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# **Body Movement as a Spiritual Discipline**

## **~ A Study Guide ~**

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Part of the



# Body Movement as a Spiritual Discipline: Study Guide

This is a free study guide designed to accompany the video *Body Movement as a Spiritual Discipline - A Christian Perspective* by Daily Christian Affirmations, which can be found on YouTube or by [clicking here](#).

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## Introduction:

God created us as integrated beings — body, mind, heart, and spirit. In this study, you'll explore how moving your body can become a sacred act of worship and a spiritual discipline that deepens your walk with Christ.

## Definition

For this study I'm going to define *Body Movement as a Spiritual Discipline* as Any type of intentional or mindful physical activity that...

- Increases mind-body awareness
- Fosters your spiritual growth
- Deepens your relationship with God
- Helps you become more like Christ

Though many Bible verses give us direction on how to use body movement in a group setting, it is important that we understand that Body Movement within a corporate worship context is not the only way to bring glory to God. For our purposes, the glorification of God through the expression of Body Movement can be done at any time in all kinds of circumstances - much like prayer and study of the scriptures can be done in the privacy of your own room.

## Key Scriptures to Reflect On

- Mark 12:30 (NIV) "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with **all your strength**."
- Romans 12:1 (CSB) "Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship."
- Colossians 3:17 (NIV) "And whatever you do, whether in word **or deed**, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
- Romans 6:13 (NLT) - "Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you

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have new life. So **use your whole body** as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.”

- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (ESV) “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”
- 1 Corinthians 9:27 (CSB) “Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.”
- Acts 17:28 (BSB) “‘For in Him we live and *move* and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are His offspring.’”
  - Cross-references...
  - Deuteronomy 30:20 - The Lord is your life
  - Job 12:10 (NIV) “In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.”
  - Daniel 5:23 (NIV) “...the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways.”

## How to Worship God with our Body

We have an incredible opportunity to honor God with our bodies in several ways...

### Observation: Being Mindful

One way is to simply get in touch with, be aware of and acknowledge the movements of our body that are already happening on a daily basis. Realize that the only reason that we are able to move is because of God. In him we have life and the ability to move. Our bodies are magnificent creations, as David declares in Psalm 139:14 when he said, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” What we are able to do with our bodies is simply astounding. Let this be a constant source of awe, inspiration and gratitude.

### Calm Connection: Being Proactive

Another way is by intentionally creating a receptive state of mind and opening a connection with God. We do this by calming the mind through mindful physical activity and breathwork. This is a powerful way to quiet our minds and bring us into silence and the present moment. Grounding ourselves through this kind of activity brings a sense of peace and calm and gives the Holy Spirit a chance to speak - and us a chance to listen.

### Unleashing Power: Being Ready

Sometimes we come under attack when the enemy hurls his fiery arrows at us (Ephesians 6:16). It's at times like this that Body Movement can be one of the weapons that we fight back with to bring our focus away from trials and temptations and back on God and heavenly things.

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## Types of Activities

What kinds of activities can you do? It can be anything you love to do! (As long as it creates a state for you to connect): Walking, running, bike riding, yoga, tai chi, dancing, playing an instrument, etc. are all excellent ideas.

## Dealing with Doubts & Questions About Certain Practices

Let's face it, in your quest for incorporating more body movement in your life as a spiritual practice, no doubt you are going to hear about some practices that are based in eastern or perhaps unfamiliar philosophies, religions and traditions. These may include things like yoga, tai chi and certain forms of meditation.

Before throwing out these ideas as un-Christian, unholy and to be avoided, I want to encourage you to think about how you might be able to redeem these types of activities for Jesus, or *claim them for Christ*.

Any physical activity that isn't expressly forbidden by scripture is not inherently wrong, bad, evil, of the devil, etc. It is what you make of it. In fact, Body Movement in and of itself is not a spiritual discipline. It will only be so if you make it so. It will be for you whatever you want it to be. You have to consciously and intentionally make it what you want it to be.

The apostle Paul said that "physical training is of some value (many translations even say it is of 'little value'), but godliness holds value for all things." Paul is not saying that body movement is worthless. He's saying that, without the godly component and focus, it can only go so far. Whatever body movement you choose to do, "do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3:17)

## Self-Reflection Questions

What comes to your mind when you think of a "spiritual discipline"? Has that view included your body before? Why or why not?

How can you begin to see everyday movements (walking, stretching, exercising) as acts of worship to God?

Which of the scriptures above speaks most to you about integrating body movement with your faith? Why?

In what ways might you have separated your spiritual life from your physical body? How might God be inviting you to bring them together?

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What small, intentional body movement could you offer to God this week as a spiritual practice? (Example: a daily prayer walk, stretching with gratitude, or mindful breathing in His presence.)

Do you struggle with feeling guilty about focusing on your body? How does Scripture challenge or affirm your feelings?

What would it look like for you to "live, move, and have your being" fully in Christ every day?

### Action Steps

- ✓ Choose one movement this week (walking, stretching, dancing, exercising) and dedicate it intentionally to God in prayer.
  - ✓ Memorize Acts 17:28 ("In Him we live and move and have our being.")
  - ✓ Journal your experience: How does intentionally offering your body movements to God change your mindset and your heart?
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### About the Author

Steve Pederson is the author of *101 Daily Christian Affirmations: Change Your Mind and Your Life Will Follow*, the creator of the Daily Christian Affirmations YouTube channel and community of over 17,000 members, and the *Spiritual Disciplines Journey* study guide series.

Steve holds certifications in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Modern Applied Psychology and is also certified as a Mental Health & Wellness Practitioner, Master Mindfulness Practitioner, NLP Practitioner, Counseling Practitioner and Advanced Life Coach.

He currently serves as a worship leader in his local congregation and has previously served as a Bible teacher, small group leader, and preacher.

Steve has been married to his lovely wife, Stephanie, for over 25 years, and together they have two amazing, faith-filled daughters actively involved in their college campus ministry.