



Exercise and sport provide a myriad of benefits to our wellbeing. There are physical health advantages such as better heart and lung health, higher bone density, lower blood pressure, better balance, flexibility and function. There's also the psychological gains of physical activity changing brain chemistry to improve mood, reduce stress, promote sleep and boost memory function. Not to mention the social positives that come with many sports - being part of a team or group joined together with a common goal. Although exercise and sport often involve a level of discomfort and hard work it's easy to understand why, with such an impressive list of benefits, we see crowded sports fields every weekend and can find a gym or two in almost every suburb.

Yet the Bible commends a different type of training to us - one that holds even more reward than sport or physical exercise.

1 Tim 4:7-8 ...train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Training to be godly is not something we hear about often, if at all. Godliness is first and foremost a right attitude towards God, that is, respect, devotion, and submission to God, which in turn shapes the way we live in His world. While physical training has the many important benefits as mentioned above, training ourselves to have a right attitude and response to God has even more positive outcomes. Living God's way in God's world not only positively influences our physical, psychological and social well being, it holds promise for the life to come - the afterlife.

Life is short. The afterlife is forever. So it makes sense, as much as we can benefit from exercise and other physical training, to focus even more on training in godliness. Like exercise, training in godliness isn't always pleasant. It takes effort, attention, and practice. It requires listening to God's word, the Bible; focusing our mind on God's truth and promises amidst the cacophony of messages; being willing to admit our sin and humbly submit to His will over our own; spending time being honest and vulnerable with God and his people. It can be hard work and even painful. Yet living in a right relationship with our creator is more valuable than anything else.

Do you have a right attitude to and relationship with God? None of us do on our own. For everyone training to be godly it all starts with joining God's team through Jesus. Jesus' life, death and resurrection bought our forgiveness and (to possibly push the metaphor too far) paid for our membership into God's team. It's only because of Jesus we can change our attitude to God and be in a right relationship with Him. And it's Jesus who keeps motivating us to train in godliness and getting ready for spending forever with him.

How much training do you do for the afterlife?

Prayer

Dear God, Please change my heart to be respectful, devoted and obedient to you. Through Jesus forgive me for my wrong attitude toward you and my wrong living. Please help me to train in godliness and focus on eternal life with you. Amen.