

IN HIS
Image
CHALLENGE

— SojoACADEMY —

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In His Image Challenge

7-DAY BIBLE READING PLAN

Day One 1 Timothy 4:7-9

Day Two 1 Corinthians 9:25

Day Three 1 Corinthians 15:10

Day Four Romans 12:1-2

Day Five Isaiah 40:29-31

Day Six Psalm 28:7

BONUS 3 John 1:2-4

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Introduction:

You were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This means that you are a reflection of the Creator of the Universe! In other words, you have the ability to reflect the Lord's own holy character. How cool is that?

But wait... because you were born a sinner, you were separated from the righteous God. How can you fulfill this image bearing potential that you were given when you deserve His wrath?

Through Christ! Because of Christ's work on the cross, when you trust in Him, you trade in your sin. And in exchange, he gives you His righteousness! Scandalous!

When you do this, you truly reflect God, becoming a representation of Him to an onlooking world. What a responsibility. What a joy. What a privilege.

While it's true that your physical body is not really involved in this beautiful Great Exchange, it was created when you were and God says it was good (Genesis 1:31). It is, of course, part of you! As such, it was bought with the price mentioned above, along with the rest of you.

And the Bible says that it is not your own (1 Cor 6:19-20).

If I'm taking care of something valuable that does not belong to me, you'd better believe I'm going to treat it with utmost respect. If I borrow someone else's car, I drive a bit slower. If I am visiting someone else's home

IN HIS IMAGE

with my kids, I'm a bit more vigilant of their every move.

How then should we treat our bodies? We've established that Christ paid for them with His life. He has allowed us to stand before a holy God clean and pure because of His righteousness. And He demands our worship in ALL things... including how we live and treat our bodies.

Let's explore ways to do this.

Pray with me that God will show you the truth from His Word, and transform you as you study it and make a plan for better physical health.

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Glorify God in Your Body

1. Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. You do not want to take this verse out of context and yes, it's referring to sexual sin primarily, but how can you translate this into other sins we commit against our bodies (like consistent unhealthy eating or laziness).

2. Read 1 Corinthians 10:23-33, focusing on verse 31. Again, do not take this out of context. What is the primary focus of this passage?

IN HIS IMAGE

How can it apply to our discussion on caring for our physical bodies?

3. Write out your current excuses for not eating more healthy.

IN HIS IMAGE

4. Write out your current excuses for not exercising appropriately (this can mean anything from training for a marathon or being consistent with your physical therapy).

5. Write out your current excuses for not getting 8-9 hours of sleep each night.

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6. Read Psalm 121:1-2, Philippians 4:13, Psalm 18:2, Ephesians 2:10. What is the common theme?

What does this mean for you?

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7. List practical ways you can overcome the obstacles you listed above that are preventing you from taking better care of your body.

8. And as we are studying our care for our bodies, let's never lose sight of this important truth. Read 1 Timothy 4:6-10. What does verse 8 say about "bodily training"?

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What does it say about godliness?

What are your reflections on this comparison?

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Discover Your Why

We've talked about one very important reason for caring for your physical body.

Worship!

And honestly, this is all we should need. God created us. He gave us a body. We should offer thanksgiving and praise for His gift and wisdom and love!

But, there are more reasons to focus on your health as well.

Write down at least three other "WHYS" that YOU HAVE for this challenge.

These could be a specific health benefit, an increased energy level to chase kids or grandkids, a better relationship with your spouse, a good example for your family... anything that you find important and think would improve with your good stewardship in this area.

(note: the desire to "look better" is not enough... think deeper)

1. GLORIFY GOD

2.

3.

4.

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Make a Plan

Although diet, exercise and sleep are three very important aspects to your improved (and continued) physical health, here are actually two other major components to consider as well.

Now it's time to get down to business.

Choose ONE (and only ONE) of these categories to focus on for the next 30 days. Once you have made some considerable improvements in that area, choose another one to add to it.

There are probably some things on this list that you are already doing well. If that is the case, I challenge you to look deeper and see that there is always room for improvement.

Once you have chosen your ONE focus for this month, put a checkmark next to it and print out the corresponding card. There is room on each card to add your own goals at the bottom (feel free to add the things you wrote in #7 above there). Put that card somewhere you will see it daily!

