

Audio ■ Exercising Yourself unto Godliness

by Hans R. Waldvogel

This sermon emphasizes the importance of exercising oneself unto godliness, drawing parallels between physical exercise and spiritual discipline. It highlights the need for diligence, ambition, and dedication in pursuing a strong spiritual life, focusing on prayer, faith, and seeking God's presence. The speaker urges listeners to prioritize time with God, to be strict with themselves in spiritual matters, and to seek transformation through the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:7, Ephesians 6:10, James 4:8, Colossians 3:1, Philippians 3:13

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Pursuing Godliness"

Description

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Transcript

A man I worked with said to me, what you need is a little exercise. So I joined the YMCA in Chicago. And we had calisthenics there two or three times a week, swimming.

And in a little while I was come right out of my sickness and I came into a new life as it were. I didn't overdo, yet they sure put us through the sprouts. Of course we had, in those days when you worked, you worked.

It wasn't like today where you go to work in the morning if you feel like it, nine, half past nine, then half past ten you have a coffee break. And then around eleven o'clock you yawn and look at the clock. Well, we had a fifty-eight hour week, if I remember correctly.

And then in the evening, three times a week, calisthenics and other exercises. I remember sometimes my body felt as if all my bones were on joints. Did you ever feel like that? Our gym was upstairs and we had to go downstairs to the swimming pool and sometimes I just almost rolled down.

Everything was just wriggly from exercising. But then the war broke out and then I was called to the war and I found out that I was one of the healthiest of all the fellows that were drafted in the war. Boy, when we had to run the gauntlet there were five or six physicians or doctors or whatever you call the horse doctors.

One was examining your head, another one your tongue, another one your arms. And then you had a card and everyone put his John Henry on it. And when I came they laughed and said, ah, this is no tin soldier.

Boy, I passed flying and I was surprised at that. And in the morning when we went to get ready, I was the first one that was dressed. We had to put on our leggings and get ready.

We had seventeen minutes time to wash and shave and get ready for breakfast. And the others all wondered how I'd done it. And in the meantime I'd take a cold shower bath and they'd say, boy, is this a hero.

Well, it all had happened because I had exercised. See? Verstehst du? I had exercised these muscles of mine and I discovered that it really is true what the Bible says. It profits a little bit.

Only it almost got me to the front line trenches. That was too bad. But anyway, I first began to feel what it was like to be a man.

I felt like a prince, honestly. When I came out of that army, I felt for three months, I felt just like a prince. Exercise did it.

It'd be good for me today if I had. Well, I get it, preaching, you know. I have to preach to keep my automatic watch wounds.

But now the Bible says, but exercise thyself rather unto godliness, which has the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. I have written unto you young men because ye are strong. Oh, for strong young men, spiritually strong young men, strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man.

Young men, do you exercise yourselves unto godliness? You'll never be godly if you don't. You'll be sickly. You'll be a consumptive.

You will perish. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and young men shall utterly fall. But as we heard the other night, there is a fountain from which you can draw life, strength.

Oh, the Bible speaks of a fullness, a tremendous, exuberant fullness. It speaks of the power of his resurrection. How strange that people expect to be ready for the rapture without exercising themselves unto godliness.

The apostle Paul says, I'm not making a fool of myself. I'm not preaching to others and myself be a castaway. So fight I, not as one that beateth the air.

I know what I'm doing. Young man, young woman, you've got to know what you're doing. If on earth exercise is demanded to make you strong, and especially if you're called upon to run a race or to win in a game, what do these prize fighters do in order to win the fight? Oh, what they don't do.

I was in a sauna bath in Germany one night, and there came a fat fellow in there, and he said he had to lose 12 pounds that day, I think, because he was scheduled to go on a prize fight that night. I felt sorry for the fellow. What don't they do? The Bible says they abstain from all things, tobacco, everything that might defile or might weaken this body.

They'll train for hours, for weeks, for months to be ready. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown. And what do our students do in universities, in high schools? If they're diligent, they study, they work hard, they

exercise themselves.

But the Bible says, exercise thyself rather unto godliness, for bodily exercise profits only for a little while, only for this life. But godliness is profitable for the life that is to come. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible.

