

## Bodily Exercise?

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by Wayne Goff

Last week while helping my father in the local rehabilitation facility, I heard Dad complaining a little about the exercises they were requiring him to do. I smiled and said, "Dad, you know the Bible says 'bodily exercise profits a little...'" His eyes lit up, and he responded with his rich, deep and very calm voice: "...but godliness is profitable for all things..." Then I said to him: "Okay, finish the verse." He thought a minute and replied "...having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." So I finished my point by saying: "Why don't you meditate on Scripture while they're walking you down the hall? That way, you can have 'bodily exercise' and 'godliness' at the same time?" He smiled and faithfully did his exercises, which he would have done anyway. He may complain a bit, but he is actually a pretty good patient.

### Bodily Exercise Profits A Little

Indeed the Lord made the body for man. It is a **tool** for us to use to accomplish our heart's desire for good (Romans 6:13c). We should reasonably care of our body because it is "the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you..." (1 Corinthians 6:19). In other words, it is to be used to fulfill the commands of God revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. The context of 1 Corinthians explains that our body is not to be used for lustful excesses like gluttony, fornication, sinful wrath, etc. (see vv. 12-17).

Today doctors admonish us all to walk every day for at least fifteen minutes. That little bit profits us much more than we think. It shouldn't surprise us. Our body was made to walk from place to place.

Some people exercise too much. They are definitely in the minority but they want to build up their body in such a way as to draw excessive attention to themselves. This leads to sinful pride. So we must balance the desire to exercise properly with the desire to exercise too much or not at all! Remember, Paul referred to the physical body of sin as "this body of death" (Romans 7:24).

### Godliness Profits Everything

Would to God that all men would exercise themselves to godliness as much as they exercise their bodies! Godliness is properly defined as "reverence, respect; in the Bible everywhere piety toward God, godliness" [*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*].

Godliness includes (1) reverence and respect for God; (2) recognition of man's dependence upon God; and (3) homage paid to God to obtain His favor. Godliness exhibits itself in our conduct, our speech, and our sacrifices of worship and prayer.

**How does this help us in the life that now is?** Well, think about it. One who has reverence for God will not lie, cheat, steal, curse, commit fornication, rebel against his parents, break a promise, cheat on his taxes, etc., etc. He knows that God condemns those things and he does not do them out of respect for God and man who was made in God's image. The Ten Commandments include six things that are good to avoid — dishonoring parents, murder, adultery, theft, bearing false witness, coveting (Ex. 20:12-17). Obviously it is good to keep these things from one's youth (see Mark 10:20). The first of these commandments carries with it the promise "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:2-3).

**How does this help us in the life which is to come?** This answer should be obvious. In order to "inherit eternal life" one must "keep the commandments" of God (Matthew 19:17). The grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, Titus 2:11-12. If one is truly "godly," then he acts accordingly. Eternal life will be his final reward.

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