



This is the *Health Matters* podcast.

The Fusion of Spiritual & Physical Fitness with Rusty Nokes

I'm your host Kimberley Payne and this is the show for women who want to improve their spiritual and physical health.

In this episode, we'll be talking about how when you address the health and fitness of your spiritual life the other elements of life become easier to manage.



My guest this week is Rusty Nokes. Rusty has been a Certified Fitness Trainer since 1998 and has competed in everything from bodybuilding to endurance events. While struggling through divorce, addiction and homelessness God inspired him to write the 31 Day Journal, *Christ Fit Fusion-The Fusion of Spiritual and Physical Fitness*. Spiritually and physically, you will weather the storms of life much better when you are Christ Fit. Welcome Rusty.

Rusty

Hey Kimberley, thank you ma'am.

Kimberley

Thanks for coming on. We have a lot in common just by reading your bio with the spiritual and physical fitness. What inspired the writing of *Christ Fit Fusion*?

Rusty

Well a couple of things primarily, through my life—and you touched on a little bit of it—I've gone through hard times. I know everybody else does and has and my story's not special in any particular way. Somebody else's struggles are not mine and mine are not theirs but we all go through those seasons and storms of life. Some of them we bring on ourselves, some of it is just thrust upon us but as I look back over my life and just saw some of the seasons I'd gone through—some as a non-believer and some as a believer, I got saved and still went through some storms. It dawned on me at about 2 o'clock

in the morning one night I started getting this download, the Holy Spirit was just pouring into me and as badly as I wanted to just tune it out and write it in the morning, I couldn't. I felt compelled to get up and start writing and writing and writing and I did. It was a lot of physical analogies that I used to paint a picture to draw attention to the spiritual fitness. I pushed myself as an athlete, I had trained hard, I had disciplined myself, I had sacrificed luxuries or some particular foods, whatever, in order to obtain a certain goal physically. And I started to see how that could so equate to our spiritual training and our spiritual growth. And how we have to push, and stretch, and strain to grow. And so my life people can relate to having gone through those storms of life. And we truly do, whether it's physical, whether it's getting your knee blown out as I did, or whether it's spiritual attacks. We get attacked both physically and spiritually and we weather those storms much better when we're spiritually and physically fit, Christ fit.

And then the other reason, just as a trainer, very practically I had used journaling forever. Myself, as an athlete, I did it with my clients, Olympic coaches use it, professional coaches use it, professional athletes use it. It's a super, super valuable tool, great accountability. As I journalled for people, I did notice that there were some that succeeded and some that didn't in my clients. There's a lot of success stories out there. I've got some as well but honestly the majority of people that are just working out and going through the motions are not getting the results that they can. You'll see some great before and after pictures but what you don't see is the after the after picture. A lot of times people will get on certain programs or a certain diet or a certain pill, whatever it is, they're going to lose some weight. They're going to have an after picture showing that they lost 40, 50, 60 pounds. But if they've not adopted a lifestyle then they go back to their old ways.

This applies again spiritually. It's just like when we get that spiritual high, grow and do really well for a season. And then we just taper off. The Bible talks about the dog going back to his vomit. If you don't develop that lifestyle, that way of life, those characteristics, then it's very easy to yo-yo physically and yo-yo spiritually. So this journaling bit has worked for decades and decades. It's been proven time and time again. If you write down what you eat, you will lose more weight, you will become healthier than someone who is on a "diet" but doesn't write it down.

With the read for the day and that journaling page, I just apply that same journaling principle with the physical diet and the physical exercise and the journaling to a spiritual diet and spiritual exercise.

Those are the two primary reasons, just my life experience and the practical side of it. Those two things are honestly what inspire me. God inspired it but I believe it's those two primary reasons.

Kimberley

I love the idea of the "after the after" picture. People go on these fast diets and lose crazy amounts of weight but you're right we're looking at a lifetime here. We're looking at a lifestyle change. I love that whole attitude. I'm a big fan of journaling myself. My audience is primarily women but I know that there are men listening, how have you found men with journaling? My experience is that there's a bit of hesitancy there. What have you found?

Rusty

You know guys typically—whether it's journaling or asking for directions or reading the instructions trying to put together a bicycle—we've got the answers and we don't have to look at anything and so off

we go charting our own course. And that's typical. That's your stereotype. Once they see the results that the journal will produce and once they do it what it does for them is it does open their eyes. The biggest thing is to get them to swallow their pride and just try. Just try it. And once you start doing it and you start writing these things down, when you're writing down your diet and you say, "Well it's 9:30 at night and I know I shouldn't have the ice-cream. Here's my journal. Instead of three scoops I'm just gonna have one." So they're writing it.

