

Training to Be Godly

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Preacher: Aaron Hoak

[0:00] 1 Timothy 4, and I'll read the entire chapter. The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith! and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

! Such teachings come through hypocritical liars! whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

For everything God created is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

If you point these things out to the brothers you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives tales. Rather, 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.

[1:26] This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance and for this we labor and strive that we have put our hope in the living God who is the savior of all men and especially of those who believe.

Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity.

Until I come, devote yourselves to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

Be diligent in these matters. Give yourself wholly to them so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and your doctrine closely.

Persevere in them because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. To be a world-class athlete, you need many things.

[2:45] And I want you to think with me tonight about three of them. First of all, you need to carefully regulate what you put into your body. What you take in.

Whether you're talking about food or water or energy drinks or energy bars or protein shakes or vitamins or supplements or pain medication or drugs, steroids, human growth hormone, performance, other performance-enhancing drugs.

You've got to be careful about what you put into your body if you want to be a world-class athlete.

Some of those things are good for you. Others are bad. Some might deliver short-term good but do long-term harm.

Some might be good in certain portions but bad in excess. You have to be careful about what goes into your body if you're going to use that body as a precision instrument of speed and skill and athletic ability.

Now, nobody has ever mistaken me for a world-class athlete. I was an athlete. It was past tense when I was in high school. But even at that level, I had to be careful about what I put in my body.

[3:56] You try to do a conditioning practice under the hot afternoon sun with a Big Mac and fries in your stomach and you're probably going to see them again. It's not a good idea.

It's not going to be helpful for your training. If you load up on salty foods and don't drink any water, it's going to be just as bad in a different sort of way and probably worse for you. You've got to be careful about what goes into your body.

Another thing that you need to be a world-class athlete is intense physical training to turn your body into that lean physical specimen of strength and to make the most of the things that you've put into your body, you have to exercise it.

You've got to work it. And you've got to be diligent at it. Not just every now and then when you have time, when you feel like it, no daily, you push your body and put it through its paces. And that will look different depending on what you're training for.

But it will be rigorous, difficult, painful. So much so that at times the athlete would wonder why he's doing it and will think about quitting. And the other thing that most will need, not all, but most will need is a good trainer.

[5:02] Some people are self-starters. They don't need any motivation. They've got it all within them and they know exactly what they need, what their bodies need. Most of us, however, need a good kick in the pants to get us out the door in the morning.

And we need somebody to tell us what we need. I don't know exactly how to train my body. I know I need to work it, but I need somebody to instruct me if I'm going to get to that high level of fitness required for a particular sport or event.

You've got to have these things if you're going to be a serious athlete. Good diet, good exercise and training, and a good trainer. And similarly, Paul says, you need those things if you want to be a world-class Christian, a healthy Christian.

You have to carefully guard the spiritual food that you take in. You must rigorously train yourself unto godliness, and you'll need someone to guide you in that process.

And we're going to look at verses 6-10 of 1 Timothy 4 tonight. And you have to remember that Paul's talking to Timothy. He's talking to a minister. He says, if you do this, if you point these things out, you'll be a good minister.

[6:09] He's talking to Timothy, and he tells Timothy to do these things. He says, you as a minister, you're going to have to train yourself unto godliness. You're going to have to be careful what you take into your body. And so on. But I think it applies to the rest of God's people as well.

Because further down, and we won't get there tonight, but in verse 12, Timothy is told to set an example. To set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, in purity.

In other words, he is to set an example of godliness to those believers. And so that means if Timothy needs to train for godliness and set an example for the people to be godly, then they are going to have to train for godliness as well.

They are going to have to work at it. And so what Paul says to Timothy here, train yourself for godliness, applies to the people of God as well. Because Timothy was to be an example for them. So if Timothy trains for godliness, then you need to train for godliness as well. And so what's said here is not just for ministers. It is for all of us. We want to talk about your spiritual diet, your spiritual exercise, and your spiritual trainer tonight.

[7:14] We start with your spiritual diet. You need truth. Your spiritual diet. And we begin by saying that you need truth.

The need for good spiritual intake is seen in verse 6. He's just warned Timothy about these false teachers that will be coming. And then he tells them in verse 6, if you point these things out, warn the brothers that this false teaching is coming, and so doing, you'll be a good minister of Jesus Christ.

And notice that he was brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. He was brought up in these things. We could say he was nourished.

