

# The Pursuit of Holiness- Session 7 - Chapter 10

## Chapter 10: "The Place of Personal Discipline"

Small Group Discussion Questions + Leader Notes\*\*

### **1. Bridges argues that personal discipline is essential to holiness. Why do many Christians struggle with the idea of discipline in the spiritual life?**

**Leader Notes / Potential Answers:**

- They confuse discipline with legalism or self-righteousness.
- Our culture prizes ease, comfort, and instant results.
- Many believe the Spirit should do everything "effortlessly."
- Some assume strong feelings or "spiritual highs" will keep them holy.
- Bridges stresses that discipline is not the **enemy** of grace but a **partner** to it.

### **2. Bridges notes that disciplined obedience is often slow, unseen, and unexciting. Why is it important to embrace the ordinary nature of spiritual discipline?**

**Leader Notes:**

- Holiness grows like a crop, not a firework (Mark 4:26–29).
- Most spiritual change is incremental, not dramatic.
- God often forms character through daily, repetitive habits.
- Discipline protects us from emotional-based Christianity.
- Encourage participants to value faithfulness over feeling.

### **3. How would you summarize the difference between discipline by willpower and Spirit-empowered discipline? Why does this distinction matter?**

**Potential Answers:**

- Willpower alone leads to pride, burnout, inconsistency, shame.
- Spirit-empowered discipline draws strength from God's promises and presence.
- The Spirit changes desires and sustains long-term obedience.

- Bridges emphasizes cooperation: *we act, but in dependence*.
- This distinction prevents despair and legalistic striving.

#### **4. Why does Scripture repeatedly describe the Christian life using athletic or military imagery (1 Cor. 9:24–27; 1 Tim. 4:7–8; Eph. 6:10–18)? What does this imagery teach about discipline?**

##### **Leader Notes:**

- Training requires focus, repetition, sacrifice, and perseverance.
- No athlete wins accidentally; no believer becomes holy by drifting.
- Battle imagery highlights vigilance, intentionality, and courage.
- Discipline is normal—not exceptional—for followers of Christ.

#### **5. Bridges says we should discipline ourselves “for the purpose of godliness.” What specific areas of life require disciplined attention in your walk with Christ?**

##### **Potential Answers:**

- Scripture intake
- Prayer
- Worship
- Purity
- Speech
- Stewardship of time and body
- Serving others
- Confession and accountability
- Encourage honest reflection without overwhelming participants.

#### **6. How do habits and routines contribute to holiness? Can you think of a disciplined practice that has shaped you spiritually?**

##### **Leader Notes:**

- Habits shape desires over time; they create grooves in the heart.
- Good routines remove friction from obedience.
- Discipline becomes delight over time (Ps. 1; Heb. 12:11).
- Examples: morning devotions, fasting rhythms, prayer times, Scripture memory, Sabbath rest.

#### **7. Bridges warns against relying on feelings to carry our spiritual life. Why is obedience more dependable than emotion when pursuing**

## **holiness?**

### **Potential Answers:**

- Feelings fluctuate daily.
- Obedience is objective, not reactive.
- Choices shape feelings—not the other way around.
- Jesus obeyed even when obedience was costly or painful (Heb. 5:8).
- Bridges wants believers to anchor their holiness in Scripture and discipline, not emotional energy.

## **8. Many people begin new spiritual disciplines with enthusiasm but fail to continue. What is the biggest obstacle to consistency in your spiritual disciplines?**

### **Leader Notes:**Common obstacles:

- Busyness, distraction, fatigue
- Unrealistic expectations
- Hidden perfectionism
- Shame after failure
- Trying to change too much too fast
- Encourage participants to identify internal and external barriers.

## **9. What practical steps can help you grow in disciplined obedience without drifting into legalism or self-reliance?**

### **Potential Answers:**

- Pair discipline with prayer (“Lord, help me”).
- Meditate on grace while practicing habits.
- Keep goals realistic and sustainable.
- Stay accountable in community.
- Remember *why* you practice discipline: love for Christ, not performance.
- Bridges emphasizes grace-driven discipline—not rule-keeping.

## **10. What single area of personal discipline do you sense God inviting you to strengthen this week? What specific, doable step can you take?**

### **Leader Notes:**Encourage participants to choose something small, practical, and Spirit-dependent—examples:

- Establish a morning Scripture rhythm
- Set a prayer schedule

- Limit media intake
- Begin a Scripture memory plan
- Create accountability around a specific temptation
- Avoid overly ambitious commitments; small consistency grows spiritual muscle.