



FAMILY FITNESS

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





Family Fitness

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Family Fitness

SERMON REFERENCE: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

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1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body...”

We have been commanded to treat our bodies as temples to maintain and dedicate to God for His glory. Our bodies are carefully crafted, finely tuned machines, and our maintenance manual is the Word of God.

There are some reasons why we have physical ailments that are not in our control; but whatever we can control, we are responsible for maintaining.

There are four principles to remember as we work on our family fitness.

1. Family fitness is a matter of discipline.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

We must be disciplined in our diet and exercise, which extends our life expectancy and improves our wellbeing. In a world of fad diets and quick fixes, we are called to consume natural, real foods, within the right portions. There needs to be discipline in how we rest. Psalm 127:2 warns us: “It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for He gives His beloved sleep.”

2. Family fitness is a matter of disposition.

Choosing to express positive emotions should be part of our family fitness regime.

Adrian Rogers says, “Hardening of the attitudes is just as bad as hardening of the arteries.”

Stress will derail us physically; it will cripple our thinking, weaken our bodies, and reduce our efficiency. We must guard our hearts and minds against hatefulness and stress.

3. Family fitness is a matter of devotion.

When we love God and serve Him in the church as we should, we can experience an increase in health.

4. Family fitness is a matter of decision.

We will not stumble across family fitness, physically, mentally, or spiritually. It takes work to gain and maintain, work that we decide to do intentionally. Our families should stand out by our faith and our fitness, recognizing our responsibility to maintain our bodies as unto the Lord.

LIFE APPLICATION

Do you recognize any areas in your health, or your family's health, that could improve? Make the decision to maintain your family's health, physically and spiritually.



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- 1) INTRODUCTION
 - a) Something that is far more valuable than any prized material possession and something that God wants us to have is health and fitness.
 - b) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
 - i) God has paid a great price for us, and we are not our own.
 - ii) God has commanded us to glorify Him in our body as well as our spirit.
 - c) Psalm 139:14
 - i) Our bodies are carefully crafted, finely tuned machines, and the maintenance manual is the Word of God.
 - d) We are God's purchased possession, and we are the temple of God.
 - i) Your body does not belong to you; therefore, you are to be dedicated to God.
 - e) Romans 12:1-2
 - i) Is your body presented to God?
 - f) God is interested in the total person.
 - i) He is interested in your spirit, soul and body.
 - ii) 1 Thessalonians 5:23
 - iii) With your spirit, you have spiritual life and know the world above you.
 - iv) With your soul, you have psychological life and know the world around you.
 - v) With your body, you have physical life and know the world beneath you.
 - (1) When your spirit is right, you are holy.
 - (2) When your soul is right, you are happy.
 - (3) When your body is right, you are healthy.
 - (a) A perfectly tuned person would be holy, happy and healthy.
 - g) 1 Thessalonians 5:23
 - i) God wants us to be blameless.
 - ii) We ought not to do anything to our body, spirit or soul that is blame worthy.
 - (1) This doesn't mean that we will be in perfect health.
 - (a) We won't have perfect health until we get to Heaven.
 - h) There are many reasons why we have physical ailments:
 - i) There is a curse upon all creation.
 - (1) Romans 5:12
 - (2) We live in a world that has the curse of sin upon it because of Adam's sin.
 - (3) There is no such thing as a natural death; all death is unnatural.
 - (a) It is a result of sin.
 - ii) We have violated God's moral law.
 - (1) Many people die just because of the sin in their lives.
 - (2) 1 Corinthians 11:30-31



- (a) The word “sleep” here means “dead.”
 - (3) Sometimes sickness is the judgment of Almighty God.
 - (4) Sometimes people are sick because they are afflicted by Satan.
 - (a) Job was sick because of this.
 - (i) Job 2:6
 - (b) The Apostle Paul spoke of a thorn in the flesh that was a messenger of Satan.
 - (i) 2 Corinthians 12:7
 - iii) The discipline of God
 - (1) Psalm 119:71
 - (2) Sometimes we have to be flat on our backs before we can look up and see more clearly.
 - iv) A violation of God’s natural laws
 - (1) Psalm 119:71
 - (2) We sometimes flaunt natural laws and expect to be well.
 - (a) Many people poison their bodies with nicotine.
 - (b) Many don’t get enough physical rest.
 - (c) Many people overeat.
 - (3) We want God to give us a pass to go ahead and violate His natural law, and then we think we are going to be well and ask God to heal us while we continue to do the things that will make us sick.
 - (4) If we continue to willingly violate the natural laws that God has laid down in His Bible, then we may become a burden to ourselves and to our families.
 - i) The Bible teaches that our mind and soul are to rule our body, just as our spirit rules our soul.
 - i) Our body is really a servant.
 - ii) But if we abuse that servant, our body may rise up and smite us for it.
 - j) Most people value money more than they value health.
 - i) Money is the most envied, but it is the least enjoyed.
 - ii) Health is the least envied, but it is the most enjoyed.
 - k) Matthew 9:12
 - i) Many times, we’re trying to break God’s natural laws and then go to the doctor for him to undo what we have done.
 - l) Today’s message will give four principles for family fitness.
- 2) FAMILY FITNESS IS A MATTER OF DISCIPLINE
- a) The words “disciple” and “discipline” are linked together.
 - i) We cannot call ourselves a disciple if we are not disciplined.
 - ii) Someone once said that passion is the degree of what one is willing to endure to achieve God’s purpose for his life.
 - (1) Many are living lives without passion because they do not want to be disciplined.
 - (2) We don’t want to endure certain things.
 - b) We need to be disciplined in matters of diet and what we eat.
 - i) Many of us are breaking God’s laws concerning what we eat.



