

Influence - Self

We can only work with what we receive, so what we receive defines what we can do.

1 John 4:7-12,19 (NLT) - Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.¹⁰ This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.¹⁹ We love each other because he loved us first.

Acts 3:1-11 (NLT) - Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service.² As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple.³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.⁴ Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!"⁵ The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money.⁶ But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"⁷ Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened.⁸ He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them.⁹ All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God.¹⁰ When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded!¹¹ They all rushed out in amazement to Solomon's Colonnade, where the man was holding tightly to Peter and John.

Study Guide

We spoke on Sunday about how we work with what we have received. What are some examples in your own life of ways your actions or thoughts have reflected what others have given you (good or bad)? That you received from your parents? Friends? The world at large?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Remembering that we spoke at length about how we cannot sum up what we need from within ourselves simply by working harder, what do you think Paul is talking about here? When you read "I run with purpose in every step" what does that look like to you?

One of the difficult parts of Christianity can be figuring out what disciplines are for, in a faith that is based on grace. A piece that has been helpful in the past has been shifting the goal of discipline. Sometimes we can view disciplines as a way to help save or restore us, when the beauty of disciplines can be that, rather than "helping" save us, they ensure that we are returning to the One who saves.

What disciplines have you found helped to deepen your relationship with God? Which ones have helped to remind you of our true source? Which have helped you enjoy His presence and friendship?

Spend some time sharing and then pray for each other.