

Okay, now can I see the Bible?

Better bring it down to where I am.

Good morning, church.

How'd you like that song?

Wasn't that a great song to sing right before the preaching starts?

So we're going to read this morning from 1 Timothy chapter 4, verse 6 through 10.

If you put these things before the brothers...

You will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being raised in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths.

Rather, train yourself for godliness.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.

For to this end, we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

Thank you.

Thanks, Penny.

We gotta get you a booster.

We're working on it.

Designs are in progress.

Our engineers are looking at it.

We'll get one back here.

I forgot to give my PowerPoint back to Emmett back there.

So we'll just use this opportunity to highlight the fact that if you download the app or you have the app or go to the website, you can go to the live stream for today.

You don't need to watch the live stream.

That would be really awkward.

It would probably be about a two-minute lag between what I say up here

and your phone.

But there are sermon notes embedded into the live app there that are like fill in the blanks and you can like follow along and click on the blank.

So you can do that.

It's Lakewood Baptist Church of NY, of New York, all right?

So make sure you get the right one.

Otherwise, you might have the wrong Lakewood Baptist Church.

Also, there's outlines printed for you in the bulletin.

So you can check those out as well.

Follow along there.

So nothing on the screen today.

You'll just have to look at my beautiful face and be engaged that way.

And yeah, I'm going to stop talking now before I get myself in trouble.

I did have coffee today, so I might just fly through this.

Hopefully you had coffee and you're ready to listen quick as I talk quick.

I'm from New Jersey.

I learned that, came by that honestly.

So let's pray and ask for the Lord's help this morning.

Lord, we trust that as we open your word, you are speaking.

Lord, that these are words that you have recorded for us, for your church.

Lord, that you are speaking.

through Paul, in this case, in our book here in 1 Timothy, Lord, that you have recorded these truths, these concepts, these words for us.

But Lord, we also trust that you're doing far more than that, Lord, that your Holy Spirit is communicating the truths that we are digging up and unearthing from this letter, Lord, and that you're communicating them to our hearts and to our minds.

Lord, we also trust that as we sang, that you are building your church through the preaching of your word.

This is the means that you have ordained to build us up, to change us, to mold us more into Christ's image.

But Lord, that you are building up the institution of your church through the preaching of your word.

So we look to be faithful this morning in delivering your word, in receiving your word,

and trusting that you're doing something far greater, far more than we can imagine, even as we go about what is a weekly and sometimes mundane task.

Lord, we just trust that you'd make it much more than that today.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

So last week, we saw in 1 Timothy 4, as we looked at Paul's kind of direct address, he's turning his focus from the church in general to Timothy individually, and he gives Timothy another warning about these false teachers that are in his church.

that he's supposed to cast out, that he's supposed to call out for their false doctrine and how their lives are not matching up with the gospel.

And he's to put them out under church discipline.

So we get another warning, and Paul goes into a little bit more detail about exactly what makes the false teachers false.

So we looked at that last week, and we saw that the main thing that they're doing is that they're repurposing God's good gifts for their own selfish ends, and that we tend to do this.

We tend to take good things that God has made, in this case, food and sex and marriage that Paul highlights, and we repurpose them to get what we want, to either manipulate others or to, in our minds, manipulate God into giving us what we want.

So the Ephesian false teachers, you know, they were denying the goodness of marital intimacy.

They were denying the goodness of certain foods.

And they were self-righteously abstaining from them as a means of control and manipulation.

So Paul tells Timothy, he's like, eat, have sex within the commitment of marriage.

These are good things from God.

They're meant to be enjoyed in this way for his glory, for his purposes, for his glory.

And some of us who are all about self-control, and we love to feel the burn, and we maybe, if we're honest, feel good about ourselves when we're denying ourselves something and making ourselves suffer, probably needed that reminder.

I was just talking with Drew recently about Coach Hsiao, who was a basketball coach at the college that I went to,

and we were just kind of reminiscing and talking about how intense Coach Chow is.

