

Back to the Gym
Wednesday Online Bible Study
4/15/20

Introduction:

- My father's notebook has many notes from when he was a pastor. But in the midst of his sermon notes I found a to do list. On it, it said, "Help Dianne memorize verses."
- He wanted to carve out time in his busy life to help his daughter, my sister, memorize the Bible.
- Many of us have more time than normal with the stay at home order with the Coronavirus.
- Now is a good time to get back to the basics.

Disciplines:

- There is a great book on disciplines of the Christian faith called "Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life" by Donald Whitney. I want to share some of these spiritual disciplines.
- 1 Timothy 4:7b-8 gives us a command to be spiritually disciplined: "Rather train yourself for godliness, for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come."
 - The word "train" is where we get our English word "gymnasium."
 - We need to spiritually exercise daily.
- The Bible Workout:
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."
 - Because the Bible equips the Christian, we should hear it. We should read it. We should study it. We should memorize it. We should meditate on it.
 - Remember that we do not engage with the Bible so that we can master its content as much as we engage with the Bible so that the content will master us.
- The Prayer Workout:
 - Even when prayer was illegal, in Daniel 6 we see Daniel faithfully prayed. Prayer is important!
 - Prayer is how we communicate with God.
 - Prayer is how we accomplish much for the kingdom.
 - Prayer is commanded. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing."
 - Martin Luther said, "As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray."
 - Remember that prayer must be cultivated. The Lord's Prayer was given by Jesus to teach us to pray. It doesn't always come easy. But like a stick shift standard transmission in the car, just go do it, and you will learn.
- The Worship Workout:

- Matthew 15:8-9 says, “This people honors me with their lips but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”
- Our worship can be vain. In order to authentically worship God, we must do these five things:
 - Know God
 - Supremely Treasure God
 - Supremely Enjoy God
 - Manifestly Praise God
 - Manifestly Serve God
- What makes the Christian different than Satan is that we do not just know the truth of God, we treasure the truth of God.
- Psalm 41:1 tells us, “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.”
- Are you panting after God during this Coronavirus outbreak?
- The Evangelism Workout
 - We are told in Matthew 28 to go into all the world and make disciples of the nations.
 - Mastering the other disciplines will have a reciprocal effect. Mastering the treadmill helps you be more in a shape for the elliptical. Mastering prayer and Bible reading and meditation will have a reciprocal effect on our evangelism. Fill your heart with the greatness and graciousness of God. It is bound to spew out.
 - Who is that one person that you can invite to join our online worship service this Sunday morning? Pray for them every day this week that he/she may be saved. Share the Gospel in a personal conversation as the Holy Spirit leads.
- The Serving Workout
 - Serving God is not a curse, but a foretaste of heaven. In Revelation 22:3, it says in the new earth “his servants will worship him.”
 - Remember that serving God is not done to earn God’s love, but in response to it. In Revelation 22:4, the servants that worship Jesus see his face and the name of Jesus is written on their foreheads. Heaven is a place of provision and grace by Jesus.
 - We are unworthy to serve God. We deserve hell. So we should be asking, “Why am I allowed to serve God?”
- The Stewardship Workout
 - Ephesians 5:16 says to make “the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”
 - We need to manage our time well to use it for God’s glory. Tomorrow is not guaranteed. Seize today for his glory.
 - We need to manage our finances well to use it for God’s glory. Paul recounts in Philippians 4:15 that the Philippians’ finances helped advance the Gospel. Are you still giving to the advancement of the Gospel while you are at home?
- The Fasting Workout
 - Fasting is when the Christian abstains from food for a period of time for a spiritual purpose. The discomfort that comes with fasting will keep reminding the individual during the fast of that spiritual purpose.

- Jesus assumes that the Christian fasts just like he prays in Matthew 6:16. He says, “When you fast.”
- Do you have a family member who is sick? Fast for him/her.
- Do you need to overcome a porn addiction? Fast over it.
- For time’s sake we must move on. But know that we should be fasting to draw closer to Jesus.
- The Silence and Solitude Workout
 - We need to find our quiet place, even in the midst of life’s demands, so that we can be empowered to do God’s will.
 - Jesus found his quiet place in Mark 1:35. Early in the morning Jesus went to the wilderness to be alone with God.
 - I hope to make Ash Camp Creek that quiet place in these warm months.
 - Some of you may need to close down your Facebook accounts, so that in a dull moment you put your mind on God instead of the newsfeed.
- The Journaling Workout
 - Nehemiah 13:31 tells us, “Remember me, O my God, for good.” Nehemiah in a way writes his thoughts to the Lord.
 - We should pause during this monumental occasion and rightly remember it and talk to God about it.
 - Journaling can be a blessing to your offspring. I am blessed to have this binder of my Dad’s thoughts about God.
- The Learning Workout
 - Proverbs 9:9 says, “Teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.”
 - This is similar to our first discipline, the Bible workout.
 - Do everything you can do learn about God and his Gospel. Go to a Christian conference. Go to church. Watch a theology debate on Youtube. Read a Christian blog on 9Marks.org. Ask your Amazon Echo to play the Albert Mohler, “The Briefing” podcast. Read a Christian book.
 - There is a paper in my Dad’s binder that says, “Areas to study.” He lists evolution, divorce and remarriage, church discipline, baptism of children, the effect of TV on the family, etc.
 - Don’t every stop learning.

Conclusion:

- We may not be able to go to the gym during this shut down, but you can go to God’s gym.
- If you would like to study these disciplines more in depth, please listen to sermons on these workouts on our website from 2018. The sermon series was called, “Cross Training in God’s Gym.”
- I have given these to us again because I know we have new people in our church since then, as well as I have felt the need for my own soul for this refresher. Draw near to God during this season of upheaval. Get back to these spiritual basics. Get back to the gym.\