

## **TwoIgnite**

## **TwoSweat**

Pastor Mark Connelly  
Mission Community Church

So we did this four week launch and then what we said we would do this at the first weekend of each month for a year, so this is our first weekend in October. The first weekend of each month, we are going to talk about one area of marriage and how to have a healthy marriage. Then, instead of inviting you into a classroom to dig deeper, we are inviting you to join in with us and live the adventure. So the first time, in September, we talked about the value of play in marriage. We said let's just get out and take some adventures together. We had all kinds of adventures. They were just fantastic. We rode a mechanical bull. There was sushi riding.... Yea, you can ride sushi. That would be really messy. It's much better to eat it.

We have a special prize for one of those groups. It is the motorcycle group. Everyone who went on the motorcycle ride, would you stand up right where you are. Motorcycle people... excellent. The couple that led that adventure, we want you to come up. We have a special prize for you and it is the Cranium game so you can continue to have fun. This is Cindy and Bob that lead the adventure. Let's give them a big hand. Good job, guys. There were actually 35 of them that went on this motorcycle ride and they had a great time, so it was fun. I hope that you continue to take the adventure.

Every month, we are going to have all these adventures that you can go on as couples. By the way, if you are here and you are single or you are single again, just know that these principles will apply totally to you, especially in the topic that we are talking about today – TwoSweat. You will be able to completely apply the principles and the gift that we are going to be giving to everybody is for you as well.

TwoSweat is all about the value of just caring for you body physically, the physical care of your body and the impact that has on your marriage. I have to tell you that I am so ready for this message. I've been working out my entire life and I'm so happy that I finally get to preach a message on this. I was so ready and had all these really good stories and I was ready to go and then I met with C.J. and we prayed over the sermons and the worship and everything. He totally wrecked me about a week ago. He was right when he said, "Mark you need to understand that there are a lot of people in here that when you talk about the physical body they are going to be immediately uncomfortable."

So I just need to put some disclaimers out there. If you are a person that has an eating disorder, we just want to bless you, we just want to love you, we want to come along side you, and we want to help you get the help that you need.

We have counselors in ministries here to come along side and to help you. But please don't think of this message for reinforcement for that eating disorder. We want to come along side you and help you get the help that you need.

For some of you, you have a physical condition or ailment that makes it difficult for you to be able to be as healthy as you want to be or to exercise, etc. Please don't feel any added pressure or guilt from this message to do something that you physically are just not able to do right now. Please be released of that this morning.

For some of you, you are already kind of sitting under maybe a spouse or friend that's already harsh with you about things and you're thinking I'm just giving him one more thing to be harsh with you about. Let me just say that if anybody leaves here today and you point at your spouse and go, "Did you hear what he said that you need to do," you have completely missed the point. This is about focusing on yourself and your own responsibility. I can't say that enough, okay?

There are some of you that you come into this place and you already struggle with your body image. When you look in the mirror, you already think that you are not beautiful. If I could just share with you the scripture verse that we ended with last week. The last verse in Ephesians 2 says, ***For we are God's workmanship.*** You are a masterpiece of God. The scriptures say that he knit you together in your mother's womb. God personally made you physically to be beautiful in his eyes and please, please, please don't feel the pressure to conform to our culture's vision of what beauty must be. You do not need to be Bradgelina to be beautiful. You are beautiful in God's eyes. You are beautiful.

As we talk about the physical body and what the scriptures have to say, I want to make sure that we keep it in biblical perspective. The fact is when we talk about our physical bodies, it is not the most important part of who God has made us to be. I'm going to stay straight up this is not the most profound message you'll ever hear. This is not the most deeply spiritual message that you will ever hear. The best I can offer you today is that this is something the Bible says is of some value to you. This will be of some value.

I typically work through a passage of scripture. When we go through Ephesians, we are going verse by verse through it. We've got our Bibles open and we are going through it together. But because this is a topical message and we want to be able to talk about the sum total of what scripture says about this, I have to cover a broad spectrum of scripture. So instead of having you try to follow along with all this... You can follow along in the scriptures, but I'm going to do something I don't normally do. I'm going to put all the scriptures up on the screen. I would encourage you to write down the scripture references and go home and check them for yourselves. I am going to do my absolute best that I never take any scripture verse out of context, but I always encourage you to go and check that out for yourself.