Maybe we'll have him here one day, and you'll all get to experience it for yourself.

Very intense man, and yeah, he would just fast certain things just to deny himself something to make him suffer, like hot showers for a week.

He's just going to take cold showers just because, you know, he just needed to suffer.

Some of us are just wired that way, right?

However, lest those of us

who loathe feeling the burn, get too smug and self-righteous after last week's message.

In our indulgences, we're like, yeah, we like to eat.

That's the category I fall into.

Paul shifts gears in our passage, and he makes it clear that there's a place in the Christian life for self-discipline and for effort.

And we're talking primarily spiritually here, right?

So he's going to mention physically and physical training, but we're also talking about training ourselves for godliness.

You know, God justifies us.

He saves us as a free gift.

That's all of his doing, right?

Our salvation, being right with God, is a free gift from him.

He works that in our hearts.

But he requires that we participate with him

and work out our growth, right?

So sanctification,

It doesn't happen all at once, or us being changed in the Christ image, it doesn't happen all at once.

And we see in the New Testament that that growth requires effort on our part, right?

That God participates or calls us to participate with him in what he's doing in our hearts to stimulate or to help that growth continue.

So we'll see today Paul's instructions to Timothy that to grow in godliness, we must hear good doctrine from others, we must train ourselves to hope,

and we must help others see and believe.

Here, hope help, which is kind of our main theme for the year and our signs out front.

I didn't work it out that way.

God did.

I just noticed it here in this passage.

Are you guys awake today?

We're good?

We're good?

We're all ready?

I know it was snowing a few minutes ago, and that's kind of depressing, but we have the Bible, and we're here to study it, and I think we can work through it.

All right.

You guys are scaring me.

I'm just getting a lot of dead stares today.

All right, let's go.

Here we go.

We got to hear good doctrine from others.

It's the first thing that Paul tells Timothy in verse six.

All right, if you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

All right, so the first thing we see here is that Paul's, again, reminding Timothy of his calling, of the preparation that God has given him for this pastoral task that he's called him to, right?

So God's called Timothy to pastor, to shepherd this church along with other elders at the church, and Paul's reminding him as he's trying to encourage him to do this really hard thing of confronting these other leaders in the church, he's reminding him of his calling and of his preparation

And in particular here, Paul's pointing him back to the training that he's had in doctrine, right?

And in the words of the faith.

And I just want to note that as Paul points Timothy back to this training, that what Paul's reminding Timothy of is not unique to Timothy.

It's normative, right?

It's normative for Christian discipleship.

Christians help other Christians grow by handing down the faith, by handing down the specifics of the gospel, and also helping each other understand what it means.

So Christian discipleship isn't merely guiding someone on a path of self-discovery.

This is kind of a popular idea today that we're all kind of,

on this journey together, which is, there's a kernel of truth to this, that we're all on this journey together, but that journey is primarily discovering something that's within.

Paul's not encouraging Timothy or reminding Timothy of some navel-gazing that he did in an attempt to discover or create his own meaning, right?

He's reminding Timothy of what was given to him, what was taught to him, what was entrusted to him.

So the God who created the world, right, stepped into history in the person of Jesus Christ,

And he has over thousands of years spoken through this book, through the Bible, and has preserved his church to proclaim it and pass it down.

So he's told us about himself, he's told us about us, he's told us about the world around us, and he's entrusted this revelation, what he's written down in this book, to his church to pass down.

So discipleship is a handing down and a receiving of that news and that insight that God has provided.

Quite frankly, we're all being disciplined by something, right?

We're all being influenced by something or someone, whether we acknowledge it or not.

That's how we're built.

We're built to see, we're built to interact with other people and be shaped by those people or even by the circumstances around us.

And as believers, we ought to acknowledge and embrace the influence that others have on us and choose who disciplines us wisely.

There's just some things you can't help.

