

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Training for Godliness

September 16, 2019

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 4

This year, I set a goal to run two 5K races and one 10K race. I started my training in April and ran a 5K in June. I did OK but wasn't very happy with my performance. I then ran an 8K with some friends and did better. I was proud of what I was able to do.

Currently, I am training for my first 10K and am following a program that has me running five days and about 20 total miles each week. I'm getting stronger and faster. I can see new muscles in my legs and even look forward to my runs—usually. I have never been one to love exercise, but something about running has me hooked. Maybe it's the extended alone time. I love that I'm doing something that is good for my body and shows my children that it's important to take care of myself.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul encourages us to take care of our physical bodies but with a caveat.

1 Timothy 4:8

Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.

Did you catch the second part of the verse? Training for godliness is much better. It's easy to train your body. You strap on your shoes or jump in a pool or put on a workout video, but how do you train for godliness? Paul provides Timothy with a list of ways to help develop this gift. One of the primary ways we train for godliness is through reading Scriptures—both in the Old and New Testaments. Many balk at reading the Old Testament, thinking it was negated by Jesus, but remember that when Paul wrote this letter, the New Testament was not complete.

He was telling Timothy to continue to study the Old Testament. When we know the entire Scripture, we are able to discern truth from error. Many in our current “Christian” culture are leading others away by omitting parts of the Bible or twisting verses to accommodate their own understanding of God’s inspired Word. Paul continues with a powerful encouragement to Timothy and us.

1 Timothy 4:16 (NIV)

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Training for godliness means we read the entire Bible. Training for godliness means we watch how we live: the media we consume, the words we say, our relationships with others. It means we carefully evaluate the words others are telling us, Christian or otherwise. It means being sure our doctrine—our set of beliefs—is biblically grounded. In doing this we will live a godly life and others will see and be drawn to Jesus through our lives.

Questions:

Do you spend more time exercising your physical body than you do your spiritual muscles?

When is the last time you read from the Old Testament?

Are you intimidated by it?

Next Steps:

This week, read from Psalms and Proverbs. Allow God to speak to you through his entire inspired Word. Challenge yourself to read through the entire Bible in the next year or so.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, Thank you for the gift of your Word. Thank you that we have both the Old and New Testaments as evidence of your love and provision for us. Give us a hunger to know more about you. Give us a burning desire to develop our spiritual muscles. Thank you for allowing us to come before you to learn and grow. Amen.

This post was written by Julie Mabus, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

Curve Ball

September 17, 2019

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 5

As I prepared for today's chapter, I began as I always do whenever I write for the LIO: I sat down and prayed before getting started. I prayed that God would guide me. That somehow my life experiences may be of some use to others facing similar situations. For today's chapter, I had already laid out a plan as to what to write about. I had even picked the verse I wanted to use:

1 Timothy 5:1-2 (NIV)

¹Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, ²older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

Then, I got sidetracked for a little while before I could get started. While I was busy with other things, I got an email from a woman whose past actions had inflicted great pain in my life. She is someone I had not thought about in a long time, as I had moved on. Now, she wanted my help. The email was polite and to the point, though offered no apology for what she had done. God had thrown me a curveball!

At first, I was a bit confused, but then it intrigued me how the same verse that I had chosen to write about suddenly unveiled itself as completely applicable to my situation. We are supposed to treat others with *absolute purity!*

I forwarded her email to those whom I trust the most (and who knew what had happened) for feedback. They agreed with my initial thought that I should respond with kindness and help her as she had requested.

God had given me an opportunity to show grace and to reflect on where my life is now.

I came to realize that I had learned so much from my past and that I had grown because of it. I had learned so many things that prepared me for a much better future. I asked myself whether I would go back and change anything I had lived through so far. And the simple answer is “no.” Because of my past—the good, the bad, and the ugly—I am the person I am now and have those in my life who love me and whom I love. So no, I would not change a thing! Well, at least nothing major—there are of course little things we all would rather forget or have done better....

When God sends a curveball, he probably is trying to get your attention and help you focus on everything he has already equipped you with. There is no point worrying about what curveballs may come. God’s got your back so that you can hit that curve ball and hit it out of the park!

Questions:

Has God thrown you a curveball lately? What did you do with it?

Were you prepared? If not, did you learn from it? Would you handle it next time differently?

Next Steps:

Identify three people in your life whom you have had difficult interactions with in the past but who are no longer in your life. Make a plan for how you would handle an unexpected encounter with them or a request for help from them. Think of two things you could do in each case to show the same grace God has shown us.

Prayer:

Thank you Lord, for making me aware again of what I have learned with your help so far. Thank you for walking beside me all this time and

for even carrying me at times. I am often in awe of how you work and how an unanticipated curveball can turn into an unexpected blessing. Amen.

This post was written by Cordula Mora, a regular contributor to and editor of the LivingItOut Bible Study.

For the Love of Money

September 18, 2019

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 6

1 Timothy 6 opens the door to taking a closer look at one's self in various ways. However, my focus is verse 10. "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." Please note, it's the *love* of money, not money, that "is the root of all kinds of evil." This should come as no surprise if you are familiar with the dilemma of the rich, young ruler referenced in Matthew 19:16-30. The young ruler was put to the test by Jesus—and he failed. His possessions and wealth were his security, and he could part with neither.

Jesus used this teachable moment to tell his disciples it is difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. Paul expounds on this in 1 Timothy 6. Clearly, the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Wealth can become an obstacle that prevents some people from coming to faith in God.

