

The Misuse of Scripture to Promote "Fads"

This study contains two separate parts:

- **The Misuse of Scripture to promote a "Health Fad" - Introduction and a Specific Example**
(Though this focuses on one specific example, the main principle can be applied to *any* fad.)
 - **A Commentary on 1 Corinthians 5-6**
(Examining the context of some verses that are often used to promote this specific "Health Fad" - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.)
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Introduction to the General Issue

If you listen to very many "Christian" speakers, radio programs, and preachers, it probably won't take long for you to realize that, for just about every fad that exists on the market, there is a "christianized" version of it. There are so many of them, that a person who tried to do everything these people claim is "Christian," would never have enough time to do it all! Worse yet, he would not have time to do those things that God *does* command him to do. He would not have time to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Nor would he have time to "love God with all his heart, soul, strength and mind," or to "love his neighbor as himself."

Promoters of such fads often quote Scripture, to "prove" that we must participate in their fad, if we want to be doing things the "Christian" way. Their words often suggest that we are less "spiritual," or completely outside the will of God, if we don't. Though, perhaps, there may be some value to some of the fads, the very fact that they try to use the Bible to push their opinions upon the rest of us brings them under the judgment of God. We must reject their twisting of God's Word, regardless of any merit we may see in what they are trying to promote. Regardless of our own opinions about the fad - even if we are strong "believers" in its merit - *this misuse of Scripture, to promote one's own personal opinion, is something we must strongly oppose.*

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THIS IS...

A Protest Written, Concerning the Use of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 to Promote the "Health Fad"

It Is an Example of Misusing Scripture to Promote "Fads"

People sometimes try to use 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 to back up their claim that God *requires* us to get more exercise, or to follow a diet or food trend, which they are promoting - often to their financial advantage. They may argue, for instance, that if you don't exercise the way they want you to, or follow their health fad they way they want you to, then you are "destroying your body"... and so you are sinning, because you are destroying the Holy Spirit's "temple." With such "spiritual-sounding" arguments, many people get pulled into their fad - especially those who blindly accept what so-called "experts" tell them to believe, and who don't carefully examine God's Word and the context of the verses that are being used to bolster such claims.

Though exercise and a change in diet may, at times, benefit a person, when we examine the context of these verses, we discover that exercise and diet are probably the farthest thing from Paul's mind. The context of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 focuses on our obligation to glorify God by avoiding sexual sin. The emphasis is on the fact that one who has been bought by God has no right to gratify the desires of the flesh in whatever way he pleases. He has no right to "sell out" to sin.

Since this is the case, it is sinful for us to tear this passage out of context, in order to support opinions that *we*, not God, are trying to push. If there is *genuine* support for these (or any other) fads, it will have to be found elsewhere - and without tearing the verses out of context.

If we were to broaden this passage in 1 Corinthians into a "general principle," it would be something like this: "God has purchased you. Your body now has a sacred role, being a place where the Holy Spirit now dwells. You must not do anything that desecrates it. Rather, you are to glorify God by avoiding sin." Nothing in the passage suggests that a non-exercised body is any less capable of glorifying God than an exercised one. Exercise and diet are *not* described as the way we give honor to God. Nowhere in this passage (or in any other passage) does Scripture tell us that the lack of exercise, or a "less-than-perfect" diet, is sin.

Scripture teaches that exercise, diet, and everything else related to the "health fad," has *temporary* value *at best*. Nothing more. Because of this, they must have only a secondary importance to us. To fail to stress this, is *at least as evil* as denying the possibility that exercise and diet *can* have value, though temporary. (This assumes that such a value really does exist. For many fads, it *doesn't* exist.)

Godliness, in contrast, is "forever" and its importance is "infinite." *This must be our primary focus.* If a person fails to stress godliness *more than* he stresses exercise or diet, he becomes guilty of idolatry. *Anything* stressed more than godliness is idolatry.

It may be acceptable for people to provide suggestions for better health. But if a person has time to follow all the suggestions he receives, yet somehow *doesn't* have time for God, or for anything that God gives us as a primary obligation, then that person's priorities are in conflict with God's. He had better stop all his exercising and dieting (*and anything else he has exalted above God*), and focus on getting his priorities straightened out. *Then*, maybe he will be able to do some of those secondary things in a manner that truly honors God.

If a *godly* person exercises and eats the right things, it may benefit him. If he doesn't, he will still be godly. If an *exercised, healthy-eating* person fails to be godly, his flesh will someday rot with worms - and of what value will that be? The godly person - even if his body were wasted away to nothing - is better off than such a man. Both will die, but the godly person will receive a new body that will never perish. The other, the one who was preoccupied with his body, will get worms, instead (Mark 9:48).

***Train yourself to be godly.
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.***

1 Timothy 4:7b-8

***Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you,
even as your soul is getting along well.***

3 John 2

***My flesh and my heart may fail [and sooner or later it will],
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.***

Psalms 73:26