

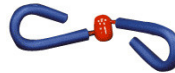
## Keep Fit

**1 Timothy 4:6-9 HCSB** If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. **7** But have nothing to do with irreverent and silly myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness, **8** for, the training of the body has a limited benefit, but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. **9** This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance.



To say that our nation is caught up in a fitness craze is an understatement. Physical fitness has become a billion dollar business in the United States and continues to grow. At any given time you can find the latest “infomercial” on television featuring the latest fitness product on the market. I especially like the creative names of the fitness equipment. For example:

“The Thigh Master”



“The Abdominizer”



I think the next thing you’ll hear of will be “The Gut-Be-Gone”

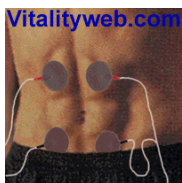
Most of the fitness products also come with a training video ... but wait! There’s more! If you order now we’ll send you free our latest training videos on: “Abs of Steel” and “Buns of Steel”.

And for our first fifty orders we’ll also include...

“The Elvis Presley Guide to Nutrition; the Later Years”.

Whether it’s “Sweatin’ to the Oldies” with Richard Simmons or Billy Joe Jim-Bob’s “Country Line Aerobics”, they all promise the same thing: If you’ll follow their training plan, you can be physically fit in a matter of days.

And just when you think you’ve seen it all...you see in a catalogue a



picture of a man hooked up to several electrodes on various muscles on his body. The advertisement states that gyms and fitness centers are a thing of the past. All you need to do now is to hook up to the various electrodes that will send an electric current to stimulate the muscles and work them out while you do your work.

Most who know me know that I am a big believer in being physically fit. One of the highlights of my day has always been to go through my regular workout routine. But physical fitness doesn’t happen overnight. It takes developing a personalized regular routine and staying with it. And it’s certainly not as complicated as all the “infomercials” make it out to be. In fact, it can be broken down to three simple elements:

1. Eat a balanced diet to maintain energy.
2. Regularly exercise to build muscular and cardiovascular systems.

### 3. Get Proper Rest to Recharge Yourself.

First Timothy 4:7-8 says:

- **1 Timothy 4:7-8 HCSB** But have nothing to do with irreverent and silly myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness, **8** for, the training of the body has a limited benefit, but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

In other words, it's good to be physically fit, and it's even better to be spiritually fit. But just how do you get spiritually fit? Funny, but I haven't seen too many "infomercials" on spiritual fitness. Hey, who knows? Maybe we're on to something here! We could develop some training videos on spiritual fitness:

- "Prayers of Steel"
- "Sermons of Brimstone"

What does it mean to be "Spiritually Fit"? And how do you get there? Well, I don't think it's that difficult. In fact, I would like to suggest a very simple approach. And although I don't plan on developing an "infomercial" any time soon, I think the following three steps can help you get spiritually fit.

#### 1. Spiritual fitness requires the proper spiritual nutrition.

Just as the body needs the proper daily nourishment of food, spiritual fitness requires the proper daily nourishment of spiritual food. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus stated:

- **Matthew 4:4 HCSB** But He answered, **"It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."**

In other words, man is more than just a physical being. He is a spiritual being as well as a physical being. And just as the physical side of him needs nourishment, so does the spiritual nature.

In the Old Testament there is a story about how God miraculously provided food for the Israelites during their forty year journey from their slavery in Egypt to their entering the promised land.

- **Exodus 16:11-35 HCSB** The LORD spoke to Moses, **12** "I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them: At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will eat bread until you are full. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God." **13** So at evening quail came and covered the camp. In the morning there was a layer of dew all around the camp. **14** When the layer of dew evaporated, there on the desert surface were fine flakes, as fine as frost on the ground. **15** When the Israelites saw it, they asked one another, "What is it?" because they didn't know what it was. Moses told them, "It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. **16** This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Gather as much of it as each person needs to eat. You may take two quarts per individual, according to the number of people each of you has in his tent.'" **17** So the Israelites did this. Some gathered a lot, some a little. **18** When they measured it by quarts, the person who gathered a lot had no surplus, and the person who gathered a little had no shortage. Each gathered as much as he needed to eat.



19 Moses said to them, "No one is to let any of it remain until morning." 20 But they didn't listen to Moses; some people left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and smelled. Therefore Moses was angry with them. 21 They gathered it every morning. Each gathered as much as he needed to eat, but when the sun grew hot, it melted. 22 On the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, four quarts apiece, and all the leaders of the community came and reported *this* to Moses. 23 He told them, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow is a day of complete rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you want to bake, and boil what you want to boil, and everything left over set aside to be kept until morning.'" 24 So they set it aside until morning as Moses commanded, and it didn't smell or have any maggots in it. 25 "Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a Sabbath to the LORD. Today you won't find any in the field. 26 For six days you may gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none." 27 Yet on the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they did not find any. 28 Then the LORD said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep My commands and instructions? 29 Understand that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day He will give you two days' worth of bread. Each of you stay where you are; no one is to leave his place on the seventh day." 30 So the people rested on the seventh day. 31 The house of Israel named the substance manna. It resembled coriander seed, was white, and tasted like wafers *made* with honey. 32 Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Two quarts of it are to be preserved throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'" 33 Moses told Aaron, "Take a container and put two quarts of manna in it. Then place it before the LORD to be preserved throughout your generations." 34 As the LORD commanded Moses, Aaron placed it before the testimony to be preserved. 35 The Israelites ate manna for 40 years, until they came to an inhabited land. They ate manna until they reached the border of the land of Canaan.