I am thankful for one of life's lessons that I learned years ago: **money does, indeed, not buy happiness.** In spite of my extreme spiritual brokenness, God gave me undeniable insight into the life of a business professional. This man (a Christian, by the way) had a vast income—and a lifestyle that matched. Yet to me, there was a clear lack of contentment. That observation caused me to understand real contentment (genuine happiness) is an inside job. It didn't matter that this man was a Christian—he lacked true contentment. This real-life lesson saved me from longing for meaningless possessions.

I rejoice he allowed me to learn contentment in such a profound way. I can never know the worries I saved myself from by rarely wanting more. My husband and I prefer a simple life on many levels. This style of living

has allowed us to be givers. God has placed a genuine desire in our hearts to step financially into the lives of others. We know it would be foolish to be stingy with the money he has sent our way! Without realizing it, this personal clarity has encouraged helpful progress in others.

Questions:

What areas of excess in your life need attention to align with God’s plan for you? Is the path you are on leading you closer to God or further from him? What things in your life keep you from helpful progress?

Next Steps:

Identify areas of “excess” where realignment is necessary. Align your priorities with God’s—make adjustments as needed. Intentionally remove the things in your life keeping you from helpful progress.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, forgive me for failing to realize you have ALWAYS been generous to me in countless ways. Reveal areas of excess in my life. Give me the courage to step into relationships that will bring me closer to you and an understanding of the truth of your word. In Jesus’ name, amen.

This post was written by Karen Peck, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

The Great Adventure

September 19, 2019

Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 1

In the past couple of weeks, our Lead Pastor Ben introduced the new mission statement of CedarCreek Church. In 1995 we began with this mission statement: “The mission of CedarCreek Church is to help spiritually restless and unchurched people become fully devoted followers of Christ.” After a decade or so we revised it to: “Our mission is to help spiritually restless and unchurched people to love Jesus, serve others, and tell the world about Christ.” Now, we are: “Inviting people to know Jesus and the life-charging adventure of following him.” Nothing has changed, really. Our mission is the same. Paul writes to Timothy, his “son” in the faith:

2 Timothy 1:5-7

⁵ I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. ⁶ This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

Over the past 24 years, God has called CedarCreek Church to share our faith in Jesus with those in our lives who do not know him and to strengthen the faith of those who do. Our leaders continue to remind us to fan the flames of our faith and use our spiritual gifts to help the church positively impact our communities. God has not given us a spirit of timidness and fear! He invites us to enter into the adventure of following him! It is risky! It is entering into the unknown! It is the

ultimate high! Our invitation is to enter into his power, his love, and his self discipline.

Paul goes on to say:

2 Timothy 1:8

So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord.

In our day and age, as in Paul's, this IS risky. But, it is part of the adventure of following Christ!

Questions:

Are you ashamed of telling others in your life about Jesus? Can you tell the story of how you met Jesus and the life changing adventure you have had in following him?

Next Steps:

Spend some time writing down the story of how you met Jesus and how your life has changed since then. Condense it down to a 1-minute version, a 5-minute version, and a 20-minute version. Share them with a Christian friend for refinement. Then, be prepared to share it with friends and family who don't know Jesus.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the power you give us through your Holy Spirit! Help us, Lord, to use this power to show others how you have changed us, called us, and prepared us to fulfill your purpose on this Earth! Give us the courage we need to trust you in this adventure to which you have called us. We are your 'Plan A' for reaching our world. There is no 'Plan B'! Thank you for trusting us! Amen.

This post was written by Lauri White, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

One on One

September 20, 2019

Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 2

The word “legacy” is frequently heard in the context of people’s lives. Typically, it is used in conjunction with those who leave behind good works that live on in the hearts of the people they touched. Physically, they will no longer be a part of our society, but their principles and achievements will become great memories, to us now and future generations. Benjamin Franklin once said, “If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead and rotten, either write things worth reading or do things worth writing.”

In 2 Timothy, we read Paul’s final letter to Timothy. This letter is typically considered Paul’s last letter before his death. Paul wrote it as he was awaiting execution from Rome for being a Christian and making disciples of Jesus. At this time, Timothy is leading the church in Ephesus, so Paul writes to encourage him while facing his own impending death.

In 2 Timothy 2, Paul speaks about the ideal characters of Christ followers and provides several examples, including himself (v. 1-2), a soldier (who shares in suffering and hardship to be involved with the work of God and his will, v. 3-4), an athlete (on boundaries which cannot be crossed, v. 5), a farmer (ideas of patience and hard work, v. 6-7), Jesus Christ (those who claim the title of "Christian" should, strive to be Christ-like, v. 8-13), a worker (to present himself to God as one approved, and has no need to be ashamed, v. 14-19), a vessel (live a clean life and be ready for every good work, v. 20-23), and a servant (help others escape the snare of the devil, v. 26).

2 Timothy 2:15

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.

We are called to embrace the cost of discipleship, denying self, taking up our cross, and walking in the steps of our Lord. Jesus himself tells us discipleship is more than just following him-- it includes the call to disciple-making. Jesus said in his Great Commission to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:19-20). Timothy was to take what he learned from Paul’s own example and teach it to others who would then go and teach still others. Christianity has always been meant to be spread through relationship and person-to-person teaching.

2 Timothy 2:2

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

Questions:

So, what about you? Do you think about the people in your life who don’t personally know Jesus and the forgiveness and eternal assurance that he offers? So, who will you share this ultimate love with today? What will be your legacy?

Next Steps:

We share Christ because we want others to experience the eternal assurance we have through faith in Jesus. We share because we are thankful for Jesus’ tough love that never gave up on us. Being a disciple of Christ is not just about each of us following Jesus personally but also passing our commitment on to the next generations of disciples.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, help me to carry out your plans and purposes in my own life and live my life as you intended. Give me the courage and the words so I can share the truth of the gospel through fellowship and encourage others to pass on your words of grace. This we pray in Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Gary Schnabel, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.