

If Jesus Was Your Personal Trainer

Jesus was fully human and fully God (John 1:1, 14). Jesus was God, but God in the flesh, God in a human body. The human body was the place of Jesus Christ's presence in the world.

The apostle Paul affirmed the deity of the body in his letter to the Corinthians, "What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God, and that you are not your own? You were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20, MEV).

As followers of Jesus, we are willingly called to: come to, believe in, love, worship, abide in and walk with Him! We are also transformed—mind, body and spirit—not through our own will or efforts, but through His gift of the Holy Spirit, which resides in our earthly bodies. Jesus can and should be our first source for help with any and all of life's challenges ... yes, even the dismay over the way our bodies look and our reluctance to do anything about it.

A healthy lifestyle—including exercise, health-supporting diet, adequate rest and so on—offered to God and pursued with God offers spiritual, emotional and physical benefits. If the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle is biblical and affords tremendous benefits, then as followers of Jesus we should be doing everything we can to avoid neglecting our bodies.

Jesus was a role model for how we should treat and care for our bodies. Jesus glorified God in all that He did, including glorifying God through His earthly body. We are all called to care for our bodies because our bodies are not our own; they belong to God.

The pursuit of a healthy active lifestyle is a symbol of being

a good witness, as we have more energy and are better equipped for what God has planned for us. Jesus modeled healthy lifestyle behaviors throughout His ministry and, as followers, we too are called to be Christ-like, glorifying God in all we do—mind, body and spirit. Obedience to a biblical view of a healthy and active lifestyle plays into God's plan.

Jesus showed us all how to be physically fit. Jesus was a carpenter's son, born and raised in a physically and mentally demanding time and environment. Jesus taught not only through His words but by His actions. Jesus said, "Come follow me and walk with me," and so be physically active with Him and alongside Him.

Luke, a physician and disciple of Paul, made reference to Jesus' physical attributes, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52, MEV). Stature refers to a person's height, but can also signify the quality or status gained by the growth, development or achievement of an individual.

Increasing in stature means that Jesus grew normally as a child. Because Jesus was raised in a very physically demanding era and environment, combined with the rigors of His ministry—traveling by foot everywhere—it would have precluded any major physical limitations or illness. Jesus was God, but in the flesh, and by all accounts in good health.

To be able to accomplish all the Father desired for Him, Jesus would have taken good care of his body. If we are to accomplish all the Father desires for us, then we too should care for our bodies. Our bodies do matter to our faith!

Was Jesus Fit?

- Luke (a physician) made reference that Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52).
- In a study from the Mayo Clinic on the life of Jesus

prior to his beatings and crucifixion, modern physicians conclude ... “The rigors of Jesus’ ministry (traveling by foot) would have precluded any major physical illness or a weak general constitution. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that Jesus was in good physical condition before his walk to Gethsemane.”

- While Jesus’ spiritual teachings have been widely disseminated, the practical implications of His physical lifestyle are rarely if ever mentioned.

How Far Did Jesus Walk in His Lifetime?

- 400 miles (Egypt to Nazareth)
- 18,000 miles (Nazareth to Jerusalem and return by age 30)
- 3,125 miles in his 3-year public ministry
- Estimated grand total = 21,525 miles (20 miles per day)
- Most of His life spent on the road ... walking, preaching and teaching—and then more walking. All the time Jesus spent walking alone and with His disciples was never wasted: time, fellowship, teaching and devotion were part of who they were and what they did everywhere they went.

What Does the Bible Say About Exercise?

Few biblical texts specifically delineate the benefits or requirements for physical fitness, perhaps because physical health was a natural outcome of lifestyle in Jesus’ day. Life in biblical times required significant energy expenditure just to survive.

In addition to the necessity of having to walk everywhere, there was plenty of fresh air, water and healthy foods to help support good health. We do know that the human body was uniquely and wonderfully designed to *move*. In fact, the longer the human body remains in a state or period of disuse, the faster it will degrade and die. We were not designed to be

sedentary, we were designed by God to—among many others things—*move*!

Jesus always knew how to relate to people, those that were good and evil, healthy and un-healthy, it didn't matter. His words transcend all time and still apply to us today and can help us help ourselves get healthy and fit, so we can help others.

We know that when we get tired, worn out and, in some cases, burned out, we can go to Jesus. Jesus is always there for us. Even when it comes to helping us with our health and fitness, Jesus can motivate and guide us through His words and inspiration and love for us.

When His disciples were down, Jesus said, “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly” (Matt. 11:28-30, MSG).

His words were comforting and motivating when He spoke them. They are to us as He speaks them through His spirit in us.

Jesus is the ultimate advisor, coach, comforter and, yes, even personal trainer. The Bible gives all the answers to all our health and fitness questions if we search.

So before you go to the gym or for your workout, go to Jesus first. Seek Jesus before anything, even fitness, and the results will be rewarding. Pray for discernment about what you need to work on and how to do it; for energy and strength to complete your workout; and for grace to know that your effort is really His effort and thus your results are not your own. Let Jesus be your coach—your personal trainer—at the gym and in life. {eoa}

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