

MOTIVATION

(1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

1) It allows me to be healthier.

- a) One of the great benefits that I have seen for myself is that I am a much healthier person than I was a year and a half ago.
 - i) I was on a daily blood pressure medicine as well as cholesterol medicine.
 - ii) Now, I know most preachers are on those medicines so that might be part of the problem.
 - iii) However, I was on them starting in my mid-late 30's, which isn't good.
- b) Every six months I go to the doctor for a check-up as a lot of us do.
 - i) I've been to the doctor 3 times now since I started running.
 - ii) I've lost over 30 pounds running and eating better.
 - iii) I've also been able to get completely off of my high blood pressure meds.
 - iv) Sadly, the cholesterol seems to be a hereditary issue and it is not responding as well as the blood pressure but it is better.
- c) I have more energy and running has made many other facets of my life better and healthier.
- d) Living the Christian life is by far the spiritually healthiest lifestyle.
 - i) When you and I really are living for Christ, you and I are getting the exercise we are supposed to be getting spiritually.
 - ii) Hebrews 5:14 – “exercised” literally means “to practice gymnastic exercises” and has the idea of training.
 - iii) Those that use God's word correctly have trained their senses to make spiritually healthy decisions, to discern between good and evil.
- e) No other way of living is as spiritually healthy as the Christian life.
 - i) Sin destroys as we all know.
 - ii) Some of us know this far better than others.
 - iii) The Christian life, one lived in a way that avoids sin as much as possible leads to better spiritual health.
- f) Think of the way you and I lived before we obeyed the gospel, or during those times we were not living for God as Christians.
 - i) We were destroying ourselves weren't we?
 - ii) Just as lack of physical exercise causes the muscles to deteriorate and the body to become weak, we were dying spiritually.
 - iii) Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians that while they were outside of Christ they were dead (Ephesians 2:1).
- g) Living any other type of life than the Christian life is an unhealthy one that leads to a lost life.

2) It helps to prevent disease.

- a) Running has been shown to reduce the risk of certain types of cancers.
- b) Running has also been shown to help reduce the risk of contracting certain diseases.
 - i) It can help against diabetes, high blood pressure, and osteoporosis.
 - ii) It has been proven to lessen the risk of heart attacks.
 - iii) The blood pumping keeps the elasticity of our arteries and veins, which is what helps lessen the risk of heart attacks.
- c) Running has been shown to lessen the effects of mental decline as we age.
- d) Also, running has been shown to help with depression and anxiety.
- e) As one article stated, There is a raft of scientific evidence that exercise, and running in particular, has health benefits that extend well beyond any pill a doctor could prescribe.
- f) I believe John understood this about living the life God wants us to live (1 John 3:19).
 - i) The idea is not that we don't sin at all, because John addressed that lie in the first chapter.
 - ii) This verse is saying that we don't lead lives of habitual sin as Christians because God's seed remains in us.
 - iii) What is the seed? (Luke 8:11).
- g) The Psalmist, while not a Christian obviously, but in a covenant relationship with God, understood this fact a long time ago (Psalm 119:11).
- h) Knowledge of God's word will keep us from moral sins as well as doctrinal sins.
 - i) If we start to fail morally, our doctrine will suffer.
 - ii) If we start to fail doctrinally, our morals will suffer.
 - iii) The two are tied together.
- i) Satan comes at us with a lot of different temptations.
 - i) We know there are three general avenues by which temptation comes.
 - ii) How do we withstand those temptations?
 - iii) If we are truly dedicated to the Christian lifestyle, we are going to be students of God's word, which will help us fight off the attacks of Satan.
- j) Sin is a disease and there is only one cure, which is the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5).
- k) Sin affects us even when living the Christian life.
 - i) We live in a sinful world.
 - ii) Disease, the sins of others, and death, even when we are living the life we should have an effect on us.
 - iii) However, when walking in the light, having the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from our sins, we don't have to die spiritually.
- l) Yes, this body of ours is decaying, but we are promised a new one if we run this race faithfully to the end.

3) It allows me to feel better about myself.

- a) Running is a stress reliever and it also helps with self-confidence.

- i) Some people aren't bothered by stress but some are and running helps with getting rid of some of our daily stress.
- ii) Setting goals in running, which you do if you ever plan on running in a race, and meeting those goals helps with self-confidence.
- b) Being healthier makes you feel better as well.
- c) It was drilled into my head growing up at Knight Arnold, now Forest Hill, that there is no better life than the Christian life.
 - i) Knowing God leads to eternal life (John 17:3).
 - ii) We can know that we know God (1 John 2:3).
 - iii) This means we know whether or not we are saved.
 - iv) That kind of knowledge lets us feel better about this life.
- d) The Christian life leads us to treat others better and ourselves better.
- e) There is fulfillment in the life lived for God and that leads to feeling better about oneself emotionally as well as spiritually.

4) It allows me to be with my family longer.

- a) Running has been shown to add time to one's life.
 - i) Of course, you may run in front of a truck, which really lessens the average life span.
 - ii) But, if life goes normally as we hope it will, running has been proven to extend the length of one's life.
- b) God had given us an earthly family.
 - i) We are commanded to take care of our parents as they age (1 Timothy 5:4).
 - ii) We are to provide for our families (1 Timothy 5:8).
 - iii) We can't do that if we are dead, so I want to be here for them.
- c) As Christians, we have a spiritual family as well.
 - i) There are those with whom you worship that need you.
 - ii) As Christians, we get to be around the best people on earth.
 - iii) We should want to be with them longer.
- d) Spiritually, living the Christian life will allow us to live eternally with our spiritual, and hopefully earthly, family.
 - i) The life of a Christian, leads to eternal salvation.
 - ii) I've always gained inspiration from 1 Peter 1:3-5.
 - iii) There is a place reserved in heaven for the faithful runner of this spiritual race.
- e) Eternal separation from God and His people awaits those that don't faithfully run this race that is set before us.
 - i) Those passages that teach the length of heaven also teach the length of hell.
 - ii) I also gain inspiration from 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.
 - iii) It inspires me to make sure that I know God and obey the gospel.