

What are you training for?

Description

8 For physical training is of some value (useful for a little), but godliness
and of value in everything and
in every way, for it holds promise for the present life and also for the life

1 Timothy 4:8 AMPC

Whether people admit it, or realize it, everyone is living their life in preparation of the eternal. Each of our decisions reflect where our heart and mind is at that time. In Paul's letter to Timothy he is talking to a young minister who is attempting to encourage and lead a group of people who are young in the faith and looking for spiritual direction. These people that Timothy has been sent to lead are at a crossroads, they are receiving instructions from leadership that is contradictory and confusing.....especially for people who are unfamiliar with scripture, even moreso with those who don't understand what Jesus' ministry/life was all about. There are leaders who are trying to tell the people to live under the old covenant Mosaic law, there are others telling them to live under a mix of the law and the new covenant established by Jesus, and finally you have the Apostle Paul under the direction of the Holy Spirit who is freeing the people of God to live solely under the new covenant of grace, mercy, and relationship with Christ. In the verses above Paul is informing Timothy to explain to the people how they should be living and preparing for the eternal. There is two ways to live; you can live a life that is spiritually edifying, or you may live a life that satisfies the flesh. What is the difference? A life that satisfies the flesh is one that fulfills temporary desires, but at the same time creates separation from God. Don't be confused, physical discipline, health, and exercise is important and beneficial even for spiritual success; but physical discipline/training without a spiritual focus or guidance is of no value in the long run. While physical training can help to conquer the body and some of its craving it ignores two critical areas of our life; our soul, and our heart/mind.

9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly perverse and
10 I the Lord search the mind, I try the heart, even to give to every man acco

Jeremiah 17:9-10 AMPC

The verses above show why physical training is insufficient for our overall health as Christians, and can't prepare us for the eternal. Spiritual training and discipline begins and ends with Jesus. He is our example, our help, and our savior. Spiritual training like physical training is an ongoing process that requires discipline, consistency, and patience. They differ in the fact that spiritual training requires something that physical training doesn't.....it requires faith. The role that faith plays in spiritual training is that it helps you to believe and understand that you are worthy and saved in the eyes of God, even though you haven't quite yet arrived at the goal. Faith is the belief that you have received what you are believing for even when it hasn't been achieved or realized. Physical training requires that you make it happen, you have to wake up early, eat clean, work out consistently, follow the regiment/plan perfectly, and even then it isn't guaranteed that you will achieve what you have been working for. Spiritual training requires that you first believe, then as a result of your belief, you will walk and act accordingly.

So also faith, if it does not have works (deeds and actions of obedience to back it up), by itself is destitute of power (inoperative, dead).
James 2:17 AMPC

Spiritual training will therefore not only lead to a renewed mind, and clean heart, but it will also change how you live and walk naturally. Spiritual training is holistic in comparison to physical training which can at best give you change on the surface but not address the root of your issues and problems. Jesus illustrates best the benefit and purpose of spiritual training with this verse;

33 But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides.
matthew 6:33 ampc

When you focus on God and do his will, then whatever else you stand in need of, or are deficient in, he will cover the difference and supply you with. But you would do well to understand and remember that your primary goal and purpose in life is to do God's will, and spend eternity with him.

Reflection Time

What are you training for? How are you training? That question may be better written; what are you doing to enhance your faith, and spiritual walk? I recommend reading James 1:1-25, and pray about that passage so that God may equip you with the necessary character traits, and endurance to prepare effectively for the life he has called you to live.

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