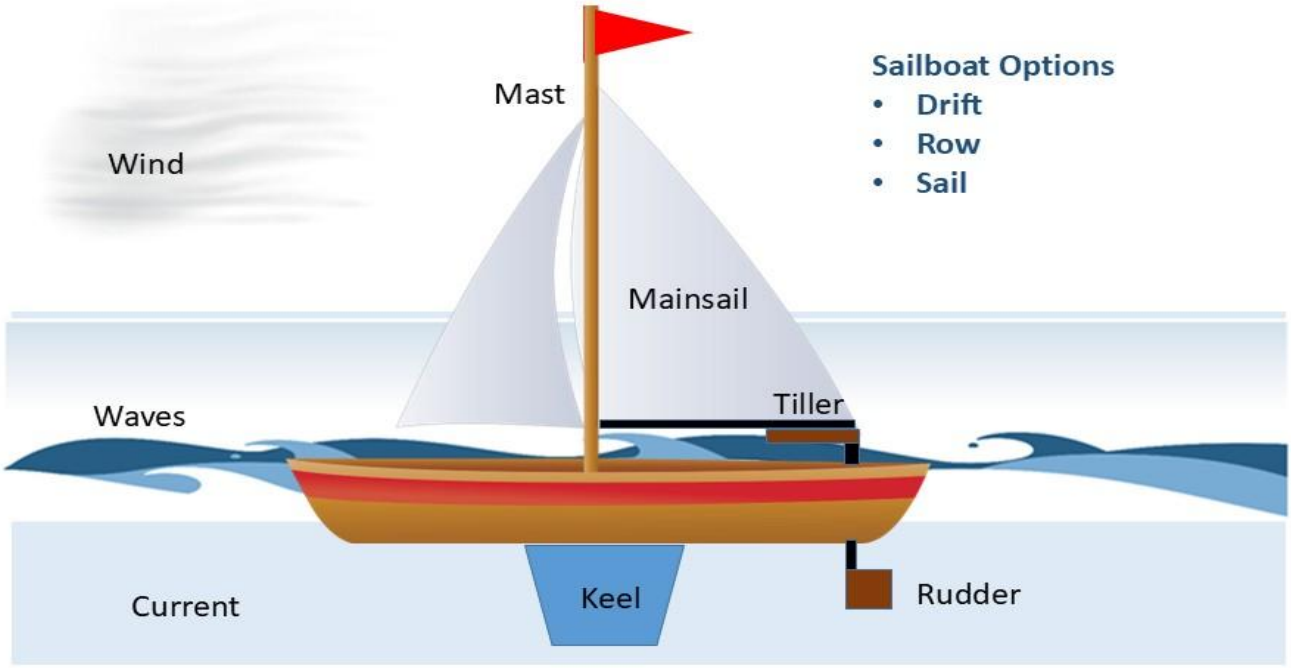
Power of Discipleship

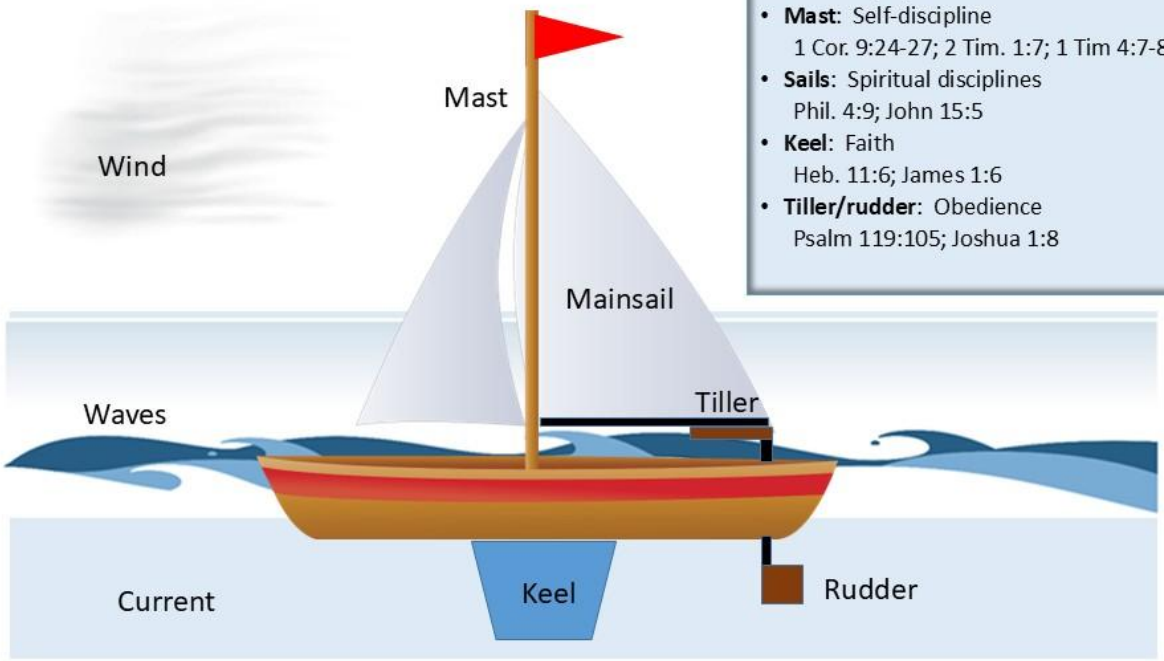


Power of Discipleship

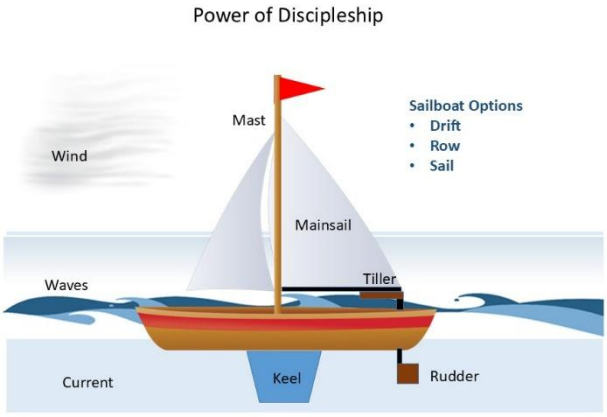
Capturing the renewable power of the Holy Spirit

Spiritual Sailing

- **Current**: World Philosophy
  Hebrews 2:1; 3:12
- **Waves**: Spiritual opposition
  Eph 4:14
- **Wind**: Spirit of God/Word
  John 3:8; Eph 3:16
- **Mast**: Self-discipline
  1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Tim 4:7-8
- **Sails**: Spiritual disciplines
  Phil. 4:9; John 15:5
- **Keel**: Faith
  Heb. 11:6; James 1:6
- **Tiller/rudder**: Obedience
  Psalm 119:105; Joshua 1:8



Capturing the Renewable Power of the Holy Spirit



When it comes to a sailboat, there are really only three things you can do: **drift, row, or sail.**

If there's no wind, you drift—pushed along by whatever current happens to be moving. You can try to row, but that's hard, slow, and frustrating. Sailboats aren't designed to be rowed. They were made to move under the **renewable power of the wind.**

That same truth applies to discipleship. We can drift with the cultural current, exhaust ourselves trying to row in our own strength, or learn to raise our sails and move under the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Parts That Make It Work

To sail effectively—especially against wind and waves—you need more than just a boat. Every part has a purpose:

- **Mast:** provides strength and stability to hold the sails in place.
- **Sails:** catch the invisible, shifting power of the wind.
- **Tiller and Rudder:** steer the vessel toward its destination—not in a straight line, but by adjusting to changing winds.
- **Keel:** gives balance and momentum, keeping the boat upright and moving forward.

Each part matters. Leave one out, and the whole system struggles.

Sailing as a Picture of Discipleship

Discipleship is a lot like sailing. Each of us is responsible for navigating our "boat" toward the divine destination God has set for us. Our power source is invisible—the wind of the Spirit. Our course is guided by God's Word. And the seas we sail are often filled with opposing currents and strong headwinds.

But here's the good news: Jesus never asked us to sail alone or without power.

The Renewable Power of the Wind

When Christ ascended, He exchanged His physical presence for something far better—the indwelling presence of His Spirit. Jesus told His followers to **wait** for that power before they tried to carry out His mission (Acts 1:8). And when the Spirit came, as recorded in Acts 2, everything changed.

That same Spirit still empowers disciples today. It's His wind that fills our sails, transforming us from the inside out and giving us the strength to fulfill our calling.