- ii) 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - iii) The Bible mentions healthy foods, such as whole grains, herbs, fish, fowl, and clean animals.
 - iv) The Bible also mentions no eating of fat or blood.
 - (1) Blood in the Bible is a symbol of life, and God prohibited His people from ingesting blood.
 - (a) Blood carries infections and toxins that circulate in an animal's body.
 - (2) The Bible warns very clearly about the consumption of fat.
 - v) The Bible makes a distinction between clean and unclean animals.
 - (1) Genesis 7:2
 - (a) Not every animal went on the ark two by two; the clean animals went on the ark by sevens.
 - (i) They were there for food.
 - (b) This was before the Mosaic Law.
 - (2) God puts all animals into two categories:
 - (a) Those that are scavengers.
 - (b) Those that are not scavengers.
 - (3) God warned against eating scavengers, which eat the dead and decaying flesh of other animals.
 - vi) The Bible warns against junk food.
 - (1) Proverbs 23:1-3
 - (a) The Bible calls these deceitful dainties.
 - (2) Sometimes our churches are guilty of encouraging gluttony.
 - (a) Proverbs 23:2
 - vii) We need to find the foods that God created for us to eat and avoid the others.
 - (1) We should also eat foods the way that God created them as much as possible.
 - viii) We should also eat foods in the right proportion.
- c) We need to be disciplined in our exercise.
- i) 1 Timothy 4:8
 - (1) This verse should not be used as an excuse to not exercise.
 - (2) He is saying that there is profit in exercise but that godliness is more profitable.
 - ii) God wants us to exercise our bodies.
 - (1) Moderate, intensive exercise at least three times a week has been shown to increase our life span.
 - (2) Walking is a good exercise.
- d) We need to be disciplined in the matter of rest.
- i) Psalm 127:2
 - (1) This verse literally says, "He is giving to you while you sleep."
- e) The "ABC's" of fitness are diet, exercise and rest.
- 3) FAMILY FITNESS IS A MATTER OF DISPOSITION (Proverbs 15:17)
- a) Hardening of the attitudes is just as bad as hardening of the arteries.



- b) Proverbs 15:17
 - i) A vegetable plate with love is better than filet mignon and hatefulness.
 - c) 1 Thessalonians 5:23
 - d) The Greek word for “soul” is “psyche.”
 - i) This is the word from which we get psychology and psychiatric.
 - ii) The soul is our psyche.
 - (1) It is the seed of our emotions.
 - e) There are two kinds of emotions:
 - i) Positive (healthy)
 - ii) Negative (unhealthy)
 - f) We can choose our emotions.
 - i) Philippians 4:7-8
 - (1) We can choose our thoughts like we choose our friends.
 - (a) Why let the devil mess with your mind?
 - ii) We can reject bad thoughts and choose our attitudes.
 - iii) To rejoice is a choice.
 - g) If our disposition gets upset, we can experience an upset stomach, headaches, family arguments, and a dull memory.
 - i) We will cripple our thinking, weaken our body and reduce our efficiency.
 - ii) This is caused by negative stress.
 - iii) Stress can do great damage to the temple.
 - (1) The mind is the center of stress.
 - (2) All stress is self-imposed.
 - (a) We have to agree with it in order to have it.
 - (3) Doctors speak of a psychosomatic illness.
 - (a) “Psycho” speaks of the mind; “soma” speaks of the body.
 - (b) This is the mind making the body sick.
 - (4) Surveys have shown that many patients who go to a physician have symptoms that are caused or aggravated by mental stress.
 - iv) Stress is that gap between our strength and the demands that are put upon us.
 - v) Isaiah 40:28-31
 - (1) The word “renew” literally means that they shall exchange their weakness for His strength.
 - (2) Families need to sit down together and find out what things are stressing them, repent of those things that they are doing wrong, turn their lives over to the Lord, and wait upon the Lord.
- 4) FAMILY FITNESS IS A MATTER OF DEVOTION
- a) When we love God and serve God, then we will be healthier.
 - i) Proverbs 10:27
 - b) Scientific research has shown that church goers tend to live longer, stay married and feel happier than those who say that they don't believe in God.



