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THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Greetings in the name of the One Living God- the Fountain of Living Waters!

We pray every one of you are experiencing all of the fruits of our fellowship with Father God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

In this month's Living Logos, I have asked Shannon to share a little out of a new class that she will be offering in the near future. We believe the Lord has placed an ingenious idea into Shannon's heart to do a class that teaches the practical parts of experiencing the abundant life such as physical fitness and nutrition while also combining the spiritual component such as personal relationship with God, our thought life, guarding the heart, etc. It is really going to be good and I personally am excited to see how the Lord is going to use this tool to help His children live whole, healthy, and happy lives.

But before Shannon begins her teaching, I wanted to take a moment to update you on Living Logos Ministries and let you know the many great things we are either currently doing or are headed towards...

As we speak, I am in the process of planning my second trip to India where the Lord has opened new doors this year to make a greater impact in this precious nation than we have thus far. It is going to be awesome! I will be doing everything from speaking in Bible Schools, preaching in churches, and teaching in minister's conferences. And what I am most excited about is how the impact that we will make will have a ripple effect... What I mean by that is by spending such a concentrated amount of time instructing the pastors, evangelists, and future leaders of this nation, we will essentially be ministering to all of those that they minister to as well. This will occur as they take the messages they have heard and spread them throughout their arenas of influence. Praise God!

We are also a regular contributor in a monthly publication in India that reaches over 5,000 churches. That means that our teachings are reaching easily over 50,000 people and potentially over 100,000 throughout India. We continue to increase in our contacts there as many different ministers and other Christians contact us requesting new materials. I stand amazed at how quickly our influence has spread there!

As for here in the United States, we are seeing increase as well...

We are also regular contributors in a bi-monthly Christian magazine called the "Church Connection" and regularly get responses from people who read my articles. It has been a great opportunity to spread the good news here in Georgia and a door we are joyfully walking through.

Of course, we are still sharing the Word of God wherever the opportunities arise which include various gatherings and events, the Tuesday night prayer and Bible Study which has continued for over three years now, and our Sunday Afternoon Fellowship- which, I might add, is growing and developing a strong core group who are on board with our vision and are hungry for the Words of the Living God. We are excited about what God has in store for the middle Georgia area and we believe God has placed us here for such a time as this to be a part of His mighty move.

There are also many other things that we have been doing as well as are working towards implementing in the near future, but we are excited about the future of Living Logos Ministries and are thankful for all of our partners out there who make all of this possible. So a big “THANK YOU” to all of you who support us and sow so faithfully and graciously into our ministry! All the glory belongs to Him, but the fact remains that He uses people like you and I to bring His will to pass! So again, thank you for being His vessel!

So without any further ado’ here is Shannon...

THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Noah Webster’s dictionary defines a habit as “a disposition of the mind or body acquired by custom or a frequent repetition of the same act. Habit is that which is held or retained, the effect of custom or frequent repetition. Hence we speak of good and bad habits.”

Putting God first is the most important habit we can develop because this one thing lays the groundwork for every other habit we want to cultivate. Matthew 6:33 in the Amplified Bible reads, “But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides.”

God is so good all the time and He desires to see His plan and purpose come to pass in your life. I once heard Joyce Meyer say, “When you know in your heart that God has a plan for you and wants you to be His agent of change in the world around you, all of a sudden the motivation to do the right thing comes from the Holy Spirit in our hearts.” As true as this is, it is difficult to focus on God’s plan for you when your body is not in the shape it needs to be in to be that agent of change that God desires for you to be.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own. You were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own]. So then, honor God and bring glory to Him in your body.” With that being said, I’d like to share a personal testimony with you.

When we lived in Colorado, we were in a season of many “firsts”- marriage, baby, not being in the South, where we were both born and raised. I can “Amen” the phrase, “American by birth, Southern by the grace of God!” Because we were newlyweds, first-time parents, full-time students (Trey at Charis Bible College and myself at wife and motherhood), as joyous as it was, all the life changes at once were quite challenging. Because of the demands on time, neither one of us made healthy eating and exercise a priority. If it wasn’t frozen, caffeinated or loaded with sugar, it wasn’t in our house.

