



MONDAY MANNA

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TO BECOME DISCIPLINED, ACCEPT CORRECTION

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Even though human beings are by far the most complex and sophisticated organisms on Earth, there are still valuable truths and principles we can learn from other realms of nature. Consider the plant world, for example. Have you ever tried to grow tomatoes, roses or grapes? While those plants are very different, they all share one common need: To be "trained" so they grow properly. Without some kind of supporting framework to keep them off the ground and enable them to grow upward, none of these plants will be very productive. However, with proper support and care, they all will bear rich, ripe fruit or beautiful, delicate flowers.

Another term we could use for such botanical "training" is *discipline* – applying specific methods to ensure that they grow according to their design. Discipline is also an important concept in the world of work. It takes discipline to arrive for work each day on time. Discipline prompts us to devote the necessary time and energy to complete a difficult task or project. And discipline motivates us to acquire the necessary training and skills to perform our jobs more effectively and efficiently.

However, at times discipline must be imposed upon us by other sources – such as a supervisor, or a mentor. Like a tomato plant that needs to be fastened onto a stick or other form of support so it grows properly, someone with authority over us may be needed to discipline us so we can grow properly in our jobs.

Unfortunately, we do not always receive discipline easily. If we have worked hard on a project, it is hard to be corrected and be told it was not performed in a satisfactory manner. There may be an element of our behavior in interacting with peers and coworkers that needs improvement. Or a mentor may point to an area of our lives that needs to be changed or adjusted. How we respond to such correction – or discipline – may greatly affect our future success. Consider some of what the book of Proverbs has to say about discipline:

1) **Our response to discipline influences others.** If you aspire to be an effective leader, be aware that people will be watching how you respond to every situation – including how you respond when disciplined. *"He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray"* (Proverbs 10:17).

2) **The wise person appreciates discipline.** It may bruise our egos or deflate our pride to be told something we have done is not acceptable, or that an area of our performance requires improvement. But we would be wise to understand that the correction is for our ultimate good. Therefore, we should will receive the needed discipline with humility and gratitude. *"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid"* (Proverbs 12:1).

3) **There are rewards to be gained through discipline.** At first, being corrected seems like a setback. However, discipline may well result in our becoming a better salesperson, a more effective administrator, or a more valued leader. If we regard discipline as a means to enhance our abilities and skills, we will become better for it. *"He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded"* (Proverbs 13:13).

4) **We demonstrate concern for others through discipline.** A good leader will not allow a worker to continue to perform in a substandard manner. Instead, the leader cares enough to teach and demonstrate how to properly and acceptably carry out an assignment as part of the overall strategy for developing the individual. *"He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him"* (Proverbs 13:24).

5) **The greatest failure is rejecting discipline.** Arrogance and destructive pride are displayed by the person who refuses to be corrected when work or behavior is out of line. Such resistance may eventually result in great loss – of a job, of personal possessions, and even of one's hopes and dreams. *"He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding"* (Proverbs 15:32).

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