He was fed. He was trained even in the words of faith and in good teaching. That was Timothy's spiritual intake. And if you read the two letters to Timothy, you know where he got that.

At least initially. He got it from his mom and his grandmother. Remember what Paul says to him in his second letter. 2 Timothy 3, verses 14 and 15, But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of because you know those from whom you learned it.

[8:26] And how from infancy you have known the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus from his earliest moments, Timothy was fed a good spiritual diet.

The holy scriptures that are able to make you wise into salvation. He was given the words of faith. He was given good teaching by Lois and Eunice, his mother and grandmother. He recognized the need of this.

And so Timothy has this great privilege of being fed the very best truth. He had taken in spiritual truth and needed to continue to take it in. It's what he has to teach the people there in Ephesus to take in.

That's what our spiritual diet must consist of. More on that in a moment. But you notice how he got it at first from his mom and his grandmother.

And I wonder tonight, and I'm sure there are, are there any children here that can say they've been nourished in the scriptures from infancy?

[9:27] Any moms and dads here that have been faithful to proclaim the truth to their children?

They need a good diet of spiritual intake. They need God's Word from the very beginning.

And it starts in the home. We're going to talk about the church's role in that, the pastor's role in teaching, but it starts at home just like it did for Timothy, taking that in. So you children, be grateful that your parents sit down with you and teach you God's Word.

Be grateful that they bring you to church. They're doing what God's Word tells them to do. They're giving you what you need, the very best of food, the very best possible nourishment you could have. And you parents, be encouraged to grow or to be consistent in that, to be faithful in bringing your children here and teaching them that truth so that they receive the right spiritual diet.

You know, you don't feed your kids just any old garbage. I've got a newborn at home. Well, he's six, seven weeks old now. And I don't feed him just anything.

I don't really feed him anything, but my wife doesn't feed him just anything. We don't just grab whatever's in the fridge and start shoving it into his mouth. Because I know what he needs.

[10:37] At this point, he needs his mom's milk or formula to eat. And that's what he can handle and that's what he needs. And so that's what we're going to give him. And if you know from the beginning that your children need to be fed on this book right here, then why wouldn't you give them that?

Why would you withhold that? I'm not going to starve myself. I'm not going to not feed him. Tell my wife, don't feed him anymore. Starve him. The same way with God's Word. I'm not going to withhold this glorious truth from our children.

Timothy had learned him from his mother, his grandmother. He had learned it from the Apostle Paul. He had sat at Paul's feet. He had traveled with Paul. What a privilege to be discipled. He was his son in the faith. To be discipled by the Apostle Paul.

And I wonder if any of you have taken any younger person in the faith, not necessarily even younger in years, but younger in the faith under your wing and help them along the way. Teaching them the truth like Paul did with Timothy.

We have a discipleship plan here that we use. And if you'd be interested in discipling someone, we can give you materials and match you up with a person that could use some help along the way. Because people need spiritual nourishment.

[11:45] You're going to have to see to your own nourishment as well. Taking in God's Word. We'll talk more about that when we get to training. And the substance of that nourishing is, as we've said, it's God's Word.

It's what Paul calls here the words of faith. The truths of the faith and good teaching. If you listen to words of faith, you're receiving good teaching. And if you're listening to good teaching, then you're getting the words of the faith.

And the two go hand in hand. It's the glorious truth of God's Word. The truth of the Gospel. That we who are enemies of God can be reconciled to Him through the work of His Son who we've read about in chapter 3 and verse 16.

All of those things about the incarnated and resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus Christ. It's the truth of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

It's the message that when we put our hope in God, we will never be disappointed. We will never be put to shame if our hope is in God. It's the implications of this truth that if we believe in this Jesus, then we will strive to be like Him.

[12:50] To follow Him. To walk in His way. These are the truths that we nourish ourselves on. That we glean from God's Word. You want a summary of words of faith? Come to our adult Sunday school class.

What's the book? It's God's Words. Or 18 Words by J.A. Packer. Summaries of Christian doctrine. There's words of faith. That's something to be nourished on. Come and soak that in.

That's the nourishment that we need. Our spiritual diet is important. It must be words of faith and good teaching. That's what it must be. It must not be other things.

You see, he says in v. 7, to reject, have nothing to do with godless miz and old wise tales. Now, an athlete, he can't be eating loads of fattening junk food.