There are things that are way more important than our physical being, than our outer appearance, like our inner beauty and our soul and wisdom and those kinds of things. So scripture says things like this in Proverbs: ***Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful***

**woman who shows no discretion.** If outer beauty is not matched with inner beauty, then outer beauty is of no value. It's the equivalent of putting a nose ring on a pig and going oh she's hot. No she's not.

It also says this in Proverbs 31: ***Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*** Outer beauty is fleeting. No matter how hard we try to take care of these physical bodies, eventually we are going to be hunched over and we are going to decay and we are going to die, but our relationship with the Lord is eternal. So pursuing godliness, pursuing our relationship with the Lord is of infinitely more value than our physical bodies.

The Apostle Paul says this about physical training in 1 Timothy 4. ***For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.*** In other words, physical training, taking care of your body, it's not worthless. It is of some value and it's of some value to us while we are alive in this present life; while we are walking around in this body. Taking care of your body is of some value during that time period, but godliness is of value both in the present and eternally. So pursuing godliness is infinitely more important. But, the scripture does say that the physical care of our body, physical training, is of some value.

I've been preaching for 12 years and I've never once done a message on this, never once. If you're new here, you might look at each other and think this my hobby horse because I gets so excited about this. I've never once done a message on this, ever. As a matter of fact, I've been a Christian for over 20 years and I have never once heard anybody give a message on this. And I listen to a lot of sermons from a lot of people and I have never once, in any country, in any place, doing any thing, ever heard any pastor ever give any message on this subject. I've heard pastors make mocking remarks about people who exercise and lift weights and those kinds of things, as if it's of no value... because pastors in general are a flabby bunch aren't they? We can be honest. This is church, we can be honest. But it is of some value, right?

Today I want to get a biblically balanced perspective on the value of the care of our bodies. Then specifically I want to take it a step further and talk about the value it has to your marriage. So while a physical part of who we are is not the most important part, it is a part of who God made us to be. When God knit you together in your mothers' womb, he made you both a physical and a spiritual being. The some total of who you are, the physical and the spiritual, is in some mysterious way an actual reflection of the image of God. It says something about God himself. We actually bear the image of God.

It says in Genesis 1: 26 about God's first making of that first human being. God said let us make man in our image. When he made that first human being, he made a human being that had both a body and a soul and the sum total of that person actually reflected the very image of God. That person was an image bearer. It's not that God has a physical body. The scriptures say God is spirit, but there is something about our physical body that, in some way, actually reflects the very image of God, it says something about God.

That's why scripture says things like we shouldn't slander one another. In James 3 it says it's just not right that you use your tongue on the one had to bless God and on the other to curse others who are made in the image of God. The whole image of God wasn't just for Adam and Eve. We are still image bearers. That's why we are not supposed to speak poorly of other people because those people actually reflect the very image of God. You and I are image bearers.

1 Corinthians says ***Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price, therefore honor God with your body.*** Again, I never want to rip any scripture out of its context. This is not talking about physical training, but it's talking about not offering up the parts of your body in sin. The point remains that the physical part of who God made us is real and it is not to be ignored. The body is to be cared for and used to honor God.

There is nothing new. All through out history, there have been people groups that have said that the physical part of who you are just isn't even important at all and you shouldn't even talk about it on Sunday. It's not in scripture that we shouldn't talk about that in church. The Gnostics, in the second and third century, taught that the physical is just not important at all; don't even pay any attention to it; it's only the spiritual that's important. That is not true; it's not biblical. God has made us both a physical and a spiritual being.

The fact is those things are interconnected and when one suffers, the other part suffers and when one is healthy, it induces the health of the other parts. There is a connectedness in how God created everything. The more we explore the universe... You talk to people who do this for a living; there is just this unbelievable connectedness in the universe. There has been unbelievable connectedness in how God actually wired us as people. The physical, the emotional, the spiritual; there is a connectedness between those parts. It's really easy for us to see on the physical level. It's really easy for us to look at the human body and say that obviously the parts are connected and while one part hurts, the other parts hurt with it.

Biblically this is easy to prove because when the Apostle Paul was talking about the church and referring to it as the body of Christ, he used the example of the human body and he says if one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. There is a connectedness in the human body and when one part hurts, the rest of the body aches.

God builds these things into me before I ever get up on the stage. Sometimes in ways I don't like at all. Friday, my back went out. I don't mean like my back is a little sore. I mean like I can't move. Friday night I was walking around like this. Then Saturday morning, I was walking like this. Last night at the Saturday night service, I was almost straight up. My back was hurting and my whole body started hurting because I started walking funny. When I started walking funny, it hurt my shoulders because I'm holding my shoulders differently. My wife says, "Mark, you've got to stand up straight." So I'm walking like this. My neck starts hurting and then that gives me a headache. It just starts here in my lower back and all the sudden my whole body starts hurting because the parts of the body are connected. We know this, we've experienced this.

The reverse is also true. When we begin to bring health to other parts of our body, the rest of the body begins to feel good; it begins to affect the whole body. When we begin to exercise, our muscles and our cardiovascular system... it begins to affect the entire body because God has made this thing connected.

I was just reading the Surgeon Generals Report this week and I just want to read you a couple of quotes from it. It says regular exercise improves the entire circulatory system which reduces the risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, colon cancer, breast cancer, and diabetes. As your circular system gets healthier, it keeps your mind sharper. People who are physically active are half as likely to suffer from cognitive decline as they age. The point they are making is that as you exercise, it brings health to your entire cardiovascular system and then it keeps your mind sharp; it actually strengthens your bones and fights off osteoporosis. Everything just begins to get healthier because the human body is connected. We know this, we see this, and we feel it as human beings.

Then the research is showing something that we also already kind of knew intuitively and that is that the physical part of who we are is very much tied to the emotional part of who we are. When we are physically hurting, it affects our emotions. So the same report from the Surgeon General says that people who exercise regularly have a reduced rate of depression, a reduced rate of anxiety, and have much higher marks of psychological well being.

Why? It's because God made us so the parts of who we are, are interconnected. When we are hurting physically, it shows emotionally and when we are hurting emotionally, it shows physically. The physical and the emotional are connected and I think I can prove, biblically, that it's not just the emotional and the physical, but it's also the spiritual. God has also connected our heart, our emotions and our body and our soul in such a way that those things interact with each other. They are connected and when one aches, the other aches with it.

I want you to see this from scripture. Psalm 38 says ***Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin. My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.*** Remember that's the whole message of Psalm 38 that the sin and guilt... these are spiritual issues. These are issues of the soul. Sin and guilt are things that weight heavy upon the soul; they sit on the soul like a burden too heavy to bear. But it's not just that they affect the soul. When they affect the soul that way, there is also an affect on the human body. There is no health in my body. There is a connectedness. When my soul aches, my body aches with it.

Isn't it true in your life that when there is something deeply wrong inside of you, something deeply wrong with your soul, it begins to drain your body? People can see it on you so they come up to you and ask you what is wrong. They are looking at your physical, but they are seeing that there is something wrong inside because there is a connectedness between our soul and our body; it's how God made us. Again in scripture it says ***Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways***

***acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.*** We are familiar with that verse, but the very next verse after it says this: ***This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.*** But these are spiritual issues: trusting the Lord, leaning on him, fearing God... Those are spiritual issues of the soul, but they have direct impact on the human body, the health of the body, because there is a connectedness between our soul and our body. When one aches, the other aches with it. When one is healthy, it helps the health of the other.

So when Jesus tells us how to love God, he says love God with all of who God made you to be, not just one part. Jesus says, Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your mind, with all of your soul and with all of your strength. Jesus says if you really want to love God, love God with all of who God made you to be, not just a piece of it. Don't just love God with your thought. Don't just love God with your mind. Don't just love God with your soul. Actually love God with all of who God made you to be. Love God with the depth of your soul, with the thoughts of your mind, with the emotions of your heart, and with the strength of your body. That's how you are to love God.

Isn't that how Christ loved us? Jesus didn't say I think I'm just going to think good thoughts about those people. I think I'm just going to spiritually... We celebrated communion today. What are we celebrating? We are celebrating the physical death of Jesus on a cross for us. He loved us with his body as well as his heart, mind, and soul. So if we are going to love God, we are supposed to love him with all of who we are, all of who God made us to be, not just one part.

It is the same with our spouse. If we are to love our spouse like Christ loved the church as scripture tells us to do, then we will love our spouse with all of who God made us to be, not just with one or two parts, but with all of who God made us to be. We will bring our best to our marriage. If we want to love our spouse, then we bring our best to our marriage, spiritually, emotionally, physically. We bring our best. If you want to have a smokin' hot marriage, bring your best. When you both come into a marriage and bring your best of who you are, that's a beautiful marriage.

I think we would all agree that when it comes to the other parts... if somebody said "I'm just not going to give that to my spouse," we would say that person isn't loving their spouse the way that they should. So if, for instance, if a spouse said "I'm just going to choose to be emotionally distant from you for the rest of my life," we would think something is wrong with that. Or if someone said "I'm just going to be spiritually unavailable to you," we would say that person is not loving their spouse the way they should, in the fullness of who God made them to be.

It's the same physically. If we just say "I'm not going to care at all about my physical body; I'm just going to sit on the sofa and drink beer and scratch my belly and get sloppy..." What I'm saying is I don't care enough about you to love you in the fullness of who I am. I'm holding back a piece. I'm not bringing my best in everything that God has made me to be. We are to bring our best.

Scripture says in Ephesians 5: ***In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church.*** Husbands, bring your best to your wife. You owe it to bring your best to your wife. Wife, you owe it to bring your best to your husband and that extends to your physical body.

One of my favorite verses in scripture is in 1 Corinthians 7. It says, ***The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.*** If only the rest of the scripture was so easy to apply. Wouldn't it be great? I would have been in seminary a lot longer. This passage is actually talking about physical intimacy inside of marriage. It's saying if you are married, your body doesn't belong just to you, but it also belongs to your spouse and you are to bring your body and offer your body to your spouse in reference to sexual pleasure for your spouse. This is biblical. You should offer your body to your spouse. And we should offer our best. We should bring our personal best to our spouse. That's kind of one of those verses where... I'm really glad it's in the Bible for confirmation.

Please hear me on this. Please don't go home and point at your spouse and say "Did you hear what you need to do because you are not bringing our best?" No, no, no, husbands, that tells you to focus on your responsibility as a husband. Wives, God wants you to focus on your responsibility as a wife. My responsibility as a husband is to ascribe beauty to my wife and you make it super easy to do that, you really do. But even if she didn't, it would still be my responsibility to ascribe beauty to her, not have some other standard of beauty, but she is my standard of beauty. And it's my responsibility to bring my best to her, spiritually, emotionally and physically. I owe that to her. When I bring my best to her, my whole marriage changes. When I begin to bring my best physically, it begins to affect other areas of our marriage because there is just this interconnectivity that happens. It's how God made us.

I just want to read a couple of things from a report from the Mayo Clinic about exercise. The Mayo Clinic says this in relation to exercise and marriage. It says exercise improves your mood. Physical activity stimulates brain chemicals that leave you feeling happier and more relaxed, reducing your risk for depression. Regular exercise can also help you fall asleep faster and deepen your sleep. A good night's sleep improves concentration, productivity and mood. This is true when you think about it.

I know in my life when I'm taking care of my body and I'm sleeping right and I'm eating right and I'm exercising right, I'm just a lot nicer to be around. But when I stop doing some of those things and I stay up too late and I watch something and I've been up too late and then I've got to get up early, then I get grumpy and then I don't eat right because I'm in a rush and then I can't get to the gym... I just start acting like a butthead. I didn't know whether to use that word in the sermon or not so I Twittered it. I asked all the Twitter folks if I should use that word in a sermon and it was unanimous. They said yes so... They might be buttheads, right? You never know. But if you want to weigh in on the subject, you have to start following us on Twitter.

Here's the thing: my wife doesn't want to be around me when I'm acting like that. If I want to bring my best, emotionally, to my wife, then it's good and right for me to take care of my body because that affects my emotions and I begin bringing my best emotionally.

The Mayo Clinic report also says that exercise boosts your energy level. Physical activity delivers oxygen and nutrients to your tissues which helps your entire cardiovascular system. When your heart and lungs work more efficiently, you have more energy to do the things you enjoy. You have more energy. I want to have enough energy for my wife. I don't want to give my work my best and my wife my worst. There's no advantage either way. To plow through the day at work and then I get home and just pass out on the sofa... that's not honoring to my wife. I want to take care of my body so that I have the energy to be able to give my best in the workplace and then come home and give my best to my wife. I owe that to her.

The Mayo Clinic report says exercise affects your sex life. Regular physical activity often leads to enhanced arousal for women and reduces the risk of E.D. in men. The fact is taking care of your body physically directly impacts the amount of joy that you have as husband and wife in the bedroom. It just does. The scripture says your body is not your own. It belongs to your spouse and you are to offer your body to your spouse. It's right and it's good and it's biblical. God says so. Thank you, God, right? So let's offer our best. When we offer our best, our marriage is better. The fact is you will just live longer as husband and wife if you both take care of your body.

Did you know that the American Heart Association estimates that there are 250,000 deaths a year in America...? That's 12% of the deaths in America are directly attributed to a lack of exercise. I read that and thought if my wife is prematurely a widow because I didn't take care of my body, then she has to suffer because I didn't bring my best. I owe it to her to bring my best in all of who God made me to be, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. I am to bring her my best to the best of my ability. When we bring our best to our marriages, our marriages get better.

Part of bringing your best is your physical body. That's why scripture says physical training is of some value. It is of some value. We want to come along side you and help you with this. I am going to ask the band to come on up. We never want to be a church that preaches the word and then goes "See you later, good luck with all that." We want to be a place that comes along side you and helps you and blesses you and encourages you and gives you the tools that you can use to be able to begin to walk with this.

We are going to offer you some things for you to take advantage of today. You really want to listen up here. We are giving a free gym membership to everybody in this place and your entire family and all of your kids for the next 30 days. Now I know what some of you are thinking. 'Oh, I know what those free things are. Number one, I'm going to have to give some credit card and then if I don't cancel it after 30 days, then they are going to charge me. I'm going to forget to cancel it and I'm going to pay anyways.'

None of you are going to have to give any financial information. There is no credit card

and after 30 days, there is nothing you have to cancel. It's hassle free. The other thing you're thinking is "Oh, I know what that is. I'm going to go there and they are going to try and sell me a timeshare or something, right? There going to make me sit on one of those ball things and give me this big spiel to sign up now."

We wanted to get around that so we said we want the gym to come here and we want you to give us the key fob. So here's my Fitness Works key fob. The thing is that once you have this key fob and you just check in, they don't know that you are a new person and so you don't get the sales pitch. You have a little waiver with your program. It might be blue, it might be white, but it says *Waiver of Liability*. Fill that out on the bottom. Fill that out and then go over to the tables that are over on the side here and give that to them. They are going to give you your key fob and key fobs for all of your kids so you can go in and plug in.

Then they also have this thing called Kids Zone, which is their child care for kids under the age of 12. That's all free for the next 30 days. So parents, if you're like "We don't have a babysitter so we can't do that," we took care of that for you. You just go there and you get a key fob for your kid that says Kids Zone. They check in and it's all free for the whole month. For the whole month, you can go free, put your kids in child care and you and your family begin to get in a workout exercise.

We want you to maybe start taking some classes. We put a class together just for TwoIgnite couples. One of the reasons why people don't get into the exercise classes is because they're embarrassed that everybody else knows what they are doing and they just know they're going to be doing something different than everybody else. We don't want that to happen so this is a beginner class. It's called Body Pump. You are going to love it, okay? I'll be there. This is the gym that my wife and I work out in. You are going to love it. Go on the website and it's going to tell you about the class that's only for this church. It will tell you where to go and what time. As a matter of fact they have a little flier when you go to the Fitness Works table.

Then if you want to get a little bit more hardcore, there is this thing called Boot Camp and it's all free for you. So Boot Camp and all the details on that are on our website and they will also hand you a flier and it tells you the times and the locations that you can go to this Boot Camp.

Then if you want to be a little bit more anonymous, on our website, click on TwoIgnite and we have all these resources. One of them is a nutrition guide. It will give you a meal plan. You click on that and it will give you a meal plan. You select male or female and your body weight, and it will print out a meal plan for you that you can use it over the next 30 days or for however long that you want.

Then there is also an exercise plan for beginners, intermediate and advanced. You just click on that get your workout plan.

In the month of October, we want to lose 3,000 pounds as a church. Clearly the band is

not going to be able to help us on this okay? So we need your help. Make up for the band. We need to lose 3,000 pounds as a church. We need you to tell us. There is a book being written on this and we are going to be the example of it and this chapter is going to be about this church doing this program and you are going to be that chapter. So we need you to... There is a little thing on their website... TwoSweat... it says 3,000 pounds. Click on that and tell us how much weight you've lost each week and then we total it up. We want to lose 3,000 pounds as a church. A killer whale weighs 3,000 pounds. We are going to lose the whale in one month.

I know I'm forgetting some other stuff. Then there are all these other adventures. If you click on Adventure... it's just like all the TwoPlay adventures. There are all these exercise adventures. There are some runs that actually help girls that are trafficked in this area. There is Pilipino dancing. There are all kinds of fun things that you can get plugged into. Just go on the website and do that.