Notice some of the stipulations on the Manna:

- (1) It was to be gathered once a day.
- (2) It was to be consumed for that day and not to be kept over ... it would spoil if kept.
- (3) On the sixth day, they were to gather twice as much for the Sabbath.

In the New Testament, Jesus referred to this manna while talking to some religious leaders:

- **John 6:48-51 HCSB** I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

Notice what Jesus is saying:

- (1) "I am the bread (manna) of life that came down from heaven."
- (2) Whoever consumes this bread will live forever.
- (3) This bread is Christ's Body which is given to save the world from their sins.

How do you 'consume' Jesus, the Bread of Life?

- a. Saving Faith - By believing in his death, burial and resurrection ... that He is God who came down from heaven to die for your sins.
- b. Sanctifying Faith - By inviting Christ to be the Master of your life
  - i. **Identification** – publicly confessing His name; Baptism
  - ii. **Association** - Church fellowship; hang out with His family and serve them.
  - iii. **Conversation** – daily prayer and meditation
  - iv. **Confession** – keeping short sin accounts

- v. **Contemplation** - By daily reading of His Word the Bible.
- vi. **Application** – not only being a hearer but a doer of the Word.

All of these points are vital, but it's this last aspect that I want to focus on concerning spiritual nourishment. One of the steps, if not the greatest step, to getting yourself spiritually fit is to learn to feed on God's Word, the Bible.

- **Job 23:12 HCSB** I have not departed from the commands of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily food.
- **Jeremiah 15:16 HCSB** Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became a delight to me and the joy of my heart, for I am called by Your name, LORD God of Hosts.
- **Psalms 119:103 HCSB** How sweet Your word is to my taste--*sweeter* than honey to my mouth.
- **Hebrews 4:12 HCSB** For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as to divide soul, spirit, joints, and marrow; it is a judge of the ideas and thoughts of the heart.

I would like to submit to you that reading God's word and combining it with faith is food for the soul! It's better than Oprah, Rosie, Jay Leno, David Letterman and Jerry Springer all put together! It's better than a Harlequin Romance Novel! It's better than a John Grisham Classic! You can surf the internet ... You can surf the oceans waves, but you will never find anything better as food for your soul than the Bible, The Word of the Living God!

When You're Down It'll Lift You Up!  
 When You're Lost It'll Help You Find Your Way!  
 When You're Fearful It'll Give You Courage!  
 When You're Weak It'll Give You Strength!  
 When You're Hurting It'll Give You Healing!

In order to experience proper growth, you must regularly read God's Word and listen to his voice.

## 2. Spiritual fitness requires regular spiritual exercise.

Faith is like a muscle; it must be utilized and exercised in order for it to grow. How do you exercise your "faith muscles"? By discovering the usefulness of a serving faith.

- **Romans 12:3-8 HCSB** For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one. **4** Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, **5** in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. **6** According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the standard of faith; **7** if service, in service; if teaching, in teaching; **8** if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

## 3. Spiritual fitness requires spiritual renewal.

- **Ezekiel 37:1-10 HCSB** The hand of the LORD was on me, and He brought me out by His Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. **2** He led me all around them. There were a great many of them on the surface of the valley, and they were very dry. **3** Then He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I replied, "Lord GOD, *only* You know." **4** He said to me, "Prophecy concerning these bones and



say to them: Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5 This is what the Lord GOD says to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live. 6 I will put tendons on you, make flesh grow on you, and cover you with skin. I will put breath in you so that you come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD." 7 So I prophesied as I had been commanded. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 As I looked, tendons appeared on them, flesh grew, and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. 9 He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man. Say to it: This is what the Lord GOD says: Breath, come from the four winds and breathe into these slain so that they may live!" 10 So I prophesied as He commanded me; the breath entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, a vast army.

We need to understand that the world does not revolve around us. We need to step back after having done our best and let God take over the rest. We can move the bones around, we can stack them, we can speak to them we can do whatever we like – but there comes a point in time when only God can breathe life into them.

The church will not fall apart because we are not in charge of every aspect. The business will not collapse because we decide to take a day off. The universe operated quite nicely for a long time before we were born. I think it will continue if we take a little time to invest in ourselves. Take some time for the three Rs.

- Rest and relaxation
- Recreation
- Relationships

### **Conclusion:**

- c. Spiritual fitness requires the proper spiritual nutrition.
  - a. By believing in his death, burial and resurrection ... that He is God who came down from heaven to die for your sins.
  - b. By inviting Christ to be the Master of your life
    - i. Baptism – publicly confess His name.
    - ii. Communion – keep short sin accounts.
    - iii. Church fellowship – hang out with His family and serve them.
  - c. By daily reading and application of His Word the Bible.
- d. Spiritual fitness requires regular spiritual exercise.
  - a. Saving Faith – again starting with belief in what He did for you and trusting that act as being enough.
  - b. Sustaining Faith – Not only trusting Him to save you but to be enough to get you through each day.
  - c. Serving Faith – Stepping out and trusting Him not only as allowing you to survive but to thrive and be able to reach out to others.
- e. Spiritual fitness requires spiritual renewal. Trust Him enough to keep everything running so that you can take time for the three Rs.
  - a. Rest and relaxation
  - b. Recreation
  - c. Relationships