And they start journaling our spiritual exercise and our spiritual diet—there's spiritual junk food too—so before I go click on that computer, if I'm going to be honest I'm going to be honest with my accountability partner and I'm going to write all this stuff down, spiritual health food and spiritual junk food it confronts you. And in a good way. It's a great accountability tool. So the initial impression is, "I know what to do, I got all the answers and I don't really need it." But if you can just get them to take a look, it's just like getting somebody to take a look at the gospel message for the first time. Once God starts to do something you're not going to strong-arm them. I already did that for years and realize it doesn't work if somebody's heart is not open to it. They got to want it. But once they want it and once they see it's effective then it's an easier sell. And once they try it then their eyes are opened.

Then I've seen just the opposite way where they get on fire for it. And that's what I did. I mean as an athlete I could've told you back in the day how many calories were in a ketchup packet. I counted everything that went into my mouth, and every set and every repetition and I just had journals and journals and journals of it. Once you see the effectiveness of it, it's almost addictive and you start really dialing that in because you have such a good benchmark and a track record for where you can adjust as you go forward to become even better, even stronger, even more spiritually and physically fit.

Kimberley

When you talked about a spiritual diet and spiritual exercise, what do you mean by that?

Rusty

Okay, well we've got our physical diet and if I told you, Kimberley, as your trainer I want you to get up tomorrow morning and eat a great breakfast but don't worry about eating again until next Friday morning. Okay are you in? I'm not going to be your trainer very long in the first place.

Many Christians, many religious people in general, eat one spiritual meal a week and that's usually a Sunday morning service or a Saturday night mass or what have you. And not all but many. We know the grazing principle physically is the best—smaller meals throughout the day. So spiritual diet, just the same thing. A well-balanced, healthy spiritual diet throughout the day. And I'm not talking about burying your nose in the Bible every 15-20 minutes that's the main course—and absolutely I think you need to be in your Word every day, I start my day off with it—but then there are other little things that we can do to get that spiritual nutrition. While I'm driving I've got the choice to flip over to my radio and listen to my country tunes or I can turn it over to one of my favourite pastors on one of the local Christian channels or I got an app on my phone and I can plug in any pastor I want and listen to a little word while I drive. I've got little scripture cards that I post on my computer. I'm glancing at that throughout the day.

So these little nuggets, these little snacks, we can go on every day. We're not sitting down and engaging in a 5-course meal all the time. Eat that good meal and every few hours, just something. And it's easier than you think. It just takes commitment. Just like physical training and physical nutrition, it just takes a

little bit of discipline. Almost everybody takes a lunch break, okay an hour. So if you're going out to lunch you got a few minutes in the car to listen to something, you got 3-4 minutes, you don't even have to be following a story to flip over to the Proverbs and just land on a random proverb and read a proverb or two. Get your little snack in. That's what I mean by spiritual nutrition. There are other books by pastors, all these things we take in to feed our spirit. That is what I'm talking about when I talk about spiritual diet.

Kimberley

I love the idea of a spiritual snack.

Rusty

You asked me about both of them right, and spiritual exercise is part of it. And if I'm jumping ahead I won't answer that question yet but I thought you asked me about spiritual diet and exercise.

Kimberley

Yes I did.

Rusty

Well the spiritual exercise goes hand-in-hand with the physical exercise. The doing. It's the doing something. So with my Bible reading I'm getting my nutrition but that's also a physical act. I could hit the snooze button, I could get up and make coffee and watch the morning news, but I'm going to choose to do something that requires me to work those spiritual muscles that I'm making those conscious choices.

You've got your Bible reading, you've got your prayer, you've got your fasting, you've got these spiritual disciplines but you've also got some things that sometimes you don't think about. You know it takes a lot of strength for me spiritually to choose to forgive somebody. I'm one of those that's inclined to get bitter, hold a grudge, and pout and sulk and just not forgive somebody. But when I choose to say, "Okay, I know God wants me to forgive this person." They've hurt my feelings, but rather than say something back to them or get a dig I'm going to choose to forgive them. I'm going to choose to ask for forgiveness when I know I've said something a little snide or whatever, whether it's to my spouse or one of my children. You know the tongue gets you in a lot of trouble, it will for me. And so for me to forgive or choose to forgive it's like bench-pressing 300 lbs. I've gotten very strong spiritually because I have to press that weight. I know what I need to be doing.

