

Noonday Bible Study
Elder Sharon A. Smith
June 16, 2026

Lesson 3

“Leveling Up Through Discipline “ (Building a Strong Spiritual Foundation)

Key Scriptures for Growing and Maturing:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 , Galatians 6:9 , Luke 9:28

Leveling Up:

- To improve, advance, or reach a higher stage of development.
- Leveling Up involves Personal Development:
Taking intentional steps to upgrade your mindset, habits, and emotional maturity.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

(vs 24)

“Know ye not that they which run in a race, all but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.”

(vs25)

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptable.”

(vs 26)

“I therefore so run, not as uncertainty; so fight I, not as one that beateth air.”

(vs27)

“But I keep under my body and bring it unto subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Discipline:

- Is often described as “chastening”, “instruction”, or “correction”.
- It is framed as a sign of God’s love, necessary for spiritual growth, and is the foundation of a wise, self controlled life.

Note:

- The Apostle Paul uses athletic metaphors, running a race and boxing; to urge believers to practice intense self-discipline, internally and perseverance in their faith.
- He contrasts the temporal rewards of earthly sports with the eternal , but imperishable prize of salvation.
- Christian life is compared to a stadium race, where all run, but only one receives the prize.
- Competition for the Christian is not what Paul is saying. He is saying that followers of Christ should run with the same singular focus, dedication, and effort as a professional athlete aiming for gold.
- Athletes trained rigorously for the games (like the Isthmian and Olympic games). The single winner would win a perishable wreath or garland made of pine, olive, or celery leaves.
- Today the Athletes win a medal (silver or gold) or trophy
- Paul urges that Christians self- control for an “imperishable” crown; eternal life and ultimate victory in Christ.
- The “crown of life” is a symbolic Biblical term representing eternal life and divine reward.
- It is promised to those who demonstrate their love for God by patiently persevering and remaining faithful through earthly trials, temptations, and sufferings.

Crf:**James 1:12****“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.”****Revelation 2:10****“Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer, “be thou” faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”****2 Timothy 4:7-8****“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith,”****“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”****Note:**

- He likens his ministry to a boxer who lands his punches rather than swinging (wildly) in the air.
- He emphasizes strict bodily and spiritual discipline, warning that if he preaches to others but fails to live a disciplined life himself, he would lose his testimony, not his eternal salvation.

Galatians 6:9**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap. If we faint not”****Faint not:**

- God will bring blessings, justice, or harvests at the exact right, appointed time.
- **We all have an appointed time.** (Genesis 18:14) “Is there anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall conceive a son.”

- Encourages believers not to give up on doing good, because they will eventually be rewarded if they do not quit.

Galatians 6:9

Perseverance:

- We must keep going and wait, we have a due season coming.

Psalm 145:15

Provision:

- The eyes of all look to you, you give them their food in due season.
- He is our ultimate provider who sustains all of creation at the exact moments they are in need.

Ecclesiastes 3:17

Timing:

- “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under Heaven.”
- This establishes that life operates on God’s timeline, and not every phase has a specific purpose.

Note:

- Keep doing the right thing, even when you feel exhausted, unappreciated, or discouraged.

Ex:

- Just like a farmer planting seeds, our good deeds are an investment, and God promises to reward your perseverance at the exact right time.

Don’t become weary in doing good:

- Paul acknowledges that living a life of service, integrity, and love is hard work. It is completely natural to occasionally feel spiritually, emotionally, or physically exhausted.

Appointed Time:

- God’s timing rather than our own.
- Just as crops take time to mature, spiritual results and rewards often take time to materialize.

Note:**1. We will reap a harvest, at the appointed time that God has set for us.**

The Bible uses a farming metaphor to reassure you that your effort is never in vain.

Every act of kindness, patience, and generosity is a seed planted that will eventually bear fruit.

2. If we do not give up, we shall reap:

The promise is conditional on our endurance. The ultimate danger is quitting right before the “harvest” appears.

Focus on the big picture, our ultimate reward comes from God, not from human recognition.

3. Pace Yourself:

In doing good, avoid burn out by practicing healthy boundaries, taking time to rest, and rely on God for your strength instead of our own willpower.

Luke 9:23

“And He said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Note:

- This verse lays out the fundamental requirement of being a christian disciple.
- Emphasizing total surrender and continuous commitment over personal comfort or worldly status.

Deny himself:

- We must surrender control of our own life and desires to align with God’s will instead.
- We cannot be self-centered in living.

Take up his cross daily:

- In Jesus's time, the cross was a symbol of torture, humiliation, and death.
- To carry it "daily" means continuously sacrificing your own pride, enduring hardships, and dying to one's own self ambition.

Follow me:

- Living in active obedience to Christ's teachings and imitating His example in every aspect of life.

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Revelation 2:10

"Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer, be thou fruitful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

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