

## Excerpt from The Way – Part 1 of 2

E. Stanley Jones

*Excerpt from Preface:* “This book is designed to put our feet upon the Way. It is not an argument, but an adventure. It is an experiment in living. If it doesn’t work, don’t take it. If it does work, bet your very life upon it. If you do, you will not be working in the dark. As soon as you really get hold of it – or better, when it gets hold of you – you will know that this is the Way. Everything else will become irrelevant. This book begins, not with those who have attained, but with those who *want* to attain.”

### ***Week #32 in The Way***

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## 1. A DISCIPLINED LIFE

[I Cor. 6:12-20](#)

We turn now to the truth that must be set over against the one we have been considering. We have been saying that the first law of life is receptivity, to know how to accept what Life offers to us.

A soldier asked Lilian Eubank in a U.S.O. club, “What kind of vitamins do you take?” He explained: “I have watched you for a month, and it does not matter how confusing a situation you are in, how disagreeable the people you are with, you always have a smile and a cheery word. I can’t understand it.” She said: “It isn’t a vitamin at all, but a philosophy of life, that one has to smile when he or she really believes basically that everything works together for good – if you *let* it.” That is the point – if you let it. If you know how to be receptive and responsive to God and let Him work things out for you.

But to do that we must learn to be disciplined persons. While the Way is the way of dependence, drawing strength from Another, nevertheless, in order to do that we must be disciplined. Very often “free grace” has been preached in such a way that it has weakened character. Paul warns against this in these words, “Do not make your freedom opening for the flesh.” (Gal. 5:13, Moffatt) Here, liberty had become license. Discipline was needed.

The acceptance of grace is a privilege, a blessed privilege, provided it is permeated with discipline. Dependence plus discipline equals dependable disciples. This combination was shown in this incident in which God apparently showed a sense of humor. A woman writes that she had been healed, gloriously healed of paralysis in the legs and arthritis when she surrendered it all to God. Then she said: “Now, Lord, you’ve healed me, what are you going to do about my overweight?” The answer: “This kind goeth not out save by fasting.” Where only dependence could heal, that was the answer. Where only discipline could heal, that was the answer. The balanced life is the Way. The Christian is blessedly balanced.

Discipline, then, is not a turning into an unnatural, screwy type of person, but it does mean that the forces of life are not unharnessed forces that roam everywhere and get nowhere, except into trouble. They are harnessed to God's ends; they are disciplined.

*O disciplined Christ, so disciplined and yet so free, teach me Thy secret.  
For only as I am disciplined can I dance the dance of freedom. I want my  
powers to be at the disposal of the highest. Amen.*

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*AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: "Happy are they who follow his injunctions, giving him undivided hearts. (Ps. 119:2, Moffatt)*

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### **1 Cor. 6:12 – 20** (Moffatt)

<sup>12</sup> 'All things are lawful for me'? Yes, but not all are good for me. 'All things are lawful for me'? Yes, but I am not going to let anything master me. <sup>13</sup> 'Food is meant for the stomach, and the stomach for food'? Yes, and God will do away with the one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body; <sup>14</sup> and the God who raised the Lord will also raise us by his power. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know your bodies are members of Christ? Am I to take Christ's members and devote them to a harlot? Never! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that he who joins himself to a harlot is one with her in body (for the pair, it is said, shall become one flesh), <sup>17</sup> while he who joins himself to the Lord is one with him in spirit. <sup>18</sup> Shun immorality! Any other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his body. <sup>19</sup> Do you not know your body is the temple of the holy Spirit within you — the Spirit you have received from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> you were bought for a price; then glorify God with your body.

## 2. THE WAY IS THE WAY OF DISCIPLINE

[1 Cor 9:23-27](#)

*The Way is the way of discipline.* Yesterday I saw a beautiful elm tree which had been blown over in a storm because some of the roots had strangled the tree. They had twined themselves around the base of the tree underground, so that the very things which were intended to sustain the tree had strangled it.