Oh, you've got to see that ghost, like the apostle Paul, who saw the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He says, they all run, but one receives the prize. So run that ye may obtain it.

I don't have much respect for young people that have no aim in life. Some time ago, I was asked to help a certain minister. He wanted help.

He was failing. His assembly was dwindling, and everything was going kaput. And so he wrote to me.

He said he begged me, come, please, come and help me. So I went. And on the way, I had a dream.

And I dreamed that I'd gotten to this fellow's church. He was building a church, mind you. And it wasn't finished.

And so I took a pail full of cement and trowel and whatever is needed. And I climbed up that tower. Some work was to be done up there.

And I thought, of course, he was up there working at his own church. And so after I climbed up there laboriously and got up there, I looked around for him. He wasn't there.

He was lying in the shade of an apple tree snoozing. And you know, when I saw him, I found out that's the way he was carrying on his ministry. No wonder.

No wonder death is in the pot. I have no respect. I like to see young people diligent about something, working at something.

I like to see them having some kind of an ambition to get somewhere, to do something. Interested in stamps or in photography or in something else. You know, today we develop a flabby, procrastinating generation.

They know it all. Ask them to take a book and study something. They'll look at it and they're through with it.

But to really get down and study the fundamentals like the men that have accomplished something in this life. Johann Sebastian Bach. What a master of music he was.

And when he was a kid, you know, his brother was an organist. And this little Hunsworth, he wanted to play that organ and he wasn't allowed to touch it. His brother was very strict with him.

And so what did he do? He'd get up at night when his brother was sleeping. And with the light of a candle, he'd steal it to the place where that organ was and quietly try those keys. And he got someplace.

There was a sculptor of note in Italy. Do you know how he got started? He was a kid and he had a job with a dairy. And he was always fiddling around with the butter.

Always trying to make some monument. And one day the boss got angry and he locked him into the icebox. They didn't have any icebox, but they had a place where the milk stood to make cheese out of, you

know.

And there were piles. There was a pail full of butter. And this poor kid was locked in there.

And what did he do? He rolled back his sleeves. He got hold of that butter. And by the time the boss came to get him out, he had shaped a beautiful lion.

And the boss looked. Who made that? Why, he did. And it just happened that the king came to town that day for a banquet.

And that lion was used to honor the king's table. And that man became a real... Listen, what is your ambition? What is your ambition? I went to visit a home in Berlin not long ago. And I had been told, please go.

There was a very fine girl that I had known. And I was interested in her soul and had been for years. And when I saw her some years ago, oh, her aunt said, well, she wants a husband.

She's got one. Brother, she's got a husband. She'd be better off to have married a gorilla.

I came there. I looked at the house. I'd seen that house before they were married.

And now, honestly, it looked as if it was locked up and there wasn't a soul living there. The windows were broken out. And I came into the front room and chickens were in there.

The parlor. And finally, I met the husband. What was he doing? Nothing.

Why, he had a wife that could work. She had to work at night, all night long. He didn't have to work.

He had a wife. What's the use of getting married if you can't... If you have to work still? I will make and help meet for him. But, beloved, to exercise thyself rather to please God, to be ready for God, to be ready when Jesus comes, it requires exercise.

You cannot get filled with the Holy Ghost if you do not go to Jesus Christ and take oil. They took their lamps. They took their witness.

But they took no oil with them. Are you taking oil with you? Are you seeing to it that the Holy Spirit finds room in your life? Are you exercising yourself, beloved? Unto godliness requires more diligence than any earthly exercise that we know of. Because this is an exercise to obtain an incorruptible crown.

Do you pray? Do you pray in faith? Do you add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love? Do you put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness? Do you diligently follow every good work? Oh beloved, it means something to live in this life and to have this wonderful call of God. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown. But we, an incorruptible, and how wonderful, beloved, when you exercise yourself unto godliness, you're not alone.

Jesus says, go into your closet. Your father's there. What? Father, father of my Lord Jesus Christ, can I meet you? Really? Yes, you can.

Every day. Anytime during the day. And I know that everybody cannot shut himself into the closet and stay there all day.