I personally felt like I was in survival mode. I can speak from personal experience when I say that existence is not the life that Jesus came to give us. John 10:10 says, “I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).” God didn’t give His all so we could do things “halfway.” God wants us loving Him with our whole hearts, and so

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much of this is simply seeing ourselves the way He sees us.

I recently saw a friend of mine and she had lost a tremendous amount of weight. I asked her, "Did you focus more on fitness or nutrition to lose your weight?" She answered, "I changed the image on the inside of me." Wow! She began seeing herself the way God sees her- not the way she saw herself, not the way others saw her, but simply the way her Creator looks at her. That is so powerful!

I am happy to report that Trey and I have since changed our ways and we're now taking care of these bodies that God has given us. Hebrews 12:1-2 reads, "Therefore, then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who have borne testimony to the Truth], let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us, Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Here is the point that I really want you to get: Time is short and we have a race to run. If we are not seeing our bodies as the temples of the Holy Spirit that they are, then we will not treat them accordingly. If we feel there is something we HAVE to have daily (a certain food or drink, for example), or else we won't be able to make it through the day, we have become a slave to that very thing. "Everything is lawful for me, but I will not become the slave of anything or be brought under its power." (1 Corinthians 6:12)

In Gary Thomas' book, "Every Body Matters," he states, "The goal in this pursuit is not sculpting thinner or more athletic-looking bodies. The goal is to cultivate stronger, well-nourished bodies that are primed to become, in the words of the apostle Paul, 'instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.' By looking at your body as an instrument rather than an ornament, you'll find new and compelling motivation to embrace the kind of active lifestyle that fortifies your soul." Begin today treating your body as what it truly is- the abiding place of the Holy Spirit!

I would now like to share with you some practical tips for getting started in uprooting the bad habits and cultivating good habits.

WALKING WITH GOD

As I made the point earlier, no habit is more important than the habit of putting God first. Jesus had a habit of spending time with His Heavenly Father. If it was a habit for Him, then why would we not make it a habit?

When I was single, I so looked forward to the weekends. I would sit on my couch for hours and just spend time in the Word. It was wonderful! I discovered rather quickly when I got married and had Levi that those days were as good as gone! There are times I believe that because we cannot do things the way we once could, we cease from doing them at all. Often times we just have to

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get creative and think of a more time-efficient way of doing something. For example, I cannot sit for hours on end like I used to and spend time with God, but I can go for a walk and praise and worship Him during that time or listen to a teaching tape or just simply talk with Him.

You can edify your spirit while edifying your body. Take a look at a few of the health benefits of walking. Walking fends off heart attacks and strokes, reduces your chances of diabetes, slims you down, keeps you sharp mentally, reduces stress, boosts your immune system, and keeps you going- walking has the highest compliance rate of any exercise. After hearing these benefits, who wouldn't want to start a walking program?

Joyce Meyer says, "Your body only has the ability to love what you let it get used to." So make the time each day to take care of your spirit and your body, and walking is a way you can do both. You can walk and listen to the Word. You can walk and pray in other tongues. My brothers and sisters, you can walk and walk with God.

OUR THOUGHT LIFE

If we only do what we feel like doing, we will feel worse, but if we do what we know to do, we will feel better. Joyce Meyer puts it this way- "Choose to do the right thing and your feelings will catch up with the decision you make."

Did you know the Bible even tells us what to think about? Philippians 4:8 says, "Whatever is true, whatever is worthy of reverence and is honorable and seemly, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely and lovable, whatever is kind and winsome and gracious, if there is any virtue and excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on and weigh and take account of these things [fix your minds on them]."

Trey and I don't ever watch the news. I've had people ask, "How do you know what is going on in the world?" My response is, "I don't want to know. Besides, if it is that important, I am sure somebody will call and let us know about it." We are living in perilous times. I don't need a television to tell me that. I have the Word of God that tells me what will be taking place in the last days, and it is happening exactly as God said it would. No surprises here!

We, however, are to "not be conformed to this world (this age), fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for You]."

Proverbs 23:7 reads, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." The way that you think is the way your life is going to go. Begin today meditating on the Word of God. Think continually about the love of God, His goodness, His mercy, His grace, and His undeserved favor to and for you- His Beloved.

