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Spiritual Fitness

By Teresa Hampton

Did you know there are three foundational things that, if managed properly, will keep one physically fit? Food. Rest. Exercise. Food consumption must focus on a healthy, balanced diet, avoiding processed foods, sweets, and such. Rest, that is, consistent good sleep, can prevent serious physical and emotional illnesses. Nothing beats a good night's rest. Exercise is the third foundation stone in maintaining a healthy body. The word *exercise* is distasteful in some people's vocabulary. But, if done correctly, it helps one live a longer, more energetic and productive life with less anxiety and illness.

Did you know that spiritual women and men also need food, rest, and exercise to be healthy, well-balanced, and spiritually fit? God's word, if ingested frequently and used properly, is food that fills our souls with everything we need for correction, instruction, and righteousness, so we may be complete, thoroughly furnished for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We must avoid unhealthy books or other things of the world that draw us away from God.

What rest is to the physical body, prayer is to one's soul. Diligent prayer can prevent serious doubt and anxiousness. Think about it. Prayer reminds us that God is in control of all things, great and small. We have the privilege of taking our joys, sorrows, and everything in between, to our Father. When we do, we find peace that surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4:6-7). God's care and love for you and me is unsurpassed! The One who loves us so deeply promises to provide everything we need, and shower on us rich spiritual blessings that we never dreamed were possible to receive.

The physical body needs exercise to be fit. Likewise, the Christian woman and man need exercise to become stronger each day. Spiritual exercise comes in steps; beginning, intermediate, and adult or full-grown. When we know God's word and understand His will for us, we humbly obey him with repentance and baptism, then we gradually move beyond the first principles. Growing up in the Lord requires that we begin to feast on the meat of the word, its deeper truths. With greater knowledge and understanding of God's commands we build spiritual muscles that allows us, by reason of use, to have our senses exercised to help us discern between good and evil (Hebrews 5:12-14). Spiritual exercise is not a choice, it's a must, given the society in which we live.

Some questions remain. Are we feasting on the word of God, or just sampling it from time to time? Do we often come to the Lord in prayer, or just seek him we we are in need? And finally, are we growing spiritually? Have we developed spiritual muscles so we can rightly divide the word of truth? Or have our muscles atrophied due to lack of exercise, leaving us open to every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14)? Important questions, don't you think?

Today's Verse: *Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God* (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4).

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