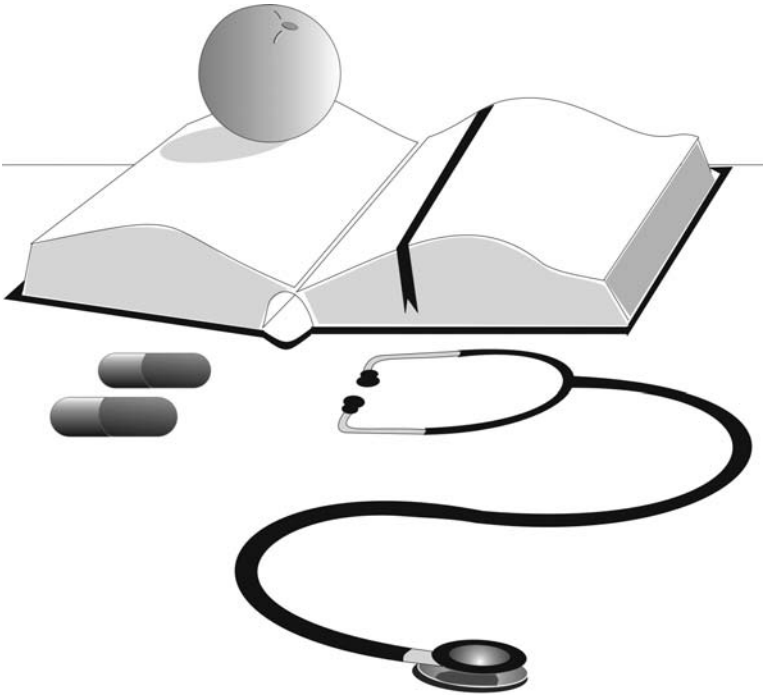


The Bible and Health



“I am the Lord, who heals you” (Exod. 15:26, NIV).

The Secret to a Long and Healthy Life

Sabbath
May 26

INTRODUCTION

Gen. 1:29; Exod. 15:26; John 14:15; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20

Every human yearns to have a long, active, and healthy life. Millions of dollars have been spent in the United States alone on human health. The health-related industry is one of the fastest growing industries; however, the human lifespan on this earth averages approximately 75 years for a developed country and about 40 years in some of the poorest countries of Africa.

Sardinians, Okinawans, and Seventh-day Adventists are among the people who may live 100 years or longer and still remain healthy and active. Their common secrets? They do not smoke. They put their families first. They are physically and socially active. Plus, they eat lots of fruits and vegetables. Seventh-day Adventists also have a strong faith in the Lord and keep the Sabbath. Marge Jetton is one such Adventist. She is 101 years old and is still driving and filling up the gas tank herself. Marge states, "We need somebody to lead our life . . . God is a good friend." Dr. Ellsworth Wareham, who is still doing heart surgery at the age of 91 years, mentioned his favorite secret to a healthy and long life: "God is our leader and protector."*

Faith means doing what the Lord wants us to do.

What is the relationship between faith and an active, long life?

In part, faith means doing what the Lord wants us to do (John 14:15; notice the motivation for obedience in this verse). And He wants us to have a strong and healthy life. A healthy life helps us to have a healthy mind through which God can communicate to us. Because our body is His temple, it is important to glorify Him with it (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

The X-rays of Egyptian mummies reveal that they had heart disease, arthritis, rheumatism, and sexually transmitted diseases, because of their lifestyles. The X-rays also show that they had tooth decay and obesity. But God promised ancient Israel the following: "I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you" (Exod. 15:26, NIV).

This week, we will study the relationship between God and our health and why it is important for us to have a healthy, active, and long life.

**National Geographic*, "The Secrets of Long Life." Nov. 2005.

Sunday
May 27

Need Help? The Faith Factor

LOGOS

Exod. 15:26; Matt 4:23; 8:16, 17; Luke 4:16–21; Rom. 6:4, 9–11; Phil. 4:4–9;
Col. 1:20, 21; 3:8–10; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3 John 2

God's Plan

God created the human race to live eternally, but the entrance of sin brought disease and death. Before the Flood, it was common for people to live 700 years or more. The longest lived was Methuselah, Noah's grandfather, who lived 969 years. But after the Flood, Abraham lived only 175 years; and when the Jews left Egypt and entered the Promised Land, the average life span was approximately the same as today.

God put His guidelines for health and happiness in the Bible. God will not force us to follow these guidelines, but failure to do so will result in poor health. God promised the Israelites they would not inherit the Egyptian diseases if they followed His commandments and kept His statutes (Exod. 15:26). Genetic weaknesses and deformities, along with diseases such as cancer and AIDS, are the results of what humanity has sown.

Healing constituted approximately one-third of Christ's ministry.

