



# GOSPEL *for* LIFE

## **Jonathan Edwards and the Body Season 6, Episode 4 Transcript**

[00:00:00.000] - Announcer

Welcome to the Gospel for Life podcast. We provide resources to help you become more like Jesus. Here's your host, Darryl Dash.

[00:00:19.140] - Darryl Dash

Welcome back to the Gospel for Life podcast. You might recognize these words, Resolved to maintain strictest temperance in regards to eating and drinking. This is one of 70 resolutions that Jonathan Edwards is known for. We have a lot to learn from Jonathan Edwards view of embodiment and his practices regarding diet, sleep, and exercise. In my view, this is an area that's often neglected. I grew up in the church, and a lot of the time we dismissed the role of physical fitness, care for our bodies, diet, and that was seen as shallow. And what really matters is our spiritual condition. And we often don't think enough about what it means to be embodied creatures and what it looks like to honor God with our bodies.

And that's why I'm so excited today to talk to a friend of mine, a co-pastor by the name of Myles Holmes. And about 10 years ago, he wrote a paper called "Dear Companions: Embodiment in Jonathan Edwards," with specific reference to his thought about diet, sleep, and exercise. Right away, I asked him, Would you be willing to come on the podcast and talk about this topic? And I'm very excited that he has agreed to do that.

[00:01:33.860] - Darryl Dash

Myles is the lead pastor of Redemption Newmarket here in Canada, and he also served at Redemption Durham in Whitby, Ontario. Myles graduated with a Master Divinity in 2017, and he's married to Amber, and they have three children. And I just have to say, I

met Myles at a retreat, I think back in January, and I didn't know anybody at the retreat. And Looking around feeling like, Oh, man, I don't really know that many people here. Myles and his wife were one of the first people to come up and introduce themselves and make us feel at home, and I'm very grateful for that. So great guy. Myles, it's so good to talk to you today.

[00:02:14.410] - Myles Holmes

Yeah, I'm so thankful to talk to you, Darryl, and I would also return that. I really appreciated our time. I think we've known each other almost for half a year now.

[00:02:23.980] - Darryl Dash

Yeah, not a long time.

[00:02:24.980] - Myles Holmes

Yeah. I really appreciate being able to meet you on that retreat. I look up to you in a lot of ways. I think it's a reminder for me that when you're faithful, you're a faithful pastor, you're a faithful man, there's, I guess, something like an aura that comes off of you. You see it right away, and I see that in you. There's this consistency, this faithfulness in the way that you pastor your church and love your wife, and even in the few interactions we've had, the way that you've shepherded me. I'm incredibly thankful to be able to talk to you right now.

[00:02:56.040] - Darryl Dash

I really appreciate that. I wanted to ask you before we get down to business on the topic, what is something you're enjoying about this phase of life right now? What's giving you energy and joy these days?

[00:03:09.340] - Myles Holmes

Oh, man. Well, we're in a season in the life of our church right now that's incredibly exciting. I've been there for about two and a half years now, and it was a pretty tumultuous time coming out of COVID. And the church had been beyond what churches regularly went through COVID, had been through a pretty It was a tough time. And so that carried over. But we feel like we're in a season right now where the Lord is... There's highs and lows in ministry, and it certainly feels like a high in terms of people getting baptized and conversations that people have been shepherding in conversation

for it feels like a few years now, getting to the point that you want to shepherd them to. We're incredibly excited just by what the Lord is doing in the church and feel like it's a season that we need to steward really carefully. That would be the ministry answer. The family answer is that my kids are at an age right now where my wife and I are just very aware that these are special times as well. I got three girls, seven, five, and three. There's a lot of joy.

[00:04:16.500] - Myles Holmes

I got a girl running around today in a dragon costume. She's getting ready for Halloween. We look at that stuff and it brings a lot of levity to anything that we're going through that's serious. And so we're really as tired as we are and as busy as that is, we are having a lot of joy in that.

[00:04:38.450] - Darryl Dash

It really is true. Those years go very fast. It doesn't seem like it at the time, but they do go so fast. I'm glad you're enjoying them. Yeah.

[00:04:44.770] - Myles Holmes

Well, you mentioned that I was at Redemption Durham. And when I was there, about 50% of the adult attendance was kids every Sunday. We had that many kids. And most of the people were a generation above me. So when we had our first kid there, we felt like every Sunday there is someone coming huge bags under their eyes with this... It almost felt like a prophecy. Like, your life is over. You're never going to sleep again. Say goodbye to freedom thing. And yet we also had this just constant reminder that from people getting out of the stage that we're in now that the years are so short and they go by so quickly and you got to be... You got to cherish it. So, yeah, we've really enjoyed it.

[00:05:27.300] - Darryl Dash

I wanted to ask you about Jonathan and how you even got interested in thinking about him and his resolutions, and especially as they relate to physical health. How did all that come about originally?

