



discover wellness

Uncover the abundant life through health and wellbeing

Copyright © 2012 Adventist Media Network

Published by HopeChannel

Written by Clifford Goldstein

Edited by John Gate & Sue Robinson

Art direction by Jared Madden & Shelley Poole

Layout by Elena Janakijovska

Typeset in Univers

Printed in Australia by Signs Publishing Company®

Unless otherwise stated all Bible texts are from the **New King James Version**

For more information about this series, visit www.beyond.info



discover **wellness**

The most famous trial and execution in antiquity, besides that of Jesus in the first century A.D, was that of the Greek philosopher Socrates, executed in Athens in 399 B.C., a little over 400 years before Jesus went to the cross.

Scholars have noted some interesting similarities between the deaths. Both men had teaching that the authorities feared. Both faced sham trials. Both were accused of ungodliness. Both men had faithful followers. Both Socrates and Jesus, though able to escape, went willingly to their death.

Of course, many huge differences existed, the greatest being that - unlike Jesus - no one claimed to have seen Socrates rise from the dead in the flesh!

There's another important difference, and that has to do with Socrates' whole concept of death, flesh and the soul. According to Plato, who wrote down the last words of Socrates, the condemned philosopher spent a great deal of time before his execution talking about the evils of the body, arguing that as long as the human soul is trapped in the flesh it will never attain to perfection.

Our body, Socrates said, fills us with loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies and a great deal of nonsense, with the result that we literally never get an opportunity to think at all about anything.

ANOTHER VIEW

In contrast, Jesus presents a radically different view of our bodies. As we have already studied, the concept of a separate, conscious, immortal soul is not biblical. Instead, historians can show that, from Plato and

his teachings, the idea of an immortal soul - which is alien to the Bible - infiltrated Christian thinking, and is still doing so even up to this day. How ironic that Plato's view of the soul and body has more influence in Christianity than does the Bible itself!

For example, the Bible not only makes it clear that God created the human body, human flesh, but that it was good.



So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 1:27



And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Genesis 2:7



And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.

Genesis 1:31

The ancient Greeks taught the idea of a fall into the body. The Christian idea, instead, is a fall in the body. For many Greeks, the body was something to shed, to get rid of, something evil that our souls, by transgression, fell into. This is alien to the Bible, to both Jewish and Christian thinking which view the body as a masterpiece of God's amazing creation. God intended us to have bodies. In fact, having a physical body is part of being truly human. But when sin and death entered, it also affected the natural world - and that includes our bodies. Along with the environment, our bodies need redemption.



And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Romans 8:23

CORRUPTION

No question, though, our whole being, body included, has been greatly damaged by sin, which has invaded our whole planet like a malignant cancer. No one escapes that sad reality. But the idea that the body is bad in and of itself is a radically different concept to the idea that our bodies - originally created by God - have been damaged and corrupted by sin. The latter is a biblical concept - the former is pure paganism.

Plus, after God created Eve, *bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh* (Genesis 2:23), they were to become man and wife, and do what?



Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 See also Matthew 19:5.

In the light of such texts, it's hard to see our bodies - our flesh - as anything but good.

Now, one can find verses in the Bible that talk about the *flesh* in a negative sense, but only in the sense of carnal fallen flesh - of our corrupted passions, which are bad and can lead to the loss of eternal life. But that is a different concept completely from the idea of the flesh in and of itself, and the desires of the flesh - all gifts from God - being inherently evil. They are not.

God gave human beings, for instance, the gift of sexuality. The gift itself isn't evil. When someone, however, abuses that gift, and for example molests a child, the act itself is evil. That act, however, doesn't mean that sexuality itself- as God gave it – is evil. On the contrary, it isn't.

JESUS AND HEALING

The greatest proof we have that our bodies are good can be found in all the time Jesus spent healing people. If our bodies were inherently evil, why would Jesus have spent so much time restoring them? In fact, an estimated 20 per cent of the Gospels are dedicated to Jesus healing broken bodies.

For example:



And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Matthew 4:23

In fact, when Jesus raised people from the dead, He raised them back into their flesh - more proof that the flesh wasn't evil, or bad, even though it has been corrupted and damaged.



Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say to you, arise. So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

Luke 7:14-15

No question, our bodies are gifts from God.



Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

That humans do bad things with their bodies is one thing, but that does not mean the body is evil any more than water is evil because people use it to make alcohol and then drive drunk and kill people.

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE

What do these verses mean? On one level, it's easy - you didn't ask to be born. You didn't create yourself. God created you. Were it not for Him, you wouldn't be here. What price is that?



Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 Peter 1:18-19

And because of this great price, we are told to do what? *Glorify God in your body and in your Spirit, which are God's.* 1 Corinthians 6:20

That is, you - your flesh, your thoughts, your mind - they all belong to God. And thus, you are to glorify Him, and not use your body for sinful purposes.

Right there is the motive for taking care of yourself physically. Knowing that our bodies are the *temple* of God, and that we have been told to *glorify God in your body*, it makes sense that we should take care of our health, and take care of our bodies in a way that will glorify God.

What is more likely to glorify God - abusing your body with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and unhealthy food and bad lifestyle practices - or living a moderate and temperate lifestyle that will help you achieve the best health possible?

No question, as long as we are here - in fallen flesh - we are going to face sickness, ailments, and - unless we're alive when Jesus comes - death.

But, because our bodies are gifts from God, we have a moral obligation to do what we can to take care of them the best we can. Just as hand-made gifts from friends have that added value, so it is with our bodies - hand-made gifts from God.

And though the Bible itself doesn't present any kind of systematic treatise on health, we can take from it certain broad principles that can make a big difference in the quality of our existence here.

DIET

Over the years, especially in Western countries, there has been a great increase in lifestyle diseases - diseases directly related to how we live. And time and again medical experts point to diet as crucial for good health. In most cases, too, it doesn't matter what diseases are being talked about - diabetes, cancer, heart disease, whatever - similarities appear in all the dietary recommendations - lots of fruit, whole grains, vegetables, and nuts, as opposed to flesh foods and saturated fats. All one has to do

is look at what are considered optimal diets, and though the charts do vary somewhat, the emphasis is almost always on more fruits, vegetables and whole grains than on most everything else.

Interestingly enough, what was the original diet given to humanity before the fall? Pretty much the same kind of diet that we are recommended to follow today!



And God said, See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.

Genesis 1:29

Humans were given a vegetarian diet - the kind of diet that medical science implies can be the healthiest.

Coincidence?

The Bible does not demand a vegetarian diet. It's just that, with the example of Eden, we can see what the ideal diet was. It is true that, after the flood, with so much life destroyed, humans were given the option to eat meat, though that was not the ideal.



So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. ... I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.

Genesis 9:1-3

Also, as Noah was getting ready to bring animals onto the ark, look at the distinction between the kinds of animals that were brought in.



You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are

unclean, a male and his female.

Genesis 7:2

This is important because, much later, in writings given to the Jews by God regarding what animals they could and could not eat, the distinction between what were clean animals and what were unclean was clarified. What these verses here in Genesis show, however, is that the clean-unclean distinction existed before the Jewish nation did. That is, it was not something only for the Jews. That's why many people, though not vegetarians, don't eat unclean foods, which are generally from scavengers anyway. Besides Jesus didn't die to make unclean foods clean! He died for unclean people - sinners - so they can be clean, and live clean lives.

HEALTHFUL LIVING

Though it has been said, we are what we eat, that's not quite true. Diet is important for health - but there's more.

When God created Adam and Eve, where did He place them?



Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

Genesis 2:15

A few points come through here from which principles of health can be derived - principles that are supported by the findings of medical science.

Note: They were to work in the garden. That is - exercise. Time and again medical science shows that exercise is crucial to good health. Medical advice is needed, though, before exercise, if a pre-existing health problem exists. Exercise is so important for good health.

Living in a garden, Adam and Eve also had the advantage of fresh air and sunshine, two important components for good health. Sunshine, however important, must not be overdone. Here, too, advice from a doctor can be very helpful in knowing just how much sun can help toward optimum health. As far as fresh air goes, pretty much the rule can be - the more the better!

COMMON SENSE

Look at this text:



Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

We can glorify God in what we eat and drink? That's awesome! That's what it says, and whatever exactly Paul meant, he surely included the idea that what we eat and drink can glorify God by how it impacts the bodies God trusted to us. Alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco are not only bad for you, it's hard to imagine a true-blue Christian sitting at a bar drinking a beer, smoking a cigarette, or smoking a joint, and glorifying God.

The image doesn't fit.

Also, the Bible often puts alcohol use in a very bad light. It's no wonder, either, because who hasn't seen the devastating effects of alcohol on those who get caught up in it, especially when anyone who picks up their first drink doesn't know if he or she has the tendency toward alcoholism.



Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Proverbs 20:1

In the 1960's, during the Hippie era, Timothy Leary had become an iconic figure of the drug movement. He coined the infamous phrase, *Turn on, tune in, and drop out!* More than any other man, he made illegal drug use - especially LSD - seem hip. Many years later, long after he faded from the news, his daughter wrote about what it was like growing up surrounded by drugs. Interestingly enough, of all the drugs - heroin, marijuana, LSD, cocaine, etc. - that permeated her home life, none was more devastating and destructive, she said - than alcohol!