God's Health Laws

The first five books of the Bible, written by Moses between 1491–1451 B.C., contain remarkable scientific principles. The Bible also contains scientific knowledge regarding hygiene and sanitization. We'll discover that the Bible contains medical guidelines that were more extensive and thorough than the knowledge of Egypt and other ancient nations at that time.¹ The entire Bible contains high level medical principles and laws designed to protect us from various diseases.²

The Value of Health

The Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 2 Cor. 6:16–7:1). Poor health habits harm the body, and therefore degrade and can possibly destroy the temple of the Holy Spirit. God wants us to be healthy. Read 3 John 2.

"True religion and the laws of health go hand in hand. It is impossible to work for the salvation of men and women without presenting to them the need of break-

ing away from sinful gratifications, which destroy the health, debase the soul, and prevent divine truth from impressing the mind. Men and women must be taught to take a careful review of every habit and practice, and at once put away those things that cause an unhealthy condition of the body, and thus cast a dark shadow over the mind.”³

Christ’s Ministry

Healing constituted approximately one-third of Christ’s ministry. Read Matthew 8:16, 17, and 1 Peter 2:24. Christian tradition describes Jesus as the Great Physician. He sought to heal the whole person, not just their physical ailments (Matt. 8:16, 17; Mark 2:1–12). He risked persecution by healing on the Sabbath. Just as grace is freely given to all, the Gospels attest that Jesus healed whoever came to Him, including many people the religious leaders considered unclean and outside the bounds of their community (Matt. 8:5–13).

Believe It or Not—the Faith Factor

Medical research shows what the Bible states as truth—faith plays an important role in determining our health. A Harvard School of Medicine Conference in 1995 concluded that “attending divine worship in church each week, reading the Bible every day, and the continuous life of prayer are remarkable medications to mind, soul, and body.”⁴ This conference also reported that weekly attendees of a church in Maryland, U.S.A., had a significantly lower number of heart attacks and emphysema (down to 50 percent), cirrhosis (down to 74 percent), and suicide (down to 53 percent).⁵

REACT

God’s people have within the Bible guidelines to healthful living. Do following these guidelines mean we will never become ill? Explain your answers.

1. Grant R. Jeffrey, *Signature of God, Immanuel*, p. 157.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

3. *Counsels on Health*, p. 445.

4. S. I. McMillen, M.D., and David E. Stern, M.D., *None of These Diseases (2000)*, p. 241.

5. *Ibid.*

Monday
May 28

Food for a Healthy Life

TESTIMONY

Gen. 1:29; 3:18; Isa. 55:2; Dan. 1:15; 1 Cor. 10:31

"Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet."¹

"The diet appointed man in the beginning did not include animal food. Not till after the Flood, when every green thing on the earth had been destroyed, did man receive permission to eat flesh."²

A research scientist and nutritionist formerly with the National Cancer Institute said, "Eat a lot of whole grains, vegetables, and fruits, some soy or other beans in your diet every day. Use fats and animal foods in tiny amounts or skip them if you prefer. Believe it or not, this is all you really need to know."³ Soybeans and their products are high in fiber; rich in high quality protein, isoflavon, and genistein; and high in inoleic acid. Isoflavon and genistein can protect us against a number cancers, including breast, colon, lung, prostate,

skin, and leukemia. Fifty percent of fat in soy oil is linoleic acid, which is more effective in lowering blood cholesterol than oat bran.

Modern medical research proves that for a healthy and long life, humans should eat beans, nuts, fruits, and vegetables. High consumption of fruits, vegetables, and grains is now widely recommended by many physicians and nutritionists to prevent many degenerative diseases, such as diabetes mellitus, stroke, and certain cancers.

Living a healthy life is our choice to make. What will your choice be?

1. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 296.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 311.

3. W. Dysinger, *Heaven's Lifestyle Today* (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1997), p. 32.

Resolution or Revolution?

EVIDENCE

Dan. 1:8

My friends were quite surprised to see me. They almost didn't recognize me. "Yes, I'm changing," I said.

But they responded, "You're different. You're fatter now!"

About eight years ago, when I was a student at the Klabat University, my weight was 65 kilograms (approximately 150 pounds) which was adequate for my height of 173 centimeters (approximately 5 feet 8 inches). Now, however, I weighed 80 kilograms (approximately 200 pounds) more. No wonder they almost didn't recognize me!

Comparing what I ate in the campus dining room with what I eat today, I realize how differently I eat now. On campus, I ate nutritious foods. Now, however, I eat more junk food. To make matters worse, I don't get enough rest or exercise.

Daniel and his friends had the chance to live like kings in Babylon. But they chose not to defile themselves with the king's food (Dan. 1:8). They chose not to destroy their faith with what they were eating. Their decision can teach us much about commitment.

At the beginning of each new year, I like to make New Year's resolutions. My objective for the last several years has been to reduce my weight by avoiding meat and by not eating an evening meal. Unfortunately, I could never keep this resolution.

I realize now that in order for me to change, I have to make a radical commitment. I have to make a "life revolution" rather than New Year's resolutions.

