

A Review of Disciplines of a Godly Man, by R. Kent Hughes

Disciplines of a Godly Man is a practical meditation on 1 Timothy 4:7, “But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;”

Hughes quickly dispenses with accusations of legalism by pointing out that, “The difference is one of *motivation*: legalism is self-centered; discipline is God centered. The legalistic heart says, “I will do this thing to gain merit with God.” The disciplined heart says, “I will do this thing because I love God and want to please him.”” (Hughes, p. 23)

From there he goes on to point out that the Christian needs discipline in every area of life. This is the strength of this book. It is quite broad in its coverage. The book is divided into six sections. Each of the first five contain several specific areas of discipline.

Introduction:

- Discipline of Godliness

Relationships:

- Discipline of Purity
- Discipline of Marriage
- Discipline of Fatherhood
- Discipline of Friendship

Soul:

- Discipline of Mind
- Discipline of Devotion
- Discipline of Prayer
- Discipline of Worship

Character:

- Discipline of Integrity
- Discipline of Tongue
- Discipline of Work
- Discipline of Perseverance

Ministry

- Discipline of Church
- Discipline of Leadership
- Discipline of Giving
- Discipline of Witness
- Discipline of Ministry

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Part 6 is a sort of final advocacy for a disciplined life.

The book is fairly well written and easy to read. It does have some weaknesses. Hughes is a calvinist, although this is not always evident. Some chapters are far better than others. The chapter on Purity was quite good. The chapter on worship was disappointing. He goes through a sample worship service with absolutely no mention of the Lord's Supper. (In fairness, he does bring it up in a later chapter.)

Overall, I would recommend this to any man capable of being discerning enough to "take the wheat and leave the chaff." There is plenty of wheat here and, in my experience, most of us are not suffering from an over disciplined life. - Sid Latham