

A strong core muscle group helps with balance, flexibility and posture, reducing the risk of injury.

Just as a strong core muscle group is important to long term health and stability, so too is a strong spiritual core.

STRENGTHENING OUR SPIRITUAL CORE

The repetitive practising of spiritual disciplines will develop our spiritual core. This will contribute to our long-term spiritual health and stability.

Spiritual disciplines: regular Bible reading, study and application, prayer, fasting, giving, serving, witnessing, fellowshiping, regular church and group attendance, reflection etc.

Practising spiritual disciplines creates spiritual muscle memory. EG: Memorising Scripture.

Paul says to the Corinthians that no one will ever get anywhere without self-discipline and self-control.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (niv) Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it

to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

The Christian life is a journey of self-denial and self-control, known as discipleship - becoming Christlike, with the goal of entering eternity with Christ.

Discipleship is the process of knowing Jesus more, obeying Him more and imitating Him more in our attitudes and behaviour, through a lifelong training program of spiritual disciplines.

Jesus said to His disciples, “...*whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.*” **Luke 9:23** (niv)

To *take up your cross* meant to literally carry one's cross to the place of your crucifixion.

To be followers of Jesus will require daily decisions to give up our selfish way of living and to please Jesus.

Paul said ^{27a} ...*I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave...*

Our discipleship journey will finish when we cross the finish line here on earth and receive our *crown that will last forever* in eternity with Christ.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. **John 3:16** (niv)*

As Christians we are running the race of discipleship toward our heavenly reward.



Strengthening our Spiritual Core has long term benefits.

Spiritual disciplines equip us to run with stamina and purpose.

Paul challenges the Corinthians that no one will ever get anywhere without self discipline.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (niv) Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.

The athlete undergoes intense self-discipline to win a crown that within days will wither and die.

^{25b} ...they do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

The goal in the race of discipleship is to run into eternity to receive our crown of victory that will last forever and not to limp across the line or fall short of the finish line!

1 Corinthians 9:26-27 (msg) I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No lazy living for me! ²⁷ I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.

Do we desire to be purposeful in our journey of discipleship and relationship with Jesus, to ultimately run across the finish line and to receive our crown of victory.

Question: Are you willing to invest fully in being a committed follower of Jesus?

Personal Reflection

Evaluating my Spiritual Disciplines.

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	(circle)
(poor)				(average)					(good)			

The one thing I can focus on in 2025 is to...

- Increase my Bible reading, study and application.
- Increase my prayer life.
- Introduce fasting with prayer into my life.
- Be regular in giving my tithe back to the Lord.
- Give to Missions over and above my tithe.
- Volunteer my time to serve in our church.
- Be more intentional in sharing Jesus with others.
- Be more regular in attending Sunday services.
- Commit to attend a connect group.
- Take regular time to reflect on my spiritual walk and relationships.
- Other _____