

Fitness Challenge: Stand Up Straight, Bow Low Before God

Editor's Note: Susie Larson started a fitness challenge on her blog. Every week she has encouraged readers to do one activity to encourage physical and spiritual discipline.

*Always consult your physician before beginning any exercise program.

Here are your two disciplines for this week:

Physical Discipline

Stand Up Straight (practice good posture): This week's discipline is easy to do and doesn't take a lot of effort, but it's even easier to forget about and neglect. How do you practice good posture? It's not hard at all. Right now, sit up straight; pull your shoulders back, stretch your neck upright (like you're trying to add a couple inches to your height), pull in your abs (imagine pulling your navel all the way in until it touches your spine). When you stand, think, "Shoulders back and down, abs in, chest high, neck long—no slouching."

Benefits of good posture:

- Better for your frame (things are aligned; lessened stress on joints and muscles)
- Easier to breathe
- Makes you look 5-10 pounds lighter
- Reminds you to carry yourself with holy confidence

Spiritual Discipline

Bow Low (humble yourself): First Peter 5:6-7 says this: "So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."

More important than standing up straight is knowing when it's time to bow low. All too often we get it backwards. We cower, buckle and cover our heads when the enemy presses in hard to harass us. And when God moves in to correct or redirect, we tend to go rigid and tend to be unteachable.

When the enemy presses in hard, though our instinct is to cower, our call is to stand fast, raise our shield, point our sword and trust the Lord.

And when we approach the throne of Almighty God, our call is to come humbly, reverently and thankfully, because He is the star-breathing God who gladly welcomes us into His presence. To me, nothing stirs up my faith like pausing before I pray and remembering once again who God is—and marveling that He invites me to enjoy intimate fellowship with Him. I love to marvel, to stand in awe and then to humbly bow, knowing that my life, my dreams and my worries are all in His hands. He is God Most High, and I need Him every hour.

I encourage you to approach God with a new sense of reverence this week. I dare you to kneel or go face-down on the floor, not in dread or fear or with a wormlike mentality but with a humble regard for His love and greatness. Scripture says that God considers the humble, contrite heart a lofty place to inhabit. Think about that for a moment: Our high and holy God considers our humble heart an honorable place to reside. We are blessed beyond measure, no?

The high and lofty One who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: “I live in the high and holy place—with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble—and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts” (Is. 57:15).

Stand up straight with holy confidence, and humbly bow with holy reverence—these are your two disciplines this week. I'll be praying for you as you add these two important disciplines to your life.

*Adapted from **Susie Larson**'s new book, Balance That Works When Life Doesn't: Simple Steps to a Woman's Physical and Spiritual Health. Susie is an author, speaker and radio host for KTIS in Minnesota and Focus on the Family. Visit her website at .*