

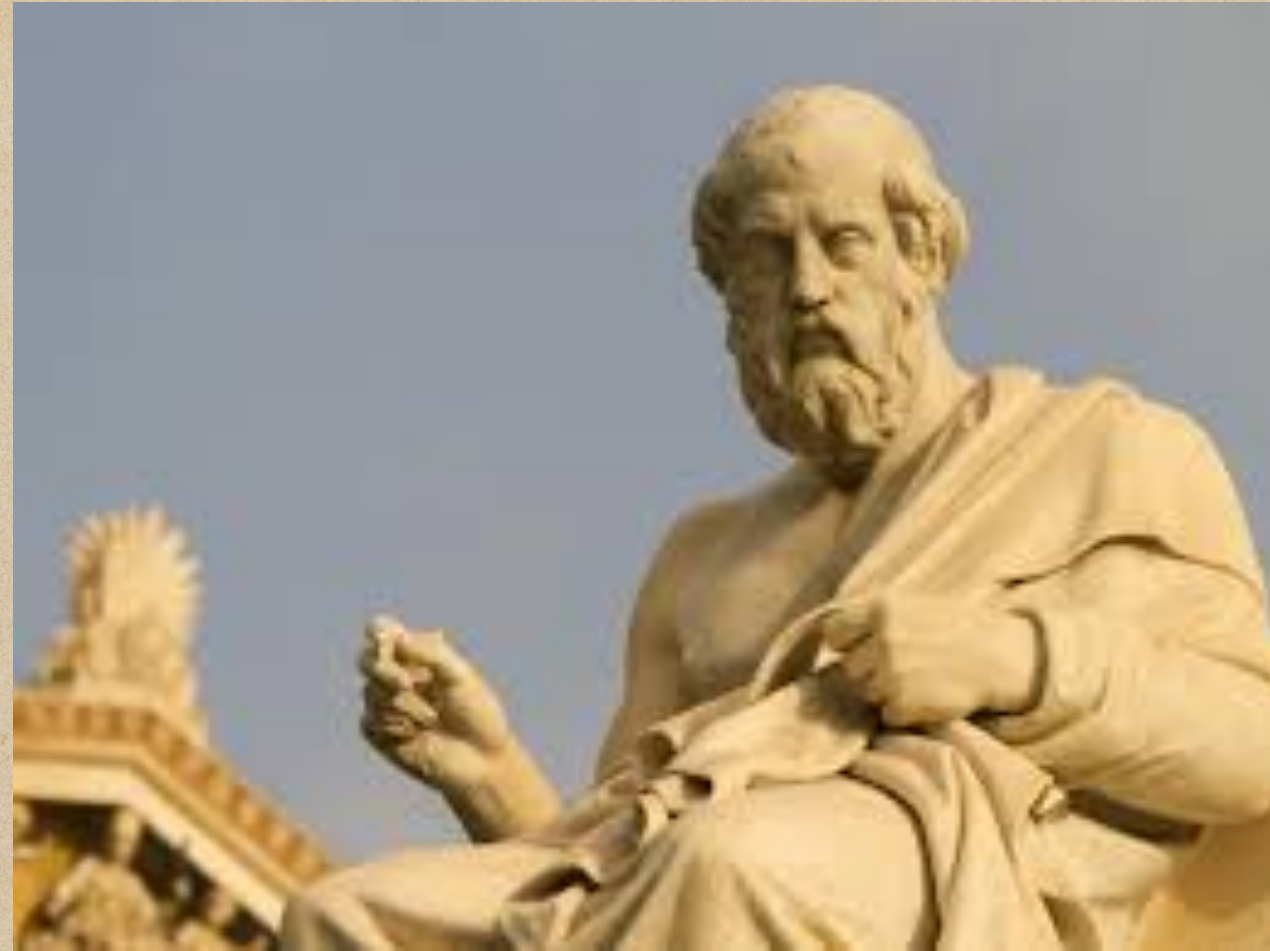
Philosophy of Discipline

What is discipline?