- i) Faith is good for our health.
- ii) One study showed that the more a person goes to church, the better his or her health.
- c) Faith is good for family fitness.
- d) God wants our families fit.
 - i) Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii) Psalm 139:14
 - iii) There are some reasons why we may be sick that are beyond our control, but there are other things that we can control and should control.

5) FAMILY FITNESS IS A MATTER OF DECISION

- a) It matters not that we understand the facts of family fitness if we don't make a decision for family fitness.
- b) Joshua 24:15
 - i) It is a matter of decision.
 - (1) How do you serve the Lord?
 - ii) 1 Thessalonians 5:23
 - (1) It deals with the body in discipline, the soul in disposition, the spirit in devotion, but we have to make a choice.
 - (a) We must decide that for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.
 - iii) There were other gods calling upon the Israelites.
 - (1) There were the gods they knew back in Egypt.
 - (2) There were the gods of the Amorites, in whose land they dwelt.
 - (3) Joshua was telling the people to look at the gods and philosophies around them, and then look at Jehovah God.
 - (a) The Lord God is greater than all these other gods and philosophies.
- c) We must choose whom we are going to serve.
 - i) We are free to choose, we're not free not to choose, and we're not free to choose the consequences of our choice.
 - ii) Not to choose is a choice.
 - iii) Once we make a choice, then our choice chooses for us.
- d) We need to get together with our families and examine what we are eating, what we are doing, and what we are thinking.
 - i) Will we continue to live this way?
 - ii) Will we make a decision about family fitness so that we might be a testimony to our neighbors and those around us?
- e) Our families ought to stand out in matters of faith, fun, finance and in matters of fitness.

6) CONCLUSION

- a) The message today is not just about physical health.
 - i) What difference would it make to live a healthy life, live to a serene old age, and then die and rise in the judgment to meet a God whom you do not know with your sins unconfessed and unforgiven?



- ii) 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- b) God wants you saved so much that He sent His beloved Son to pay for your sins with His blood on the cross.
- c) If you will trust Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, He will forgive your sins and save you today.
 - i) Will you trust Him?
- d) Pray to Him now, and ask Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Be finding in your Bibles First Corinthians chapter 6, First Corinthians chapter 6. In a moment were going to begin reading in verse 19. An unknown person paid \$3,005,000 for one baseball. \$3,005,000 for one baseball. The thing that made it different is it was Mark McGuire's 70th home-run ball and somebody valued that baseball so much; a baseball that could be bought for about \$9.00, that they paid \$3,005,000 for that one baseball. Well, let me ask you a question. Would you like to have it? Let me tell you something that you can have that is far more valuable I think that God wants you to have, and that is fitness; health. Health is far more valuable than Mark McGuire's baseball. Would you agree with that? I hope so. The Bible says in Psalm 139 verse 14, concerning our bodies, that, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made," and that, "Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit of God." Look in First Corinthians chapter 8 verses 19 and 20, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." God paid a greater price for you than that man paid for that baseball and you're not your own. Therefore, God has enjoined you, yes, has commanded you to glorify God in your body, as well as in your spirit.

Now the Psalmist said, concerning his body, that he was, "Fearfully and wonderfully made," Psalm 139 and verse 14. The Psalmist said, "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Your body is a carefully crafted, finely tuned machine, and thank God it comes with a maintenance manual. We have the Word of God.

Now remember, we are His purchased possession, and so we are the temple of God. Now, if we are the temple of God, don't you think that we need to look into some temple maintenance? I know some of us are in a temple building program, but what we need to think about is a little temple maintenance. The Bible teaches that our bodies do not belong to us; therefore, they are to be dedicated to God. Now some people think that the spiritual thing is to take care of your spirit and your soul, but who cares about the body? They think that perhaps that the body is of no consequence or perhaps even evil, but Romans 12 verses 1 and 2 the apostle Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, your bodies, a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God."