[00:05:40.480] - Myles Holmes

Yeah, well, I guess it was the merging of two different worlds. I consider, I mean, I'm reformed, and so I'm going to speak in terms that may get me in trouble. But I had a

second salvation. I know, not speaking, obviously, in terms of salvation, but certainly a turning in my life when I first read Desiring God by John Piper. I was saved when I was 12, coming from a family that didn't have a Christian background. But I don't think I really ever had a theology of joy. In fact, I would have never said it, but if you could have got inside of me and see my thoughts, I would have had this theology of Christianity that's like, it's a lot more fun to not be a Christian as a teenager. I even I looked at the faith almost like it was mystical. I believed it. The Lord had done so much in my life, and it was so clear to me that he was working, and I never doubted his existence. But I looked at secular worldviews and atheism and thought their worldview makes sense, all the while being a Christian. When I first read *Desiring God*, that was the first time that I came to realize that This is actually the best way to live.

[00:07:02.390] - Myles Holmes

If you want to talk about joy, then the pursuit of Christ, the pursuit of happiness in God and his character and in life with him is the only way to do it. That was a big turning point for me. And so obviously, any time that you read John Piper, you're just reading a 21st century Jonathan Edwards. And so that was my first real connection to Jonathan Edwards. And from that, I was really interested in his writings and everything that he had to say, and still, too, from the ministry of John Piper, as he was a filter for some of what Jonathan Edwards was saying. So that's the one thing is I have always had this, I guess, just special connection with his theology just because it was so practical in my own life, and even still today, my preaching is so practical.

The other thing is this, I've I just always had a passion for fitness. And if you ask me what my hobby is, it would be something along the lines of something fitness and sport related. And so this was just the merging of two worlds as I grew in my understanding of theology and tried to make sense of what are we doing when we're working out, how do we fit that into the Christian life?

[00:08:26.220] - Myles Holmes

Paul says that make the best use of time. He also says that bodily exercise is of little value. Well, then practically, what does that look like for me in my life as I try to find satisfaction in who God is through Jesus Christ? That was always a question in the back of my mind. As I did my Bachelor's of Theology and Masters of Divinity at Toronto Baptist Seminary and was under Dr. Michael Haykin. It came around time to think of a

thesis. It just seemed natural. I was like, Oh, I'm going to that it was the merging of these two real passions that the Lord had brought together in my life.

[00:09:06.180] - Darryl Dash

Jonathan Edwards is famous for one sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an angry God. I think a lot of people, even if you don't know a lot about him, are familiar with that. But he's fascinating, played a big role with actually not too far from here. And one of the things I love is if you drive to the States from Canada, you're going to be not too far from where he ministered. And then I was thinking about him a lot during COVID because he died of a vaccine. And so certainly the whole vaccine controversy, it just feels like his ministry in many ways is so relevant to so much of the things we talk about today and even ministry in our general area.

Give us a brief overview of Jonathan Edwards and why does he matter for today? Why should we be even talking about him all these years later?

[00:09:54.660] - Myles Holmes

Yeah, I think the reality that he still is so prevalent today is astounding. I think it's a testament to the word of God, right? I think the thing for me that was astounding, digging in beyond Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God for Jonathan Edwards. It was just his devotion to studying the word of God. I think he's a bit of an anomaly when it comes to just thinkers in the sense that just from a young age, he was...

I remember reading his biography, and it's like he's seven years old and he's going up to the forest to talk about theology and pray. From an early age, he's got this just... I mean, he wouldn't have said he was saved at that point, but there's this clear desire to think deeply and then mixed with this God-given ability to make observations not only about the world, but about people, which became really important in his ministry, but also just about God's word and theology. You have this work ethic of studying 13 hours a day in his whole life revolved around thinking deeply about God's word, along with just this natural God-given ability to think deeper.

[00:11:13.030] - Myles Holmes

It means that I think it's similar, I think, to Augustine and Calvin, that for years will depend on him as a thinker, because he just got to places that not many people have

the gifting to be able to get to. He thought in a I think certainly, even as I read his works, you're sweating just trying to keep up with him, let alone forge the pathway forward to write what he wrote and to think how he thought.

[00:11:46.400] - Darryl Dash

One of my friends was reflecting on Rosaria Butterfield's work, The Gospel Comes with a House Key, and he was quiet for a while, but after a while, he just said, This woman is not normal. The level of hospitality that she is able to provide to people is admirable. But I think a lot of people would look at her and say, that's way beyond my ability. And that's just like she's extraordinarily gifted. I can imagine somebody looking at Jonathan Edwards and saying, for somebody to write his resolutions and 70 of them. And actually from your paper, I learned actually the 70, he had more than those 70, right? You mentioned that he had other ones beside that. Do you think that there's an element in which he's in a different class? Maybe you and I can learn a little bit from him, but he's just so extraordinary that maybe he could have 70 resolutions, but most of us are going to struggle to keep up with two or three of them.

