

“Sit or Fit Bit?”  
I Corinthians 6:19-20, 9:24-27  
*Series: Soul Care Week 3. Exercise Your Soul*  
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The Woodside Church

August 8, 2021

*Doug is sitting watching TV with the remote. Lisa enters in her exercise outfit*

Lisa: Alright, Doug. Are you ready to go out for some exercise?

Doug: (stares at TV while changing channels) I am exercising.

L: (she looks at him, looks at the TV) You're just sitting there watching TV

D: I'm exercising – I'm exercising my right to sit and watch TV

L: C'mon. Get up and go for a walk with me. It's a great way to take care of the Temple.

D: Listen I know you got your PhD at Temple but I think we gave them enough money in tuition.

L: I'm talking about the temple of your body. The Bible says,

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

Exercise is a great way to honor God with our bodies and take care of this beautiful temple He created.

D: Does it count as exercise if I watch the Olympics?

L: The Apostle Paul watched the original Olympics and he said, “*Run* in such a way as to get the prize” (I Corinthians 9:24) NOT SIT! You have to DO something to take care of your soul. Aren't you doing a sermon series on Soul Care?

D: Yes. And last week my message was on Rest. So I'm practicing what I preach.

L: Resting in God's presence is not the same as Sitting in the Tube's presence.

D: What do you mean?

L: Most of us sit in the car, train, or bus to travel to work or school; sit at our jobs or in classes; and sit to watch television or surf the internet when we get home.

D: You just described my lifestyle.

L: Well that sedentary lifestyle keeps us from regular physical activity. It prevents us from maintaining our bodies in good working order. The American College of Sports Medicine says sedentary behavior is a major public health concern.<sup>1</sup> It calls sitting the new smoking!<sup>2</sup>

D: How can a chair be that harmful?

L: Lack of exercise, excessive sitting, and sedentary behavior have been linked to many of the chronic diseases afflicting people in the 21st century, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and back pain.<sup>1</sup>

D: Back pain! Now you have my attention. But with all the gyms, kids' sports and exercise equipment out there, most people are exercising right?

L: Actually only 26% of men, 19% of women, and 20% of adolescents in the US meet the recommended amount of physical activity.<sup>3</sup> Many people have good intentions to start exercising. In January they buy those Fit Bits and then just sit.

D: I bought you that Garmin watch for Christmas. That should count for something.

L: Only if we use it. So get up and let's Walk around the Block! Ready? (L starts her watch) Go!

D: (Both walking) Why do people resist exercise when they know it's good for them?

L: Like you said in your sermon last week, many people say they're too busy or too tired.

D: Yeah, when I feel like exercising I lay down until the feeling goes away.

L: Some people are just in the rut of passively watching computer and television screens.

D: Guilty!

L: Some of us may have had bad experiences in the past.

D: I still have emotional scars from High School Gym Class.

L: And some go to extremes and overdo exercise.

D: O yeah – those speed demons. I call them the Exorcists!

L: Most people don't know what to do and don't have anyone to coach them. They're like the man lying beside the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15) - full of excuses, blaming others for not helping us, just

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<sup>1</sup> Thompson, Paul D. Benefits and Risks Associated With Physical Activity. In: ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, 9<sup>th</sup> edition. Linda S. Pescatello, Sr. Editor. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, PA. 2014. Pp. 1-18.

<sup>2</sup> Laskowski, ER. What are the risks of sitting too much? The Mayo Clinic website. Available at: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/sitting/faq-20058005>. Accessed January 12, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Introducing the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. In: Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Department of Health and Human Services, USA. 2018. Pages 13-26. Available at: [https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf). Accessed January 12, 2019.

lying there passively waiting for things to get better through someone else's effort. Jesus asks us the same question he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" He offers us his healing power as he offered it to the man by the pool. Where would the man be if he had not done as Jesus commanded?

D: So I have to want it. Well, if I'm going to give up my excuses and get off the coach what do I get in return?

L: Research shows increased physical activity, such as a walking program, improves the health of our heart, muscles, bones, joints, and reduces the risk of cancer and obesity.<sup>4</sup> As the American College of Sports Medicine says, "Exercise is medicine!"<sup>4</sup>

D: Can't argue with that. How do we get started?

L: After watching the Olympics Paul says, "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever" (I Corinthians 9:25) A training or exercise plan is a great place to start. Now if someone has medical conditions it is always a good idea to be examined by a physician before starting a physical activity and exercise program.

D: How much exercise and physical activity do I need to stay healthy?

L: The government's Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans<sup>5</sup> recommends adults get 150-300 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity per week.<sup>6</sup>

D: Wow. That sounds like a lot.

L: It breaks down to about 30-60 minutes of activity 5 days per week. Or about 50-100 minutes of exercise 3 days per week. And the time can be broken up into smaller amounts spread over the course of the day.

D: Is that true for all ages?

L: The growing bodies of children need 60 minutes of physical activity every day on most days of the week – 5 or more.<sup>6</sup>

D: What's an Aerobic activity?

L: Those are movements which make your heart pump harder. Walking, dancing, jogging, bicycling, using the elliptical - all of these are good for your heart. Those who exercise at a vigorous intensity can achieve health benefits from just 75-100 minutes of exercise per week.<sup>6</sup>

D: So all I need to do is walk really fast!

