

Lead Yourself

Lesson 2-5: Your Health

Discussion Guide – Confidentiality Reminder

One Word Check-in

Update – Personal, Business, Leadership

“Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives’ tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. ‘Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.’” 1 Timothy 4:7-8 (NLT)

When we are young, we think we are invincible. As we age, we begin to experience health issues, and these typically get more significant with time. It is common to wish that we had taken better care of our bodies.

Inevitably, when health issues strike, we become consumed by them. The more painful or significant the health crisis, the more it overtakes our thoughts and energy and those of our loved ones. It can even consume our waking hours and effect our sleep. It has the potential to also draw us closer to the Father, but no matter how a health crisis comes about, it consumes our time and energy.

The benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle are well documented. Eating well and exercising increases all aspects of our health and mortality. At different points in life, we all have likely resolved to improve our health habits. If you “fell-off-the-wagon” and were unable to follow through, it may have affected you mentally and spiritually.

Motivation and discipline alone may not be successful in implementing change, but they are essential to effecting change in your life. This is especially true about changing eating and exercise habits. Typically, after a few weeks, motivation and discipline will wane unless your life depends on it. The crucial step to sustainable change is figuring out how to develop a habit.

Below are steps to create a new habit – for any area of life. To make the desired change permanent, we must make the desired change a habit. As the habit becomes normal, it then becomes hard to give up. Here are some ideas to help create a new habit:

- Write down what success looks like. Be specific and reasonable. Put it somewhere that you can see it every day.
- Know that you are in this for the long-term.
- Schedule the time needed on your calendar just like it was a meeting.
- Find an accountability partner(s).
- Hire a trainer if you are going to the gym.
- Offer yourself forgiveness (which means no guilt) when you mess up, but don’t do it again.
- Measure and evaluate your success one little step at a time.
- Know this is important so don’t give up.

Shared Experiences:

- Can someone share a health issue they had that necessitated a change in their habits? Were you able to make a change and how?
- Has anyone found that motivation and discipline alone has been enough for you to eat healthy and exercise? What about for any other changes in your life? Yes/no and why?
- Can anyone share a time they felt out of place exercising (maybe at a gym) and how they overcame that fear? How did being more active help you in your life?
- Can someone share a time they tried to cultivate a spiritual habit and either succeeded or failed? Why was this the outcome and what did you do about it?
- Has anyone ever had an accountability partner for a spiritual or physical habit they were trying to form? How did it go? What advice would you give the group?

Bottom line: To put everything in perspective, always devote yourself to spiritual growth before you focus on going to the gym. But it is important to take care of your health. Your family and friends need you.

One Word Check-out

Dig Deeper

Want to learn more?

- *Article:* [My Life Check | Life's Simple 7](#) from the American Heart Association. This is an excellent assessment tool to evaluate heart health.
- *Video:* [Life's Simple 7: Eat Better](#) by Dr. Clyde Yancey from the American Heart Association
- *Abstract:* [Impact of Healthy Lifestyle Factors on Life Expectancies in the U.S. Population](#) from the American Heart Association Journals
- *Video:* [Work Life Balance in Business](#) by Henry Kaestner (Executive Chairman) and David Morkin (CEO)
- *Article:* [Healthy Lifestyle: 5 Keys to a Longer Life](#) by Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School
- *Article:* [How to Build Healthy Habits](#) from the New York Times
- *Article:* [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans 2nd edition](#) by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018. This is a comprehensive document that includes information for children, adults and senior adults. Below is a quote from page 34:

Strong scientific evidence shows that physical activity delays death from all causes. This includes the leading causes of death, such as heart disease and some cancers, as well as other causes of death. This effect is remarkable in two ways:

First, only a few lifestyle choices have as large an effect on mortality as physical activity. It has been estimated that people who are physically active for approximately 150 minutes a week have a 33 percent lower risk of all-cause mortality than those who are not physically active.

Second, it is not necessary to do large amounts of activity or vigorous-intensity activity to reduce the risk of all-cause mortality. Benefits start to accumulate with any amount of moderate- or vigorous-intensity physical activity.

Creating habits

There is an abundance of information about forming new habits. Many articles state it takes 21 days to a month, but we all know it takes longer when it comes to eating better and exercising more. Healthline.com states in "[How Long Does It Take for a New Behavior to Become Automatic](#)" that "it can take anywhere from 18 to 254 days for a person to form a new habit and an average of 66 days for a new behavior to become automatic." Therefore, expect to spend significant mental energy to develop your new habit.