

**“What’s Your Body Language?”**  
**I Corinthians 6:19-20, 9:24-27**  
*Series: New Year, New You Week 1: Check Up*  
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Here’s an interesting statistic: “40% to 45% of adults will make one or more New Year's resolutions.” It then lists the following Top Ten New Year's Resolutions:

1. Spend more time with family
2. Get in shape
3. Lose weight
4. Quit smoking
5. Enjoy life more
6. Quit drinking
7. Get out of debt
8. Learn something new
9. Help others
10. Get organized

Now here’s another interesting statistic: “80% of all New Year’s resolutions fail by the second week of February.” So the next question is: Why, despite our good intentions and best efforts, don’t we keep them? Why do so many of our attempts fail?

- Fear – we worry about what will happen if we make this change.
- Comfort – we prefer our current routines and ruts.
- Pride – we try to change on our own power and then fall short
- Stubbornness - we don’t want to be told to change.
- Laziness – we don’t have the energy or interest to follow through.
- Priorities – we don’t rearrange our schedule to make the change possible.
- Value vs. Cost – we know the change is valuable (such as lower cholesterol) but we don’t want pay the cost (giving up bacon and French fries).

Why don’t our efforts make us new? We are trying to change from the outside in. During the Christmas season we focused on the movie *It’s a Wonderful Life* starring Jimmy Stewart. During my research about the movie I uncovered this little known story. Remember the pharmacist Mr. Gower that George Bailey saved from poisoning a child with a bad prescription? The actor’s name was H.B. Warner. In 1927, he was cast by the great director Cecil B. DeMille as Jesus in his silent film *King of Kings*. The director was afraid any bad behavior by his lead actor would bring negative publicity for the film. So he kept tight reigns on Warner.

During the filming, Warner was driven to the set with blinds drawn and he wore a black veil. DeMille separated Warner from the other cast members, even forcing him to eat alone every day. Warner couldn't play cards, go to ballgames, ride in a convertible, or go swimming.

Unfortunately, the regimen of rules didn't make Warner more holy. Instead, all of the pressure to be Christ-like seemed to drive Warner over the edge. During the

production of King of Kings, rather than act more like Jesus, Warner merely relapsed into his addiction to alcohol.<sup>1</sup>

We don't have the power to sustain long-term transformation. The good news is God does. And He wants to make a New You in this New Year. The Bible says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Starting today you will learn how God can make you a New Creation from the inside out. In nature, a chain reaction usually occurs when something triggers a chain of events that lead to large, sometimes cataclysmic results. Take for example a snowball rolling down the hill. It eventually grows into a larger snowball that can cause an avalanche. God's change reaction begins with the addition of power from the Holy Spirit. When we rely on our own power to make lasting change we often fall short. This is why so many resolutions fail. We work on the outside such as trying to stop our bad habits. God works from the inside by changing the inner desires that drive these bad habits. Scriptures says,

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

This is a radical new idea. God doesn't want to live in a building. God wants to live in you. God's new temple is not made with sticks and bricks but with flesh and blood. Your life may be a glorious edifice ready to receive the Holy Spirit. Or maybe, after some honest self-evaluation, you find you are more like a church needing a few upgrades, a sanctuary requiring major renovation, or perhaps you feel your life is in ruins. Fear not! Like any new homeowner, the Holy Spirit wants to make some home improvements in you. During this series we will focus on three key pillars which hold up the Temple of your life. They come from Jesus' two greatest commandments.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

Love your neighbor as yourself. (Leviticus 19:18)

Loving God with your heart and soul is the Emotional Pillar. Loving God with your strength is the Physical Pillar. And loving your neighbor is the Relational Pillar. We will dedicate the first month of the year to working on your Physical Pillar. In February we'll strengthen the Emotional Pillar and in March the Relational Pillar. All three are essential. Without one of these pillars, the temple of your life is likely to collapse.

So how do you strengthen your Physical Pillar? How can you Live Fit? It starts with a Check Up. I was sick during the Christmas break so on the last day of 2018 I went to the doctor. Even though I was pretty sure what was wrong my doctor still performed the same tests she always does. She checks my weight and blood pressure, takes my temperature, listens to my chest, looks in my ears and then, my favorite, sticks that huge popsicle stick down my throat until I gag. Now why does she do all that? She's listening to what my body is saying – if you will – my body language. When you go for a check-up

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<sup>1</sup> "The King of Kings" (1927)—Did You Know?" IMDB.

the doctor uses these and other tests to evaluate how well the different systems of your body are functioning and collaborating with each other. This month we will look at three interlocking areas which help you to Live Fit and be physically healthy: **Exercise, Nutrition and Rest.**

To begin, let's do a baseline checkup on these three areas. How are you doing with **Exercise**? Which of these attitudes matches yours?

1. Staying physically fit is very important to me.
2. I leave physical fitness to the young.
3. Physical fitness is overrated in our society.
4. I worry about it, but only exercise sporadically.
5. When I feel like exercising, I lay down until the feeling goes away.

Moderate, frequent exercise is essential for a healthy lifestyle. Yet I find we go to extremes with this. For some, the only exercise they do is working the remote while they lie on the couch. On the other end are what I call the "exorcists" – speed demons who can't get enough exercise. Just this week a Woodside member stopped in my office and said, "Hey Doug, you're an active guy would you like to do a Tough Mudder with me?" This is an obstacle course in which you climb high walls, crawl through mud, swim under obstacles and fall through a ring of fire. I politely declined the invitation.

