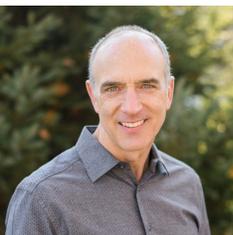




BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN FAITH AND FITNESS | SATURDAY 01.25.20



Q & A with DAVID BUSH

Author and Founder, Fit for the King

As the founder of the INSPIRE conference, what have you discovered with this event over the past 6 years?

One thing we've discovered is that this conference is unique. While I've become aware of a few "fitness" conferences that have been held for the Christian community, these have all been developed by fitness professionals focusing solely on improving people's physiology without addressing spiritual issues or how our level of fitness fits in with overall discipleship. Without exception, every outside speaker we've brought in to this conference has stated that they've not only never spoken at anything like it, but that they've never even heard of a conference addressing body stewardship the way we do.

Have you seen a change in the kind of person who attends the conference?

I think there's been a learning curve in this regard. The first year, both because of our speaker lineup and the fact that no one had yet experienced an INSPIRE event, there were more people who thought there would be a focus on exercise routines, nutritional supplements, enhancing your sports performance or some kind of personal empowerment message. Those looking for that kind of message have fallen away I suppose and have increasingly been replaced by those wanting to gain a theology of the body, of which there is a great vacuum for most believers, as well as reinforce biblical and gospel-centered motivations for physical transformation. Of course, the breakout sessions have always been well received as they help people with their nutrition, stress, injuries, and other practical matters.

Attendees of INSPIRE have always skewed older and female, and I'd like to see more balance in this area. Many attendees are looking for help in mitigating the consequences of years of an unhealthy lifestyle. I'd prefer to have younger people come and learn gospel-centered motivations for stewarding their bodies that can benefit them their entire lives. But most young people think they're indestructible or haven't yet seen the cumulative effect of their lifestyle choices. The full weight of those often isn't realized until they hit middle age. Then they wish they could find a time machine to transport them back to a time when they could sow different seed.

Why do you think a conference like INSPIRE is important or necessary? If Christians want to learn about good health practices, can't they just ask a friend or co-worker, join a health club, talk to their doctor, get a personal trainer, or do a Google search of a topic they're interested in?

All of these things might benefit the Christian looking to get in better physical condition, assuming they had a knowledgeable friend, an engaged doctor, landed a good trainer and found accurate and scientifically sound information on the internet. But I find it interesting that in most other areas a Christian might be struggling, we are careful to point them in a direction that could give biblically accurate direction in their area of need.

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There is a worldview present in any sphere of life. Whether we're looking for help with finances, relationships, marriage, child-rearing, or health and nutrition, we need to be careful to assure our perspective and actions are driven by motives and solutions that align with our faith. The health and fitness culture in the United States is permeated with messages, motivations, and goals that don't align with a biblical worldview. Most Christians have heard countless messages and attended many seminars and conferences telling them what the Bible says about their money, dating, marriage, parenting, etc. Most Christians in this country have never heard anything about what the Bible says about their physical bodies, how to steward them, and what should motivate them to do this well.

You mention the issue of motivation here. Isn't that what you'll be speaking about in your plenary session talk?



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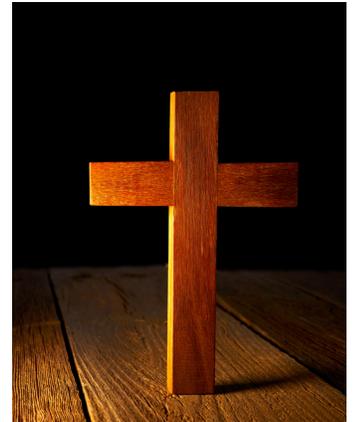
Indeed it is! A statement that is applicable to many areas of our lives is especially important in this area of body stewardship: God cares more about my motives than my intentions or my results. God desires that our motives for fitness be tethered to our faith; not fear, insecurity, personal empowerment or conforming to a cultural ideal. In something as difficult to pursue in our culture as good body care, our motives will hold the key to success or failure – both practically and in God's eyes.

This year's conference theme is "Focusing on the Gospel to Form Our Motives for Wellness." I think many might wonder what the gospel has to do with their health. What's the connection?

Pastor David Mathis and I will focus our presentations on this connection. For the Christian, the gospel is to inform every pursuit and is applicable to every important issue in our lives. When I work with people who are struggling with their health, it's rarely due to ignorance of healthy habits. Rather, it's issues in their lives that need gospel truth and healing that have metastasized to their physical wellbeing.

The gospel tells us we are secure and don't have to live in shame. The gospel tells us we are loved and have value. The gospel is a continuing story of redemption. The gospel tells us we're not inclined to obey God and that we have a naturally flawed perspective of ourselves and God. When the gospel is understood and applied to an individual's area of hurt or dysfunction, their mind can be changed and their body can be freed to experience lasting transformation.

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INSPIRE 2020

SATURDAY
01.25.2020
THE MISSION CHURCH
12001 Ridgmont Dr. Urbandale