Now, is your body presented to God? Is it holy? Is it acceptable to God? Now God is interested in the total person. God is interested, yes, in your spirit and God is interested in your soul, but God is also interested in your body. First Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 23 says, "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Body, soul, and spirit, or in the order that Paul gave it: spirit, soul, and body. With my spirit I have spiritual life and I know the world above me; with my soul I have psychological life and I know the world around me; with my body I have physical life and I'm related to the world beneath me. When my spirit is right I'm holy, when my soul is right I'm happy, when my body is right I'm healthy. And



a perfectly tuned person would be holy, happy, and healthy. Most folks I know are unholy, unhappy, and unhealthy. I mean they're out of tune, they're out of whack, they're not what God really intended for us to be. Listen to that verse again, First Thessalonians 5 verse 23, "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, God wants us to be blameless. That is, we ought not to do anything to our body, spirit, or souls that is blame worthy. It doesn't mean that we're going to be in perfect health. We won't have perfect health until we get to Heaven. There are a number of reasons why we have physical ailments.

Let me just give you three or four of them before we talk about family fitness. First of all, we have to understand that there is a curse upon all creation. We live in a world that has the curse of sin upon it and Romans chapter 5 verse 12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for all that have sinned." Now in that sense we all have a terminal illness, don't we? The latest statistic on death is one out of one people die. We all have a terminal illness because of Adam's sin so we might as well admit that. Every so often we say that so-and-so died a natural death. There's no such thing as a natural death. All death is unnatural. It is a result of sin. All right. So that's one reason that we're sick.

Then sometimes we're sick because we have violated God's moral law and every kick has a kickback, every sin fascinates, and then it assassinates, and many people die just because of sin in their lives. For example, the church at Corinth they were living with blasphemous ways at the Lord's Supper. They were not discerning the Lord's body and Paul warned them in First Corinthians 11 in verses 30 and 31, "For this cause many are sick and weakly among you, and some sleep." And he meant by sleep some are dead, not discerning the Lord's body. And he says, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." Sometimes sickness is the judgment of Almighty God. Sometimes we're sick because we're afflicted by Satan. Job was sick that way. The Lord said to Satan in the book of Job chapter 2 verse 6 concerning Job, "Behold, Satan, he's in thine hand; but save his life." And in Second Corinthians 12 verse 7 the apostle Paul talked of a thorn in the flesh that was the result of Satan. So sometimes we're under satanic attack and that may be the reason that we're sick.

Sometimes we're sick as the discipline of God and we know that to be true. David said in Psalm 119 verse 71, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes." Sometimes we have to be flat on our back before we can look up and we see more clearly through eyes that have been washed by tears.

And sometimes, however, and that's what I want to zero in on today, our sickness is due to a violation of God's natural laws. I mean it, we just go out and flaunt God's natural laws and expect to be well. For example, a lot of people are poisoning their bodies with nicotine. Now, somebody says, "Well, can I smoke and go to Heaven?" The truth of the matter is you may get there a whole lot quicker. Smoking won't send you to hell; it'll just make you smell like you've been there. You violate God's natural law. God made that nicotine to kill bugs, not people, but you take that into your body. One pastor was asked to pray for another pastor who was sick, and that pastor said, "I'm not going to pray for him. Why should I pray for him? He does the work of ten men and eats everything in sight." And then, you know, we just want God somehow to give us a pass to go ahead and violate His



natural law and then think we're going to be well and ask God to heal us while we continue to do the things that'll make us sick.

Now it's very, very important that we think and your family thinks about your family being fit. Because when you naturally, willingly violate the laws that God has laid down in His Bible, I'm talking about natural laws, if you're not careful you will become a burden to yourself and a burden to your family and your family will become a burden to other people. You see, God tells us that your mind, your soul is to rule your body, just as your spirit rules your soul. Your body really is a servant, but if you abuse that servant, if you abuse your servant, that is, your body, your body may rise up and smite you for it. Your body is very unforgiving. Now most folks value money more than they value health. Isn't that true? They value money more than they value health. We value things more than we value health until we lose our health. So many people spend the first half of their lives accumulating their wealth by wasting their health. Then they spend the last half of their life spending their wealth trying to get their health back and they are unhappy in both halves of their lives.

Now, it's a funny thing about health. We value money more than health. Money is the most envied, but it is the least enjoyed. Health is the least envied, but it is the most enjoyed, that is, until you lose it. When the wealthy man loses his health then he would give all of his wealth to get his health back, but he doesn't think about that health. I'm talking about the simple principles of family fitness. Now, I'm not a doctor and I thank God for doctors. I believe in doctors and Jesus said in Matthew 9:12, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Luke was called the beloved physician. And I thank God for what doctors can do, but you know what many of us are trying to do? We're trying to break God's natural laws and then go to the doctor and try to get him to put the scrambled eggs back in the shell. We're trying to get him to undo what we have done and that's not the purpose of medicine.

