

I. My Notes ... WWC message 12/27

II. Series: General

- Title: Are We Headed to the Gym?
- Text: 1 Timothy 4:6-9
- Quote: We just celebrated a season focused on Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Let hope shine brightly each day and joy fill your heart along the way. Then peace will be the result, and love will be shared each and every step of the day. Pastor Rick

III. Introduction

- We've come through the Christmas season—some grateful for every moment, others relieved it's over. Now we stand on the edge of a new year, a time filled with anticipation and the hope of a fresh start. People everywhere are looking for change, for renewal, for a chance to reset what didn't go right in 2025.
- New Year's celebrations have always carried that theme. Whether in ancient Babylon or in the Roman world under Julius Caesar, the turning of the year symbolized beginnings, transitions, and hope. And even today, January 1st feels like an invitation to start again.
- That's why so many people make resolutions—go to the gym, eat better, adjust their attitude, read the Bible more. These are good intentions, but they often fade quickly because they rely on willpower alone. Circumstances don't shape us nearly as much as our attitude does, and the right attitude grows from the right kind of training.
- This year, our theme is simple: Read the RED. I want to sit at the feet of Jesus in the Gospels and let His words shape my life. Jesus said, *In the same way let your light shine ·before others [for people to see], so that they will see ·the good things you do [L your good deeds/works] and will ·praise [glorify; give honor to] your Father in heaven.* **(Matthew 5:16 EXB)**. That's the kind of life I intend to train for in 2026.
- And that's exactly where Paul takes us in 1 Timothy 4. He reminds us that spiritual growth doesn't happen by accident. It takes intention. It takes training. It takes a purpose rooted in godliness—a life that honors God and reflects His grace.
- So today, as we prepare to step toward a new year, let's head to the gym—not the physical one, but the spiritual one—where we learn how to train for a life that holds promise.

IV. Jumping In

- Sometimes I reach a tension point when I am preparing a message. Studying and writing often take me to places that are deeply interesting to me but I am not always sure that it resonates the same with those who read or listen to these messages.

- I want to tell you what the Bible says so that it drives you to a place to go deeper in your relationship with our Lord. I want you to understand the truths taught in Scripture so that they will encourage you and protect you along your daily journey.
- And that is where the tension lies. I think that everyone learns their lessons in a unique way. Some are students, some need real experiences, and some might just need to be hit right between the eyes. I know that the most important thing is that you discover and understand the truth, not the way that you get there.
- So today, in preparation for the New Year, we are going to look at a training program for our spiritual health and well-being. We are heading to a gymnasium of sorts.
- With that in mind, Paul gives Timothy—and us—a clear training plan for spiritual strength.
- **1 Timothy 4:6-9 CSB**
6 If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of the faith and the good teaching that you have followed. 7 But have nothing to do with pointless and silly myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness. 8 For the training of the body has limited benefit, but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9 This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance.
- Most will agree that physical training holds some value. Even Paul recognizes this. Yet, he continues with a more significant statement. One that holds eternal value.

V. Go to the Gym

- The main point of this passage is that training is essential to a lifestyle that holds promise. In other words, life doesn't just happen. It is the result of a focused effort.
- Now please, don't twist this into that our salvation is earned. That isn't the point here. We are saved by grace, through faith. If you aren't sure about that we need to go back and talk about Ephesians 2 for a bit.
- Paul had started this portion of his letter to Timothy talking about how things were going to change in the last days. People's actions and attitudes will stem from selfishness and trying to control others. It's a strong warning to those who are servants of the Lord God to be aware and remain ready.
- It is clear that Paul is telling believers that godliness doesn't just happen, you train to get there. Holiness and godliness aren't character traits that are spoken of enough. Actions matter. We reflect Christ to others through our actions and attitudes. Others not only see Jesus through us, but it is how they begin to relate to Him.
- Paul is encouraging us to train to act appropriately. In another letter Paul reminds us of what Christ did so that we might be able to find that relationship with God ... *"He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* (**2 Corinthians 5:21 CSB**).

- Jesus came so that we might understand what it meant to live in a deeply intimate nature with the Father. Jesus lived to glorify the Father. We must do the same – glorify the Father by living in obedience to the Son.
- Think about it this way. Some time ago I used to lift weights. I got fairly good at it for a time. When I began going to the gym, I couldn't lift all that much. I knew that something had to change in my life and I went to the gym to start to train. After some time and choosing to work with a trainer I was able to see some progress. I began to get stronger and change in other ways. By going to the gym faithfully, following a schedule, and listening to someone who knew much more than I did I was able to accomplish some goals.
- It should be that way in our spiritual walk too. We are not meant to do it on our own. Make a choice to train – to *“grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord”* (2 Peter 3:18).