But everybody can take an hour out of the 24, at least. And you can take more than an hour. Jesus Christ tells us, everyone that asketh receives.

Oh, there's something to receive. This is the very principle of faith, to know that God is. I don't see him, but faith opens the door into the very palace of the king.

Your father, who sees in secret himself. Oh father, that's what prayer means. It means meeting you, our father who art in heaven, the father of my Lord Jesus Christ.

Where is he? He's in the prayer closet. He's where you get on your knees, where you lift your heart, where you say, my father, thy kingdom, come, deliver me. Oh God, I have seen your promise, your exceeding great and precious promise.

That you will give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him. God, I'm not going to let go. I'm going to come to you.

I'm going to wait upon you because you said you give power to the faint. Beloved, there's no one among us that has a right to stay faint, to stay weak, to be defeated. Not a single one of us, because he.

God, do I exercise myself unto godliness? Why then I will certainly avail myself of this marvelous invitation that God Almighty gives me. The father himself loves you. The father himself will reward you openly.

It will be visible. There will be rivers of living water flowing from you. Beloved, it is high time that in this assembly, God can raise some examples of godliness.

Some A1 soldiers, not 4F, but number A1, having on the whole armor of God, whose eyes are ablaze with enthusiasm to please God because the Holy Ghost has driven out every other spirit and has strengthened them with might in the inner man, they're sons of God. And God Almighty will roll away the heavens one of these days and will open the pearly gates and he'll say, let the righteous nation which keepeth the truth enter. He has destroyed famine.

He has made a hit of a city and here we have a strong city. Salvation will God appoint for Bulwer and praise for the gates. Enter in.

It's high time that in this assembly, God has some eminent saints. And listen, it's high time that you become an eminent saint. What keeps you? What is it that keeps you from being healthy, pure in heart? What is it that keeps you from running after Jesus and being strengthened with might? I know what it is, you don't pray.

I can feel that sometimes when I come into homes, there's a hole there. I come into other homes and God is there. If you can't prove it, love is a tragedy.

Life and some people that profess with their mouths to be saints and they haven't got the stuff in them. And secretly they sin. They live for the devil.

And secretly in their hearts there crawls the vermin of fleshly lust. And all these things possess them and eat their bite. The worm that shall never die.

Listen, it's high time you were rid of that. It is high time you came out of that bondage. Sorrow and pain.

It is high time you came down from your pride and your conceit. Beloved, nothing can save me. Nothing can deliver me.

All my own efforts won't do it. Unless I make this one effort to bring upon my God. There's nothing like praying in the Holy Ghost.

And if I don't, beloved, my ruin is certain. It's more certain than the rising of the sun in the morning. Exercise.

Exercise. Do you exercise? I wonder what's going to happen to the United States. I wonder if something that's happening in China today is going to happen there.

They've got to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning. And the loudspeakers all over the city. Blair, one, two, one, two, old and young, fat and lean.

They all have to exercise. They all have to do it. They've got to do it.

If they don't, they're going to the jungle. Say, wouldn't that be splendid for the United States? For those sleepyheads that can't get up five minutes to pray. They can't.

The devil gets you up. He certainly will. There'll come a time when the devil will hang you.

And here Jesus Christ has opened the heavens. And he is pouring out the Holy Ghost. And he said, when ye pray, enter into your closet and shut the door.

Be alone with God until that reward is yours. Until God lays his hand upon you. He will.

God will. There will be a transformation that no human ingenuity can effect. But God can.

He tells us what it is. You'll be filled with all the fullness of God. God, can you do that? Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think by the power that worketh in us.

Oh, it takes the Holy Ghost to do it. And when the Holy Ghost does it, you'll have it. It's yours.

There is that exuberance. There is the vitality of heaven. There is our prize, the Lagomogo.

And the devil will know that he can't fool you anymore. He'll know that he is a defeated enemy. Oh God, what a job he had with Israel when he brought them to the border of the promised land.

And these twelve spies came back and they made the hearts of the people sad. They broke their character, they said. Giants, mountains, chariots of iron.