So sometimes those spiritual exercises—walking away from an argument, not firing back—take a lot of strength for some people. Being patient. Doing an act of service for somebody. There'll be things that we do like that, anytime the Spirit kind of puts it on our heart to do a spiritual action or to refrain from doing something that we know we shouldn't it requires those spiritual muscles to come into play. That's spiritual exercise along with your normal disciplines of reading and praying and fasting.

Kimberley

I love that, it reminds me of the book of James. You know when he's always talking about it's one thing to know what to do but it's an entirely different ballgame to actually do it.

Rusty

Amen! And it's hard. You've got to be strong to do it. The natural thing is lose our tempers and holler at somebody at the interstate. Whatever, you have to deal with your own issue. For some people it might be exercising tremendous spiritual strength to avoid buying that 15th pair of shoes they don't need. All I know is that everyone has these things that they deal with, we're human, and so there are things that require spiritual strength. We've got to be spiritually strong to do them or refrain from doing them as the case might be.

Kimberley

What is the Christ Fit Fusion nutrition and exercise plan and why would we journal it?

Rusty

We talked about the journaling a little bit, it's effective. It's been proven for decades. Journaling works. Now the plan, the program, the beauty of it is that there's really not a program. I do not tell anybody how to count calories, or how many grams of protein, carbs and fats to eat etc. That information is available but honestly it can be very personalized and I'm going to have a different calorie requirement than you are and your listeners. We're all going to fall within a range. But I certainly don't want to claim to have the next magic bullet because there's no such thing.

Second of all, it's very individualistic. But it's not complicated. The plan is to simply eat healthy and clean. And educate yourself a little bit. The Bible tells us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. I want people to take this thing seriously and work out their salvation physically and not just take somebody's word for it who said this is how many calories to eat. There's a range and I don't mind counselling people and I do. People pay me for my time and for the most part if you ate three healthy well-balanced meals a day, a breakfast, lunch and dinner and a healthy snack in-between it's very simple. And the whole thing, the whole journal, is based on simplicity. The message of salvation is free. It's a very simple message. Jesus came, He lived, and He died for our sins. He was risen on the third day and it's a very simple message. Now to walk with Him and apply takes a lot of discipline, very challenging and it can be difficult.

But the message of fitness is equally simple. You just eat clean and healthy and balanced. Mix up the colours on your plate if you will. You've got your colourful veggies, and you've got your meats and as we eat balanced and develop this lifestyle and educate ourselves because some of it is on you. You've got to want it bad enough to dig a little bit. You can't just sit and listen to the preacher and take everything he has, and that be all you get. You need to get in the Word for yourself and educate yourself on what the Bible says.

So I apply that same principle to health and fitness. I don't leave anybody hanging out to dry. But I, on purpose, don't claim to have the answer because for me, there's not one. If somebody gravitates towards their activity level to start exercising well, gosh, if they're running they're going to have environments where someone is going to take up weight lifting or swimming or what have you. To start off simply, just eat clean and healthy. And eat frequently. As we start to develop that lifestyle, as you start to educate yourself you're going to be able to answer some of those questions. Do I need more carbs than the other person if I'm doing various activities? Does that make sense?

Kimberley

It sure does.

Rusty

I don't want to be vague on purpose but if somebody's not hungry enough to educate themselves then they're setting themselves up for failure in the first place.

Kimberley

Right. Simplicity, that's important because again, we're looking at a lifetime, we're not looking at a quick fix. It's something that's got to be a lifestyle change and it has to be simple. If it gets too complicated then it won't be something that we continue to do.

Rusty

Absolutely.

Kimberley

What is the content of the daily readings?

Rusty

It's a 4 to 5-minute read, just one page and I use analogies kind of like I've been doing as we talked. You don't eat one physical meal a week and expect to be physically healthy so why expect to be spiritually healthy on one spiritual meal a week. We talk about everything related to spiritual and physical fitness.

Accountability. You know when I was training in the gym—back in the day when I was doing the body building thing—I had a workout partner. That's accountability. So on the days I didn't feel motivated to go work out, I went anyway. If it was cold outside, I went anyway. If it was a particular day, leg days were always the toughest and you'd dread leg day, but you would go anyway. You had that accountability partner.