The following is an excerpt from a minister named Graham Cooke- "The Lord says there is nothing you can do that would make Him love you more. There is also nothing you can do to make Him love you less. He loves you because He loves you, because He loves you, because He

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loves you, because He loves you, because that is what He is like. It is His nature to love, and you will always be the Beloved. 'I love you as you are, so be loved. You are the Beloved. It is your job,' says the Lord, 'to be loved outrageously. It is why I chose you. That is why I set my love upon you, that you would live as one who is outrageously loved, that you would receive a radical love, so radical that it will blow all your paradigms of what you think love is. And know this,' says the Lord, 'I will love you outrageously all the days of your life because I don't know how to be any different. This is who I am, and this is who I will always be. This is the I Am I promised you. I am He that loves you outrageously.'"

If you have never read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a in the Amplified Bible, I would encourage you to do so. I used to think, after reading this passage of Scripture, "How can I walk in love like that?" Anytime the focus gets on us, the focus is in the wrong place. Focus on God. Look unto Jesus and love will manifest in your life.

Choose to focus on how much God loves you. The greatness of His love will always be enough. We can (and should be) choosing what we think about. We can think on the things the Word tells us to and be full of joy and peace or we can think on the things of the world and be anxious and confused. God gave us the power of choice. Joshua 24:15 says, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." We can choose life (those thoughts that line up with the Word or we can choose death (those thoughts that line up with the world). Either way, it's our choice. Choose wisely!

NUTRITION

Speaking of your thought life, how do you think about food? Is your motto, "Eat to live or live to eat?" This all goes back to seeing ourselves the way God sees us. 3 John 2 says, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in every way and [that your body] may keep well, even as [I know] your soul keeps well and prospers." Walking in the Word brings health.

"If I have any respect for Jesus or the Body of Christ, I'll have respect for my body, the true temple of the Holy Spirit. How long will I steal the health out of my body that Jesus' body died to pay for?" (Don Colbert quote) The following facts are taken from well known physician, Dr. Don Colbert. The average American consumes 3700 calories per day. The body can only burn 2000 calories per day. One pound of fat is equivalent to 3500 calories. Americans are gaining 1/2 pound of fat a day. The average American consumes 33% of calories from fat, which is equivalent to 1200 calories, which equals 12 tablespoons of lard.

He goes on to list 7 habits for highly effective weight loss. They are as follows:

1. Practice temperance.
2. Become active and increase amount or time of activity... 25% of Americans do not exercise at all. The average American watches 30 hours of television per week. This is not Christian programming. It is the wrong programming, which instills fear, doubt, unbelief, and anxiety in the body and mind.
3. Eat breakfast every day... People who wait just 90 minutes after waking up to eat breakfast increase the risk of becoming obese by 50%. If you skip breakfast, your metabolic rate

slows, making the body think it is starving and it holds on to these calories. We should be eating a high fiber breakfast with some protein (flaxseed, nuts, or seeds). For example, a ½ cup of steel cut oatmeal has 8 grams of fiber and will keep you full for 4-5 hours.

4. Watch portion sizes/Tame environment... This basically means get stuff (junk) out of the house. Meat or protein should be the size of your palm (3-3 ½ ounces). Fat should be the size of the thumb (1 tablespoon). Fruit should be the size of your fist. Starch should be the size of a tennis ball (whole grain- pasta, potatoes). This combination is the perfect fuel mixture to keep the body running at peak performance for 4-5 hours and burns fat as fuel.
5. Weigh regularly... Make adjustments quickly. If there is a gain, lay things back on the altar.
6. Become accountable... This increases the chance of weight loss by 50%.
7. Make a commitment... God told Joshua, “Meditate the Word day and night,” then we can see into it and how to observe what God has commanded. Meditating God’s Word prepares me and sets me up for victory instead of the devil setting me up for failure. Everything begins and ends with Jesus. “With Him, all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

I pray that this has been a blessing to you. This is not even close to everything that will be covered in the class I will be offering but simply a “snapshot” of topical information. But the point I wanted to make in this month’s Living Logos is you have one life to live and one body in which to live it. We cannot run our race effectively if we are treating these temples any way we want to. I would encourage you to begin seeing yourself the way God sees you and as my good friend put it best, “Begin to change the image on the inside of you.”

Victoriously,