I remember talking with a professor about parenting, and he's like, listen, you're going to give your kids hangups.

That's kind of what parenting is, is giving your kids hangups.

You want to give them the right hangups, right?

You want to choose wisely, be aware that you're having an influence on your kids and that you're influencing your kids, and make sure that you're intentional about those influences.

So being disciplined is kind of similar.

People are going to influence you.

Things are going to influence you.

Be intentional about who you're allowing to influence you, who you're spending time with, who you're being disciplined by.

Charles Spurgeon puts it this way.

He says, much of a person's character comes from other people.

What we are is not all of ourselves, meaning that we haven't shaped ourselves.

It's not all our own doing.

We are deep in debt to others.

Indeed, what person is there on whom a hundred fingers have not molded him and a thousand influences made his plastic character what it is?

Christians need others to help train them for godliness.

Paul says specifically here, when he's reminding Timothy of his training, that we need people to help train us in words and in doctrine, or in other words, for the particulars of the faith and the interpretation of those particulars.

Words of faith here simply means just the bare facts of the gospel, right?

1 Corinthians 15, three to five, Paul writes there, for I delivered to you as a first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,

that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, or that's Peter, then to the 12th.

And then he goes through a whole list of witnesses that Jesus appeared to, the risen Christ appeared to, and that you can go back and verify.

So just like we need to be taught what happened at Pearl Harbor or at the Battle of Gettysburg, right?

We need to be taught who Jesus is, who Jesus is and was when he was here on earth.

and what he did when he was here on earth.

Historical facts, right?

We need to be taught about who he is and what he did.

But more than that, right, we need to be received and be instructed in what Paul calls here the good doctrine that you have followed.

Doctrine is a fancy word, theological word, but simply it just means the teaching.

about God, right?

Doctrine's teaching about God, in particular what Paul's talking about here, is the teaching about the events of Jesus' life and what they mean, right?

What the meaning behind Jesus' actions, especially his death on the cross and his resurrection.

Yes, he died on the cross, but his death wasn't just an example of

or merely a beautiful act of selflessness, he died to satisfy the wrath of God on our behalf so that we can be right with God.

There's a depth of spiritual meaning behind the facts and the events of the Gospels that has to be explained to us.

And that's why God didn't just give us the Gospels, although there's a lot of doctrine and interpretation within the Gospels.

He didn't just give us the Gospels as a narrative of what Jesus did, but he also gave us the letters of the apostles, not just Paul, but Peter, James, John, a number of the other apostles, to help explain what Jesus did and accomplished on the cross and in his resurrection.

So Paul says that we need others to teach us, right?

We need other people, other believers, those who have kind of gone on before us to turn around, to teach us, to help us hear the good teaching of Christ.

But he also says in verses 7 to 8 that we got to train ourselves, right?

That we got to train ourselves to hope.

Look at verses 7 and 8 again.

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths.

Rather, train yourself for godliness.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

So godliness requires training ourselves.

So first off, we ought to define our terms like, what is godliness?

What does godliness mean?

Well, we saw at the end of chapter 3 that we looked at on Easter, that godliness is most clearly seen in the person and work of Jesus.

So Paul says the mystery of godliness is great, and then he just gives a little narrative.

of what Jesus did and how the news about the good news, the gospel just simply means good news, the good news of who Jesus is and what he did, how that spread and is spreading throughout the world.

So who Jesus is, what he did is like godliness, right?

Jesus is the image of God.

If you wanna know what God is like, you look at Jesus, what he did, what he said, what he accomplished, what he's going to accomplish and what he's doing now.

We also see that godliness is not merely sentimentality or church vibes.

It's real, concrete, boots on the ground, real world effects kind of thing.

So godliness is not just supposed to be abstract kind of things.

you know, for the philosophical or theological classroom.

But that godliness is like what God looks like right here, right now, what he would do, how he would shape the things around us.

Kent Hughes puts it this way, for Paul, godliness is no static stained glass word.

