

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

SUNDAY SERMON

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INTRODUCTION:

Exercise is something the human body depends upon in order to keep the bodily processes flourishing. A sedentary lifestyle is said to be one of the most detrimental things to the well-being of humans. No one understood this more in Scripture than the Apostle Paul. With his many references in His epistles to sporting events, many Bible scholars think he had to be a close follower of athletics. Paul, however, uses these references to illustrate the struggle of the Christian Life. It is indeed a wonderful comparison. To do well at any sport takes sacrifice, dedication and most importantly, exercise. Paul at the very least understood this and compared the spiritual growth and maturity of Believers to this process. The end goal of living the Christian Life is to show forth God's quality of life in human flesh. This is called "godliness". In his epistle to Timothy, Paul is giving Timothy exhortation on how to instruct the Ephesian Saints. One of the things he tells Timothy is to exercise himself to godliness. This does not infer an open invitation to self-effort, but instead it is the realization that our spiritual enemies impede us living in light of the salvation provided. It is a struggle for the Believer to consistently frame our minds on our position. Nevertheless, like any exercise the more you do it, the easier it becomes. Like Timothy, if the Believer can focus on our position in Christ, the Holy Spirit is able to take up the battle and the life of the son can be made effective in the within. As a result, those on earth and in heaven see godliness manifested.

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO EXERCISE?

A. Exercise by Definition

1. The Act of Exercise (Verb) γυμναζω (goom-nad-zo)
 - a) Louw and Nida – to control oneself by thorough discipline; to make oneself obey
 - b) Friberg – literally, exercise naked, train in gymnastic discipline; figuratively, of mental and spiritual training and discipline "control oneself, exercise self-control
 - c) Thayer's – (1) properly, to exercise naked (2) to exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind, of one who strives to become godly
2. The State of Exercise (Noun) γυμνασια (goom-na-sia)
 - a) Thayer's – a. properly, the exercise of the body in the palaestra b. any exercise, the exercise of conscientiousness relative to the body such as is

characteristic of ascetics and consists in abstinence from matrimony and certain kinds of food

- b) Friberg – physical exercise, bodily training
- c) Louw and Nida – to engage in physical exercise as a way of improving the body

- 3. CDJ – Spiritually, it is of the activity taken by Grace Believers to remove themselves from situations in their Present Tense Salvation, by placing their minds on our heavenly position and allowing the Holy Spirit to take up our spiritual battle.

B. Exercise as Seen in Scripture

- 1. The Exercise of the Unsaved Man Is All in the Things Pertaining to the Sin Nature – 2 Pet. 2:14
- 2. The Exercise of the Believer’s Mental Faculties Helps Discern Things Good in Appearance and Personal Evil – Heb. 5:14
- 3. The Exercise from Chastening Leads to the Production of Righteousness – Heb. 12:11
- 4. The Exercise of the Believer to Godliness Has More Value Than Bodily Exercise – 1 Tim. 4:8

II. WHAT IS GODLINESS?

A. By Definition

- 1. Friberg – (1) generally, as a particular manner of life characterized by reverence toward God and respect for the beliefs and practices related to him *religion, piety*; (2) as behavior directed dutifully toward God *piety, devotion, godliness; godly acts, godly living*
- 2. Louw and Nida – appropriate beliefs and devout practice of obligations relation to supernatural persons and powers
- 3. CDJ – God’s quality of life being visibly see in a human body by the actions of a Believer

B. By Scripture

- 1. Peter Understood That His Actions Had Nothing to Do with the Healing He Performed (Trans. “Holiness”) – Ac. 3:12
- 2. There Is a Quality of Truth That Is Measured by Godliness – Tit. 1:1
- 3. The Father Has Given the Believer All Things Necessary for Godliness in Christ – 2 Pet. 1:3, 6, 7
- 4. The Believer Should Seek after Godliness in Light of the Temporal Nature of the Existence of Anything Else – 2 Pet. 3:11

C. The Mystery of Godliness – 1 Tim. 3:16

- 1. What Is a Mystery? – Is revelation given that had not previously been revealed (cf. Rom. 16:25)
- 2. What Is This Mystery?
 - a) Paul Called the Mystery a Great One (Mega)

b) The Content

- (1) God Was Manifested by a Human Body (Jesus) – Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:5; 1 Jn. 1
- (2) The Son Was Declared by His Glorified Body Being Joined to His Spirit in Resurrection
- (3) The Son Was Gazed upon by Spirit Beings – 1 Pet. 3:19
- (4) The Son Was Preached as Glorified and Resurrected to the Gentiles
- (5) The Son Was Believed upon in His Glorified and Resurrected State
- (6) The Son Was Received in Glory

III. HOW DOES THE BELIEVER EXERCISE THEMSELVES TO GODLINESS?

A. The Requirement of Exercising to Godliness – 1 Tim. 4:7:8

1. Paul Instructs Timothy That the Exercising to Godliness Was More Fruitful Than Listening to False Teachers – vs. 7
2. Paul Instructs Timothy in This Manner because of the Present and Future Reward – vs. 8

B. The Resting in the Son Position

C. The Rejection of Ungodliness

1. Paul Compared the Christian Life to a Track Meet and a Boxing Match – 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:14
2. Paul Warned Timothy to Shut out Actions That Would Lead to Ungodliness – 2 Tim. 2:16
3. The Grace from God Child-Trains the Believer to Deny Ungodliness – Tit. 2:12
4. Paul Warned against the Teaching of Things Opposite to Godliness by False Teacher – 1 Tim. 6:3-11
5. Paul Warned against Men Who Denied the Power of the Holy Spirit – 2 Tim. 3:5

D. The Reflection of the Son

1. The Glory of the Son Can Be Seen through the Believer When Living in Our Position – (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18)
2. The Manifestation of the Life Being Seen through the Believer When Living in Our Position Is Godliness

CONCLUSION: