

24 TOP TIPS BY STEPH BETH NICKEL

I am relationship-driven and very much appreciate the opportunity to connect with you. Below are half a dozen tips I've personally found helpful in each of these four areas: Prayer, Bible Study, Exercise, and Healthy Eating.

Prayer

1. Commit each day to the Lord before you get out of bed.
2. Instead of listening to secular music while you're traveling alone by car, spend the time talking to God.
3. In those spare moments we all have during the day—waiting in line, listening to elevator music while on hold, standing at the bus stop—pray for those who come to mind and those whose paths cross yours.
4. When you say you will pray for someone, do it right then. It's too easy to get busy and forget all about it.
5. Make it a habit to read God's Word and pray with your family regularly. (Even though we have been hit and miss with this discipline over the years, we are seeking to again make it part of our routine.)
6. Good day or bad, offer it all back to the Lord when you crawl into bed at night.

Bible Study

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to illumine God's Word every time you open it.
2. Read God's Word daily. Devotionals are good, but make sure you are opening the Bible and reading the passages in context so you can gain a deeper understanding of what they mean.
3. Set aside time to meditate on what you read. Don't rush in and out of God's presence. There is so much richness to be discovered even in very familiar passages.
4. Even if you find it a challenge, seek to memorize portions of the Scriptures and review them regularly.
5. Discuss the awe-inspiring, challenging, and downright confusing passages of God's Word with fellow believers. Together seek a deeper understanding of what the Lord is saying.
6. Spend some time digging into resource materials to more fully understand the culture of Bible times.

Exercise

1. Create an achievable list of goals and get started. As I've often said, even a baby step in the right direction is just that, a step in the right direction.
2. Don't say you're too busy to exercise. Exercise helps us think more clearly and work more efficiently. Actually, you're too busy not to exercise.

3. Instead of curling up on the couch and watching TV after dinner, go for a walk with your family, your dog, or on your own.
4. Purchase a new exercise DVD at the appropriate level of difficulty and follow along three or more times each week.
5. Find an accountability partner and hold one another to your goals, even when you can't get together in person.
6. Visit the local gym and see what they have to offer. Sometimes it's just what you need to encourage you to get active. Make sure they offer to show you how to properly use the equipment even if you choose not to purchase personal training sessions.

Healthy Eating

1. As I said with exercise, make a list of doable goals and get started. Don't try to change all your bad eating habits at once.
2. Remember that what works for one person may not work for another. Finding out what eating plan is best for you will, to a certain extent, be trial and error.
3. Take a trip to your local farmers' market. I began doing so every Saturday morning last summer and it made a huge difference to what we ate. One day in particular, I did not have any other commitments. It was like Christmas! Just remember to take cash. Most do not accept debit or credit.
4. Plan ahead. Some of you likely do this all the time. However, I do not. And if I wait until the last minute to decide what's for supper—or breakfast or lunch—I'm more likely to choose the processed, ready-to-eat-in-no-time options.
5. When cooking for others, introduce new foods and meal plans creatively. Healthy eating is important for the whole family, but you actually want them to eat what you prepare.
6. Seek to be more concerned about your overall health than your weight or clothing size.

These tips have worked for me but may not be right for everyone. They are meant as information and encouragement only. Before changing your level of physical activity and/or your diet, consult your doctor or other medical professional.

I would love to stay in touch. Feel free to contact me . . .

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I had the privilege of co-authoring Paralympian Deb Willows' memoir. If you are interested in reading about this amazing woman's life, a lady who gives all the glory to God, I invite you to pick up a copy of *Living Beyond My Circumstances* from [Castle Quay Books](#) or other online and physical bookstores.

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