It is active, kinetic obedience that springs from a reverent awe of God.

So it's an awe of God, seeing God in all of his beauty and his glory, and responding in obedience, wanting to be like that.

Like wanting to reflect that or image that beauty and greatness.

So the main command here, because there's a lot of different clauses and phrases in these couple verses, it's a big long sentence, but the main command here is to train yourself for godliness.

Meaning that even for born-again, Holy Spirit-indwelt believers, growth in godliness is going to require effort.

Growth in godliness is going to require training ourselves or require effort.

And it's a sweaty effort.

The word for training here is the same root from which we get the word gymnasium.

So the gymnasiums back then, everybody would be there naked, unhindered, training for the Olympics, basically, for these competitions that were very kind of primal and wrestling, running, very basic strength and endurance type events.

And so everybody's there denying themselves,

throwing off every hindrance, as Paul says in Hebrews, right?

Training for these singular events and for glory.

And most of them were training for like a wreath of laurels, right?

Not even a trophy that you can go back and put on your shelf.

It was just for the glory of that day to come out ahead of everyone else.

And Paul's saying that that kind of bodily effort or that kind of bodily training, taking care of what God has given us, is of some value.

But he uses it as a metaphor, a metaphor for a rigorous and disciplined exercise that we ought to be doing on the spiritual level as well.

So Paul's comparing our spiritual growth directly to physical growth and the physical fitness that we experience when we exercise.

We've got to care for our souls in a very similar way that we care for our bodies.

So when you feel like you can't lift anymore and you do one more rep, that feels good, right?

And that needs to happen.

That's what training is.

When you feel you can't do anymore, you do one more rep.

And when you're exhausted from the several miles you just ran, you still sprint to the finish.

And when you've already come to church that morning and your recliner is feeling really comfortable, you still make it out to Sunday evening prayer meeting.

Now, some of you are like, wait a minute.

That seems like, aren't we getting a little legalistic here?

Aren't we crossing the line?

And that may be too specific.

Let's back it up a little bit, all right?

Maybe I don't want to bind your conscience beyond what the scriptures say this morning.

So take that with a grain of salt.

But seriously, you know, what does spiritual exercise look like?

Paul says, train yourself for godliness, but then he doesn't really get into a ton of specifics here.

How do we differentiate, and even more importantly, how do we differentiate between the legalistic self-denial the false teachers were guilty of in the verses just above this and true spiritual training, right?

So you got these false teachers that are saying, you know,

don't eat all these foods, lead a simple life, refrain from sexual activity, even within marriage.

All these indulgences are bad, and indulging in all of these things is not healthy for you spiritually.

So if that's not spiritual training, if self-denial can go wrong, and not all self-denial is good, then what kind of self-denial, what kind of training are we talking about exactly?

What does it look like to train ourselves spiritually?

Well, the difference between legalism and training for godliness is that true spiritual discipline trains us to hope in God's promises.

It trains us to learn to hope in God's promises.

Let's look at, I just want to look at verses 8-11.

7 and 8 again.

Have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths.

Rather, train yourself for godliness.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way as it holds promise for this present life and also for the life to come.

So Paul says godliness is superior to being fit and buff because godliness has value not just in this life, but it also has value in the life to come.

You know, there's gonna be a point in your life when you realize that exercise and healthy eating is an exercise, pun intended, in futility, right?

That no matter what we do, we get old,

and our bodies break down.

It's still better than not doing it.

I'm not saying, you know, Paul says bodily training is of some value.

It's a good thing to do.

It's a responsible thing to do.

But your body is breaking down, and it's a losing battle, right?

Time is contagious.

Everybody's getting old.

But no matter what shape your body is in today, no matter how old you are, you can be, and maybe are currently, a spiritual athlete.

Paul also says in verse 10 that we toil and strive because our hope is set in the living God.

So I would say the first step in spiritual training is to stick with the metaphor here, is to watch our diet.

What are we feeding our souls with?

