

Healing Essentials

What You May Need to Know for Yourself or a Loved One

Sometimes healing comes as easily as a gently breathed prayer. Sometimes, no matter how vigorously we may be pursuing prayer, doctors and everything else we can think of, the answer seems too long delayed. Simple, easy problems need little explanation or reflection. It is the difficult ones which require us to search deeper into the mystery of health and healing.

May these articles enhance your understanding with fresh insights, but remember: though God is our Healer, He is also our greatest Mystery to penetrate. That may be a dilemma, but it is also, wondrously, our delight. May your search

lead you to restored and enhanced health, but may it also lead you into fresh discoveries of our magnificent God and the delirious joy of getting to know Him well.



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Interested in Going Deeper?

Consider taking our free [eCourse for Healing](#). We have designed a complete series for personal transformation, 'Matters of the Heart,' to help Christians gain emotional freedom and inner healing. In all there are 24 Main Healing Lessons and 24 Head to Heart Guides to help you bring your heart to God and receive His Great Heart for you in return!



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eCOURSE

About the Author: [Steve Evans](#)



For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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CHAPTER ONE

Total Healing

Our God is committed to our total healing. He doesn't want to cleanse us only a little bit from the effects of sin upon us. Whether it was due to our own sins or the sins of the fallen world around us, whether we are broken in body, soul or spirit, God wants us healed. The Bible describes our three part nature and then assures us that the Lord desires that we be fully restored ('kept blameless') in all three areas of our being: [Body, Soul and Spirit](#).



Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. 1
Thessalonians 5:23-24 ESV

Is Full Healing Possible?

The gospel of grace is intended to fully liberate us by cleansing us from sin in all of its forms (to 'sanctify' is to purify). God frees us from the penalty of sin as we believe in Him; God gives us victories over the power of sin as we die to self; God heals us from the effects of sin as we bring our broken hearts and battered bodies to Him through prayer. Jesus' heart is set on our total healing!

1. Physical Healing

Physical healing the body brings freedom from sins that have broken our bodies. These may not have any originating connection with us. We have probably all been physically hurt in some obvious ways by the effects of someone's sin, if we are willing to count carelessness as a moral fault, not solely an 'accident.' Disease is much harder, usually, to trace back to any particular sin. However, since disease has its roots in the fall from grace, not the God of Grace who created all things good, we can be certain that disease never originates with God.

The Bible classes disease as a curse, not a blessing (see Deuteronomy 28). When you consider the full scope over the course of thousands of years of original sin (deeply at work in the world), generational sins (diseases are known to travel down family lines), the direct and indirect sins of others, and even our own sins (known and unknown), it becomes easier to acknowledge that there is a wide open door for the kingdom of darkness to bring the curse.

Happily, by God's design the power of the curse has been broken at the cross: Jesus fully atoned for all of our sins. Salvation's benefits, which include healing, are available to



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everyone. Learning how to access these benefits may be difficult, but we can count on it that we have God helping us every step of the way. (See [Physical Healing](#).)

2. Emotional Healing

Emotional healing brings freedom from sins which have broken our hearts. We may carry wounds from the sins of others against us that steal our joy and tarnish our hope. We are usually painfully aware of these sins and their negative effects. Less obviously, our emotional life may be 'wounded' by our own unwitting sins of unforgiveness or unbelief which bind the past to us, along with anxiety, guilt, shame, regret or blame.

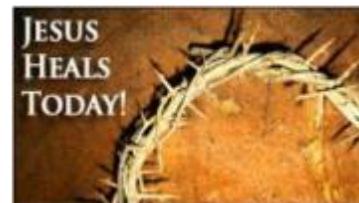
None of these wellsprings of pain in our inner life can be cured by pushing them down or ignoring them. They will continue to work from below the surface of daily consciousness to subvert our best intentions and undermine our efforts to find true peace and fulfillment. Unresolved the right way, they can even become [strongholds](#) within us, putting pressure on us to act out our inner pain in ways which further hurt and hinder our lives. Emotional healing leads to greater freedom from sin and much closer walking with the Lord! (See [Emotional Healing](#) and [Mending the Broken Heart](#).)

3. Spiritual Healing

Spiritual healing brings freedom from separation from God which is the root cause of sin and its consequences. This begins when we are reborn of the Spirit through faith in Christ. Now we know Jesus as our Savior and we can call on His Name to rescue us and reunite us to Himself whenever we get into trouble. Much trouble, however, can be avoided once we finally yield to His rightful claim to be our Lord. A Christian who has not fully submitted and yielded his or her life to the leadership of Jesus is far from experiencing genuine spiritual health and wholeness! (See [Spiritual Healing](#).)

A Brief Overview from Jesus to Now

When Jesus walked the earth as the full expression of the Father's will, many times He healed absolutely everyone that was present. The healing ministry of Jesus far surpassed anything that God had begun through the prophets of the Old Testament period. Jesus' ministry of healing was certainly a high point in the history of God's efforts to liberate us from disease and clearly demonstrated The Father's perfect will to heal everyone (when conditions are right). Jesus healed all manner of physical diseases. He healed people's souls through deliverance from demonic oppression which surely brought them freedom from what we would call mental or emotional illnesses. He also healed people spiritually by restoring them to a living faith in God.



The second high point came through the ministry of the Apostles after Jesus ascended and His frontline disciples were filled with power by the Holy Spirit. Once again multitudes were healed, and supernatural miracles happened in abundance. These were close to but not quite on the same scale as Jesus. After the Age of the Apostles ended the healing ministry began to taper off. A long season covering many centuries began in which only sporadic outbreaks of healing and miracles took place, usually through gifted persons who were often described as saints. The Church seemed poised on the brink of losing her healing abilities altogether.



The best is yet to come. Fortunately for all of us, there has been a concerted restoration of the healing ministry of Jesus over the last two centuries, building towards a crescendo in our time.^[1] Jesus promised that one day His believing people would be doing greater miracles than were even being done through Him.^[2] The fullness of that time still awaits us, but it is quickly arriving! Best of all, you can be a part of it!

Two Sets of Facts

The clear evidence of what is happening all over the world points towards two conclusions:

- 1) God is doing amazing things to bring miracles of healing and deliverance to His people, so let's never give up on believing for what God can do or what He desires to do. The question here is: How can we best position ourselves for healing to happen?
- 2) Not everyone is healed. Just because we can be healed, doesn't mean that we will be: Not everyone is being healed even in the 'Third World' where healings are happening with breath-taking frequency. Evidently, we need to be prepared to live a full life even in those times when healing hasn't yet come. This raises the question: How can we best stay in balance when it is not happening?

Scriptures and Foot Notes

^[1] For an excellent summary of healing movements in the church, see [The Healing River](#) by Randy Clark; Global Awakening: Mechanicsburg, PA, 2013.

^[2] Whenever the church rises into this higher calling, we will see total healing breaking forth for multitudes: **'Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.'** John 14:12-14 ESV



CHAPTER TWO

Healing Body, Soul and Spirit

The Bible describes our three-part nature and then assures us that the Lord desires that we be fully restored ('kept blameless') in all three areas of our being. These three parts of our being aren't separated in water tight containers. Jesus created us with seamless, elegant connections between all three. This has tremendous implications both for recovering health and for maintaining it. In addition, it gives us three quite different, legitimate pathways for receiving healing from the Lord.

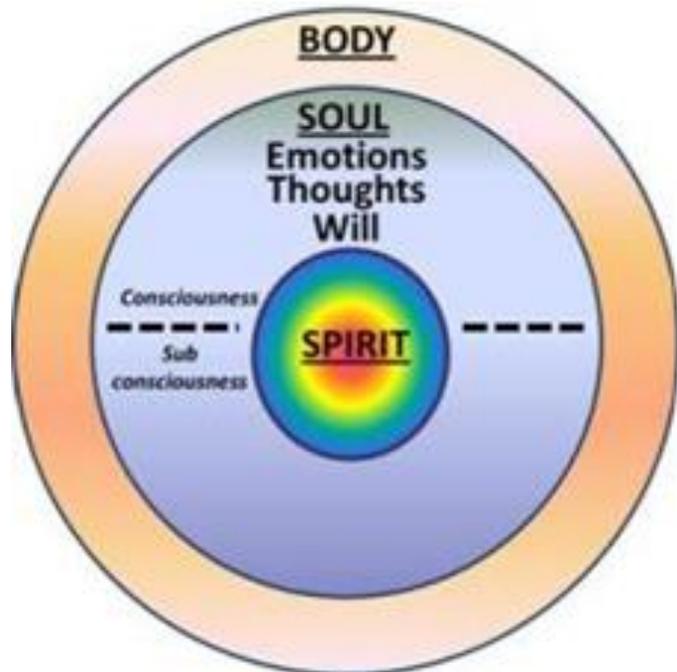
Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
ESV

From the Natural to the Spiritual

When you think about health and healing what is the first thing that comes to your mind? Your body, right? For most of us that is where our thinking about healing begins. This is entirely appropriate, because the Lord has arranged things in such a way that He uses the physical realm to enable our blinded eyes to see things of the not-so-visible realm of the spirit.^[1] Everyone knows what it is like to be physically ill at times, if only due to a minor headache or cold. These we experience and understand even in childhood. Disease of the soul is more problematic.