VI. Training Begins

- An athlete of any kind will prepare for the competition or event. Can you imagine someone walking up to compete in a marathon without any training or preparation? They might run a mile or even two but soon they will fall off the pace and quit.
- Many believers begin the journey of their faith walk with excitement, with enthusiasm. But they try on their own, they don't get guidance or help. And soon the difficulties come, life happens, they are hit with an overwhelming situation. And they fall by the wayside, unable to understand where God is or why it seems that He has abandoned them.
- The Apostle points Timothy, he points us in a direction. *“But have nothing to do with pointless and silly myths...”* (vs. 7).
- There are a lot of distractions around us. It's easy to get caught up in endless scrolling on our phones or the internet, listening to something that “sounds good” but doesn't really feed us, comparisons, and so on. Part of training is avoiding the things that don't help us, that inhibit growth.
- Along with physical training, an athlete eats a proper diet, uses equipment that helps progress, wears the proper gear to train and compete, and finds others to help achieve the goals that have been set.
- What is it that you are doing to facilitate your spiritual training? Being in the Word is a place to being – having a Bible translation that you can understand and want to read helps. Communication is another strong step – Prayer, talking to God, is the way to start.
- Being faithful in building a foundation is a great way to accomplish spiritual growth. Jesus said these words, *“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”* (John 14:23 CSB). What a great reason to practice obedience!

VII. Hard but Worth It

- Training is never easy. Anyone who has ever stepped into a gym knows that the first few days feel awkward, uncomfortable, even discouraging. Muscles ache. Progress seems slow. You wonder if it's even working. But over time—through repetition, consistency, and guidance—strength begins to grow.
- Paul is honest about this. He doesn't pretend that godliness comes naturally or effortlessly. He uses the language of discipline, practice, and perseverance because spiritual growth requires commitment. But here's the good news: the effort is never wasted.
- Godliness is "beneficial in every way"—not just someday in eternity, but right now, in the middle of your real life. When you train in godliness:
 - Your reactions begin to change.
 - Your peace deepens.
 - Your discernment sharpens.
 - Your resilience grows.
 - Your love becomes more consistent.
 - Your hope becomes more durable.
- And all of this happens not because you are strong, but because God is faithful.
- Remember what Paul wrote: "The Lord is faithful and will give you strength and will protect you from the Evil One." (2 Thessalonians 3:3 NCV). That means you are not training alone. You are not trying to become godly by sheer willpower. You are cooperating with the Spirit who is already at work within you.
- Think again about the athlete. They don't see results overnight. They don't always feel motivated. But they trust the process. They trust the trainer. They trust that the small, daily choices are shaping something bigger than they can see.
- The same is true spiritually. Every prayer is a rep. Every moment in Scripture is a step. Every act of obedience is a seed planted. Every time you choose grace over anger, faith over fear, or truth over distraction—you are training for godliness.
- It's hard. But it's worth it.
- Because godliness shapes who you are becoming. It prepares you for the challenges you haven't faced yet. It anchors you when life shakes you. And it reflects Christ to a world that desperately needs to see Him.
- So, as we step into a new year, don't be discouraged by slow progress. Don't be surprised by resistance. Don't give up because it feels difficult. Training is challenging, growth takes faithful focus—but the results are eternal.

VIII. Last Words

- As we look forward to 2026, Paul's words to Timothy echo with fresh relevance: "Train yourself for godliness." Not "try harder." Not "be better." Not "fix yourself." Train. Step into a process. Commit to a path. Trust the One who walks with you.

- Because the truth is simple:
 - Trying relies on willpower. Training relies on grace.
 - Trying wears you down and burns you out. Training builds up.
 - Trying is about the moment. Training is about each day and tomorrow.
 - Trying depends on you. Training depends on the Spirit working in you.
- And that's why this matters so deeply. Godliness isn't about earning God's love—it's about living from it. It's about shaping your life around the One who has already shaped eternity around you. It's about becoming the kind of person who reflects Christ in the ordinary moments of every day.
- So as 2026 begins, let me ask you a simple but important question: What is one step you can take to begin training for godliness this year? Not ten steps. Not a whole spiritual overhaul.
- Just one.
 - Maybe it's reading Scripture daily—even a small portion.
 - Maybe it's praying with more honesty and less hurry.
 - Maybe it's joining a group, serving someone in need, or cutting out a distraction that's been draining your soul.
 - Maybe it's simply choosing to "Read the RED" and sit at the feet of Jesus.
- Whatever it is, start there. Start small. Start now. Because godliness grows through daily choices, not yearly resolutions. And remember this: You are not training alone. The Lord is faithful. He will strengthen you. He will protect you. He will finish the work He began in you.
- So, let's head into this new year with purpose. Let's step into the gym of grace. Let's train our hearts, our minds, our attitudes, and our actions to reflect the One who saved us. Let's pursue godliness—not out of pressure, but out of gratitude. Not out of fear, but out of love. Not for our glory, but for His.
- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always