What are we satisfying our spiritual longings and desires with?

Eugene Peterson, in his commentary on the Song of Solomon, talks about spiritual longings this way.

He says, "...there are recurrent elements of quest in the life of the Spirit, longing and searching."

But the longing isn't meandering, nor is the search fumbling.

There is direction, and there is a destination.

The appetites God has created in us lead us to the satisfactions he has promised us.

If my beloved isn't with me at the moment, if I don't feel his or her touch or experience his or her presence, I know that the absence is for my good and that there will be a reunion which I will enjoy."

Pastoral work should acknowledge the difficulty and the pain of the quest and should share it.

It shouldn't attribute the pain of longing to a neurosis, and it shouldn't try to ease the pain of our longing, let alone eradicate it.

It should honor the quest and validate the longings, realizing that the piercing moments of unfulfilled longings are a natural part of intimate relationships.

The appetites God has created in us lead to the satisfactions that he has promised us.

And Paul is saying here, don't satisfy your spiritual hunger with irreverent silly myths or Instagram vanity or political saviors or endless amusement and entertainment, but rather dig into God's word,

Feed on the promises of the living God who promises to be for you and not against you, not just in this life, but also in the life to come.

So dig into his promises, his promise to be for you, not against you, if your hope is in Christ, not just in this life, but also in the life to come.

So watch your spiritual diet.

Don't try to live off of spiritual junk food or fill yourself with God's, but fill yourself with God's word and promises.

And then he says, after that or following that, to stretch our spiritual muscles by helping others to see and believe.

Look at verses 9 and 10.

Verses 9 and 10.

This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, for to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hopes set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

So we've got two phrases here that are built on the main statement of

Because we have our hopes set on the living God who is the savior of all people, especially those who believe.

That's the main sentence.

And then you got a couple phrases leading up to that.

So when we see, what Paul's saying is, when we see the greatness of the promises of our living God, the promises that he's made to us as people,

When we're not setting glittery junk before our eyes, but we're setting the radiant glory of our Savior God, the only proper response is to set our hope on him.

When we actually see the beauty of his glory,

the only proper response is to put our hope in him, to turn to him in hope and faith.

Now, we'll see what that looks like more over the next several weeks.

Paul's going to flesh this out.

He's going to show us what it looks like to have our hope set on the living God.

But we need to know now that that's not just a mental or emotional thing, though those are important.

So when Paul says to set our hope on God,

He's not just saying, you know, have warm fuzzies towards God or, you know, feel a certain way towards God, but that this is a whole being-like setting of our hope on God.

We set our hope on the living God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind, with all of our strength.

So setting our hope on the living God means toiling and striving here,

So it's the phrase that comes right before setting our hope on the living God.

Setting our hope on the living God means toiling and striving for the things that he's working for in this world.

God's at work in this world and he's bringing about the growth and the victory of his church of calling people out of darkness and into light and transforming us in the Christ's image.

Toiling and striving or setting our hope on God is aligning ourselves with the purposes that he has in this world and the work that he has in this world.

It means working to know him and not just know his love for us and all of the benefits that he has promised to us, but to know him in his love for others too.

One of the ways that God expresses who he is and shows us who he is is how he loves others.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit for all of eternity loved each other, right?

Saw each other, found each other beautiful.

We're in this kind of Trinitarian dance of joy and love.

And yet they broke out of that, right?

They broke out of that, created people to love that were outside of themselves.

That's one of the ways that God demonstrates or shows us who he is.

And he's called us to do that too, right?

Break out of ourselves, break out of our little circles and to love others, especially with the good news of the gospel.

So I'm not saying that God's goodness to us and his love for us is based on our obedience and performance.

I'm saying that we see less of God, we miss out on the blessings of God, we don't grow in godliness when we don't set our hope on him with all of our mind, with all of our heart, with all of our soul.

and with our actions.

So ultimately, we want more of the living God, whose beauty, Paul is saying, is seen here in that he saves.