Soul is a word not widely used in the modern world, but it simply indicates a person's inner life of intellect, emotion and will. Sin attacks a person in each of these three areas of the soul; therefore, we stand in need of restored health for our souls. Usually, however, we have to grow up a bit before we can make a connection between problems of thought or emotion and a need for restored health and healing in a person's inner life. Eventually, we learn to draw an analogy from the body and think of mental and emotional problems as a form of illness. Even addiction is often referred to as a disease - a disease of the will, an inability to make healthy choices and to make them stick.

But what of the spirit? By its very nature the spirit defies easy identification, since it lies beyond the power of our five senses to explore. Neither can it be experienced directly by the soul, unless God intervenes. Without the Word of God to explain things, we would hardly know our spirit was even there! Indeed, many scientists are convinced that it isn't; and they have their



doubts about the soul, too. Don't count it out: The human spirit is the key player on the field, even if its presence is largely undetected. The 'sickness' of our spirit is the true source of all diseases of body and dis-eases of soul, just as the health of our spirit is the true source of all recovery of health in body or soul. At this level we will have to stretch the analogy from the body beyond what we put it to at the soul level in order to gain eyes to see what God sees.

The View from Heaven

God sees sin in us as we see a life-threatening sickness in our bodies: it is a corruption of the goodness of our created being; it is pervasive, touching everything about us; it is deadly; it reaches to the core. Just as sickness can take the body down into death (and us along with it) and negative thoughts and emotions can destroy the inner life of the soul, so sin crushes life out of the spirit. In fact, this had already happened to us and we didn't even know it! Before we were born again by faith in Christ, our spirit was captive to death, cut off from a life-giving connection to the Living God, blinded and enslaved by the god of this world. Seems like we would have had a clue! At most I suspect that we had a sense we were disconnected from God and wanted to find a way to bridge the gap: This sense of loss made us seekers and that's a good thing. But did we have any idea how far our spirit had fallen into a living death? It just seemed normal...Thank God, Jesus is fully able to help us by healing body, soul and spirit!

Just as the Lord uses the natural process of disease to teach us about the sickness of soul and spirit, so too He takes our understanding of sin from the natural through to the spiritual. Weren't the first sins that we learned about outward and physical: stealing, lying, adultery, murder, etc.? Over time we began to recognize the reality of sins of the inner life: unforgiveness, bitter judgments, lust, pride, envy, etc. Our analogy comes into play yet again: Just as dis-ease in the soul can produce disease in the body, so too these sins of the soul often lead to the outward sins involving the body. Yet, the real culprit, the deadliest sin of all is the one embedded in our spirit.

The Deep Sickness at the Core of Our Being

What is this most deadly sin-sickness? It is the turning of our innermost life from God to self. In this we followed 'our father' the devil who infamously declared his independence (and therefore rebellion) from God with a series of defiant 'I wills': 'I will ascend... I will sit on the throne... I will sit on the mount...'^[2] This deep sickness at the core of our being was inevitable, once sin broke our connection to God. No longer able to behold the Lord with sighted eyes, we lost the ability to carry His true Image within our hearts. Our hearts and minds have been veiled by the god of this world ever since.^[3] Into this spiritual vacuum we inevitably began beholding (focusing upon) ourselves! Read more on this at [Spiritual Healing](#).

Scriptures and Foot Notes

^[1] **But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural [physical], and then the spiritual.** 1 Corinthians 15:46 ESV

^[2] **'How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in**



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the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. Isaiah 14:12-15 ESV

[3] And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2

Corinthians 4:3-6 ESV



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CHAPTER THREE

Three Paths to Healing

Just as we have three parts to our nature, so too we have three paths to healing our bodies. This is because there is a hierarchical order to our tripartite nature: first the spirit, then the soul, then the body. We are spiritual beings who have souls who live in bodies. See [Healing Body, Soul and Spirit](#). If we don't understand the realities we are dealing with, much heartache or wasted effort can result. Since our God has placed hierarchy and order in creation, we will move most powerfully into His purposes, if we stay attentive to the boundaries He has set.

Healing Body, Soul and Spirit – Three Distinct Approaches

For any physical illness there are three paths to healing that we can pursue:

- 1) We can go directly to God through prayer - bypassing both our hearts and our bodies.
- 2) We can go after the root of the problem which often is embedded in the heart.
- 3) We can relieve the symptoms and sometimes produce a cure by dealing directly with the body itself.

Healing Body, Soul and Spirit – The Boundaries

The divinely created hierarchy of spirit first, then soul, then body sets the boundaries for what is normally possible:

1) Healing the Spirit

Our spirit can only be healed by one means: by God directly. It takes God's Word, faith and the working of God's Spirit to restore genuine spiritual life, where there had once been only death. Nothing else can accomplish this. The spirit cannot be healed by the workings of our own inner life (soul) or by any physical exertion on our part.

2) Healing the Soul

Our soul (our inner life) can be healed by two means: by God directly or through the mending of our heart. The heart is the deepest thing about us, so deep only the Lord can effectively search its hidden depths. It is where images and memory are held, where our deepest beliefs are retained, where thoughts are influenced, and emotions are released. Jesus said that "out of the heart" both good and evil issue forth. Solomon urges us to "guard our hearts with diligence" for that very reason.

Mending the heart can be done by God directly through prayer alone; more often God works through many things that require our active cooperation to produce the



transformations which heal our hearts: the renewing of our minds by His Word and by carrying of the deep thoughts of our hearts captive to Christ, especially during times of trial. These are two common means. Things in our deep heart cannot be cured by merely physical remedies. A pill, for instance, can change the way a person feels, but only as long as the medicine is working.

3) Healing the Body

Our body can be healed by three means: by God through prayer, through the heart by freeing it of its deep stress, and by natural means (doctors, medicines, procedures, and other remedies).

Healing Body, Soul and Spirit - The Pathways

Turning this dynamic hierarchy around we see that through our spiritual connection to God any area of our life (mental, emotional, physical) can be directly healed or restored by God. This gives us our three paths to healing.

1) The Spiritual Pathway

The first, highest and best path to healing is prayer.

God's power supersedes all else. If we are healed directly by God through prayer, what could be better? This prayer pathway is well known but underdeveloped in anything like its true potential. However, it does have a drawback. It sometimes happens that if the root cause of the disease of body or dis-ease of soul is not mended, then even the healing God produces by His Spirit can be overthrown if what is broken in a person's heart reasserts itself.

2) The Emotional Pathway

The second path is healing the soul by mending the heart.

This path has the potential to produce the deepest and most elegant cure. The root issue of many, if not all, disease is the stress effect upon our bodies. Relieve the soul from carrying its burden of stress (either from past trauma or present problems) and the body can spring back into life. Not only is the heart mended, but the body can be as well. That's a tremendous bargain - two for one!

Admittedly, this is not as easy as it sounds, for we are only at the beginning of tracing the mind-emotion-body connections and mending the interior life. Too few people take this path seriously, though most everyone acknowledges the reality of stress's effect upon the body. Nevertheless, if a disease has its root in the soul, then the most direct path for healing the body is to heal the soul of that which is wounding it.

3) The Physical Pathway

The third path is the seeking to heal the body through natural, physical means.

This is the one we spend the most money on: doctors, medicine and natural remedies. We have absolutely nothing against doctors or medicine, provided that the Lord is always consulted first and that a person looks to God to lead the way. However, since

we are neither doctors nor druggists, we leave mending the body by natural means to others.

On this site you will find a tremendous amount for mending your heart and gaining emotional restoration and mastery over your inner state. This could also lead to a physical cure for your body. It will certainly lead to greater peace and freedom, more ready access to joy, and a closer walk with the Lord. What are you waiting for? Go now to explore [Emotional Healing](#).



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CHAPTER FOUR

Physical Healing

When the body breaks down, it rightly cries out for our attention. Displaying a tremendous heart of compassion, Jesus healed everyone brought before Him. He didn't just do it once. He did it on every recorded occasion.^[1] This shows us our Father's heart as well: No matter how or why we get sick, God wants us healed! Because Jesus is the same today as He was yesterday, you can count on it that He is just as ready and willing to heal us now as He was then.^[2]

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. Psalms 103:2-5 ESV

God Wants us Healed

Our God wants everyone healthy and well in the fullest sense of the word.^[3] That is our starting point for seeking physical healing and our desired end. In heaven everyone is enjoying perfect health all of the time and God didn't break a sweat accomplishing that feat. It is an uncontested fact of our faith that Jesus wants us to pray for the conditions of our Father's heaven to become a reality upon the earth. This certainly includes health and healing.

