the new found prosperity.

Instead of entrusting and training the emerging generation with the tools to steward this new found prosperity people did something that has impacted us ever since.

They invented teenagers.

They literally said,  
we fought for this,  
our kids need to enjoy it.  
Go to school children and you have no responsibilities during your teenage years.

And for the first time in American history we had rebels without a cause.

Now these people grew up and had children and they took it one step further and we had the flower children of the 1960's.  
Now the flower children had no purpose and they lacked nothing.

They grew up with more wealth and more job prospects and more money than the previous generations.

They didn't have to strive to get a job, the economy was booming, they were guaranteed a job.

They had kids.

These kids grew up in the 70's and it was all about me.

My wants,  
my needs,  
drug exploration,  
sexual exploitation.

They basically took the overall theme of the 60's and magnified it in terms of personal depravity.

Then these people had kids.

And that is the group of people who are sitting in this room.

A nation that was built on a pioneering, hard working, make it happen, up at dawn, bed at dark, lets carve out our place in the future lost its way.

And what we have today is the fattest, laziest, most indebted, poorly educated generation, wrapped in a blanket of self-entitlement.

And the American of tomorrow

The church of the future cannot be built on jello!

In order for us to become all that God wants us to be is our responsibility.

The greatest single lesson I learn from my father was the ability to discipline myself.

To hold court over my own character and conduct and judge my own performance.

Not based upon the standards of others, but based upon the standards of myself

And this is the underlying force behind self-discipline, you have to know where you're going and how you are going to get there.

### **So what is self-discipline and self control?**

British psychologist William McDougall (1871 ~ 1938) said,  
*"Will is character in action,"*

In other words willpower is the source of our action; it is the fruit of our character.

When people complain or are dissatisfied with their lives, they often blame others for their unhappy state of affairs.

They don't yet understand that life doesn't happen TO us. It happens BECAUSE of us.

After all, our present conditions were brought about by our past actions, and our present actions will create our future circumstances.

### **Will Power:**

Will power is the ability to overcome laziness and procrastination.

It is the ability to control or reject unnecessary or harmful impulses.

It is the ability to arrive to a decision and follow it with perseverance until its successful accomplishment.

It is the inner decision that overcomes the desire to indulge in unnecessary and useless habits, and the inner strength that overcomes inner emotional and mental resistance for taking action.

It is one of the corner stones of success, both spiritual and material.

## **Self Control:**

Self-discipline is the companion of will power.

It endows you with the stamina your decision to persevere in whatever you choose to do.

It bestows the ability to withstand hardships and difficulties, whether physical, emotional or mental.

It grants the ability to reject immediate satisfaction, in order to gain something better that requires more effort and time.

In other words it embraces delayed gratification for the greater good.

Everyone has inner, unconscious, or partly conscious impulses making them say or do things they later regret saying or doing. On many occasions people do not think before they talk or act.

By developing these two character traits you gain control of your conscious and subconscious impulses.

### **In what way does self-control help you?**

- It keeps in check self-destructive, addictive, obsessive and compulsive behavior.
- Gives you a sense of personal mastery over your life, and brings balance into your life.
- Self-control helps to keep over-emotional responses in check or moderation.
- Self-control eliminates the feeling helplessness and being too dependent on others.
- It enables you to control moods and reject negative feelings and thoughts.

- This in turns helps to manifest mental and emotional detachment, which contributes to peace of mind.
- Self-control strengthens self-esteem, confidence, inner strength, self-mastery and willpower.
- It enables you to take charge of your life.
- It makes you a responsible and trustworthy human being. People can rely on you because they can trust you

## **How do you develop self control?**

### **1) Analyze your life**

This is a two part process, first of all Self Knowledge, secondly Self Awareness.

#### **Self Knowledge:**

Self Discipline means behaving according to what you have decided is best for you, regardless of how you feel in the moment.

The first step in self-discipline is self-knowledge.

You need to decide what behavior best reflects your goals and values and what behaviors are hindering you.

This process requires introspection and self-analysis, and is most effective when written down.

You have to know yourself to change yourself.

#### **Self Awareness:**

Self-discipline depends upon conscious awareness as to both what you are doing and what you are not doing.

Think about it.

If you aren't aware your behavior is undisciplined, how will you know to act otherwise?

Have a look at the areas in your life that are prospering and those areas that are suffering.

If you are failing in school yet doing well on the football field, you may need to address a lack of discipline in your study patterns.

If you are gaining weight or unable to lose it...then there is a problem that is looming there.

So have a look across the spectrum of everything that is important to you and rate yourself from 1-10 on how you are doing

Give yourself some starting points.

Here are some thoughts:

- Eating
- Physical fitness
- Obsessive behavior
- Working
- Financial stewardship
- Emotional state
- Intimate relationships
- Personal development

Now don't start trying to justify things, simply assess things.

## **2) Analyze your analysis**

Acknowledge your own responsibility.  
Admit that if you sit around doing nothing, you will achieve nothing.

I recently had a gentleman tell me that he didn't believe that there was anything he could do to prepare for his future.

