**1. Motivate**

Why do you think there is such emphasis on physical fitness in our society?

* people want to look good
* the health clubs want to promote business
* Pelaton wants to sell more machines
* nutritional companies want to sell more of their stuff
* there is a renewed awareness on working at maintaining health to fight against heart problems, high cholesterol
* we are living longer – realize need to better our health early so as to benefit later
* interest in plastic surgery body sculpting to look good
* desk jobs do not exercise us enough,
* realize a need to burn calories, get aerobic exercise for heart and lungs

**2. Transition**

Many of us do things to better our physical fitness.

* Growth in Christ occurs when we practice spiritual disciplines.

A video introduction is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/1_dx4xpi91> If you have no Wi-Fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/y3vel2zb>

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Good Things of God Distorted

Listen for a prophecy we’ve seen fulfilled.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 (NIV) The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 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.

What concern did Paul have about the latter times?

* some abandon the faith
* some follow deceiving spirits
* people attracted to messages communicated by demons

What are some reasons why people walk away from the church in today’s world?

* attraction to worldly pleasures
* claim too many hypocrites in the church
* peer pressure when young people go off to a secular university
* they were not well grounded (or grounded at all) in their faith
* somehow feel religion is not relevant to them today
* too busy with other pursuits

What are some examples of good things that have been distorted or perverted by our culture?

* marital intimacy – distortions lead to premarital sex, adultery, “if it feels good, do it”
* substance abuse – things that can be good for you are harmful if over indulged
* entertainment – extremes can be evil
* social media – OK for keeping up with family but can be abusive
* social media is used as a way to promote many more things than just contracts with Facebook friends – advertisements, links to “click-bait” sites
* internet – good for communication, but makes of pornography and other perversions easier to find
* political correctness

3.2 Focus on, Lift up God’s Truth

Listen for spiritual nourishment.

1 Timothy 4:4-7a (NIV) For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. 6 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. 7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales;

What was Timothy supposed to do for spiritual nourishment?

* point out truth to fellow believers
* follow the truths of the faith
* keep with the good teaching of that truth
* stay away from godless myths and old wives’

How do you think God’s Word nourishes one’s spiritual life?

* the Truth found there builds up spiritual life
* you find encouragement
* you are directed in the right paths, you are warned about things that will harm you
* your spiritual life has a hunger for Truth that only God’s Word provides
* we learn about who God is and what He has done … things that all men desire down deep to know

In deciding what to watch, read, and listen to, how do you determine what will nourish your soul and what might be *spiritual* junk food?

* does it build me up, or does it just pass time?
* with what does it fill my mind … language, images, attitudes
* does it harm me, or help me?

What effect might the irreverent and silly myths have on those who embraced them?

* confuse them
* cause them to do some things to excess (with little effect on true godliness)
* sidetrack them from important ministries
* cause divisions between themselves and other believers

What passing fads have churches embraced, only to discover later that these were empty and even destructive?

* someone declares that the Lord is coming back on a specific date and everyone dresses in white robes and waits on a hilltop!
* everyone decides that a certain type of ministry that worked for one church will work for everyone (bus ministry, youth concerts, etc.)
* we should segregate ourselves from all evil influences and move to a remote jungle location
* everyone must exercise a certain spiritual gift

Consider significant social and religious issues in our day to which the church often speaks

* abortion,
* teen sexual abstinence,
* war,
* prayer in schools,
* the Ten Commandments in public places

I realize I’m showing my bias here … if these issues are priorities for you, no offense intended

These issues are *not* irreverent and silly myths, still as important as these issues are, what might God place as a *higher priority*?

* preaching the Gospel
* discipling believers
* taking the Gospel message to people who have never heard
* witnessing, winning people to Jesus
* ministering to people around us who are hurting and sharing the Gospel with them when they are especially open

3.3 Discipline and Train in Godliness

Listen for Paul’s priorities.

1 Timothy 4:7b-10 (NIV) rather, train yourself to be godly. 8 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. 9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance 10 (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.

What appears to be Paul’s view about the value of physical exercise?

* it’s good for you
* has some value
* it shouldn’t be our highest priority
* he uses the idea of physical exercise to make a point about *spiritual* exercise

How does that analogy teach us about the *value* of spiritual exercise? What is the purpose of training ourselves in godliness?

* train yourself to be godly
* godliness has value in all areas of our lives
* it applies to this present life and the life to come
* enables us to live a meaningful and purposeful life now
* it has eternal rewards – makes us ready for heaven

In what positive action did Paul urge Timothy to engage?

* put your hope in God
* pursue knowing Him better
* pursue learning to trust God, obey God
* develop a personal relationship with The God WHO IS (not with those who aren’t)
* He is The Living God

What would be some spiritual disciplines that believers might practice regularly?

* prayer
* personal Bible study
* group Bible study
* corporate worship
* fasting

Consider the practice schedule of a young lady (Mirjana Bosevska) preparing for Olympic swimming,

Note that she did not medal, but was among the top 20 in Sydney … there *were* people there who trained harder and were faster

* *5 1/2 hours a day in the pool,*
* *with extra time for weight training and*
* *other strength-building exercises.*
* *Her training regime takes up much of her time,*

⇨ Although we are not training for the Spiritual Olympics, we *are* engaged in spiritual warfare …

⇨ 5 minutes of Bible reading and a “now I lay me down to sleep …” prayer don’t accomplish very much to empower us for spiritual battle

So, what will be the benefits of spiritual training?

* peace, joy, … the Fruit of the Spirit
* God’s wisdom for all kinds of situations
* We learn to trust God more, obey Him more faithfully
* God’s Truth and how it applies to all areas of our lives
* We become more and more sensitive to what God wants us to know each day
* God’s Spirit speaks through the Truth we read and applies it specific issues we are facing in our lives

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Commit.

* Commit to prepare for and attend every session of this study on spiritual disciplines.

Invest time.

* Add an additional thirty minutes each day to your quiet time for the next six weeks.
* Practice the spiritual disciplines covered in this study.

Disciple.

* Develop a relationship with a new or young believer (of your same gender).
* Encourage his or her growth in Christ.

Crossword Puzzle

Clues and words taken from 1 Timothy 4:1 – 10 (NIV)

If you’re stuck, go to <https://tinyurl.com/y3vel2zb> . There are other good **exercises** there for the whole family