GK *paideia* — pais-“child” + edos-(Athenian term) “education or upbringing”

the way a person needed be in order to enhance Athenian democracy



Plato regarding paideia (The Republic)
“The art of living as well as possible — the GOOD Life”

(Context: the city-state and how it runs properly)

Key for Plato — instilling in students the four primary virtues:

Wisdom: understanding moral reality and applying to daily life

Courage: doing what’s right in the face of pain

Moderation: tempering attraction to pleasure

Justice: doing one’s own work, and not meddling with what is not one’s own

System involved exposure to certain subjects (disciplines)

metaphysics
mathematics
astronomy
philosophy
theology
literature
ethics
aesthetics
physical training
music
cooking



...all about being formed in the Greek way of life

“Discipline” in Christian Spirituality



“Living the Good life” is “living the God-life”

**living as Christ and having our wills conform to
the will of God as Christ’s is;
live in harmony with God’s will**

John 6:37-38: “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.”

“Discipline” in Christian Spirituality



More than just modeling...

...the heart of discipline and being a disciple is quite literally
to have the heart changed

It is to die to the self

Galatians 2:19-20 — “For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.”



Collect for Last Sunday After Epiphany
Transfiguration Sunday
(Sunday before Ash Wednesday)

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and **be changed into his likeness from glory to glory;** through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Good Life in Christianity...

...our wills are infused by and in union with the will of God
who wants nothing but the best for us.

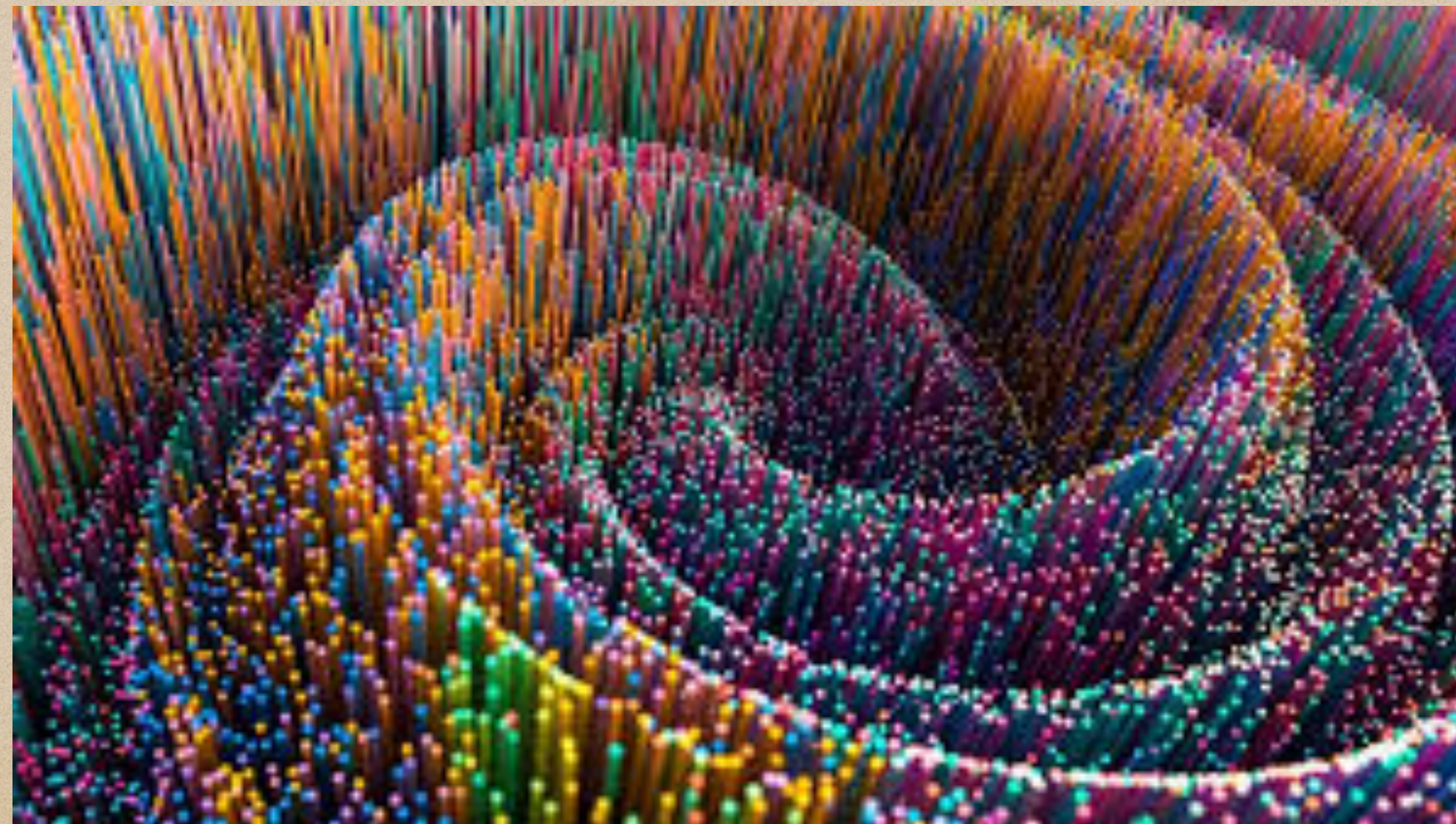
Jeremiah 29:11 — “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”

