



Right after high school, I started working for a plumbing company. The days started early and went long. I liked the job because every day was different.

Some days I'd be hauling equipment, tools, and pipes into buildings and climbing what felt like endless flights of stairs. Other days I'd be up on a ladder with my arms stretched over my head, installing pipes in ceilings. And sometimes, I'd spend hours with a shovel in my hand, digging trenches. It wasn't always fun, but one thing was certain—by the end of the day, I was completely worn out and ready for a nap.

It was a good job, but I realized something important while working it: my faith was in a terrible spot. I was so tired from work that I barely made time for my relationship with Jesus—or even with my friends. Physically, I was drained. Spiritually, I was weak.

That can happen to all of us. We pour out energy at school, in sports, with friends, and even in trying to grow our faith. But if we don't train and build endurance, we burn out quickly. That's why Paul tells Timothy that while physical training is good, training for godliness is even better. Physical strength only lasts for a while, but spiritual strength carries us through this life and into eternity.

This lesson is about learning how to build that kind of spiritual endurance so we can live with purpose and honor God with our whole lives.

Icebreaker

If you could have any superpower, but it only worked for 24 hours, what would you choose and what would you do?

Daily Devotions

Day 1 : Read It

Read 1 Timothy 4:7–10.

1. In verse 7, what is Timothy told to stay away from, and what is he told to do instead?
2. What two types of training does Paul mention in verse 8, and how do they compare in value?
3. According to verse 8, what benefits come from training in godliness, and when do those benefits show up?
4. According to verse 10, what motivates Paul to work and strive?
5. What does this passage teach us about where to place our focus and effort?

Day 2 — Today's Theme: What are You Training For?

Read 1 Timothy 4:7.

Paul tells Timothy to avoid “irreverent, silly myths.” Basically, he’s saying, “Don’t waste your time on things that don’t really matter.” For us today, these distractions might look like endlessly scrolling social media, getting caught up in drama, or caring more about what other people think than what God desires for us.

Our culture trains us to **watch life instead of living it**. TV, video games, social media—they make us passive, like we’re spectators instead of participants.

Instead of getting stuck in those distractions, Paul gives a clear command: **“train yourself for godliness.”** The Greek word for “train” is where we get our word **gymnasium**. Paul is basically telling us to hit the **spiritual gym**!

Just like athletes train for a game, we are called to train our hearts and minds to follow Jesus.

6. What are some of the “irreverent, silly myths” or distractions that you find yourself wasting time and energy on?
7. Why do you think Paul uses the idea of “training” to describe growing in faith? What does that tell you about what it takes to follow Jesus?
8. If you were completely honest, what does your life show that you are truly “training” for right now (like popularity, good grades, athletic success, comfort)?

Day 3 — Today's Theme: Hitting the Spiritual Gym

Read 1 Timothy 4:7–8.

Taking care of our bodies is important, but Paul reminds us that it's not the ultimate thing. He tells Timothy to **“train yourself for godliness.”**

So, what does that look like? Spiritual exercises are habits that help us grow stronger in faith and connect with God. These can include:

- **Praying** — talking with God regularly
- **Reading the Bible** — getting to know God's Word
- **Worshipping with others** — joining together in praise and small group
- **Developing your spiritual gifts** — serving, building each other up, and sacrificing your time
- **Giving** — sharing your resources to bless others
- **Fasting** — setting something aside to focus on God
- **Confessing sin** — being honest with God and receiving His forgiveness
- **Practicing gratitude** — thanking God daily for His blessings
- **Sharing your faith** — telling others about Jesus
- **Taking time to rest** — observing Sabbath or quiet time (Not scrolling through TikTok, but resting in God)

These habits **aren't rules to earn God's love**. We can't earn righteousness—that's a free gift from God—but these are ways to help your heart align with His purpose and prepare you for the mission ahead.

Paul also emphasizes that spiritual training requires **hard work**. He says, *“for to this end we toil and strive”* (1 Timothy 4:10). The word “strive” in the original language comes from a Greek word meaning **to agonize**, so yes, spiritual growth can be challenging, but it's worth it!

A note on discipline vs. legalism:

- **Legalism** is self-centered: *“I do this to earn God's favor.”*
- **Discipline** is God-centered: *“I do this because I love God and want to please Him.”*

Spiritual discipline helps us grow closer to God, strengthens our faith, and prepares us for whatever comes our way. ¹

9. Paul says godliness “is of value in every way.” What do you think is at risk in our lives if we neglect spiritual training?

10. Which fact above is the most helpful to you to give you confidence that the Bible that we have today is God's Word without error? What would your answer be, and why?

11. What is the difference between doing something out of legalism (because we “have to”) and doing it out of discipline (because of our love for God)? How does that change your motivation?

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 11–21.

Day 4 — Today's Theme: Our Bodies Matter Too

Read 1 Timothy 4:8.

When we think about faith, we usually focus on our hearts and minds, but our bodies matter too! Even though our bodies won't last forever, they're the only ones we have right now to live on mission for Christ. Taking care of your body is part of following Him.

Paul doesn't say physical training is worthless, he says it does have **some** value. God gave you your body so you can serve Him and live in the world He made. Neglecting it is like driving a car without putting gas in the tank or expecting to ace a test without ever studying.

The way you treat your body, through sleep, rest, exercise, and what you eat, affects your energy, mood, focus, and even your relationships. Faith isn't just something in your head; it involves your whole life. **If you're constantly exhausted or stressed, it's harder to notice and respond to what God is asking of you.**

But Paul also reminds us that while physical training is helpful now, spiritual discipline matters even more. Taking care of your body is good, but you must remember that training your heart and mind in God's ways is eternal.

12. How do social media, school pressure, or friend groups shape how you think about your body and energy? How does/should the gospel change that perspective?

13. What routines or habits in your life right now give you energy? Which ones drain your energy?

14. What is one small, realistic change you could make this week to take better care of yourself physically so you have more energy for what really matters?

Day 5 — Today's Theme: Better Physically

Read 1 Timothy 4:9–10.

Living “better physically” isn’t about having a perfect diet or becoming a star athlete. It’s about recognizing that God cares about your whole life—your body, your time, and your spirit. When we are intentional about stewarding our physical energy, we create more space to train for godliness.

This means we can show up for our friends when they need us, have the focus to learn and grow, and have the strength to live out our faith at school and at home. Paul’s motivation was his hope in God. When our hope is in Him, it changes how we see everything, including how we care for the life and body He has given us.

Writer Kent Hughes points out that spiritual discipline isn’t meant to restrict you; it actually frees you “from the gravity of this present age and allows [you] to soar.”² In other words Spiritual discipline doesn’t trap you, it sets you free from the earthly stuff that weighs you down so you can live closer to God and strive for eternal things.

15. How does taking care of your physical health (sleep, food, exercise) connect to your ability to “train for godliness”?

16. Think about your schedule this week. Where could you create a little space to intentionally train in godliness?

17. What is one specific step you can take this week to live “better physically” so that you can better honor God with your whole life?

This study was written by Ethan Wentzlaff, based on the adult study written by the VBC Pastoral Team.

² Ibid.