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:9-10
ESV



You would think that it would be easy to pray and see heaven come down to earth, since this is our Lord's stated desire. Sometimes it happens with just that much simplicity and suddenness. These are the testimonies that we love to hear and all want to experience, especially when it is our turn to be in need of a miracle. Nevertheless, physical healing is evidently much more complicated than that much of the time.

Don't Let Mysteries Stop You!

There are real mysteries surrounding the ministry of healing because God's way of working is a great mystery, because we have a legion of invisible enemies dedicated to thwarting our recovery, and because body, soul and spirit are immensely complicated and interwoven. If you run into snags and delays, try not to become discouraged. Never quit. Never give up. Prayer, patience and perseverance really do move mountains, even when it only seems to be one bucket full at a time.



Since there are so many avenues that can be pursued, we have compiled a check list of things to prayerfully consider. There are times when just one of the things on this list may be all that is needed, but which one? There are other times when a thorough combination is required. Let the Lord lead you. These are set down for your prayers and consideration: We are not doctors or health experts! We are just fellow believers trying to find the best way forward like you.

A "Check List" of Suggestions to Consider

Pray over the items on this list to see which one(s) the Holy Spirit would have you pursue.

1) Build your faith in God.

Never rule out a supernatural intervention by God. Keep encouraging your faith in God as a healer by studying the [Scriptures for Healing](#). Grow your faith for physical healing and your understanding about it by reading books on healing written by people that God is using as instruments of His healing. Without ever giving up the hope of an obvious and direct intervention, take confidence in knowing that our God also works in "hidden" ways through every kind of legitimate pathway you we may feel led to pursue.

2) Don't be passive.

Seek to recognize and deal with any doubts, discouragement or signs of unbelief that need to be overcome. Then take active steps to do what you think the Holy Spirit is showing you. For combating doubts see [The Power of Believing](#). For learning guidance see [Walking in the Spirit](#). If you are struggling with fear, practice the antidotes we list in [Fear Not!](#). Many people have gone into remission when the grip of a stress or fear-focus has been broken and deep peace restored.

3) Pray with persistence.

God has promised that "all who call on His name shall be saved." Don't give up: let your need for God's help teach you the way of [prevailing prayer](#). Ask for restored health, of course, but don't neglect to pray for wisdom, guidance, confidence, spiritual growth, a surrendered heart, and anything else He may show you. Don't let the trial be wasted!

4) Get your heart right with God.

Since emotional stress (past or present) is a leading cause of illness, seek the Lord for help in dealing with any issues that may be putting stress pressure on your body. This could be an excellent time to take the [eCourse for Healing](#). You may discover and deal successfully with the root of the disease and even if you don't, you will gain great freedom and peace. You can't lose!

5) The medical community.

Seek healing through doctors. Always pray asking for guidance and for the Lord's hand to be upon the medical community. Let Him lead you. He never drives a person with fear - that's the enemy's tactic to cause to make foolish choices. Jesus leads us with peace. Keep praying over every medical decision or procedure. Many double-blind clinical studies have shown that people of faith who have faith communities praying for them, receive better outcomes from illness, time in hospital, or other treatments.

6) Be wary of non-traditional medical approaches.

There are countless "alternatives" out there that have more in common with the New Age or [occult spiritual power](#) than the Lord's ways of working.

7) Basic healthy disciplines.

Seek healing through natural remedies, such as diet, exercise and herbal supplements. Scripture says that God placed healing power in herbs, but don't go overboard. See [The Bible on Diet and Health](#): a balanced, moderate approach is the Biblical norm to the whole of life.^[4]

8) Get in every prayer line you can.

Go to every conference or healing crusade you can. I once spent a month doing this deliberately with a badly sprained ankle. I went in to meetings on crutches and came out on crutches, but never quit trying. Eventually that just right moment came along and I was instantly healed! Jesus' own experience of being stymied by unbelief at Nazareth shows that the faith community has a key role to play. God is cultivating some awesome faith communities that are well worth traveling to find. See [Ministry Links](#) in the Connect section for churches and ministries we are familiar with and can heartily recommend.

9) Get baptized in the Holy Spirit.

It is a fact that most of the people powerfully gifted for healing in the Body of Christ have been [baptized in the Holy Spirit](#). Most of the healing taking place in the Third World is being done in communities of faith that are baptized in the Holy Spirit. When the apostles were baptized in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, signs and wonders began following them. Spirit baptism helps people both in praying for healing and receiving healing.

10) Eliminate any blocks to healing.

Study this list to see if there are any [Biblical Blocks to Healing](#) that may be operating in your life.

11) Never give up your hope in God.

Never quit seeking. But learn to live with peace in the meantime (see [Praying Through to Peace](#)). This by no means easy to do, but it is something that we all need to learn. Paul says that he learned how to "abound" even when things weren't going well and he learned to lean on God's grace, even under affliction.^[5]

Scriptures and Foot Notes

^[1] Whenever multitudes or individuals came to Him seeking physical healing, He healed them. Their seeking Him out was evidently important: He didn't heal every sick person He came near. This is evidenced by the healing at the Pool of Bethesda where He only healed the one He was sent to heal (John 5:1-9) and by His apparent inability to heal many sick people in



Nazareth, because "of their unbelief" (Mark 6:6).

[2] Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8 ESV

[3] Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in every way and [that your body] may keep well, even as [I know] your soul keeps well and prospers. 3 John 2 AMP

[4] Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Philippians 4:5 KJV

[5] Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:11-13 ESV;
Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:8-10
ESV



CHAPTER FIVE

Emotional Healing

Both Solomon and Jesus declare that the important issues of life flow out from the depths of our hearts. Practically all of us carry stuff from our past which can spill over and influence, even control, the new life that Jesus wants to give us. Emotions that overwhelm us in the present (like fear, anxiety, hurt feelings, anger, depression, etc.) are things God wants to free us from. Go for this glorious liberty!

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God... Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Romans 8:20, 22 NKJV

Who Doesn't Need This?

Emotional healing is so desperately needed that this entire website is devoted solely to it. By way of introduction to this immense field here are some of the basics:

1) The emotional life of a Christian is intended to be a river of peace which enables love, joy, contentment, patience, kindness--all kinds of good things--to "bubble up" to the surface as we go through the day.

2) [Negative Emotions](#) jam up the works. Things like fear, worry, anger, shame, despair, etc. do not come to us out of our union with Christ. They actually spring to life out of the old nature and issues buried in our hearts.

3) These "[strongholds](#)" of negative emotion have to be taken down for that wonderful sense of freedom and peace to reign in us. (See the illustration [Stronghold Protection](#).)

4) The first stage of dealing with negative emotion strongholds is learning how to defeat them when they show up--this is like mowing down weeds. We call this "basic discipleship." (See the illustration [Feeling Unplugged?](#))

5) The second stage is learning how to resolve past issues that are the breeding grounds for negative emotional reactions in the present--this is like pulling weeds out by the roots (See the illustration [Fruit and Roots](#)). We call this "emotional healing" or "emotional recovery."

6) The final stage is learning how to ride herd over your emotional state, spending far more time in the river of peace than in the struggle with negative emotions. We call this emotional health" or "emotional mastery."

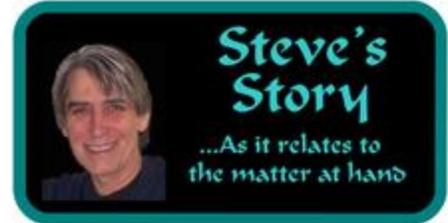


7) As a bonus, gaining emotional liberation from past and present issues often leads to freedom from disease, because negative emotional stress is the number one cause of illness in the first place. (See "[Dis-ease and Disease](#).")

Let's Go for This!

If you want to learn how to deal with the negative emotions that keep popping up, or if you know that you have some deeply wounded places in your heart that need emotional healing, take our free [eCourse](#) Matters of the Heart.

Living one day down the road in greater peace and joy (and freedom from those pesky negative emotions!) is well worth the investment of your time now. And **YES!** you can get this. If I could learn and apply these truths as messed up as I was, anyone can who is willing to put their whole heart and hope into God and His ways of mending us (see [Mending the Broken Heart](#)).



True Life Illustration

Why we need emotional healing: What I learned on a Honduran road...



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CHAPTER SIX

Spiritual Healing

Spiritual healing goes deepest of all. Even though the reality of our spirit lies beyond the ability of our five senses to experience, it nevertheless holds the answer to all that affects our lives. Every breakdown in heart, mind or body traces back to this deepest of all roots. God begins our spiritual healing through the gift of faith in Christ. However, there is one thing that necessarily depends upon us, before God can bring our spiritual life into genuine health.

