

The Sure Blessings of Health

There is a lot of emphasis on health today, especially in the area of diet. It seems some are putting so much emphasis on a healthy diet that one might think that even our salvation depended on what we ate! Others scoff at the idea that we should be particular about diet or other lifestyle issues because in their view, this has nothing to do with the spiritual aspect of our lives. To help us find the balance to this issue we must turn to the Bible.

I Corinthians 6:12 – *“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”*

This goes back to cause and effect. This includes physical law as well as spiritual law or principles.

Galatians 6:7-8 – *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”*

God does not directly punish those who follow poor health practices, but they will suffer the sure consequence of violating health principles.

However, regardless of how healthy a lifestyle people live, some will not live out their normal life expectancy. Accidents and disease can strike those who are in the best of health and cut their lives short.

The Bible teaches there is a more meaningful reason for why we should do our best to be healthy beyond simply living longer. Look back to something Jesus said as recorded in the book of Mark.

Mark 7:18-21 – *“And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it*

entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

Remember one of the rules of correct Bible study from lesson # 1. Who is the primary audience the speaker is addressing? In this text, to whom is Jesus speaking? The answer is the Jews, and to the Jew in those days, eating unclean meats, hormones and chemicals in meats, processed foods, not drinking enough water – lack of sleep – lack of exercise, none of these things were a problem – so Jesus did not mention any of these as things they should avoid. But, what would Jesus say to us today in America?

– Could what we eat and the lifestyle we live affect what comes from within, that is, affect the way we think and our ability to make good decisions? Absolutely! The main reason to maintain good health is so that we may protect the mind, the control center of our being.

From the book **“Why God Won’t Go Away”** - Ballantine Publishing Group Copyright 2001 by Andrew Newberg M.D.

“The brain is a collection of physical structures that gather and process sensory, cognitive, and emotional data; the mind is the phenomenon of thoughts, memories, and emotions that arise from the perceptual processes of the brain...The mind cannot exist without the brain”

“Every event that happens to us or any action that we take can be associated with activity in one or more specific regions of the brain. This includes all religious and spiritual experiences.”

“If God appeared to you in some incarnation, you would have no way of experiencing his presence, except as a part of a neurologically generated rendition of reality. You would need auditory processing to hear his voice, visual processing to

see his face, and cognitive functions to comprehend his meaning, and input from the brain's emotional centers to fill you with rapture and awe... There's no other way for God to get into your head except through the brain's neural pathways. God cannot exist as a concept or as a reality anyplace else but in your mind. Even if there were a soul through which God could communicate, it would have little cognitive meaning to us without a brain."

This helps us to understand the importance of the proper function of the brain, which is directly related to the working of the mind.

We all know alcohol and some drugs cause problems with the brain's ability to function. But what we may not realize is that things like overeating - eating a lot of processed foods - too many sweets - animal products - caffeine - lack of fresh air and sunshine - lack of exercise, all these things pose a health risk and thus can cause problems with the brain's ability to function properly.

For example, if our arteries are restricted with cholesterol and our blood flow is sluggish because of fats, there is lack of blood to nourish the heart and the brain.

The book – **“Exploring the World of Psychic Powers”** Southern Publishing Assoc. copyright 1971 by Fernando Chaij, Ph.D., Dr. Franz Volgyesi speaking about hypnosis states:

“A lack of blood to the brain induce the hypnotic state...the activity of the control centers of the cerebral cortex is suspended... and one's individual consciousness and will power are therefore replaced by those of the frontal cerebral region of the brain of the hypnotist....

The lack of blood to the brain makes it easier for someone else to “get into our head.” Satan gets in our head this way! This is why diet and exercise and lifestyle are so important. Diet and exercise promote healthy blood as well as proper blood flow to the brain so we can think clearly and make good decisions that would be of benefit to us and pleasing to God.

Galatians 5:22 - *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”*

Note the last virtue in this list of fruit of the Holy Spirit is temperance. The word in the original Greek is “enkratia.”

“Enkratia” means self-control. We all need self-control, the power of mind over body. That is, the ability to do what is best regardless of how much our “flesh” may crave those things that are harmful. Let’s look at some texts that relate to this.

Luke 10:26 – 28 - *“He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy **mind**”*

II Corinthians 8:12 – *“For if there be first a willing **mind**, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”*

1 Peter 1:13 – *“Wherefore gird up the loins of your **mind**, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ”*

Romans 7:25 – *“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the **mind** I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”*

Romans 12:1-2 – *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your **mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

Christ living on earth as a man, knew the importance of this health principle in affecting the mind.

Matthew 27:34 *“And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to*

drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him..."

Vinegar mingled with gall was a potion given to men who were being crucified to help deaden the pain. But as with all painkillers it also deadens the ability of the mind to think clearly.

One Bible scholar commented on this in the book, ***Desire of Ages*** (Pacific Press Publishing, copyright 1940, pg 746)

"To those who suffered death by the cross, it was permitted to give a stupefying potion, to deaden the sense of pain. This was offered to Jesus; but when He had tasted it, He refused it. He would receive nothing that could becloud His mind. His faith must keep fast hold upon God. This was His only strength. To becloud His senses would give Satan an advantage."

Jesus needed His mind to be clear so that He might stay focused on His mission. What about us? As the followers of Christ, isn't that important for us too?

Right health principles promote:

- (1) Mental superiority and Intellectual power
- (2) Physical strength, and Longevity

All of these things depend upon unchangeable laws. There is no happen-so, no chance, about this matter. Nature's God will not interfere to preserve men from the consequences of violating nature's laws. We will reap what we sow!

