

## 8. Exercise Some

Exercise was never a big part of my life. I grew up on the farm and by the end of the day I was tired and didn't have the energy. Someone said the other day in an interview that farm strength is just a different kind of strength it makes you use all the muscle groups - your throwing hay bales, carrying buckets of feed and water, chasing cattle, pulling weeds in the bean field all morning, getting on and off the tractor, fixing things etc. It's not regimented it just happens. Dad used to tell us "if we needed to exercise at night we didn't work hard enough though out the day".

Exercise can be overly emphasized and taken to extremes. In fact, there are probably two extremes that fit most people: those who exercise none and those who are near fanatics. However, the best way to stay on top of things is to exercise some. Exercise that is kept in proper balance can really benefit you. For me it always helped me think clearly. Like when my nephew was killed in a car accident at 25, my brother, dad and I set forms and poured cement to clear the mind. Exercising helped deal with the grief and write words and memories for the funeral.

Paul in I Timothy 4:7-8 says, "Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 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. The King James Version puts it this way, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come". I used to quote that little phase when it came in handy and I didn't want to exercise. Which was so wrong of me.

David put it this way in Psalm 147:10-11, "His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love". In both of those verses our challenge is not to not exercise but to make sure we take care of ourselves physically and spiritually. There would be times I'd run six miles a day or walk seven. It would take two hours of my day and yet I'd only spend 15 minutes reading scripture.

As I get older I love this verse in Proverbs 20:29, "The glory of young men is their strength, but the splendor of old men is their gray hair". Strength has its way of diminishing as we get older even when we try not to let it. I can't lift the rocks I used and need others to help me. It was fascinating to do a Bible search on the word strength. It's used in so many ways. I've always loved these verses in Deuteronomy 10:8-18. It reminds us to always go back and give God praise for what God has done lest we take credit ourselves. It says "When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>then</sup> your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your

ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today". In fact in Jeremiah 17:5 he puts it this way, "Cursed is the man who trust in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord".

Exercise can help you THINK STRONG, WALK TALL, SMILE BIG AND SLEEP WELL. I enjoy walking, gardening, hiking, biking, fixing things, and at one point skiing. I even tried golfing in my 30's and 40's but it didn't work for me. Find something that gives you enjoyment and increases the endorphins. To stay on top of things it's essential to EXERCISE SOME even if it "profiteth little". Remember "the joy of the LORD is our strength".