Sustain me with a willing spirit. Psalms 51:12 NASB

The Deep Sickness

What is this most deadly sin-sickness? It is the turning of our innermost life from God to self. In this we followed "our father" the devil who infamously declared his independence (and therefore rebellion) from God with a series of defiant "I wills": "I will ascend... I will sit on the throne... I will sit on the mount..."^[1]

This deep sickness at the core of our being was inevitable, once sin broke our connection to God. No longer able to behold the Lord with sighted eyes, we lost the ability to carry His true Image within our hearts. Our hearts and minds have been veiled by the god of this world ever since.^[2] Into this spiritual vacuum we inevitably began beholding ourselves! We became self-focused and self-centered.

The gospel has come to liberate us from our separation from God and restore the true image of our God "in the face of Jesus Christ" so that by beholding Him we can grow ("be transformed") from glory to glory.^[3] We are set free to live no longer for ourselves alone, but for Him who died for us.^[4]



Until we are born again, we have no other option but to live with self at the center. Now that Jesus has been revealed we are given a daily choice: Will we seek and serve Him, or follow our own devices? The first healing of our spiritual disease, therefore, comes through the revelation of who Jesus is as our Lord and Savior. But wait! There's more: Until Jesus becomes the Lord I freely choose to trust and follow each and every day, the healing of my spirit has not gone nearly far enough.

David prayed to be sustained a "willing spirit" - to fully be recovered from the sin that led him away from God and His ways.^[5] That is true spiritual health! Like any other form of health it cannot be faked: genuine surrender to and submission to the Lord Jesus will always produce His peace; rebellion to His leadership or straying from His Person always robs us of peace. Having tasted the bitter fruit of going his own way, David yearned to stay yielded to and united to God.



As we gain spiritual health our questions inevitably change from self-centered, self-directed, self-promoting and self-defending to Jesus seeking: If we still ask "What do I want to do?" it is only to remind ourselves, "I know, I want to do what Jesus would want me to do!" As we "allow" Jesus to be our Lord and have fully submitted to His Leadership, He is able to cleanse us of the "garbage" within. As our inner life becomes cleansed and healed, we live in ever greater measures of freedom, peace and joy. This in turn becomes a wellspring of health to our bodies. That is truly being healed from the inside out!

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:22
ESV

A Spiritual Health Check List

Willingness is the coin of the realm when it comes to experiencing new life in the Spirit, genuine spiritual health and growth, as well as receiving guidance from the Lord. Have you ever seen someone trying to get a resistant dog on a leash to walk obediently in the direction the master wants to go - and at the pace the master desires to set? Some dogs are rebellious; some are easily distracted by cats or other dogs. Such dogs may not be taken out beyond necessity! Then there are other dogs who don't even need a leash, who go everywhere with their masters.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go. I will counsel you with my eye on you. Don't be like the horse, or like the mule, which have no understanding, Who are controlled by bit and bridle, or else they will not come near to you. Psalm 32:8-9 WEB

If you would love to be readily and frequently guided, then the issue of living with a surrendered heart and a willing spirit is paramount. When Isaiah saw the Lord, he fully surrendered and became willing for anything (Isaiah 6:1-8). So let's review what a surrendered heart is saying to the Lord. Then keep checking your heart to make sure your surrender and willingness stay intact. Let the acronym SAAW remind you to look to Him. (Go here for a more in depth [prayer to re-center](#) and re-surrender.)

Father, according to Your love and wisdom,

S: Send whatever You desire to send (He is the Giver of blessings).

A: Allow whatever You have to allow (of free will and its consequences).

A: Ask of me whatever You desire or require (of inward and outward obedience).

W: Withhold me from and withhold from me whatever is necessary (to fulfill your plans).

Make me willing to be made willing to surrender everything to You.

Beware: Even a twinge of unwillingness to surrender is a step towards the Great Rebellion. If you see it in you, you have met the enemy! Carry that thought captive to Christ. [\[6\]](#) True spiritual healing is a surrendered heart!

Scriptures and Foot Notes

[\[1\]](#) "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven;



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above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. Isaiah 14:12-15 ESV

[2] And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 ESV

[3] But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 ESV

[4] For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 ESV

[5] Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit. Psalms 51:12 NASB

[6] For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 ESV



CHAPTER SEVEN

Disease and Dis-ease

Our modern medical science has brought forth a landslide of evidence that emotional stress (dis-ease) is the culprit causing most, if not all, of our diseases. We don't like either one, but we invest more energy and money in trying to drive out disease than in seeking to live free from stress. Jesus has the answer to both.

And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds, in that peaceful state] to which as [members of Christ's] one body you were also called [to live]. And be thankful (appreciative), [giving praise to God always]. Colossians 3:15 AMP

Excerpt from Lesson 1: 'The Spiritual Roots of Disease'

Though we begin with the body, this series of lessons (from Matters of the Heart [eCourse for Healing](#) and [book](#)) is not primarily about physical health and the means to achieve it. Rather, it is about seeking emotional and spiritual health of the highest order. Finding the life that is "hidden with Christ in God" or entering into "the glorious liberty of the children of God" would be excellent Biblical ways of expressing the goal. As it happens, however, modern medical science shows us a connection between our emotional life and the root issues of disease that gives us a practical place to begin looking at our deeper, truer need.



C. S. Lewis once described pain as "God's megaphone," meaning that He gets our attention when our bodies break down. So, it is in seeking to find a remedy to our illnesses that we have been drawn into a far greater understanding of the ways in which we are actually going astray from our God. The diseases of our bodies are but reflections of the dis-ease of our souls!

Three Flawed Theories

Before we look at what is actually making us sick, let's go over some cherished notions that we may still be carrying around in the back of our minds. There are three flawed theories of why we get sick. They may not be taught, but they are often caught.

1) The Germ Theory

As an explanation of why we get sick, this is accurate but misleading, since germs account for only part of all diseases. Nor does this theory tell us why we had the weakened immune system that allowed germs to infect us in the first place. Stressing the body by lack of sleep, poor nutrition, or lack of exercise can weaken the immune



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system, but are you aware that research has shown that just six minutes of a negative emotion can suppress the immune system for more than 21 hours?

2) The "Out of the Blue" Theory

This provides a graceful covering for us, since we are claiming to have no idea of any connection between our lifestyle and the disease. (Surely it is nothing we have done. It just came on us out of the blue!) Yet everything on earth happens by cause and effect. The real problem with this theory is that it seems to be pointing a finger at God who lives in those "blue" heavens. However, God is never the author of evil: Untainted by any shadow He is instead the Giver of "every good gift." Death, disorders and disease are consequences of the fall of man.

3) The Punishment Theory

According to this theory we sinned, so God is punishing us. But that cannot be! God punished Jesus fully and completely at the cross for our sins; it would be a breach of justice for God to punish us when the penalty has already been paid in full by Another. A further problem is that it seems to suggest that God reaches, in anger, into His bag of punishments and puts one on us without regard to the natural order.

The Mind-Body Connection

The truth is that there is a natural connection between the way that we live and the diseases that come upon us. As much as 80% or more of all incurable diseases have a known mind-body connection. According to one study, stress related disorders account for 75-90% of all visits to primary care physicians.

Consider these connections between disease and emotional stress: high blood pressure and heart disease correlate with anger and hostility; autoimmune disorders, Multiple Sclerosis, Lupus and arthritis are associated with bitterness, resentments and self-hatred; gastrointestinal disorders such as IBS, panic attacks and heart palpitations are related to anxiety; tension and migraine headaches, along with back pain, TMJ and Fibromyalgia are all associated with repressed anger.



Now reflect that our science is just beginning to discover the linkages between specific negative emotions and specific physical disorders, but already these connections can be made. Imagine how fine-tuned this may one day become.

Negative emotions damage the body. When we perceive a situation to be dangerous, adrenaline and cortisol are released by our bodies to facilitate "flight or fight" responses. This is part of the General Adaptation Syndrome (G.A.S.) which gives us the extra "gas" we need to power-up for potentially life-threatening situations. The problem is that most of the "dangers" that cause stress cannot be resolved by fighting or running away!



Submerged in a Sea of Stress

Modern life seems to be characterized by a mounting sea of stressful events and daily pressures coming at people from every conceivable direction. And yet the real culprit isn't the situations which surround us - it is the emotional reactions going off inside of us.

That is why Dr. Don Colbert entitled his book on the mind-body connection *Deadly Emotions* - not "deadly situations." Stating that emotions are not confined only to the mind or heart, he describes the physiological processes by which all emotions are translated into chemical reactions which occur at both the organ level and the cellular level! Apparently, the "most damaging" emotions are feelings we might consider "garden variety" such as un-forgiveness, anger, worry, fear and frustration. Clearly, no one with an emotional life is immune to the danger!



