

Lesson 2 / March 9, 2008

One Hot Yoga

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 2

Focus:

Jesus demands that we
shape up.

Lesson 2

Bible Basis:

Matthew 22:12-17

Students will look at ways people get in physical shape as well as discuss the merits of expressing appropriate anger.

Materials:

- jump ropes
- large fitness ball
- workout DVD or videotape
- DVD or video player
- Two- and Five-pound weights
- small stress balls (that strengthen hands by squeezing)
- appropriate fitness magazine covers

Call on a few students and ask them what they typically do in one week to exercise their bodies or stay in shape.

Mention that because fitness is so important, today, before talking about anything else, the group is going to have an exercise time. Allow at least five minutes where students can run in place, jump rope, do jumping jacks, do pushups, lift light weights, and stretch, or use fitness or stress balls. You may also want to have an appropriate workout presented on a television in an area where students can spread out and participate. After all students have had a chance to exercise, regroup.

Ask the students:

- **How do you feel now after a few minutes of exercising?** (*Most in the group will say they feel energized, raring to go, better, happier, etc.*)
- **Why do you think it is important to exercise?** (*To stay in shape, lose weight, gain muscle, keep healthy, get your heart rate up, live longer.*)

Hold up a few of the appropriate fitness magazines and show the students the covers. Have a few students call out the headlines that catch their attention. Mention that people have been getting into shape for thousands of years but every year a new technique or fitness activity shines through.

Mention that a trendy yet dangerous fitness movement that is all the rage now is a form of yoga called Bikram or "hot" yoga. It involves participants to conduct yoga moves in 105 degree temperatures.

Lesson 2
Memory Verse

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."

—John 8:31

According to the *New York Times*, "Part of the Bikram yoga philosophy is the push to go a little farther every time a posture is performed. Participants arch backwards and bend to the side in the 'half-moon pose,' for example, and then do the movement again, trying to bend the spine even more. Practitioners maintain that the spinal flexibility and strength cultivated in Bikram yoga can be vital in warding off the effect of aging on posture. Some physical therapists, however, question the value of excessive joint flexibility, saying it can lead to inflammation and pain. Physicians caution that exercising in heat 2 to 7 degrees above the body's core temperature of 98.6 can be dangerous."

Why do you think people might take part in an exercise routine that could actually harm them? (*People enjoy pushing themselves to the limit.*

Those who are into fitness may especially like cutting edge things even if they pose a risk. People also become bored with fitness routines and may want a "quick fix" especially if this yoga in the heat leads to rapid weight loss. Also, eating disorders affect more and more people every year, and cause them to do harmful things to their bodies.)

Why, in general, do you think people enjoy taking part in the latest 'fads,' like fitness routines, diets, or fashion? (*Boredom busters, to get attention, to be "in," to gain popularity, etc.*)

In today's lesson Jesus, in no uncertain terms, told some people to shape up. He didn't have to turn up the heat to 105 degrees in the temple to get His point across. Jesus was "hot" under the collar and these men knew it. Why did Jesus get on their case . . . well these guys weren't lazy or overweight physically but they were huffing and puffing spiritually. Most importantly, these men had desecrated God's holy temple. A big "no, no" in Jesus' and His Father God's book.

Jesus' rebuke in this Bible story goes much deeper than Him just expressing anger at what these guys were doing. Jesus challenged *everything* surrounding these guys' actions, their motives, their hearts, and their greed. Pretty tough stuff, yet Jesus' call to shape up still applies to us today. So, get ready to get your heart rate up and dig in to what it was that got Jesus hoppin' mad then and still gets Him going today!

[Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.]

Sources:

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=health&res=9905efde1f30f933a05750c0a9629c8b63>

Lesson 2 / March 9, 2008

One Hot Yoga

for use as
STEP 4

Lesson 2
Focus:

Jesus demands that we
shape up.

Lesson 2
Bible Basis:

Matthew 22:12-17

In today's Bible study, Jesus gets angry. He doesn't just get a little angry—like He has in the past when He made a cynical or thought-provoking remark directed at a Pharisee. Here, Jesus gets super-furious, table-tossing mad! He looks like a crazy person running around. Can any good come of that? And how can Jesus be sinless if He lost His temper? These are all good questions, but ones that can be answered by looking deeper into Jesus' heart.

Jesus didn't sin in His anger because His anger was justified. Jesus used His anger to make a point and to show people that a temple is a place of worship, not a place to make a profit.

How can Jesus' actions in the temple apply to us today?

(Some churches or T. V. evangelists take advantage of people by asking for money that isn't used appropriately. Any time the church or God's work is used as a cover for personal financial gain it makes Jesus angry.)

Do you think anger can ever be used for good? Explain your answer.

(Anger that is used to right a wrong can be good. Anger that is used as revenge is never good.)

Anger, in and of itself, isn't bad. "The red-hot emotion has a positive side,' say psychologists who study anger. 'Several factors can make the difference between constructive and destructive anger,' say psychologists who study and treat everyday anger. In a best-case scenario, the angry person expresses his or her anger to the target, and the target hears the person and reacts appropriately. If the anger is justified and the response is appropriate, usually the misunderstanding is corrected,' notes James Averill, PhD, a University of Massachusetts Amherst psychologist."

"Anger can be constructive when people frame it in terms of solving a mutual problem rather than as a chance to vent their feelings,' says social psychologist Carol Tavris, PhD, author of *Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion*. The question is not, 'Should I express anger or should I suppress it?' It is, 'What can we do to solve the problem?'"

What do you think Jesus would see if he walked into your congregation today? Would He find a spirit of worship appropriate to what is expected in God's temple? (Have students contemplate this question on their own.)

Lesson 2
Memory
Verse

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."

—John 8:31

How about if Jesus looked into your heart? What would He find there? *(Have students also contemplate this question on their own.)*

Jesus got mad because He wanted these men to shape up or ship out. He holds us to even higher standards. This week take a look at your heart and ask yourself:

- Why do I do my devotions? Is it to glorify God or just because I know I'm supposed to.
- How about tithing. Do I give money to God from my heart or because my parents want me to?
- Sharing Christ with others. Is it because I genuinely want others' to come to know Jesus or because I'm on a guilt trip if I don't?

First Samuel 16:7b says, "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." This week do a "heart check" and see if you're really in as great of shape as you thought. If you are, great! Keep at it. If not, make a spiritual fitness plan and stick to it. Nothing will yield better long-term results than being in tip-top spiritual shape.

Close in prayer.

Sources:

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/mar03/whenanger.html>

(We are not affiliated with and do not endorse any website listed on these pages.)