Our natural urges are given to sustain us, but if they get out of place, they can strangle us. Sex dedicated is sustaining. But sex out of place, an end in itself, coils about the rest of life and strangles it. Self dedicated is sustaining, but if the self becomes the center of life it can strangle the personality. The trouble with the roots of that fallen tree was that, instead of reaching out beyond themselves, they turned back on themselves and the trunk. They were not disciplined to their original purpose. The natural became the unnatural.

Dr. Charles Mayo, one of the greatest surgeons of the world, came into a room dragging one of his legs clumsily. A friend of mine asked him about it. He replied: "There is a passage in the Bible which says, 'They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.' I saw this coming on, but I would not pay heed." He had not disciplined himself to the advice he gave others, and he dragged a lame leg through life as the result. Many of us are dragging ourselves lamely through life because we would not be disciplined to what we knew. They tell us that civilization depends on the top nine inches of topsoil on the earth; if that goes, we go with it. And yet we have wasted those precious nine inches with the result that millions languish upon eroded, impoverished lands, and gain a precarious living in dust bowls. The lack of discipline strikes back to undernourished bodies and decaying civilizations. Our personal lack of discipline strikes back at us in impoverished souls and bodies and in a decaying spiritual life. Be disciplined or be decadent.

I glanced up from my writing on a train and saw on a lever these words, “Lift up to release.” We have to lift up to release. If we think we can turn our powers to lower purposes and be free, we are mistaken. You have to lift up to release.

*O Christ, help me to lift up my powers to Thy purposes and Thy plans; then I shall be released and free. I am blinded by local clamorings. Give me the long look and the far-seeing purpose. Amen.*

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AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: “I am Eternal ... training you for your good.”  
(Isa. 48:17 Moffat)

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**1 Cor. 9:23-27** (Moffatt)

<sup>23</sup> And I do it all for the sake of the gospel, to secure my own share in it. <sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race, though all run, only one man gains the prize? Run so as to win the prize. <sup>25</sup> Every athlete practices self-restraint all round; but while they do it to win a fading wreath, we do it for an unfading. <sup>26</sup> Well, I run without swerving; I do not plant my blows upon the empty air — <sup>27</sup> no, I maul and master my body, in case, after preaching to other people, I am disqualified myself.

### 3. **DISCIPLINE PRODUCES SPONTANEITY**

[I Cor. 10:23-24, 31-33](#)

The Way has been called “The Christian discipline.” “The aim of the Christian discipline is the love that springs from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith.” (I Tim. 1:5, Moffatt) Strange that the end of discipline is defined as spontaneity – “love that springs.” And that is the end of discipline, to make you free.

There is a false idea of freedom prevalent in modern civilization: “You are free to do as you *like*.” The Christian answer is, “You are free to do as you *ought*.” Said a high-school boy to his principal: “Sir, they say that this is a free country. But where’s my freedom? They tell me to go to school, and I have to do it; to study or to go home and I have to do it. Where’s my freedom?” He was serious – and in serious trouble with himself. A returned soldier, rebuked for something he said, replied, “I have fought over there to say and do exactly as I please.” In both cases, life did not approve; both these persons were in trouble with themselves and others. Liberty comes through obedience to law. A man who had lived a defeated life told how he became victorious: “It is silly for a poor mortal to buck the stream of life. I have always sought out its currents and sought to flow with it.”

Love can “spring,” be spontaneous and free, only if it comes “from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith.” In other words, from a disciplined life. Any supposed freedom that leaves you with an impure heart, a bad conscience, and an insincere faith ends not in springing and singing, but in sighing and dying.

Another passage puts discipline as the result (the first passage puts it as “the aim”): “God has not given us a timid spirit but a spirit of power and love and discipline.” (II Tim. 1:7, Moffatt.) The aim of discipline is to produce discipline. The first result of that discipline is courage – “not a timid spirit.” A disciplined

person has a sense of courage. He is afraid of nothing for he knows that the sum total of reality is behind him. He has a sense of “power” for he knows he is working with God, and God is working with him, and he has a “love” that springs and sings.

