

## Health and Healing Lesson 3 2Q 2010

### Celebrating Spiritual and Physical Fitness

#### SUNDAY

2 Tim 4:7 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

What does it mean to fight the good fight? What is the fight? What course? What does it mean to keep the faith?

**The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought.** The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness. {SC 43.3}

What does this mean? Do you agree? Is this the greatest battle fought? How have you experienced this fight?

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup> but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. James 1:13

Isn't this saying the same thing that we just read in Steps to Christ?

Have you found this to be true in your life?

If you are in high-school and hanging out with friends and they are all smoking and pressuring you to smoke too, where is your battle? Is it with your friends, or is with your own feelings of fear and insecurity, fear of rejection, fear of being laughed at?

What if someone insults you, calls you names – who will your battle be against? Won't it be against your own feelings of anger?

What if you are out a your date tries to take the relationship too far, and you fear rejection, and want him to like you, who is your battle against?

What if your child says this, “I thought you loved me, but every time I want to do something fun you say no. you don’t love me!” Where is your battle? Is it with your child? Or is it with your own feelings that such comments arouse?

Read last two paragraphs, “From merely....” Thoughts?

Last week we talked about BDNF and how the neural circuits we exercise grow stronger and the one’s we leave dormant grow weaker.

We have neural circuits that correspond to love, compassion, empathy, sympathy, the ability to care for another. This is primarily in the Anterior Cingulate Cortex. We also have a more primitive emotional center in which we experience fear, anger, irritability, anxiety, and other selfish impulses.

Are there specific behaviors we can engage in which will help our love circuits and calm our fear circuits and conversely are there specific behaviors which will stimulate our fear circuits and damage our love circuits?

- Love awakens love – when we experience someone genuinely loving us we have our love circuits awakened. And when we genuinely love another person, giving self to help another we have our love circuits exercised and they grow stronger.
  - But if we come from experiences in which we were betrayed, in which we trusted and were taken advantages of, then when someone loves us it could incite feelings of fear, fear of getting too close and becoming vulnerable to hurt again.
- Theatrical television watching activates the emotional centers while turning off the reasoning centers – this causes vicarious emotional stress. During high stress movies or TV the brain will stimulate the release of stress hormones like it would if you were going through the event.

- Altruism results in the activation of the love pathways and the calming of the fear circuits, has a positive effect on the immune system and results in better health
- Worshipping a God of love activates the love centers, brain scans document growth in the ACC of the brain when meditating on a God of love, conversely any other god-concept, angry, wrathful etc grows the fear circuits and not the love circuits.

## MONDAY

The lesson asks, “how do we maintain and build up the faith we have been given as a gift?” Thoughts?

What is faith? Greek *pistis* is translated as “faith” “trust” “belief”. What causes you to have more trust? Where does trust originate? What causes you to “believe” something or in something?

- **Romans 10:17**. "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ." (*NRSV*)
- **1 Thessalonians 5:21**. "Test everything. Hold on to the good." (*NIV*)
- **Proverbs 14:15** "A simple man believes every word he hears; a clever man understands the need for proof." (*NEB*)

What do these texts mean? Upon what should we base our faith or beliefs? Should it be evidence?

"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His Word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth, will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith." *Steps to Christ* 105 (1892); *9MR* 202; compare *Education* 169

Does it matter in what we place our faith? Where does sincerity come in? What if a person sincerely believes the wrong thing?

Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action." Letter 12, 1890; *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 56

How do we get more faith?

First step in faith or trust is to be presented with enough evidence of trustworthiness that we are willing to extend trust or faith on some degree.

You meet someone and they ask you out, but they are a complete stranger so you instead of going out spend some time talking with them. The conversation allows for some exploration of them, their attitudes, behaviors, ideas. With this information you decide to trust enough to meet them at a public place. How they behave will cause greater or lesser trust over time and as trust builds you extend more trust.

