

I've asked the servers to help with this talk. Would you guys please go into action now?

This is my new bicycle. It's a 12-speed with an aluminum frame, so light even a server can pick it up. This summer I've only gone biking four or five times. And to tell you how my luck has been, in the midst of this drought, rain has soaked me to the skin twice. But still it's probably my favorite form of exercise. I figure any time you can exercise while sitting down, you're ahead of the game.

Recently I saw an article about this sport. It tells you how to get serious about biking. And I'll share these secrets with you. So if you leave Mass with nothing else today, you'll at least have a good lesson in biking.

Rule number 1: Be informed. Get to know your bike, how to do simple repairs. Read up on bikes. Subscribe to magazines, read books, talk with people who know them.

Rule number 2: Choose your heroes. Find out who the pros are. Follow the Tour de France and some other international bike races. Choose and imitate the people you admire.

Rule number 3: Train regularly. Get into a workout habit. Train all year round, not just when the weather is good. And eat properly; a good diet will help your performance.

Rule number 4: Ride with other bikers. You'll develop friendships, but you'll also be inspired by their love for biking, and you'll inspire them.

Rule number 5: Create a special room in your home for your bike. Decorate the room with posters of your heroes. In this room you prepare your bike for the ride, but you also prepare yourself. It's here where you can psyche up for biking, and you'll enjoy it most.

Now, surely you can see already where this is going. For the author of this article, biking is more than an exercise. It's a religion, it's a whole way of life. It can happen with golf, music, even bookkeeping. We will schedule our lives around our religion, whatever it may be.

In the Christian religion, too, we follow rules to help our exercise. But there's a big difference between Christianity and biking. In the religion of biking, we take the first step. In the religion of Christianity, God takes the first step. Jesus says in today's Gospel, "You cannot come to me unless the Father who sent me draws you. Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me." You see, it is God who moves first in our faith. We move second, always in response.

Now, an effective response to God would be very much like a biker's. Let's review the 5 points.

One: Be informed. Get to know about your religion.

Two: Choose your heroes. Learn about the saints, both living and dead.

Three: Train regularly. Get into a habit of prayer.

Four: Train with others. Share your faith with others in the community.

Five: Choose a special place. Either at home or at church or someplace else, but find a place where you can prepare yourself to lead the Christian life. Then it will bring you joy.