

Bulking Up, part 1: Supplements  
March 17, 2013

All of us would like to make some changes in ourselves and in our lives. But big changes are hard to make. That's why we've quit making New Year's resolutions. Most of the ones we've made are big changes. We've learned that big changes are hard to make. We make resolutions like the following:

- "I'm going to exercise 30 minutes a day."
- "I'm going to read the Bible through this year."
- "I'm going to work in the yard every evening after work."
- "I'm going to learn Spanish this summer."
- "I'm going to quit eating all sweets".

Those are huge changes. And huge changes are really difficult to keep up with. We know that. We've learned that.

I want to suggest that you not try to make such big changes in your life, but rather that you supplement your life with small changes. Small changes are much easier to make and they still have benefits if you do them over a long time.

For example, if you decided on one place to always put your keys, and always put them there, you would have less stress in your life. You would quit wasting time looking for your keys. You could do the same thing with your phone, the TV remote, your church phone directory, and anything else you spend time looking for each week. It only takes about two seconds to put the remote in its designated place than it does to just set it down somewhere. Two seconds. You can do that. Two seconds won't make you late for work. It won't keep the cook waiting for supper.

If you would start making a written list of what you need to do today, carry it in your pocket, add to it every time you remember something else, and keep looking at the list as you work your way through it, you would have a greater sense of accomplishment at the end of every day, and a greater praise for God as you start tomorrow. List your work and work your list. Pick one item, preferably the most important, or the one you want to do the least, and do it first, and don't stop that item until it is finished. When it is finished you will be filled with joy. That sure beats the stress of walking around thinking, "I ought to be doing that other thing, instead of this one."

I was pondering such examples this week and ran into one. I had to see a new doctor this week. That meant going early to fill out the forms, unless I downloaded them off the internet and filled them out ahead of time. That's what I did. I put them in my folder, in my bag, so I would have them with me to take to the doctor. So I'm on my way to the doctor's office, at the light in front of his building and realized I had left the forms in my study. I felt like such a dummy. I should have gotten everything together that I would need at the doctor's and put them with my hat and gloves. Instead I waited until the last minute, rushed around to leave, and ended up forgetting the forms.

These are examples of little changes that produce less stress results every day, every week. There are other things that would show results long-term.

For example, if you put a dollar in a savings account every day, at the most conservative interest rate of .05% (my bank), in 40 years you would have saved \$4,600.00. (**\$1/day x .05% x 40 years = \$4,600**) So deposit \$30 per month, every month. Depositing more money or earning a higher interest rate would give you even bigger savings down the road. Currently, a conservative CD rate for 60 months is 1%. So if you take that same \$1 per day and put it into a CD (**\$1/day x 1.00% x 40 years = \$16,000**) and leave it until you retire you could end up with \$16,000.00. And that is just from \$1 per day. How hard would it be for you to save one dollar a day?

Let me give you another example. If you cut out 19 calories a day, that would equal ten pounds of weight in one year. (**19 calories per day = 2 pounds per year**) Nineteen calories is roughly one slice of white bread, or 1/4 slice of whole wheat bread, or 1/2 pat of butter, or just under 1/4 cup of milk (actually 1/5), or 7 grapes, or 1/8 cup of cooked white rice, or 1/2 ounce of meat. You can see the calories and serving sizes on the package of what you are eating. Use that to estimate how much less to put on your plate.

Let me give you another example. If a 180 pound (me) walked five minutes a day, at 2 miles per hour, a normal walking speed, he would burn 19 calories. (**5 minutes of walking per day = 2 pounds per year**) That would be 2 pounds of calories burned in a year. Walking faster or longer, even if you divided it up between two or three times a day, would burn even more calories.

And of course if you added eating 19 calories less a day and walked off 19 calories more a day, that would equal 4 pounds a year, and 40 pounds in 10 years.

You could even do less than that and see improvement. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Eat an apple or banana instead of a donut or your usual snack. Stand up in front of your chair during the TV commercials, or go up and down a flight of stairs once or twice between TV shows. All of those will make a difference over the course of time.

Here is the point, in case you missed it. **A little change each day adds up to big results.**

Now my goal in this sermon is not to get you to eat less food, or get more exercise, or save more money. Those are all worthy goals, and I WOULD encourage you to do them. But that is not my goal today.

What I am really hoping to get you to do today is to make a change in a different food group. I hope to get you to add spiritual supplements to your diet of truth. I am hoping to get you to spend a little bit of time each day focused on God in prayer and Bible reading.

