

Introduction:

1 Timothy 4:6 *If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.* Most of us understand, at least philosophically and intellectually, the value of exercise. Schools used to have physical education classes so as to promote good health both physically and mentally. But the bad thing about exercise is it is so demanding and tiring. One gets tired of running, jumping, training, etc. But notice our text as Paul tells Timothy "Exercise yourself rather to godliness."

I) Our Text

A) Paul is telling Timothy of his responsibilities in preaching the Gospel.

1. He was to instruct the brethren in the things he had learned and done.
2. Preaching the Gospel requires one to know what is right, and to do what is right.
 - a. Many a preacher has undermined the cause of Christ by being hypocritical.
 - b. Either by getting involved in sin and causing the name of Christ to be ridiculed, or not doing what he preaches and undermining the message preached.

B) The same can be said for all Christians.

1. There is no such thing as a clergy/laity system in Christ.
2. We are all to be students of God's word and practioners.

Acts 17:11 *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica,*

in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

- a. Many a Christian has brought reproach on the church by being hypocritical and getting involved in sin or not doing what they say they believe.
- b. The way to avoid such is to do what Paul says next.

C) Reject profane and old wives fables,

1 Timothy 4.7 *But reject profane and old wives' fables*

2 Peter 1:16 *For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.*

- 1. Profane means ordinary.
 - a. Derived from a word which referred to the threshold, has the primary sense of that which may be trodden.
 - b. "It describes a man whose mind recognizes nothing as higher than earth; for whom there is nothing sacred; who has no divine reverence for the unseen... In its thoughts, its aims, its pleasures, its standards, it is completely earthbound."
- 2. Wives fables -- made up stories, silly superstitions and alleged miraculous events which old women (as well as leaders) had made a part of the Jewish system or religion.
 - a. Adam Clark says this refers particularly to the Jews, whose Talmudical writings are stuffed with the most ridiculous and profane fables that ever disgraced the human intellect.
 - b. Today we may say the Gospel of Thomas or Barnabas or some other writings not found in the Holy Scriptures.

II) But Rather Exercise Yourself

A) Exercise

1. ISBE -- originally meant to drive or thrust out.

a. To do, to put into action,

Jeremiah 9:23 *Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.*

b. To walk, to strive

Acts 24:16 *"This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.*

c. To train,

Hebrews 5:14 *But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

d. Authority of, dominion over,

Matthew 20:25 *But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.*

2. Physical exercise teaches us about spiritual exercise.

a. Requires self control, discipline,

1 Corinthians 9:25 *And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as*

one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

- b. Hard work
 - c. Over time it does have its effect, not the first day but days afterward.
3. Spiritually one must have discipline.
- a. Study their Bible, prayer, rejection of false teachings, worshipping God
 - b. Over time it changes the way one thinks and behaves. A "renewing of the mind"

Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

- c. In sports, if you have to think about it, you are too slow. In religion you have to train yourself to think in a certain way.

B) Yourself

- 1. Exercise is individual in nature. One cannot work out for you.
- 2. One cannot work out your salvation for you,

Philippians 2:12 *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*

III) Unto Godliness

A) What is the aim or purpose of exercise?

- 1. Important because without a goal or aim you will grow tired of it.

2. In this case it is to be toward godliness.
 - a. The scriptures are aimed at making us godly people,

1 Timothy 6:3 *If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,*
 - b. Godliness with contentment is great gain,

1 Timothy 6:6 NKJV *6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.*

B) If you want to know what is godly or what a godly person would do, look at the scriptures.

IV) Which is Profitable for You

A) The value of exercise is?

1. Physically- feel better, look better, mentally may be sharper.
2. But those benefits are temporary. Stop exercising you lose your muscle tone, etc.
3. Spiritually we can lose our spiritual strength if we quit. Grow cold and weak. See Christians in the New Testament who left the faith and make shipwreck of their faith. "Don't STOP!"

B) Eternal life

1. To those who remain faithful and do not quit it will make you better now and eternity.
2. See this encouragement in

1 Timothy 4:16 *Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*