Now let me give you four principles, four principles for family fitness. Are you ready for these? Number one; family fitness is a matter of discipline. Write it down, family fitness is a matter of discipline. Now we call ourselves disciples. Well the word disciple and the word discipline are linked together. We cannot call ourselves a disciple if we're not disciplined. We had a staff meeting and one of our staff talked about passion. And he said we need to live our lives with a passion, and then he gave a description of passion and this is what he said, "Passion is the degree of what one is willing to endure to achieve God's purpose for his life." I love that. Listen to it again, "Passion is the degree of what one is willing to endure to achieve God's purpose for his life." Many of us are living lives without passion because we do not want to be disciplined. We don't want to endure certain things. For example, we need to be disciplined in matters of diet and the things that we eat. Now I know that many of us have gone on diets and we fail miserably. I have a friend who said, "I went on a liquid diet. It didn't work well either. I mean it was very difficult: three shakes for breakfast, four shakes for lunch, and two sensible dinners, but I still didn't lose any weight." Then he said, "I tried many diets. I tried the mush diet, you eat while riding on a dogsled; the eggplant diet, you plant an egg and whatever comes up you eat. Well, we've tried all kinds of diets. They just don't seem to work. I heard of a woman, somebody said she's a light eater. As soon as it gets daylight she starts eating. And,



many of us fail to understand that we are breaking God's laws concerning what we eat. Now you may think that the Bible doesn't say much about what we eat, but the Bible has much to say about what we eat, and also the Bible gives us an injunction in First Corinthians chapter 10 verse 31 which says, "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That ought to be put in our kitchens, maybe on your refrigerator. "Whatever we eat, whatever we drink, do all to the glory of God."

People are telling us that all foods are equal. It doesn't make any difference, that all foods are equal, that green beans and jelly beans are the same. I mean that, they really believe that. Friend, that's absurd. If you believe that, you're going to make your body a walking garbage can. The Bible mentions healthy foods, whole grains, herbs, fish, fowl, clean animals, no eating of fat, no eating of blood. Blood in the Bible is a symbol of life, but also God prohibited His people from the ingestion of blood. Why is it? Well, we know that the blood carries infections and toxins that circulate in an animal's body and when you eat these things, when you eat and ingest animals' blood you are needlessly exposing yourself to these infections and these poisons. The Bible warns very clearly about the consumption of fat. Scientists are now just catching up with this, that we are to have diets that are low in fat. The heart diseases; it's an old disease. They've actually done autopsies on Egyptian mummies and found fat deposits in their arteries. The Bible has a lot to say about what we eat.

The Bible makes a difference between clean and unclean animals. And we say, "Well, that's Mosaic Law." Listen, you'd better go back and read your Bible. You talk about everybody; everybody talks about how the animals went on the ark. How did the animals go on the ark? Two by two, two by two, two by two. Go read your Bible in Genesis 7 verse 2 and you'll find out that some animals went on the ark by sevens. People, oh, where's that? Just go read your Bible. What animals went on the ark by sevens? The clean animals. They were there for food. That was before the Mosaic Law. That was before any of these ceremonial laws. They're clean animals. What is the difference between the clean and the unclean animals? God puts all animals into two categories: those who are scavengers and those who are not scavengers. God says don't eat the scavengers, those scavengers who will eat rotten, dead, decaying flesh, those scavengers who eat the off-scouring of other animals. You eat that and then you are putting all of that into your body. The Bible has a lot to say about what we eat. The Bible even warns against junk food. You know somebody thinks the three basic food groups are: fast, fried, and junk. The Bible, listen to this, Proverbs 23 verses 1 through 3, "When thou sittest with a ruler, consider diligently what is set before thee." That is, the ruler is the high muckety-muck, he can have all of his little dainties, "And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite." And then the Bible says, "Be not desirous of his dainties," listen to this, "they are deceitful meat." A lot of us are eating deceitful meat, dainties, and people are telling us, "Well, it makes no difference." Do you know a sad thing? I was reading an article that shows that Christians are fatter than ordinary people. That's true. It's in Christianity Today from January 11, 1999. "Christians tend to be more overweight than pagans." Listen to this. "States with a high rate religious affiliation Mississippi, Michigan, and Indiana have heftier citizens than such strongholds of secularity as Massachusetts, Hawaii, and Colorado." Now listen to this, "Among all denominations Southern Baptists are the



real heavyweights.” Southern Baptists; maybe we ought to call ourselves Southern Fried Baptists. I mean, Southern Baptists have the idea that when we go to Heaven, Heaven is going to be a great big banquet table up there with fried chicken, buttered biscuits, and pecan pie. I think sometimes our churches are guilty of encouraging gluttony, promoting gluttony. The Bible says in Proverbs 23 and verse 2, “If you are a man given to gluttony, put a knife to your throat if you’re a man given to appetite.”