There are a number of reasons why this is especially critical for us living at this time.

1) Because of all the "*winds of doctrine*" blowing today, we need clear minds to discern the true from the false. We need to be able to clearly hear the still small voice of the Holy Spirit that says to us "*This is the way walk ye in it.*"

2) In our world today obtaining food untainted by contaminants is difficult. That being the case, our greatest safeguard is a strong

immune system to fight off the diseases that may attack our bodies. Only with proper diet and exercise can we have a healthy immune system.

3) If our blood flow is sluggish and impure with fats and contaminated with chemicals, if our arteries are restricted with cholesterol, if our blood pressure is high from gluttony and lack of exercise - We will be like the drunk who thinks he's ok when he's not. If we can't think clearly, our ability to reason will be crippled.

4) If our mind is clouded we may not be able to correctly understand God's Word and be more open to Satan's subtle temptations. These problems may lead us to make poor decisions and in the end be lost! Perhaps even worse, we may confuse someone else and cause them to be lost!

There are seven basic keys to good health –

1. Rest.

Proper rest is essential for health of mind and body. Overwork should be avoided, and getting 7- 8 hours of sleep per night is vital. Periods of rest provide much needed quietness and communion with God. The Sabbath plays an important role in rest.

2. Pure Water

The human body is 75 percent water, but this vital fluid is being lost through exhaled air, perspiration, and waste products. Therefore drinking 6 to 8 glasses of pure water a day is needed to maintain efficient health. Another important function is its use in cleanliness, daily bathing, and washing hands often.

3. Sunlight

Sunlight is essential to life; it powers the process that provides the nutrients that nourish and energize our bodies and releases the oxygen we must have to live. Sunshine is the best source of vitamin D which promotes health and healing. But, too much exposure to the direct rays of the sun can be dangerous.

4. Fresh Air

Impure air hinders the blood from carrying the oxygen required for the best function of every cell, including that of the mind which makes a person less alert and responsive. It is important that we

secure a generous supply of fresh air every day. The following is a list of things that help provide your body with optimal oxygen.

1. Give the body an oxygen flush by frequently taking slow deep breaths.
2. Don't smoke and don't breathe anybody else's smoke.
3. Air out your house often.
4. Surround yourself with green plants.
5. Be active, exercise.

5. Exercise

Regular exercise results in increased energy, a firm body, stress relief, weight control, healthier skin, improved digestion, and reduced risk of heart disease and cancer, and self-confidence. Exercise is not an option; it is essential to maintaining good health!

Note the following quotes from Time Magazine's Health Report (Sources: American Journal of Medicine; Institute of Medicine; Cancer Causes and Control)

"Tobacco is the primary non-genetic contributor to death in the U.S.; among other things, it doubles the chance of having a stroke. Poor diet and lack of exercise are second, alcohol abuse is third, microbes and viruses are a distant fourth."

"Score another point for healthy living. Half of all fatal cancers are linked to poor diet, smoking and lack of exercise – all factors that individuals can control."

6. Stimulant free, Drug free life There are many harmful drugs through which Satan destroys lives everyday, speed, heroin, cocaine - but more commonly used drugs, drugs people try to justify, are just as deadly! Alcohol and nicotine are both toxic (poisonous) substances. Do not use them in any form. Caffeine is another widely used addictive drug that causes many physical and mental problems.

Note the following:

Quote from Time Magazine Health Report :

"A survey of 22 published studies shows that heavy coffee drinkers face a 40% greater risk of heart attack than non-drinkers."

Quote from Self Magazine:

“We found that caffeine impaired recall ability by about 20%.”

Quote from the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry:

“In a study of the demographic characteristics of the people who use caffeine, it was found that high consumers were also less active in religion.”

Where do we get caffeine? - Coffee, tea, colas, and chocolate. Since God communicates with us through our minds, it is well to remember that nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol adversely affect its function. A Christian who is truly, sincerely seeking to know God better, will abstain from using these or any mind-altering drugs.

7. Nutritious Food

Food produces blood, and blood nourishes the mind, therefore what we eat is very important. To the first humans on earth, the Creator gave the ideal diet. According to the Bible, in the beginning because there was no death, man was given a vegetarian diet. Man’s body was designed to function best on that kind of food.

Genesis 1:29 – *“And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”*

The word “meat” in the King James Version is misleading. The Hebrew word is “oklah” and it simply means “food.” While it is true that God later allowed men to eat flesh foods, it was not the very best diet for them.

Today eating of flesh foods and other animal products including dairy products is much worse than in the past. Considering the hormones, chemicals, and other harmful things used in the food of animals raised for human consumption, as well as the fats contained in animal products, nutritionists today agree that the vegetarian diet is the most healthful diet.

There is too much material to provide all the information and evidence for this in this study guide. There are many materials available for that purpose. It would be best to research those

materials and keep abreast and follow the best diet available to you.

An excellent book on this topic is **The China Study** by T. Colin Campbell, PhD Published 2005 by BenBella Books.

The New York Times commenting on this book said it is - "The most comprehensive large study ever undertaken of the relationship between diet and the risk of developing disease are challenging much of American dietary dogma."

Another helpful source of information on health and nutrition is –

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I John 1:2 – *“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”*

Response Questions

1. The reason for a Christian to be concerned about physical health is clear to me. Yes ___ No ___
2. I will study to learn more good health habits. Yes ___ No ___
3. I will commit to the practice of good health habits that my mind will be alert to the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to me. Yes ___ No ___