



you are what you do

Have you ever heard people say, “You are what you eat”? This is true on a very cellular level. In the same way that our physical bodies are made up of the physical things that we consume, our spiritual and social selves are formed by the things we do – the more regular and repeatedly we do things, the greater effect they have on shaping us as a human. Think about physical training for any sport, or maybe the recovery process from an injury. The more you practice and condition yourself to move your body and your muscles in certain ways, the more instinctual those movements become. The idea is that after a time, you don’t even have to think about it. Spiritual practices can be the same way.

As we engage in the practices that make up the Christian life, the more instinctual and responsive the way of Christlike living becomes formed within us. The practice of memorizing scripture, for instance, helps make the truth of the Word become that much more accessible and orienting for our daily lives. Journaling helps us practice self-reflection and mindfulness, etc. Paul uses the analogy of physical training to help illustrate this in the passage we will look at today.

read

1 Corinthians 9:24-27
Acts 17:1-15

reflect & journal

1. In 1 Corinthians, what is Paul encouraging the believers to do? How is his comparison to athletic training applicable to the spiritual life? What specific things do you think Paul is encouraging the believers to do (this verse isn’t very specific, so feel free to use Paul’s words from other passages: Colossians 4:2, Philippians 4:9, etc.)?
2. As you read Acts 17, what comparisons can you make about the Thessalonians and the Bereans? Why do the Bereans earn the title of “more noble”?
3. How do these passages challenge us in our current day to put regular and intentional “practice” into our faith life? In what ways might you be doing this already (i.e., having a regular quiet time, gathering regularly with other believers, etc.)?
4. How might spiritual practices, coupled with the renewing work of the Holy Spirit in our life, work hand-in-hand with each other? How do these passages help us see that joint effort?

pray

- Spend a moment reading Philippians 3:17-21. Use this as a prayer for your own life; a prayer that God would reveal our “practices” that misform us to the patterns of the world.
- That He would reveal examples of faithful practices that will partner with the work God is doing in our own lives to help us resemble Christ.