

Is Your Marriage Physically Fit?

“He trains my hands for war, so that my arms bend a bow of bronze” (Ps. 18:34).

“She clothes herself with strength, and strengthens her arms” (Prov. 31:17).

As you may be able to see in the verses above, the first speaks to any men reading, and the second to you ladies. Each one shows that physical strength isn't just for *American Ninja Warrior* contestants or action stars. It's for every one of us.

Gentlemen, you are to be strong in order to protect and fight for your families and communities. Sure, you're no warrior-king like David was, but you're the head of your home, and as such, the defender of it. Ladies, you are to be strong because heaven knows you have a plethora of responsibilities that require your attention every day. Strong arms for those tasks are an incredible blessing, enabling you to accomplish everything safely, efficiently, and independently! (“Independent Women” by Destiny's Child just popped into my head.)

Being physically fit, I'm sad to say, generally isn't prioritized in Christian circles. Spiritual fitness is, yes. Mental and emotional wellness, you bet. But lifting weights, running sprints, or swimming laps seems too worldly, vain, or materialistic to warrant any spiritual merit.

After all, Jesus never gave a parable about the importance of deadlifting (although the power of God did lift Him from the dead!), and Paul never wrote a letter to a church chastising them for not obtaining gym memberships. So, why write or read a blog post that emphasizes a Christian's need for physical

fitness?

You've probably heard of the Mediterranean Diet. It's a way of eating that focuses primarily on plant-based foods, like fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts. It also limits red meat and prefers fish and poultry as its protein sources. It's also the way ancient cultures ate, such as the one Jesus and the apostles lived in. There was no "junk food." There was no such thing as processed foods or toxic artificial sweeteners.

Along with a naturally healthy way of eating, the people of the Bible were by no means suffering from a sedentary lifestyle. Ladies, read Proverbs 31 and see what this "wife of noble character" was up to. You will see that she was no slouch, and probably had a pretty impressive pair of biceps!

And guys, it might surprise you to learn that Jesus wasn't a carpenter in our modern comprehension of the word. The Greek word used in the New Testament is "tekton," which can mean "craftsman," "a worker in wood," or "a ship's carpenter or builder. Men with this occupation would have been the ones to build such grand and spectacular structures as the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem.

Needless to say, they were undoubtedly in excellent shape and worked out hard every day of the week, save for the Sabbath! Another bit of Bible trivia for you, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is said to have walked 12,187 miles by the time she was fifty. That's half the distance around the world at the equator!

I gave the examples above to illustrate the fact that health and fitness came naturally to those living 2,000 years ago. Only in the last century have we seen the troubling rise in diet-and-exercise related diseases and premature deaths. As Christians, we should lead the way not only in spiritual health, but physical health as well.

“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, even as your soul is well” (3 John 1:2, MEV).

What are some steps that you and your spouse can take today to be more like Jesus in the way you eat and exercise? What are some other reasons why it would behoove you to have a strong body as King David and the Proverbs 31 woman did? {eoa}

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