“The average American consumes 150 pounds of refined sugar every year in this country, and some people eat as much as 350 pounds of sugar.” That’s a pound a day, that’s a pound a day, and this is a deceitful dainty. It’s processed which means that the nutriment is taken out of it. All that is left is naked calories. That is a deceitful dainty. Somebody went through the supermarkets and found out that 92% of the items in the supermarket, 92% of them contain sugar; deceitful dainties. You see we live off of half of what we eat; the doctor lives off the other half. Now, what do we do? Well, find those foods that God created for food and eat those and avoid the others. And eat things as much as possible the way that God created them before they have been poisoned and preserved and mutilated and stabbed and baked and fried, or whatever else. And then, friend, only eat them in the right proportion. It’s what God’s says. “If you are given to appetite put a knife to your throat.”

But not only do we need to be disciplined in what we eat, we need to be disciplined in our exercise. Put down First Timothy chapter 4 verse 8, the Bible says, “For bodily exercise profiteth little.” Now some people have taken that as an excuse not to exercise, but that’s not what he’s saying. He is saying there is profit in exercise. He’s saying that godliness is more profitable, but he’s not saying that exercise is not profitable. I took the time to look this up in a number of different translations. The RSV says, “Bodily training is of some value.” Williams’s translation says, “Physical training indeed is some service, it does profit.” And, whether you’re a couch potato or pew potato, we need to understand that God wants us to exercise these bodies of ours. One thing about being in rotten, physical shape you don’t have to exercise to keep it up, no matter how much money you have. If you’re a rich man, in matters of diet and exercise you are going to have to learn to live like the poor man or else you are going to kill yourself.

I have another friend, Dr. Kenneth Cooper. He is called the father of modern aerobics. I’ve been to the Cooper Clinic out in Dallas, Texas. He’s the man who’s changed America’s way of thinking about exercise. And so many of us, when you talk about bodily exercise, want to go out and buy a gymnasium or something, put it in our attic, and start pumping iron. You’re just going to waste a lot of money if you do that, most of you. Here’s what Ken Cooper says, listen to this, and by the way he’s a godly man, believes in Christ, “Research shows that moderate, intensive exercise, at least three times a week, can increase your life span by at least 2 and one-half years. I have developed a five day a week walking and toning program that takes less than one hour per day to perform. You don’t have to go to a gym to do it.” That’s the only workout you need. Walking is the perfect exercise and if you want to do more, fine. But there needs to be a discipline in the matter of diet, a discipline in the matter of exercise. You need to get your kids out, you need to get out yourself, daddy.

There needs to be a discipline in the matter of rest. Psalm 127 and verse 2 says, “It is vain for you to rise up early, to stay up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for he giveth his beloved sleep.” It literally



says, "He's given to you while you sleep." That is, you are taking care of business while you are asleep. Just think of those simple things: diet, exercise, and rest. That is so phenomenal. Friend, that's the ABC's; that's just the ABC's. We need to be disciplined in all of these things.

Now, here's the second thing; family fitness is a matter of discipline. Number two; family fitness is a matter of disposition, that's the second thing. It's a matter of disposition. Hardening of the attitudes is just as bad as hardening of the arteries. Listen to Proverbs 15 verse 17, "Better is a dinner of herbs," that is, a vegetable plate, "where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." A vegetable plate is better than a filet mignon if you have that vegetable plate with love, rather than that hefty steak where there's hateful there; now, hatefulness there. Disposition, emotions, emotional health. First Thessalonians 5 verse 23, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Your soul is your psyche. The Greek word for soul is psyche. It's the word we get psychology from, psychiatric, psychic from. You see it's the seed of your emotions and there're two kinds of emotions: positive and negative, healthy and unhealthy. Well you say, "I can't help my emotions." Yes you can. You can choose your emotions like you can choose your friends. Listen to what the Bible says in Philippians chapter 4 verses 7 and 8. He speaks of the, "Peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Literally, guard your hearts, guard your minds. God's peace.

And then he says this, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." You can choose your thoughts like you choose your friends. I woke up one night with a negative thought. I said, "I refuse that in the name of Jesus. Lord Jesus, I praise You," and went back to sleep. Why let the Devil mess with your mind? You can choose your thoughts. You can reject bad thoughts and choose your attitudes. To rejoice is a choice. If your disposition gets upset let me tell you what's going to happen to you. You're going to have an upset stomach, headaches, family arguments. You are going to have a dull memory. You're going to cripple your thinking. You're going to weaken your body. You're going to reduce your efficiency. I'm talking about negative stress, not positive stress. There's a good positive stress. You don't need to be just a dishrag. But I'm talking about negative emotions. Stress does great damage to the temple. Millions of Americans suffer from ulcers. Not every ulcer is caused by stress, but many are.

