

Bodybuilding

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I. Questions

1. What does the Bible say about bodybuilding?
2. Can a Christian be a bodybuilder?
3. When does bodybuilding become sinful?
4. What things should a Christian consider before getting involved in bodybuilding or continuing in it?

II. What does the Bible say about bodybuilding?

1. Bodily exercise profits *little* (**1Ti 4:8**).
 - A. Godliness is very profitable (**1Ti 4:8**).
 - i. As a Christian, should a man devote more time, energy, and money to bodybuilding (including time in the gym, meal prep, cost of food, supplements, equipment, etc.) than he does to pursuing godliness?
 - ii. Should a Christian spend more time in the gym than in the word of God, church, and Bible study?
 - B. Exercising wisdom, fearing the LORD, departing from evil, and hearing and heeding the word of God will do more to improve your health than working out (**Pro 3:7-8; Pro 4:20-22**).
2. The Lord takes not pleasure in the legs of a man (**Psa 147:10**).
 - A. God does not care one iota how big your muscles are.
 - B. For a man to take pleasure in his legs, especially to the point of showing off the entirety of them to others, is for him to take pleasure in something which God has no pleasure in.
 - C. To appear in public in a speedo (or less) for the purpose of taking pleasure in the sight of one's muscular legs is to have "pleasure in unrighteousness" (**2Th 2:12**).
 - i. Unrighteousness is not conforming oneself to the standard of God's law.
 - a. Unrighteousness *n.* - The quality of being unrighteous; an instance of this, an unrighteous action.
 - b. Unrighteous *adj.* - 1. Not righteous or upright; unjust, wicked:
 - c. Righteous *adj.* - 1. a. Of persons: Just, upright, virtuous; guiltless, sinless; conforming to the standard of the divine or the moral law; acting rightly or justly.
 - ii. God's law states that women are to be adorned in modest apparel (**1Ti 2:9**).
 - iii. The same goes for men.
 - a. God's law states that the buttocks is nakedness which is to be covered (**Isa 20:4; Isa 47:2-3**).
 - b. God's law prescribes a garment which covers a man's nakedness, which is shorts which extend to the knee (**Exo 28:42**).

- c. Therefore, to appear in public (or post pictures of oneself on the internet) dressed in a speedo, thong, or even briefs is not conforming oneself to God's law concerning modest attire, which is *unrighteousness* by definition.
- iv. *Unrighteousness* is an excludable offence (**1Co 6:9; Rom 1:29, 32**).
- v. Those who are guilty of it will be excluded from the church.
- 3. God is much more pleased with those who fear Him and are strong in faith, than those who are strong in body (**Psa 147:11**).
 - A. God looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart (**1Sa 16:7**).
 - B. We should not judge or praise men based on their outward appearance (**2Co 10:7; Joh 7:24**).
- 4. Children of God are not supposed to glory in their strength (**Jer 9:23**).
 - A. We must only glory in the fact that we understand and know God (**Jer 9:24**).
 - B. We must only glory in the LORD (**1Co 1:31; 2Co 10:17**).
- 5. If a man wants to become truly strong, it's by growing in wisdom and knowledge, not in muscles (**Pro 24:5; Pro 8:14**).
 - A. Wisdom is better than physical strength (**Ecc 9:16**).
 - B. Wisdom, not weight lifting, strengthens the wise (**Ecc 7:19**).
 - C. Wisdom is found in God's word (**Pro 2:6; Deut 4:5-6**).
 - D. If you want to be truly strong, pick up your Bible more often than you pick up barbells.

III. Can a Christian be a bodybuilder?

- 1. Yes, as long as it does not cause him to break God's commandments or to live outside the boundaries set in the word of God.
- 2. The remainder of this study will help a Christian man determine if he can be a bodybuilder.

IV. When does bodybuilding become sinful? (The following things also apply to *any* hobby or activity.)

- 1. Bodybuilding becomes sinful when it causes a man to break God's commandments.
 - A. Sin is the transgression of the law (**1Jo 3:4**).
 - B. If bodybuilding causes a man to break God's law, then it is sinful.
- 2. Bodybuilding becomes sinful if any of the following are true.
 - A. It becomes an idol in the heart (**Eze 14:4-8**).
 - i. One's own body and lusts can become his god (**Php 3:19**).
 - ii. This love of self (**2Ti 3:2**) can cause a man to glory in the shame of his nakedness (**Php 3:19**).
 - iii. If a man is willing to break God's commandments regarding modest apparel to compete in bodybuilding competitions, then bodybuilding has become an idol in his heart.
 - iv. If he chooses bodybuilding over the house of God, then bodybuilding has become an idol in his heart.
 - v. The same is true a person's career, spouse, children, leisure, vacationing, hobbies, sports, or other people, things, or activities a person chooses over God's commandments and His church.
 - B. It is loved more than God (**Mat 22:37-38; 2Ti 3:4**).