But here's the key: **we must raise our sails.**

Without spiritual disciplines—our ways of "catching" the wind—we simply drift along, carried by

the culture. To sail, we must learn how to adjust our sails, align with His leading, and trust the Spirit's renewable power.

Destination and Direction

Every sailor needs both a destination and a direction. God's purposes define ours. Our spiritual GPS can be summarized in three coordinates:

Knowing Christ. Reflecting Christ. Sharing Christ.

That's the lifelong journey of a disciple.

And while the destination never changes, the route rarely runs in a straight line. Just like a sailor, we must tack back and forth—adjusting for the winds, the waves, and the cultural currents—if we're going to reach the harbor God intends.

Ask yourself:

- Where is my sailboat heading?
- Am I locked onto God's destination?
- Am I sailing under His power—or drifting under my own?

The Mast of Discipline

No sailboat can function without a mast. The mast doesn't capture the wind—it supports the sails that do. In the same way, **spiritual discipline** supports our spiritual practices.

Discipline is doing what we should do even when we don't have to or don't feel like it. It's self-control—the structure that holds up our spiritual sails.

The Apostle Paul modeled this kind of discipline, describing his life as an athlete in training, keeping his body and habits under control so he could finish well (1 Corinthians 9:24–27; 2 Timothy 4:7).

Discipline doesn't mean rigidity. It means intentionality. It means shaping our habits so that what's good becomes natural. Over time, our repeated choices become rhythms—habits of the heart—that align us with God's purposes.

The Sails of Spiritual Practices

If the mast represents discipline, the sails represent the **spiritual practices** that catch the wind of the Spirit. These are the habits that keep us connected to Christ—the means of grace through which the Spirit moves.

Scripture mentions many: studying God's Word, prayer, fellowship, worship, solitude, fasting, and witnessing, among others. These practices aren't ends in themselves; they're how we **abide in Christ** (John 15).

Think of your devotional life—reading, reflecting, journaling, praying—as your **mainsail.** It's how you open your life to the Spirit's movement. Without raised sails, no amount of effort will move the boat forward.

The Tiller and Rudder of Obedience

On a small sailboat, the tiller is the handle that moves the rudder beneath the water. It takes constant adjustment to keep the boat aligned with the wind. The sailor can't just "set it and forget it." Wind and waves shift constantly, requiring sensitivity and responsiveness.

That's obedience. It's how we stay aligned with God's Spirit. It takes effort, attention, and continual course correction. The path of discipleship is rarely straight—it's a series of "tacks" as we adjust to the Spirit's lead.

The Keel of Faith

Beneath the surface of every sailboat is the keel—a hidden but vital structure. It prevents the boat from tipping over, keeps it moving forward, and provides the ballast that stabilizes the vessel.

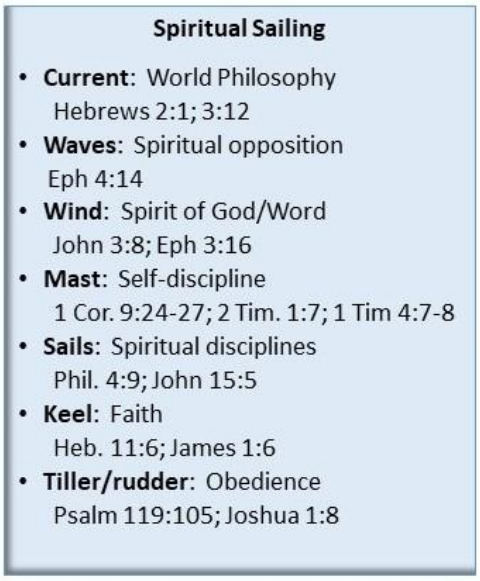
That's **faith.**

Without it, everything else—discipline, obedience, spiritual habits—loses balance. Faith anchors us when the winds are strong and the waves are high. It keeps us upright and moving toward the goal.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us that "without faith, it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is the unseen confidence that God is who He says He is and will do what He has promised (Hebrews 11:1). It's the deep, steady weight beneath the surface that keeps our spiritual life from capsizing.

Final Thought

Discipleship isn't about drifting aimlessly or rowing harder in our own strength. It's about learning the art of sailing—raising our sails, holding our course, and trusting the invisible, renewable power of the Spirit.

So, how's your boat?

Is your mast strong, your sails raised, your tiller in hand, and your keel deep?
The Spirit's wind is always blowing. The question is—are you ready to catch it?