How does this work with God? Does God expect us to blindly trust Him? Has He provided us evidence of His trustworthiness, goodness and love?

Once we have come to understand enough evidence that God is trustworthy then we must choose to begin exercising trust in God. Putting the outcome of our lives and situations into His hands. This is where trials come in and why God allows them, when we trust Him and we face a trial and He delivers us then our confidence or trust in Him grows stronger.

Read second to last paragraph, "So it is..." thoughts? What do you think of the idea of "taking chances"? Is faith taking chances?

Might it feel like taking a chance? Is it taking a chance? What is the difference between presumption and faith?

Is presumption believing without seeing or is that faith?

- There are many who fail to distinguish between the rashness of presumption and the intelligent confidence of faith. . . . God has given man precious promises upon conditions of faith and obedience; but they are not to sustain him in any rash act. If men needlessly place themselves in peril, and go where God does not require them to go, and self-confidently expose themselves to danger, disregarding the dictates of reason, God will not work a miracle to relieve them. He will not send His angels to preserve any from being burned if they choose to place themselves in the fire." *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1875 (1RH 161:2:5, 3:3); 2Red 87
- Here is a test which all may apply if they will. None need be left in uncertainty and doubt. There is always sufficient evidence upon which to base an intelligent faith. But God will never remove from any man all occasion for doubts. Those who love to dwell in the atmosphere of doubt and questioning unbelief can have the unenviable privilege. He who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things that he cannot make plain to his finite understanding, will be left to the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and skepticism, and will make shipwreck of faith." *Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1886 (2ST 83:2:2); 4T 232

## TUESDAY

Title is Believing Without Seeing – is this what you think of when you think of faith?

What about experience, how does experience come in?

"Experience is said to be the best teacher. Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude. . .

"That which many term experience is not experience at all. . . . There has not been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action. . . .

"Here is where we have met the greatest difficulties in religious matters. The plainest facts may be presented, the clearest truths, sustained by the word of God, may be brought before the mind; but the ear and the heart are closed, and the all-convincing argument is, 'my experience.' Some will say, 'The Lord has blessed me in believing and doing as I have; therefore I cannot be in error.' 'My experience' is clung to, and the most elevating, sanctifying truths of the Bible are rejected. . . .

"Many examples might be given to show how people have been deceived by relying upon what they supposed to be their experience." *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* 109-110 (1890 - Originally written in 1865 in a series "How to Live"); *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 71; *RH* July 27, 1886; *The Health Reformer*, June 1, 1872; *Australasian Signs of the Times*, Dec. 19, 1904; *The Watchman*, Sept. 1, 1908

What do you hear being described? Does it sound scientific? Careful experiments? Minds free from prejudice and bias? Wow, are we really supposed to approach religion like this?

Read last paragraph “After Jesus...” thoughts?

How do we “know” of God’s love? Would knowing God’s love be evidence? If we have knowledge of God’s love would our faith in Him be without seeing?

If we have experienced God’s goodness, interventions, presence would our experience be evidence? Would our faith in God, based on our experience, be without seeing?

If God has shown us His goodness and love would that revelation be evidence? Is our faith, based on this, without seeing?

What is it we don’t see when we have faith? We don’t see the future, we don’t see the immediate outcome, we don’t see the specific plan of God – but is our faith in the intervention, is our faith in the outcome or is our faith in God? Is our faith in God without seeing?

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY

Benefits of Exercise – what are benefits of exercise?

- Better cardiovascular health
- Better brain health
- Better sleep
- Better stress management
- Increased interleukin 10, which is anti-inflammatory and reduces pain
- Better aging, reduced dementia, reduced physical infirmities
- Better sex
- Better mood, endorphins, enkephalins
- Reduced risks of cancers

What interferes with regular exercise in your life?

What suggestions do you have for others to enhance exercise?

FRIDAY

Read top paragraph discuss

Read questions 2 and 4 and discuss