

attempt to make excuse for godless living. And Paul's call to us is to build up our **endurance**: to be able to stand and resist those who'd try to pull us away from truth and into error by gradually wearing us and our faith down.

**EH 6.10-20** ~ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.*

### **CONCLUSION – The Training's Benefit (vs. 8-10)**

I always hear from people about how much they enjoy going to the gym. That's not me. I've always taken solace in the next verse Paul says: *for while bodily training is of some value (1TM 4.8a)* Of course, I joke, but there is a powerful truth in this. We often are willing to spend hours of time in **strength training** in the gym—working on our legs and our arms. But we're not willing to study and memorize Bible verses and learn Biblical doctrines. We are often willing to spend hours a week in walks, runs, and trainings for marathons—able to build the **endurance** for 5ks, 10ks, and the Ironman triathlon. But we are unwilling and unable to build the **strength** and **endurance** to make it through the Christian race.

**1TM 4.8-10** ~ *for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. <sup>9</sup> The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. <sup>10</sup> For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.*

Let us work on and build the correct priorities—not the building up and strengthening of just our body, but of our faith: building **strength** and **endurance** so that we can run the race God has presented to us.

**2TM 4.6-8** ~ *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

### **INVITATION**

#673 [EXP-NTPstE]  
10/04/2025

**Spiritual Training**  
PC \_\_ Pchd

1TM 4.1-10

**QUESTION:** What kind of training really matters?

## **TRN TO 1TM 4**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**ILL—Been Working Hard to Lose Weight** (started at 225—down to 198; largely focused on watching what I eat) But there's a problem. Losing weight is good, but to really get better health, I also need to focus on living healthier. For that reason, Erin and I have been considering getting back to that most dreaded of places: the gym.

It's easy for me to just focus on eliminating the bad things—too many chips and sour candies. But for me to be truly healthy, I need to do **strength training** to bulk me up and help me to truly be in the form and health I want to be.

### **BACKGROUND**

Paul was a busy man: he was an Evangelist, missionary, and tent-maker on the side. But as if that wasn't enough, he also served as a spiritual father figure for the young man, Timothy. As Paul found himself in prison, he sought to do something that more of us should do: he sought to encourage this young, Christian man in his ministry.

His first epistle contains many firm and practical teachings. But at its core, it is a screed against the false teachers that were arising in Ephesus. *As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, <sup>4</sup> nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. (1TM 1.3-4)*

For the rest of the epistle, he prepares Timothy for the thing that all fathers must prepare their sons: for a future without them. He taught how to select church leaders so that he'd have people there, in Ephesus, to help him in his struggles against false teachers. And then, he warns him that things are going to get worse—that the false teachers are going to keep coming.

**1TM 4.1-3** ~ *Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, <sup>2</sup> through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, <sup>3</sup> who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

Not exactly the most encouraging of words! But, in truth, that's really a matter of perspective. When these false teachers would come, Timothy would be able to take comfort knowing that this was the way of things: that things were happening just as Paul had promised they would. Paul then used their false teachings—that they should abstain from good things given from

God out of a false form of holiness—and used them to make the case for what true spiritual health is.

**1TM 4.4-5** ~ *For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, <sup>5</sup>for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.*

In Christianity, we see a dramatic shift from Judaism. In the Old Law, there were hundreds of laws—many focused on unclean acts and unclean foods and animals. But that all ended in Christ—for in Christ, there is a change in focus from a focus on physical purity to a focus on spiritual purity. From our physical health, to our spiritual health!

It's easy for us to focus on only one area of our spiritual lives. But if we want to be truly healthy, we need to develop a good spiritual training regimen: develop our own kind of **spiritual strength training**!

### **BD1: Spiritual Strength Training (vs. 6)**

It's interesting going to the gym: you'll see men and women all over the gym, often on the very same machines. And yet, the way they use them is so different. Most of the men focus on a singular kind of training: **strength training**.

### **HEALTH/Exercise/Strength Training**

There's a good reason to focus on strength—the lifting of these heavy weights builds strong and powerful muscles and allows us with great and strong showings of strength. It's a very masculine aim!

**1TM 4.6** ~ *If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.*

**EX:** Paul wanted to prepare Timothy for what was coming—for the fight that was sure to unfold between him and the false teachers that were coming in great numbers to Ephesus. More than anything, Paul wanted Timothy to be able to fight that battle, himself—to stand as a *good servant of Christ Jesus*—to stand as an example of truth in the face of error. And to do that, he was focus on his **spiritual strength training**. He was to be trained on *the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed*.

Paul showed that! It was Paul, in his final conversation with the Ephesian elders, who said: *Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, <sup>27</sup>for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.* (**AC 20.26-27**) Paul was focused on knowing, learning, and teaching the *whole counsel of God*—that's a man who had built up his spiritual muscles!

It's interesting: depending on your translation, you might not see the word **“trained”** in **vs 6**. Instead, you might see another: **“consumed”**. The idea was be focused upon the training and consumption of the Word of God: *Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts.* (**JR 15.16**)

**AP:** It's interesting, I often hear people talk about **“good preachers, good ministers, and good pastors”**. And I find myself quoting Inigo Montoya: **“You keep using that word—I do not think it means what you think it does.”** Being a good minister and preacher and servant is not about how dynamic your speaking is. It's not about how you can move people to tears at the drop of a hat. A good minister and good servant is one who is practicing **spiritual strength training**—who's devoted to training *in the words of the flesh and of the good doctrine that you have followed*.

**1PT 2.1-3** ~ *So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. <sup>2</sup>Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—<sup>3</sup>if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

### **BD2: Spiritual Endurance Training (vs. 7)**

Nearly every man in the gym is loading the machines with weight, adding another disk to the barbell, sweating and straining and grunting as they try to finish another set. But then you look and notice the training of the average woman in the gym. Their weight tends to be less, but their sets tend to be longer—they tend to spend more time on cardio than the bench press. They are focused, instead, on **endurance training**. If strength training makes you stronger, endurance training helps you to...well, endure! To not be limited to mere bursts of strength, but to be able to keep going!

**1TM 4.7** ~ *Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness;*

**EX:** Paul knew that there were all sorts of things that were tempting and drawing people away. Their false teachings and philosophies are denigrated simply as *irreverent, silly myths*. The fact, is we are fascinated by such things: they're popularized in modern denominational churches and YouTube videos—focused on powerful and questionable tales from antiquity and whispered from one man to another. Paul knew that these tales and myths would be tempting: *not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth* (**TS 1.14**)

**2TM 4.3-4** ~ *For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup>and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.*

To resist, Paul encourages Timothy to *train yourself for godliness*—that is, he needed to train himself to endure and resist these things. It wasn't enough just to know the truth, but to know how to remain within it! *But as for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.* (**2TM 4.5**)

**AP:** These false teachings and fables were tempting then, and they're tempting now. We can find ourselves fascinated by the words and stories and tall tales we hear from those around us. We hear it from people who give emotional and appealing calls to argue against true teachings on baptism and on how we ought to live and worship. We hear it from people who