

### Discipline and Training

Jerry Rice had a long and outstanding career playing football. Few could match his talent, and even fewer approached his level of physical conditioning. He would arrive at training camp before every season ready for the hardest workouts, while many of his teammates needed to take it slowly in order to get back in shape. They would ask him how they too could be as fit as he was at the start of camp. His answer was simple: he worked his body as hard during the off season as he did every week in the regular season. The truth revealed by this answer is even simpler: you don't need to get back into shape if you train to stay in shape.

Our spiritual condition needs training as well. This week let's study what God has to say about that conditioning and how he wants to guide us along in becoming the people he wants us to be. With him, and together as his people, we can grow in discipline and training to glorify God in all we do all year round.

#### Monday – Godless Myths

*"Incarnation transcends myth."* C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, "Myth Became Fact" (1944)

1. Please read 1 Timothy 4:7. What type of ungodly myths do you think influence people in our day and age (e.g. "being rich will bring you happiness")?
2. What false teachings and actions did Paul identify in 2 Timothy 3:1-9? How can you be on your guard against people who have a form of godliness but deny its power (v.5)?
3. In Mark 13:21-23, what warnings did Jesus give about rumors and false teachings about God?

**Making it Personal:** What are the godless myths or big ideas of our day (e.g. individualism, consumerism, pluralism) that most threaten to undermine your faith? Ask God for his help to prevail over them.

#### 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." Where did he find the ability to "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)? Why?

**Making it Personal:** What do you spend your time laboring and striving for? 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 bluesman

1. Please read 1 Timothy 4:7. What do you think godly training looks like?
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 – Chosen, Compassionate and Kind

*"When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."* Matthew 9:36

1. Please read Colossians 3:12 and Leviticus 20:26. How do you think being chosen and dearly loved by God can assist you in being holy?

**Text Insight:** One way to look at the word "holy" is in the concept of being set apart. God chose us to be with him, to think, speak and act differently from the way people do who are without him.

2. Now look at 1 Peter 1:13-16, a passage on godly living. Now describe the opposite kind of life – a life that is contrary to the things in this passage.
3. According to Psalm 145:9. How does God express his compassion and kindness?

**Digging Deeper:** Read Psalm 103:1-14. How are God's people described? How does it describe God's love?

#### Friday – Humble, Gentle and Patient

*"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* Isaiah 55:9

1. Please read Colossians 3:12 and Romans 12:3. When have you seen true humility?

**Text Insight:** The Bible does not teach that we should pretend we are less than we really are in some vain effort to make others think they are better than they truly are. Humility is action as much as attitude.

2. How does Jesus describe his gentleness in Matthew 11:28-30? What is our part in this passage?
3. Now look at 2 Peter 3:8-9. Why is God patient with us? How does this underscore the importance of his patience?

**Making it Personal:** Ask God to show you how you can act with humility, gentleness and patience with others today, especially those you know you have difficulty with.

**For the Weekend:** In Matthew 5:43-48, what aspects of God's character does Jesus reveal? What does he say about our need to take on that character? Just as God the Father still chooses to provide for those who reject him (v.45), what can you do that is in keeping with your relationship with him?