



# First Timothy

# Workout

**Living For God**

**I Timothy 4:7-10**

**Lesson Sixteen**

*Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum*



# First Timothy

## A Study of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to His Son in the Faith

### Workout

In our Scripture today, Paul says don't be led astray by "old wives tales." What, you may ask, is an old wives tale? Well, it is something that might be referred to as a silly story. Such stories got their name because some women, not necessarily old or wives, passed down stories to children that were fables, or stories that were not true...just sounded like it.

Read I Timothy 4:6-10

Paul also said have nothing to do with godless myths. With both phrases about myths and tales, he is referring to the things being taught by the hypocrites and liars he spoke about in the earlier part of this chapter. (4:1-3) We should all be careful about who we listen to and on what we base our Christian belief and our daily living. It is so easy to be side-tracked by things that are not really that important. Christians should become strong in the basic things before wandering off into less important issues.

Then, Paul said that instead of depending on silly teaching and things that are supposed to be true, but are not based on the Bible, Timothy was to train himself to be godly. A better translation of what Paul said there would be, "On the other hand, discipline yourself for purpose of godliness." (New American Standard Bible) Being like God, as He was revealed by Jesus, requires training, and Paul gave us a good illustration of what that means.

The Greek word "train" actually has our word gym in it (*gymnazo* - pronounce it gem-nadz'-o). It means to do physical exercise. But, it can also be used to describe spiritual exercise. The Greeks were a very athletically inclined people. The Olympic Games come from the Greeks. Every city had its own public gymnasium, or in Greek *Gymnasia*, (gem-nahs'-ee-ah). Many, if not most males went to the gyms to exercise. They knew what exercise meant and what discipline it took to exercise regularly so that they built up their bodies. Actually, for boys who were sixteen to eighteen years old, it was a requirement in the school curriculum.

These days there are many public gyms in our cities, and many of them are specifically there for helping us become physically fit. Regular physical exercise has some value, according to Paul...also according to doctors and physical fitness experts. But, Paul said, there is more exercising for us to do.

Training in godliness is much more important. Being what God wants us to be is critical. It is more valuable to us than physical exercise, and certainly more important. It is even more important than mental exercise. Paul speaks often in his letters of the mind and encourages the use of the mind in serving God. But, that is not his point here.

He was talking specifically of spiritual exercise. Of course, using our mind to do the spiritual exercise is critical. We must learn with the mind. We must pray with the mind. We must think with our mind. But, it is more than that. Just reading the Bible and studying what others have said isn't all of it.

He said, "godliness" has value for all things. When we train our spiritual self, we build

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ourselves up for dealing with all things. Training in godliness involves not only thinking about it, we must do something about it. If we want to have the very best now and forever we must discipline ourselves spiritually. Paul links the present with the future. He links today with our eternity in God's presence... "the life to come."

Paul again says that this is a "trustworthy saying." This is the third trustworthy saying in this letter. (See 1:15 and 3:1) We must see this as referring back to what he said in verse eight. He is restating and affirming his word that being like God has supreme value. It is good for us now and forever. We cooperate with God in living out our Christian life. It is to be a life like Jesus lived when He was here on earth. It is a life of self-sacrifice and focused on helping others. It is a life of holiness. None of these is possible without God's gracious help.

In the tenth verse he said, "And for this, godliness, that we labor and strive." No one has ever claimed that living God's way was easy. Actually, just the opposite. Jesus said that following Him would be a life of suffering, maybe even death. Paul said that Christians would labor and strive. The word for strive here is another athletic term. In the workout, one must work hard, "break a sweat." to achieve much success in physical fitness. The old saying is, "No pain, no gain."

Paul wants Timothy and the Ephesians...you and me also...to see that it takes effort on our part to live godly lives. But, he said, the goal is God. Every Christian should be doing what is necessary to be as much like God as we can possibly be, because He is waiting for us at the end of our labor and striving.

And, it is not just at the end of life when we finally get to God's eternal presence, that we can arrive at the goal. We are to become godly in life here and now. Our salvation is not only for the future, heaven instead of hell, but for living today so that others can see God in us and can experience the love of God through us.

Think about it, our hope is in the living God...not some god represented by something that is made by humans. Our hope is in the living God who created humans. That God is the Savior of all humans, Paul said, especially of those who believe. The easiest way to explain the last part of the tenth verse is to say, God wants to be the Savior of all humans, and Jesus died for all of us. However, not all of us are going to accept His salvation. So His death was especially for those who do believe in Him. (For other uses of "especially," see 5:8, 17; II Tim. 4:13)

\*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

**Lesson Goal:** To encourage students to continue spiritual workouts which lead to godliness.

**Scripture Memory:** "We have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe." I Timothy 4:10b

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## Student Worksheet—Following Through

### Workout

- >To what was Paul referring when he wrote about myths and tales?
  
- >What did Paul say is more important than physical exercise?
  
- >Training in godliness involves not only thinking about it, we must \_\_\_\_\_ something about it.
  
- >We cooperate with God in living out our \_\_\_\_\_ life. It is to be a life like \_\_\_\_\_ lived when He was here on earth. It is a life of \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ and focused on helping others. It is a life of \_\_\_\_\_.
  
- >The word “strive” is an athletic term. What does it refer to?
  
- >We are to become godly in \_\_\_\_\_ here and now.
  
- >The easiest way to explain the last part of the tenth verse is to say, \_\_\_\_\_ wants to be the \_\_\_\_\_ of all humans, and Jesus died for all of us. However, not all of us are going to accept His salvation. So His death was \_\_\_\_\_ for those who do believe in Him.

**For Memory: “We have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.” I Timothy 4:10b**

#### **How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:**

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.