

Faith and Fitness: Loving God in Body

Move, Eat, and Live with Intention Spiritually, Emotionally, and Physically.

Every day you wake up knowing that how you treat your body is a form of worship for God. For many young Christians, and for new Christians, faith and fitness could look like two worlds apart. But the Bible tells us plainly: our bodies are temples on loan from the Creator, and honoring Him by taking care of it is part of the contract.

In this blog post, we will talk about how biblical principles fit so well with modern-day health habits, and how to add design into how you move, how you eat, and how you live nourishing your heart, mind, and spirit. We will also be giving you simple workout ideas and healthy recipes anyone can do and make, no matter where you are starting from!

Seeing Your Body as Temple

One of the most compelling verses about how we treat our bodies in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20,

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

This is critical because it informs us that our physical bodies matter and they are not just vessels to have a life with. Our bodies are a dwelling place for God's spirit. So, when we prioritize health through exercise and nutrition, we are actually respecting and honoring the gift that God has given to us. It becomes an act of worship not just self-care. Why Faith and Fitness Should Go Hand in Hand

Faith asks us to be stewards not just of our money or time but our bodies. Fitness and nutrition enhance not just our physical health, but also our mental clarity and energy, emotional stability, and are an important part of being able to serve others and discover God's purpose with greater zeal. Studies indicate that regular activity can minimize feelings of anxiety, improve one's mood, and even sharpen spiritual focus.

Blending fitness into your faith journey takes on a different angle, as each workout and meal becomes a prayer of proclamation to glorify God through good stewardship of our body.

Moving with a Purpose: Physical Movement as Worship

Exercise doesn't need to be complicated or scary. Walking, stretching, dancing, strength training, and other methods of movement can promote positive changes in your quality of life and wellness.

Simple Suggestions to Start Moving

Start Small: Begin with 10-15 minutes of movement each day. The first step could be as simple as walking around your block or doing a few stretches that feel comfortable for you.

Choose Movement that is Enjoyable: Select activities that you find enjoyable! Dancing to worship music, riding your bike or doing yoga is fine. The more enjoyable the movement, the less likely you will skip it.

Make it Meaningful/Mindfulness: Use your movement time to pray or meditate on a scripture, or, thank God for your ability to exercise.

Create a Routine: it's better to be consistent than dynamic. Find a weekly routine that fits and commit to it.

As an example, you may wish to create a daily routine that starts with a 5 minute breathing exercise and prayer, then 10 minutes of light stretching for the purpose of thanking God for your health.

Creating a Simple Weekly Fitness Plan for Beginners

Monday: 20-minute walk + scripture reading

Wednesday: bodyweight exercises (squats, push-ups, planks) - 2 sets each

Friday: yoga or stretching routine with worship music

Sunday: active rest - sport, or simply dance with family/friends.

Eating to Glorify God: Nutrition that Nourishes Body and Soul

What we eat impacts not only our physical health, but also our spiritual and emotional states. The Bible has a plethora of references and reminders regarding food and nourishment, and it anticipates balance, gratitude, and mindfulness when it comes to food consumption (Proverbs 25:27, Ecclesiastes 3:13).

Principles of Biblical Nutrition

- **Balance:** enjoy a balance of foods in moderate amounts. The Bible does not forbid foods, but rather advises us on what, and how much, we should eat.
- **Gratitude:** always thank God for your meals, and recognize that every bite is a blessing.
- **Simplicity:** natural or minimally processed foods, think fruits, vegetables, grains, and lean proteins, often resemble the foods that were eaten during biblical times.
- **Self-control:** eating is enjoyable, but it should never have control over us, nor be harmful.

Easy and Healthy Recipes that Honor Your Body

Sunrise Power Smoothie

- cup spinach
- banana
- 1/2 cup frozen berries
- tbsp chia seeds
- cup almond milk (or preferred milk)
- Blend and pray for strength to accomplish the day!

Scripture Stir-Fry

- cup mixed colorful veggies (peppers, broccoli, carrots)
- 1/2 cup lean protein, cooked (chicken, tofu, beans)
- tbsp olive oil and garlic
- Serve over brown rice or quinoa

Prepare with joy and with a heart full of gratitude for God providing us with food. Calm Evening Tea Chamomile or peppermint tea A slice of lemon or a drizzle of honey Consider sipping your tea and meditating on **Psalm 4:8**,

"In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety."

Holistic Health: Spirit, Soul and Strength So by holistic health, I mean addressing every part of you, spirit, soul, and strength (physical body). **1 Thessalonians 5:23** states

"May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Spirit: Care For Your Relationship With God Prayer, worship, Bible study and fellowship with believers fuel your spirit! A strong spirit makes wise decisions around food, exercise and rest.

Soul: Manage Your Emotions and Thoughts Your soul connects thought and emotions. You can improve your emotional landscape by practicing gratitude journaling, continuing to connect with the community, and bless yourself with life giving words. Establishing healthy habits in this part will yield resilience and mental clarity.

Strength: Care For Your Body This is the physical component – movement/nutrition/ sleep & REST. When you treat your body well, it becomes a serving platform for God and others - in joy and energy!

Overcoming Obstacles: Remaining Faithful by Staying Consistent In Fitness Journey.

The thought of beginning a fitness and nutrition journey can feel overwhelming, especially as a new believer or creating a new healthy habit. Below are some practical tips to motivate you to stay consistent and committed.

Set Realistic Goals: Create fitness goals and eating plans in bite-size, realistic goals, and celebrate each step along the way.

Enlist Help: Find a church group or online community that encourages faith and fitness. Pray for strength and discipline: every day, ask God for motivation and perseverance.

Be Gracious to Yourself: Don't succumb to defeat if you have a setback or two. Remember, redemption applies here too!

Change It Up: try some new exercises, recipes, or different components of God's creation- vary to keep it all fresh and exciting!

GET MOVING: Call to Action!!

Remember - Faith and fitness is not a single journey - it is a journey within a journey. One journey that is working together to result in a full life, healthily lived for the glory of God! Start where you are at, and no matter your level of your commitment - God will be honored in every step you take, every bite you eat, and every breath you take.

Start today (together) with a simple prayer, move your body with a grateful heart and nourish yourself and your body with intention. Your body is God's temple, and your body is a tremendously precious gift!

Are you ready to get moving with faith? If you'd like, please share your favorite workout, recipe or scripture in the comments below, and we can encourage each other to honor God, body, spirit, soul and strength!

REMEMBER: There is no definite journey timeline to honour God, by and through faith and fitness - it is uniquely yours! Be patient, be faithful and enjoy the journey!