We all need exercise. Even the Apostle Paul writes,

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize (I Corinthians 9:25-27).

Paul describes the training required to get in physical and spiritual shape. Running aimlessly or beating the air is a waste of time and energy. Focused consistent exercise leads to a healthy body and spirit. When I was in high school my parents were in a running club. They ran short distances and worked their way up to half and full marathons. As I turned over and hit the snooze button they were already out on the road before sunrise. They ran specific distances each day to condition themselves for the grueling 26 miles. While I consumed all sorts of fatty, salty, sugary foods, they carefully ate proper diets for racers. Their bodies were finely tuned and in fit condition. And they told me they actually felt, "The Runner's High." I didn't believe them.

Whether or not you run a race, God designed our bodies with the need for exercise. My parents started small, kept at it and became healthier. Like the snowball I mentioned at the beginning, the change starts with small consistent practices instead of large dramatic acts. So ask yourself this question: What am I doing now in the way of exercise and what can I add to improve? Next week my wife Lisa, a Ph.D. in Physical Therapy and a professor at Thomas Jefferson University, will share with us the importance and the practice of exercise.

Next, how are you doing with **Nutrition**? With all the candy, cookies and feasts it's hard to eat healthy at Christmas. I heard numerous people say, "I'll start eating right on January 1<sup>st</sup>." Our world does not make it easy. Everywhere we turn there are skillfully designed ads which tempt us to indulge our taste buds. Then there are other ads pushing us to stay trim and thin. Food is tied to emotions. Just think about the words we use: comfort food, stress eating, cravings. When we worry, we often turn to food. Jesus said,

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? (Matthew 6:25)

In Jesus' day people worried about famine and hunger. We worry about calories and cholesterol. Both situations arise from emotional issues: worry and fear. In the 1st century people worried about not having clothes. We worry about fitting into our clothes and how we will look to others. So inner drives – worry and fear – and outer reactions – the opinion of others – are what motivate us to overeat or to diet.

God knows we need to eat to live. There is no life without food. Yet as Jesus points out, food is not the answer to life's problems. Food can't dispel stress, drive out guilt or deal with depression. Often, it makes these things worse. In two weeks we will look at how to have a sane, sober approach to nutrition. But for now, ask yourself: what am I doing well with nutrition and where can I improve?

Finally, how are you doing with **Rest**? How much sleep do you get a night? Do you get completely away from your work? Do you find you need a weekend to recover from your weekend or a vacation after your Christmas vacation? Faster! That's the demand of our day. We want fast food, fast phones, fast FedEx deliveries. Why all the hurry? So we can rest? No – so we can fill up the day with more activities which exhaust us. Slowing down is countercultural. Yet God, who needs no rest, took a break on the seventh day of Creation to show us how it's done. He even made Sabbath rest one of the Ten Commandments.

We all know stories of people, like the Pharisees, who go to extremes to keep the Sabbath. The Pharisees even criticize Jesus for not doing the Sabbath right and He's God. Jesus makes it clear that the Sabbath and rest are God's gift to us.

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27-28)

We are the opposite of the Pharisees. We rarely take a break. And that's why we break. Even though we know rest is essential for a healthy life, 35% of American adults fail to get at least seven hours of sleep each night—the minimum recommended sleep time for adults. Beyond being tired and less productive, a lack of sleep causes serious hazards such as physical and mental health problems, accidents in the workplace, fatal crashes on the road, and poor performance at work. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) listed states which get the most to least sleep. #1 South Dakota (probably because there's not much of a reason to stay up). #50 Hawaii (the opposite reason). Where does Pennsylvania fall? #38

In Pennsylvania, 37.5% of adults do not get enough sleep, more than the corresponding 35.1% national rate. Just as adults in the state are more likely to be sleep deprived, they are also slightly more likely to be obese and not partake in physical activity compared to their counterparts across the country.

In other words...they could really use this message series. How are you doing with rest and what can you improve?

Park Hye-ri certainly needed to take a break from her life. The 28-year-old South Korean office worker was swamped with work. "I shouldn't be here right now, given the work I need to do. But I decided to pause and look back at myself for a better life." So

Park paid \$90 to spend 24 hours in jail. In the northern part of the country you can spend 24 or 48 hours in solitary confinement in a 54-sq-foot cell. Prison rules are strict. No talking with other inmates. No mobile phones or clocks. Clients get a blue prison uniform, a yoga mat, tea set, a pen, and notebook. They sleep on the floor. There is a small toilet inside the room, but no mirror. Since 2013, the facility has hosted more than 2,000 inmates, many of them stressed office workers and students seeking relief from South Korea's demanding work and academic culture. Park says, "This prison gives me a sense of freedom." The owner of the prison retreat says, "After a stay in the prison, people say, 'This is not a prison, the real prison is where we return to.'" What's the name of the facility? "The Prison Inside Me."<sup>2</sup>

You don't have to go to prison to be free. The problem is not out there. The prison is inside you. God wants to set you free. Won't you join us?

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<sup>2</sup> [https://apple.news/AkZfcRIJ8TnKu1Vrb\\_q8FyQ](https://apple.news/AkZfcRIJ8TnKu1Vrb_q8FyQ)