

# SPIRITUAL FITNESS CHALLENGE...

## HOW SPIRITUALLY "FIT" ARE YOU AND HOW DO YOU KNOW?

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP AND MEASURE YOUR OWN SPIRITUALGROWTH?  
HOW ARE YOU DOING WITH GOD? ARE YOU ON GOOD TERMS OR IS GOD  
SOMETHING/SOMEONE ELSE TO FIT INTO YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU CAN?

## HOW ARE YOU GOING TO STRETCH YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY?

"Love the Lord your God with all your **heart, soul, mind and strength**  
(**spirit, feeling, thinking, physical body**)... Love your neighbour as yourself"

*Matthew 22:37-39*

**Read through the questions in this booklet and highlight the ones which disturb you, annoy you, excite you, challenge you etc the most.**

What is it that makes you feel that way?

What do you think God might want to communicate to you through this?

What leaps out to you as an area of need, change, growth...?

Which area of spiritual growth/fitness/discipline do you *want* to concentrate on?

## What is your attitude to this... ?

Having already been challenged to read Bible notes, be part of a small group within the church and having heard that God wants to speak to you, what is your response?

Does it matter to you that God wants your attention?

Are you bothered about hearing from God? How are you demonstrating this?

What does it feel like to be challenged over these details of your spiritual life?

Is this uncomfortable to you? Why? What is God saying through it?

Are you insisting God comes to you or are you going to him?

Are you arrogant in God's eyes or humble?

Do you expect him to do things for you on your terms and make demands of him?

Is your attitude "If he wants me he should come and get me" or are you conscientiously seeking to "live a life worthy of the calling you have received"?

How can you change your attitude if you need to?

## Are you hungry for God?

Have you had so much "on a plate" that you have got filled up on the junk food surrounding God and missed the key nutritious bit of the meal before you? Are you desperately

hungry for the things of God or do you feel like you could "take it or leave it"?

How hungry are you to hear God, see miracles, obey and see what happens, step out in faith to do something you've never done before...?

How hungry are you for spiritual growth in your own life? What will you do about it?

Can you commit to taking an action? eg, offering to pray with people, going in a mission, speaking in church, giving a testimony?

## Is Jesus Lord? Is seeking/pleasing God a priority?

How are you doing in regard to the first commandment?

What does it mean to you to "seek first the Kingdom of God"?

Do you have other "gods" before him? Who is "Lord" of your life?

*Yes, God has given you personal sovereignty to make choices, be a wise steward and enjoy every blessing but "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded"* **Luke 12:48**

## How much does it cost you to follow Jesus?

How much does your walk with God cost you really?

What are you willing to give up?

What are you willing to start/take up?

*Salvation is a free gift but being a real disciple and following Jesus comes at a cost – "take up your cross and follow me" "whoever loves God will be persecuted" "If they hate me, they'll hate you" Doesn't sound like a pleasant "let's be nice good people" kind of a faith but a gritty, determined, challenging one. Let's up the level of challenge. If you think it's too much effort and hassle to even read a bit of a Bible study guide or pray for more than 5 minutes a day, ask yourself if you have truly grasped what it means to be a Christian.*

## How are you using your time?

Probably studying, definitely socializing, pursuing hobbies/sports/own interests

How much time do you actively give to God on a daily/weekly basis? (ie not just "God is always with me" but devotional time, time set aside regularly for word, worship prayer etc)

Is how you spend your time all about the pursuit of pleasure/self satisfaction?

If something doesn't suit you/is an inconvenience to you, does it mean it is not from God?

**Are you seeing life unfold like it did in the Bible with all those miracles and amazing things happening? Are you doing the same things Jesus did?**

*God can't deliver you from a den of lions unless you're **in** a den of lions.*

*If you're never around the dead you'll never see the dead raised but who wants to hang around where there's death?! To walk on water you have to get out of the boat!*

*God doesn't provide supernatural manna from heaven unless there is no food.*

***This does not mean we should recklessly put ourselves in danger and trouble just so God can get us out supernaturally but it does mean that we are blessed! It also means we may need to get out of our comfort zones when God says so and learn to really depend on him. Then we'll see miracles!***

***Until we are in a position of dependency on God we'll never need him to do something supernatural or "amazing".***

Who said that seeing and doing what Jesus did would be nice for **you**?

Are you prepared to look silly, take a risk, make a mistake, feel uncomfortable?

Have you ever had to really depend on God for anything? What? When?

