



**Christian Life Fellowship**  
*Becoming fully devoted followers of Christ*



## **Fit for Life – Physically Fit**

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### **Introduction:**

Before we consider the topic of getting fit physically this morning, I want to remind you that this Tuesday, January 22, marks the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Roe versus Wade, the infamous Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion on demand for all nine months of pregnancy. More than 50 million innocent unborn children have lost their lives to abortion. This is a national tragedy and we must never allow the abortion issue to become a settled issue. There are too many lives at stake. Let's take a moment to pray about this issue before we look into God's Word.

Today we are continuing on our series on getting fit and specifically we will be looking at getting fit physically. Each of us is given only one body to live and function in while we are here on earth. With obesity taking over our health and issues of high blood pressure, diabetes, heart problems, cancer and many other physical issues, we should be anxious to take the necessary steps to safeguard our health. God wants His people to be healthy. Jesus paid too high a price for us not to do our part in maintaining our health.

**1 Cor. 6:19-20 - Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.**

There were all kinds of requirements and regulations that God specified to His people. If they followed these rules, He would allow them to live longer, healthier, less painful and more productive lives.

**Exodus 15:26 - He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."**

There were certain animals that were unclean which God instructed His people not to eat. There were certain types of fish they were not to eat as well because they were scavengers. If they followed those regulations, they would be healthier.

Let's look at some of the indicators from Scripture that can help us build a foundation for healthy lives.

## I. REST

**Leviticus 23:3 - There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD.**

God in His wisdom instructed people to rest one day out of seven. The seventh day was to be holy to the Lord. During that day they were not to work, not to gather food, but to rest. The principle of resting one day out of seven is God- directed. Our bodies need to rest in order to stay healthy. You cannot work and run and go non-stop seven days a week and expect that everything will function properly indefinitely. Eventually something will wear out or break down because we were not designed to do that.

Also, sleep is important for the body and the mind. Some people say – I only need 4 hours of sleep a night. Listen – God made the night for us to rest. Scientific research indicates that each of us needs 8 hours of sleep a night for our bodies to heal and rest and be healthy. So scientific research validates what God told His people to do: REST.

Even with our digestive system, there should be times of resting it; fasting is a great way to do that. Every once in a while, give your body a rest and fast a meal or two or all day. Drink water, juice, refrain from eating meat, and you will be healthier.

Daniel, as a captive, requested to eat only vegetables and refused to eat the rich foods of the king, nor did he drink the wine. Yet at the end of the specified time period, he was healthier than others who had eaten the rich foods and drunk the wine.

## II. WHAT WE EAT

We are what we eat! If we eat in unhealthy ways, we will end up unhealthy. Unhealthy habits will take their toll. I am not going to give you a nutrition talk this morning, but I hope to give you good information.

The average American consumes an astounding 2-3 pounds of sugar each week. This is not surprising considering that highly refined sugars in the forms of sucrose (table sugar), dextrose (corn sugar) and

high-fructose corn syrup are being processed into so many foods such as bread, breakfast cereal, mayonnaise, peanut butter, ketchup, spaghetti sauce, and a plethora of microwave meals.

Obesity is defined simply as too much body fat. Your body is made up of water, fat, protein, carbohydrate and various vitamins and minerals. If you have too much fat —especially in your waist area — you're at higher risk for health problems, including high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Obesity is now recognized as a major risk factor for coronary heart disease which can lead to heart attack. The main cause of obesity is taking in more calories than are used up in physical activity and daily life. When people eat too many calories, or too much saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol, their blood cholesterol levels often rise. That raises their risk of heart disease.

In the last 20 years, we have increased sugar consumption in the U.S. from 26 pounds to 135 lbs. of sugar per person per year! Prior to the turn of this century (1887-1890), the average consumption was only 5 lbs. per person per year! Cardiovascular disease and cancer were virtually unknown in the early 1900's.

There is much information that indicates sugar is food for cancer cells. If we want to be healthy, we should limit our sugar intake.

Of the over 4 million cancer patients being treated in the U.S. today, almost none are offered any scientifically guided nutrition therapy other than being told to "just eat good foods." Many cancer patients would have a major improvement in their conditions if they simply controlled the supply of cancer's preferred fuel: GLUCOSE.