That's going to kill him. That's going to hold him back. If he's taking in the wrong thing, it's going to hinder his progress. And same with the Christian life. If you're taking in the wrong spiritual diet, it's going to hinder you.

[13:45] So Paul says, reject. Don't have anything to do with these myths, these profane, these godless myths. He's talked about that back in chapter 1. We talked about their foolish, vain speculation, their myths, these old wives' tales.

That was sort of an expression they used back then to cast doubt on the credibility of something. It was used against Christianity. People would call Christianity the truths of the faith that we're calling good teaching.

They would call those things old wives' tales, opponents of the faith. Paul says, no, this is the truth. You ignore the other garbage that's out there, the lies that are circulating. Pay no attention to it. It's broader than the mistake, the error, the heresy that he's talked about in the first five verses. Even more, whatever is opposed to the Christian faith have nothing to do with it. Don't take that in. And so for our spiritual diet, we're to take in the truth and to reject the error.

And so he says in chapter 6 and verse 20, Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. You guard that truth that's been given to you and turn away from godless chatter. The opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.

[15:00] You see, it's your spiritual life that's at stake. You believe the error, it'll lead you away from the truth. away from the faith. And so, if you want to be a faithful Christian, if you want to be a world-class Christian, you've got to be careful what comes in.

What you take in. It must be the truth of God's Word. You must reject the lie. We need good spiritual food to be faithful children of God. But secondly, we want to talk about your spiritual exercise.

And we first say here that you need godliness. Your spiritual food, you need truth. Your spiritual exercise, you need godliness. The training in view here is unto godliness.

In verse 7 again. Rather, train yourself to be godly or train yourself unto godliness. And then he talks about physical training in verse 8. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things.

Maybe you've done some physical training, some bodily training. That's the word there in verse 8. If you have, you know that it requires work. It requires discipline. It requires consistency.

[16:12] The word here is the word where we get our word gymnasium. Gym yourself unto godliness. Train yourself. And you go to the gym, you get a good workout, maybe you shoot some hoops, you run on the treadmill, maybe you lift some weights.

But you go there either to get in shape or to stay in shape. And if you really want to exercise, it takes hard work. I might not look at it anymore, but I do remember what two-a-day practices are like.

I used to be in some kind of shape. Two-a-day practices in the hot sun. Preparing, I played soccer and soccer starts in the fall and so training starts in the summer. And summers in Kentucky are about like they are here, hot and humid.

And it takes work to get yourself into shape. You're going to have to expend some effort. You can't just come out for one day before games start, kick around a little bit and then expect to be able to go 90 minutes without stopping.

No, you're going to have to work. You're going to have to do sprints and suicides. You try suicides on a soccer field instead of a basketball court. And then run distance and you work on your ball touches when you're exhausted and you run drills when you're trying and your legs feel like jello and mush and you don't even want to get up to the couch after practice.

[17:27] And then about the time you're ready to get off the couch, number two rolls around. And man, it's work. It's painful to get yourself into shape. It takes discipline.

And you're not going to get in shape by doing that for just one day. And then saying the next day, you know, I really don't feel like doing that again today. I'm just going to stay in bed. It doesn't work that way. If you've ever tried to get in shape, you know the discipline it takes to get up out of bed in the morning and go for that run or get to the gym for the workout.

Man, the alarm goes off and you just, the bed, it's like a magnetic pull almost. And you don't want to get up because it takes work. It takes devotion.

It takes consistency. And that's what's in view here. Training. Training without any hindrance. The word actually, I don't mean to be crass, but this was their word for nude.

The Greeks went and they exercised in the nude. They competed without any clothing. I think the view is without anything to hinder them. It's like a swimmer today will even shave his head and even shave all the hair on his body so there's no resistance.

[18 : 34] Nothing to hold him back. Nothing to slow him down. That's the sort of focus we're talking about here. And all of this talk about bodily training that Paul does here and that we've done isn't just for illustration's sake.

It is primarily, but not just. That physical training has a little bit of value too. He says it's of a little value. And he's not speaking of it in a derogatory way.

He's not saying it's insignificant. And so it's good for us to exercise discipline in training our bodies. We enjoy health. A better quality of life. A healthy body promotes a sharp mind.

The profit is small in comparison to godliness, but it's profitable. Physical training prevents bodily decay. Perhaps in early death, spiritual training will prevent soul decay and apostasy.

