

INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has died on the cross for our sins; He was buried; and on the third day, the first day of the week, He rose again from the dead. By His blood, the debt you owed for all your transgressions of God's law has been paid. In the name of Jesus Christ, repent and be forgiven your sins by God. Believe in Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, and have eternal life. That is the good news. You sinners, hear it, repent, believe, and be saved today.

We who already believe, who know ourselves saved, look forward to the Lord Jesus coming back on the last day, although we don't know when that will be. Until that day, every disciple of Jesus Christ is delighted to serve our Lord in this life. But each of us longs to be a good servant, a servant by whom our Lord brings good to our fellow servants. We desire to be beneficial to other people in the name of our Master Jesus Christ.

In putting this matter to Timothy, the apostle Paul used language related to diet and exercise. We are grateful for how the Holy Spirit of God inspired the human authors of the Bible to use such ways of speaking, relating spiritual things we need to learn to simple everyday things we already understand. We know about diet, choosing what food to eat, and how much of it, for our bodily health. We know about exercise, training ourselves for bodily strength. So when the spiritual matter of being a good servant of Jesus Christ is put in those terms, we can understand.

Already we have considered together the matter of spiritual diet for the servant of Jesus Christ, what we are to eat: To be a good servant of Jesus Christ, His disciple needs to be nourished in the words of faith and good doctrine; the gospel of Jesus Christ and all the other truth the Scriptures teach us.

We also considered what we are not to eat, neither to exercise ourselves in: profane and old wives' fables. Things that are not holy and not true do not belong to the program of spiritual diet and exercise that makes a disciple of Jesus and good servant.

But what kind of spiritual exercise, when combined with a good spiritual diet, will strengthen us to be good servants of Jesus Christ? What kind of training will build up the necessary spiritual muscles?

Here in the next lines of 1 Timothy, we read that **to be a good minister or servant of Jesus Christ, a Christian must exercise or train himself unto godliness.**

TEXT

1 Timothy 4:7-9

GEN exercise thy selfe vnto godlinesse
KJV exercise thyself rather unto godliness
NKJV exercise yourself toward godliness
ESV Rather train yourself for godliness
CSB Rather, train yourself in godliness

BODY

To be a good minister or servant of Jesus Christ, a Christian must exercise or train himself unto godliness.

I. Godliness

A. Greek word G2150 *eusebeia* - compound word

1. *eu* - good
2. *sebomai* - to worship
3. good worship; right worship

B. English word - godly, godliness

1. our word seems like it would mean he is “like God”
2. but for a person to be “godly” doesn’t mean he is “like God,” but that he is oriented toward God; his life is lived for God; he is attuned to God
3. godliness - devotion to God; obedience to God; right worship of God

C. When used as one word in a pair

1. concept
 - a) there are two aspects to life
 - (1) your dealings with other people
 - (2) your dealings with God
 - b) our duty in these two areas summarized so beautifully in the Old Testament scriptures, as taught us by the Lord Jesus
 - (1) Matthew 22:37-38 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment.
 - (2) Matthew 22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
2. (2 Peter 3:11) Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and **godliness [G2150 *eusebeia*]**,
 - a) translations
 - (1) GEN, KJV holy conversation and godliness
 - (2) ESV holiness and godliness
 - (3) CSB holy conduct and godliness
 - b) here Peter writes to us of the coming day of the Lord, and the end of this world as we know it; since everything of this present world shall be destroyed by fire, what should characterize our lives here until that day?
 - (1) as to our dealings with other people: holy conversation or conduct
 - (2) as to our dealings with God: godliness

3. (1 Timothy 2:2) ...that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all **godliness** [**G2150 eusebeia**] and reverence.
 - a) translations
 - (1) GEN, KJV godliness and honesty
 - (2) NKJV godliness and reverence
 - (3) ESV godly and dignified
 - (4) CSB godliness and dignity
 - b) here Paul writes to us of how we pray for those in authority in the government, that we may be undisturbed in both areas of life: our worship of God, and our daily walk in love toward other people
- D. 1828 Webster's dictionary - godliness
 1. a careful observance of the laws of God and performance of religious duties, proceeding from love and reverence for the divine character and commands
 2. e.g. 1 Timothy 4
- E. Summary: faith, piety, religious devotion; obedience to God; right worship of God

II. Exercise Yourself

- A. Greek word G1128 *gumnazo* verb - to exercise or to train; G1129 *gymnasia* noun - exercise or training
1. this is where we get our word “gym” short for “gymnasium”
 2. our ideas of training and exercise are, I think, similar to what Paul would have had in mind
- B. Hebrews 5:12-14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. (13) For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. (14) But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses **exercised [G1128 *gumnazo*]** to discern both good and evil.
1. here the concept of exercise is that you take what you have learned from the Bible, and use it to test things, to see if they are good or evil
 - a) whether they are loving or unloving
 - b) whether they are true or false
 2. as you learn more, you keep up this practice
 3. by this kind of exercise, you become skillful in the use of the scriptures
 4. eventually, by this kind of exercise, you become “of full age,” and able to be nourished even more by the scriptures
- C. Another way of putting this: (1 Timothy 6:11) But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, **godliness [G2150 *eusebeia*]**, faith, love, patience, gentleness.
- D. APPLICATION
1. let the weakest be encouraged by the fact that we are not stuck where we are; we may exercise ourselves to become strong
 2. do not be discouraged by any physical weakness; it may well help in spiritual training!
 3. understand that as the word of God commands us this, so the Lord Jesus will be granting it, working it in you by the power of His Holy Spirit in you
 - a) you are to exercise or train yourself
 - b) but the power by which you are strengthened is the power of God
 4. do not give up if the exercise produces pain and suffering
 - a) you know this from physical exercise
 - b) the Lord strengthens us for His service by taking us through troubles, tribulation, afflictions