Living food is food that nourishes. Fruits, vegetables and grains are living and when we eat them, they nourish our body and the cells there with nutrients that are healthy for us. There are reasons why God told the people of Israel they should not eat the fat of animals; that there were certain meats that they should stay away from.

If we are going to nourish and take care of our bodies, then we should be careful what we put in our

mouths. Processed foods are wonderful for shelf life, but contain many additives that are not healthy for us and may actually be contributing to many of our health problems.

Stimulants – caffeine, soda, smoking nicotine, drinking liquor are all things that will harm our body. May I encourage you to get away from those things? You may say, “Pastor you have gone to meddling now.”

NO. God wants us to be healthy. We are the ones who control what we do with what we eat and drink. I’m simply warning you that those things are not healthy for any of us and given regular use, they will bring disease to our body.

I stood by the bed of a lady from one of our former churches who was dying. Her family had gathered because she was very close to death. Death came and this lady’s daughter spoke to me with anger. She said, “I am so angry with God for allowing my Mom to have lung cancer and die like this so young.” I wanted to allow her to be angry, but at the same time, I had to speak truth. I said quietly to this teenager, “It’s not God’s fault. Your Mom got lung cancer because she smoked all her life. She could have chosen another path but it was her decision to smoke and the consequence of that was lung cancer. That was not God’s fault.”

Beloved, we abuse our bodies, make choices and get sick, incur diseases and then we come asking for prayer that God would heal us. God loves and will heal and will do some incredible things, but let’s be wise and not blame God for the choices we make that cause us to be sick.

What about self-control in all this? One of the fruits of the Spirit that we read about from Galatians is self-control. We need to be self-controlled when it comes to what we eat, what we drink and how we exercise and take care of ourselves. For Christ followers, the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

There is nothing wrong with eating a cookie or a few chips, or whatever it may be, but if we say we can’t stop, we can’t control our urges or the volume we put in our mouth, then we are denying the work of the Spirit which brings us self-control. Forget that marketing strategy that says you can’t stop with just one. If that is true, it’s better not to even have one.

God has given us a will and knowledge and we need to use that will and knowledge to be healthy.

### III. EXERCISE

**1 Tim. 4:8 - 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.**

I have some great news for you if you are already a member of the TAG center here in Mayville. A member of CLF has personally funded a corporate membership for CLF this year. None of those funds have come from our general fund or your tithes and offerings. What that means is that if you are an active member at CLF and you join the TAG center, you will get a reduction off the annual rate. If you already belong, you will receive a reduction at the time of your annual renewal. You have the opportunity to get fit physically at a lower rate, because you are an active member at CLF.

The scripture tells us that there is some value in physical training and exercise. Exercise gets your blood flowing. It gets us sweating so that toxins which are stored in our body are released.

Paul writes in his first letter to the Christ followers in Corinth these words: **1 Cor. 9:25-27 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.**

Paul often used the example of the athlete in his writings and the parallels between the physical and spiritual disciplines. We should not become so regimented that we are enslaved to physical exercise, but I will testify that when I have worked out, I do feel better, physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally. God so designed us that what affects one part of our being affects our whole being.

Paul goes on in his first letter to the followers of Christ in Corinth and warns them and us about destroying God’s temple which is our body.

**1 Cor. 3:17 - If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.** Be cautious of what you do with your body. You are not your own; you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body and spirit which belong to Him.

#### **IV. STRESS**

One of the factors that we must deal with is stress. I am not sure we understand completely how stress impacts the physical body. There are all types of diseases that show up as a result of stress.

#### **Conclusion:**

So here is our challenge this week. Work on getting fit physically. Take a walk. Push away from the table. Don't take a second helping. Practice self-control with fasting, or saying no to all the cookies in the jar. Eat things that nourish. Give up that habit of smoking, drinking or eating the sweet things that are making you sick. Eat more vegetables, grains, nuts and fruit.

Take care of this body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. You will live longer, enjoy life more, serve God better and hear Him say at the end of this life, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Here are some ways we can deal with stress – exercise, cast our anxiety on the Lord. Eliminate from your life or schedule excess demands that are not critically essential or important to your life – spiritually and relationally.

Often when we are stressed, we eat or drink. We turn to things that comfort us and for many people that is food. It is not because our body needs the food at that time. It is just because we turn to something that we enjoy, tastes good and we think it helps us. But actually, it does just the opposite.