



Christian Life Fellowship
Becoming fully devoted followers of Christ



Fit for Life - Intellectually

January 13, 2008

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Introduction:

We will be concluding our week of prayer this afternoon at 4:00 PM with an all-church prayer meeting. I trust you will take this opportunity to come and participate with others in seeking God for His direction and blessing on this ministry in 2008. Today we continue with our series on getting intellectually fit. God has given each of us a mind and we must do all we can to be fit mentally so that we can bring glory to God.

One of the things that I realized as I was on my sabbatical last year was that I was stagnant intellectually. I needed to do some good reading so I could grow. I since have remedied that and have begun reading books again and it is awesome. Let me encourage you to do the same thing. Our church library has some wonderful resources that can be checked out that will help you grow both spiritually and intellectually. Be fit in your thoughts and mind.

Growth means change. If we want to keep growing, we must seek and accept the right kind of changes. Conforming to God's will actually has to do with our mental ability to use the knowledge we have from God's word and the work of God's Spirit. To avoid becoming stagnant, the mind has to be renewed with positive changes.

Romans 12:2 - Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

If we want to be mentally fit, then we have to allow changes to take place that come only from renewing our minds. The word "transformed" here means metamorphosis. It conveys the idea of changes that take place. For example, the change that takes place when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. There is a transformation that takes place at our spiritual new birth, but the ongoing process of transformation happens as we pray and apply knowledge.

Changes that take place by renewal of our minds involve the ability "to test and approve what God's will is." This means to explore, to investigate, to learn and to accept God's will. A "renewed mind" is a mental state open and ready for change, actively seeking God's will. When we know and understand God's will for our lives, then we can obey Him.

I. Study is a part of being intellectually fit.

Paul was an educated man. He knew the law; he was a student and he gained knowledge so he could debate and use that knowledge to influence those who were learned or had questions.

Acts 22:3 - "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.

Paul defines some of his credentials and tells how he was schooled and educated. He understood the law. When writing his letter to Timothy, he encouraged Timothy to study so he would know how to apply truth to his life.

2 Tim. 2:15 - Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

One of the ways to keep fit intellectually is to study. To study means more than just to read. When we study, we investigate. We get out books and gather information.

II. Attitude is part of being intellectually fit.

The things you think about will shape what you do and what you become.

Proverbs 23:7 - For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:

If we think and focus on the past, we are going to be defeated. If we think only about the future, we are not living now. If we focus on evil and destructive things such as violence and pornography, those things will destroy us. Garbage in, garbage out. People act on the things they dwell on and think about. If, on the other hand, we turn our thoughts to the truthful, noble, righteous, pure, lovely, admirable and excellent things, then we will be working on becoming intellectually fit.

Philip. 4:8 - Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--

if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

A good attitude is part of having a healthy mind. Charles Swindoll writes the following about attitude: "The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you....we are in charge of our attitudes."

Currently in High Point – our children's program for Wednesday nights, we are dealing with attitude. Our point is, "I will choose a good attitude" and our life verse is **Psalm 51:10 – Create in me a pure heart O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me.** We can pass blame on other people and the fact we were dealt a bad hand in life, or we can take control of our attitude and choose how we will respond to such things.

III. Remembrance is part of being intellectually fit.

Memory is important in being mentally fit. We need to remember phone numbers, names, driver's license numbers, combination numbers, social security numbers etc. We need to remember our names, birthdays, and e-mail addresses. Every so often I do multiplication tables in my head just to keep my memory sharp.

More importantly, we need to remember the faithfulness of God, the love of God, the ways God has moved in the past. God wants us to be fit and remember how He has moved in the past. He does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. We have the Bible as a record of how God moved and responded in the past. God does not

want us to forget and we benefit by not having to repeat the same lessons others had to learn.

1 Cor. 10:11 - These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

One of the things that God told his people was to remember what He had done. Remember how He had spoken to them. Remember His laws.

Deut. 6:6-9 - These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

It's pretty obvious from this scripture that God wanted His people to think about His directives or commandments to them. They were important and He did not want them to forget what he had spoken to them. They were to write his laws on the doorposts of their homes; they were to be tied as symbols on their hands and their foreheads.

IV. Dealing with our fears is part of being intellectually fit.

One of the greatest fears that we have as human beings is the fear of failure.

Conclusion:

God wants us to have a mind that is fit. I read and study to be fit intellectually. I develop an attitude that is positive and reflects what I think about. I remind myself of the good things God has done and His faithfulness and character. I deal with my fears. Do not waste your intellect. God has given us our mind as part of our being. Being fit and loving God include doing so with our mind.

Matthew 22:37 - Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

Our challenge this week is to work on being fit intellectually. Here are some steps you can take to do so. Check out a book from the church or local library. Get into a study group here at CLF. Deal with a fear that is holding you back. Work on your attitude so it reflects the positive things you think about. Bring to memory the ways God has helped you in the past by writing them down in a journal.

Fear of failure is closely related to fear of criticism and fear of rejection. Action gives you the power to change the circumstances or the situation. You must overcome the inertia by doing something. Let me ask you a question. "What would you do if you knew you could not fail? What could you achieve?" Be brave and just do it.

Ninety-one times in the Word we read *fear not*. Often when we read those words they are words of assurance, courage, and affirmation that God was with the person to whom He was speaking. He tells us: I will protect, I will direct, I will provide, I will lead, and you will see my salvation.

2 Tim. 1:7 - For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

God wants the thoughts of our mind to be peaceful, powerful and filled with self-discipline. Paul talks about the kind of mind we should be cultivating as followers of Christ. He alludes to the giving of the law which brought fear and anxiousness and had been communicated in a way that caused people to tremble. The gospel, on the other hand, came mildly and everything was placed on a level with human intellect and within the reach of every human spirit. Every aspect of the gospel is inviting. A sound mind implies sound judgment, a clear understanding, a surrendered will, holy passions, and heavenly tempers.