And so it is by far the more important. And before we talk about that spiritual training, notice that even these are going to mix a little bit. Even getting the right diet takes training.

[19 : 38] Anybody here ever tried a diet? You don't have to raise your hands. You know that it takes discipline. It takes exercise. It takes diligence.

You've got to train yourself to only eat the portion size instead of the size that you're used to eating. You've got to train yourself to eat the right thing instead of the things that you're used to. And it's hard to do that.

It's difficult. It's painful. And so even taking in the right food will require training spiritually as well.

And so we come to that spiritual training for the purpose of godliness.

And the lessons are similar though the goal is very different. Here the goal is godliness. You remember from chapter 2 and verse 2 that our lives are for the... to make it our goal to live a quiet life in all godliness and holiness.

It's the opposite of that profane, godless mist that we're to avoid. And Paul has talked back in chapter 3 verse 16 about the mystery of godliness.

[20 : 39] There I think he's talking about the Christian religion, the faith. And this is related. If you are part of the Christian religion that worships the living God, then you will live the way that God wants you to live.

You'll live a godly life as a follower of God. I'm a worshiper of God. Therefore I train to live a life of godliness. In other words, we are to live as God directs us to and where do we find that except in His Word.

And so if we want to know how to live a godly life, then we've got to have the right spiritual diet. You see how these are all connected? The spiritual intake and the spiritual training. If you want to know how to be godly, it's here.

And so you've got to be taking in the Word. And then you've got to train yourself to live according to this Word. We're to live lives of holiness, God's Word says.

Shunning sinful entrapments of the world. Living as light, shining in the dark. We're to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. That's a life of godliness.

[21 : 38] We're to boldly proclaim the good news that God has given us to others. The Gospel of Jesus Christ. Donald Whitney has a book, The Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life.

I'd recommend it to you highly if you want some help in spiritual training. And he lists various disciplines or exercises that we're going to have to participate in if we would live lives of godliness. I'm going to make mention of some of them here with a little bit of comment on some of them. And his first spiritual discipline that he lists is Scripture intake. His first spiritual discipline is our spiritual nourishment.

It's what we take into our bodies. And just like a diet, this is going to take work. We're very good at filling our minds with all sorts of garbage. It's easy.

It's easy to be entertained. It's easy to fill our mind with mindless drivel from TV and everything else. But it's going to take work to fill our minds with that which is true and right and holy.

[22:37] And so, we're going to have to get ourselves out of bed each Sunday morning and get through the doors of this building or some faithful church where God's Word is proclaimed and hear that Word preached every Sunday.

Every Sunday. Come and receive that nourishment. Come and receive the teaching of God's Word. You're going to have to take that food in. But how many of you, some say, good, I've got my spiritual nourishment.

I'm good to go. I got it Sunday and now I'm set. I got my spiritual intake. I got my intake of the Word. How many of you here, and this one I do want you to raise your hands on, how many people here eat one big meal on Sunday, maybe two on Sunday, food, real food, we're talking about now, and then don't eat anything else for the rest of the week?

I don't see any hands. I don't see any hands of anybody that just eats on Sunday and says, well, I got my nourishment, my physical nourishment for the week and now I'm good to go.

No, we eat every day. Three times a day. Maybe a snack in between. Some of us. That's what my mom always said about me. I would go from meal to snack to meal to snack.

[23:49] But anyway, we eat every day, don't we? Because we need it. We need that nourishment every day. And that's good. And so I don't understand then if the comparison is similar, our spiritual intake has to be the same way.

We can't come on Sunday and say, alright, I got my big meal, I'm good to go for the rest of the week. I'm set. And you know what? It's going to take discipline then to get into this Word every day. To wait daily at wisdom's doorpost. To take in if this is where we learn about godliness, if this is what we need to feed our souls on, then we need to be in it regularly.

And then we take that Word that we've read and we meditate on it throughout the day so that everything we do is, somebody here used this language once, everything is soaked in Scripture and so close to God's Word that every situation that arises, you immediately think biblically about it. You think, what does God's Word have to say about this? About this situation that comes because we've meditated on it. We've taken it and we've turned it over in our mind as we heard about this morning, meditating on God's love.

[24:55] And then we memorize it. We put it to work and boy, that takes discipline, doesn't it? You know what it takes to study and to memorize. It takes work to memorize and you have to discipline yourself for that.

And what did we just sing? Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee. And that takes work and you hear that might not sin against Thee.

