



May 2, 2022

To be patient can be defined as “steadfast despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity” or “able to accept or tolerate delays, problems, or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious.” Have you ever become discouraged or anxious in pursuing physical fitness goals because you encountered problems, difficulty, or delays along the way? I have! God provided us with physical bodies that are awesomely and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14), and He designed our bodies to carry us—body, soul, and spirit—in loving service to Him. Although this is God’s design, our bodies are not perfect. Sometimes we may face difficulties or delays in staying physically fit to serve. When this happens, we can choose to be patient and steadfast. As we strive to become or stay fit to serve, at times we may have to be patient with ourselves. We remind ourselves of our motivation and remain faithful, keeping in mind our unique bodies and season of life.

Maintaining physical fitness is an endeavor that takes faithfulness and patience. It is important that we stay patient with ourselves as we strive to stay fit to serve. Setting challenging but attainable goals is a great way to keep ourselves moving in the desired direction with our fitness. For example, we may want to strengthen specific muscles for a new responsibility, or we may want to be able to walk or run a certain distance in a specific amount of time. When setting goals, we must consider the time we have available, current fitness level, age, and any physical limitations. The type of exercise needed to achieve our goals may differ when we are twenty, forty, sixty, or eighty years old. The amount and types of food that help us feel best physically are likely to change over time as well. As we consider these factors in our physical fitness, it is beneficial to remember that each individual has a unique physical body with different strengths and needs. Just as our goals may change over time, our goals will be different than another individual’s goals.

When my husband and I embarked upon our first Way Corps assignment, we found that we were able to maintain a vigorous exercise regimen similar to what we maintained during our in-residence training. However, when I became pregnant, I had

to modify the type and intensity of physical exercise I performed. And once our daughter was born, I had to be patient as my body changed. I found that I could not expect to immediately perform the same exercises I had done before pregnancy. Neither could I expect to meet the same fitness goals as my husband. I also found that with a child, I had less time to devote to physical exercise. So, I had to be patient with myself as I learned how to fit fitness into my schedule with my new responsibilities as a mother.

In order to help ourselves stay patient as we build or modify our physical fitness plan, let's remind ourselves of our motivation to stay fit. Fitness, including physical exercise and nutrition, helps to move us toward the goal of loving God by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice in service to Him.

Romans 12:1:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

What a great motivation to stay fit! As we are patient with ourselves, we can build and maintain our physical fitness, increasing our strength to serve God as living sacrifices. Remembering this heart of service has helped me to persevere with patience in my personal endeavors to stay fit.

As we set out to stay fit to serve, a critical element in staying patient with ourselves is faithfulness. To begin on the road to faithfulness, we need to do something more than once. We must continue to do the desired action faithfully until it becomes a part of our daily lives. Proverbs 28:20 tells us that a faithful man shall abound with blessings. God also tells us that He preserves, guards, the faithful (Psalm 31:23). As we take steps to faithfully incorporate physical fitness into our daily lives, we can expect God to bless our efforts.

Galatians 6:9:

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

It takes time to develop habits, and it takes time to see the changes we desire. We will be in a better position to enjoy the benefits of faithfulness as we stay patient and don't become weary and give up. God promises that we will reap if we don't faint. As we are patient with ourselves in staying fit to serve, we can be faithful to take actions that move us toward our goal.

Staying fit to serve looks different in different seasons of life and between different individuals. And that's okay. Changing seasons of life bring changing priorities, time availability, and physical needs. Our goals may change but our motivation does not: staying fit to serve God throughout our lives. We can be patient with ourselves as we faithfully exert effort to attain our goal of staying fit to serve God, no matter what season of life we are in. As we do, we will be able to serve God to a greater degree.

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