

Special Forces: Day Nine

Basic Training: Unit Two

Fitness Training

Pain Builds Character

This was a favorite saying of an "A" team operations sergeant I once worked with. I was on his team. We mostly heard it uttered in the middle of rigorous physical training, heavy breathing and lots of sweat, not to mention the body aches. The training was hard, but it was worth it in both physical and mental terms. Our team sergeant was teaching us the art of self-discipline. He was also helping us to learn that this lesson comes with a cost. After we had paid that cost, the result was that we were prepared physically and mentally to handle any mission!

What a contrast between the picture above and the multitude of media commercials advertising great bodies with little or no impact, and certainly no pain in the process! Effortless machines, miracle diets and magic pills, and even electric belts that you wear to stimulate muscle activity while you watch your favorite television program. It must sell, because they keep advertising! What's the goal? A beautiful body for the time being that's eventually going to get old and wrinkled anyway!

Key Verses

"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." 1 Corinthians 9:25 (NIV)

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness for those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:11 (NIV)

When I look at all the 'Christian' programming we have available, I see the same thing at work. It's sad, even tragic, that so often we want our Christianity the same way - no impact. We can hear about salvation without repentance, the love of Jesus without having to admit your true condition as sinners. We can throw God's money away in the direction of those who would tell us how to receive our miracles and how to claim our rights as king's kids. We can shop for churches down the street like we shop for shoes, trying them on until we find the one that fits our chosen lifestyle; one that helps us feel good about ourselves and call it spiritual growth.

So What?

True athletes are the ones who endure the pain and discipline of hard training and maybe even emerge one day in the Olympics. Those athletes know the value of hard training and discipline, whether it's initiated by their coaches or from the wellsprings of internal dedication. It is the same for us as Christians. We can welcome discipline from the Master and hardships on the road of life as valuable lessons on the path to the 'crown that will last forever'.

Now that we have settled the attitude question, we need a coach. I can recommend a great coach - the Bible!

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16,17 (NKJV)

Be encouraged, brothers and sisters! Let God give you the desire to reach for the prize and listen to the coach!