

Shed Extra Pounds With These Strategic Verses

I spoke last week at the wonderful Community Bible Church here in San Antonio on the subject of honoring God with our bodies. One concept I emphasized is that the living and active Word of God was given to live and act in *all* areas of our lives, from our marriages and money to our holiness and health.

We can attend church every week, volunteer our time to serving the sick and needy, never utter a curse word or gossip about a single soul, but if we neglect to take care of our bodies, our temples of the Holy Spirit, we are not living the Christian life the Lord intends for us.

Romans 12:1 says, “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship.” Notice that the Holy Spirit, speaking through the apostle Paul, tells us to give not just our spirits, not only our souls, but our *bodies* to God.

First Corinthians 10:31 underscores this command with another like it: “Therefore, whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”

We see that God is indeed interested in how we treat our bodies. Keeping them strong through regular workouts (which wasn't as much of an issue 2,000 years ago like it is today) and maintaining a healthy diet (there were fewer dietary pitfalls around the Mediterranean, and elsewhere around the globe, before GMOs and processed foods came along) are habits that please and glorify our Creator. When we choose laziness and excuses over discipline and obedience, we not only set ourselves up for obesity and an increased risk of various diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension, but we move

toward a Christian walk devoid of the strength, confidence, energy and longevity that God wants for us.

I know that working out is the last thing we want to think about some days. With myriad responsibilities at work, stress-inducing assignments at school and an exhausting schedule with kids and countless other activities and chores, the word “exercise” can be tiring just to say. But we all know that exercise, despite the negative emotions we may ascribe to it, actually increases our energy levels, boosts our moods, clears our heads, reduces stress and gives us the strength, immunity and flexibility necessary for life’s everyday tasks.

So, how do we find the motivation to work out on the days we feel like forgoing the gym (or track, or trail, or studio), kicking up our feet and eating a box of Cheez-Its for dinner? I have found that the best source is the Holy Bible. In it, we are reminded that life isn’t about appearances or pleasing others, and that indolence and idleness are vices to be purged as we become sanctified, day by day. The Word exhorts us to do all things as unto the Lord, and to be hardworking and diligent laborers in His kingdom.

Here are 10 verses that I believe will encourage and motivate you to get your workout in, especially on days when the couch is calling your name like a Siren’s song:

1. *“May the very God of peace sanctify you completely. And I pray to God that your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23).*

2. *“I can do all things because of Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13).*

3. *“So, therefore, I run, not with uncertainty. So I fight, not as one who beats the air. But I bring and keep my body under subjection, lest when preaching to others I myself should be disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:26-27).*

4. "Therefore, whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

5. "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?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

6. "But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint" (Is. 40:31).

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

8. "Now no discipline seems to be joyful at the time, but grievous. Yet afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness in those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift up your tired hands, and strengthen your weak knees" (Heb. 12:11-12).

9. "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

10. "No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, and He will not permit you to be tempted above what you can endure, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). {eo}

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