And, and not only can the stress bring on those ulcers, but heart problems. Cardiologists tell you that if you're a type A individual, you have a greater opportunity for a heart attack. What's a type A person? Well, he's ambitious, aggressive, self-demanding, competitive, constantly striving for success, driven by the clock. It doesn't have to be man. It can be a woman. One man said, "I got up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom. When I came back my wife had made up the bed." Type A people are seven times more likely to have a heart attack than type B individuals. Now, if you're a type A person that's good because you'll achieve a whole lot, but you need to learn how to



rest in the Lord. Physicians have long suspected that stress brings on some cancers and the mind is the center of stress.

My former doctor told me one day. He said, "Pastor, all stress is self-imposed, all stress is self-imposed." I mean you have to agree to it in order to have it. The doctors talk about a psychosomatic illness. Psycho is the mind; soma is the body. It is the mind making the body sick. A survey showed that two thirds of the patients who went to a physician had symptoms caused or aggravated by mental stress: two thirds; 2 out of 3 caused or aggravated by mental stress. You say, "Well, I don't believe my mind really affects my body." Oh, yes, it does. What you think affects the amount of blood that flows to any organ. What you think affects the secrecy, secretions of the glands in your body. What you think affects the tension in the muscles.

Let me illustrate what I'm talking about. Have you ever seen someone blush? What causes a person to blush? Because of what they've thought about. Embarrassment causes the blood vessels in the face and the neck to open up and the face turns red. What they think has affected their bodies. If you have anxiety you're going to cause blood to rush to your head and your skull is very hard and it doesn't give and you've got a headache there. Fear causes the salivary glands to dry up. Have you ever seen a speaker get up and put a glass of water there and talk and drink and talk and drink and his mouth gets dry, kind of like a windmill pumping over a dry hole? And he's just drinking and talking. Why? Because he's terrified of standing up there to speak. The mind is controlling the body. The muscles tighten when you are filled with fear or frightened or angry, and that causes pain. If you just take your fist and just clench it you won't feel any pain, but just clench it and keep it there long enough and you won't be able to keep it clenched very long. You're going to have to let it go because it's going to begin to hurt because you; pain in the neck. Do you have a pain in the neck? Well, so often that's because you have a problem in your mind. Worry, they tell us, can cause arthritis. You can worry yourself stiff. Listen, it is a matter not only of discipline, it is a matter of disposition.

Douglas MacArthur; boy, give us some more men like Douglas MacArthur. Douglas MacArthur had this hanging on the wall of his office. "Youth is not a time of life. It is a state of mind. It is not a matter of red cheeks, red lips, and supple knees. It is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotion. It is a freshness of the deep springs of life. Years may wrinkle the skin but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear, and despair: these are the long, long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust." And then the great general said, "You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt, as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear, as young as your hope and as old as your despair."

Why do we have stress? Stress is that gap between our strength and the demands that are put upon us, and we all feel that. That's the reason the Bible says in Isaiah chapter 40 verses 28 to 31, "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not." God never passes out. "Neither is weary?" God never gets tired. "There is no searching of His understanding." God is never perplexed. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."



The word literally means they shall exchange their strength; their weakness for His strength. “They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.” I believe that what you need to do is to take your family and have a family conference. You need to sit down and say, “Are we a family living under stress? What is the disposition of our family?” And need to find those things that are stressing your family, those things that you’re doing that are wrong repent of them, turn your life over to the Lord, wait upon the Lord. That may sound simplistic, but friend, it’ll work.

Now, here’s the third thing; now watch. Family fitness is a matter of discipline. Family fitness is a matter of disposition. Thirdly, family fitness is a matter of devotion, devotion; it is a matter of devotion. That is, when you love God, when you serve God, you’re going to be healthier. You know, we’ve been told in the Bible that the fear of the Lord adds years to life and we need to understand that. I was reading an article by Mary Ann Herring, the title of the article, “Believe Well and Live Well.” I want to quote, “Pick out any man out of a church pew on Sunday morning and liken him to a neighbor who is still at home pouring through the two pound Sunday newspaper in his easy chair. Let’s say the two are the same age, and are in comparable salaries. Neither of them smokes, drinks, or plays the lottery. Both floss their teeth, collect baseball cards, and enjoy cheesecake. Which man will live longer and enjoy the benefits of a stable marriage? Answer; the man or woman in the pew. In recent years scientific research is backing up what common sense has told us for years. Mainly, that church goers live longer, stay married, and feel happier than those who say they don’t believe in God.” That’s just a scientific fact they’re telling us. Now the secret is out. Faith, religion is good for your health, but science is just verifying what the Scriptures have told us for years.

