

## Exercise

Ponder: The benefits of exercise

Scripture: "Exercise yourself toward godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7, NKJV).

I have an exercise routine. I walk on a machine called an elliptical three times a week, going as fast as I can for thirty minutes. Lately I've been reaching 4.2 miles. The machine gives me varying degrees of resistance to simulate walking up a hill.

I can't say I enjoy the workouts; in fact, they're rather boring even though I have the television on to distract me. So why do I keep exercising? For my health, of course, especially my heart health. My family history is awful as it relates to heart disease. My mother, brothers, and other kin died of heart disease well before their time. I'm trying to prevent that same thing from happening to me. I know I'll die of something, but it doesn't have to be a heart attack and it doesn't have to be now!

The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to exercise. But he had a different and more important kind of exercise in mind. "Exercise yourself toward godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7). Godliness is reverence toward God and toward the things of God such as the Bible, the church, and worship. Paul wasn't telling Timothy "not" to exercise his body, but was emphasizing the higher priority of strengthening himself spiritually. Listen to his follow-up in 4:8 – "For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." Paul acknowledged the benefit of bodily exercise for one's physical health but emphasized the greater importance of godliness.

You see, godliness has a positive effect even on our physical wellbeing. Ungodly behavior like using alcohol and other drugs compromises our health and can lead to an early grave! The same is true of sexual immorality, criminal activity, and a host of other ungodly practices. But aside from the benefits of godliness here-and-now, it also has the promise of that life which is to come. Bodily exercise has little or no bearing on my relationship with the Lord, but godliness definitely does!

I encourage you to exercise your body. But more importantly, exercise yourself toward godliness!

Hymn: "Oh To Be Like Thee"

Prayer: Father, we thank You for the measure of physical health we enjoy. Help us to place an even higher value on our fellowship with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.