[00:12:42.480] - Myles Holmes

Yeah, no, that's true. Hey, you think about our New Year's resolutions, right? For him, his diary was really a tracking of the resolutions. He had these 70 resolutions, mainly. And his diary is really like, How am I doing at those things? And many of them would come up-time and time again thing. So, yeah, you're right. He really did have a absurd ability to be able to not only make the resolutions, and you read through them, and they're even to this day so inspiring and give you a clear path of what a life that's just really inflamed with passion for God looks like. But again, that also just... It's a certain personality. I think if Jonathan Edwards was in our day, he would have loved Excel spreadsheets. He would have had everything tracked out because that's really... So many of his... Even his resolutions are, I'm going to do this and I'm going to track it monthly, weekly, and daily. You start to think... I start to think, How do you have the time to track all these things so daily? But he had such a desire to make sure that every bit of time that he had was used for the glory of God.

[00:13:59.920] - Darryl Dash

It would be easy to think that looking after your body is important for pragmatic reasons. And yet his belief went a bit deeper than that. It wasn't just that it was pragmatically

helpful. He actually had a theology of the body. How did that inform how he tried to live? Why did he think that caring for a body was so important?

[00:14:26.630] - Myles Holmes

I guess this is what originally even made me interested in thinking about Jonathan Edwards is that it was really... I have this passion for working out, and I'm trying to discern, am I trying to make... As I think about this theologically, am I trying to make this into something that it's not so that I can have this little Lord of the Rings ring that I'm trying to keep to myself thing. And it was really the first time that I encountered someone who was thinking about that, thinking about diet, thinking about sleep, thinking about exercise. And so that's actually what made me interested in asking the question, what is it that made him think about that? I think one of the things you figure out really quickly is that he never really pieced together those things in any formal work. It's a bit of a puzzle. As you go through the diaries, you're putting things together and you're getting a sense of his theology and He just never had the need to write anything about that. That was a bit of what attracted to me was I saw the practical before I saw the theoretical. Then I asked the question, Well, what was it?

[00:15:43.160] - Myles Holmes

You start to dig and you realize he's really got I feel. He thought so much about the soul and what the soul is. He had to because of the revivals that were happening, and then especially the criticisms of the revivals that they weren't genuine. We had to think about when God acts in a salvific way on the soul, and there are these physical outbreaks, for instance, I'm sure you've heard this, when he preached that sermon, Sinners in the Hands of the Angry God, he didn't even finish it. People were crying out, and people were seeing... They were saying they were seeing hell opening up beneath them. The revival at that time was having this real physical outbreaks, and he was just having to think really beyond what even my paper is thinking about sleep, diet, and exercise. He's having to think about, what are these physical manifestations even? Are they genuine works of the Holy spirit, or are they false? He really has this crystal clear understanding of the body and the soul and the union between them and making an argument that the revivals that are happening and the bodily expressions that are happening through the revivals are actually true.

[00:16:56.510] - Myles Holmes

He's got to understand that connection. He's got to lift up the engine on the relation between the soul and the body and make sense of what's going on there.

[00:17:07.940] - Darryl Dash

How did this work out for him, practically? I love in your paper how he identifies some of the very practical things that he did. He had a very Spartan diet, and I even love this. This humanized him for me. I mean, reading his biography does that, but you talk about how he struggled when there was a great feast or meal, and He was very tempted to over eat in those circumstances, which these problems are new, right? They're being faced by people like him. How did this actually work out in practice for him?

[00:17:40.310] - Myles Holmes

Yeah. Also, he loved chocolate. One of the problems he had was he did so much writing, he didn't have enough paper. He'd be writing on the back of the receipts. You see the receipts of what he's bought, and there's a lot of chocolate.

[00:17:56.990] - Darryl Dash

I love him already. I love him even more.

[00:17:59.580] - Myles Holmes

Yeah, you can certainly relate to him. I think, especially in the struggle, too. He made that resolution. You have this picture of Jonathan Edwards as he's got a soul that's so on fire for the Lord. If he says he's going to do it, he's going to do it. And yet there's this great struggle that he has in constantly... I love in one passage, it's on a Wednesday that he's writing in his diary, and he's really down in the dumps. Life is I think we've had those days. Life is horrible, I'm discouraged. And then the Thursday, the very next day, he writes, and it's totally different, upbeat. The thing he says is, I realized I was just eating too much. It was pretty constant for him that he had this battle of trying to find for himself, again, just his power of observation, trying to find where's the that I can draw that will cause me to... I want to eat and I want to enjoy these foods. But if I do it too much, it takes away from my main work and the way that I glorify God, which is by studying. Sorry, what was the question again?



