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# Learning Lifeline

A LETTER ABOUT LEARNING FROM ESTHER WILKISON

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Imagine walking into a gym knowing you are about to meet your personal trainer for the first time. A middle-aged man with massive muscles walks towards you and calls you by name. *This is good*, you think. *My trainer knows my name.*

Next, he asks you your age. You state that you are—let’s imagine—38. He looks at his clipboard and says—“Okay, 38. Well, let’s start with 38 burpees. Then I want you to do 38 dead-lifts using the weight that is standard for 38-year-olds. We’ll follow that with 38 chin-ups.”

You laugh, then stop since he appears extremely serious. You take a deep breath and get started by giving those burpees your all—which means you stop, shaking with exertion, long before the amount he wanted.

Your trainer looks disappointed as he writes on his clipboard. You take a deep breath and attempt the deadlift—but you can’t get the bar to move at all. He shakes his head and writes more on his clipboard. And chin-ups? The bar he points to is too high for you to even reach.

This trainer could blame you for being unmotivated. He could lecture you about how, back when he was 38, everyone could do these things.

Of course, this trainer is delusional. How fit we are is not based on our age but on body development, athletic aptitude, how we have (or have not) been trained, and how we have practiced.

What if, instead, a second trainer walks up to you and, after calling you by name, begins asking you questions about your workout history and fitness goals? What if he has you try different lifts using various weights to get a clear read on your fitness level? What if he starts you out with a number of reps that are challenging but doable?

What if, on top of that, the second trainer actually listened when you described your pain from a past injury? What if he used his expertise to rehabilitate your muscles so that you no longer experienced pain?

Now imagine that this same trainer actually lowers the weights for you on a day he notices that you are exhausted from a sleepless night. You may be discouraged by your poor performance, but he encourages you for showing the commitment to come in and put in the reps.

That second trainer would have an incredible impact on those blessed to have his attention and skill moving them to their next level.

If you find yourself facing the frown of those who don't find you standard enough or strong enough, take heart in the reality that we've been given a Holy Spirit who is far more capable and kind than even that second trainer. He is not frowning at your weakness. He is happy to take you right where you are and build you up in His love so that—together—you can accomplish every good work He pre-planned for you.