



My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

Lesson #23: "Better Health"

SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 5:1-16 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

Memory Verse: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." 3 John 1:2.

God created man with good health. It was never His intention that any man, woman, or child should be sick, languish in pain, suffer, or die. Doubting God's love and disbelieving His word led Eve to reject God's authority. Death was the result. Let no man be deceived into thinking that sin, sickness, sorrow, suffering, and death are but the figments of human imagination. They are very real and should be faced realistically. Only the remedy provided by God can cure permanently! Let us look now at God's cure for (1) sin, (2) death, and (3) sickness.

1: WHAT IS GOD'S PROVISION FOR SIN AND DEATH?

Christ redeems us from the curse (*Galatians 3:13*) by giving us grace to walk in the newness of life (*Romans 6:4*). When Jesus took the sinner's place, His blood atoned for man's sin, but man "must be born again" and grow up "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (*Ephesians 4:13*). Christians must be "Christianized." This is the function of the Spirit working within the Christian. God also provides a way of escape from death. Since Christ died for us (*Romans 5:8*), we need not perish in the final conflagration. Although the gospel does not save us from the first death, Christ does save us from the second death (*Revelation 20:6*).

Ezekiel 33:11: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish. but have everlasting life."

It is the privilege of every reader of these lines to escape the second death. If you have not yet made this surrender, will you not kneel right now and offer this simple prayer to God?

Psalms 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

2: WHAT PROVISION IS MADE FOR SICKNESS?

Remember, now, God wants us to enjoy good health. He is not the cause of sickness or death, and should not be blamed for either.

3 John 2: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Lamentations 3:33-"He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."

He does bring good out of our afflictions if we let Him.

Hebrews 12:11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peace able fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

We must always remember that Satan often afflicts men. Men also bring suffering upon themselves by sinning against the laws of the body. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (*Galatians 6:7*). We need also to be reminded that some are born with a richer heritage of health than others. The sins of our forefathers are felt by us-as the law of God says, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" (*Exodus 20:5*).

Remember, too, that God has the power to heal our diseases. We read in Psalm 103:3: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Sickness, suffering, and death are the common lot of all. Our own violation of God's moral and physical laws increases our difficulties and hastens death. Yet, in mercy, God heals us. At times God heals supernaturally. When Jesus was on earth He often left an entire village without one sick person, one body wracked with pain, one blind eye, one deaf ear, one stammering tongue, or one lone cripple in it. He has the same healing power today. We will discuss this more fully later. The healing processes of nature are also of God. And the more we learn of the intricate workings of the infinite God as revealed in these human bodies of ours, the more fully do we understand that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," and that within us are the forces of God combining to fight against disease (*Psalm 139:13-18*).

3: DOES GOD HEAL ALL THE SICK?

To the question "Does God heal all the sick?" we must answer, No." We know that He could (*Psalm 103:3*), but we know also that He does not always deem it best. In fact, only those true Christians who live to see Christ come and who are translated to heaven will escape the first death. Remember the following: Jesus can heal. He healed Peter's mother-in-law (*Matthew 8:14-15*). But Paul was not healed (*2 Corinthians 12:79*). Therefore, continued sickness need not be a sign of weak faith or a lack of Christian experience. It is more important for the sick to trust God than to be healed. He who makes bodily healing the first of all desires may be deceived. Satan is on the alert to catch in his snare those who will do anything but make the will of God first in their lives. There are many false cures wrought for those who go to charlatans and false healers for the benefits they seek.

4: ARE MIRACLES A TEST OF TRUE RELIGION?

We repeat, Jesus worked many miracles while here on earth (see *Matthew 9* for several examples), but He warned us against wonder workers. Listen to these words:

Matthew 24:24: "There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

The Word of God is the only standard by which all religions should be tested.

Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."

There are three reasons why it is wholly unsafe to make miracles a test of true religion. First: The miracle worker himself may be false. Satan is a miracle worker. He transforms himself into an angel of light. "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (*2 Corinthians 11:15*). Jesus said there would be many in the last days.

Lesson 23: Better Health

Second: There may be healing without salvation, as in the case of the ten lepers cleansed by Jesus (*Luke 17:12-19*). Only one returned to give glory to God. To him Jesus said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." He received soul healing also, but the other nine did not.

