

Exercising Yourself unto Godliness

Hans R. Waldvogel:

Selected Verses:

1 Timothy 4:7-8. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

1 Chronicles 28:9b. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

Opening:

A man I worked with said to me, "What you need is a little exercise." So I joined the YMCA in Chicago, and we had calisthenics there two or three times a week, swimming. And in a little while I was come right out of my sickness, and I came into a new life as it were.

I didn't overdo, yet they sure put us through the sprouts. Of course, we had "in those days, when you worked, you worked. It wasn't like today where you go to work in the morning "if you feel like it" nine, half-past nine. Then, half-past ten you have a coffee break, and then around eleven o'clock, you yawn and look at the clock and "Well, we had a 58 hour week, if I remember correctly. And then in the evening, three times a week, calisthenics, and other exercise. I remember sometimes my body felt as if all my bones were on joints. Did you ever feel like that? Our gym was upstairs, and we had to go downstairs to the swimming pool, and sometimes I just almost rolled down. Everything was just wriggling from exercising.

But then the war broke out, and then I was called to the war. And I found out that I was one of the healthiest of all the fellows that were drafted in the war. "Well, it all had happened because I had exercised.

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Selected Quotes:

"I have written unto you young men because ye are strong. Oh, for strong young men "spiritually strong young men "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man! Young men, do you exercise yourselves unto godliness? You "ll never be godly if you don't. You "ll be sickly, you "ll be a consumptive, you "ll perish: "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall utterly fall." But as we heard the other night, there is a fountain from which you can draw life, strength. Oh, the Bible speaks of a fullness: a tremendous, exuberant fullness. It speaks of the power of His resurrection.

How strange that people expect to be ready for the rapture without exercising themselves unto godliness. The Apostle Paul says, "I'm not making a fool of myself. I'm not preaching to others and myself be a castaway. So fight I not as one that beateth the air. I know what I'm doing." Young man, young woman, you've got to know what you're doing!

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"They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." Oh, you've got to see that goal, like the Apostle Paul who saw "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He says, "They all run, but one receiveth the prize. So run, that ye may obtain."

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But beloved, to "exercise thyself rather" to please God, to be ready for God, to be ready when Jesus comes "it requires exercise. You cannot get filled with the Holy Ghost if you do not go to Jesus Christ and take oil. They took their lamps "they took their witness "but they took no oil with them. Are you taking oil with you? Are you seeing to it that the Holy Spirit finds room in your life? Are you "exercising yourself,"

beloved, "unto godliness"? [It] requires more diligence than any earthly exercise that we know of, because this is an exercise to obtain an incorruptible crown. Do you pray? Do you pray "in faith"? Do you "add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love"? Do you "put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"? Do you "diligently follow every good work"?

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Oh, Father! That's what prayer means. It means meeting You "Our Father who art in heaven, The Father of my Lord Jesus Christ. Where is He? He's in the prayer closet. He's where you get on your knees, where you lift your heart, where you say, "My Father, Thy kingdom come! Deliver me, O God! I have seen Your promise, Your "exceeding great and precious" promise: that You will "give the Holy Ghost to them that ask Him." God, I'm not going to let go. I'm going to come to You. I'm going to wait upon You, because You said You'd give "power to the faint." Beloved, there's no one among us that has a right to stay faint, to stay weak, to be defeated "not a single one of us, because He!

God, do I "exercise myself unto godliness"? Why, then I will certainly avail myself of this marvelous invitation that God Almighty gives me: "the Father Himself loveth you" "the Father Himself will reward you openly." It'll be visible. There will be "rivers of living water" flowing from you. Beloved, it is high time that in this assembly God can raise some examples of godliness, some A-1 soldiers, not 4-F, but number A-1, having "on the whole armor of God," whose eyes are ablaze with enthusiasm to please God because the Holy Ghost has driven out every other spirit, and has strengthened them "with might in the inner man" "they're sons of God.

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It's high time that in this assembly God had some eminent saints. And listen, it's high time that you become an eminent saint. What keeps you? What is it that keeps you from being healthy, pure in heart? What is it that keeps you from running after Jesus and being "strengthened with might"? I know what it is: you don't pray. I can feel that sometimes when I come into homes "there's a hole there. I come into other homes and God is there. You can't fool me.

Beloved, it's a tragedy the lives in some people that profess with their mouths to be saints, and they haven't got the stuff in them. And secretly, they sin "they live for the devil. And secretly, in their hearts there crawls the vermin of fleshly lusts, and all these things possess them and eat their vitals" "the worm that shall never die." Listen, it's high time you were rid of that. It is high time you came out of that "bondage, sorrow, and night." It is high time you came down from your pride and your conceit.

Beloved, nothing can save me, nothing can deliver me. All my own efforts won't do it, unless I make this one effort: to wait upon my God. There's nothing like praying in the Holy Ghost. And if I don't, beloved, my ruin is certain "is more certain than the rising of the sun in the morning.

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Oh, when God sees you getting up in the morning to be alone with God, to gain an extra half-hour to be alone with God! Does God watch the sun rise? Sure, He makes it rise. But I tell you, He has more interest in your rising out of your lazy beds to be alone with God than in the sun. The sun will rise alright, rise in time. But I tell you, God will meet you. But there's no use talking like this. I know if you're a procrastinator, if you're lazy, go ahead! Go to sleep!

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Listen, if you look for Jesus, you'll find out He's looking for you, oh, glory to God! What is the best part of every day? Is it when you get up to select your breakfast food out of a thousand different boxes and put heavy cream on them, and strawberry jam, and what else? What is the best part of the day? Or is it when you meet your girlfriend, or your boyfriend, or you go out skating, or you go some tomfoolery someplace to satisfy your flesh? Listen, "They that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh." That occupies them. God says, "Their God is their belly." You might just as well kneel down and say, "Buddha, buddha, buddha, buddha, buddha." You'd be better off than to worship your belly and worship your flesh.

But is the best part of the day the day when you can be alone with God? Do you fight for it? Do you steal time from reading and from company?

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If you really desire and hunger after righteousness, you will seek Him. And â€œwhen you seek Him, He will be found of you.â€ He will be found of you. Oh, the wonder of finding God, meeting Godâ€”not just to be in His presence, but to be united to Him, to be identified with Him forevermore.

Illustrations:

An illustration of the rigors endured by worldly competitors: â€œWhat do these prize fighters do in order to win the fight? Oh, what they donâ€™t do!â€ (at 5:29)

An illustration of a pastor with a lack of ambition. (from 7:16)

Illustrations of diligence: J. S. Bach, and Antonio Canova. (from 8:48)

An illustration of a disastrous ambition: â€œWell, she wanted a husband. Sheâ€™s got one. Brother, sheâ€™s got a husband. Sheâ€™d be better off to have married a gorilla.â€ (from 10:59)

An illustration of prayerless ministers: â€œRevival was dead, and you couldnâ€™t do a thing with them! After almost 40 years he said, â€”My life is wasted, my life is broken, my ministry is defeated.â€ Why, of course!â€ (from 24:04)

German at 2:42:

Verstehst du? â€” You got that?

German at 9:20:

Hanswurst â€” a tomfool.

References:

Jesus Calls Us, a hymn by Cecil F. Alexander.

Jesus, I Come, a hymn by William T. Sleeper, 1887:

Out of my bondage, sorrow, and night,
 Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
 Into Thy freedom, gladness, and light,
 Jesus, I come to Thee;
 Out of my sickness, into Thy health,
 Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
 Out of my sin and into Thyself,
 Jesus, I come to Thee.