God's done a lot of stuff.

He's created the world.

He sustains the world.

He providentially upholds the world by the word of his power.

But Paul's saying, we see the beauty of God most clearly in that he saves.

God's glory and his beauty is most clearly seen that he gave himself to save us from our sins.

Now Paul means the same thing here that he did in chapter two.

I feel like I got to acknowledge it because I'm going to get some questions about it.

You know, he says, who is the savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

Paul's not saying that all people are saved by default.

What he's saying here is that God didn't come for one type of person.

Rather, every kind of person can be saved, and what really matters for salvation is belief, right, is faith in Jesus.

And we can see and experience more of that saving power, right?

Even if our faith and hope is already in Jesus, we can see and experience more of that saving power and glory when we serve others and share the gospel with others.

And seeing God's glory more clearly in that way has a life-changing, a heart-changing, a spiritual growth effect.

effect on us as we see him at work in others.

You know, sometimes it's really hard to see yourself grow, right?

It's hard to see yourself changing because you're with yourself all the time.

And so you just don't see things as clearly, but you can see things more clearly in other people as God works in them, changes them, becomes their hope and satisfaction.

All right, so what?

I don't always have a so what at the end of sermons because sometimes I don't feel like we really, the sermon doesn't call for it.

But I think we need one today, right?

So Paul's being really practical.

He's talking about us training ourselves.

I think we need to be practical as well and think through what does this look like in my life today?

So we've just heard this truth that to grow in godliness, we must hear good doctrine from others.

We must train ourselves to hope and help others see and believe.

What does this look like for me?

Let me just try to help you this morning think through what it looks like for you.

We'll start with here.

You need more than one sermon a week to be trained in the gospel and good doctrine.

One sermon a week isn't going to cut it.

It's not enough.

And online sermons and talks are okay.

I listen to a lot of online sermons and talks.

I think they're beneficial, especially if you're listening to folks that are explaining the gospel with proper hermeneutic.

We can talk more about that some other time if you need help being pointed in the right direction.

I'd be happy to help with that.

But you need people

that know you, at least a little, that are pouring into you God's word and who he is and what he's taught, that are aware of your situation, that know you and you know them.

There's a million ways to apply the things that God has given us.

Having somebody that knows you intimately give you God's word so that you can digest it and be shaped by it practically where you're at is invaluable.

Our main avenue right now for additional teaching here at LBC is Sunday school.

The ladies have a Bible study.

We've got a men's breakfast starting up, which I'm excited about.

But yeah, main avenue here is Sunday school where we take a little bit more of an academic approach or kind of practical approach to the scriptures where we're just trying to help teach you, right?

Teach you both the words of the faith, but also doctrine as well.

And we also get together with other believers outside of Sunday through small groups.

Now you'll notice, real quick, we added a self-serve kiosk out there.

Kiosk isn't the right word.

But there's a countertop there.

You can tap your phone on any of the little plastic doohickey signs that are on that countertop if you want more information about baptism, how to become a member, joining a small group, volunteering here.

Was there another one?

Four?

Four, right?

I think we got four out there.

So basically, those will just take you to a little, like, a way to contact us.

Because I know most of us today, especially if you're below a certain age, we don't even like talking to the door dasher, let alone, like, having to walk up to somebody

and say, hey, I would like to have a conversation about X. I know that's scary.

So we tried to remove the scariness there.

You're still going to have to talk to somebody eventually, but you can at least reach out electronically and initiate that conversation through that little kiosk there.

It's out there.

Check it out.

So if you want to know how to get plugged in with a small group, if you want to know more information about Sunday school and stuff like that, that's a good place to start.

But bottom line, so what for the here part, one sermon a week is not gonna cut it, right?

You need more input in your life.

You need more people speaking God's word into your life than just one sermon a month or a week.

Yeah, definitely more than a month.

Hope, moving on.

This is getting too long now.

So I gotta wrap this up.

