

How to Have a Great Workout

Philippians 2:12-13

Skip Heitzig

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groups

PATH

Every day in every city, people go to the gym to get in a workout. Running on a treadmill, spinning on a cycle, working the stair-climber, and lifting weights are becoming more and more frequent in our health-conscious culture. But money spent on a gym membership is pointless unless we take the right approach. In this message, we learn how to have a healthy spiritual life, looking at what it means to “work out [our] own salvation in fear and trembling.” Pastor Skip unpacked five choices we must make if we want to stay in top spiritual shape:

I. Get a Good Trainer: “*Therefore my beloved*”

IV. Don’t Flex in the Mirror: “*With fear and trembling*”

II. Pump Some Iron: “*Work out*”

V. Use Power Supplements: “*For it is God who works in you*”

III. Follow a Personal Plan: “*Work out your own salvation*”

POINTS

Get a Good Trainer:

- When Paul said, “Therefore” (v. 12), he was pointing believers toward Jesus Christ as the ultimate example for us to follow in love and humility.
- A good personal trainer motivates and encourages us, making sure we’re using correct form. It’s the same with Jesus, who said nineteen times, “Follow Me.” He is the template for our behavior.
- Paul praised the Philippians for obeying his instructions. *Obey* is the same word he used in Ephesians 6:4, the idea being that, just as a child responds to a parent’s instruction and example, so they responded to his example as he followed Jesus.
- In his absence, the Philippian believers continued to walk in faith. The real test of maturity is how you live when the props are gone.
- **Probe:** Jesus’ example should inspire us to live with integrity—following Him even when no one but God is looking. In what ways have you let Jesus into every part of your life?

Pump Some Iron:

- With Jesus as our perfect personal trainer in spiritual matters, we should get to work living out our faith.
- When Paul said to “work out your salvation” (v. 12), he didn’t mean the Philippians needed to do works that led to salvation. He was addressing believers, people already saved through faith in Christ’s finished work on the cross.

- Rather, Paul exhorted them to work *out* their salvation, and you can’t work out what God hasn’t already put in you.
- The idea of *work out* is to cooperate with God’s operation in your life—to put His saving work into action in your life.
- **Probe:** Spiritual growth is not accidental but intentional. How does spiritual maturity result from human cooperation with God’s operation? What are some examples of this in your life?

Follow a Personal Plan:

- Good trainers personalize fitness plans for each individual. God does the same for each believer.
- You have your own relationship with God in Christ, so why try to have a cheap imitation of someone else’s relationship with Him?
- Most of our problems come not when we’re looking ahead but when we’re looking around.
- **Probe:** Read Hebrews 12:1-2. Discuss what it means that Jesus is the “author and finisher of our faith.” What happens when we fail to keep our eyes on Him?

Don’t Flex in the Mirror:

- *Fear and trembling* means living out your faith with deep reverence for God, having a tender conscience and being open to His prompting.
- The Bible indicates that God honors those who maintain “a nervous and trembling anxiety to do right” (J. B. Lightfoot): “But

on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:2).

- Our calling in Christ should inspire us to do good because we don’t want to disappoint Him in anything we think, do, or say.
- Anytime we think of ourselves as spiritual giants, we’re setting ourselves up for a fall.
- **Probe:** Read 1 Corinthians 10:12. Paul gave this lesson to warn Christians not to fall into idolatry. What things are you prone to putting ahead of God in your life? How do you resist them?

Use Power Supplements:

- When you work out, a healthy, natural supplement will maximize your efforts for the greatest possible benefit. Spiritually, God’s power supplements our efforts to follow Jesus.
- Again, you can’t work something out that God hasn’t first put in you—He gives you His divine energy “both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (v. 13).
- God gives you the desire and then the energy and ability to do His will. It’s that cooperation that helps you live out your faith, maturing you as you do the works He has set aside for you (see Ephesians 2:10).
- **Probe:** What desires has God given you? What do you enjoy doing with Him and for Him? Are you active in pursuing those desires?

PRACTICE

Connect Up: Read 1 Peter 1:2-8. Discuss what it means to be “partakers in the divine nature.” How does the sequence of actions Peter described relate to working out your salvation? What does it mean to add virtue to your faith, and knowledge to virtue, and so on?

Connect In: Read 2 Corinthians 10:12. What was Paul warning Christians about? How does comparing yourself with others boost your ego or rob your joy? Why is it important to keep your eyes on Jesus as an example (and on others who are following Him)?

Connect Out: Read Psalm 37:1-9. How do these verses reflect what it means to work out your salvation with fear and trembling in the world around you—with your family (both immediate and extended), at work, and in your community?