



**THE SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS MONTHLY JOURNAL
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Give thanks and praise to the Lord always, for He is our guiding light.

He is our shining star, in the midst of a world of trouble and darkness.

The Lord has come to save the world from sin and eternal destruction.

The Lord will always look out for His flock, for He is my shepherd.

Matthew 7:7-8 Ask an it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be open to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be open.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS

By Dennis A. Palma

Have you ever tried getting into shape, and then had to stop? Once you stop, your body seems to get out of shape real fast.

For some strange reason, staying in good shape takes a lot of hard work. It seems once you get started working out on a regular basis, you start to feel a sense of getting in better shape!

It's a great feeling once you reach a point of working out at least 3 to 4 days a week steady. You can feel the difference in your complete self at that point. Once your body gets use to this regular conditioning, it won't settle for anything less than a regular steady schedule of exercise.

As you get older it becomes even more important to not only getting a structured regimented exercise program, but also keeping a watchful eye on what you put in your mouth.

The word watchful eye, is the key word to staying committed. Every time we slip and fall back out of shape, is do to an unwatchful eye.

It is the same thing , with regards to our personal spirituality.

In order to stay spiritually fit, we must also keep a watchful eye continuously on our spiritual fitness.

One blink of an eye, and the Devil is starting to make his move spiritually, to seek and destroy our spiritual souls wherever and whenever, the opportunity presents itself.

It really only takes a blink of an eye, for things to start changing! It is the same thing when you stop working out, it is only several days of not working out, and your body is starting to get out of shape again.

The same holds true with our diets. It only takes a couple of days of not keeping a watchful eye on our diets, and our bodies start to go into a tail spin. We start spiraling our of control and it seems like we are on our way back to where we were before, back in that rut again.

Whether it is spiritual or physical with respect to our existence, it requires a lot of fortitude and ongoing maintenance.

We are constantly looking for an easy way out, but there really is none.

The mind is always searching for a new way or approach, when it comes to both spiritual and physical fitness. The Devil always likes to put a spin and twist on everything especially when it comes to our spiritually. He is the master deceiver, and the Lord is the master reliever. Jesus said in Mark 13:5 "Watch out that no one deceives you.

Romans 16:8 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naïve people.

In the New Testament, the word most closely associated with deceit is *planao*, which means to lead astray by words or behavior.

Against this background the New Testament command, Colossians 3 :9 says, “ Do not lie to each other “ becomes far more complex than it first appears. God’s people are to eliminate any words or actions that paint a false portrait of reality, or are intended to mislead and thus to harm others. John spares no words in condemning false teachers, 2 John :7 “ Who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

Satan, who seeks to mislead and harm humanity, in John 8:44 is called “ a liar and the father of lies “

Just take a good look around and see all the lost souls that the Devil has already destroyed. The numbers are stagnating to say the least.

In contrast, God is always open and honest with us and seeks our good. We must be just as open and honest with others.

Getting back on the topic of spiritual fitness: In order to stay focused on our spirituality, we must first ask God to help us stay focused on Him. The best way I find to stay focused on our heavenly power is a basic three step plan. First, ask for God’s help to read and understand the Bible. Try and read at least 3 chapters every day. Second, finding time for prayer with whatever free time you have in a day. Always start your day on your knees in prayers of thanks, praise, and offering up your daily petitions to the Lord. Prayer is such an important part of our daily spiritual fitness program, without it I believe that it would be impossible to know our Father’s will. Third, find a good Church to fellowship regularly, in your local community. Make sure before you get to comfortable, that it is a Christ centered Church.

I am going to leave you with this thought, and a closing prayer.

We can continue to be spiritually out of shape and allow our souls to be devoured up by the Devil who is the master deceiver, or we can insulate ourselves from the Devil’s attacks, with the Lord’s words. Let us pray, Heavenly Father we thank You, we praise You, for the opportunity that You have given us to know You personally. Thank You for helping us to stay spiritually fit. Father please watch over your children, and help us to stay spiritually in tune to Your words of wisdom. Also Father help us stay on the narrow course set in place for us, to Eternal Salvation.

I ask this in Jesus nameAmen.

MAYS EDITION OF HOPE FOR LIVING

Shining Lights

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may glorify your Father in heaven

Our Lord regarded His followers as a select company who belonged to a different world from the rest of humanity. Many of the religious people of His day were worldly and unspiritual, publicly parading their religion to impress others while privately dominated by pride, ambition, greed, and falsehood.

Jesus said to His disciples they could not make their light shine by sinking to the world's low level. It was only by abiding in Christ and living under the ruling power of His Holy Spirit that they could rise above the world. Only in that way could they be salt and light to a decaying and darkened world.

Our influence on society depends on our likeness to Jesus Christ. We cannot elevate others higher than we ourselves have gone. The first century Christians out-thought, out-lived, out-loved their neighbors, and by their example of purity and compassion attracted countless thousands to the Christian faith.

**What do others see in your life that would attract them to Christ?
.....Billy Graham**

Spiritual Cliché for the month of May

Proverbs 10: 11 The mouth of the righteous is the fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked

Special Prayer intentions for the sick

**John Sotile Vera Achinco Anne Palma Janet Neil Harry Neil
Anthony Palma Jr Sarah Jones K. C. Jackie Ferrell Debbie Danino**

The Spiritual Connection can be reached at :

Office Number (609) 704-8547

Fax Number (609) 704-9408