"Since the first surrender to appetite, mankind have been growing more and more self-indulgent, until health has been sacrificed on the altar of appetite." *

Don't let appetite become the ruler your life. With the help of God's Holy Spirit, you can control it. If you are still living out your old life, take to heart these words of Paul: "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:6, NKJV).

I have to make a "life revolution" rather than New Year's resolutions.

**Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 147.

Wednesday
May 30

Double Blessings

HOW-TO

Prov. 15:13; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:20

We would not only be a blessing to ourselves by living a healthy life, but to others as our lifestyle serves as a testimony to others. Thus, we become ambassadors of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. As Their ambassadors, it is as though They Themselves are making Their appeal through us. "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20, NKJV).

Let's get started!

1. *Eat a healthy diet.* "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31, NKJV). You are what you eat. So be sure to eat a healthy, balanced diet. Plan your menus around healthy food. Take time to see what the ingredients are in the food you want to buy. Avoid eating junk food. Even when you're eating out, you can still find healthy food on the menu. Remember that fruit makes a great dessert.

**Only then can we soar
above the storm.**

2. *Get active.* The modern lifestyle makes life easier. But as a result, most people have become less active. Take time to enjoy nature, fresh air, and sunshine. Walking is an easy, fun activity for all

ages. Turn off the television or computer for half an hour and go outside. It's also a great way to catch up with family and friends. You can even power walk and power talk at the same time! Find a more challenging exercise to do once or twice a week to maintain heart health.

3. *Maintain a positive attitude.* "Happiness makes a person smile, but sadness can break a person's spirit" (Prov. 15:13, NCV). In this sinful world, bad things happen in our life. It is not the burdens of life that weigh us down, it is how we handle them. When the storms of life come upon us, we can rise above them by setting our mind on God. The storms do not have to overcome us. We can allow Him to lift us above them. God enables us to ride the winds of the tempest that bring sickness, tragedy, failure, and disappointment in our lives.

Only then can we soar above the storm.

REACT

What can you do/change to have a healthier life?

Back to Eden's Menu

OPINION

Exod. 15:26; Col. 3:8–10

Early one morning, my mobile phone rang. To my surprise, it was someone calling me to tell me that one of our colleagues had passed away during the night.

Why, I wondered?

He was a friendly, middle-aged man with a good position. It seemed that everything was going his way. It's true that about two months ago I visited him in a hospital after he had collapsed from a stroke. But several days later, I met him in the office with a tie and a full pack of smiles.

Why did this tragedy happen? Were his wife and his children ready? Did they understand?

Death, sickness, and a plethora of health problems are now part of modern life. This is an indication that the quality of life and the environment continue to decrease. New diseases are found every day, and some of them are dangerous because there is no knowledge or medicine to combat them.

Fortunately, He knows the best way to live life, and Eden's menu is one way He has given us to be healthy, to preserve our environment, and most importantly, to know and to obey Him. "The mechanism of the human body cannot be

I met him in the office with
a tie and a full pack of
smiles.

fully understood; it presents mysteries that baffle the most intelligent. It is not as the result of a mechanism, which, once set in motion, continues its work that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. The beating heart, the throbbing pulse, every nerve and muscle in the living organism, is kept in order and activity by the power of an ever-present God."*

In the beginning, God told Adam and Eve to eat only fruits, nuts, and grains. I believe this rule is still applicable, because of the decreasing quality of our environment.

Following God's advice is the right thing to do in order to be healthy. Staying as healthy as we can be leads to a fruitful life of service to God and to others.

REACT

1. Why do people not want to follow God's advice in choosing their food?
2. What can you do to make your immediate environment more conducive to good health? What can you do to make the world's environment healthier?

* *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 417.

Friday
June 1

Living to God's Glory

EXPLORATION

1 Cor. 10:31

CONCLUDE

God is concerned with our well-being, and has given us in the Bible physical, mental, and spiritual guidelines to help us maintain that well-being. In a world where it is often easier to eat the wrong things, think the wrong things, or do the wrong things, it is sometimes difficult to follow these guidelines. But in committing ourselves to maintaining our health, we allow ourselves to become partners with God in achieving the life He wants for us.

CONSIDER

- Making a video or photographic diary of your effort to improve your health in some way. Track changes over a period of time.
- Setting a goal based on reliable information, preferably from a health professional. Some obvious goals are weight loss and blood cholesterol.
- Writing a mission statement describing your health goals as they relate to your physical, spiritual, mental, and social well-being.
- Listening to music that helps you choose the right things in regard to your health and well-being? Exercise to this music if you want.
- Moving beyond the sprouts and grapefruit that constitute healthy eating in the minds of many. Explore the produce section, or go to a world foods market. What is a jicama? Find out, and enjoy it!
- Making friends with people who can support you in your efforts to live more healthfully. Your church might not be a bad place to start looking.
- Determining where you want your current habits and lifestyle to be 10 or 20 years from now. Do you think these habits would please God? If so, how can you maintain them?

CONNECT

Counsels on Health.

Des Cummings, Jr., *Creation Health: Secrets for Feeling Fit and Living Long*, 2003.