In a 1987 review by Levin and Vanderpool, Social Science Medicine, that’s the title of the review, reported that, “In 22 of 27 studies the more often a person went to church the better his or her health.” They say, just devotion, just coming to church, just praising God, loving God make your family fit. It’s an amazing thing but that’s what the Bible has told us that faith is good for family fitness. I have some more statistics here about that but because of the press of time I’m going to press through here a little bit and I want you to follow me now. God wants your family fit. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. You are a fearfully and wonderfully made machine. There are some reasons why you may be sick that you can’t control, but there’re other reasons, there’re other things that you can control and you should control.

Now, here’s the final thing. Faith is also, family fitness is a matter of decision. Now I left this till last because if you get these facts down and you don’t make any decisions, so what? When I was in college I heard the definition of a college education and it is a college education is getting that which is in the professor’s notebook into your notebook without going through the heads of either one. I don’t want you to just get these facts down. I want them to get into your head and your heart and there has to be a decision. And I believe that you need to have a family counsel. Those of you who are parents with little children, you need to sit down and if there’s a father in the family he needs to take charge. If there’s not a father, then mother you need to take charge. But listen to Joshua chapter 24 verse 15. Joshua is talking to the children of Israel and he says this, “And if it seem



evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." It's a matter of decision. It is a matter of decision.

And how do you serve the Lord? First Thessalonians 5 verse 23, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." It deals with the body in discipline, it deals with the soul in disposition, it deals with the spirit in devotion, but you have to make a choice. You have to say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15. Now there were other gods who were calling upon the Israelites. There were the gods that they knew back in Egypt. Then there were gods in the land of the Amorites, the gods of the Amorites in whose land they dwelt. And what Joshua is saying is, "Look around, look at these other gods, look at these other philosophies, look at them, then look at Jehovah God." Do you know what God is saying? He's said, "You bring your best gods out, I'll beat them all, I'll beat them all. You bring all these philosophies, all these other people round there." And he says, "Now look, here's what they believe, here's what they do, here's what they're like, but he says listen, you're going to have to choose, choose who you're going to serve." Remember what I've told you about choice. You're free to choose, but you're not free not to choose. Not to choose is a choice. You're free to choose. You're not free not to choose. And you're not free to choose the consequences of your choice. That's very important. You're free to choose, you're not free not to choose, but you're not free to choose the consequences of your choice. Once you make a choice then your choice chooses for you. Okay. Your choice then will choose for you.

Now what you need to do is to look at your family and say, "Listen, what is this we're eating? What is this we're doing? What is this we're thinking? Are we going to continue to live this way or are we going to make a decision as a family so, some family fitness so that we might be a testimony to our neighbors and those around us? We ought to be different." Our families ought to stand out in matters of faith, in matters of fun, in matters of finance, and in matters of fitness. Our families ought to be different, don't you believe that? I do. But you see, if you just hear this and don't make a decision what good is it? What, good is it going to do you whatever? Now, you're responsible as a family.

But now, listen to me folks. If you think that I'm just talking to you about being healthy and physically strong and that's all, you missed it a thousand miles. What difference would it make if you lived to be a serene old man or woman with the bloom of health on you and then you died? What difference would it make if you died in a modern hospital with the aid of drugs, no pain at all, and died with a smile on your face? What difference would it make if they had a big funeral and all of the high muckety-mucks of society came to your funeral and there you are in a beautiful bronze casket and the undertaker's done such a good job on you? What difference would it make if they carry you out and put you in a grave as beautiful as any park and festoon that grave with flowers? I say what difference would it make if you rise in the judgment and meet a God that you do not know with your sins unconfessed and unforgiven? I am not talking about mere physical health, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord and Savior



Jesus Christ. God wants you saved so much that He sent His darling Son to pay for your sin with His blood on that cross. And I promise you on the authority of the Word of God that if you will trust Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior He will forgive your sin, I promise you He will, and He'll save you today if you'll ask Him.

I want heads bowed and eyes closed, no one stirring around. Begin to pray for those round about you who may not know the Lord Jesus. And folks, right now, we can do business with God. I mean right in this service today you can receive Christ as your personal Savior and Lord. I invite you to pray this way out of your heart, sincerely, fervently, "Dear God, I know that You love me and I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You Jesus." Would you tell Him that? "I do trust You Jesus, right now, this moment with all of my heart. Come into my heart. I invite You in. Take control of my life. I turn it over to You. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be. Save me, Lord Jesus." Pray that, just put it in a sentence. "Save me, Lord Jesus." Did you ask Him? Then pray this way, "Thank You for doing it, Jesus. You're now my Lord, my Savior, my God and my Friend. Because You died for me I will live for You and I will follow You wherever You lead me. Help me to never be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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