[00:19:18.760] - Myles Holmes  
What's the practical?

[00:19:20.740] - Darryl Dash

Yeah, how did it actually work out in his life? What practices did he put in place so that he would be sleeping, exercising, and eating well?

[00:19:30.580] - Myles Holmes

Yeah. So in terms of eating, I think he really came to realize that eating less was a lot better for him. Again, it's all observation for him. So he noticed that when he ate less, and I should say, one of the interesting things that you have to do is realize that he's doing this personally for himself. But this isn't necessarily what would be the best for to do. In fact, I think in a lot of ways, even his contemporaries looked at Jonathan Edwards and said he was pretty sick at times, and he talked a lot about being very tired. And so you wonder if he really found the right balance in it all. So he would eat. He would really limit, I would say, what he ate, feeling that if he ate less, he could sleep less so that he could study more, feeling that his mind was clearer. He had problems with migraines and health his whole life. And so he felt that when he ate less, he would have less migraines. And so I think a real practical takeaway for that is just thinking about the way that food makes us feel.

[00:20:41.640] - Myles Holmes

You think about you have this massive lunch As a pastor, you're going to write your sermon after. Well, you are sluggish. And it does have an effect on the way that you serve the Lord then in your thinking and writing. And so he was He was just really careful to make sure that everything he was doing was lining up with his goal to be a man who studied God's word and wrote. That was really what he did with sleep. Again, his resolution, the emphasis there is strict temperance, which is just self-control. Again, he would really try to limit the hours that he slept. He really felt like if he slept too much, then he couldn't think clearly, and it would take away time from his his study. Then with exercise, it's really interesting and I think practical for us. He was very intentional to make sure that he was always doing something, whatever the season was, to get his heart rate up and to get moving, recognizing that when he did that, the time taken away from studying and writing and doing the work of a pastor was much... It paid dividends. The time that he then spent doing that, he could think clearer and his mind was clearer.

[00:21:58.240] - Myles Holmes

He would go on walks and choose a theological concept to meditate on. He would do horseback riding, which I've never done, but I've heard is a workout. He would go on long horseback rides. He would always be thinking deeply about God, and he'd want to be remembering what he was thinking about, but he doesn't have a phone to type in notes and make notes of things. So he would pin almost like, you can imagine, sticky notes to his clothes to remember what he was thinking about as he was going place to place and as a memory device when he got off the horse to remember the thing that he thought about. Then in the winter, when it was colder, he would chop wood for, he said 30 minutes a day, and he would do it with the intention of getting his heart rate up and it being a hard workout with the understanding that it would help him.

[00:22:56.920] - Darryl Dash

Do you think that he may be... When I read about his sleep habits, it almost seems like he saw sleep as a necessary evil. And if you could minimize his sleep, that he would be able to spend more time studying theology. That today we understand actually sleep deprivation. If you get more sleep, it can help you be a better theologian, that if you're not getting enough sleep, it's very hard to function in a healthy way. Would you say that maybe that's an area where we shouldn't emulate him, or what does he have to teach us in that area?

[00:23:29.410] - Myles Holmes

Yeah, I mean, it's an interesting question. I think it's hard to navigate today what we should be doing health-wise, because so much of the material we find on sleep and diet and exercise comes from a worldview of materialism. And in the worldview of materialism, the savior is biology, right? The savior is what can you do to make your body run better? Because that's all there is. I'm going to answer your question by probably not answering it at all. But I think it's somewhere in between where we've definitely learned a lot studying sleep and diet and exercise to be able to say, this is the best... If you're just a machine, this is the best way to fuel the machine. But we understand, I think, what the worldview of materialism doesn't, is that we're more than a machine. And there's such a complex relationship between the soul and the body, which there are even... I was listening to a podcast with a guy named Andrew Huberman, which I think is probably one of the most successful podcasts. And again, the worldview

of materialism. Every podcast is about these biological hacks to increase, I mean, I'm really, I guess, your livelihood, right?

[00:25:02.700] - Myles Holmes

One of the things he was saying is that they don't really understand energy. He was talking to a guy who doesn't sleep a lot. He's one of these motivational guys, wake up at 4:00 in the morning, thing. And he's saying, They don't really understand energy and where energy comes from. They understand sleep and rest and all the biological mechanisms that happen when you sleep. But there are people who function so well on five hours of sleep. And so they're trying to make sense of Where does this energy actually come from? I think it's good for us to recognize. Maybe what we learned from Jonathan Edwards is, yes, he probably could have done some things better, but he also was just very aware of the state of his soul and how he was doing and playing with little things, sleeping more and recognizing that when he slept more, it took away from him placing his affections in Christ. When he slept less, he was able to think clearer Which I think sounds bad because I'm curious to hear your opinion on it because I think the recommendation we get now is you sleep seven to eight hours or you're killing yourself.

