

# FAITHFUL DEPENDENCE

## Series: “7 Spiritually Healthy Habits”

Perth Bible Church Sunday, October 25, 2009 AM

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### INTRODUCTION:

Health sure seems to be a 'hot topic' these days, whether one is talking about insurance, government plans, H1N1, what to eat or not to eat, etc. Just a couple of weeks ago, Rach & I finally bought our much belated B-day gift for one another: Wii Fit. If you're not familiar, this interactive game starts off by having each person enter certain information and take a few tests using the 'balance board.' It then calculates your “Wii Fit” age, which is meant to be a measure of your physical fitness. I was first. My biological age is 39. My Wii Fit age was determined to be 45. Ouch! But it gets worse . . . Rach was next. She's 41, but her Wii Fit age was determined to be 32. I will NEVER live this down!

When you're done laughing at me, think for a moment: what do you think would be *your* Wii Fit age? OR, what if there was such a thing as a “Wii Spiritually Fit”? How well or poorly would each of us rate in our TRUE spiritual fitness and maturity?

We spent several months this year examining 1 Corinthians and what God teaches us about being a healthy and holy Church. For the next 7 weeks, I am going to ask us to consider what Scripture teaches about being a spiritually fit and mature individual. Specifically, each week we will be looking closely at one of “7 Spiritually Healthy Habits.” Better understanding each of these habits will allow each of us to better measure our own spiritual fitness before the LORD. At the same time, it will also provide us with the specific exercises and tools we need to greater and more consistently apply in our lives for greater and sustained individual spiritual fitness.

This morning, we will begin by meditating upon the Habit of Dependence on God.

### SCRIPTURE: PSALM 42:1 - 43:5

### PRAYER

#### I.) DEPENDENCE ON GOD IS **NECESSARY**

- Jackie Mason once quipped: *“It's no longer a question of staying healthy, it's a question of finding a sickness you like.”*
- Someone else remarked: *“My allergy tests suggest that I may have been intended for life on some other planet.”* My source doesn't credit the speaker, but I think it must have been Tom Hobson.
- Even spiritually, in these sin-corrupted bodies living in this sin-infested world, this has a ring of truth. No matter who we are, how long we've been a Christian, what we've done to grow, none of us this side of Glory will ever stay disease-free.

**This means, to be fit, we must have . . .**

## A.) Awareness of **Thirst**

- Psalm 42:1-3, 5
- Matthew 5:3-10
- **Illustration:** Indian Parable – boy searching for God
- **Spiritual thirst is created by . . .**
  - 1.) **Memories** Ps. 42:4,6
    - When we feel weak, incapable, unworthy, or just outnumbered and & we dwell on such things, it dehydrates our spirits and leaves them parched.
    - Remembering and focusing instead on the joy, victory, certainty and strength we have previously had in fellowship with God will remind and reassure us and that only **He** can quench our spiritual thirst.

### 2.) **Isolation** Ps. 42:9

- Sometimes, often when we least feel like it, we need to just separate ourselves from the other voices and get completely alone with God.
- Sinclair Ferguson writes: *“Any major change in our lives can have this effect of making us feel distanced, disoriented, useless, and purposeless in our Christian lives. . . God wants to teach us lessons that we cannot learn in fellowship. In our loneliness and separation, we learn to look to God, trust in God, desire God's presence. We discover that in the past we have relied too much on the encouragement of others and insufficiently on the Lord Himself. While before we knew God (quite legitimately) through the help of our fellow Christians, now we must learn to know Him in isolation from them.”*

(“Spiritual Longing,” *Hearthcry!* Issue 47, Summer 09. Life Action Ministries. Adapted with permission from Grow in Grace, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989.)

## B.) Awareness of **Danger** Ps. 42:3,9; 43:1-2

- In this world and in this flesh, there is danger all around us at all times.
- Sometimes within, sometimes without.
- Our spiritual health and fitness will be determined *not by how much or what kind of danger we encounter, but by how we respond to it.*
- When we feel overwhelmed and in too deep, where will we turn; where will we look for help?
- Our nature is to turn away from God when we no longer easily see or feel Him and instead turn even more to ourselves or others. When we do this, however, we just become that much more vulnerable, that much more spiritually dehydrated and therefore weaker and closer to defeat.
- **Our only True Hope is to depend completely on God, especially when we feel alone in a desert and far from him!**

### But HOW do we find this?

- One man in search of better fitness observed: *“Joined a health club last year, spent \$400. Haven't lost a pound. Apparently, you have to show up.”* (Rich Ceisler)

## II.) DEPENDENCE ON GOD IS **FOUND** IN . . .

### A.) **Faith** Ps. 42:5b, 8, 11b; 43:1-2, 5b

- **Hebrews 11:1**
- The very definition of faith is trusting even when you are not certain, or are afraid, blind, or not feeling very 'lucky.'

### **B.) His Word Ps. 43:3-4**

- Only the Living Water of His Word can quench our spiritual thirst and provide the nutrients we need.
- **Psalm 119:130-131**
- **John 8:12, 31-32**
- Someone once lamented: *“Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon.”* No, it wasn't me although I most certainly agree!
- Not everything we ingest into our physical bodies is because it tastes good or is something we are really craving for. Sometimes it's just because it's good for us.
- In the same way, God's Truth does not always taste good, go down easily, or settle in our stomachs quietly. It's not always what we really crave or want at the moment, but it is what we NEED!

### **C.) Worship Ps. 42:5b, 11b, 43:4-5**

- Illustration: Our spiritual fitness is akin to a rechargeable battery. To be continually useful, 'durable' and 'ever-ready' we must perpetually be drained then filled, drained then filled, drained then filled.
- This is accomplished through a spirit of worship in all that we do!
- **John 4:13-14; 22-24**
- **Romans 12:1-2**

## **GROWING IN HEALTH, GROWING IN DEPENDENCE ON GOD:**

Throughout Scripture our spiritual lives in Christ are described as being parallel to our physical lives. We begin with the traumatic experience of birth in which we are forcibly expelled from the comfort of one kind of life into the unknown of a very different one. The rest of our lives is about transitioning from one stage of development to another. In our childhood, these stage transitions tend to occur quite frequently. However, as we become adults they tend to be fewer and further in between. Some transitions we look forward to, others terrify us.

Some are smooth, others are traumatic. Some we simply step into, others we can only achieve through great and even prolonged struggle. Each has it's own blessings and challenges. EVERY stage is very different from the others and EVERY stage is necessary whether we like it or not – even adolescence!

But they ALL have one common feature: a need for dependence. The nature and perception of our need may change, but it's reality never does! **Without an active dependence on God there is no spiritual growth!**

**We must always be sure that THIS is our lives' greatest thirst, that we remain at all times aware of the danger that is all around us, and we must seek, find and rest in complete dependence upon Christ through Faith, obedience to His Word, and Worship in Spirit and in Truth!**