That's the life of godliness. We're training unto godliness. Part of that training then is memorizing the Word so that we're able to go and live a life of godliness. And this is going to take work.

You're going to need to have a plan. You're going to need to have a set time where you know the distractions will be minimal so you can't escape getting away from your Scripture reading, from your taking in of God's Word.

And if you've tried to do this on any regular basis, you know that it requires discipline. Almost as hard or harder sometimes than prying yourself out of bed to go for a run in the morning. Getting into the Word.

[25:53] And that's why it says train yourself. Practice. It's going to take repeated effort to get up and do it. Prayer is another spiritual discipline.

And we're lazy and this will take work. People need a planned out schedule for working out. They need to say, you know what, I'm going to go Monday, Wednesday, Friday to the gym and I'm going to go every day.

And then once they get there, they've got a list of things that their trainer has told them they're going to need to do. One day I'm going to do work upper body and do cardio and then another day I'm going to lower body and do cardio. And you've got a list of things.

You know what? That's what I need for my prayer life. I'll just give you a suggestion. If you've got issues with prayer, I have to make a list. And I've got each day and things I pray for every day and then things I pray for on Monday and things I pray for on Tuesday and Wednesday and so on.

And then you take that list and put it right in front of your face if that's what it takes because I'm prone to wander. My mind wanders. And so you lodge that right there and it's okay to open your eyes when you pray.

[26:54] And you use that list and you pray off that list. Discipline yourself. You come again and again. You use that. Or maybe something different will work. But make an effort. Discipline yourself to be regularly in prayer.

Here's the source of power that we need every day. I can't get through one day without God's strength so why would I get through a day without asking Him for that strength? We have not because we ask not.

And so we discipline ourselves to come regularly and pray. Worship is a discipline unto godliness. Do you know that worship takes work? What you all are doing here is not passive.

I hope. It shouldn't be. You don't come on Sunday just to sit back and see what's going to come to you. You come ready to worship your God in prayer and praise. And even you're listening to the reading of God's Word and you're listening to the preaching of God's Word is active because you're hearing it and you're saying where does that fit in my life?

What needs to be adjusted in my life? What glorious thing have I learned about God that I can praise and thank Him for today? What glorious thing about His Son Jesus? Worship is active. And it will take practice to be active in worship.

[28:00] To gain the proper benefit from it and to give glory to God as He deserves. We could go on. Evangelism. Service. Stewardship.

Fasting. These are other things listed in Whitney's book. Things that we need training in. Things that we need instruction in. They're expected of God's people. We're to serve one another. That's going to take practice because by nature we're selfish.

You've got to train that old selfishness out of you until it's almost natural to serve people. To think of others first before yourself. And stewardship. Taking what God has given you and be a faithful steward of it.

And giving back to God from what He's given to you. And fasting. All things that you're going to have to run this race in such a way as to win. You can't wander aimlessly.

I'm going to read my Bible over here. And then in a couple weeks I'm going to pray. And in a couple months I'll give a little bit to the church. And I'm going to come and I'll worship every so often.

[28:59] No, it repeated exercise and discipline. We've got enemies all around us. The world, the flesh, and the devil. And if you go aimlessly without focus and purpose you'll not live a life of godliness.

No, Paul says. You've got to buffet your body. Make it your slave. And it will take repetition. Listen to Hebrews 5:14. Solid food is for the mature who by constant use.

The word is practice. Who by constant use. Who by practice have trained and there's our word. Have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. You hear that godliness? Distinguishing good from evil.

If you're going to live a life of holiness, of godliness. You've got to know the difference between right and wrong. And the author of Hebrews says that takes constant use to train yourself to know the difference between good and evil.

It's going to take repetition. You've got to come back at it again and again. It's going to take not just discipline as in self-discipline but corrective discipline. Ooh, we don't like that.

[29:59] But again, the author of Hebrews 12. No discipline. He's talking about that corrective discipline that a parent gives a child that God gives His children. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. We're going to need somebody to bring us back on the path. God faithfully disciplines us back and brings us into the straight and narrow way.

And then we're going to have to remove every hindrance. Like the swimmer that even shaves off the hair on his body. Hebrews 12:1 And see if you hear the athletic imagery here as well.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Well, you come to run a race. You're going to come and run a 5K. 3.1 miles. Something like that. Are you going to come with a big backpack on?