L: Well, adults also need to strengthen the muscles of all major muscle groups at least 2 days per week.<sup>6</sup> Children should perform muscle strengthening 3 days per week.<sup>6</sup> Muscle strengthening exercises include squats, lunges, pushups, lifting weights, and using exercise machines.

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<sup>4</sup> Exercise is Medicine! Available at: <http://www.exerciseismedicine.org/>. Accessed January 12, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Department of Health and Human Services, USA. 2018. Available at: [https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf). Accessed January 12, 2018.

D: How do I know if I'm exercising at a moderate or a vigorous intensity level?

L: There's a simple way to tell. Use the "Talk Test." Moderate intensity exercise is when you are breathing hard but still can talk easily.<sup>6</sup> Vigorous intensity exercise is when you can only say a few words before taking a breath.<sup>8</sup> This simple method will help you can gauge the intensity of your exercise.

D: Ok. I'm ready for some intensity minutes! Let's turn Garmin up to 11.

L: Not so fast Carl Lewis. If you have not been very active, it's good to start slowly and progress gradually.

D: In what order should I do my exercises?

L: In the Bible Paul says, "Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air." (I Corinthians 9:26). He knows we need order in our exercise plan. Begin an exercise session with 5-10 minutes of warmup activities.<sup>7</sup> Those are relatively easy active motions of your body to get the blood circulating to your muscles. Start walking at a moderate pace or do active movements of your arms and legs.

D: Kind of like we are doing now?

L: Yes. Next do aerobic exercise for your heart and cardiovascular system.<sup>9</sup> This may be increasing your walking pace to that moderate intensity level, increasing the speed on your bicycle or elliptical, or starting to jog. Depending on how long you will exercise, strive for 20-40 minutes of aerobic activity, paying attention to the "talk test" to assess your intensity.<sup>9</sup>

D: And what about those squats and lunges you mentioned?

L: *Squats and lunges* are good for the days when you do your muscle strengthening exercises.<sup>9</sup> Finally, finish up with 5-10 minutes of stretching the major muscle groups that you've worked.<sup>9</sup> Research shows that our muscles and joints stretch much better when they are warmed up from the inside out from our exercise.<sup>9</sup> This is a general plan for an exercise program. Working with a physical therapist or other exercise professional can be a great way to develop a specific exercise plan. Aren't you glad you married a Physical Therapist?

D: Yes. You've straightened me out plenty of times. Now here is the hardest part of exercise: how do you stick with it?

L: First, decide what time of day works best for you to exercise. Second, get an exercise buddy, someone whom you can exercise with or even talk with about your exercise. Exercising with someone can make it more enjoyable, keep you committed, and hold you accountable.

D: Like we're doing now.

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<sup>6</sup> Move Your Way Fact Sheet for Adults. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Available at: [https://health.gov/paguidelines/moveyourway/materials/PAG\\_MYW\\_Adult\\_FS.pdf](https://health.gov/paguidelines/moveyourway/materials/PAG_MYW_Adult_FS.pdf). Accessed January 12, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Riebe, Deborah. General Principles of Exercise Prescription. In: ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, 9<sup>th</sup> edition. Linda S. Pescatello, Sr. Editor. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, PA. 2014. Pp. 162-193.

L: Yes. Third, start simple by increasing your number of steps a day to become more active. Even 5 minutes spaced throughout the day adds up. Take those small, simple steps and start moving more!<sup>8</sup> Fourth, consider joining a gym so you can exercise in bad weather and have access to exercise equipment and exercise professionals. There are several gyms in our area with very reasonable monthly fees – as low as \$10 per month.

D: I'm glad I don't have to break the bank to get more active. To be honest, the monthly fee is a good incentive to use the gym since I'm paying for it.

L: I think your real incentives are Pizza Monday and Bagel Tuesday at the gym.

D: Doesn't hurt.

L: Many of these gyms have fitness professionals who can create an exercise plan for you and show you how to use the machines. Fifth, stick with it! Just like all habits, it takes several weeks of an activity to develop a good habit of exercising.

D: What if someone is not comfortable going to the gym during covid?

L: You can exercise by going for a bike ride, hiking in the woods, or just walking or jogging around the neighborhood. All this adds up to improved health and quality of life. You can find more information and tips to help you create an exercise plan at the Move Your Way website created by our federal government: <https://health.gov/moveyourway/>.<sup>9</sup> Take that first step! You can begin reaping the rewards of improved health, reduced risk of cancer and type 2 diabetes, improved blood pressure and sleep, and reduced anxiety and depression.<sup>4</sup> It's another great way to care for your Soul.

D: Oh! Did you hear that sound? We reached the goal of our walk.

L: (Looking at her watch) What sound? Did we do 10K steps?

D: No. It's the sweet sound of the Ice Cream Truck. (Doug runs off stage).

L: Let's pray. Lord, help us to want to get well like the man lying by the pool. Give us the courage to get off our couches and take the first step toward a healthier body and soul. Lord you said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." Give us the power to take the challenge, be more active, and live life to the fullest. Show us how to sit less, move more, and get more physically active. Make our bodies the kind of temple where your Holy Spirit would want to live. We pray this in your Strong Name. Amen.

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<sup>8</sup> Executive Summary, Physical Activity for Americans Guidelines, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. 2018. Available at: [https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/PAG\\_ExecutiveSummary.pdf](https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/PAG_ExecutiveSummary.pdf). Accessed January 12, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Move Your Way. US Department of Health and Human Services. Available at: <https://health.gov/moveyourway/>. Accessed January 12, 2019.