- i. If a man chooses to continue bodybuilding when it causes him to break God's commandments, he loves it more than God (**Joh 14:21**).
- ii. If a man willfully appears in public dressed immodestly in order to continue being a bodybuilder, he loves it more than God, and it is therefore sin.
- C. It is more important than the house of God (**Psa 27:4; Psa 84:10**).
 - i. If a man would rather choose bodybuilding over being a member of God's church, then it has become a sin.
 - ii. If he refuses to give up some aspect of bodybuilding, such as immodest attire, in order to remain a member of God's church, then it has become a sin.
- D. It is not done in moderation (**Php 4:5**).
 - i. Those striving for the mastery in bodybuilding must be temperate in all things (**1Co 9:25**).
 - ii. They must also be temperate in bodybuilding itself if they are to keep it from becoming a sin.
- E. It causes pride (**Mar 7:22; 1Jo 2:16**).
 - i. Pride *n.* - B. Signification. The quality of being proud. I. 1. a. A high or overweening opinion of one's own qualities, attainments, or estate, which gives rise to a feeling and attitude of superiority over and contempt for others; inordinate self-esteem.
 - ii. God hates pride (**Pro 6:16-17; Pro 8:13**).
 - iii. If one's strength or muscular physique gives him a high opinion of himself, bodybuilding has become a sin.
- F. It causes things which God has commanded to be left undone (**Mat 23:23**).
 - i. If bodybuilding takes up so much of one's time and energy that it causes him to not meet his family commitments or other duties, it has become a sin.
 - ii. It must take a backseat to things which God has commanded us to do.
- G. It causes a man (or woman) to appear in public dressed immodestly (see above).
- H. It becomes abusive to the body.
 - i. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (**1Co 6:19-20**).
 - ii. We should not willfully do things that harm our bodies.
 - iii. If bodybuilding does this, then it has become sin.

V. What things should a Christian consider before getting involved in bodybuilding or continuing in it? (These things also apply to *anything* a Christian is considering doing.)

1. A Christian should ask himself the following questions before getting into bodybuilding or continuing in it.
 - A. Can I do this to the glory of God? (**1Co 10:31; Col 3:17**)
 - i. If you can engage in bodybuilding and sincerely in your heart do it to the glory of God then it is fine to participate in it if it does not violate any of the other things in this outline.
 - ii. If you can't do it to the glory of God, then you should not do so.
 - B. Why do I want to do this?
 - i. Make a diligent search of your own heart (**Psa 77:6**) and ask yourself to honestly answer the question of why you want to participate in bodybuilding.
 - ii. Use your spirit to search your own heart on this matter (**Pro 20:27**).

- iii. If in your heart you find the reason you want to do bodybuilding is pride, self-promotion, vanity, recognition, status, praise of men, etc., then you should not do it.
 - iv. Don't deceive yourself concerning your true motives as men so often do!
- C. Am I doing this for vainglory?
 - i. We are to do nothing through vainglory (**Php 2:3**).
 - ii. Vainglory *n.* - 1. Glory that is vain, empty, or worthless; inordinate or unwarranted pride in one's accomplishments or qualities; disposition or tendency to exalt oneself unduly; idle boasting or vaunting.
 - iii. If you are bodybuilding to vaunt yourself or puff up yourself, you are not doing it with charity, and therefore you should not do it (**1Co 13:4**).
- D. Am I doing this to be seen and admired of men?
 - i. We should not do things to be seen of men (**Mat 23:5**).
 - ii. That which is highly esteemed in the sight of men is abomination in the sight of God (**Luk 16:15**).
 - iii. If you are bodybuilding to impress men and be admired by them, you should not do it.
- E. Is spending time with other bodybuilders going to be a good influence on me?
 - i. Evil communications corrupts good manners (**1Co 15:33**).
 - ii. A companion of fools shall be destroyed (**Pro 13:20**).
 - iii. What kind of people do you find are into extreme bodybuilding?
 - iv. Are they godly people?
 - v. If not, do you want to spend a lot of time socializing with them?
- F. Is bodybuilding going to take too much of my time away from my devotion to God, His church, His word, and His people?
 - i. God (**Deut 10:12-13**), His word (**Psa 119:72**), His church (**Mat 6:33**), and His people (**Psa 119:63**) should be of utmost importance to a Christian.
 - ii. If bodybuilding takes precedence over any of these things, it must be scaled back.
- G. Is bodybuilding my way of compensating for my own perceived inadequacies?
 - i. Is building up an impressive looking body your way proving to yourself or others that you are worthy of their approval?
 - ii. Do you feel inadequate or inferior to others in status, stature, or station in life and are therefore trying to compensate for it by impressing others with your muscles?
 - iii. We must not compare ourselves to others (**2Co 10:12**).
 - iv. We must not commend ourselves, but rather seek God's commendation (**2Co 10:18**).
 - v. If you are bodybuilding to compensate for your own perceived inadequacies, you should stop.
 - vi. You need to find fulfillment in Christ, not bodybuilding (**Col 2:10**).
- 2. Your honest answers to these questions will determine if you should get into or continue in bodybuilding (or any other hobby).
 - A. If your desire to participate in bodybuilding made it through these scriptural standards, then go for it and do it to the glory of God.

- B. But if it violates one or more of these guidelines, then you must refrain from it until it can be done without violating God's rules.
- 3. These same questions should be asked about any hobby or activity Christians are considering participating in.