[00:26:10.760] - Myles Holmes

And yet here you have Jonathan Edwards who doesn't have all of those studies on sleep. And yet he's looking at his life and the great aim of his life is to glorify God. But he's recognizing that sleeping less will help him do that more. Curious your thought on that.

[00:26:29.920] - Darryl Dash

Yeah, I find it's very hard for me to be godly unless I get... For me, if I get between 6:00 and 7:00 hours, I rarely get more than 7:00, but even if I try to, I just wake up. But if I get less than 6:00, I become a pretty cranky person. So yeah, part of it is very situational, right? Knowing our own bodies and knowing what we need. I know other people need more sleep. I haven't met too many people who need less than 6:00, but I'm sure they're out there. But yeah, I just find that... I mean, God brings us through these seasons like new parents just don't have the luxury of getting the sleep that they need. But God is... It's a hard time, but God seems to provide what they need, even though it's very difficult during that time. So, yeah, a lot of it. I think it's very difficult to be legalistic. But generally speaking, I really do agree with what Don Carson said one time, sometimes the most

spiritual thing you can do is to get a good night's sleep, not to stay up and pray all night, but actually get the rest that your body needs.

[00:27:29.980] - Darryl Dash

For sure. Hearing Don Carson say that was actually a relief. We're embodied creatures, and we just need sleep. I think there's a theology of sleep that John Piper has written about, that sleep is actually very good for learning that God is God and that we're not. At night, we have to lay aside our cares and trust him and go to bed and basically do nothing. I think actually it's a good discipline for learning our limits as creatures. We're finite and tired, and God isn't, so it's okay to go to bed.

[00:28:06.070] - Myles Holmes

It makes me think, what's that Psalm? I'm going to paraphrase it, and then I'm sure you'll remember it better than I do, but it's vain to rise early.

[00:28:14.560] - Darryl Dash

That's right.

[00:28:16.800] - Myles Holmes

That was the rest of it.

[00:28:18.370] - Darryl Dash

It does mention God gives rest to his beloved as well. Yeah, that's right.

[00:28:24.030] - Myles Holmes

But so much of it is getting to the heart of it. I think we are It's interesting. I don't know where we are in culture, but certainly, I remember in Bible College, it seemed like you were the most godly person. You hear about the Al Mohler, who sleeps three hours a night or something, and he does so much for the Lord. And you hear about all these guys who are sleeping like they aren't sleeping at all. And it heightens this. It puts this spirituality to, well, if you sleep less, you'll do more for God. And we can certainly look at that and say, we're so thankful for the council of Don Carson who says, no, there's a theology to sleeping and recognizing that you're a creature and God's the creator. But I think what's admirable from Jonathan Edwards is this recognition of... I think what he's doing is getting his heart in the right place. You can sleep too little and have a heart that

says it's legalistic and says, I'm doing this because God's going to love me because of all the work that I'm doing at 3:30 in the morning. You can sleep too late, and you have a heart that it's lazy.

[00:29:48.730] - Myles Holmes

In the name of health, you're wasting time and you're not making the best use of time. You can put your hope in the savior of materialism and think that your biggest problem is that you just don't get enough sleep. Even we recognize things like anger and a lot of spiritual issues come with a short amount of sleep. But you might think the savior is sleep, and it's not. It's Christ. I think a big part of this is your heart behind it. Having an understanding of what's actually happening and why you're doing the things that you're doing. I think this is why I love the church, because I need it. I need brothers and sisters who know me and are able to pull me aside and say, Hey, what you're doing, you're doing it for the wrong reasons. And maybe someone's doing the same thing for the right reasons, but you're certainly not, right? I think that's a lesson for us to think deeply about where our hearts are at with all of these things, diet, sleep, and exercise. And I think it's something we don't think about. I've only ever heard someone really preach about diet one time.

[00:31:00.120] - Myles Holmes

It was Paul Tripp. It was at a conference. He said, Some of you guys are sinning with your lack of self control, and you're wearing the evidence around your waist. And there was an audible gasp in the room. But even that was just a small part of the sermon. I think it's something that we need to think deeply about as pastors, as we lead people, but also in our own personal lives of living for God's glory.

