

## Must Be the End of the Year

You can always tell when a new year is upon us. Our televisions, radios, magazines, newspapers and even mailboxes are filled with advertisements for products to help us deal with the two most commonly made (and probably most commonly broken) New Year resolutions; those that have to do with diet and exercise. It seems that when people think about how they're going to improve their lives in the new year, they think first about losing weight by watching what they eat and exercising more. That's fine. There's nothing wrong with one making a commitment to take better care of his or her body, as long as they follow through with the commitment. But let's consider for a few moments the importance of maintaining a fit spiritual body through proper spiritual diet and exercise.

Regarding our spiritual diets, we have ready access to that which feeds the soul, the Divinely inspired Word of God (Matthew 4:4). Unlike physical diets that always seem to leave us hungry, a steady diet of God's Word completely satisfies (Matthew 5:6). Furthermore, while marketers have promoted hundreds or thousands of different, sometimes conflicting, diet fads through the years, the spiritual diet remains the same. The Bible is just as powerful and effective in feeding our souls today as it was when it was penned (II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12). This may be hard to believe but some of those physical diets just don't work, or at best they only work for a few weeks. On the other hand, the spiritual diet of God's Word has always accomplished its purpose (Isaiah 55:11).

Concerning spiritual exercise, Paul wrote, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (I Timothy 4:8). He explained in Hebrews 5:14 what he meant by spiritual exercise when he wrote, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." We get spiritual exercise every time we put into practice what we have learned by virtue of our spiritual diet. In neglecting this exercise, our spiritual muscles weaken and our faith gets out of shape but when we apply our spiritual knowledge daily, we build spiritual strength that helps us walk more closely with God and be a better influence on others.

Go ahead and resolve what you will for the coming year. Eat better, lose some weight, stop bad habits, get out and walk, run or lift weights to improve your muscle tone, spend more time with your family, read more, make new friends, improve your job skills. Include any or all of these and more in your list of resolutions, but don't forget to put a commitment to your spiritual health through a steady diet of God's Word and an exercise of same on a daily basis at the top of your list. Like we already mentioned, Paul said in I Timothy 4:8 that the physical improvements are profitable for a little while (during your time on earth) but the spiritual enhancements will profit you in eternity.

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