



RUN TO WIN

1 Corinthians 9:24

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Week 1: Spiritual Health

01. INTRODUCTION

Hello there, My name is _____ and I want to welcome you. I am so excited to kick off our new series called Run To Win: Where together over the next 6 weeks we will be learning Biblical strategies for living a healthy and fulfilling life.

02. TRANSITION TO MESSAGE

As we kick off this new series... Let's lay some groundwork.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴ Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. ²⁵ Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown. ²⁶ So I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. ²⁷ Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

This passage encourages believers to "run to win" in their Christian lives, and to discipline themselves and strive for health (in every area of life). It encourages us to focus on eternity when living out our faith, rather than just going through the motions.

That's what this series is all about! Together, we will explore the importance of maintaining spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, financial, and relational health, and offer practical tips and Biblical strategies for living a healthy and fulfilling life.

03. MESSAGE

Today we are going to lay the foundation and zero in on SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

Statistics on the decline of church attendance, Bible reading, and prayer in the United States (e.g. according to a 2019 report from the Pew Research Center, church attendance in the U.S. has declined from approximately 70% in the 1950s to 50% in the 2010s; according to a 2017 report from the American Bible Society, Bible reading among Americans has declined from approximately 50% in the 1980s to 30% in 2017; according to a 2018 report from the Barna Group, prayer among Americans has declined from approximately 75% in the 1980s to 55% in 2018)

For the next few moments, I want to focus on three things:

1. Why we struggle with Spiritual Health (even after we are Christians)
2. How to know God or return to Him after you've drifted.
3. Some practical training tips to stay Spiritually Strong.

While we all know Spiritual Health is the most important think in our lives, we often act as though it isn't and that because of several things.

Challenges to Spiritual Health:

1. The Influence of the World.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

2. The Temptation of Sin.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the

temptation he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it.

3. The Hardships of Life.

John 16:33

I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."

Here's the truth about our world and specifically many of us as Christians:

Isaiah 53:6a We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way;

CONTEXT: We have a tendency to move drift or coast. Even after we give our life to Jesus. Today I want to teach a familiar story that may help us. The Prodigal Son. In this story we see our story and a template for turning to God. The father represents God, we are either the prodigal son or the older son, both are far from God.

Luke 15:11-24 " ¹¹ He also said, "A man had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate I have coming to me.' So he distributed the assets to them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered together all he had and traveled to a distant country, where he squandered his estate in foolish living.

¹⁴ After he had spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he had nothing. ¹⁵ Then he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to eat his fill from the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one would give him anything.

Wow! Talk about a low point...

" ¹⁷ When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food, and here I am dying of

hunger! ¹⁸ I'll get up, go to my father, and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. ¹⁹ I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired workers.'" ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. But while the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him.

²¹ The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father told his servants, 'Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Then bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and let's celebrate with a feast, ²⁴ because this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' So they began to celebrate.

Training for the Prodigal: Here are four steps that the prodigal son took in returning to his father:

- 1. He came to his senses.** The prodigal son realized that his actions had brought him to a state of poverty and hardship, and that he had made a terrible mistake in leaving his father and squandering his inheritance. This was the first step in his return to his father.
- 2. He made a decision to return.** The prodigal son made the decision to return to his father and confess his sin. He resolved to humble himself and ask for forgiveness, even if it meant being a hired worker rather than a son.
- 3. He took action and set out on the journey.** The prodigal son didn't just make a decision in his heart, he actually got up and started the journey back to his father. He took concrete steps towards returning to his father, even though it was difficult and uncertain.
- 4. He humbled himself and confessed his sin.** When the prodigal son returned to his father, he didn't try to justify his actions or make excuses. Instead, he humbly confessed his sin and begged for

forgiveness. This was a crucial step in his return to his father, and it was met with grace and love.

TRANSITION: Now I want to end talking to another person in this story... the older brother.

Luke 15:28-32

²⁸ "Then he became angry and didn't want to go in. So his father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he replied to his father, 'Look, I have been slaving many years for you, and I have never disobeyed your orders, yet you never gave me a goat so that I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.'

³¹ "'Son,' he said to him, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

Many have the idea that after we get saved that its all a party but the truth is, the longer we follow the Christ the more we have to be intentional about our spiritual health...

The older son resented his brother and His father. Puffed up with pride and self-righteousness he didn't get to enjoy all that the father's house offered

04. CLOSING & PRAYER

In closing I want to give you some practical training tips to avoid becoming like the older brother. These are very simple, I didn't say always easy:

Training for Spiritual Health:

1. Studying the Bible regularly

Psalm 119:105 " Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path."

2. Obeying God's commands

James 1:22 " But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

3. Walking in the Spirit

Galatians 5:16 "I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh."

4. Cultivating a forgiving and grateful heart.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 "give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 4:32 "And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ."

5. Serving others in the Local Church

1 Peter 4:10 "Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God."

I believe that as we prioritize our Spiritual Health, God is going to bless us in every other area!

Let's Pray.