

Turning Boring Fitness Routines Into Spirit-Packed Training Sessions

Just the thought of exercise or eating healthy, let alone planning and pursuing it, can be challenging enough for some. If the thought of going to the gym or out for a run stresses you out to the point you don't even want to go, you're not alone. Sometimes we are just too tired or just plain not in the mood to exercise or make good health decisions. Motivated or not, we should always take time out to remember why we need to exercise and take good care of ourselves. There is more to consider than just your individual desires; it is about caring for the earthen vessels God created and provided for us, and it is about caring for them so we can glorify Him in all we do and serve Him. Motivation can vary day to day, hour to hour and sometimes even minute to minute, so the most important thing we can do to help us develop and maintain good health and fitness habits is to constantly and consistently seek Him in all we do.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you" (Matt. 6:33).

"My hands I will lift up unto Your commandments, which I have loved; I will meditate on Your statutes" (Ps. 119:48).

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4).

Benefits of Daily Devotions for Health and Well-Being

Daily devotions are a great way to connect with God and help us to get and stay motivated. It is a quiet reflective time with during which we share our hopes, desires and struggles. God seeks to have an intimate one-on-one relationship with

each of His children. A relationship is a two-way street. If we want a close personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, we need to cultivate it, and one way to do that is to spend time with Him in prayer and reflection. Daily time and devotions with God help us make better spiritually-minded decisions about health, fitness and personal well-being.

Make it About God

Spending quiet time and reflecting on God each day allows us the opportunity to give of ourselves to God, instead of expecting anything from Him. *Lord, I am your vessel, use me today. Help me to glorify you in all that I do, including caring for my health and well-being.* After taking time to seek the Lord, meditate and reflect, listen for His response, stay in the Word. Keeping a journal is a great way help maximize your daily devotion time.

Get Direction from God

Quiet self-reflective time, including daily devotions, helps give us direction from Him for our daily lives. What a great way to help us get going with our exercise program. Sitting quietly with the Lord while stretching or getting ready to exercise gives us time to seek wisdom and motivation and be able to make the right choices for the day. Today, more than ever, we have such a hard time slowing down and tuning out the outside world. We desperately need to learn to slow down and hear from our Lord.

Gain Strength and Motivation

Any way that we can, we need to learn to build strength to resist sin and make good choices so we can run our race. Seeking Him first and staying in the Word helps us keep our minds focused on God throughout the day. Using a daily devotion and journal helps us to seek and spend quality time alone with our Lord and Savior. When we expect to meet with Jesus during our daily devotion each morning, we will never be

disappointed. Remember that Jesus is both with us and within us.

Grow in Christlikeness

Life is all about learning to love Jesus and becoming more like Him in all that we think, do and say. How do we become more like Jesus? We first seek and then follow. We are made holy through the Word. The time we spend in the Word, in getting to know God intimately and allowing His Word to correct our hearts, is how we grow in Christlikeness. Taking time out of the day to reflect on Him and to listen to what He places on our hearts helps us develop healthy, fit and Christlike earthen vessels.

Good for Your Health and Well-Being

Take time to get into the habit of having daily devotions and self-reflective time alone with God. Once daily devotions become a part of your life, you will learn to rely on that time and the benefits that follow. Devotions bless your life, but study after study has shown the health benefits. They are also good for your soul and your body.

Tips on Getting Started

- **Stick to a Schedule:** Make an appointment each day with God.
- **Pick a Place:** Find a quiet place where you won't be distracted.
- **Pick a Time:** Set aside a specific amount of time dedicated to your daily devotions.
- **Make a Plan:** Decide on what you are going to do, what you are going to pray for and seek guidance on.
- **Set Goals:** What do you want to accomplish? What are your health and fitness goals?
- **Stay Committed:** Stay the course, stay committed and don't be discouraged, even if you miss a day.

Examples

Start by praying and seeking a verse to reflect on. Let's take Galatians 2:20 for example, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). What do you think the apostle Paul was thinking or experiencing when he made the statement that "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"?

Take time to reflect on this verse; it is so powerful. Even though I live in my earthly body, by trusting in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me, I am no longer held hostage to my old ways. If you have never liked to exercise or have never considered yourself an active person, believing in Christ can change that. The kingdom of God is alive and at work in you. What amazing truth. Now it is up to us to accept that truth and live it out. If I have truly accepted Jesus into my heart, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." Think about that; the Creator of the universe lives within you. How amazing, incredible and motivating. I am connected to Jesus, the Son of God, and so I believe it, I embrace it and I live it out. The more I dwell on this truth, the more my attitude aligns with it.

How does this verse speak into your heart? How does spiritual truth carry over into my daily life? Remember, our beliefs shape our attitudes, which shape our thinking patterns, which shape our behaviors.

Jesus wants to share His life with yours; are you willing? Is He enough? He is more than enough. As we read and reflect on the written truth, our faith grows, and we become more reliant on Jesus to help guide us in all we do. Remember that your thoughts become your actions. If you truly want to care for your body and keep healthy so you can serve, He will help you. Our thoughts and beliefs will determine our behaviors. Jesus

will help you live the life you want to live, if you let Him. We have been invited to share life with our Maker and Creator. So amazing!

Fitness Prayer

Dear Lord,

You are my Creator, and You are my Sustainer.

You have carefully watched over me all my life, and You even watched over me before I was born.

I praise You for the magnificent body that You have given me.

Lord, I ask that You would bring me the wisdom, motivation and ability to properly exercise my body. Stir me up to power walk and to do cardio workouts. Stir me up to do lunges and crunches and lift weights for the glory of God.

I declare that I will get excited about training my body.

I will rise up and say, "I am going to have a strong body that is fit and ready to serve the Lord."

Amen.

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