



"Troubles are the tools by which God fashions us for better things."
—Henry Ward Beecher

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Sick and Tired

This past week I have literally been sick and tired. I do not know the cause for my illness. It may be the stress that always builds this time of year, enhanced by extra speaking assignments, taxes, and household chores. It may be the result of contracting the same illness that my son John picked up last week from a neighborhood friend. Whatever the source, I have lost a great deal of sleep and shortened my workdays to just a few hours, adding to the stress.

Sickness is part of the human condition. We are biological creatures that run down if we fail to provide our bodies with adequate nutrition, exercise, sleep, and whatever other requirements they may have. In addition, we sometimes do foolish or even sinful things that result in illness or disease. I should not fail to mention that humanity may have degenerated over the last six thousand years, and mankind has certainly not helped himself in terms of air and water pollution, junk food, and toxic chemicals in our surroundings.

Of course, as God's children, we can call upon Him for healing. He is our Healer and promises to keep us from the terrible diseases of [this world](#) if we obey Him ([Exodus 15:26](#); see [23:25](#); [Deuteronomy 7:15](#)). He assures us in [Psalm 103:3](#) that He is the One "who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases." During His ministry, [Jesus](#) healed everyone who asked "according to [their] [faith](#)" ([Matthew 9:29](#)). He gave Himself in sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins, and it is by His stripes that we are healed ([Isaiah 53:5](#); [I Peter 2:24](#)). John writes, "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" ([I John 3:22](#)), showing that our healing is conditional upon obedience and right living.

This is wonderful promise! These days—with all the horrendous diseases like AIDS and the specter of bioterrorism—it is a welcome relief to know that [God](#) is the Great Physician and our Father. We can conduct our lives confidently, knowing that we can rely on God's protection.

On the other hand, we should not be foolish, stupid, or careless in these matters. Certainly, we should not put ourselves in harm's way or tempt God to force Him to act in our behalf ([Deuteronomy 6:16](#); see [Matthew 4:7](#)). There may be no quicker way to invoke the wrath of Almighty God ([Exodus 17:1-7](#))!

So we should ask ourselves when we are sick and tired and in need of God's healing, "What have I done to bring this on? Have I tempted God with my lifestyle? Has He withheld His protection so that I might get sick and have the opportunity to learn a lesson and repent of a [sin](#)?" If we are honest with ourselves, we will find ourselves answering, "Yes" to several or all these questions.

If so—if we have not been treating the temple of God's Holy Spirit properly—if we have been burning the midnight oil or the candle at both ends—if we have been feeding it low-quality fare, skipping meals, or overindulging in sugary or fatty foods—if we have been skipping even moderate exercise, such as taking walks—if we have been carrying too much weight, etc.—then we need to do something about it! That is the essence of [repentance](#): change!

For too long, I feel, members of God's church have not put enough emphasis on this last part of the process. We are happy and eager to take advantage of God's mercy and blessing to be healed, but too often we have not made the necessary changes to show Him that we indeed learned our lesson and wish to please Him by living healthfully from then on.

The process works the same physically as spiritually because it is a universal, eternal law. If we do wrong and seek forgiveness, God by His grace and mercy forgives and *leads us to* repentance ([Romans 2:4](#)). But He cannot repent for us! That is our job. He takes us as far as He can along the way, but we must make the changes so that repentance actually occurs. We must, by whatever strength we can muster with God's help, bear down and change.

The next time you get sick and tired, as I was this past week, please think about this principle. It can only make your life and health better.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Maintaining Good Health \(Part 1\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

John Ritenbaugh, using Paul's metaphor of the human body as the temple of God's Spirit (II Corinthians 6:16) insists that stewardship of our bodies or keeping ourselves healthy is (like the Levitical maintenance of the literal tabernacle) an aspect of holiness, promoting the strengthening of our relationship with Jesus Christ. The principle of dressing and keeping (Genesis 2:15) given to our original parents applies to our physical bodies as well. Good health is not an inherited right; it accrues as we apply God's standards and health laws to our behavior. Even though we may have inherited some genetic weaknesses from the sins of our ancestors, we have a God-given responsibility to maintain what we have been given in top condition, if necessary, glorifying God in our affliction.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Here's to Your Good Health!](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Maintaining good health is a vital part of our duty to glorify God in our bodies. We should study health and ourselves so we can keep the temple of the Holy Spirit healthy and do good for others.

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