*O Thou singing Christ, teach me Thy way, the way of discipline. For I too would sing. I too would be free. For Thy will is freedom; my will is bondage. When I take my way I end in a mess. When I take Thy way I end in courage, power, and love. Amen*

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AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: “My son, spurn not the Eternal’s schooling.  
(Prov. 3:11, Moffatt)

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**I Cor. 10:23-24, 31-33** (Moffatt)

<sup>23</sup> 'All things are lawful'? Yes, but not all are good for us. 'All things are lawful'? Yes, but not all are edifying. <sup>24</sup> Each of us must consult his neighbor’s interests, not his own

<sup>31</sup> So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, let it be all done for the glory of God. <sup>32</sup> Put no stumbling-block in the way of Jews or Greeks or the church of God. <sup>33</sup> Such is my own rule, to satisfy all men in all points, aiming not at my own advantage but at the advantage of the greater number — at their salvation.

#### 4. **DISCIPLINE PRODUCES LIBERTY**

[Rom. 8:1-2, 5-6](#)

Discipline is not something that is imposed on us. It is discovering the laws of our being and finding that they are the laws of God. “Happy are they who follow his injunctions, giving him undivided hearts.” (Ps. 119:2, Moffatt) The opposite could be this: “Unhappy are they who follow their own inclinations, giving themselves a divided, conflicting self.”

Again, the psalmist puts it thus: “The statutes are my songs, as I wander through the world.” (Ps. 119:54, Moffatt) Statutes become songs! Laws become a liberty – to sing! The idea of the disciplined person as a disagreeable person is false. The disciplined person is full of rhythm and song, for he is attuned to Life. It is true that Jesus said: “Everyone has to be consecrated by the fire of the discipline.” (Mark 9:49, Moffatt), but this “fire of the discipline” only burns away the fetters<sup>1</sup>. When the three Hebrew children fell bound into the fiery furnace, the fire did nothing to them except to burn their bonds. They walked around free in the fire. And the form of the Fourth was with them. The fire of discipline does nothing to you except to burn every clinging fetter and make you walk free with the Fourth. You are “*consecrated* by the fire of the discipline.” The fire frees you to be dedicated to the worth-while.

Someone has said that “beauty is the purgation of superfluities<sup>2</sup>.” Discipline takes away superfluities, confines us to the essentials, and makes life beautiful, for nothing clutters up the picture. We must so discipline our lives that nothing remains except that which counts and contributes.

“Miss America of 1945,” addressing high-school students said” “You cannot hate and be beautiful.” They don’t jibe. For hate is undisciplined love. Lust is

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<sup>1</sup> Fetters: a chain or shackle for the feet; something that confines

<sup>2</sup> Superfluities: something unnecessary or superfluous; immoderate and especially luxurious living, habits, or desires



undisciplined sex. Worry is undisciplined foresight. You cannot have an undisciplined life and be beautiful. For beauty is the harmony of lines. Discipline brings life into central harmony by directing it toward great ends. Discipline is a development – development in harmony.

*O Christ, I know I shall surrender myself to the discipline of something, to the discipline of the pressures around me, or to the discipline of Thy will and purposes. If I do the first I shall pass away, if I do the second, I shall remain forever. Help me. Amen.*

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AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: “Happy is he who has thy discipline and thine instruction, training him calmly to wait on, in adversity.” (Ps. 94:12-13, Moffatt)

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**Rom. 8:1-2, 5-6** (Moffatt)

<sup>1</sup> Thus there is no doom now for those who are in Christ Jesus; <sup>2</sup> the law of the Spirit brings the life which is in Christ Jesus, and that law has set me free from the law of sin and death.

<sup>5</sup> For those who follow the flesh have their interests in the flesh, and those who follow the Spirit have their interests in the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> The interests of the flesh mean death, the interests of the Spirit mean life and peace.

## 5. STEPS TOWARD A DISCIPLINED LIFE

[II Tim. 1:6-7; 2:1-4](#)

Many people accept grace and rise to a new life and then it leaks out because of a lack of discipline. A brother prayed very often, “Fill me, Lord.” A man near by was overhead to say, “You can’t, Lord. He leaks.” Many of us are not “filled,” because if we were, we would leak out. God isn’t going to pour the water of His grace down the ratholes of undisciplined living.

