

1 TIMOTHY 4

PHYSICAL TRAINING IS OF SOME VALUE?

1 Tim. 4:8 has been used by some as an excuse to neglect physical training. Here Paul writes to his treasured student Timothy, and compares the value of physical exercise with spiritual training (godliness). Clearly, our spiritual training will have lasting value into eternity, while physical training is limited to our time in this body. But think of all you have to accomplish in this body: Telling others about Jesus, providing for your family and community, building God's kingdom on Earth! We are called to be "Ambassadors for Christ", [2 Cor 5:20]. An ambassador must be worthy of who they represent, and must be physically capable of carrying out their mission. - Josh

1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. **2** Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. **3** They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. **4** For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, **5** because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

6 If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters,[a] you will be a good

brothers and sisters,[a] you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. **7** Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. **8** For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. **9** This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. **10** That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

11 Command and teach these things. **12** Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. **13** Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. **14** Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. **16** Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

a. 1 Timothy 4:6 The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family.

Study Notes BlueLetterBible.org Commentary

Now the Spirit expressly says: Paul especially marked this as a revelation from the Holy Spirit; either as a spontaneous word given as he wrote or quoting from a previous prophecy. Paul knew certain dangers would mark the latter times.

- The danger of apostasy (**some will depart**).
- The danger of deception (**deceiving spirits**).
- The danger of false teaching (**doctrines of demons**).

It has been more than 1900 years since Paul wrote to Timothy about **the latter times**, but he did not misunderstand his time or our own. History is not, and has not, been rushing towards a distant brink that would end this current order; even in apostolic times, history had reached that brink — and has run parallel to it since. As it turns out, the **latter times** describe a broad era, not a couple of years.

Some will depart from the faith: Because of the danger of the latter times, if Timothy were to remain a faithful minister to God's people, he must keep a dead reckoning on the truth — **the faith**. If this were lost, not much else really mattered.

A June 1997 article in U.S. News and World Report described a Virginia pastor who "Would rather preach on 'Bosnia, justice, or world peace' than on Bible stories or personal salvation." This is an example of a man who departed from the faith and followed his own direction.

The faith: This doesn't mean losing the ability to believe, but losing the content of what Christians should believe. It describes the

essential teachings of the Christian faith. When **some... depart from the faith**, they are abandoning the essential teachings of Christianity. The Bible uses the phrase “**the faith**” in this way many places: Acts 6:7 and 14:22, Colossians 1:23, 1 Timothy 1:19, and Jude 1:3.

Deceiving spirits: This refers to demonic spirits (angelic beings who have rebelled against God), who seek to deceive men and women and to entice them away from the truth. Some lies are so powerful that they have an evident spiritual dynamic behind them. These are lies crafted and promoted by deceiving spirits.

Doctrines of demons: This speaks of the specific teachings of these deceiving spirits. Demons are theology majors, and have systems of doctrine. We find the first demonic doctrine in Genesis 3. There Satan, speaking through a serpent, taught Eve: *You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God* (Genesis 3:4-5). Since then, every demonic doctrine has found its way back to this root: the idea that we can be gods, and operate independently from God.

It is hard to say if there is more false teaching today, or if it is merely a case of modern technology being able to spread the lie better. But the old saying is certainly true today: a lie travels at top speed while the truth goes on foot — and more people within the church are following these doctrines of demons.

Having their own conscience seared: Their conscience, which at one time would have convicted them of their departure from the truth, now doesn't reply at all. It is as if the nerve endings of their conscience have been burnt over and are dead to feeling.

Paul knew what it was to have a dead, burned conscience. Before he surrendered his life to Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, he felt completely justified in his persecution of Christians and hatred of Jesus. He could feel justified because his conscience was seared and needed a wake-up call — which the Lord graciously provided.

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods: This describes the legalistic teaching of those who have departed from the faith. They taught that it was by

Having tried the **ways of sin**, we infinitely prefer the **ways of righteousness**... and we would not change with ungodly men even if we had to die like dogs.

- SPURGEON

following this list of man-made rules that one was justified in God's sight — that you would be more holy to God if you didn't marry, and if you did not eat certain foods.

For every creature of God is good: Regarding what we eat, we can eat all things. We receive things rightly when we receive them with thanksgiving, with an abiding sense of gratitude towards God. We receive the blessings of food, shelter, and comfort as gifts, and not as rights.

Exercise yourself toward godliness: Ancient Greek and Roman culture put a high value on physical exercise. Paul tells Timothy that the same work and commitment that others put towards physical exercise should be put toward the pursuit of godliness.

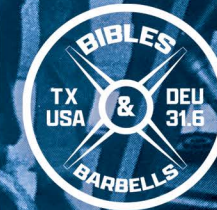
Bodily exercise profits a little in that it has some value. Or, the idea can be translated bodily exercise is good for a while, while exercising unto godliness is good for all eternity. Spiritual development and physical development share some similarities. With each, growth only comes with *exertion and proper feeding*.

Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is: Paul here explains the value of godliness, both in the present sense and its eternal sense. Godliness makes the life that now is better, and we should not hesitate to believe it and to tell people this. Though godliness does not make this life the most comfortable, or richest, or most pleasurable, or easiest in **the life that now is**, it undeniably makes it the *best*, the *most contented*, and the most *fulfilling* life one can live in this world.

“I assure you, and there are thousands of my brethren who can affirm the same, that after having tried the ways of sin, we infinitely prefer the ways of righteousness for their own pleasure's sake even here, and we would not change with ungodly men even if we had to die like dogs. With all the sorrow and care which Christian life is supposed to bring, we would prefer it to any other form of life beneath the stars.” (Spurgeon)

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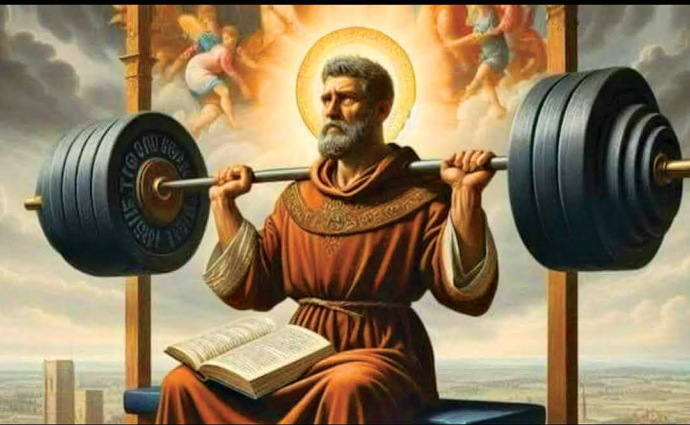
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1 TIMOTHY 4

#46

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY AS IF IT WAS GOING TO LIVE FOREVER



AND TAKE CARE OF YOUR SOUL AS IF YOU WERE GOING TO DIE TOMORROW

- AUGUSTINE

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