Hope, what is, you know, training ourselves to hope in God's commands and God's promises.

What does that look like?

Well, it looks like training yourself, right?

Engaging in the spiritual disciplines, reading your Bible.

You gotta know God's promises if you're gonna hope in them, right?

You can't hope in something you don't know.

So reading God's word, learning about who he is and what he's promised to us, communicating with him in prayer, through fasting even.

We don't talk about fasting a ton because it's a very individual thing, especially in the New Testament, and you're supposed to kind of do it in secret.

But fasting is an important way

of an important prescribed way of self-denial, of communicating with God and hearing from God.

So schedule time, right?

Get on a reading plan.

Be disciplined about it.

It can slip into legalism if you

If you begin to go at this with the mentality that this is gonna make God happy with me, like God's gonna be more for me and less against me if I do these things, that's legalism.

We're not reading our Bible, we're not praying, we're not fasting to make God happy with us.

He's already happy with us because of what Christ has done.

But that doesn't mean that discipline and working at knowing God more, seeing God more clearly, beholding more of his and experiencing more of his beauty and his grace, that doesn't mean that discipline doesn't help us in that endeavor, right?

We want to spend more time in his word, know his promises, and communicate with him about the promises that he's given us.

Getting your hope off of the junk food, of social media, of politics, or the shallow amusement of just everyday TV, everything we try to amuse ourselves with, and fixing our hope on the deep, soul-satisfying Savior Jesus.

That's what we're called to discipline ourselves in on a daily basis.

And then lastly, help.

You know, eating right is a crucial first step, but it's not everything, right?

Just taking in God's word and his promises, but never putting them into action, never flexing those spiritual muscles is, you know,

Taking in without working out, as we all know, if you just ate a bunch of creatine powder, you'd blow up like a balloon.

You've got to also work out, right?

So we've got to live in obedience and be used by God to help others.

We hope in God with our time.

So remember, hoping with our God, not just with our feelings, not just with our thoughts, but also hoping in God with our actions.

We can hope in God with our time by investing time to be trained and fed, yes, but also by making time for

people within the church that need help or need maybe someone to talk to, or making time for people outside of the church and sharing the love of Christ with them.

We also hope in God with our physical and emotional energy by being invested in people's lives and helping to bear their physical and emotional burdens.

We hope in God with our money.

You know, the regular discipline of giving a portion of your income away is crucial to spiritual health.

Greed is insidious.

It's kind of like the silent killer.

It's almost unnoticeable in our lives, especially to yourself.

And regularly and generously giving that away, especially to things that God calls us to give our money away to, reinforces the fact that money is not my safety net.

Money is not my worth.

Money is not my hope.

My hope is in God, and he's more valuable than living at the highest standard

I could possibly live at.

Physical training is of some value, but godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we just pray that as we look at

ways to maximize our joy and our satisfaction in you, Lord, that we would not slip back into the old ways of trying to earn your love and your approval.

Lord, we know that we all have different personalities and we tend to one way or the other to either be selfish

super self-disciplined as an attempt to control our lives, to manipulate others around us, even you, Lord, to make you happy with us and put you in our debt because we've done so much for you or we've been so devoted to you.

Or Lord, we just go off the other end and do whatever we want because we see no value in it.

But Lord, I pray that we would see tremendous value in you

we would see your beauty and your glory, and Lord, that we would want to be on board with that.

And Lord, that you would just use the beauty of what you've done in Jesus to motivate us to willingly give up all of the other distractions,

to give up all of the things that can get in the way, like an athlete training for the Olympics, Lord, and that we would fix our eyes totally on you, knowing that these things that we often center our lives around are fleeting, they're temporary, they don't satisfy.

Only you satisfy, Lord.

So would you help us to be intentional and disciplined in our walk with you, seeking you above everything else, knowing that there's a joy and there's a satisfaction in you that is unlike any other, Lord, not just for this life, but also the life to come.

Pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.