Third: There may be salvation without healing, as witnessed in the case of Paul, already mentioned. God knew that in the last days people would judge truth by miracles, and that they would be deceived thereby. Therefore, Jesus gave His urgent warning. But notice carefully—there is a plan for all to follow who seek healing.

5: WHAT PLAN SHOULD BE FOLLOWED IN PRAYER FOR THE SICK?

1. Confess all faults and sins, and call for the elders to pray and anoint the sick one.

James 5:14-16: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

2. Have faith to submit the will to God's will, whatever His will may be (*Matthew 26:42*).

This is simple and clear. We confess faults one to another, pray one for another, and are anointed. We confess our sins to God. The results we leave with Him, saying, 'All things work together for good to them that love God' (*Romans 8:28*). It is perfectly proper and consistent to seek sound medical advice from a good physician after such prayers have been offered. But there is another step, as we shall see.

6: WHY SHOULD WE OBEY PHYSICAL LAWS?

In answer to this question, note these four points:

1. We owe it to ourselves.

A man may drive his car hard. But he gives it good care. He has it greased regularly; he keeps the oil at the proper level and changed when necessary. He uses the best gas and oil he can afford to buy, and keeps the tires inflated. He accepts the fact that the builders of the car perhaps know more about the care of the car than he does, and so he follows the manufacturer's instructions. We owe it to ourselves to treat our bodies with equal intelligence. Cars can have new parts put in, but with our bodies this is not always true. Remember the words of Henry Ford, "When a man dies a part wears out." Take care of your body, and it will take care of you.

2. We owe it to our families and to society.

Every man and woman owes it to his home and to his children who are dependent upon him to live just as long and as well as possible. The possession of the gift of life carries with it the high responsibility to live and contribute of our talents to the good of the race.

3. We owe it to God, who made our bodies the temple of His Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought

with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (Romans 12:1).

To God, the Creator, in whom "we live and have our being" (Acts 17:28), we shall render an account of the use made of life and its countless blessings and opportunities. And our bodies are the temples of His Spirit. All His laws are for our good. Obedience to them brings the greatest good to us and to others, and brings honor to God.

4. If we defile our bodies. God will destroy us.

1 Corinthians 3: 17: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are,"

We really destroy ourselves. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help" (Hosea 13:9). If we have been defiling our bodies, God will forgive us and help us to get the victory. As a captive in ancient Babylon, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Daniel 1:8). We should also purpose to abstain from vice and intemperance of all kinds.

7: WHAT ARE THE MAIN ESSENTIALS OF GOOD HEALTH?

This question may be answered as follows:

"Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies" (*Ministry of Healing*, 127).

Outdoor life in the sunshine, fresh air, exercising every day is the best life. This means rural living, of course. But if this is not possible, city living may be improved health wise by following these simple rules:

1. Trust in God and keep a cheerful spirit.
2. Get outdoors for at least an hour every day, for a good walk.
3. Breathe deeply and naturally, filling the lungs with pure, fresh air.
4. Don't be afraid of a moderate amount of sunshine.
5. Eat regularly, not between meals, of fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and wholesome protein foods. Avoid rich desserts.
6. Bathe daily and drink a couple of glasses of water early in the morning, with one or two between meals.
7. Sleep seven to nine hours, every night, on a good bed.
8. Be moderate. Never indulge your appetite.

Following simple rules like these is just as much a part of good religion as is going to prayer meeting.

5: WHAT SPECIAL INSTRUCTION IS GIVEN ON EATING AND DRINKING?

In the beginning God gave Adam fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables to eat.

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

Genesis 3:18 "Thou shalt eat the herb of the field,"

God, who made man, originally gave him what we would call a vegetarian diet. Man's intestinal tract is built for that kind of diet. Up until the time of the Flood, no permission was granted for flesh eating. Men lived as long as 969 years (*Genesis 5:27*).

After the Flood, Noah was permitted to eat flesh (*Genesis 9:3-5*). But he knew the difference between clean and unclean meats. Read *Genesis 7:2; 8:20*. In Moses' day, this distinction was put into writing (*Leviticus 11*). When, after the Flood, meat eating was permitted, man's life span rapidly declined; so that, by the time we reach the time of Abraham, we find that patriarch passed away at the age of 175 (*Genesis 25:7*). But unclean meats were never permitted.