These negative emotions which place so much stress upon our bodies come in two forms: those that arise out of present situations and those that are "embedded" in our deepest memories. Doctors Alexander Loyd and Ben Johnson in their book, *The Healing Code*, state that embedded negative emotions are the most damaging kind, producing "physiological stress" (at a subconscious level), as opposed to "situational stress" (at the conscious level).

These unhealed memories are actually stored as false beliefs and negative images which form "destructive cellular memories" in the cells of our bodies! In terms of the mind body connection they list three "one things" which we need to know:

- 1) There is one thing that can heal anything - our immune system;
- 2) There is one thing that turns off the immune system - stress;
- 3) There is one thing that will turn the immune system back on - healing "the issues of the heart."



CHAPTER EIGHT

From Recovery to Mastery

Excerpt from the Preface to "Matters of the Heart"

When the peace of Christ enters our hearts, it feels so good and liberating that we merrily float above all our old feelings. Eventually, however, we discover that our former host of negative emotions keeps showing up and dragging us down! To stay in Christ's peace we have to first learn how to get recovery over past issues that wounded us; then, we can use these same "tools" to gain mastery over our emotions in the present. This is exactly what the [eCourse](#) is designed to help you do with God's help.

My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:20-23 ESV

Throughout the Body of Christ there are those who suffer not only from diseases of the body but from the many and varied dis-eases of the soul: stressed by anxious concerns, carrying deep pain from the past, depressed in heart and spirit or just plagued by a whole host of negative emotions which can so easily quench the simple joy of living.



Rather than being released into the glorious liberty of the children of God, many believers have become captive to their inner lives at the very time when the world needs a witness of the life-changing power of the gospel. As in Isaiah's day we are a people in need of restoration.

But this is a people plundered and looted; they are all of them trapped in holes and hidden in prisons; they have become plunder with none to rescue, spoil with none to say, "Restore!" Isaiah 42:22

These teachings grew out of a conviction that there is a real power of transformation available through faith in Christ, but that His Words of life are somehow not reaching His people in a way that they can appropriate. As a pastor I knew the frustration of preaching and pleading, "Trust the Lord and follow Him," as the great answer to life's problems and a very real means of recovering peace, yet I rarely saw the needed changes come to others. I was gently haunted by a passage in Jeremiah about speaking words that do not heal.

They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. Jeremiah 6:14

These 24 lessons from Healing Streams Ministry's "Matters of the Heart" teaching series will show you how to bring your heart to God and how you can receive His Heart for you. That is the



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essence of the Great Exchange - our dis-grace for His grace - and it is always available for us to access through the faith He has given us.

Two Gracious Invitations

Where our inner state is concerned, there are two great assignments which are actually gracious invitations to experience the surpassing vitality of new life in Christ:

1) Restoration:

Preparing our inward state to hold up under the pressures of daily life requires recovery of the natural grace that got lost along the way. For countless reasons - not least of which is getting free of the pain - we need to recover from any emotional brokenness emanating from our past. But there is another level.

2) Mastery:

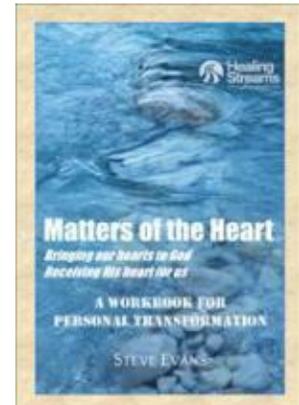
As we learn to manage our emotional life, we not only receive freedom from the past, but we gain the graced ability to reign with wisdom over our own emotions, making it possible to live even the most active or embattled days with deep peace and Spirit-led resourcefulness!

By a process of recovery leading to mastery we can experience our own life, no matter how damaged initially, becoming just what Jesus described to Nicodemus so long ago: weightless and free. Being "born again" is only the entry point. Those who learn this new way of yielding to His Spirit will become like leaves floating on the wind:

Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:7-8

We truly can learn how to be lifted and carried by the river of peace that God is sending our way each day. Being born again ushers us into the new life; the Holy Spirit within us provides the power to live the new life. He is the River of Peace. Are you only experiencing trickles and puddles of that peace?

Take these lessons to heart, learn the way of the heart and the peace will soon become a slender stream. Persevere and it will grow into a mighty river leading you into great adventures in company with your Lord. One Day it will carry you all the way to God's throne in heaven!



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CHAPTER NINE

Blocks to Healing

It may not be enough just to pursue the right things; some wrongs things may have to be removed. Sometimes healing and/or deliverance may be blocked from going forward by one or more of the 33 Biblical blocks to healing. We would be wise to pay attention to what our Great Physician is telling us.

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." Matthew 3:3 ESV

Clear the Way for the Lord!

Sometimes healing and/or deliverance may be blocked from going forward by one or more of the following:[\[1\]](#)

1) Un-forgiveness

Bitterness is a root that can cause both dis-ease and disease and is a major block to healing.

"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:37-38 ESV



2) Ignorance or Lack of Knowledge

It is a great trap to think we know all that we need to know - who then can show us the way? But bondage reveals that a vital element of knowledge is missing.

Therefore my people go into exile for lack of knowledge; their honored men go hungry, and their multitude is parched with thirst. Isaiah 5:13 ESV

3) No Relationship with God According to Knowledge

God is interested in a relationship with us that is based upon what He has revealed to be true about Himself and that is intended to go beyond mere lip service by us.

And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Mark 7:6-7 ESV

4) Personal and Family Sins



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Sin separates from God. This can block the healing we desire to receive.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. Isaiah 59:1-2 ESV

5) Not Having Faith in God

To believe in God is one thing, but to believe in that truth that God would have us believe, even when it runs counter to our feelings, may be the freeing thing.

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. Hebrews 4:1-2 ESV

6) The Need to See a Miracle

It is better to not see and believe than to demand a personal touch from God.

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:28-29 ESV

7) Looking for Signs and Wonders

It is better to keep seeking Jesus, than to chase after signs and wonders.

So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." John 4:48-49 ESV

8) Expecting God to Heal on One's Own Terms

Preconceived ideas about how things ought to go, can block His leading of us.

But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper." 2 Kings 5:11 ESV

9) Looking to Man Rather Than to God

There is much that doctors can do, but if the disease is spiritually rooted, we need to be seeking God to heal and restore us, not just the doctors.

Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord." Jeremiah 17:5 ESV

10) Not Being Honest and Transparent

Pride and fear will tempt us to cover our sins, rather than offer them for ministry.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.
James 5:16-17 ESV

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2-3 ESV

11) Flagrant Sin or Habitual Sin

Here it is not the sin, so much as the hardening of the heart to continue it without repentance, that makes such sins a block to healing.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Romans 6:1-2 ESV

12) Robbing God in Tithes and Offerings

The promise of the tithe goes beyond mere material blessing - as does the curse.

You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:9-11
ESV

13) Some Are Just Not Saved

God heals many without conversion, but for some it may be the essential healing in order to break the power of the delusion that is blocking them from seeking the One who is Truth.

And with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12
ESV

14) Sins of our parents:

It is not God's desire that we remain under the consequences of our own or our fathers' sins, but that we would take responsibility and renounce them.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. Exodus 20:5-6
ESV

15) Sometimes the Sickness Is Unto Death

The "wages" of any sin is death, but some sins may be the root from which a terminal illness develops. Repentance may be more effective than prayer for healing.



If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life - to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death. 1 John 5:16-17
ESV

16) Our Allotted Time in Life Is Fulfilled

If a person has lived beyond the allotted years, it may be their time has come.

The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. Psalms 90:10
ESV

17) Looking to Symptoms and Not to the Healer

The symptoms of the disease are the fruit of the problem, not the root. Deal with the root issues, turn from the symptoms and keep looking to God.

"Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other." Isaiah 45:22
ESV

18) Letting Fear Enter Your Heart

Fear will quench faith; faith will drive out fear. Choose which will rule you.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:27
ESV

19) Failure to Get Away in Prayer and Fasting

Prayer and fasting are primarily to meet God, secondarily to receive from Him.

He said to them, "Because of your unbelief. For most assuredly I tell you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. But this kind doesn't go out except by prayer and fasting." Matthew 17:20-21
WEB

20) Improper Care of the Body

Even in the service of Christ, we need to regard proper care of our bodies.

So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me. Philippians 2:29-30
ESV

21) Not Discerning the Lord's Body

The holiness of the Lord's Supper requires that we deal with sin issues, especially with others in the Body of Christ, seeking renewed communion with them also.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone

who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 ESV

22) Touching God's Anointed Leaders

If we have anything to say against God ordained leaders, we need to speak it to them in love and seek to heal division rather than promote it.

He allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account, saying, "Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!" 1 Chronicles 16:21-22
ESV

23) Immoderate Eating

Good nutrition, moderation and exercise promote health for the body. It is presumptuous to think we can do whatever we like with our bodies and be well.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ESV

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Philippians 4:5
KJV

24) Unbelief

Unbelief kept the children of Israel out of the Promised Land and even blocked the healing ministry of Jesus. Faith believes in God and in His Word with a confidence and expectancy that is not forced. Even a little unbelief can block the release of an active faith. Good thing the Lord loves us and never forsakes us even when our faith is low! Nevertheless, even if faith is low, we can turn back, ask for help and begin renouncing and resisting unbelief.

And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. Mark 6:5-6
ESV

25) Failing to Keep Our Life Filled Up with God

To walk in freedom and health, we need to stay filled with the Spirit. The enemy will always return to check us out to see if we are seeking God - or temptation.

Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." John 5:14-15 ESV

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for

everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:17-21 ESV

26) Not Resisting the Enemy

To call on the Name of the Lord and to keep calling is one way of resisting the enemy. Without such resistance in prayer, God's work may be hindered.

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13
ESV

27) Just Giving Up

It is important to never come into agreement with negative pronouncements - as is they were the final word. Let God's love and power have the final Word.

Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." Job 2:9-10 ESV

28) Looking for Repeated Healings Instead of Divine Health

God's perfect will is not simply to heal us, but to lead us into such a life of devotion to Him that our hearts are free of the issues that destroy health.

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. 3 John 2 ESV

29) Rejecting Healing in The Atonement as Part of The Covenant for Today

If we don't believe that healing is for today, then it likely won't be for us today. Yet Jesus not only bore our sins at the cross, His stripes are for our healing.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:24 ESV

30) Trying to Bypass the Penalty of the Curse

Seeking to escape the disease/addiction (the consequence or penalty of the curse) without dealing with the root cause(s) is short-sighted and likely to be unfruitful.

Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, a curse that is causeless does not alight. Proverbs 26:2 ESV

31) Murmuring and Complaining

An ungrateful heart murmurs and complains against God's ways of working.

We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. 1 Corinthians 10:9-11 ESV



32) Hating and Not Obeying Instruction

Despising correction and hating instruction are signs of rebellion against God.

And at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed, and you say, "How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors. Proverbs 5:11-13 ESV

33) Involvement with the Occult - Past or Present

The occult can be both a root of affliction and a block to healing and deliverance.

**Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. Ephesians 5:11-12
ESV**

Scriptures and Footnotes

[1] Blocks to Healing is modified from [Be In Health](#)® teaching and materials, Dr. Henry W. Wright, Thomaston, Georgia, seminar notes, October 2000.



CHAPTER TEN

The Bible on Diet and Health

Healing and health are separate, though related issues. When our bodies break down, naturally we want our health back, but isn't there a way to stay in health and avoid physical illnesses in the first place? Indeed, there is - and the Bible has a lot to say about it! What it has to say about diet may also surprise you.

Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. Proverbs 3:7-8 ESV

Snippets of Biblical Wisdom Concerning Diet

Exercise moderation (not total abstinence) with sweets. Learn to quit when you have had enough. What is "enough"? Listen to your body - you give it food; it gives you "feed-back."

If you have found honey, eat only enough for you, lest you have your fill of it and vomit it.

Proverbs 25:16 ESV

It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glorious to seek one's own glory. A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

Proverbs 25:27-28 ESV

One who is full loathes honey, but to one who is hungry everything bitter is sweet. Proverbs 27:7 ESV



Exercise moderation with wine and oils. Nowhere in scripture is drinking wine condemned - on the contrary it is at times recommended (see Paul's advice to Timothy). What scripture consistently condemns is drunkenness - the immoderate, excessive use of wine which abuses God's good gift.

You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart. Psalms 104:14-15 ESV

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. Proverbs 23:29-30 ESV

No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. 1 Timothy 5:23-24 ESV

The oil that is mentioned is olive oil which was plentiful and widely used. Oil stands in as a symbol for prepared meals, as distinct from fruit, for instance, which can be plucked and eaten with no preparation. Oil makes for a "richer" meal - a meal more like a rich person can afford.



But if you can't afford it, then exercise moderation! Keep in mind that none of their "prepared food" would have had any of our modern preservatives or additives.

Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich. Proverbs 21:17 ESV

Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it. Proverbs 21:20 ESV

The Bible is big on moderation. Gluttony is condemned; moderation is praised; self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. We are to crucify the craving of the flesh to over-indulge in anything.

But all things should be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:40 ESV

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Philippians 4:8 KJV

Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags. Proverbs 23:20-21 ESV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Galatians 5:22-24 ESV

The Old Testament Period

Dietary concerns were addressed after the Flood. By the Lord's command we are allowed, even encouraged to eat meat, even red meat. This command came in after the flood. It may be that prior to the flood, people were vegetarians, but this is an inference drawn from the text cited below, not a necessary conclusion. There is nothing (I have found so far) in scripture to clarify this point one way or the other. What matters for us, of course, is what those who come after the flood are required or invited to do, since we cannot go back to either the Garden or post-Garden pre-flood conditions.

The one stipulation is that we are not to eat flesh with its blood - the blood must be drained from the animal during slaughter and preparation for eating. This command may seem minor, but it is repeated three times by the Early Church as a dietary restriction that is still in force for Gentile believers.

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Genesis 9:1-4 ESV

Dietary concerns were also addressed on entering the Promised Land. Note the restrictions placed upon meat offered for sacrificial purposes and the contrasting freedom given to eat meat at home - "as much as you desire." Did the Lord know what our modern day "experts" believe



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they have discovered about "how bad it is" to eat red meat or any meat? Of course, He did and does - nothing is hidden from Him! But who has the actual truth and wisdom? Who knows our bodies best and cares the most about what is healthy for us? Note once again that there is a restriction against eating any meat without the blood having been drained from it.

Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see, but at the place that the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.

"However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your towns, as much as you desire, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you. The unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the deer. Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it out on the earth like water.

Deuteronomy 12:13-15 ESV

When the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised you, and you say, 'I will eat meat,' because you crave meat, you may eat meat whenever you desire. If the place that the Lord your God will choose to put his name there is too far from you, then you may kill any of your herd or your flock, which the Lord has given you, as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your towns whenever you desire. Just as the gazelle or the deer is eaten, so you may eat of it. The unclean and the clean alike may eat of it. Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh. You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the earth like water. You shall not eat it, that all may go well with you and with your children after you, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord. Deuteronomy 12:20-25 ESV

Under the Law certain foods were forbidden. This brings us to the well-known restrictions placed upon the Jewish people under the conditions of their "new" covenant with God. Certain animals of the land, sea and air are declared "unclean" and not to be eaten under any circumstances. Why? For health concerns? Out of concern for ceremonial purity? As a sign of their being set apart - "for you are a holy people"? As a test of their obedience? We are not given a full explanation. We are told only that these animals are "abominations" and are therefore "unclean" and cannot be eaten by these Jewish believers - as a condition of their covenant with God.

If you are a Gentile Christian, this hardly matters for you as the decision of the Early Church makes plain - we are not under "the yoke" of these regulations. On the other hand, do these stipulations remain in force for Jewish believers, even Jewish-Christian believers? That is a very interesting question and doesn't seem (to me) to be fully settled one way or the other in the New Testament.

"You shall not eat any abomination. These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. Every animal that parts the hoof and has the hoof cloven in two and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. Yet of those that chew the cud or have the hoof cloven you shall not eat these: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger, because they chew the cud but do not part the hoof, are unclean for you. And the pig, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud, is unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. "Of all that are in the waters you may eat these: whatever has



And fins and scales you may eat. And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you. "You may eat all clean birds. But these are the ones that you shall not eat: the eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture, the kite, the falcon of any kind; every raven of any kind; the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind; the little owl and the short-eared owl, the barn owl and the tawny owl, the carrion vulture and the cormorant, the stork, the heron of any kind; the hoopoe and the bat. And all winged insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten. All clean winged things you may eat. You shall not eat anything that has died naturally. You may give it to the sojourner who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. Deuteronomy 14:3-21 ESV

The New Testament Period

The end to the dietary restrictions of the Old Covenant began with this teaching of Jesus. It is a clear statement that "nothing that enters a man from the outside" can defile us. At the very least He is removing food (our dietary choices) from having a spiritual value, since no food enters the heart. Those who promote the idea that it is more spiritual to eat or not eat certain foods are doing so in contradiction to this clear statement from Jesus. It is possible to conclude from this that the dietary restrictions of the Old Testament are being removed through His life and ministry, which is exactly what the inspired writer of the gospel inserted into the text in parenthesis ("Thus He declared all foods clean"). Nevertheless, that case will be made even more solidly later in the Book of Acts.