We must now take these steps in becoming a disciplined person:

1. ***Let discipline begin at the center, not at the margin.*** The center is you. You must be undivided in affection. It was said, “Asa’s mind was undivided all his life.” (II Chron. 15:17, Moffatt) That is at the basis of all successful, effective character. “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” (Jas. 1:8, Moffatt) “Purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (Jas. 4:8, Moffatt) “Keep, then, an undivided mind for the Eternal our God, to live by His rules and to obey His orders.” (1 Kings 11:4, Moffatt) One of the greatest tragedies of history is this: “When he grew old, he had no undivided mind for the Eternal his God. His wives seduced him to follow foreign gods.” (I Kings 11:4, Moffatt) Solomon was a wise man turned foolish because of a lack of inner discipline – a discipline at the place of his affections. He wanted mutually incompatible things and fell between stools. Listen to this sound advice: “To those who find them, they are life and health to all their being. Guard above all things, guard your inner self.” (Prov. 4:22-23, Moffatt) Solomon must have said that with a wistful sigh, for it was the very thing he did not do. He did not guard his inner self, so his outer life came down in ruin around him.

Discipline the inner self by a complete self-surrender to God. Don't give up this thing, that thing. Give up the self and that carries everything else with it. God has *you* – and that means all you've got. I know of a man who is a marginally surrendered person. He is centrally unsundered, the self sticks out through all he does for God. A very discerning friend commented, "He comes near being a great man." He surrendered the marginal, kept back the central.

*O Christ, I know Thou are relentless for Thou art love. Thou canst not be satisfied with my marginal allegiances. Thou art asking for me. And I give Thee that – now and forever. I am disciplined through self-surrender. The inner tension is gone. Thou hast me. I'm glad. Amen*

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AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: "The Eternal's law is in his heart, his footsteps never falter." (Ps. 37:31 Moffatt)

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## **II Tim. 1:6-7; 2:1-4**

II Tim. 1: <sup>6</sup> Hence I would remind you to rekindle the divine gift which you received when my hands were laid upon you; <sup>7</sup> for God has not given us a timid spirit but a spirit of power and love and discipline.

II Tim. 2: <sup>1</sup> Now, my son, be strong in the grace of Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> and transmit the instructions I gave you in presence of many witnesses to trustworthy men, that they may be competent to teach others. <sup>3</sup> Join the ranks of those who bear suffering, like a loyal soldier of Christ Jesus. <sup>4</sup> No soldier gets entangled in civil pursuits; his aim is to satisfy his commander.

## 6 DISCIPLINE YOUR HABITS

[II Tim. 2:22-26](#)

We are now on the discipline of the center. Of one man someone said: “He cared little for his character and everything for his reputation.” He tried to discipline a reputation, leaving an undisciplined character untouched.

Someone has said that “there are Seven Deadly Sins: The first is dishonesty, the other six are selfishness.” But dishonesty too is a species of selfishness, so the seven are one – self-centeredness. The first discipline, then, must strike at the first sin – egocentricity.

2. ***Discipline your habits.*** Having surrendered the center, you may now deal with the margin. Go over your life and see if there is anything that is incompatible with that fundamental surrender of the self. Someone has defined a preacher as “one who preaches a whole gospel and wholly lives it.” Evelyn Underhill speaks of “a willed correspondence to the world of spirit.” Would it not be more Christian to speak of a willed correspondence to the will of God – in everything? A very intelligent woman who had gone through many cults in her quest writes: “After reading your chapter on discipline in **Abundant Living**, I finally stopped smoking after twenty years of consuming twenty cigarettes a day. I prayed God to replace my will with His will, as you teach, and really, it was not difficult.” Perhaps your experience will be like this pastor’s: He battled with cigarette smoking, gave it up several times, would go back to it. One day he really prayed and these words came: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me.” The desire left.

