

Train Yourself to be Godly – Soul Training!

1 Timothy 4:7 ... train yourself to be godly

THOUGHTS:

- To get fit we need exercise, or work-outs at the gym
- An athlete intentionally trains (see Mo Farah's training regime!)
- Paul uses the same concept for our spiritual well-being
 - As well as 1 Timothy 4:7-9, see also 1 Corinthians 9:24 – 26, Hebrews 5:14 and Hebrews 12:11
- What is your spiritual training regime? How are you training yourself, seeking to be 'ever closer to Jesus?'
 - Use the take-away sheet to consider habits of discipleship, different resources that you can use and so on.

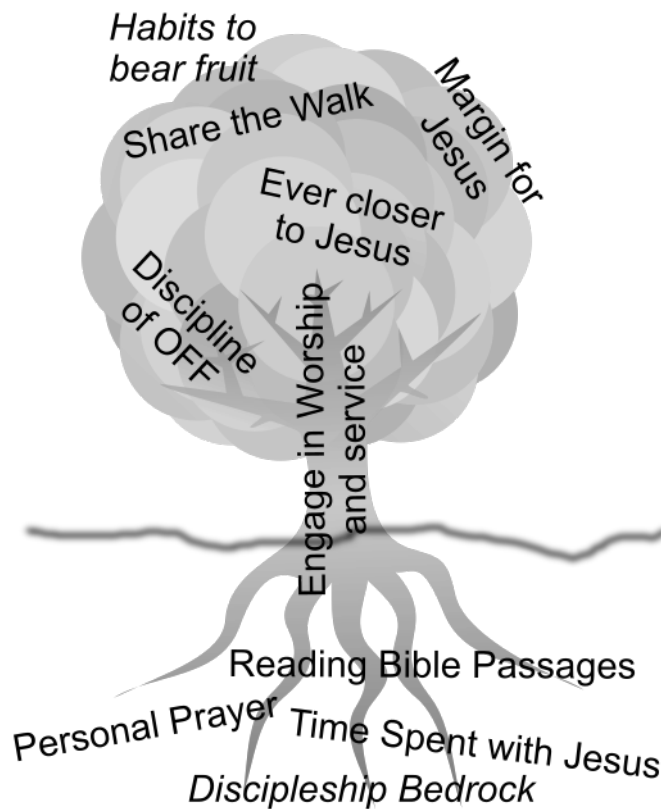
PRINCIPLE: Training is hard work (no pain, no gain!), but necessary and useful to be built up. Jesus desires our ever closer walk with Him, and invites us toward Himself.

1 Timothy 4:10 - Our training may be hard work, but it is not a 'work' we do to earn our standing with God, but rather a response to the grace Jesus has already made available to us.. God is not barking us like an army sergeant-major to his raw recruits, but our saviour in whom we can put our hope.

That same save grace is available to all peoples. By training ourselves in godliness, we can better take part in God's saving purposes.

Your Soul Training Regime!

Training involves several components – making time for prayer; reading the Bible; joining with other Christians in 2s or 3s, small groups and all together in worship; as well other habits to adopt



There are many resources to help!

- Bible reading notes
- Study guides
- Books with prayers
- Podcasts, blogs and more!

To Ponder ...

There are many resources and options ... but ultimately it comes down to your desire and your discipline to get to it!

Your day may be super crowded – but can you think of creative ways to carve out a little space, for example re-applying some

time or moments? For example take a couple of minutes praying in your coffee break, or a short reflection just before you go to the school pickup etc. ...

Four Habits

See overleaf for the 4 habits we are recommending to *live differently* to the fast paced world what will quite happily consume you and your family – habits to bear fruit.

Prayer Partners or Triplets

Buddy yourself up with one or two others to pray together say once every 6 to 8 weeks. Be accountable – give permission to the others to lovingly 'bug you' on stuff you know you need to work on.

4 Habits to bear fruit

The Discipline of OFF – make space to reflect & listen

Share the Walk – do discipleship with a trusted friend or two (e.g. prayer triplet)

Ever closer to Jesus – seek more and more closeness to Jesus

Margin for Jesus – space in schedule for Jesus to fill



Leave space for Jesus to fill

My Soul Training Regime:



Mo Farah's Typical Weekly Training Schedule

Below is the typical weekly training schedule for Mo Farah. This involves running up to a maximum of 135 miles per week with no rest days and two sessions every day but Sunday, when he just does an all out 22-27 miles at 5:40 min/mile. This is the life of an elite runner!

