

Lesson 2

Getting Your Spiritual Life in Shape

Listed Scriptures

Eph 6:13-18; Ex 33:17-23, 34:28-33; Num 12:6-8; Deut 34:1-12; Dan 6; Acts 2:43-47, 4:31-33, 6:2-4

Lesson Aim

- 1) To examine the important elements of spiritual growth.
- 2) To discover how to win the battle between the spirit and the flesh.
- 3) To implement a plan to get the students' spiritual lives in shape by using specific goals.

Memory Verse

"That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." (Phil 2:15)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Proverbs 4-6

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



There is no Bible background information for this lesson.

W A R M U P



The society we live in today has much talk about staying healthy and keeping fit. Go on the Internet and you will find a myriad of websites with health related content, with topics ranging from how to eat well and how to keep fit to various types of health programs and products. Do we ever think about what it means to be healthy and fit in our spiritual life? If you had to define spirituality in terms of how healthy one is, how would you characterize a “spiritually fit” person? (Allow students to list some qualities that come to their minds.)

There can be many answers to this question. One lesson may not be enough to exhaust all the possible qualities to be found in a “spiritually fit” person, but we shall attempt to look at some important elements of spiritual health and growth.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

Aims in Spiritual Cultivation

What do you think are the fundamental aims of spiritual cultivation? (Let students respond.) As we’ve learned in the memory verse for today, one of the important things we as children of God ought to pursue is to be lights of the world in this wicked and perverse generation, and to be found blameless and harmless. We should also actively carry out the commission from the Lord Jesus to preach the gospel to all the nations and to tend to His sheep (Read Mt 28: 19, 20). That way, we can glorify God and bring benefit to those whom we come into contact with on earth. Let us now look at some verses from the Bible that tell us about spiritual growth and cultivation.

A. Galatians 5:22-23

To be able to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit is one indication of whether a person is spiritually fit and healthy. Explain how bearing the nine fruit of the Holy Spirit is related to the fundamental aims of spiritual cultivation.

(Two of the fundamental aims of spiritual cultivation are: 1) for us to glorify God’s

name by obeying His teachings, and 2) to have good relationships with people around us. If we have these, we will have true happiness on earth, and hope of heaven. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These are essential virtues in our relationships with people and with God. For example, we need to have love for people to treat them well. Also, if we love God, we will love His church and do our best for our brothers and sisters and contribute our best to the work in the church.)

B. Ephesians 4:13-14

An important aspect of spiritual cultivation is to arrive at “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” What are the characteristics of our Lord Jesus Christ that the Bible has shown to us? Each student should list at least three characteristics. For each of the characteristics listed, explain how we can strive towards attaining that spiritual virtue.

(Love, mercy, kindness, compassion, wisdom, gentleness, forgiveness, purity, holiness, righteousness)

C. Colossians 1:9-10

Knowing God’s will is important. Without wisdom to know God and His will, it is easy to do the wrong things, even if we do it with zeal. How do you think one can increase spiritual understanding so as to know God’s will?

(Bible reading and Bible study, fellowship and mutual learning from brothers/sisters/pastors in church, prayers, sermons, meditating upon God’s words in every moment of our lives and in every decision we have to make)

D. 2 Peter 1:5-8

a. Peter listed eight very important elements of spiritual cultivation. List these elements.

(Faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love)

b. What is the result of working towards and possessing these virtues?

(These eight virtues will lead us to true knowledge of God. Verse 10 says if we do these, we will never fall, and we will be welcomed into the eternal kingdom of our Lord.)

- c. For these eight items, explain how you can improve on each area and practice that virtue in your daily life.
(students' answers)



Part 2

Spiritual Cultivation of the Saints of Old

From the Bible, we know of many spiritually successful people. They had a very close relationship with God and at the end of their lives, we know that they were confident of their salvation and returned to God. We will take a look at a few of them so that from their walk with God, we can glean some tips about how we ought to practice our spiritual cultivation today.

A. Moses

- a. Read Deuteronomy 34:1–12. Describe in your own words what the last moments of Moses' life were like.
(Moses was all alone but with God as he neared his death. He looked towards Canaan, and knew that although he would not see the physical Canaan, God would take him to the real land that flows with milk and honey – heaven.)
- b. In what way(s) can we say that Moses was the most special of all the prophets in the history of the Israelite nation?
(He was the only one that God buried.)
- c. Read Exodus 33:17–23, 34:28–33 and Numbers 12:6–8. Would you say that Moses' prayer is one of the greatest level of intimacy with God? How can you tell?
(God let Moses see Him and His glory. Moses stayed with God at the top of Mt. Sinai for forty days and nights (twice). God Himself said that other prophets see Him in visions and dreams but with Moses, He speaks face to face.)
- d. What are some of the characteristics that God saw in Moses and therefore wanted to speak to him face to face?
(Moses desired to be close with God, for he asked to see God. Moses was

also faithful and obedient to God in all things.)

- e. How can we learn from Moses in our life of prayer?
(We can be close to God like Moses if we truly desire Him and place Him as first in our lives. That includes obeying Him in all things.)