Perhaps the habit may be of another type: a sex habit that saps the lifeblood from the central purposes of life; or a habit of taking the line of least resistance instead of standing up for your principles; or a habit of evading responsibility,

excusing yourself when opportunities are presented; or a habit of negativism, of always raising objections to positive plans; or a habit of criticism and faultfinding, of picking flaws in others; or a habit of living in a state of self-reference - “How would that affect me?” – or a habit of comparing yourself with others instead of with the will of God. Discipline all these.

*O Christ, thou art making me a disciplined person and I am glad. I feel that these barnacles which have accumulated through the years and have slowed own the progress of my ship are being sloughed off. I'm getting ready for action. I thank Thee. Amen.*

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AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: “Happy are they who hold to what is right, who do their duty at all times!” (Ps. 106:3, Moffatt)

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## **II Tim. 2:22-26**

<sup>22</sup> So shun the lusts of youth and aim at integrity, faith, love and peace, in the company of those who invoke the Lord out of a pure heart. <sup>23</sup> Shut your mind against foolish, popular controversy; be sure that only breeds strife. <sup>24</sup> And the Lord's servant must not be a man of strife; he must be kind to everybody, a skilled teacher, a man who will not resent injuries; <sup>25</sup> he must be gentle in his admonitions to the opposition — God may perhaps let them change their mind and admit the Truth; <sup>26</sup> they may come to their senses again and escape the snare of the devil, as they are brought back to life by God to do his will.

## **7 OUT OF GOOD AND EVIL STORES**

[II Tim. 2:15, 21; 4:5](#)

Before we leave the disciplining of our habits, we must turn to the positive side – replacement of the old by the new. Habit can work with you as well as against you.

Someone said to the exuberant Billy Bray, who was always praising the Lord: “Isn’t it possible to get into the habit of praising the Lord?” “Yes,” replied Billy, “and it’s a very good habit, and so few have it.” You can build up a set of good habits so that you habitually take the Christian way without thought. Every act repeated drops into the subconscious mind and becomes an attitude that easily repeats itself. Jesus says, “The good man brings good out of his good store.” (Matt. 12:35, Moffatt) the good which he brings forth is out of his good store, which is the sum total of accumulated good habits which have passed into attitude and character. No good action, therefore, is lost. Even though it seems to have no effect on the other person, it does something to you, becomes a part of yore good store. This becomes a part of inevitable goodness. You are fated in the direction of good.

On the other hand, Jesus says, “The evil man brings evil out of his store of evil.” (Matt. 12:35, Moffatt) Every evil thought, every evil act or attitude becomes a part of the “store of evil.” The “store of evil” becomes fate, destiny. Every temptation yielded to makes inevitably easier the yielding to the next temptation, until the character is fixed – in evil. Only the power of God can break it.

But to return to the “good store.” You can add to the good store of your children by your example and your teaching. A magazine editor told of his boyhood days when his Irish father would say to him as he came back from work, “Have you told the truth? Have you fought square? If so, then begorra, you’re all right. But if you haven’t, I’ll break every bone in your body.” Rough teaching; but years later, when the editor was offered a half-million-dollar bribe to print certain things, he wouldn’t accept it. There was his father’s teaching – the “good store” held him in the crisis.

We speak of a man “making his pile.” The “good store” is the pile that counts when you most need it.

*O Christ, the simple thought, the simple act, the simple habit becomes a part of my store, a part of me. Teach me to watch day by day the little things that make me inevitably. I want to be a truly disciplined person, to be good inevitably. Amen.*

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AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: “I know that his orders mean eternal life.”  
(John 12:50, Moffatt)

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### **II Tim. 2:15, 21, 4:5**

II Tim. 2: <sup>15</sup> Do your utmost to let God see that you at least are a sound workman, with no need to be ashamed of the way you handle the word of the Truth.

II Tim. 2: <sup>21</sup> If one will only keep clear of the latter, he will be put to noble use, he will be consecrated and useful to the Owner of the House, he will be set apart for good work of all kinds.

II Tim. 4: <sup>5</sup> Whatever happens, be self-possessed, flinch from no suffering, do your work as an evangelist, and discharge all your duties as a minister