He was going to just give up and sit down and wait till God delivered him.

Friend that is future suicide by neglect.

Try and analyze the thoughts or emotions that sit behind your uncontrolled manners and attitudes.

A lack of self control is always the manifestation of deeper issue.

For example laziness is a manifestation of a lack or purpose of vision....without a vision a man cast off restraint.

Challenge yourself to break your destructive habits.

In order to build self-control, you must practice self-denial.

You now have a list of things that you need to work on in order to start to take greater control over yourself and thereby your life.

### **3. Act on your analysis**

It is not enough to simply write out your goals and values.

You must make an internal commitment to them, and a plan on how you will achieve them.

Enlist trusted fiends' or family members to help you with your blind spots, those behavioral triggers that send you into negative and destructive activities.

If you struggle with commitment, start by making a conscious decision to follow through on what you say you're going to do – both when you said you would do it and how you said you would do it.

Make a detailed plan of what self discipline looks like.

- a) I will pack my bag for the gym the night before
- b) I will arrive at the gym at 7am
- c) I will do 30 minutes of cardio
- d) I will work out with a trainer for 45 minutes
- e) I will stretch
- f) I will do this 4 times a week
- g) I will put it in my diary at least one week in advance

#### **4. Analyze your action:**

You cannot improve what you are not tracking.

I highly recommend putting in place a system to track these commitments.

If you can't measure it, and if you can see progress, you will slip into a cycle of self-criticism and lose motivation.

#### **5. Be gentle but firm with yourself.**

Act firmly in that you stop running away.

Face your task, accept it, and accomplish it. Finish what you start.

Follow through on every project.

Focus on one task at a time.

Don't scatter your attention.

Be gentle in the sense that you don't have to do all your tasks immediately as long as you start doing some.

Don't expect to go from zero to a hundred in one second.

Work up to it.

Start slowly, but gradually pick up the pace as you develop your skills.

The kingdom of God is like a seed...it starts small and grows in the heart of a man or a woman.

So it is with anything of any consequence.

Big chances start as small decisions.

## **6. Anticipate temptation:**

Expect to be tempted to avoid your tasks.

Your mind will come up with rationalizations and excuses for putting off till 'tomorrow' what can be done today.

Remain aware of your feelings and learn to think before you act.

Use your reason (rational mind), not your emotions, to guide your actions.

Do what is good FOR you instead of what FEELS good.

## **7. Courage to commit:**

Make no mistake, self-discipline is often extremely difficult. Moods, appetites, and passions can be powerful forces to go against.

Therefore self-discipline is highly dependent on courage. Don't pretend something is easy for you to do when it is in fact very difficult and/ or painful.

Instead, find the courage to face this pain and difficulty.

As you begin to accumulate small private victories, your self-confidence will grow and the courage that underpins self-discipline will come more naturally.

## **8. Coach yourself:**

Self-talk is often harmful, but it can also be extremely beneficial if you have control of it.

When you find yourself being tested, I suggest you talk to yourself, encourage yourself and reassure yourself.

After all, it is self-talk that has the ability to remind you of your goals, call up courage, reinforce your commitment and keep you conscious of the task at hand.

### **How to teach your child discipline:**

Parents you have to teach your children discipline.

If your child is allowed to be lazy and self indulgent at 12, they will lack direction and purpose at 22.

Bum Phillips was one of America's great football coaches, he said:

*The only discipline that lasts is self-discipline.*

Self discipline, self control is a learned skill.

It is something that can be taught.  
It is something that must be taught.

It is something that parents have to teach children, but also unfortunately bosses have to teach employees now days because parents have abdicated their responsibility to either school or church.

It is not the churches responsibility to discipline your child, it is ours to disciple your child.

Parents...if you are constantly being ask to control your children,  
by the host teams,  
or the children workers,

then can I suggest that they are not special and need understanding, they are children and need to learn self control. Unruly and out of control children is a result of disengaged and overwhelmed parents.

Put your hands up folks.

Come and talk.

No one is going to laugh at you...we may laugh with you....but never at you.

Here are some thoughts on teaching your child self-discipline.

You have to start with parental discipline before you can insist on child self-discipline.

### **1. Know your boundaries:**

You have to know what is important to you.

You can only discipline for rebellion. So unless you know what is important, you can't enforce what is important and you can't ask them to stay between the lines.

If it is important to you that your child does not take crayon and color in the wall, then if it happens- There are not giggles and smiles and pictures on face book.

Your child should be dealt with in such a way that they thought of ever connecting wall and crayon should never enter their mind with out the full realization that there are consequences.

### **2. Enforce your boundaries:**

Now this is very important.

There is no point having boundaries, if your not going to enforce them.

If you make a big deal about something and then never enforce it, you are teaching your child that it does really matter what you want, you're flaky and inconsistent and if they wait long enough you will change your mind.

### **3. Be consistent:**

You must discipline crayons on wall, pencils on wall, paint on walls. Nail polish on walls. Each and every time or not or not at all.

