

Four Disciplines To Getting What You Want

by Kathy Williamson

I bet you're like me - you want results now, without having to put in the effort and time to make things change. We want to pray a prayer and have instant results. Kind of like microwave Christianity!

But God isn't our sugardaddy. He wants to build character in us so that once things do change we can handle the new lifestyle and be better equipped to fulfill His plan for our lives. And building character takes disciplines and time.

But what disciplines do we need to work on? It depends upon what outcome you're looking for. If a person wants to be a concert pianist, he practices the piano consistently and increases the level of his challenge as he improves.

If you don't know what you want in life, you just know you're not happy and your life needs improving, then you're in serious trouble! If you don't have a target, then you'll hit your aim every time! But the good news is that every person has a dream. Even if your dream was put on the shelf some time ago, you can take it down and begin working on it today. The dream is still there because God put it there and He is ready to help you implement it.

Let's look at how the following four disciplines will help you, no matter what you are striving for.

1. Transform Your Thoughts (change your beliefs)

To make changes in our life it helps to understand the process of what happens between the time we think about something and when we take action. It looks like this:

Beliefs create thoughts
Thoughts create emotions
Emotions create actions
Actions create our lifestyle

Therefore, to change our thoughts requires us to identify false beliefs and replace them with God's truths. Sometimes if we aren't sure why we acted in a certain way, we can backtrack through the above process to uncover our core beliefs that caused our ultimate action.

Whenever we want to make changes in our life, fears and self-doubt begin to creep in. In order to conquer them we need to identify the specific fears (false beliefs) so we can counter them with God's truths.

This is accomplished by continually reading the Bible. When we read statements that are contrary to what we think (believe), then we have a choice to make. We choose to either believe God's truth and act according to this new belief or continue to believe the lie, which keeps us stuck in a rut. We must make the choice as soon as we realize our thoughts are focused on lies.

2. Speak Your Future Into Existence

This outcome of this second discipline is described very well in Proverbs 18:20-21: " A man's [moral] self shall be filled with the fruit of his mouth; and with the consequence of his words he must be satisfied [whether good or evil]. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for death or life]."

God created the world and everything in it, including us, by the words He spoke. He first thought about what He wanted, then He spoke it into existence. This power isn't limited only to God. God tells us that we, too, have this power to create with our words.

Many of us spend more time talking about our past than speaking forth our future. When we talk about our future, it's important to say what we "want" not what we "don't want." We must be extremely specific on what we speak forth for our future.

3. Control Your Emotions

We aren't taught that it is possible to control our emotions. Therefore, we feel powerless over how we react to situations. In John 14:1 Jesus told His disciples, " Do not let your hearts be troubled (distressed, agitated)..." God won't ask us to do something that He is not capable of helping us do.

This is great news that we can reign in our out-of-control emotions. Just knowing that this is possible helps us to see things in a new light. We see new possibilities of change where we didn't think change could ever occur.

4. Pray Consistently

This fourth discipline keeps us connected to the source of our hope - God. We need to set aside a time *every day* to read the Bible and pray. Without it, we lean to our own wisdom and fall.

We obtain success through deepening our relationship with God and others. The four disciplines above help us develop character to enable us to develop healthy, loving relationships which fulfill us.