Romans 8:28 — “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.”

DISCIPLINES

TOOLS BY WHICH OUR WILLS ARE BROUGHT INTO GOD'S

“By ‘disciplines’ we understand consciously undertaken or chosen activities that enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort. ‘Spiritual disciplines’ are such activities, but ones specifically relevant to growth and attainment in the spiritual life. Hence, they are major factors in spiritual formation. They are a major part of what we can do to contribute to our own spiritual formation.” (Dallas Willard, PhD)





HERESY ALERT: Pelagianism

We don't change (save) ourselves...

...the Spirit does through God's Grace.

Transformation is a gift from God.

We can only put ourselves in position to receive the gift.

Disciplines are only a means to an end

Only a means to grace received from God



SPIRITUAL FORMATION & HABITS

(Dallas Willard, PhD)

“Spiritual formation, without regard to any specifically religious context or tradition, is the process by which the human spirit or will is given a definite ‘form’ or character. It is a process that happens to everyone...Christian spiritual formation is the process of the inner human world being formed so that it takes on the character of the inner being of Christ himself. In the degree to which it is successful, the outer life of the individual becomes a natural expression or outflow of the character and teachings of Jesus. But the external manifestation of “Christlikeness” is not the focus of the process; and when it is made the main emphasis the process will be defeated, falling into crushing legalisms and parochialisms. ‘*That Christ be formed in you*’ (Gal. 4:19) is the eternal watchword of Christian spiritual formation, fortified by the assurance that, while ‘*the letter of the law kills, the Spirit gives life.*’” (II Cor. 3:6)

Disciplines become doorways to liberation



Matthew 23:37 — “How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”

Luke 5:37-38 — “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.”

habits are always motivated by LOVE of God
— our love of God and God’s love for us



6 Disciplines for Consideration

Meditation — Fasting — Study — Simplicity — Solitude — Worship

7 Pitfalls of the Disciplines

1. Turning disciplines into laws
2. Misunderstanding the social implications of the disciplines (not hiding from world but engaging head on)
 3. Viewing the disciplines as virtuous in themselves
 4. Centering on the disciplines rather than on Christ
 5. Elevating one discipline and neglecting the others
6. Thinking ANY list of disciplines exhausts the means of God's grace
7. **(Most Dangerous)** Study the disciplines without experiencing them

CONCLUSION

Union with God through Christ by the Holy Spirit
who changes us on the inside

John 17:20-24 — Jesus prayed, “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