Here is a little formula Beccy and I use for disciplining our kids.

A+B+C=D

Affection +  
Boundaries +  
Consistency =  
Discipline

All of this is in "Helping Guys" in greater detail.

Once you have general parental discipline operating, then you can work with teaching a child to be self-regulating.

But remember, if you are not self-controlled, then they will do what you do and not what you say.

### **4. Do not give into your child just because they want something**

Never give a child everything they want.

It doesn't matter what it is.  
Cookies, another ride, another toy.

No matter what the activity or item there has to be a limit.

If they want “just one more” and they always get “just one more”, then you have taught them that if they keep pestering you and wearing you down, they get what ever they want.

### **5. Don't cater to the trauma child:**

The trauma child is the child, who may have been sick growing up, or had a disability, or there was an accident or parents can't have any more children. Or there was a death in the family and the parents reacted by cocooning a child instead of raising an adult.

Trauma child are basically spoiled children whose every whim is catered to.

Parents do everything for them.

Give them everything.

And never discipline them because they have a sense of guilt or fear.

Now this behavior will flow into other children in the family and they will start acting out bratty behavior to get the same level of attention.

I have seen whole families and children's lives destroyed because parents catered to children instead of guiding children.

Think about this.....

If there was an explosion at school that killed one of your sons and left the other so badly burned that the doctors wanted to remove both his legs....how would you react...and would your reaction limit your child or bring the best out in him?

GLENN CUNNINGHAM WAS ONLY SEVEN years old when a classroom stove exploded, injuring him and killing his brother. His legs were severely burned, and the doctors recommended amputation because they doubted that Cunningham would ever walk again.

Cunningham's mother, determined that her son would improve, refused to allow the amputation. Sure enough, with the help of his mother, Cunningham learned to walk again.

However, Cunningham was not simply satisfied with walking, he wanted to run.

By the time he was twelve, he was not only running, he was running faster than everyone else at his school.

His deeply scarred legs prevented him from running smoothly or efficiently, but he made up for his ungainly stride with endurance and strength. Before competing, Cunningham had to spend a lot of time massaging his legs and doing warm-up exercises.

When he was thirteen years old, Cunningham won his first mile-long race. Although he participated in many other sports, he excelled at running.

He set records as a University of Kansas student and competed twice in the 1,500-meter run at the Olympics, where he came in fourth in 1932 and won a silver medal in 1936. Cunningham was elected to the U.S. and the National Track and Field Hall of Fame and named the most outstanding track athlete to compete at Madison Square Garden during its first one hundred years.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Andries – secret of success

## **6. Never give into a temper tantrum:**

Let me define this for you:

Stomping their feet.

Saying no to you publically.

Saying no to you privately.

“Umpphhhing”

Throwing themselves on the floor.

Running away from you screaming.

If you ever give into this,

If you ever allow this to go on with out addressing it,

Then your child learns that they can do what ever they want to do where ever they are and if the tantrum is big enough then it has the desired affects.

Kids aren't silly.

There are some children who only ever through tantrums when they are out in public because they know that their parents will not discipline them but give into them to keep them quite.

That is why God invented the skin on the back of the arm and public restrooms.

Another great approach is the tally approach. Every time they throw a tantrum, you take out a pen and just make a mark on your hand.

5 tantrums = 5 marks = 5 when we get home. I will make you remember never to embarrass me again like that in public.

We should all expect our child to throw one tantrum. One.

We should all deal with it in such a matter from that point on that there is no doubt in their small terrorist minds what the consequence will be if they ever rain on our parade like that again.

If your child learns that if it screams enough you will come and get it from kid's church and you will walk around and give it cookies...it will scream every Sunday.

If you child learns that if its behavior pulls you out of church there will be consequences instantly or when you get home...they will not pull you out of church.

Don't blame separation anxiety, it is toddler terrorism.

I insist upon living in my house with people that are pleasant and well behaved.

If they are not then one of us has to change.

The key here is that it is my house.....

### **7. Delayed gratification:**

Around the age of two, start to delay gratification.

Not just "you'll get a cookie after dinner".

Try "You'll get a cookie in a minute".

They have to wait a little while. Do they still want it? Yes.

But you've taught them how to wait before they get it.

Extend the length of time.

## **8. As a child grows, Modify your training, don't stop your training:**

### Step 1-

Let kids know in advance that everything they do carries consequences.

Although telling them this still gives them the freedom to behave any way they want, chances are they will stop themselves from doing certain things to avoid punishment. Adjust the consequences to the action.

The bigger the issue, the more serious the consequence should be.

### Step 2-

Give children a choice.

Children won't learn self-discipline unless they have the opportunity to make choices and decisions.

Younger children should have options explained to them so they can understand that some options are better than others.

### Step 3-

Reward positive outcomes.

This concept doesn't mean you should bribe your children. Instead, give praise or additional benefits when things are done right. This way, children will learn to discipline themselves to do a task because the results are pleasant.

Don't make all the rewards material, but instead use praise and celebration as well, so the child doesn't always expect an actual "prize" for his action.