

# Personal Discipline

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## I. Introduction.

A. Both Christians and non-Christians are interested in strengthening willpower. (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Corinthians 10:19-20)

B. Our will is the faculty of choice that we possess. There are many influences on the will.

## II. The real matter in strengthening willpower is bringing the right influences to bear on our will.

A. When the Bible talks about our hearts, it is referring to our emotions, our intellect, and our will. (Genesis 6:5; Mark 7:1; Deuteronomy 6:6; Psalm 119:11; Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 3:1-2)

1. We must filter what our minds are exposed to. (Proverbs 4:23; Psalm 119:11)

B. The two main influencers of our wills are our emotions and our intellect. Usually, though not always, God speaks to our intellect and Satan speaks to our emotions.

C. We can guard the channels of influence on our will by setting our minds on the things of the Spirit. (Romans 8:5-6; Romans 12:2)

1. Meditate on and memorize scripture. (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2)

2. Understand the importance of habit in our thinking patterns. (Romans 6:19; 1 Timothy 4:7)

a) We break habits by frequently acting the opposite way. We build habits by frequently repeating the same thoughts or actions.

b) Don't allow exceptions to occur, but don't be overly ambitious.

c) Realize that one habit is interwoven with another and that one action will affect many others.

d) When you fail, don't give up. (Proverbs 24:16)

## III. Rely on the Holy Spirit for strength in willpower. God expects discipline from us; even so, we are still completely reliant on God to give us the victory. (Galatians 5:17; Romans 8:12-13; Philippians 2:12-13)

**Application questions:**

1. As you consider the influences in your life, are they pushing you toward selfishness or self-control? What influences would be helpful to you in attaining willpower?

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2. Try to acquire a habit that will reinforce your willpower in an area that you struggle with. As you gain control over that area, observe how it affects other areas in your life.

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3. What does it mean to rely on the Holy Spirit for strength of will?

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