The land eats its inhabitants. But Caleb and Joshua had a different spirit with them. And God said, I'm going to bring them in.

They followed me fully. Oh beloved, exercising myself unto God and this is God's call to me. Day by day, Jesus called us.

Oh the tumult of this life. Vain earthly scene out of this vanity fair. He called.

Do you ever give up some earthly thing to be alone with God? I looked into the death notices in the Time Magazine, which comes to my house for some reason or other. And I noticed this. The fellows that die young, in so many instances are athletes.

They overdid it. Baseball players and prize fighters and other athletes. And why in the world do they die before they're sixty years old and sixty-five years old? Nothing wrong, they overdo it.

But you can't overdo exercising unto God unless you have the promise. The promise of God. Oh when God sees you getting up in the morning, to be alone with God.

To gain an extra half hour to be alone with God. Does God watch the sun rise? Sure, he makes it rise. But I tell you, he has more interest in your rising out of your lazy thing.

To be alone with God than in the sun. The sun will rise all right. Rise in time.

But I tell you, God will meet you. But there's no use talking like this. I know if you're a procrastinator, if you're lazy, go ahead, go to sleep.

I've pledged a speech. I was in a place before I came here. And it was hot.

And in those days I had to pray out loud. And I'd shut the windows so as not to bother the neighbors in the night. The fire didn't make any difference.

I walked up and down and spent all day praying. Praying. Praying.

And the result was, like always, God gave us a life. God came to that place. People wondered how it happened.

And then I was relieved. Two others came along, a man and his wife. And so when they came, I greeted them.

They were going to take over. And the first thing I said, come on, let's pray. All right.

They weren't very interested. So we got down and prayed. I prayed.

And when I got through here, they were both asleep. The driver was dead. And you couldn't do a thing with him.

Listen, I met the same fellow again after almost 40 years. He said, I'm awfully sorry I didn't do like you did. He said, I'm sorry.

My life is wasted. My life is broken. My ministry is defeated.

By God, what are you looking for? Listen, if you look for Jesus, you'll find out he's looking for you. Oh, glory to God. What is the best part of every day? Is it when you get up to select your breakfast food out of a thousand different boxes and you put heavy cream on it and strawberry jam and what else? What is the best part of the day? Or is it when you meet your girlfriend or your boyfriend or you go out skating or you go to some tomfoolery someplace to satisfy your flesh? Listen, they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh.

That occupies them. God is their belly. You might just as well kneel down and say, Buddha, Buddha, Buddha, Buddha, Buddha, Buddha.

You'd be better off than to worship your belly and worship your flesh. What is the best part of the day? The day when you can be alone with God. You fight for it.

You steal time from breathing and from consciousness. I felt like saying to a top-notch female saint today, don't your jaws ever get tired? Not everybody here does. Sister Laudagab, how can they gab and gab and gab and gab and then get up and preach as if they were top-notch saints? What tomfoolery? If you live a life of prayer, God will shut that mouth.

He'll put a muzzle there. He'll put a lock upon your heart. He'll take hold of your mind.

Your mind will be under the control of the Holy Ghost. God gave a power to the faint and to them that have no mind. Here it is.

Oh God, that's what prayer means. It means God coming into my life. It means God Almighty taking over this earthly life of mine.

And glory to God transforming my mind and my heart and conforming it to His holy plan and to His will. It has the promise of the life that now is. You won't need to pray much about healing.

Hell will spring forth speedily. But it has the promise of, oh what will it be? They will this day come marching in and occupy the kingdom that's prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Oh let us exercise ourselves unto Godliness from this day forth.

It is important and absolutely essential to be strict with yourself. Absolutely. It's like when a fat woman goes on a diet.

She'll never lose weight. She just measures the calories and then in between goes and has a crack. Well, I didn't have any butter on my toast this morning so now I can eat an ice cream soda.

No wonder that scale. You gotta be strict with yourself. And you will be.

Oh you will be strict if you really desire and hunger after righteousness. You will seek Him and when you seek Him, He will be found of you. He will be found of you.

Oh the wonder of finding God. Meeting God. Not just to be in His presence, but to be united to Him, to be identified with Him forevermore.

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