And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." Mark 7:14-23 ESV

Peter's famous vision is repeated three times - a clear indication to Him and to us of its importance. In the vision Peter is commanded to "kill and eat" all manner of food which he had previously (as a good, observant, "Old Covenant" believer) abstained from eating. However, according to the vision the conditions have changed. All foods are now being declared to be clean - "What God has made clean, do not call common." This indicates that God has done something to make clean what once had been "an abomination."

Was the curse upon "unclean" creatures (they are an "abomination") a part of the larger curse that came upon all of creation through Adam in Genesis 3? Was it God's work through the atoning death and sacrifice of Jesus Christ that has made this change come about? We are not told, but it seems a fair conclusion, since Peter is the one chosen by Jesus to be the leader of



those who would come to faith through Him. Now Peter is being shown a further outworking of the cross and resurrection, presumably to share with others in his role as their recognized leader. He understands by the vision that this means that Gentiles, formerly "unclean" and outside of the covenant, are now to be allowed in the fellowship of believers.

Some have argued that this inference of Peter (that Gentiles are no longer to be considered unclean) is the only interpretation of the vision that is valid. That argument falls apart when placed against the teaching of Jesus and of the gospel writer cited above: Peter's vision is a dramatic representation of the new reality that both Jesus and the gospel writer were expressing.

The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. Acts 10:9-16 ESV

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." 4 But Peter began and explained it to them in order: "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But I said, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life." Acts 11:1-18 ESV

What should Gentile Christians eat? The issue of whether or not the Hebrew scripture (Old Covenant) restrictions applied to new, Gentile believers continued to vex the early church. Paul

saw need to carry the question to the leadership in Jerusalem. After hearing all sides, James (the Lord's brother) spoke for the united council. The only dietary restrictions would be for Gentile believers to refrain from eating foods offered to idols (and later sold in the meat market of that temple), things strangled and from meat that had not had the blood properly drained from it (these last two go together, since slaughtering an animal by strangulation traps the blood in its carcass).

Once again, we are treated to a three-fold repetition in scripture, clearly indicating the importance of this decree: We see the command agreed upon, sent as a letter to the Gentile churches, then recounted by James much later when Paul returned to Jerusalem to under a cloud of controversy.

Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues." Acts 15:19-21 ESV

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." Acts 15:28-29 ESV

But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality." Acts 21:25 ESV

The controversy over diet was hard to stop. In the letter to the Galatians Paul tells how he had to oppose Peter, because Peter was evidently "backsliding" on the agreement reached by the council at Jerusalem and against the revelation he had received by his own vision. Paul evidently believed that Peter was caving in to pressure from "the circumcision party" - a legalistic group who apparently sought to impose the whole of Old Covenant restrictions upon all believers, both Jewish and Gentile.

Refusing to eat with the Gentiles indicates that Peter was abstaining from fellowshiping with them as full-fledged believers (even though they had not been circumcised). It also seems to indicate that he was abstaining from eating the food they were eating - treating their food as if it were "unclean." This can only be inferred from the passage - it is not sufficiently clear on that point.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Paul utterly rejected what Peter was doing as well as the position the "Judaizers" were taking. It was hypocrisy and it was not in accord with the gospel. This shows us how much pressure there was - even then - to place restrictions on diet and how determined Paul was not to let even this breach of liberty in Christ go unopposed.

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him,



so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?" Galatians 2:11-14 ESV

The Example of Jesus

Whatever was OK for Jesus, is surely fine for us. He is our greatest Example for how to live. Certainly, He practiced moderation and never sinned by gluttony and drunkenness, but that didn't stop people from trying to impose on Him their own ideas about diet and alcohol! He warned that what people did to Him, they would certainly try to do to His followers. So, if legalists in the church try to impose their misguided ideas on you, you're in good company. Stand firm in the faith that you have the same liberty that Jesus did.

For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by all her children." Luke 7:33-35 ESV

Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him. John 2:6-11 ESV

New Testament Controversy Over Ritually Impure Food

The general principle Paul states here applies to many things. There are all kinds of decisions we are free to make and the key is being "fully convinced" in our own mind that we are doing right in God's sight based on what we believe He has shown us to be right for us. Unfortunately, there is a strong tendency to want to make these personal decisions a general rule for everyone to follow and to try to make it seem that even God is behind our set of rules. Paul will have none of that! Just act according to your own best understanding and conscience and let others be free to sort things out for themselves.

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

Romans 14:1-6 ESV



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Paul's own view is that "nothing is unclean in itself." Yet, even in this, he is not seeking to make his understanding a rule for everyone else to follow. He goes on to say that we should be careful to avoid flaunting our freedom in the face of people who have other beliefs. Does that mean we should never eat meat or drink wine - because some believers would be grieved to see us do it? Certainly not! He cannot be saying that it is right to do what Peter did, because he himself felt compelled to rebuke Peter to his face for abandoning his principles.

There is a difference between Christians who, like the Judiazers, try to impose on others their own narrow, legalistic view - they are to be stoutly resisted. However, there are others, weak in their convictions, who might easily fall into misunderstanding and sin by eating meat (for instance) when they have not fully resolved their own doubts about it. Be circumspect around them.

I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil... Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Romans 14:14-16; 20-23 ESV

"All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience - I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? 1 Corinthians 10:23-30

New Testament Admonitions Against Restrictions on Diet

Jesus began the release of diet from the restrictions of the Old Covenant period. Paul carries this liberation into other areas as well, adding in festival celebrations. The principle Jesus inaugurated is that nothing of the body affects your spiritual health, unless of course you use your body to sin. The things we eat or drink, or refrain from eating and drinking, have zero spiritual value one way or the other. It is what goes into the heart and what comes out of the heart - that's the real issue (Proverbs 4:23). Paul is simply expanding on the teaching of Jesus. He adds that teaching intended to restrict our lawful liberty in Christ to eat and drink actually have no value to stop "the indulgence of the flesh." It has long been observed that legalism works for some but produces backsliding (over-indulging the flesh) in others.



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Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations - "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (referring to things that all perish as they are used) - according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. Colossians 2:16-23 ESV

A warning against deception in the "latter times." I have included the King James Version and Strong's Concordance with this passage, because it speaks so strongly against promoting abstinence from certain foods. According to Paul, this is actually one of the signs of Last Days deceptions! Evidently, the Holy Spirit wanted this warning to us included in the New Testament. What foods in particular will we be told to abstain from? Meats. Take this warning and do whatever you like with it. Personally, I find it curious that at a time when so many believers are convinced that our Lord's return is drawing near, vegetarianism is being widely promoted on the earth - just as the scriptures predicted!

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. 1 Timothy 4:1-5 ESV

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,* which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 1 Timothy 4:1-5 KJV

*NT:1033 broma (bro'-mah); from the base of NT:977; food (literally or figuratively), especially (ceremonially) articles allowed or forbidden by the Jewish law:** KJV-meat, victuals. **Note: Meats were the primary food group addressed by the ceremonial laws.

Even the unknown writer of Hebrews weighs in: Don't be led away by "diverse and strange" teachings about food - this has no real benefit! The New Testament rule remains. Eat anything you like, so long as your conscience is clear about it; keep to the one rule of moderation; and don't be a busybody about what other people are putting on their plates!



Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. Hebrews 13:9-10 ESV

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper became a source of concern, not as a dietary issue, but as one of hospitality. Evidently some people were providing themselves with a full meal at a time when Communion was being shared. Yet, they weren't sharing their excess of food with those around them who had nothing to eat other than the bread or wine being distributed. This is the same concern we saw earlier (Romans 14) for the detrimental effect that our actions, even our freedom in Christ, can have on others "in the Body." In this situation the inappropriate feasting by some of the Corinthians had a detrimental effect on their physical health - not just their spiritual well-being.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another - if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home - so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come. 1

Corinthians 11:27-34 ESV



CHAPTER ELEVEN

Thrive and Be in Health

Do you believe that God wants you to thrive in life and enjoy good health? Then, be very glad, because He says that He does. We will examine this simple passage in detail later, but for now enjoy the beauty of this promise which shows us something wonderful in the heart of God, being spoken to us through Jesus' "beloved" disciple, John.¹

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. 3 John 2 ESV

We may still be a long way off from that lovely, longed-for stage of the journey, but at least we can know with assurance that our God wants these good things for us down the road. On the other hand, perhaps this is a thing that you do not yet know with assurance—deep down where it counts when problems come and refuse to leave. Many believers certainly hope that God wants them to thrive in life and enjoy good health, but they are not so sure. Lots of everyday realities seem to contradict that hope. Even our internal reality (sinfulness) argues against it being for us. For somebody else maybe, but for me?