Have you ever stepped out in faith to pray for something/someone even if it costs you you're pride, takes courage, takes more time than you want it to?

When have you "stepped out of the boat"? What happened?

What is the hardest price for you to pay? Being laughed at? Being stereotyped? Time?

How do you share the good news with people? Do you?

Do you lay hands on sick people and pray for their healing?

Have you ever confronted and cast out demons/ungodly spiritual strongholds? How?

What will you do to be further equipped in discernment/spiritual warfare?

Have you ever stepped out into a situation where only God's supernatural intervention will meet a need?

*That's a scary place to be in. But if you're hungry to see God do those things you better be willing to make yourself uncomfortable and dependant on him not yourself. Don't assume that if God doesn't seem to answer straight away, or in a different way than which you'd hoped, that he's not at work. Don't give up the first time "nothing happens". Perhaps God is working behind the scenes. However, if God has given you the resources within yourself to do a certain thing, praise him and thank him for it. God works through many means and we need to celebrate his work both through us and through his own supernatural intervention.*

### Have you grasped what the gospel means?

Do you realize how powerful the love and forgiveness of God is?

*It is easy to forget that without Christ we would be "dead in sin" and subject to God's wrath. You may never have been a murderer, thief, liar, adulterer etc but how valuable is it that God has removed **any** and **every** offense between you?*

Have you grasped the significance of this?

Do you recognize just what God did by sending Jesus?

Have you acknowledged his sacrifice?

How does it affect your life?

"Those who have been forgiven much love much"

### What are you doing with your freedom?

You are free. You are not persecuted.

Are you taking this freedom for granted and assuming it is merely for your own comfort?

Have you considered **why** God has blessed you with all that you have – your intellectual capacity and education, relative wealth, your health and fitness, your talents, skills and abilities, your opportunities etc? Do you see "comfort" as your right or a privilege?

*These things are easy to take for granted and it is easy to assume that those things are the consequences of good choices, background, "chance", the "potluck" of being born where you were but actually God has chosen and/or allowed you to be amongst the most privileged people in the world. What for?*

**Deuteronomy 8:1-20** A word for kiwis!? I see a land of huge blessing here, great opportunity, relative safety and great people. To some extent, the Scottish/English/European settlers may feel like the Israelites – "we have done this" but it is important to see that God gave the calling, opportunity and abilities in the first place. How is your humility/thanksgiving/pride? New Zealand has it easy. The land is fertile, the scenery is stunning, the ingenuity is great. But the self-sufficiency seems to have led people to independence from God rather than gratefulness to him.

"Trouble" is often God's way of getting attention, showing his love and kindness, drawing people to himself through times of crisis but often we see "disaster" or hardship as punishment or the wrath of God, and blame and accuse him, or run further away from him saying "he's cruel and unloving..." How about seeing hardship as an opportunity from God to overcome, serve, show his love, see him bringing us closer to himself in prayer and crying out to him?

Perhaps the reason we don't see miracles much is because we are too blessed to need them! God doesn't need to move in supernaturally heal people who are already fit, healthy and well. But do you see those things as the blessing of God and praise him for it? Or do you just moan about God not doing anything and feel disappointed about it? Perhaps it's time to change our perspective. Start thanking God, and rejoice in the fact that you don't need him to provide manna from heaven or water from a rock. You are already walking in the blessing of God. If a miracle is evidence of God's existence and his kingdom at work, be grateful that you already have abundant evidence of his love and blessing in your life. Stop whining and start praising!

Also, perhaps we need to think about the privileges we have as a means to serve others not ourselves. We often only look to meeting our own needs, wants and desires but since we already have relative material comfort, education, health etc as well as "everything we need for life and godliness" we will only find fulfillment and satisfaction in looking beyond ourselves.

**1 Timothy 4:8 - "For physical training is of some value but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come"**

