

Exercise Yourself in Godliness, Nourish Yourself with His Word

There is a lot of emphasis in our culture on proper nutrition and exercise, and rightly so. Much of what we eat is processed and full of chemicals and our occupations often require us to sit in one place for extended periods of time. So the exercise that we practice is necessary to compensate for the negative influences that we incur on a regular basis. The Bible acknowledges our need for physical exercise but alludes to a form of exercise that is even more critical and beneficial to our eternal well-being. The Apostle Paul spoke with his protégé, young Timothy about the need for proper nourishment and exercise because he recognized the influences that would impact Timothy's daily life. Notice Paul's exact words; ***"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."*** (1 Timothy 4:6-8 NKJV)

Notice the fact that Paul's major emphasis here and in the words that follow are on proper nourishment, not physical but spiritual. We live in an age where the tyranny of the urgent has become increasingly urgent and fast food has become a staple of our daily diet. The natural consequence of this is that our spiritual consumption has followed suit. We think that we can gulp down a short devotional reading with our coffee on the way out the door or catch a few words of a good sermon on Sunday morning on the way to a sporting event and be properly nourished to go out and work for the kingdom. Such is not the case! Notice the rest of Paul's words to this young minister; ***"Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."*** (1 Timothy 4:13-16 NKJV)

In another passage Paul says that we are ambassadors of the King Jesus Christ in the ministry of reconciliation; ***"Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."*** (2 Corinthians 5:18-19 NKJV)

Jim Freed

The author of Psalm 119 knew the value and unchanging nature of God's Word and so he feasted upon it when times were good and when times were bad.

Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, For all are Your servants. Unless Your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction.

(Psalms 119:89-92 NKJV)

Listen to what Charles Spurgeon says about this passage **"After tossing about on a sea of trouble the Psalmist here leaps to shore and stands upon a rock.** Jehovah's word is not fickle nor uncertain; it is settled, determined, fixed, sure, immovable. **Man's teachings change so often that there is never time for them to be settled; but the Lord's word is from of old the same, and will remain unchanged eternally.**¹

So how about you? Will you feast upon His word this morning and end up standing on a rock or will you settle for a snack and end up face down in a puddle? The choice is yours.

¹ Spurgeon, C. H. (2009). *The treasury of David, Volume 5: Psalms 111-119* (315). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.