_____ **Eat more healthy** (goal of ½ of your plate filled with fresh fruits or vegetables, limited starches, lean meats and VERY limited concentrated sugars)

_____ **Exercise** (goal of 45 minutes of cardiovascular exercise at least 5-6 times a week, as your health allows)

IN HIS IMAGE

_____ **Drink more water** (goal of ½ of your body weight in ounces each day and no sweet drinks)

_____ **Improve your sleep** (goal of at least 8 hours each night at the appropriate times)

_____ **Limit screen time** (goal of less than 2 hours of recreational use a day... including phone screens)

NOTE: consult your physician before starting any change in diet or exercise if you have any health issues that can be affected by it.

Diet

1. I will plan my meals in advance whenever possible.
2. I will limit my starches and carbohydrates to LESS THAN $\frac{1}{4}$ of my total meals and try to choose complex carbs over simple (oatmeal, sweet potatoes, etc).
3. I will eat only lean meats that are not fried.
4. I will fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of my plate with fruits and/or vegetables.
5. I will slowly start cutting out processed and concentrated sugars (think cookies, snack cakes, candy), as well as artificial sweeteners. (note: give yourself some room to "cheat", but don't completely derail)
6. I will choose healthy snack options (like almonds instead of chips)
7. I will watch for and follow my hunger and satiation cues to avoid overeating.
8. I will avoid eating out, especially fast food, when possible.
9. I will have grace for myself when I inevitably stumble at these things and start again tomorrow.

Exercise

1. I will schedule my exercise into my planner.
2. I will commit to 30-45 minutes of cardiovascular exercise at least 5 times per week (as my doctor allows).
3. I will lift LIGHT weights (hand weights or even soup cans) 3 times a week to strengthen my muscles.
4. I will not do more than I am allowed for medical reasons, but will not let my physical limitations keep me from moving as I can.
5. I will listen to my body and push myself without overdoing it.
6. I will get my family involved in my exercise program when possible.
7. I will find an accountability partner in doing this.

Water

1. I will set a goal of $\frac{1}{2}$ of my body weight in water each day. (for example, if I weigh 160 lbs, my goal is 80 oz of water a day, or approximately four 20 oz bottles of water a day)
2. I will avoid artificial sweeteners in my water.
3. I will track my water intake.
4. I will drink my first 10-20 oz first thing in the morning... before my coffee.
5. I will avoid all sugar drinks, including those with artificial sweeteners (like Diet Coke or coffee creamers).

Sleep

1. I will commit to going to bed at a reasonable time allowing for at least 8 hours of sleep when at all possible.
2. I will go to bed and wake at consistent times when possible, even on the weekends.
3. I will remove all devices with an LCD screen from my room (or turn them completely off) 30 minutes to one hour before "bedtime" to encourage more healthy sleep.
4. I will avoid caffeine and alcohol in the evening hours.
5. I will avoid eating (large amounts) late at night.
6. I will avoid daytime naps and if taken, limit to 30 minutes early in the day.
7. I will attempt to get at least 2 hours of sunlight or bright light exposure during the day to enhance my body's circadian rhythm.
8. I will keep the room where I sleep as clutter and stress free as possible.

Screen Time

1. I will commit to limiting my purely recreational time on my phone, tablet, computer or TV to less than 2 hours per day. (think games, FB/IG scrolling, surveys, shows and fluff articles)
2. I will track this for 1 week in an effort to see where this can be cut.
3. I will turn off all screens 30 minutes to 1 hour before bed.
4. I will turn off all screens during family meal times.
5. I will avoid keeping the TV on for "background noise".

Conclusion

You are a special person, who was created by a good and loving God.

He cares most for the state of your soul and desires a personal relationship with you.

However, you were also given a physical body to care for and steward. Doing this is an act of worship and is pleasing to God.

Taking steps towards improved health is not easy. In fact, it is often very difficult. But you don't have to muster up all the "willpower" yourself. Spoiler: you probably don't have it in you.

You do, however, have the strength of the Almighty God living in you when you are in Christ... not only to fight sin, but to fight these bad habits that are preventing you from the worship required of you.

Let's link arms, trust God, and care for the gifts we have been given while running the race toward an eternity with our Father.

