

**Properly Equipped**

*A man decided to take up jogging so he went to a store specializing in running shoes. He had no idea there were so many types to choose from. Confused, he took a pair over to a sales clerk and pointed to a flap hanging down the side of each shoe.*

*“What are these extra pocket things for?”*

*“That’s a special feature for beginners,” the clerk said. “You load them up with spare change.”*

*“Is that to make the shoes heavier so I get a better workout?”*

*“No,” explained the clerk, “it’s so that when you realize you’ve run too far you can call your wife to come pick you up.”*

We all admire those who have the discipline to be well-trained, whether in athletics, at school, on the job or in some other aspect of life. This week we continue our new series on the Spiritual Disciplines by exploring what the Bible says about *spiritual* training. Let’s look into God’s word this week and discover God’s training program for us.

**Monday – Godless Myths**

*“Incarnation transcends myth.” C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock**

1. Please read 1 Timothy 4:7. The godless myths and wives tales are referenced in 1 Timothy 4:1-3. Take a look and comment on what type of ungodly myths (i.e. false teachings) you think influence Christians today.
2. What false teachings and actions did Paul identify in Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-9? How can you be on your guard against people who preach a “different gospel”?

**Making it Personal:** Without using the Bible, how would you explain the gospel in your own words? How did Paul explain it to the Corinthians (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-7)?

**Tuesday – Godly Truths**

*“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Mark 10:45

1. Please read 1 Timothy 4:9-10 and list everything Paul says about the “trustworthy saying.” Why do you think he would “labor and strive” on its behalf?
2. Look at Colossians 3:12-17. Which would you say is more important: *what* you strive for (v.12-16) or *how* you strive for it (v.17)? Or both? Why?

**Making it Personal:** What do you spend your time laboring and striving for? In other words, what are you devoted to that receives your greatest efforts? How do you think this fits in with God’s plans for you?

**Wednesday – Godly Training: it gets results!**

*“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.” B.B. King, American musician*

1. Please read 1 Timothy 4:7, focusing on the last half. What do you think godly training looks like? How does it compare to physical training?
2. Now look at 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Where can you go to begin your godly training? What sort of results does this passage tell you to expect?
3. How did Paul’s godly training help him according to 2 Timothy 3:10-13?

**Making it Personal:** Pray for God to guide you in studying the Bible regularly, and for wisdom to understand all he has for you.

**Thursday – Training an Apostle**

*I have seen many men work without praying, though I have never seen any good come out of it; but I have never seen a man pray without working.* Hudson Taylor

1. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Why do you think the Apostle Paul appealed to the metaphor of athletic training to describe his spiritual training?
2. What does it mean to live one’s faith as if “to win the prize?” What does that look like in everyday practical terms?
3. How did Paul view the role of his body in his spiritual training? In what ways do you discipline your body in order to train yourself in godliness?

**Friday - Training God’s Prophet**

*“Personally, I am always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.”* Winston Churchill

1. Today let’s do a case study by exploring the life of Samuel. Please read 1 Samuel 1:1-11 & 19-28. How did Samuel’s godly training get its start?

**Text Insight:** In that society, Children were expected to provide for their parents in old age. Hannah could not expect Elkanah’s children by another wife to care for her if he died.

2. In 1 Samuel 2:18-21, what did Hannah do in furtherance of her promise? What blessing did God provide?
3. How did Eli encourage Samuel in building a relationship with God in 1 Samuel 3:1-21? Describe Eli’s conduct in 1 Samuel 3:17-18. What impact do you think this had on Samuel’s spiritual growth?

**Making it Personal:** Who can you encourage in their growth in God? Pray for God to give you the opportunity to do so, and then follow through on it.

**For the Weekend:** Read 1 Kings 19:19-21 and 2 Kings 2:1-14. Is there anyone you can go to for help in growing with God? Pray for God to guide you in developing relationships with those who know him well.