

Training in Godliness

Ready:

"Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. 'Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.' This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it. This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people and particularly of all believers." -- 1 Timothy 4:7b-10

Set

There is an IronMan 70.3 race coming to our city in a few months where over 2,500 athletes will compete with all they've got to cross the finish line. The rewards will be great and may look different for each athlete. These athletes have ramped up their training to complete the 1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike and 13.1 mile run in the beautiful Blue Ridge mountains.

Training doesn't come easy. It's hard work! Training is defined as developing and improving mentally and physically through instruction or practice over a period of time to reach or maintain a high level of fitness. Whether it's "two-a-days" practice for a football player or the rigorous training, focus and dedication of a triathlete, it requires strict discipline, prioritization and a plan.

This same level of training should be applied to our spiritual development and relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul exhorts us to "train ourselves to be godly." He goes on to share the reason we are to train to be godly, "godliness has value for all things." While coaching or training for an athletic event will result in a better performance in that sport on any given day, training in godliness will result in an even more important result in the life we live on this earth and the life to come. We labor and strive because our hope is in a living God!

What does training in godliness look like? The first step is to stay connected to our Heavenly Father. In John 15, Jesus uses the word "remain" or "abide" in Him 11 times. We can do nothing apart from God. We practice and train by immersing ourselves in God's Word and spending time with Him in prayer, fellowship and worship.

In 1 Timothy 4:11-16 Paul goes into further instruction on how to train to be godly. We are to:

1. Command and teach God's Word. v.11
2. Set an example in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity. v.12
3. Be devoted to the public reading of Scripture, preaching and teaching. v.13
4. Use our God-given gifts to serve. v.14
5. Be diligent in living out our faith, giving 100%, loving God and others. v.15
6. Persevere in following Jesus' example in our daily living. v.16

An athlete in training and a coach knows that there will be plenty of self-sacrifice when training and coaching in their sport. If we desire to advance and perform well, wise decisions, prioritization and following a plan will set the stage for success. This is true if we desire to follow Jesus and do what matters most. Jesus says in Luke 9:23, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

Are you ready for the challenge of training in godliness and righteousness? Let's PURSUE this together!

Go

- What do you need to stop doing in order to spend more time with your Heavenly Father?
- Which one of the practices of godliness mentioned above do you feel God nudging you to pursue?
- Who is someone you can encourage to practice and train in godliness? Take a moment to pray for them now.
- Review FCA's Competitor's Creed for encouragement.

Workout

1 Timothy 4:6-16; Luke 9:23; 1 Corinthians 9:26-27; Romans 12:1-2

Overtime

"Father, thank You for loving us and giving us the desire to pursue You with everything we've got. Your Holy Spirit equips us, and Your Word instructs us for training in godliness. Forgive us when we go by our own playbook and bring us back to Your Truth which leads and guides us in godliness and righteousness. Thank You that we have victory in Jesus!"

Bible Reference:

1 Timothy 4:7-10

1 Timothy 4:6-16

Luke 9:23

1 Corinthians 9:26-27

Romans 12:1-2



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