B. Daniel

- a. Read Daniel 6. Daniel 6:3,4 tell us that Daniel had an "excellent spirit" in him and that no fault could be found about him even by his enemies. Can you say the same about yourself? What do you think contributed to Daniel's beautiful character? What are the things one has to watch out for in one's spiritual cultivation in order to be as virtuous as Daniel?
(Daniel obeyed God in all things. He prayed to God at least three times a day even in the midst of people who did not worship God. In our spiritual cultivation, it is important to obey God in all things. That includes the thoughts we have, the things we do, the way we interact with people.)
- b. Daniel did not simply obey the king without wisdom and reverence for God. How can we tell from this chapter? What does Daniel's obedience to God over the king teach us about how we ought to conduct our lives?
(In things that did not interfere with his worship of God, Daniel fulfilled his duties well, towards the king. But, as far as God's matters were concerned, God was always number one in Daniel's life. Hence, we see that he prayed to God even though a decree was set against anyone who worshipped or bowed to anyone else but the king. The same principle should apply in our lives. We do whatever we have to, to the best of our ability, but in all we do, we must abide by God's teachings and not allow anything to interfere with Him as the most important one in our lives.)

C. The Early Believers

- a. Read Acts 2:43–47 and 4:31–33. Describe in your own words the type of life that the early believers led.
(Devotion to God's teachings, fellowship with one another, prayer, sharing of possessions, of one mind.)
- b. Read Acts 6:2–4. The apostles were the pillars of the church. What were the key elements of their lives according to these verses?
(The apostles' priority was on prayer and ministry of the word.)

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 What are the fundamental aims of spiritual cultivation?

2 What are the nine fruit of the Holy Spirit?

3 Why is it important to know God's will and have wisdom and spiritual understanding? How can a child of God gain greater spiritual understanding?

4 What are the "secrets of success" behind Daniel's political life?

5 If you had to summarize the lives led by the early believers in four descriptive words, what would those words be?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



My Daily Spiritual Workout

Part A- The whole armor of God (Read Eph 6:13-18)

1. Ephesians 6:13 explains the end result if we were to take up the whole armor of God. What is this end result?
2. Identify the six components of the full armor of God. (Girdle of truth, breastplate of righteousness, gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit [word of God])
3. For each component, discuss how you can build yourself up in that area as far as (a) family (b) school and (c) church are concerned.

Part B- A spiritual workout

Have you seen athletes competing in a sporting event? Many of them have very strong bodies with well-toned muscles. In most sporting events, stamina and endurance are needed. To become a competitive athlete, one has to go through years of training. That is not all. One has to be consistently undergoing training. It is a continuous process, not something one does sporadically. If one neglects to train for some time one will find that all his/her strength, skills and stamina would have deteriorated so much, that to get back in shape requires much effort.

It is the same with our spiritual cultivation. If we do not pray, read the Bible, or go to church services for a period of time, we will discover that we have drifted far away from God. And to get back to God may seem very difficult.

Next, you will read some thoughts shared by brothers and sisters about how they make sure they stick to a routine of keeping their spiritual self in shape. After reading their words, plan and write your own routine to keep your spiritual self in shape. Then, share your routine with the rest of your class.

1. I have missed many important moments in life. Sometimes, there is no turning back – you miss something and you miss it forever. That moment will never come back to you. So, I've learned to make use of important times in the day. Mornings are especially important. When most people are still sleeping, when the bustle of life hasn't quite kicked in yet, I make it my prayer time. To many people, it's a chore. But for me, it's a special moment, waking up early every morning to meet with my best friend. It's an appointment I set for myself with God. I've been doing this for years since my first year in college and I think morning prayers really help me put things in perspective and give me strength to handle all that come my way during the day.
2. I always wonder how some people can spend such a long time in the morning showering and getting dressed. It is as if smelling and looking good are more important than asking God to be part of your life for the day. To me, it is absolutely important that I ask God to participate in all my activities for the day. I can spend my entire morning getting dressed or eating a great breakfast. But, if I do not have God's presence with me for the day, I don't think I can have a good day, no matter how good I smell or how well I'm dressed.
3. I have to set aside quiet time during the day just for God and myself. For me, I find that time in the evening is the best time. I use it to read the Bible, and talk to God about all the issues of the day and things that are going on in my life. Before I began this routine, I usually wasted these early evening hours doing nothing important. So now before dinner, and before I get back to my books, I make sure I have a good session with God and read His words first. This has proven to be most helpful for me to reflect upon my weaknesses and transgressions. I find myself growing spiritually with this daily communion with God.
4. I find that nighttime works best for me. Usually, I read the Bible for fifteen to twenty minutes. Then I pray and talk to God about what went on during the day and also my plans for the next day. It's a time when it's usually not too noisy,

so I find that I can concentrate better and talk more deeply to God. I also use this time to meditate on how to apply God's words to what is happening in my life.

5. For half a year, I lived in a place where there are no church members or church. The first two weeks were okay, as I still read the Bible and prayed on my own. I listened to sermon tapes that I had brought with me. But soon, I realized how weak I had become. I no longer wanted to keep the Sabbath. Prayers got shorter and shorter. Then I realized the importance of having spiritual support through fellowship with brothers and sisters. I made it a point to stay in touch with church members and now I try not to miss church services, even though it is far away. Being part of some form of church work is also a good way to keep in close communion with brothers and sisters.

Based on the sharing by the brothers and sisters, identify some of the important factors that affect our spiritual health. If you have more ideas, include them in your spiritual cultivation routine below. When you write your spiritual cultivation routine, state how you want to do it, what activities you want to include and when you want to carry out those activities.

REFLECTION & PRAYER



Sing hymn 399. Above all else, a true believer of God must be one who is true towards God and toward man. As the Lord Jesus Himself says, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him" (Jn 2:23). As we build up our spiritual lives, this is a vision that must be kept in mind all the time.