# SPIRITUAL GROWTH CHALLENGES...

## TICK THE THINGS YOU WANT TO WORK ON for the next three months

- I will make it a priority to grow in spiritual understanding and maturity.
- I will keep asking for God's help and submitting to Him in all aspects of my life according to Proverbs 3:5-6
- I will consistently pray for revelation and that my spiritual life and capacity will increase, according to Eph 1: 17-20.
- If I am not yet a Christian I will get some help to understand how I can know God. Who?
- I want to be filled with the Spirit and learn how to be led by the Holy Spirit, so I will seek God consistently for this and ask for prayer.
- I will ask the Holy Spirit for spiritual gifts and help to grow in my use of them.
- I will have found a church that I consistently attend.
- I will consistently attend a small group. When and where...
- I will develop my ability to read and be satisfied with God's word.
- I will follow the notebook readings on Ephesians.
- I will find a way to read the Bible that is meaningful to my personality and learning style.
- I will find a way to pray that is consistent and meaningful for me.
- I will make it a priority to learn how to hear God speaking to me.
- I will have a greater consistency in the time I spend with God to develop my relationship with Him. I will do this by:
- I will reflect on the attitudes of my life and address areas of weakness, unforgiveness and temptation.
- I will develop ways in which my life expresses an attitude of worship to God.
- I will have developed/grown in spiritual disciplines: eg fasting, thanksgiving, worship, intercession.
- I will read and learn about the discipline of:
- I will engage in this discipline by:
- I will be obedient to God by:
- I will join a Gel Group to develop my leadership skills and discover how I can serve.
- I will pray for people when the Holy Spirit prompts me to.
- I will grow in my capacity to share the Good News with my friends.
- I will pray for and seek after these opportunities.
- I will learn how to do this.
- I will commit to serving God in the area of:

List/highlight your five top spiritual aims. Rank them in order of priority.

Set yourself some realistic and measurable goals for these.

- I will make sure I get help in any of the above areas in order to grow.
- I will make myself accountable to:

I will ask myself in the semester break whether I am making progress and review other areas in which I need to grow/develop.

**Read the questions throughout this leaflet and allow God to prompt your responses. Act on them! God can be speaking to you about these issues as you consider them...**

Look at the following areas of SPIRITUAL FITNESS and give yourself a realistic goal/an action to take this semester to grow in each area.  
Or concentrate more on a few specific areas of need. "For physical training of some value but spiritual training is of value for all things"

Some areas of a Christian spiritual life	Challenges, thought-provokers...	Some ideas for training in spiritual fitness in this area. Add your own too!	THE ACTION I WILL TAKE TO GROW IN THIS IS...
<b>WORD</b>	Are you reading, studying, learning, applying the Word of God?	Use the notebooks, follow up from Sunday, Use reading/study notes,	
<b>PRAYER</b>	Are you talking to God? How often?	Set yourself a goal for prayer each day, Keep a prayer diary, mind map Pray and walk daily	
<b>SEEKING TO GOD</b>	What are you seeking God about? Are you listening to God? How?	Journal what God's speaking to you about, Tell someone what you want in God	
<b>THANKS-GIVING/ CELEBRATION</b>	Do you ever give public testimony of what God is doing? Are you grateful to God? For your health, your food, your freedom, your choices, your material blessings? Do you take these things for granted?	Give testimony at church, Thank God in "public" prayer, share what he has done and celebrate, start to pray out loud in a group	
<b>SELF-DISCIPLINE</b>	Have you ever fasted? Can you "give things up" if God says so? Eg TV, junk food, an activity Are you forming good habits that help your spiritual growth?	Try a 24 hour fast and spend each meal time seeking God/reading the word/praying. Have something specific in mind that you want God to respond to	
<b>WORSHIP</b>	Does your life demonstrate that you are someone who not only believes in God but loves him and consciously worships him? How do you worship God? How and when do you give God praise and adoration?	Try and make time in your week, not just on Sundays, to worship God (with or without music) but thank him for who he is, tell him the things you love about him, give him praise. Try using Psalms as a tool for worship - pray a psalm out loud and make it your own prayer	
<b>SPIRITUAL GIFTS</b>	How are you developing your spiritual "fine tuning"? Have you ever asked to be filled with the Holy Spirit and for spiritual gifts/visions/dreams?	Ask for prayer to receive the Holy Spirit, Ask God for spiritual gifts, discernment, wisdom. Step out of the comfort zone and offer to pray for people. Find out about prophecy and ask God to speak.	
<b>PRACTICAL GIFTS</b>	What are they? How are you using them? What can you contribute in church? Are you a leader?	Look at your skills and talents and ask if they can be useful in church/ the community somehow. Join a GEL group to develop leadership skills	
<b>LIFESTYLE</b>	Does your life reflect the moral teaching of the Bible on purity? How is your general attitude towards God, your family, your friends and strangers?	Weigh up your own living. List areas of strength and weakness, temptation etc and pray into them. List what you think are areas of good attitude and bad in yourself. Address them!	
<b>OUTREACH/ MISSION</b>	Have you been on a mission? Are you involved in any outreach?	Consider opportunities that come up. Ask God if he wants you to do anything other than your own plans.	

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