[00:31:34.100] - Darryl Dash

There's an article at the Desiring God website, Exercise for More of God, and I'll link to it in the show notes. But the author writes, When my body is not dragging me down. I find it less difficult to delight myself in the Lord. Exercise as a way of clearing the cobwebs from my brain and helping me focus on the promises of scripture. And she makes a point for her. A lot of people talk about the physical benefits, but for her, she's saying, When I look after my body, I enjoy a lot of spiritual benefits. I just am able to enjoy God more and serve others well, love others better. I see the same thing in Edwards. I think that his ultimate goal is not, I want a buff body or I want the abs or whatever, or even to

be more productive. I think it's like, I want more of the Lord. My wife, I think she might have, I can't remember if we talked about this, but for her, looking after her body was actually her gateway to enjoying more of the Lord and actually reawakening her love of God. I love Edwards. I love your observations on how this is actually an important spiritual discipline, but the goal has got to be right.

[00:32:46.440] - Darryl Dash

The heart has got to be motivated by the glory of God and our enjoyment of him.

[00:32:50.800] - Myles Holmes

I'm interested to hear some of your practical... I know you thought about this and wrote about this, so I'm interested to hear some of your practical pursuits of that. I think even in Edwards, it's interesting. Paul says that bodily training is of little value, but exercise Godliness. I've always thought that's significant because he doesn't... I've heard people preach that like it says no value. I always thought it's so interesting he doesn't say no value. He said it's of a little value, which I think says a world about, really, the place that we have it in our lives. But it's interesting what you pointed out there. I think that's what Jonathan is after in his exercise is he's doing it in a way... It's not about being buff. It's not about the way that you look. It's about how he can use that time. So he's walking and meditating He's always doing something that is... I think this is so practical for us, that he can pair with another spiritual discipline. I think as Christians, there are so many... The time is so available to us to pair physical fitness with a spiritual discipline, to walk and pray, to run.

[00:34:08.760] - Myles Holmes

And on the beginning of your run, choose something that you read or you heard Pastor Darryl preach on Sunday, I'm going to meditate on this reality while I run. I'm going to use this time, 45 minutes that I'm not looking at, or whatever you're running, 10 minutes that you're not looking at your phone and you're not distracted. I'm I'm going to meditate on this thing. There's an aspect of where it's like the time is it can be used for God's glory. Some of my best thoughts come to me at the gym. Some of the most relevant things I do, I put on my to-do list when I'm at the gym. And there's something about... I mean, it's a hobby for me. I think that happens for any of us in the recreation that we do is the mind is cleared and you're thinking about something else. And it's almost like it creates space for these other thoughts that you need to have to come in, and the

busyness is cleared out. And so for me, it's incredibly practical, just the time being spent, let alone the effect that it has on me throughout the day.

[00:35:13.990] - Myles Holmes

It was the same for Jonathan Edwards. It was the effect that it had on him in life.

[00:35:18.940] - Darryl Dash

Yeah, absolutely. Myles, I've heard recently at least one book argue that Jonathan Edwards leaned into his resolutions early in his life and later in his life moved away from them a little bit, maybe found them a little bit too onerous. I don't know if you've heard or researched that thing. Is there a danger in trying to be over-resolved? I don't want to say he was legalistic, but is there a danger in trying to do too much and almost feeling crushed under the weight of trying to do all these things and maintain a standard that might not be realistic?

[00:35:58.370] - Myles Holmes

Yeah, for sure there's a danger in doing that. I think the... Yeah, this, again, is why I'm so thankful for the church. I'm so thankful for people who know me and know when I'm doing that. I think the reality is people are built so different. There are people who, again, like I said, I think that Jonathan Edwards is your typical Excel spreadsheet guy who thinks that way and loves tracking and loves systems systems. That was even what he contributed theologically. It was really like, that's the way that he thought it was in whole systems. I do agree that in his life, at least publicly, for what we have, the resolutions were an early thing for him because he stopped his diary after a few years. So I think I don't know that... I haven't researched it fully, but I don't know that he stopped or that he just stopped writing about it. Because even at the end of his life, you see him thinking about food and diet. So with that, specifically, at least. And I don't even know that he stopped tracking it. All I know is that he stopped his diary. And so that was the main thing we had to say, he's still thinking about these resolutions that he wrote when he was a teenager.

[00:37:19.720] - Myles Holmes

So, again, I would say that it really comes down to the heart of it. I think legalism, it can be a bit of a buzzword. Certainly, Jonathan Edwards, if your typical definition, my definition of legalism is doing this so that you can get a right standing for God. There's

nothing that would even begin to make you think that Jonathan Edwards is keeping up the resolutions in order to find justification. It's just the opposite. He's got a clear understanding of justification by faith. But what he is trying to do is out of a... To me, it really seems like a sincere passion and love and an understanding that for his greatest happiness. This is Edwards' theology, right? His happiness. That happiness in the Lord. That's where the greatest satisfaction can ever come from. That his greatest happiness is actually in the pursuit of these things. So I read a quote in a secular book that was about self control. And part of what it was saying was that self control is recognizing. It's not restricting yourself from something. It's enabling you to enjoy something more later. I think that's it. God's common grace is a real great principle.