[31:13] Got a cooler in there? Got some sandwiches? Got some water? For your 5K? Maybe carry a radio with you because you like your music. It helps you. Is that going to help you on your

race?

It's not going to help me, man. You've got to unload that stuff. You lay off every... You get rid of every hindrance. And so Paul says, put off these false myths, these false teachings.

You've got to get rid of that. What is it that hinders you from spiritual godliness? Here's just one example. You have a hard time getting out of bed in the morning.

And that's going to be, you know, it's the time when the kids are still asleep. It's going to be the time that you've got where there's no distractions to get into the Word and to pray. But man, it's just too hard to get out of bed in the morning.

But you also love that late night TV show, whatever, news, entertainment, I don't know. You love that. You know what? You're going to have to cut off that, whatever it is that's holding you back.

[32:10] You know? Get to bed earlier. Cut off that TV show if need be. And get up in the morning so that you're more well rested and you get your sleep at night instead of getting it in the morning.

You cut off that hindrance. If your love for the pleasure of the world is holding you back from your pursuit of holiness, then you cut off whatever source of pleasure is hindering you. I'm not talking about forbidding legitimate pleasures like food and marriage up here.

But remember what we said last week. That when the created thing becomes more important to you than the Creator, then it's no longer serving its purpose. And so if you've got some good created thing that has become too important, that's become more important than the Creator, and your relationship with that Creator, then that's when you've got to start knocking off that encumbrance, that thing that's holding you back.

I love to play golf. I'm not very good at it, but I love it. And that's legitimate. It's a legitimate pleasure that I can enjoy. But if golf becomes so all-consuming to me that it takes all of my time, every waking moment, it's taking me away from my family, it's taking me away from the work that I'm called to do, it's taking me away from God's Word.

Man, instead of up at 6 in the morning studying God's Word, I'm up at 6 in the morning on the golf course, then man, that thing that's legitimate has become an idol. And that's got to be... You've got to get rid of that.

[33:33] You've got to cut it off so that you can run the race without any hindrance, without anything holding you back. And brothers and sisters, it sounds like hard work and it is, but the benefits are beyond measure.

Now, physical training, there's some benefit to that, a little profit for your earthly life, but godliness is profitable for all things. It holds promise for this life and the next.

For the life now as we grow in grace and draw nearer to God and His people, and this is its own reward, you know the blessings of a clear conscience, sweet fellowship, that God smile upon you. Godliness benefits us now. God has promised to preserve His people and keep us. But also for the life to come. We who have been saved by God and by His grace live for Him, a life of godliness. We'll enjoy eternity with Him. 1 Timothy 6, 18 and 19, command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds. You hear the life of godliness there. To be generous and willing to share.

[34:37] In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age so that they may be able to, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Paul says the same thing about himself later. He's fought the good fight. He's finished the race. He's kept the faith. And now what's waiting for him? The crown of righteousness. And the words, I think, reflect those of Jesus.

Paul even talks here about the promise. In verse 8, godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

And Paul could well have in mind the words of Jesus. And what was his promise? Mark 10, 29 and 30, I tell you the truth, Jesus replied. No one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age.

Homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields. And with them, persecutions. And in the age to come, eternal life. You hear how similar Paul and Jesus' teaching is?

[35:48] It's the same. Godliness has benefit for all things. This life and the life to come. And so says Paul, this is a trustworthy saying worthy of your acceptance.

I think verse 9 more fittingly goes with verse 8. I think it refers to what precedes it. The way the NIV divides it up and divides the paragraphs, it makes verse 9 go with verse 10, but I think it actually

refers to what precedes and most commentators agree.

Or I guess I agree with them. That that trustworthy saying is what's in verse 8. It's a trustworthy saying deserving of your acceptance tonight that physical training is of a little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things.

Holding promise for this life and the life to come. And so it's worthy of your acceptance tonight that you need to train yourself onto godliness. And finally, the source of that godliness is we're still talking about your spiritual training as God Himself.

The living God is the best place to put your hope of godliness. We are God's people. And if we're to live lives of godliness, then it must be in His strength.

[37 : 03] You remember that we're the church of the living God, and so it makes sense that our hope is in the living God because we are His people. If we're to train ourselves for godliness, we will fail apart from God.

And so our hope is in Him and Him alone. As soon as we begin to depend on our own strength, we fail. Our God is our help in ages past, in the present, and for years to come.