That's the problem with hope: It is kind of squishy. It can give way when trouble comes. At those times, we need something rock solid to base everything on. If, in the face of disease or disaster, I am going to have bright hope, if I am going to stay confident in God, if I am going to let my feelings float upwards into joy, then I want to be absolutely sure that I am believing what God wants me to believe. Otherwise, it may not come true. For that kind of assurance, He has given us His Word. His Word is our Rock of Refuge.² His Word will never change or fail to be true.

The Dynamic Power of Faith

Actively believing His Truth to be The Truth sets our hearts free no matter what we face, and that internal freedom draws the hoped-for future to us. Such faith releases us to work with Jesus following His lead, or rest before Him trusting in His promise. Either way (usually both), we can hold bright hope and confidence in our hearts because we know we are believing what our Lord wants us to believe, not some pipe dream of our own imagination (or someone else's). In this way our soul – our interior life – gets to thrive in life no matter what's going on. Even poor health can't keep us from enjoying this place of refuge: This is the true prospering of our soul.

This next step is so important: Fully believing the right truth in any "wrong" situation releases our hearts into a level of faith-trust that not only protects our emotions, it also brings God's solution



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to us. That is a true win-win! We are saved by grace through faith.³ This means that whenever we get the faith “right”, the saving work of God and His grace flows so much more freely and powerfully. A liberated and lively faith unblocks the channels of blessing like nothing else. The same level of faith that releases our hearts into hope and joy, is the same faith that becomes the “substance” of what God uses to bring His saving work our way.⁴

A word to those who may feel weak in believing these things. Even if our faith is low, our God will still be for us and keep working on our behalf, so don't despair. Just go to work on your faith level, knowing that He will work with you to bring your believing back up to the place where your heart is released. The goal is always to have bright hope, confidence in God and joy moving around on the inside with room to breathe, right? That way we can enjoy our life and relax in Jesus' embrace right now. We don't have to scrunch up our insides and hold our breath until His solution arrives. The peace of Christ is always available. We only need to meet the requirements: trusting God with all He has (so far) allowed and being willing to do anything He may ask.⁵ Once the peace returns, joy, bright hope and confidence in God can show up also.

Soul Prosperity

With our soul prospering, we are ready to advance the kingdom into other areas of our life. Or, we could say that once Jesus sees that we are yielded to Him in believing faith, He will turn the situation towards the long-for solution. As Hannah Whitehall Smith wrote in *A Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, God will use the situation to work on us, until we yield to Him in trusting faith. Then, He will go to work on the situation. Quite an incentive, isn't it? Yet, the intention is that we learn first and foremost to thrive in life. We can't do that if our inward life (our soul with its emotions) is being constantly thrown into disarray by one problem after another. May this present crisis be the time we get take the lesson to heart. Let's listen again to our main text this time in the New King James:

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. 3 John 2 NKJV

Because this is scripture, we can trust that John is praying in alignment with the heart of Jesus under the leadership of the Holy Spirit who is inspiring him. John (and by extension our God) wants us to prosper in all thing and be in health, “just as” our soul prospers. By this we see how important the prospering of our soul is to the Lord. As much as He desires us to enjoy health and success, He wants it, not in place of our soul prospering, but because of it. The prospering of our soul includes living with bright hope, confidence in God and the peace and joy of the Lord in our hearts – always and in any situation. This would not be possible without faith and grace, but because we are given all things freely in the Beloved, such a life is not only possible for us, it is expected of us.⁶

One of the amazing things that our modern medical science shows us, is the intimate, powerful relationship between the things in our soul and the health of our body. Our souls are definitely not prospering when they are burdened with a thousand cares. Things like unforgiveness, resentment, anger, fear, anxiety, guilt, regret, shame and depression really crowd out the peace of Christ and annihilate the joy of the Lord. In fact, every negative emotion we could name is recognized by our bodies as a stressor that throw our immune and hormone systems out of

whack. Just about every “incurable” disease (think heart disorders, cancers, gastro-intestinal trouble, etc.) either originates with stress or is compromised by it. It turns out that our bodies were designed to operate optimally with peace and interior freedom within us. James may not have known that fact, but the Lord does. Hence, the priority He places on our soul prospering.

Financial Prosperity?

Having seen what soul prosperity means, what other kinds of prosperity are promised to us by this passage? John, after all, is praying that we prosper “in all things.” Does this mean that God wants us all to be rich? This is the unfortunate, mis-guided belief that has been pressed upon the Body of Christ by some people in the “prosperity movement.” To be fair, many saw themselves as combatting a crippling “poverty mentality” which made some believers think that God wanted them to be impoverished, or that succeeding in life was somehow not a proper goal for a Christian. Pushing out of that ditch, propelled the movement at times into the one on the other side, by taking a position that God wanted everyone to be wealthy and that it was somehow unspiritual if you weren’t. A balanced life is in the middle of that road: Don’t cling to poverty and don’t grasp after wealth. Do the right thing because it honors the Lord, not in order to get rewarded by Him with riches.

The irony here is that the prosperity movement used this passage from John as their standard bearer: “John says that God wants us to prosper financially!” True, the passage clearly states that God wants each one of us to prosper and to our modern ears that almost always means material wealth, i.e. money. Be that as it may, the word prosper only appears if you are reading the King James and similar translations. For many of these ministers, the King James was the Bible of choice, sometimes of exclusive use. Other versions, however, translate John’s prayer differently. Here is the same passage in the New International Version, which like the ESV quoted above, doesn’t use the word prosper at all.

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3 John 2 NIV

How can we account for this discrepancy? Languages are living things; their meanings change over time. It just may be that the scholars of 1611 had a different connotation in mind when they reached for the word prosperity to fit this passage. Whatever the case, the words in the underlying Greek text do not have any direct connection to wealth at all! The actual Greek word is compounded from one that means “well done” and another that means “a road, a journey, a progress” towards a desired end.⁷ The compound word means to receive “help on the road” and to find “success in reaching” one’s destination. That certainly can carry a secondary meaning of picking up some financial success along the way, but clearly the main idea is moving along well on the path that God is calling you. Who wants that? All of us, probably. Yet, who would be so crass as to say, “My goal is to get lots of money, so help me God!” Few, one hopes.

Body Prosperity

We are, thankfully, on obvious and solid ground with it comes to our hopes for healing and health. There can be no doubt that this passage expresses God’s heart that we “be in health.”

Every translation carries this meaning, loud and clear. In one translation after another it is prosper (the tricky part) AND “be in health,” or “be healthy” (the clear part). The Greek word being translated means “to have sound health, that is, to be well (in body).”⁸ How could it be otherwise? Anything less than full health is something less than prospering physically, every single time. It is wonderful to see that the Lord is entire agreement with our logic, at least on that point. (Or maybe we’re just in agreement with His.)

Happily, there are many other passages to reach for in scripture which declare God’s desire to heal us, in addition to this one. (See [Scriptures for Healing](#).) Still, if you want to memorize one passage and take your stand upon the Rock of God’s Word, this could be the one for you. Use it to defeat every doubt that God may not be interested in your healing or is in some way unwilling to see you healthy. Crush those errant thoughts with the truth! Believe this powerful promise with a full heart of faith. It will uphold your spirit, liberate your soul, and draw grace to faith with salvation’s power released in your life.

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. 3 John 2 ESV

Scriptures and Footnotes

¹ **So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”** John 20:2 ESV; and: **Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?”** John 21:20 ESV

² In His worst moment before the cross, Jesus bet His life on God’s Word being true and prayed that we would also learn to the same thing. It is called being sanctified by the truth, because belief in the truth pushes out unclean things like fear and worry: **Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.** John 17:17 ESV

³ **For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.** Ephesians 2:8-9 MKJV

⁴ **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.** Hebrews 11:1 MKJV

⁵ He will keep anyone in perfect peace (the peace of Christ is perfect peace), IF we trust Him enough to fully surrender to Him and stay (rest) our heart and mind on Him. This means trusting Him with what He allows and trusting Him enough to do anything He may ask: **You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.** Isaiah 26:3 ESV

⁶ We have been given “all things” necessary for life which we receive through believing what God has promised us about who He is and what He intends to do for us. This level of believing enables us to “partake” of His nature and live in His joy and peace in any situation, just as He does: **His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.** 2 Peter 1:3-4 ESV

⁷ Strong’s G2137 *euodoō*: From a compound of G2095 and G3598; to help on the road, that is, (passively) succeed in reaching; figuratively to succeed in business affairs: - (have a) prosper (-ous



journey). G2095 *eu*: Neuter of a primary word εὖς *eus* (good); (adverbially) well: - good, well (done).
Strong's G3598 *hodos*: Apparently a primary word; a road; by implication a progress (the route, act or distance); figuratively a mode or means: - journey, (high-) way.
⁸ G5198 *hugainō*: From G5199; to have sound health, that is, be well (in body); figuratively to be uncorrupt (true in doctrine): - be in health, (be safe and) sound, (be) whole (-some).



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