[00:38:41.000] - Myles Holmes

Self control is saying no to the buffet that we stand before Because we know that, and Jonathan Edwards actually talks about this, we know that five minutes after we leave, we're going to be incredibly grateful that we didn't overindulge. You can look at it and say, Oh, that person is forsaking pleasure. But actually, the way that Jonathan Edwards is looking at it is that there's a greater pleasure to be found in forsaking this and treating it the way that God intended me to treat it. Jonathan Edwards is my hero, so I'll go to bat for him. But as I look at it, I really think that he's actually pursuing a greater satisfaction. That's not a heart of legalism. It's a mature understanding that pursuing a right relationship with food, diet, and sleep is going to lead to a greater in the Lord. Would you agree? I think- I would agree, yeah.

[00:39:35.190] - Darryl Dash

I think that we're very good at taking good things and going off course, either in an antinomian or legalistic direction. I think that you can take... I think that the danger isn't Jonathan Edwards being legalistic. The danger is that we could take his 70 resolutions and apply them legalistically, become unhealthy in the way we apply them. But I think the solution to that, again, is what you identified. The purpose isn't to earn our approval with God or to measure up to a certain standard, but actually to seek him through living in a way that would please him. So, yeah, it's got to be the heart focus, I think, that matters in the end.

[00:40:15.530] - Myles Holmes

Yeah.



[00:40:17.180] - Darryl Dash

Most of us could use more structure, right? I think that I am, as I'm talking with you about this, I don't know if you've read Gretchen Rubin, and she talks about the fact that most habit books are written by type A like people who love habits and Excel spreadsheets and habit trackers. And she makes argument that, yeah, a lot of people aren't like that, right? A lot of people, that appeals to a certain personality type, but not everyone's like that. So I think part of my struggle is figuring out how does Jonathan Edwards apply to people who are maybe not as structured, who don't like tracking habits, and yet the way he lived is still going to be instructive for them. It's still going to have some lessons for them. But, yeah, how they translate it into their personality and live in a way that they can be themselves and yet learn from him well.

[00:41:07.230] - Myles Holmes

Yeah. I think we recognize this in other spiritual disciplines that every person is different. You have theology that doesn't change. We have a theology of God's word that doesn't change that says we need God's word and we need to study God's word. We even have some intricacies in there that we will maintain that you not only need to You need to study it. You need to make observations about what's in God's word. You need to study God's word. You need to apply God's word. You need to pray God's word. We'll even make some generic universal applications of what we need to do with God's word. But when it comes to the specific application of that, I think we're really good at saying there's not necessarily one way to do it. Your scripture reading likely looks very different than my scripture in terms of time, in terms of what we do. And yet it's all built on the same theology that we have of God's word. I think what we need to do is, and we haven't done this enough, and written about this enough, and there hasn't been enough practical guides in this, and probably because it's, with all honesty, maybe not as important and not as relevant.

[00:42:23.910] - Myles Holmes

But I think especially in our day, where materialism is the primary worldview in the West, it's We need to take our theology of embodiment, which I think most of us, if we've thought deeply about, agree on, that the soul is of primary significance, and yet that the body is something. We need to actually have that theology. I don't think we do it enough. I think as Christians, we're reacting to the secular materialism of our day, and

we're not thinking about the body. We're only thinking about the soul. And yet I think what we need to present is this, what the Bible presents, this understanding that the body is incredibly important and incredibly helpful to us as we pursue our soul, delighting in the Lord and loving the Lord with all of our being. We need that embodiment theology, and then we need to figure out how that applies to us, and it's going to look incredibly different. I think that's part of the way that God has created our bodies is that it can look incredibly different the way that we do it. I heard a stat recently. If you do one set of strength work a week, it decreases all cause mortality by 50 %.

[00:43:46.860] - Myles Holmes

It's a one set a week. And so the reality is there's not a specific... Even as you think about exercise, there's not a specific thing that we need to be doing. If we don't do it that way, we're doing it wrong. There's a thousand different ways that we could do this, whether it's running, whether it's walking, whether it's strength training, whether it's all the options that we have in this day and age, thousand different ways that we can do it. But I think the practical application for us is we are embodied. We are created by God with a soul and a body. We care about our soul, the lighting in the Lord. So we need to, therefore, care about how the health of our body in order that we can aid that process.

[00:44:33.780] - Darryl Dash

Yeah, that's really helpful. I want to just ask you a few questions as we wrap up here. One would be if there was anything we should take away from Edwards in his understanding of the body and how to live well in this area, what would that takeaway be? I know you've written a big paper. There's a lot to say, but what would be something that would be really helpful to think about in applying all of this?