And so we need that spiritual accountability. Journaling, that's a great accountability tool for self-accountability. But we also talk about accountability whether it's a spouse or a close confidant, somebody in your life that you're accountable to that helps you with that walk. And if you goof up, we're not there to judge and point a finger. We're workout partners essentially. The Bible says that if a brother gets in sin to reach out to him and bring him back with love and do it humbly.

Each day is something like that. There's inspiration pages that talk about thriving vs. surviving, and running our race, whether it's the physical race or the spiritual race. But the bottom line is that each day has something to do with the physical aspect of fitness and we're always going to relate it to our spiritual fitness.

Kimberley

It's a little bit of an encouragement every day.

Randy

Encouragement and some of them are quite challenging.

Kimberley

So what do you see is the big vision for Christ Fit Fusion?

Randy

There are several things. I do Boot Camps here in San Antonio Texas. I do the Boot Camp for about 30 minutes then I do a message from the journal, and then we have some questions and answers and some fellowship and prayer. That's how I run my Boot Camp. Now there's a lot of churches that are starting to catch on and do some physical activity. There's Boot Camps at churches.

And I do a Life Group at the church where I attend and there's other zumba classes. There's various physical classes that go on at the church where I worship and other churches all over the country. And so part of my vision is, with these exercise classes that are happening and it's starting to happen, people are starting to use the Christ Fit Fusion journal to bring into their already going exercise program. Because a lot of these programs, you get a lot of leaders together and they're exercising together and that's great but they're not adding a spiritual element to it other than they may fellowship and pray after their workout. But I would love to see the journal be out there as a resource and a tool for these people that are already meeting. I would like to see Christ Fit Boot Camps if somebody wants to help a few others set up a Boot Camp. They're using the journal and people are getting healthier and they're going through it and journaling. We've even got people out in California doing it. He's even a secular fitness guy doing the Cross fit gym and they use the journal. His wife bought a batch of them and did a Bible study—a little spiritual and physical fitness Bible study. I would love to see that become a tool that more and more people use individually.

You don't have to be doing any kind of organized fitness to use the journal. You could be thinking, "Hey I need something in my life so I'm holding myself accountable and I got a tool." I'm just going to walk around the block every day. Or I'm going to swim some laps at the YMCA, or whatever the case. Start cycling. I want to see this journal help people to get on track and doing a lifestyle of becoming Christ Fit.

So it goes way beyond me and my Boot Camps. I think it's a great tool that's going to effect a lot of people . It's already started. So the more that we can get that message out and just get people plugging into it that's one area where I see it going.

And honestly with my wife studying Christian counselling with an emphasis in substance abuse and victim disorders we plan to have a Christ Fit Ranch one of these days. I do have a background working on a ranch, and it was actually a fitness ranch—a 24-hour live-in ranch—and so we'd love to see it grow into something where people can actually come. Almost like a retreat centre for a weekend or a week at a time and be a Christ Fit ranch where we are doing fitness activities throughout the day. Not a Boot Camp but recreational stuff like water aerobics and water volleyball and digging into the journal and digging into the Word of God and growing over a period of time versus just seeing somebody once or

twice or three times a week. There's so much time out there that when you're outside of your element after your workout there's still 23 other hours in the day where the devil can be tapping on your shoulders and so it would be awesome to see something developed to where we can have that extended period to really dig in and get a real kick start for that whole lifestyle program.

Kimberley

I definitely look forward to a Christ Fit ranch. That would be something. Especially living up in Canada here, where today, in April, it snowed. I'd love to come south and participate at your ranch.

So now we're going to move on to the BEEP round. Rusty will give quick tips on the four disciplines of Bible study, eating healthy, exercise, and prayer or BEEP. So what do you have for us for a quick tip for Bible study?

Rusty

Everyday. It's part of the three rules, not rules, but principles of being Christ Fit. The three principles that the whole thing is based on is to: 1) Eat a healthy spiritual and physical diet, 2) Exercise spiritually and physically, and 3) Do them both consistently. Those are the three principles throughout that journal. And so if you are doing it consistently, I'm talking about every day. And you might not be in the Word for an hour or two hours a day and that's okay. But every day.

So for me—and again there's no scientific formula—I like to read in my New Testament and I'll start a book and I'll just systematically read a chapter or two a day. And then I'll go to the Old Testament and read a chapter or two in whatever book I'm in there. And I like to get into the Proverbs a little bit and the Psalms a little bit and have that balance. You know again there's that balance, physically and spiritually. But whatever you do, every day.