Now, while there is no command to have a daily quiet time, what we need to happen from such an experience with God is certainly encouraged in God's word.

#### **Jude 1:20-21 (NIV)**

*But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*

Build yourself up. Bulk up spiritually. Build spiritual muscle. He encourages his readers to do this because of those around them who would lead astray from their faith in Christ. They lived in a pagan dominated world. So do we. Pagan doesn't mean non-religious. It means false religion. There is a lot of false religion around us today. And we are pulled from many directions to abandon our faith in Jesus. Like those early Christians, we need to build ourselves up in our most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

Let me suggest the kinds of things that you will learn to do as you spend time bulking up with spiritual muscle in prayer and Bible reading.

### **Spending time in prayer and Bible reading will...**

**Inform your faith as you ingest spiritual truth.** The Bible is full of spiritual facts. It tells us about God, His purposes, and how He is accomplishing those purposes. It tells us God's promises, some of which are conditional. You need to learn those conditions and fulfill them to realize the promises. Keep learning spiritual truth.

**Inspire your hope and inflame your zeal.** This past year the world lost one of the most successful salesmen in history, Zig Ziglar. Selling is hard to do, and most of us avoid it like the plague. Even those who are good at it have to keep themselves psyched up to accomplish it. Even Christians, who have the best news in the world to share, need to keep up their spiritual zeal. You can focus each day on your complaints, pains, troubles, etc. Or you can focus on what is right in your life, on your joys, on your friends and family, and your Savior. Keep your zeal as a disciple high. Feed your zeal with the Word of God.

### **Spending time in prayer and Bible reading will also teach you to...**

**Inspect your heart and inhibit the flesh.** Over and over we are told to put to death the desires of the flesh. Those desires live in the heart and need to be eradicated there in order to prevent them growing into actions. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to keep you cleaning your life of sin.

**Involve Jesus in your life.** Jesus is Lord. That means He is boss. Through prayer and Bible reading you will learn how to let Him be the boss of your life.

**Invoke Jesus' name on your requests.** Jesus tells his disciples that their prayers need to change. Their prayers need to reflect the Lordship of Jesus. He says to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus.

That doesn't mean to tack on "in Jesus' name" at the end of your prayers. That won't help your prayers. Instead, pray what Jesus would pray. Think of it this way: If Jesus were living your life, what would He pray for? That's what you need to pray for.

**Invite the H. S. to fill you.** Your character needs to change if you will successfully follow Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the one who produces that change of character. But you must want the change. Ask the Holy Spirit each day to fill you, guide you, and change you.

Over time you will learn more spiritual truth, appreciate God more, sin less, and grow to serve others with the love of Jesus. In short, you will become more like Him.

So here is what I am encouraging you to do.

**Read your Bible** (for at least five minutes each day), **thinking seriously and prayerfully about what you read** (for another four minutes), **and turn that into a prayer** (about one minute = ten minutes).

Jude writes that we should build ourselves up in our most holy faith. Build yourself up. This is YOUR responsibility. It isn't mine. It isn't the church's. We will help you. The Holy Spirit is involved, too. But God isn't going to make it happen without your desire and cooperation. YOU have to make sure this is done. You have to feed on the spiritual truth God has for you in the Bible.

Build yourself up. Bulk up with spiritual muscle. Feed on spiritual truth. Pray that truth with faith. In time you will see great results occurring in you.

Invitation:

Do you have the faith Jude writes of?

**Jude 1:20-21 (NIV)**

*But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*

The most holy faith spoken of here is not faith in your daily prayer and Bible reading. It is not faith in your church attendance. It is not faith in your good deeds, the kindnesses and helps you give to others. It is not faith in your offerings to the church. It is not faith in you being a good person.

The faith spoken of here is faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is faith in what God says in the Bible about His Son. It is faith that God sent His Son to be the sin payment for you. It is faith that you can be forgiven of sin and receive eternal life as you trust in what Jesus did for you on the cross.

Trusting only in Jesus is the most holy faith that we stand on.

Trusting only in Jesus is the truth we are building our lives on.

Trusting only in Jesus is what makes you a Christian.

Won't you trust in Jesus today?

Christians, is God telling you to meet with Him more..., more regularly, more faithfully? Or have you made such a commitment in the past... and having been keeping it? You need to speak to God today too.