E. APPLICATION: Spiritual exercises

1. prioritize what our Lord Jesus said is the first and great commandment: to love God with your all
 - a) think about it early and often
 - b) pray He will help you to understand it and obey
 - c) repent of all your breaking of that commandment, and trust in Him to forgive you by the blood of Jesus Christ
2. meditate on the first four of the Ten Commandments
 - a) read them
 - b) memorize them
 - c) read what the Baptist Catechism and the Larger Catechism say
3. read about, remember, think about the example set for us by our Lord Jesus Christ
 - a) resisting temptation in the desert
 - b) praying in the garden
4. in prayer, do as the Lord Jesus taught us: Matthew 6:9-10 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven,
 - a) Hallowed be thy name.
 - b) Thy kingdom come.
 - c) Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
5. constantly check and correct your thoughts regarding justification through faith
 - a) that you are not relying on your works
 - b) that you are not letting your way of speaking about salvation drift into works
 - c) that the object of your faith is Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has done, not yourself, who you are and what you have done
6. make good use of the Lord's Day
 - a) the other six days our main business is the needs of the body in this world; we can exercise ourselves in godliness, but that can't be our main activity
 - b) on this one day in seven, God has ordained since creation that our main business is to exercise yourselves in godliness
 - c) so make good use of what God has given you
7. understand the value of opportunities to train together with your congregation
 - a) the Bible is preached and taught
 - b) brothers lead in prayer
 - c) we are speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
 - d) we take the Lord's Supper and we baptize

CONCLUSION

To be a good minister or servant of Jesus Christ, a Christian must exercise or train himself unto godliness.

Rita - Prelude

Rita - Trinity 727 "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder"

Allison - Trinity 146 "Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah"

Allison - Trinity 431 "Just As I Am"

Thad - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 146:1-2

Alex - Scripture Reading - Psalm 146:3-9

Roel - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Psalm 146:10

G1128 *gumnazo* verb - exercise

G1129 *gumnasia* noun - exercise

(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 [G1128 *gumnazo*]** to discern both good and evil.

(Hebrews 12:11) Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who **have been trained [G1128 *gumnazo*]** by it.

(2 Peter 2:14) having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart **trained [G1128 *gumnazo*]** in covetous practices, and are accursed children.

G2150 *eusebeia* - 1) reverence, respect 2) piety towards God, godliness

G2151 *eusebeo* - to act piously or reverently

G2152 *eusebes* - pious, dutiful

G4576 *sebomai* - to revere, to worship

RWP (on 1 Peter 1:3): from *eu*, well, and *sebomai*, to worship

VWS (on 1 Peter 1:3): It is from *eu*, well, and *σέβομαι*, to worship, so that the radical idea is worship rightly directed.

Gill (on 1 Peter 1:3): "godliness", or internal religion...everything relating to it, or is in it, or it consists of, is from Christ: the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love, which, when in exercise, are the principal parts of powerful godliness, are the gifts of Christ, are received out of his fulness, and of which he is the author and finisher; and he is the donor of all the fresh supplies of grace to maintain the inward power of religion, and to assist in the external exercise of it

Barnes (on 1 Peter 1:3): The word "godliness" is synonymous with piety.

godliness *eusebeia*: faith, piety, religious devotion

Bengel: piety toward God

Wesley: inward religion; the true worship of God

Barnes: piety - or the duty we owe to God

JFB: in relation to God

(Acts 3:12) So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or **godliness [G2150 *eusebeia*]** we had made this man walk?

(1 Timothy 2:2) for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all **godliness [G2150 *eusebeia*]** and reverence.

(1 Timothy 3:16) And without controversy great is the mystery of **godliness [G2150 eusebeia]**: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

(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 [G2150 eusebeia]**,

(1 Timothy 6:5) useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that **godliness [G2150 eusebeia]** is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

(1 Timothy 6:6) Now **godliness [G2150 eusebeia]** with contentment is great gain.

(1 Timothy 6:11) But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, **godliness [G2150 eusebeia]**, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

(2 Timothy 3:5) having a form of **godliness [G2150 eusebeia]** but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

(Titus 1:1) Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with **godliness [G2150 eusebeia]**,

(2 Peter 1:3) as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and **godliness [G2150 eusebeia]**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

(2 Peter 1:6-7) to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, (7) to **godliness [G2150 eusebeia]** brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

(2 Peter 3:11) Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and **godliness [G2150 eusebeia]**,

If you perceive that you are not very strong in godliness, take courage, because the Lord Jesus knows that, and has provided for your strengthening.

If you are not very strong physically, take courage, because that does not hinder exercising toward godliness; instead, it may well help!

Note our Lord's praying; this kind of praying must be achieved by exercising in it.

Hebrews: strong meat for the mature; use