Monday

AM: 10-mile recovery run (6:00min/mile pace)

PM: 6-mile recovery run

Tuesday

AM: 4-mile warm-up run; 8-12mile tempo run anywhere from 4:40 to 5:00min/mile pace (depending on altitude and terrain); 3-mile cool-down run

NOON: Strength and conditioning session (1 hour)

PM: 6-mile recovery run

Wednesday

AM: 12-mile recovery run, followed by a massage.

PM: 5-mile recovery run

Thursday

AM: 11-mile recovery run

PM: 5-mile recovery run

Friday

AM: 4-mile warm-up jog; 10x200m intervals (with 200m recovery jogs) on grass in 29 seconds each rep; 10x200m hill sprints at equal effort, walk back down to recover; 4-mile cool-down run.

NOON: Strength and conditioning session (1 hour)

PM: 4-miles easy

Saturday

AM: 11-mile recovery run, massage

PM: 6-mile recovery run

Sunday

AM: 22-27 miles, no slower than marathon race pace + 1 minute (for Mo, this means 5:40min/mile)

Total: 126-135 miles per week!

But remember Mo probably didn't adopt this overnight, but worked up to it through his career.

Our own spiritual disciplines should not be adopted out of fear or 'ought', but a response to God's grace and a desire to follow/

Trustworthy Sayings

1 Timothy 15:1 Here is a trustworthy saying ...

THOUGHTS:

- Through both letters to Timothy Paul has these 'Trustworthy Sayings':
1 Tim 1:15, 1 Tim 3:1, 1 Tim 4:8 – 10, 2 Tim 2:11 - 13
- Paul also appears to quote what seem to be early Christian poems:
1 Tim 3:16 and 2 Tim 2:11 - 13
- It suggests that Paul and the Apostles formed in the early church a set of simple sayings that people could grasp and remember as anchor points for teaching and their faith
- A Christian leader in the Far East would disciple people in remote villages by writing just 1 verse on a stone and leaving it with the disciples. When he returned (say in a years time) he would then ask: 'What did you discover by pondering the verse on the stone?'

PRINCIPLE: You might not remember all the detail or points of every sermon or message you hear, but can you draw out a simple one-liner 'golden-nugget' that you can grasp and remember going forward? Karl calls these 'Simple Teaching Points', and tries to draw attention to one of these in most of his messages (clue – when he says 'if nothing else remember just this one thing ...!')

- Use the take-away sheet which summarises Paul's Trustworthy Sayings.
- The same sheet also summarises the key points of our 'Jesus the Discipled' series earlier this year.

Being a disciple doesn't have to be mega-complicated. It may be a case of grasping some simple truths and pondering those through the weeks & months.

Trustworthy Sayings

1 Tim 1:15 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners

1 Tim 3:1 Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task

1 Tim 4:8 Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both this life and the life to come

2 Tim 2:11 – 13 If we died with him we will also live with him; If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

See also 1 Tim 3:16 He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory [quite possibly an early Christian poem]

Questions

Which key phrases or verses do you hang onto for yourself as your own set of 'trustworthy sayings'?

Why is it useful to have these readily come to mind?

How might these be useful when witnessing to your friends?

Possible Responses or Habits to Get Into

Highlight verses in your Bible that stick out, or convey a simple principle you want to grasp

Do you have a way of recording key principles or verses when you come across them?

E.g. a notebook, or note-taking app on your phone (e.g. Google Keep)?

Resolve to try and learn one verse of Scripture that grabs your attention each month

PTO for summary of Jesus the Discipler series

Jesus the Discipler – Key Points

Earlier this year we used the Gospel of Mark to study Jesus the Discipler – how Jesus did discipleship with the first followers. Here are the key points from that series:

- We are commissioned to make disciples (Matthew 28:16 – 20)
- Jesus saw potential in others – concentrating more effort on a few
- Jesus did discipleship in a context of friendship and working together
- Jesus arranged for his disciples to have to step out in faith
- Of course people make mistakes: Jesus would correct & restore his disciples
- There came a time when Jesus released his disciples to go out without him physically present

Questions

Can we follow the commission and disciple others the Jesus-way?

- Who are you called to disciple? (Who do you see potential in?)
- Where can you naturally be-friend someone, work along with them?
- Are you able to encourage someone to step out – supporting and then reviewing with them how it went?
- Can you affirm others, and when necessary lovingly correct and restore?
- Are you able to 'let go', releasing someone to be free to flourish in their God given call?

Responses

Pray into the above questions – who should you be alongside?

And finally, who is helping you continue your growth?

