

## “‘Work Out’ For Godliness,” Part Two”

Imagine that you are the coach of a soccer team. What are your training goals for the athletes? They must have speed, agility, endurance, a high level of hand and foot to eye coordination, as well as a high level of skills for the game (kicking and receiving the ball with their foot, using their head on the ball, etc.). They also will need some strength, but it will need to be the kind that is combined with the above-mentioned skills. So, they will not be able to be huge, muscle-bound, bulked- up athletes.

Let’s imagine that you have a friend who is training weight lifters for the Olympics. What are his goals for training? Certainly the main thing that he is striving for is strength. There will be a lot of lifting of weights and protein shakes. His athletes wouldn’t do very well on the field trying to kick around a ball for very long. At the same time, your team would probably not get his team’s weights off the ground. Now, if either of you attempted to take over the training regiment of the other, your team would suffer because they would not be ready for their competition. In other words, coaches must have in mind the goals of their training so that they can specifically define how they go about the process.

The same is true of our own Christian growth. If the only goals we have include earning a great deal of money, purchasing a large home, marrying a handsome or beautiful spouse, and being well-known, there will be certain ways that we will approach growth and measure success. On the other hand, if we long to train ourself for godliness (1 Tim. 4:7), this will demand a very different approach.

1 Timothy 4:7 teaches us, “Train yourself for godliness.” This involves “working out” through Bible intake and prayer. Yet, what are our desired outcomes? Using the athletic analogy, what kind of muscles must we develop? There are five. To help us remember and apply these, we are following the lead of the MPACT youth mission statement with its five core values.

### ***The Muscle Of Adoration***

Any athlete needs a well-conditioned heart to serve at the core of his physical conditioning. The heart of godliness (our goal) is a strong loving, reverential view of God. It is a relationship with God that, in no way, takes Him lightly. To the contrary it is an outlook that longs to glorify and show forth the worth of our Savior in all we do and all we are.



MPACT Youth Ministry exists to disciple teens to **M**inister to others and **P**roclaim Christ to the lost stemming from a strong **A**doration of Christ and which results in **C**ommitment to Christian growth and a **T**eaming up for fellowship together.

This is seen in Paul's statements on man's downward spiral in to more and more sinfulness in Romans 1:18-23:

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all **ungodliness** and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. [19] For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. [20] For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. [21] For although they knew God, **they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him**, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. [22] Claiming to be wise, they became fools, [23] and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images** resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.*  
(emphasis added)

"The fear of God is the soul of godliness."  
-John Murray, Principles Of Conduct

Here we find out that at the heart of man's sin, i.e. his ungodliness, is not honoring God or giving thanks to him, as well as exchanging the glory of God for images. The converse of this is also true, that godliness consists in large part of honoring and worshiping God, giving Him first place.

Westminster Shorter Catechism, #1: "What is the chief end of man?" A: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever."

Jesus made much the same point when He affirmed that the greatest commandment is to love God with all we have (Mk. 12:30) and that loving others flows out of this loving of God (Mk. 12:31).

When a Christian comes to the point that what she wants more than anything else in life is for God to be lifted up, for God to be honored, then and only then is she able to serve the Savior and exhibit true godliness (cf. Mt. 5:16, 6:1, 33; John 3:30)

### ***The Muscle Of Ministry***

The Apostle John was not familiar with delicate politically correct ways of saying things. Otherwise he would not have said so bluntly, "Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love." (1 John 4:8) What is more, John did not stop here for he made it clear that if we truly love someone else, we will take action to meet their needs (1 John 3:17-18)

What this means is that a person who loves God more than all, who is immersed in a God-focus and a love of God will seek to imitate Jesus Christ by serving others rather than trying merely to be served (Matthew 20:28). In fact, he will seek to walk in all the good loving works that God has prepared beforehand for him

to walk in (Eph. 2:10), with the result that others will see these good works and give glory to God (Mt. 5:16).

### ***The Muscle Of Christ Proclamation***

If we love others flowing out of our adoration of and love for God, this will mean that we will want to meet the greatest of their needs. Certainly, that must be for them to know Jesus Christ as their Savior (John 3:36; 17:3). This is why Paul wrote the following in Colossians 1:28: “Him [Jesus Christ] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” In fact, along with Paul, we will desire that our entire existence will further the gospel and serve to bring others to Jesus Christ (cf. Phil. 1:12-21).

### ***The Muscle Of Commitment To Growth***

If one is to be a God-adoring, other-serving, Gospel-proclaiming Christian, then this will need to be done with the energy that Christ powerfully works within him through Christ’s Word which richly dwells in him (Col. 1:29; 3:16). This necessitates a pursuit of holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

### ***The Muscle of Team Fellowship***

God has not saved us to try and follow Him alone. He has saved us as part of the Church and He does not want us to neglect meeting together. Instead, He wants us to encourage one another, especially as we see the final day of judgment and reward drawing nearer and nearer (Heb. 10:25).

### ***Bringing Together Our Training And Muscles***

How do we bring together our working out with these strong muscles or desired outcomes? One of the best ways is this: Whenever you sit down to read or study the Bible and once you understand its meaning, ask yourself application questions centering around these five areas: adoration, ministry, proclamation, growth, and fellowship. Also, make your points of application key requests you bring before God in prayer. Then, make sure you don’t leave your thoughts in your journal. Instead, get them out into your heart, words, behavior, and into your daily schedule!

Family Discussion:

1. Of the five desired outcomes (or strong muscles) we discussed, which one(s) do you need to give special attention or prayer? Spend time as a family praying for each one’s responses.

“A spiritual discipline is any activity undertaken to bring us into more effective cooperation with Christ and His kingdom.”  
-Dallas Willard, cited in James Emery White, [A Mind For God](#)

2. Discuss how each of the desired outcomes will help a person grow in godliness.
3. Talk about whether each family member uses a journal in their Bible intake and prayer times. If you would like a helpful tool for this, there are journal inserts available on the Resource page of the MPACT web site. [www.mpactteens.com](http://www.mpactteens.com)
4. If you have questions on the Bible as you read it, check out our Burning Questions page on that same web site.