And so, we have put our hope in the living God, the Savior of all men and especially of those who believe. Are we fools to put our hope in this God, this unseen God? The world says yes.

Why would you trust Him? Why would you put all your eggs in that one basket? And you know that the Scriptures say that those who hope in the Lord will not be put to shame.

And Isaiah 40 and verse 31 says of this, who hope in the Lord, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles.

[38 : 05] They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not grow faint. You hear the training there? Where does your strength to run the race come from?

Where does your ability to walk and not get tired in the Christian life comes from? Well, it's for those who hope in the Lord. There's the source of your godliness. There's your hope while you go about this all this hard work of training.

He says, too much, I can't do it. Hope in the Lord. There's your source. There's your strength. There is your help. God is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

There's a lot of debate about what that means. But I think it simply means this. That God is, in many ways, the Savior, the Deliverer, the Provider for all men in a generic sort of way.

The reason that anybody on the earth is alive is because God has spared their life to this point. He has saved them. We've talked about how God sends His reign on the just and the unjust alike.

[39 : 14] The Scriptures talk about God delivering, saving His people out of the land of Egypt. And He did. He saved them. But not all of them were true Israel, were believers who were saved from their sins.

And so God is the Savior, the Deliverer of all men. But in a special way, He is the Savior of those who believe, who have put their hope and their trust in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ them, He saves from their sin and from the penalty of their sin. And so what better place to have your hope than in this God who is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe.

You can try to put your hope in all sorts of places. You can try to put it in men. You can put it in presidential candidates and they can talk about hope all they want. But if God is not the object of your hope, then it is empty.

It is vain. But our hope is in the living God. And so we will not be put to shame. We will find strength to run the race.

[40 : 16] He will prove Himself faithful even as He has in the past. And so may God make us a people who are careful what we take in, careful what we feed ourselves on, and careful to train ourselves for godliness.

May He make us a people of godliness. We're going to have to save the third point until next week. We've said that we've talked about your spiritual nourishment, your spiritual training, and thirdly, your spiritual trainer.

And we're going to talk about pastors. God gives His church ministers to help you along the way. And He has. And we'll talk about it more next week. But let me say this tonight.

He hasn't left you to walk this road alone. He's given you the Holy Spirit to dwell in you. And He's also given the church ministers. And so you better have some people like are described back in chapter 3, He tells Timothy.

You need people like that. And He talks about how if you're a good minister, you'll point out these errors to them. And He talks about how we labor and strive. That's a minister's job.

[41:20] But let me say, if you need help in spiritual training, then don't hesitate to come to one of your pastors and say, look, I'm really struggling with this particular area, spiritual intake, or the intake of the Word, or prayer, whatever.

Come and talk to us and let us shepherd you and be a help to you and a guide to you if you need help in any of those areas. I need help in those areas. I'm glad I have faithful shepherds.

One of the blessings of having a plurality of elders in the church. But we'll come back and spend more time with that next week on the spiritual trainer and the good that a pastor does for his church and God's gift to him and how we need men like that.

But for tonight, let's make sure that we're people who are taking in what we need spiritually and are training ourselves for godliness because this is what is needed. It's what's needed for ministers.

It's what's needed for all of God's people. And so may He make us a people of godliness. It'll take work, but we have the greatest help, don't we? We have the living God who will not disappoint us.

[42:28] Well, let's pray together. Our Father, we pray that You would strengthen us to run the race set before us and to run it in such a way as to win. We pray that You would help us to put off everything that hinders us and to press forward towards that goal, that crown of righteousness that awaits us.

We thank You that godliness holds promise for this life and for the next. and we pray that You would make us a people of godliness. Give us discipline to train ourselves for that purpose.

Give us grace to walk according to Your Word, to live according to the precepts set forward in Your Word. We pray that You would give us grace to receive them humbly and to order our life according to them.

We are not sufficient for these things, and so tonight we confess that our only hope and trust is in the living God, the Savior of all men, especially those who believe. And so we come to You in faith tonight, believing that You are the Savior, the One who is able to not just save us for this life, but to save us for eternity.

And so we pray that You might draw lost sinners to Yourself, that they might put their hope and trust in Your Son, Christ, and then walk this way of godliness with us. Pressing forward, we thank You that, having hoped in You, we won't be put to shame, but that You will give us strength to run the race and will bring us safely home.

[43:54] Comfort us in these truths, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.