With the Bible giving a strong emphasis on taking care of the body temple, and with alcohol being so damaging to it, both mentally and physically, the smartest and safest route with it, as well as tobacco and tobacco products - is total avoidance. Don't be fooled by what the alcohol is mixed with.

Alcohol is a toxic poison. Include some in fermented grape juice - wine - and we are told it is good for your health! The nutrition of the grape is, but the alcohol is still toxic, addictive, and deadly.

CHILLING OUT



The sleep of a labouring man is sweet.

Ecclesiastes 5:12

Of course, one doesn't need medical science to know just how healthful and beneficial sleep is to the human body - both mentally and physically. Who hasn't experienced the amazing phenomenon of how much better life can seem after a good night's sleep?

Then, too, as we have studied, the Sabbath - the physical rest that comes from the Sabbath - can be a wonderful way to improve and maintain health.



But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

Exodus 20:10

We are commanded - commanded, just as with *thou shall not kill* - to rest from our work on the weekly Sabbath day. Studies have shown the powerful advantages, both physically and mentally, from taking time away from work. Let's face it - how many of us, in the mad race for the dollar, would work seven days a week to get ahead, even though by the time you finally get there you are dead?

TRUST IN GOD

One of the most amazing, and still not fully understood aspects of humanity, is the link between our minds and body. Our thoughts, our moods, our attitudes, have, without question, an impact - even a powerful impact - on our physical health. The more negative your thoughts, the more negative the impact on your body. Though all sorts of theories exist on how this link works, one thing is sure - the link works. Our mental attitude can have an impact, for good or for ill, on our bodies.

Hence, how crucial that we learn to trust in God, to take God at His promise, to not just believe in God and His love but to experience it and the peace of mind it can bring.



Be still, and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10



Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.

Proverbs 3:5

Jesus said it the best:



Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Matthew 6:34

No question, we all have problems, we all have struggles, and we all have things in our lives that we wish were different. No question, too, that we all have things to be thankful for, to be grateful for, and to be happy about. How important that every day, in every way that we can, we focus on the positive, praising and thanking God for the blessings that we do have. We have to remember, too, that this world is not our final home, and that whatever happens here, however terrible, God calls us to live just one day at a time.

In what sounds like it could have come from a modern medical journal, the Bible says:



A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

BALANCE

God wants us to be in as good health as possible.



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

3 John 1:2

Our lifestyle choices can go a long way in helping us to attain to that ideal.

But we must also balance this out with these words of Paul:



For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

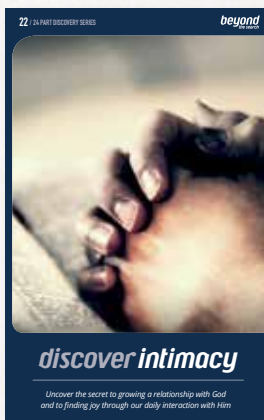
Romans 14:17

We are not saved by what we do or don't eat or drink, or by how much, or even how little we exercise. We are saved by the righteousness of Jesus, which covers our sins and gives us a new life in Him. However beneficial a healthful lifestyle is, we must always remember that a healthful lifestyle based on biblical principles is not the means of salvation. It is, instead, a grateful expression of that salvation.

We might be tempted to think that our health habits have little or no bearing on the cosmic struggle in which we find ourselves. Don't be fooled! It was on the very point of food that the villain brought his rebellion against God to planet earth. See Genesis 2:17 and 3:1-4. The issue is who do you believe? Who do you trust? It's at the heart of the epic story. It's at the heart of your story too.



NEXT IN THE SERIES:



*Uncover the secret to growing a relationship with God
and to finding joy through our daily interaction with Him*

BEYOND THE SEARCH – DISCOVERY SERIES

- 01 Discover Tomorrow
- 02 Discover Meaning
- 03 Discover Truth
- 04 Discover the Saviour
- 05 Discover Insight
- 06 Discover Hope
- 07 Discover Eternity
- 08 Discover Peace
- 09 Discover Steps
- 10 Discover New
- 11 Discover Freedom
- 12 Discover Rest
- 13 Discover Authenticity
- 14 Discover Immortality
- 15 Discover Restoration
- 16 Discover Justice
- 17 Discover Judgment
- 18 Discover Allegiance
- 19 Discover Safety
- 20 Discover Loyalty
- 21 Discover Wellness**
- 22 Discover Intimacy
- 23 Discover Tribute
- 24 Discover Belonging

