



# HOW TO GET “SHAPE UP” SPIRITUALLY

## A SUGGESTED PLAN FOR SERIOUS CHRISTIANS WHO WANT TO HAVE A CONSISTENT DAILY WALK WITH GOD



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**M**any Americans are obsessed with physical health. They join Health Clubs, eat health foods, and spend millions of dollars on vitamins and minerals related to physical health. This is good and this is Biblical. The body of a Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit and the Bible urges us to *stay in shape* both physically and spiritually.

**(1 Tim 4:7-8)**

*7 “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little (little or for a little time), but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”*

### THREE THINGS NECESSARY FOR GOOD HEALTH

There are three things necessary for good physical health: food, rest, and exercise. It is also important to remember that these three things *must be in balance*. Too much or too little of either is damaging to one’s health. The same thing is true in our spiritual lives. We too need food, rest, and exercise. These also must be balanced or the result is *poor spiritual health*. The Word of God is the *food* in our spiritual lives. Prayer is *our rest* and *Christian service* is our exercise. Have you had a *physical lately*? How did it turn out? How long has it been since you *had a spiritual exam*?

### TRY THE 1459 PLAN

We have a plan we want to recommend. It is called the 1459 Plan. The numbers 1459 stand for 14 minutes and 59 seconds, which is just an easy way to say “15 minutes.”

The 1459 plan is designed for serious Christians who want to live a consistent Christian life. We challenge anyone who reads this to agree to spend at least fifteen minutes every day, for at least 30 days, in personal, private Bible reading and prayer.

This plan was adopted from the “959 Plan” which was given to Pastor Gene Keith in 1968 by Peter Lord. Peter was the pastor of the Park Avenue Baptist Church in Titusville, Florida and Gene was the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Cape Canaveral.

### THREE TOOLS NEEDED

To participate in the 1459 plan you will need the following three tools: A translation of the Bible you are comfortable with; A notebook and a pen or a pencil; a time and a private place.

### The Place is your Gym

The place is important. It is like going to the gym every day to *work out*. This place may be a room, a park, in an automobile, etc. Find a quiet place where no-one will interrupt you for the 15 minutes you are talking with God.

### Schedule your Time

People who work in a gym or health club must have a schedule or it just won’t work. It is best to select the same time each day just like going to the gym on schedule. There will be no “time left over” in our busy schedules. We suggest you set aside 15 minutes early in the morning. Start your day with God!

### Divide your Time

Divide your 15 minutes into two periods. We suggest that you *rest first and then eat*. Spend the first 15 minutes in prayer (spiritual rest) and your second 15 minutes in Bible study (your spiritual food). It is much better to get things right with God in prayer before you begin to read His Word. God might not talk to you through His Word until you get your heart right..

### PRAYER TIME

#### Praise

Begin your prayer time with praise to God. Praise and thanksgiving are different. If you have any trouble thinking of things to praise God for, read Psalm 145. This psalm lists a number of things God desires praise for.

#### Thanksgiving

Go down this list and thank God for things in each of the following categories.

1. Physical blessings
2. Material blessings
3. Spiritual blessings
4. A person
5. An answered prayer
6. An event
7. Anything else the Holy Spirit brings to mind.

#### Confession

Now that you have spent time in praise and thanksgiving, it is time for confession.

First John 1:9 says: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* Serious Christians must deal with sin on a

daily basis. Unconfessed sin brings chastisement. This list may be helpful:

1. Sins of the mind
2. Sins of the tongue
3. Sins of the flesh
4. Secret sins
5. Sinful actions
6. Sins of omission

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Do not write your sins down in your notebook. These things are between you and God.

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### Intercession

Here is where you begin to use your notebook. At this point, pray for others and their needs. Perhaps this list will help. Pray for the following people by name. Write each request down and date it. When prayers are answered, mark them and add the date the prayer was answered. This is a real faith-builder.

1. A *relative*
2. A *Christian friend*
3. An *unsaved friend*
4. A *Christian leader*
5. A *political leader*
6. A *missionary*
7. *Anyone else* the Holy Spirit places on your heart.

### Petition

Now that you have confessed your sins and prayed for other people, you are in a position for God to hear and answer prayers for you personally. God has invited you to ask him for anything and everything you need.

#### (Philippians 4:19)

*“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

#### (Ephesians 3:20)

*“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”*

1. Write each request down and date it.
2. Be very specific.
3. When God answers these specific requests, cross them off and write down the date. This will be a great faith-builder during the times you are feeling “down.” When those times come (and they will) look back and see the list of answered prayers.

### READING YOUR BIBLE

#### Tools Needed

You will need a version of the Bible you are comfortable with, a small notebook in which to take notes, and a pen or pencil.

### Daily Bread

We recommend a copy of the *Daily Bread*. Simply read the thought for the day and the suggested Scripture reading.

### A Book of the Bible

If you choose not to use the Daily Bread, you may simply choose one book of the Bible. If you do choose one book in the Bible, stay in it until you have finished it. Don't be “jumping around” all over the 66 books. For example, many of the books of the New Testament are letters (called Epistles). If you had several letters in your desk drawer, wouldn't it make sense to read one entire letter rather than reading a sentence or two from five different letters?

### QUALITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN QUANTITY

Read just a brief section of the Book and then stop to reflect on what you read. Be sure to read the complete thought. Don't stop in the middle of something. ***Remember that your time is limited and the quality of what you read is more important than the quantity.***

### USE YOUR NOTEBOOK

When you have completed reading the section you have selected, ask yourself the following questions and record the answers in your notebook.

1. Is there a ***sin*** mentioned here that I should forsake? What is it?
2. Is there a ***command*** I should obey? What is it?
3. Is there an ***example*** I should follow? ***Who*** set this example and ***what*** did he/she do?
4. Is there a ***promise*** here I can claim? What is it? Write it down. What do I have to do to claim it?
5. Is there a ***new thought*** I never knew before?

**Number five** is perhaps the most rewarding of all of these five points. When you completed all of this, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal something to you, from the verses you just read or some new thought you have never known before.

1. Identify that new thought and write it down. This is priceless.
2. Over a short period of time your notebook will be filled with things that God taught you all by yourself.

### MAY GOD BLESS YOU! STAY HEALTHY!

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You may also visit our church website: [cbcgainesville.net](http://cbcgainesville.net)