[00:45:00.500] - Myles Holmes

That's a great question. I think the needful thing is to... I mean, this maybe will be a bit of a cop-out. I think the needful thing is to think about it. I think that's what Jonathan Edwards teaches us. He spent his life thinking about it, and especially with diet, doing different things and playing around with eating different foods and the amount of food that he ate. I think it would do us wonders to actually take these realms that we have put in the secular sacred divide we often have. We've put in a secular bucket and said, That's the world's thing, and it has nothing to do with godliness. I think we need to take that out, not make a god of it, but say, How can we make the best use of these tools

that God has given us? And then we need to start the pursuit of what that actually looks like for us, relevant to the journey, where we are in that journey. If we're going from nothing, maybe that means just taking a 10-minute walk a day and seeing how that affects us. I find I don't know if this is just me.

[00:46:17.490] - Myles Holmes

I'm sure you could relate as well. I find that if I'm in a season of eating unhealthy and not going to the gym, it's like if I do it for one day, I'm amazed at how great I feel just physically and how that changes my mood and how that changes the pursuit of even Christ in my own life. There's just so much joy. You can talk chemically about all the endorphins and stuff. Why don't we use every biological mechanism. It's so studied today with materialism and try to figure out how can we use this tool, the body that God has given us, to the glory of God to the greatest degree. That's what I would say. I We got to think about it. I think those three realms, diet, sleep, and exercise, if you can lock those in, you've got 95% of physical health cared for there. Those are three huge things. It's relevant for us to have a plan of what does the pursuit of health look like for me now. Yeah.

[00:47:23.120] - Darryl Dash

So good. Myles, I want to ask you a couple of personal questions. What has God been teaching you lately in your life?

[00:47:33.480] - Myles Holmes

Yeah. I think it keeps coming back to this, and I think this has been a... This is not the first time I've learned it, but I keep being reminded of the seriousness of it, of just that the greatest thing that we can have is faithfulness to the Lord. If we can just focus on a personal faithfulness and pursuit of the Lord, if we can walk with integrity, then whatever we face in life, we're going to be okay. And whatever role we're called to, the Lord is going to bless us in. And for me, that's incredibly comforting because it simplifies things for me. I think about being a pastor, and in many ways, I have no idea what to do. The problems are too many. The burden are too great to bear. And yet the Lord has made so many promises about living a life with integrity, and it protects you from so much. I just, I think constantly about the Psalms and how many times David is in the presence of enemies, and the thing that he relies on is his integrity. I was recently at a conference

with elders, and I was looking around the room and I consider this as I see you do your ministry, Darryl, and see your life.

[00:49:00.140] - Myles Holmes

There is a great power in godliness and a great comfort that comes from pursuing faithfulness with all the power and energy that you have. That's what I'm praying for. That's what I'm after is a greater faithfulness, trusting that God's going to use that. All the confusion and messiness of life, we just focus on that. The Lord is going to use that.

[00:49:22.440] - Darryl Dash

Amen. Yeah. So encouraging. So good. How has God been encouraging you lately?

[00:49:29.920] - Myles Holmes

I think that he has been... I'm really encouraged by... I'm young, and I think I'm young. I got grey hair, so maybe I'm not young anymore. How long can you say that you're young for? In terms of the game of senior pastoring, I am quite young and I'm surrounded by pastors who have fought the fight, and they fought battles I haven't seen yet, and they have done it with just a great desire to bring glory to the Lord. In a world where there's constant news about people that are in our position as pastors that are failing and not finishing the race well. Even recently, more news coming out about just a guy that the Lord really used in my own ministry that was really powerfully used. The thing that encourages me is there are so many men that are pursuing the Lord in faithfulness and nearing the end of their ministries. I'm sure that if the Lord were to come today, he would look at them and say, Well done, my good faithful servant. Faithfulness is so possible. The Lord, more often than not, those who set their eyes on the Lord, they make it to the end.

[00:50:59.540] - Myles Holmes

The news blows up over all these guys that don't. But I just have too many practical examples to know God is going to hold us fast. He's going to keep us in his hands. We're secure in him. He's our shield and our salvation. I'm just incredibly encouraged to know to rest in the Lord is to find refuge and strength and safety.

[00:51:23.760] - Darryl Dash

Amen. I'm so encouraged. I look around, I see so many godly people who have served God for decades and are finishing strong. It's easy to lose sight of them in the midst of the scandals that we hear about. But you look around, you realize there's a lot of faithful people. And behind that is the goodness of the Lord, right? That we don't have what it takes, but he sustains us to the end. Myles, I'm so encouraged by you. I really appreciate your thought on this topic. And, yeah, I'm thankful for your ministry, your friendship, and I certainly hope I get to see you in person again and we get to hang out. Yeah. Thanks for being with us today, too.

[00:51:58.080] - Myles Holmes

Yeah, I really appreciate it, Darryl.

[00:51:59.050] - Darryl Dash

Same goes to you.