The Problem of False Teachers

1:2 Command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer

THOUGHTS:

- A theme that runs through both letters – but what were the false teachings?
- The take-away sheet has a summary of the different verses, but the hard data does not give us a complete picture
- Scholars suggest several possibilities:
 - So-called 'Judaizers' – people who wanted Christians to conform to all aspects of Jewish Law
 - People re-applying parts of the Jewish Law in novel ways
 - So-called 'Gnostics' – people who believed they had 'special knowledge', by which they believed they were better than the created world (somehow they were already resurrected?), and they seemed to scorn the created world
 - People who went in for 'ascetism' – cutting themselves off from the world as much as possible. Believing the world to be impure, they sought purity by isolating themselves
- In Ephesus (where Timothy probably received the letters), there was also the problem of the Greek god Artemis, with its female cult prominent in the city.

PRINCIPLES: Most likely the difficulties were a mix of the above possibilities. In any case Paul entrusts Timothy with the task of countering them, doing so by returning again and again to Jesus and our foundations in Him: God come in human form to save by His grace, proving to be fully God by rising from the dead. We can counter that which is false by focussing ourselves more closely on Jesus, getting to know Him better.

1 Timothy 6:11 Flee from all this and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

The Problem of False Teachers

A summary of the different passages – scan each one for yourself

- 1 Tim 1:3-7 Myths, endless genealogies, controversial speculations
- 1 Tim 4:1-5 Deceiving spirits & things taught by demons! Food laws, but with other restrictions (e.g. marrying) added on top. Note the food laws stem from Jewish law (e.g. Leviticus), yet see also Mark 7:19 and 1 Corinthians 8!
- 1 Tim 6:3-5 Controversies and quarrels about words ...
(Perhaps the adage 'knowledge is power' has relevance here?)
- 1 Tim 6:20-21 Godless chatter and (false) knowledge
- 2 Tim 2:14-18 Quarrelling about words, godless chatter, 'our resurrection has already taken place'
- 2 Tim 3:1-9 Lovers of themselves ... always 'learning' but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth (Jesus)
- 2 Tim 4:3-4 Preach to suit their own desires. Myths.

Questions

Does it frustrate you that we cannot exactly pinpoint the error(s) of the false-teachers?

For each passage above, look at the verses nearby – how do they return to the firm grounding in Jesus Christ?

What do you think might be the most problematic distractions or false teachings that circulate in culture today ... those that lead away from Christ?

See overleaf for a couple of ideas!

Responses

Paul returned over and over to Jesus, the real deal. In countering false teachings, are you simply going to *speak against* them or can you find ways to draw attention to *Jesus the risen Lord* and the fact that salvation is found in Him?

Two Patterns of Thought Prevailing in our Culture ...

Individualism

'If its good for you, then that is okay for you'

We are led to believe that we exist for ourselves, and can live in our own bubble.

A spin-off in secularised societies is that 'faith' is held as a purely private matter. Unfortunately this thinking can infiltrate the church and people's own discipleship, thinking that their walk is purely between themselves and God, and need have no bearing on others (which in turn leads to there being no witness).

Jim Wallis (A Christian leader in America) correctly counters this by saying:

“Our relationship with God through Jesus is intensely personal, but never private”

Moltmann (A leading theologian of our time) says:

“the closer we come to the cross, the closer we come to each other”

God made us to be in community, and the corporate nature of our faith runs throughout scripture. We were never intended to follow Jesus on our own ... hence ***Share the Walk!***

Consumerism

'I shop, therefore I am!'

World economies are now fully based on the assumption that growth can go on forever. For that to happen we must keep consuming more and more! This brings a 'Hedonistic Treadmill' that conditions us to only feel of any value if we can buy & consume more. With it comes many issues, for example 'ditch & switch' attitudes.

If we are not careful the same logic can permeate our discipleship and approach to church. Rather than valuing faith and covenanted relationships with others, we can value 'experience' and what we think 'feels good for us'. In the worst case we end up with a pic n mix attitude to church, evaluating 'what does it do for me'.

Mother Theresa: God doesn't demand that I be successful. God demands that I be faithful. Results are not important, faithfulness is.

God values us because He created us ... to be in relationship with Him.

Paul & Timothy Discipleship Game

- Suggest you play with 2 or 3 teams or individual players
- Each team takes turn to roll the die and move forward the number of spaces
- The first team or player to land on or pass an asterisk bubble (*) should look up and read out the Bible reference. They can then pick up and keep any card associated with that bubble
- All teams/players must stop and wait until they throw a 6 to cross the sea towards Athens
- At the end of the game, see who has the most Place Name cards, and who has the most 'Things said about Timothy' cards
 - Compare the place names with the map of Paul's missionary journeys
 - List out the things said about Timothy