And there's days where we have those like, "Man I missed my workout, here it is 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock I need to go to bed but I've not done my exercise." Guess what? You can lie in bed and do some crunches. I'm not going to the gym but you can lie in bed and do 20 crunches. If you haven't read your Word, guess what it doesn't take any time at all to flip over to the Proverbs and read a few proverbs. So overall my advice on that whole thing is just every day. Consistency. Do it consistently. Day in and day out. And make it balanced.

Kimberley

I like that. Doing a little bit every single day and in every single discipline. Excellent. Now I understand that you have a gift for our listeners. An eBook—a portion of your Christ Fit Fusion journal—that you're offering as a gift. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Rusty

The journal is going to be available as an eBook. It's in the process right now. There will be a portion of the book where you can get a good sample. I like the introduction because it lays out the whole program and what living a Christ Fit lifestyle is all about. It gives the scriptures like a platform for the whole book and then you get several pages of the journal. You can read a page a day as if you had it in your hand. You can have your own little separate notebook. When I journalled, there's nothing magical about

journaling, you can take a spiral notebook and write down your spiritual diet and spiritual exercise etc. You'll see the template that's in the journal how I've got it laid out. But that's how that's going to work.

Kimberley

What I will do is put a link to it in my Show Notes and everybody can access it there.

Rusty

I apologize about one thing. You asked me about the BEEP and so I addressed the Bible study but it sounded like I was supposed to address the E E and P as well. I don't know if you're going there yet or if I just failed to finish up but I got the E E and P ready to go if you need it.

Kimberley

Sorry, go ahead, I was thinking that the tip you had mentioned kind of covered all of them. But go ahead. What do you have for a quick tip for eating healthy?

Rusty

Honestly, I kind of did, because that's the whole thing about Christ Fit Fusion, it's the fusion of spiritual and physical fitness so when I'm talking about one I'm almost talking about the other and so of course the balance when it comes to eating. Obviously I'm all about balance—protein, carbs, and fats. I'm not a stay-away from carbs guy. You know, I'm not going to go overboard either. But our bodies, our brains, our first source of energy is carbohydrates. You know as well as I do that Doritos is not your best source of carbohydrates. And sugar and ice-cream are not your best source of carbohydrates. A lot of times people already know what they need to do or not do. Eating: So healthy and clean, and again, consistency. Balanced and grazing throughout the day.

Exercise: same thing, be consistent. And you don't have to work out an hour in the gym. If you find yourself there one day, that's great. But maybe for you it's walking around the block a couple of times. That's fine if that's where you have to start. But consistent. I can go out and play badminton and get a workout. I can go out with my kids and play 4-square and call that my workout for the day. It doesn't have to be some extreme workout that leaves you in a puddle of sweat. But something every day. Something consistent.

And then prayer: obviously, the Bible tells us to pray without ceasing. Before my feet hit the floor, I just wake up and say, "Good morning. Thank You Jesus for another day. Before I even get out of this bed help me get my mind right and get ready to go out there and do whatever it is You got me planned to do that day." And then just talking to Him throughout the day. I've got my moments in my prayer closet. I've got my moments on my knees. A lot of times I'm praying while I drive. It's just another one of those spiritual exercises, disciplines if you will, so I'll just talk to Him throughout the day. It's that eating healthy spiritual diet, spiritual and physical diet. That's it.

Kimberley

Amen! We are on the same page for sure. I want to say thanks again to Rusty Nokes for his expert advice and thank you for joining us today.

This interview has been brought to you by [JumpStart – a free 2 week challenge to get you into the habit of spiritual & physical routines](#). You can discover more about this free challenge and other health programs at my website at www.kimberleypayne.com.

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This has been the *Health Matters Podcast*, believing that prayer & Bible study are to the spirit what exercise and healthy eating are to the body.

Blessings on your journey to health.

About Kimberley Payne

Kimberley Payne is the host of the *Health Matters – Healthy Spirit Healthy Body* podcast. She is author of *Fit for Faith – a 7-week program to improve spiritual and physical health* and is a motivational speaker offering workshops and online courses based on her book. She hopes to inspire women to live happier, healthier lives that glorify God. She is happily married and lives with her husband in a village east of Toronto, Canada where she hikes and bikes. Visit her website at www.kimberleypayne.com