The distinction between clean and unclean meats was not of Jewish origin. God gave the commandments covering it, and Noah knew of God's instruction centuries before Abraham was born.

Pork eating is a prolific cause of the disease, trichinosis. Tiny parasites enter the human system and infest the body until death results. Dr. Maurice Hall says that about one in every seven Americans probably has it. There are at least forty diseases one may think he has which may be mistaken for the real disease, trichinosis. Don't let anybody lead you to believe that Jesus Christ made hogs clean. The swine is not ceremonially unclean, but physically unclean and unfit for food.

Strong drink should not be used by the Christian.

Proverbs 20:1: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 23:29-32).

Fermented wines and strong drink are certainly condemned in God's Word. Alcohol deceives. It makes a man think he is wise when he is foolish, sober when he is drunk, strong when he is weak. Alcohol is a poison. We should eat for strength, not drunkenness (*Ecclesiastes 10:17*).

Coffee contains a poison, caffeine. Tea has caffeine and tannic acid. One physician said, "We are a nation of tea and coffee drunkards." The Christian should study carefully the matter of his eating and drinking.

All filthy habits should be discarded by the followers of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Tobacco contains a narcotic poison, nicotine. The cigarette is the worst form in which to use tobacco—though all forms are harmful. The relationship between cigarette smoking and cancer of the lungs has now been established. Tobacco, injurious to the body and mind, is a waste of money and a filthy, breath-fouling, enslaving habit. God commands us to be separate from the world and "touch not the unclean thing" (*2 Corinthians 6:17*). "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh" (*2 Corinthians 7: 1*).

The amount of money spent for tobacco and liquor is about ten times the amount of contributions for religious work. This fact alone should cause every Christian to lay aside these two evils. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not" (*Isaiah 55:2*)? Let us glorify God in our body. This is one sure way to build a highway to health and happiness.

9: HOW CAN ONE LIVE A TRULY TEMPERATE LIFE?

Evil habits may be broken off and right habits established to take their place. This can be done by the grace of Christ and the exercise of our own will. We should come to Him, lay all our evil practices at His feet, and cooperate with Him in a new and abundant way of living. All God's biddings are enablings. Here are the words of Paul:

1 Corinthians 9:25-27: "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached, to others, I myself should be a castaway. "

Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Philippians 3:13:14: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

If you wish special reading matter on the subjects of alcohol, tobacco, or on the topic of diet, we shall be glad to refer you to inexpensive helps.

God bless you, dear friend, as you now plant your feet upon this beautiful highway to good health and happiness.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

"The sanctification set forth in the Scriptures embraces the entire being-spirit, soul, and body. Paul prayed for the Thessalonians that their 'whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Again he writes to believers: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God' (Romans 12:1). In the time of ancient Israel every offering brought as a sacrifice to God was carefully examined. If any defect was discovered in the animal presented, it was refused; for God had commanded that the offering be 'without blemish.' So Christians are bidden to present their bodies, 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' In order to do this, all their powers must be preserved in the best possible condition. Every practice that weakens physical or mental strength unfits man for the service of his Creator. And will God be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer? Said Christ: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' Those who do love God with all the heart will desire to give Him the best service of their life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will. They will not, by the indulgence of appetite or passion, enfeeble or defile the offering which they present to their heavenly Father.

"Peter says: 'Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul' (1 Peter 2:11). Every sinful gratification tends to benumb the faculties and deaden the mental and spiritual perceptions, and the Word or the Spirit of God can make but a feeble impression upon the heart. Paul writes to the Corinthians: 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God' (2 Corinthians 7: 1). And with the fruits of the Spirit-"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness"- he classes 'temperance' (Galatians 5:22,23) . .

" 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your

Lesson 23: Better Health

spirit, which are God's' (1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20). He whose body is the temple of the Holy Spirit will not be enslaved by a pernicious habit. His powers belong to Christ, who has bought him with the price of blood. His property is the Lord's. How could he be guiltless in squandering this entrusted capital? Professed Christians yearly expend an immense sum upon useless and pernicious indulgences, while souls are perishing for the Word of life. .

"To those who comply with the conditions, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate. . and touch not the unclean,' God's promise is, 'I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty' (2 Corinthians 6: 17, 18)." Great Controversy, 473-475