

Thirty-Five – Week 2

Physical Health – Jim Burgen

September 12, 2021

Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation--encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

// Bible References

Matthew 26:41; Mark 12:30-31; Romans 7:18-25; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

// Message Summary

This week Jim brings us a message about physical health and officially kicks off the [35 Day Challenge](#). Even Jesus' disciples – the followers that walked and talked with Him in the flesh during His time on earth, admitted to struggles and hardships based on their own physical limitations and temptations. These were recorded in the scriptures (referenced above) by Paul, who wrote many of the New Testament books of the Bible. Paul gave a lot of ink to the utter submission of the flesh, and the disciplined control that must be exercised over it by heart, mind and soul.

// Biblical & Historical Context

Physical life in Israel during the early centuries of the Christian era was built around agrarian societies. Most historical sources describe people living in smaller communities and villages, with the exception of Rome and the Decapolis there were only a few larger settlements perhaps supporting as many as 5000 people.¹ So while a few were engaged in trade, most work was derived from agriculture and was physical in nature. Only about half of all children survived to age 10 but for those who reached that age, archaeological and documented evidence reports a life span surprisingly similar to what it is today. Although life as a farmer or shepherd would have been more difficult without industrial-age conveniences, it wasn't necessarily much shorter and may have even been healthier with most adults living to their seventh decade.

Many of the things that account for reduced quality of our physical lives today are not attributable to hardship but rather to excess. It has been said by contemporary sociologists that Americans today are the most addicted, indebted, obese, and medicated group of adults in human history. But that's not the life Jesus intended for us. As part of the challenge this week we read that Jesus became flesh when He came to earth (John 1:14). He can identify with us and He understands our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15). And that's where we'll find our help as we begin to exercise some discipline over the physical aspect of our lives. With Jesus' grace and help each day we can begin sending a message to our physical bodies saying: "you work for me –

¹ Pierson, W. A. (2021). Spatial Assessment of Urban Growth in Cities of the Decapolis; and the implications for modern cities. Theses and Dissertations Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/3972>

and I am not ruled by you.” This prioritizes the decisions of mind and spirit – over the desires of our flesh. Formation will still take repetition of this conscious decision and effort over time, but eventually the body adapts to (even cooperates with) the new normal.

// Community Questions

1. Are you a morning person or a night owl? What are your habits when you wake up in the morning/ go to bed in the evening? Have you ever had to change your schedule (to attend school, for shift work, etc.)? How long did it take your body to get used to the new routine?
2. Have you started the 35 Day Challenge? What have you decided to do for the 15 minutes of physical activity?

// Discussion Questions

1. The physical aspect of our lives sometimes seems resistant to change. Have you started a positive habit(s) in order to realize some larger goal (training for a sport, recovering from illness/ injury, losing weight)? Did you have any failures or restarts before it took hold?
2. Read Romans 7:18-24. Paul describes the kind of internal struggle nearly all of us have faced at one time or another. Can you relate? How is this struggle a part of any kind of change in our lives?
3. Jim reminded us about the four quadrants heart (will power), soul (emotions), mind (thoughts), and strength (physical) not as independent silos but as inter-connected in our lives. What connection do you see between the spiritual and physical parts of your life?
4. When you read 1 Corinthians 6:19 how does it make you think differently about your body?
 - a. In God’s order of things the body is meant to serve the soul, mind and spirit. Think of some practical things the body does to submit or serve the soul, the mind and the spirit? (example: the body must be put to sleep to rest and refresh the mind)
 - b. What are some possible consequences when the body/ flesh decides to take over to get its own way?
 - c. God created our physical bodies to honor and glorify Him. As you are making your way through life in this physical body, what are some ways it glorifies God and serves others?

// Challenge

Often, one of the only ways to take hold of the mind is to take hold of the body. What might you do to work 15 minutes of physical activity into each day. Discuss ways of encouraging one another to accomplish this.

Oh hey, one more thing . . . Life can be hard sometimes. Our physical bodies may be experiencing brokenness from alcohol, drugs or addiction. If you or any of your group members need help in this area you can contact your groups coach and check out these resources: <https://www.flatironschurch.com/care>